

WORLD OF DARKNESS:

# MAFIA

## This Thing of Ours

Like the supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness, the “men of respect” are damned in their own unique way. Beholden to tradition, threatened by ethics and forced by their nature to remain outside the society that sustains him, the modern mobster is every bit as compelling a character as the most monstrous creature of the night.

## World of Darkness: Mafia

Includes:

- Character-creation rules for mortal Mob characters.
- Storytelling advice for incorporating the Mafia into a World of Darkness game.
- General information and setting-specific storylines.

VAMPIRE  
THE MASQUERADE



WORLD OF DARKNESS:

# MAFIA™

By Ari Marmell, Matthew McFarland  
and C. A. Suleiman

## CREDITS

**Written by:** Ari Marmell, Matthew McFarland and C.A. Suleiman. World of Darkness created by Mark Rein•Hagen

**Fiction by:** Ed Hall

**Storyteller Game System Design:** Mark Rein•Hagen

**Developed by:** Justin Achilli

**Editor:** Ed Hall

**Art Director:** Richard Thomas

**Layout & Graphic Design:** Kieran Yanner

**Interior Art:** Andy Trabbold, Mike Danza, Kirk Van Wormer and Kieran Yanner

**Front Cover Art:** Mike Danza

**Back Cover Art:** Kirk Van Wormer

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**WHITE WOLF PUBLISHING**  
2075 WEST PARK PLACE BOULEVARD  
SUITE G  
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

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## Table of Contents

SOLILOQUY	4
INTRODUCTION: THIS THING OF OURS	10
CHAPTER ONE: A DISTINGUISHED HISTORY	14
CHAPTER TWO: MADE MEN IN A WORLD OF DARKNESS	40
CHAPTER THREE: CHARACTER CREATION	74
CHAPTER FOUR: THE VEIL OF SECRETS AND LIES	86
CHAPTER FIVE: STORYTELLING	104
OBSEQUIES	121



# Soliloquy

by Ed Hall

*What a world this is. What a cruel, godless garden of miseries it is we live in. Cristina, Cristina, you can't die on me this way. There'd only be one of us left. This is unfair! You were never anything but good, but it's like life was good to you just so you'd know how awful ashes taste.*

*I don't know if you can hear me. The doctors, they told me to talk to you, that a familiar voice might bring you out of this... this sleep that's so close to death. So I'm speaking to you now the way you asked me to the last time we saw each other. I remember the first words you said to me that day, after so many years. As if I could forget them! You said, 'This is America Emilio. Speak English to me.'*

*Then you said, 'Just don't expect me to say anything back.'*

*That was right before you called me a killer. My brother is a killer, a thief and a whoremaster. Those were your exact words. The words that hurt me worse than when I got shot, worse than the times I got stabbed. You cut out my heart that day. You cut it out and never knew! You never understood why I did the things I had to do.*

*I did it all to keep my family alive. And the only thanks you ever gave me was to cut me apart, to tell me that the one brother you had left in the world was dead to you. You made me feel like I had invented cruelty itself, like my soul had withered away.*

*I'll tell you where we all would be if I hadn't led this life of mine. On the ground with Mama and Papa, that's where! You, me, Pietro, all dead, all long dead!*

*Things would have been quicker that way. Maybe they would've been better, too. Is that what you thought? Did you think that if we hadn't lived, all the people who suffered, who died of want, did you think their lives would have been better somehow? Or longer? Life doesn't work that way. Life is struggle, life is hard, no matter what you do. Why couldn't you see that? Why couldn't Papa see that? People who don't fight hard enough in this life become stepping-stones for the ones who do. People who never figure out which are the right friends to have sink out of sight. Papa never learned these lessons. But I knew he wouldn't, and that's why I left when I did. What was hard for me wasn't being away from Mama or Papa. Or Pietro. It was leaving you behind. Leaving you was like leaving me, like my body left home and my soul stayed there.*

*All I knew for sure the night I ran away was if I stayed, the only good that was ahead was us getting to die together.*

*I never told anyone before, but the first decent night's sleep I can remember was that night I ran away. I hated that house. It was always cold, and the spiders! Spiders are the Devil's fingers, I'm certain of it. Most nights in that house I'd wake up two or three times, sure that something had been crawling on me in the dark. Nights I managed to sleep through, I used to dream that a fat spider was dropping down toward my face.*

*That first night I should have been terrified. I slept in a barn I had never seen just because it had a solid roof. Not like the one we had. The war hadn't been over long then, so lots of*



places were deserted. A lot of the farmhouses were just wrecks, though, so I slept in barns like that one while I headed south to find someplace warmer than home.

I wound up in Sicily because I made a friend in Naples. A good friend he turned out to be, a man named Lucania. And he was the right friend to make. He told me to go to Sicily and mention his name to a man there.

He did the same for the Americans. When the Allies landed there in '43, the English and the Canadians died by the thousands. The Americans took a different route, though, and barely had to fire a shot. Thanks to Lucania, the Sicilians knew they were coming. When people saw that the Americans' tanks had banners with a big "L" in gold, the islanders knew these soldiers were just passing through on their way to hand Mussolini his ass. And that made them very friendly. While the rest of Italy was falling in step with Ol Duce, the Sicilians were telling him to go bite his own rump. He didn't like that. He tried to wipe out all those old bandits hiding in the hills there. You know who won that battle. Lucania knew how it would end, too, so he wanted to be a friend of the United States. A patriot. An ally. He understood the importance of friends. By being a good friend, he was able to convince the Americans to let him out of prison after the war and send him home. To Naples, anyway. Close enough to home. And that's where I met him.

How I met Lucania, that was a thing in itself.

Every— is someone there? Nurse?

Everybody was hungry after the war. Even so, a lone child at the door at sunset held the key to most people's hearts back then. This I learned by accident. I traveled by day, asked farmers for water and got food. Late one afternoon it turned cool, so when I saw a farmhouse I walked up and asked if I could warm myself in their barn. The couple who lived there looked at each other, and for a moment I thought I had made them angry. Then the woman put her hands on my face and pulled me to her. I didn't realize she was crying until her tears began to fall on my cheek. At first I thought that their roof must leak the way ours did!

They fed me. They gave me an overcoat that was too big and too warm for the season. I knew I'd need it on the road, though. Even then, I knew I couldn't stay with those people. They reminded me too much of Mama and Papa. Not because they were kind, but because they also seemed beaten. Defeated. Somewhere else, I knew, was a place not made of loss. I just had to find it.

The farmer and his wife offered me a bed to sleep in that night. I accepted because I didn't want to offend them. Before they could enter their own bedroom, though, I was out the window and headed back to the road.

And there, in the farmer's yard, I learned that our father did not hold all the truths in the world. When I would awaken screaming from fear of spiders in the dark but ashamed to admit

it, our father often said to me, What frightens you, boy? Always I would say, A ghost, Papa. And he told me, Do not fear ghosts, child, they mean us no harm. They are merely lost and need to be helped along their way.

Yet there, in my path, stood a boy — or the shape of a boy — a little taller than I was. But he wasn't all there. I could see through him to the trees at the roadside. Right before me stood a ghost. I thought of Papa's words, and I tried to step around him but again he blocked my way. I felt a scream inside me, but I didn't want to bring the farmer and his wife running. I decided I had to walk through this phantom, but when I tried I became even more frightened!

The ghost seemed angry then. He opened his hand toward me. My first thought was that I should pay him for what food I'd eaten at the farmhouse — but I couldn't imagine what use a ghost could have for money, which I was without, anyway. I looked down at my empty hands, then at this angry soul between me and the road. And then I knew. I looked down again, not at my hands but at the cuffs of the coat that almost hid them. The coat had been his when he lived, I was sure. I took it off and let it fall behind me. I watched the ghost the whole time. As the coat fell on the ground, the dead boy moved out of my way.

I took a few steps straight ahead, but with each one my fear heated into something else. What did he need a coat for? I couldn't warm him, I figured. I turned and saw he was sitting on the coat. I ran back and snatched it up with one hand, then I turned again and ran for the road. I held the coat up high, like a flag. Behind me, I heard a sound like nothing else ever. I thought the Devil himself was behind me and if I slowed down at all or even turned to look, he would swallow me whole! I don't remember when I stopped running, but once I did I had no wind in me at all. I dropped to my hands and knees in the middle of the road. I could barely see the farmhouse in the distance, and there was no sign of the dead boy at all. I don't know how long I stayed there, but when I thought about sleeping, I knew I wouldn't be doing any that night. So I walked.

I didn't rest until almost daybreak. I remember thinking right before dawn how comfortable the flat rock in front of me looked. Then I was falling asleep on top of it.

It must have been midday when I woke up with an American soldier standing over me. The sun was behind his head, so I couldn't see his face and I was afraid. The man wanted me to come with him. I did because I was sick of walking, and I saw there was another American in a truck. I climbed inside it with them. I fell asleep again. And at nightfall, again the soldier woke me up.

They had brought me to a depot filled with children. It looked like a prison to me, even though some of the boys were playing ball in the yard. I stayed there for exactly three days, three of the worst days of my life. They moved me from place