



A great cathedral cannot be comprehended in the glance of an eye. Certain features, such as its magnitude and general beauty, are obvious, but inwrought with these is a wealth of meaning which is the soul of the Cathedral—the real Cathedral—and which reveals itself only on intimate acquaintance. When Ruskin called Amiens Cathedral “The Bible of Amiens,” he used a figure of speech applicable to all great cathedrals. It is a sacred book, written in massive pier and ponderous arch, in sculptured marble and carved oak, in stained glass and inlaid mosaic, in embroidered fabric and woven tapestry, whose pages are full of delight, inspiration and help for those who will take the trouble to read them.

—Edward H. Hall, *The Grey Book*

## **Introduction**

The Toreador guildhouse in New York City is one of the most splendid of all Kindred creations. Named in honor of its Master Builder, Santa de Luzarches is a massive cathedral constructed underground directly below the Hudson River and situated between the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels. Much more than just a guildhouse, Santa de Luzarches is a symbol of all the Toreador hold sacred; it is a collection of exquisite galleries, a safe haven and a cherished home, a vast studio of arching stone. Every five years it hosts the All Hallows Eve Ball, and Santa de Luzarches is the only location in the world to have hosted the Grand Carnivale three times—upon its completion in 1886, after the Second World War in 1946, and in an honor without precedent, at the close of the millennium in 1999.

## **The Architect**

The cathedral was designed and built by the thirteenth-century engineer, Robert de Luzarches, the Master Builder of the Basilique Cathédrale Notre-Dame d’Amiens. Robert was Embraced upon his deathbed in 1228 by the artist Villard de Honnecourt, a young Toreador admirer who had sought him out in Amiens. After a tempestuous relationship with Villard in Paris, Robert traveled to Spain and studied under the architects of the Reconquista, eventually taking Hernán Ruiz the Younger as his own progeny in 1569. Growing weary of Lasombra machinations, Spanish intolerance, and the rampant, mindless destruction of Moorish treasures, Robert returned to Paris in 1610. In 1653 he met Duncan Capelthwaite at a fireworks display celebrating the return of Cardinal Mazarin, and Robert de Luzarches followed his new friend

across the Channel to England. In 1664, they traveled to the New World with the Duke of York's fleet, where they established first Toreador enclave in colonial New York. Robert de Luzarches was to create only one work of art as a New York Toreador, but that creation would elevate his name to the highest constellations of the Damned.

### **History of the Cathedral**

It was not easy, however, building this underground miracle. It took many years, and involved the coordinated efforts of the entire Camarilla. Initiated shortly after the Great Fire of 1835, all involved realized the awesome scale of their undertaking—and all enthusiastically embraced the challenge. It was indeed an exceptional time in New York City. Immanuel St. James and his Tremere were at the peak of their power, anxious to plant the seeds of a Kindred Eden in the fertile soil of New York. Hungry to establish a reputation for visionary leadership, Marius had just welded the Ventrue into a wealthy and influential body willing to take risks. Even the Nosferatu were eager to play a role, and Dead Caesar saw the cathedral as an opportunity to enrich the status of his oft-neglected clan.

The construction process took several decades of whole-scale cooperation between the clans, as well as the intense—and not always subtle—manipulation of numerous mortals. In Europe, or in modern America, the Camarilla would certainly view such a project as a threat to the Masquerade; but the *Zeitgeist* of nineteenth century America was more entrepreneurial and free-spirited. The Toreador designed the cathedral and procured the more difficult-to-obtain materials. The Tremere invoked their arcane skills to engineer a vault below the Hudson River. The Ventrue used their political influence and creative Domination to ensure a steady, nocturnal supply of resources, while the Nosferatu coordinated physical labor from their warren beneath the Burial Ground. Even the New Jersey Sabbat were curious about the cathedral, and tacitly condoned its construction through an “unofficial” policy of non-interference.

The cathedral was completed in 1886, the year the Statue of Liberty was commemorated. The Kindred used this mortal festivity as a cover for their own celebration: the Cathedral of Santa de Luzarches was unveiled to the vampire world at the Grand Carnivale of 1886, and the Toreador were hailed across the globe for their artistic triumph. Humans, too, were included on the guest list, most later Dominated into believing their visitation was the product of dream or delirium. This list of mortal attendees included George Heins and Christopher Grant LaFarge, who would later be appointed as the architects of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Although Heins and LaFarge adopted a Byzantine style over de Luzarches' Gothic, both men maintained throughout their lives that their dreams were a source of constant inspiration.

For decades after its unveiling, Santa de Luzarches acted as a Kindred Mecca, attracting pilgrims from as far as Beijing and the Ottoman Empire to bear witness to the brash Americans' achievement. In 1899, Prince Gratiano of the Barcelona Sabbat requested a month-long residency at the cathedral. It was a remarkable and audacious request, but Duncan Capelthwaite granted it—a controversial decision for the clan leader, who realized that behind the “hide the silver!” jokes lurked a genuine sense of unease. Despite the vehement protestations of the Ventrue, the Dark Prince and his entourage spent October 1899 in the cathedral, mingling with the Toreador and appropriately marveling at every artistic triumph. They were the perfect guests, and on the eve of their departure, Gratiano presented the Toreador with a priceless gift—the Mirror of Don Quixote.

Of course, the current moral and political degeneracy of St. James' court, combined with the rising tide of Sabbat malevolence, has brought this period of cooperation and harmony to an ignoble end. Despite this, the Prince's royal neglect has only served to further enhance the reputation of the cathedral. With the alienation of the besieged Primogen Council from the rest of the City, Santa de Luzarches plays an important role to the Kindred who recall its glory days. To the Toreador, it remains their most sublime triumph, and to the Ventrue it stands as an example of what the Kindred can accomplish when united in the Camarilla. Sadly, many of the remaining Tremere under St. James have either forgotten or chosen to disregard its splendor. The Prince himself, almost unbelievably, now calls it "that silly Tory folly."

## **Description**

There are several supernatural gateways into the cathedral, but first-time visitors to Santa de Luzarches invariably enter through St. James Vault. Carved from Tremere magic and polished by enthralled labor, this enormous cavern houses the cathedral in a vast dome of dark stone, its perimeter supported by caryatids surrounding a wide moat. Constellations of enormous lamps hang from the ceiling, a Fresnel zodiac that bathes the cathedral in a subtle, arcane glow. Above this canopy of stars lies the Hudson River, its unseen weight pressing down like the suspended judgment of a distant god. The most sensitive Cainite ears may even detect the flow of the water above the stone heavens, a prenatal susurrus said to resurrect memories of the mortal womb.

Seen from the Vault, the cathedral is breathtaking to behold, seamlessly combining styles from many different periods and regions. Flying buttresses arch and swoop in Gothic glory. Baroque reliefs trap the eye and command the observer's rapt attention. Soaring Modernista spires mingle with the constellations above. Gargoyles abound, each lovingly crafted, and bearing more than a passing resemblance to members of the nineteenth-century Camarilla. The surrounding moat is fresh and clean, replenished from a pair of sculpted waterfalls and drained silently into the Nosferatu depths. While the moat may be traversed by one of the cathedral's picturesque gondolas, a drawbridge offers the most convenient path to the great doors of the narthex.

In high Gothic style, Santa de Luzarches is laid out in cruciform shape; but contrary to mortal cathedrals, its axis is aligned from east to west. This is the reverse of traditional Christian orientation, which makes Holy Communion at the altar a symbol of sunrise and rebirth. In this Kindred cathedral, the penitent enters from the east and makes a journey into perpetual twilight. The high altar reflects this inversion, and is a celebration of the night sky; carved from black basalt and decorated with ebony, jet, onyx, obsidian, and hematite. The front panel features a crescent moon made from opal and pearl, surrounded by glittering diamond stars.

Radiating outward from the high altar are innumerable glories of architecture and design; a subterranean paradise of chapels, galleries, parlors, libraries, ballrooms, conservatories, concert halls, and theaters; most of which are contained in the expansive North Wing and the triforium, the second-level gallery above the nave. The North Wing also houses the columbarium, a circular gallery where the ashes of slain Toreador are preserved in crystal boxes. The South Wing is taken up by private residences and studios, where many of the Toreador live and work.

Nearly two hundred Kindred, ghouls, and guests inhabit the cathedral, from clan leader Duncan Capelthwaite to a coterie of Venetian Toreador who arrived in 1985 and show no sign of departing. Many of the cathedral's ghouls are actually "employed" by the Toreador to perform repairs and general maintenance—after all, somebody has to keep all those candles lit!

## **Treasures of the Cathedral**

The Toreador guildhouse holds many wondrous works of art, but there are a few that are essential to the character of the cathedral. Created by the New York Toreador themselves, these masterworks and galleries are the collective soul of Santa de Luzarches.

### **The Windows of Veronica Tryst**

The first thing to strike visitors upon entering Santa de Luzarches are its magnificent stained-glass windows, Pre-Raphaelite masterpieces aglow with arcane light. The majority of the cathedral's windows were fashioned by the great Toreador artist Veronica Tryst, before she declared herself *antitribu* in 1916 and joined the Sabbat. Tryst's windows depict scenes that transfix the heart with intense immediacy, each a symphony of glass and light: majestic angels with cobalt-blue wings hover over mortal artists, their weeping faces convulsed with terrible and beautiful knowledge; an illuminated orchestra of mythic beings play fantastical instruments before an enraptured audience of ancient deities; slender Cainites with thin, milk-glass fingers sculpt humans from the clay of their bloody desire. The wall above the high altar is home to her *pièce de résistance*, a great round window overlooking the fuligin altar below: a recreation of Achilles' shield, as forged by Hephaestus and described by Homer in *The Iliad*, every magnificent detail brought to life by countless panes of colored glass.

### **The Fountain of Muses**

There are many fountains, waterfalls, aqueducts, and pools in the cathedral; the product of Robert de Luzarches' careful study of Moorish architecture combined with a ready supply of water and gravity. However, the most remarkable of these is Duncan Capelthwaite's Fountain of Muses. Begun in 1886 and completed in 1900, the fountain is the signature work of Duncan's Art Nouveau period, and many Toreador consider it to be their leader's supreme accomplishment.

Dominating the cavernous narthex, the Fountain of Muses emerges from a wide, circular pool, welcoming visitors with a vision of Clan Toreador's patron saints. All nine muses are depicted, dancing in a ring around a central column. The marble goddesses are vibrant with life, as if Duncan simply trapped them in stone, their flowing bodies captured in a flash of transient joy. The central column is entwined with bronze vines, spiraling up from the column to take flight in looping arcs above the individual muses. The end of the vines flower into crystal blossoms, water spilling from their petals to cascade down the marble goddesses below. Duncan has cunningly fashioned each statue to capture, deflect, or re-channel the water as it tumbles to the pool. Illumination is provided by stained-glass ornamentation—pendulous fruits, radiant flowers, terrestrial globes, golden lyres and theatrical masks; each aglow with gaslight and casting subtle colors across the shimmering marble. Duncan's final achievement is the very sound of the fountain itself. The bubbling, gurgling, dripping, and splashing forms a liquid concerto that resounds delightfully across the colonnaded vault of the narthex.

### **Aoidé**

Every great cathedral has a pipe organ, and Santa de Luzarches is home to Aoidé, a masterful instrument named after the “elder muse” of music and song. The organ was designed and constructed by Miguel and Barnabas Llop, brothers from Valencia who were Embraced by Hernán Ruiz the Younger after they completed the great “Gospel” organ of Córdoba. Constructed from 1852–1869, Aoidé retains the baroque splendor of seventeenth-century Andalucía, but features several key innovations dating from the Romantic era. Indeed, the great Eberhard Walcker himself worked with the brothers during his stay in pre-Civil War Boston.

Boasting over 3600 pipes, Aoidé towers over the choir like its namesake titan. As beautiful to the eye as to the ear, Aoidé features rippling fans of *en chamade* trumpets, engraved ivory stops, and four Viennese-style keyboards set with ebony naturals and ivory accidentals.

Although several modern Toreador have learned to play Aoidé, particularly Adrienne Tabor, only Vladimir Zamiatin demonstrates a genuine understanding of its nuances, and gives intermittent performances when the mood strikes. The older Toreador agree that only two players have ever truly mastered Aoidé. The first was Lili Zann, a Saxon Toreador who joined the New York clan in 1790. A composer and organist who claimed to have known Bach, Zann helped design the cathedral's acoustics, and founded the conservatory's renowned musical library. She vanished mysteriously in 1922, and to this day her fate remains a mystery. The second was a visitor—El Alcaudón, a Nosferatu *antitribu* in the entourage of Prince Gratiano. A Spanish partisan, El Alcaudón was Embraced in 1810 during the Siege of Almeida by a Persian architect employed as a French engineer. Taken to Mazandaran after the defeat of Napoleon, the Spaniard eventually escaped his Sire and joined the Parisian Sabbat. The charming Nosferatu spent most of stay at the organ, delighting the Toreador with his brilliant improvisations and unparalleled virtuosity. Those present during the Sabbat's infamous *fin-de-siècle* visit still wax poetic about El Alcaudón, and even Duncan Capelthwaite occasionally refers to Aoidé as “*el órgano del guerrillero.*”

After Gaston Leroux published *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* in 1910, many Toreador suddenly remembered the name of the Nosferatu's beautiful ghoulish companion—Christine. Unfortunately, El Alcaudón was burned to death in 1902, and if a copy of *Don Juan triumphant* actually exists, it has yet to be discovered.

### **The Observatory**

Occupying the upper floor of a tower in the clerestory, this room is another of Veronica Tryst's stunning achievements. Technically an orrery, most residents refer to it as the Observatory; but its actual name is *Stained Glass Number Eight for Clockwork and Electricity*. Completed in 1916 after five years of work, *Number Eight* was Veronica Tryst's “surprise farewell” to the Toreador. It was unveiled to the Camarilla during a special fête held in her honor—and then she promptly shocked everyone by announcing that she was joining the Sabbat. Even today, many recall the stunned silence of that moment with heartrending clarity.

The Observatory is entered from a balcony in the clerestory—the third-level gallery above the nave. A short walk through a narrow corridor ends in a nondescript blue door. A spiral staircase behind the door leads to a hatch in the ceiling, and through this the Observatory is entered from below. Neither the blue door nor the hatch can be locked, a design element insisted upon by Veronica Tryst and honored to this day.

The Observatory is an octagonal room, with eight walls made from milky blue glass. Each wall represents one of the planets of the solar system, and is adorned with subtle astrological and alchemical symbols. The peaked ceiling is composed of eight interlocking panes of stained glass, fitted around a series of brass gears and tracks. The ceiling panels depict the constellations in brilliant detail, a soft, white glow illuminating them from behind. Planetary orbs of stained glass are suspended from the tracks, positioned around a blazing sun formed from thousands of red, yellow, and orange polygons. A brass telescope mounted to the floor sports an ostentatious crank, and when wound up, the orrery runs uninterrupted for twelve hours, filling the room with the

click, rattle, and whirl of Victorian industry. The golden sun rotates majestically on its axis, planets and moons revolve in clockwork orbits, and shifting lights behind the ceiling panes highlight or darken seasonal constellations. If a visitor waits long enough, a small comet emerges from the ceiling to swoop past the earth on its seventy-fifth revolution around the sun. The telescope is functional as well, but proves to be a kaleidoscope, refracting the glass orbs of the orrery into churning, psychedelic whirlpools of color.

The Toreador use the Observatory as a meditation room, although it periodically hosts recitals, poetry readings, clandestine meetings, and furtive assignations. It is Duncan's favorite location in all of Santa de Luzarches, and when he vanishes here to brood, one can sense the change in internal weather throughout the stone halls of the cathedral.

### **The Hall of Textures**

Located in the South Wing, this gallery is kept in complete darkness, and is hung with ten thousand fabrics, furs, hides, and unique textures. It is said there are over four hundred separate grades of silk alone, and only the most gifted Toreador have the ability to distinguish between even a fraction of them. The gallery was first conceived by Duncan's lover, the American fashion designer William Danzig, who was personally responsible for half the collection. Intrigued by puzzles, the good-humored Danzig included a few textures which, to this day, no Toreador has been able to identify. It is strictly forbidden to bring any source of light into the Hall of Textures. Duncan insists that the colors, designs, and identities of the fabrics remain secret, forever locked away in the columbarium with Danzig's ashes. No physical catalog of its contents has ever been compiled, and most feel that doing so would be a tasteless violation of the spirit of this unusual gallery. Notwithstanding this tacit restriction, some Toreador keep a running tally in their memory, with the Angel Gabrielle being the closest to having achieved something akin to completion—although some doubt her sincerity; especially when she claims to distinguish between different patterns of tartan!

The latest addition to the Hall is a collection of modern Japanese textiles, all the products of technology and industry. Featuring metallic meshes, chemically-treated velvets, and molecular-thin silks, the fascinating collection was a gift from the Prince of Kyoto, and includes several textiles which were recently on display at the Museum of Modern Art—an exhibit that was surreptitiously visited by more than a few Toreador, eager to see these fabrics under the brazen light of a mortal museum.

### **The Garden of Stone**

When the Boston jeweler Ansel Clerkenwell was Embraced in 1744, he began a project that was to last until his True Death nearly a quarter of a millennium later. His vision was to realize a garden of exotic flowers carved from stones and precious metals. When Santa de Luzarches was first conceived, Clerkenwell knew that he had found the perfect home for his magnum opus, and in 1874 he celebrated his work's one-hundredth anniversary by moving it from his Staten Island studio to the half-completed cathedral. Clerkenwell tended his cathedral garden diligently until 1993, when he was assassinated by the Sabbat during a meeting of the Primogen Council. According to Clerkenwell's surviving notes, he was less than a decade away from its completion.

The Garden of Stone represents two hundred and fifty years of a single Toreador's artistic obsession. In layout, it appears to be a complex medieval knot garden, but all the plants and flowers are artificial—meticulously carved from jade, onyx, agate, and precious stones, the vines

and stems are fashioned from wires of copper, silver, and gold. The detail is dizzying to behold—one famous rosebush has over ten thousand individually crafted pieces! Even though the plants and flowers of the Garden reflect a shifting of artistic style and methodology over the decades, in no place does an individual piece seem out of harmony with the whole. Whether he was hand-carving a dying orchid from ivory and scrimshaw, or detailing a stalk of jade bamboo using an electric cutting tool, Clerkenwell’s vision remained coherent and cohesive.

The shocking assassination of Ansel Clerkenwell left a void at the farthest corner of the Garden, a sad vacancy that will never be filled. Rather than placing his ashes in the columbarium, Duncan had them inurned in this unfinished corner. A small pool was constructed in the middle of the vacancy, and locked within a crystal chest at its bottom are the remains of the great Kindred gardener. A simple marble bench now sits beside the pool, its back to the splendor of the Garden. Although no Toreador knows who erected this mysterious bench, it has become a favorite meditation spot for many of the cathedral’s residents.

The younger Toreador tell the story of Adrienne Tabor, who, before she left the cathedral to wander the world, attended a meeting in Barcelona with none other than Prince Gratiano himself. Her only question to this ancient Cainite, the head of the Sabbat, was simple but earnest: “Why did you assassinate this one Kindred, of all others who sat on that decadent Primogen Council—why kill the only true artist? Why prevent him from completing such a miraculous work of art and beauty?” According to those who tell the story, Gratiano replied simply, “Because I loved him.”

There is a belief among these younger Toreador—persistent, and despite Duncan’s silence on the matter, surely false—that Prince Gratiano himself placed the bench. There is an equally persistent belief among the Tremere that Clerkenwell’s garden was actually an intricate trap, created to ensnare some unknown supernatural being.

## **The Conservatory**

The cathedral’s conservatory includes several practice spaces, a musical instrument workshop, a small concert hall, and the famous Zann Library. One of the largest musical archives in the world, the holdings of the Zann Library range from priceless scores handwritten by Bach to underground ‘zines advertising forgotten punk bands. The library is also dedicated to acquiring as many Kindred compositions as possible—heretical polyphonic chants from the Cathars, sublime string quartets “written for the drawer” in the Soviet Union, dismal promo cassettes issued by childer goth bands; all are collected, catalogued, and carefully archived. A few Kindred highlights include the bittersweet “Songs and Poems to Punish My Lovers” by Ziryab, the harrowing *Konzert für Orchester, Violoncello und Posaune* by Otto Wagenknecht, *48 Etüden für die Orgel Aoidé*, composed at the cathedral by Lili Zann herself, Adrian Wren’s decadent chamber opera *The Rape of Salomé*, the “forbidden” oratorio *Requiem pentru un inger negru* by the “Black Toreador” Ion Florescu, Vladimir Zamiatin’s fiendishly difficult Symphony No. 8<sup>1/2</sup>, Eric Dolphy’s epic *Descension (For Coltrane)*, the mysterious *Aria Translated from a Pattern of Tapping Recorded from the Bilge of a Tanker (And Believed to Be Something Entombed In a Metal Coffin Below the Cosmonauts Sea)* by the Malkavian serialist Mark Gustavson, Rachael Brungard’s 48-hour drone-fest *Invisible Music for the Invisible Chapel*, the “industrial song cycle” *Imaginary Numbers, #You Know! to #Who Cares?* by the Nosferatu Sula Threek, and Adrienne Tabor’s Cello Sonata No. 3, “Upon Dying,” which was awarded the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for music.

While all of these works are celebrated in their own right, the most infamous manuscript in the Zann Library is certainly *Messa di Requiem per Shuggay*, the opera composed in 1768 by the Toreador *antitribu* Benvenuto da Chieti during his stay at the Oratorio di San Bartolomeo in Bordighera. While technically a late-baroque piece, the work is fraught with dissonance, and features atonal passages that prefigure serialism by two centuries. With an hallucinatory plot featuring rape, incest, corruption, and monstrous beings, it required a good deal of Domination to stage even a single performance! Indeed, the Roman première of the opera sparked a riot that left a dozen mortals dead, drove several members of the audience insane, and resulted in a fire that burned down the opera house. (Rumors that certain females of the audience became pregnant during the performance were later debunked.) The work was outlawed by Pope Clement XIII, who had the composer beheaded in 1770. Frequently referred to as “unplayable,” the challenging score calls for several bizarrely-named instruments devised by da Chieti especially for the opera, a children’s chorus singing in an invented language modeled on backwards Italian, and a host of virtuoso passages that require intense pizzicato, extended circular breathing, and frequent use of woodwinds and brass as percussion instruments.

Several attempts have been made to stage the work at Santa de Luzarches, but none have been successful, each plagued by misfortune, disaster, or a simple lack of talent. The last attempt was in 1978, when a French Toreador was invited to conduct a production designed by William Danzig. On the night of the first rehearsal, the conductor beheaded Danzig and escaped with her entourage. Pronounced “Unclanned and Nameless” by Duncan, the conductor declared herself *antitribu* and attempted to join the Parisian Sabbat. Five years later, Danzig’s lover tracked her to her lair and slaughtered her entire brood. It is rumored that Duncan was assisted by none other than Prince Gratiano—Danzig’s assassination was unsanctioned, and even the Sabbat believed that studying the score so intensely had damaged the conductor in some irreparable way.

### **The Chapels of the Kindred**

The cathedral of Santa de Luzarches contains seven apsidal chapels, each dedicated to a clan of the Camarilla and accessible through the ambulatory behind the high altar. Primarily designed by Duncan Capelthwaite, Justinien Valois, William Danzig, and Luther Bates, the chapels are a gift from the Toreador to each clan; and as such, they represent the Toreador’s perception of that clan, rather than an accurate self-image. The Toreador being what they are, several are not without a certain wry sense of humor. Tradition states that each chapel is a sacred haven for the clan to which it’s dedicated, that any Kindred of that clan may seek sanctuary there for a period of forty-eight hours. This is known as “declaring Chevet.” While Chevet is inviolable even by the Prince, it’s so rarely invoked that the Camarilla solemnly accepts the tradition as unwritten law.

### **Chapel of Myrddin**

Reserved for the Tremere, this round chapel is dedicated to Merlin the Magician, and reflects St. James’ nineteenth-century obsession with Arthurian legend. It also reflects the magical principle “as above so below,” and is designed to evoke the exterior form of Santa de Luzarches enshrouded by St. James Vault. The chapel is adorned with stained-glass windows depicting Merlin’s great deeds, the caryatids between them carved with Welsh dragons twisting up to embrace the constellations of the zodiac. A band of esoteric symbols encircles the chapel’s perimeter just beneath the domed ceiling. Drawn from astrology, alchemy, and the Tarot, the interlocking symbols were painted by Valois; but Danzig added a few touches of his own, and if one looks closely, one clearly see a rabbit being pulled from a top hat, a woman getting sawn in half, and a crude representation of the New York Tremere running away from a ghost. A large

font occupies the center of the chapel, carved from white marble with porphyry dragons curled around its base and images of Hermes engraved along the circumference. Wide but shallow, the font is filled with mercury. The liquid metal glows from within, casting shimmering veils of light across the gilded ceiling. Modeled on the Alcázar of Seville, the ceiling is likewise infused with arcane light, and fills the chapel with a beautiful, golden effulgence. The quality of light in this chapel is often described as “miraculous,” and since being abandoned by the New York Tremere, the chapel has become a popular location for Toreador picnics, site-specific dances, and photo shoots.

Given the current state of affairs in New York, it’s hard to believe this chapel was once a Tremere haven; but during the nineteenth and early twentieth century it regularly hosted Tremere events. Kindred from all over the world would enter the chapel through the Mirror of Mercury, a magic portal that once stood at the far wall. Tremere brought favored progeny here for their first taste of vitae, and more than one new member of the clan was Embraced “under the glow of Hermes.” Among all of the cathedral’s chapels, the Chapel of Myrddin is most known among human kind, as the Tremere used to invite mortal associates to attend séances, rituals, and even the occasional soirée. Notable mortal visitors have included William H. Mumler, Henry Steel Olcott, S.L. MacGregor Mathers, Arthur Machen, Nicholas Roerich, Peter D. Ouspensky, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Gerald Gardner, Austin Osman Spare, Israel Regardie, Richard Sharpe Shaver, and Miriam Simos. Sadly, Midori Satsujin arrived in 1994 to smash the Mirror of Mercury, which the Toreador replaced with a standard floor mirror concealed beneath a ghostly white sheet.

### **Chapel of Apollo**

Celebrating the Ventrue, this pentagonal chapel sports a bronze statue of Apollo, carved in Romanesque style by Duncan as a tribute to Marius. The chapel’s only additional feature is a marble font of clear water, surrounded by five white candles. At the bottom of the font is a gold Byzantine coin, dating from 945 A.D. and stamped with an image of Jesus Christ. The “blessing of the basin” is believed to bring its possessor good fortune, and may be freely claimed by any newly-Embraced Ventrue. However, within one year, that Ventrue must replace it with an even more valuable offering. Although a few Toreador profess to remember a U.S. silver dollar occupying the font in the 1920s, the current coin has remained there for decades.

### **Chapel of Saint Oscar**

Dedicated to the Nosferatu, this chapel was redesigned in the early 1970s by William Danzig, one of the few Toreador willing to acknowledge the mysterious disappearance of Dead Caesar’s clan and the arrival of Prince Radu. As the Nosferatu had not visited Santa de Luzarches in decades, Danzig sought them out in the sewers and subways, returning three weeks later with an enigmatic smile on his face. He immediately set about creating the most controversial chapel in the cathedral. The centerpiece of the chapel is a wax statue of Bela Lugosi’s Dracula, stolen from Madame Tussaud’s and sporting a paper crown from Burger King. The chapel is illuminated by seven-day novena candles, and the wall boasts a painting of Oscar the Grouch, stylized like a Byzantine icon as he emerges from his trashcan. Although Duncan finds the chapel amusing, most of the cathedral’s residents consider it tasteless—after all, the former Nosferatu chapel was appointed with stately portraiture and proper coffins! Despite rumors regarding secret passageways connecting the chapel to Radu’s warren, no Toreador has ever seen a Nosferatu visit the chapel. Nevertheless, every so often someone changes Lugosi’s paper crown, or leaves an interesting piece of junk as an offering to Saint Oscar, and it’s certainly not a Toreador.

### **Chapel of the Morning Star**

The rarely-visited Brujah chapel contains an elegant Lucifer cast from mannered bronze, his angelic face set in a sublime expression of Romantic arrogance. Guttering red tapers illuminate the walls, which are etched with passages from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Flags hang from the ceiling, each representing a famous rebellion—Pugachev's cross, Gadsden's DONT TREAD ON ME, the French tricolor, the Confederate battle flag, the People's Banner of the Algonquin Commune, and so on. In the absence of any actual Brujah, the chapel has become something of a "secret hangout" for younger Toreador and their ghouls, who congregate in the chapel to read pretentious poetry, gossip about their Sires, and posture about quitting the Camarilla and declaring themselves Anarch or Sabbat. Needless to say, most older Toreador are aware of this, but Duncan forbids them from interfering—"The chapel is dedicated to Lucifer, after all. At least *someone* has the spirit of the thing."

### **Chapel of the Fenris Wolf**

Dedicated to the Gangrel, this chapel represents a highly idealized image of the feral clan. The central figure is a bronze statue of the Fenris Wolf, his jaws uplifted in a ferocious howl. The walls are inscribed with burly, half-naked men wrestling wild animals, seducing innocent virgins, and challenging each other to vaguely-defined contests that seem to involve lots of biting and growling. Illuminated by green candles in corroded copper pots, it's a wonder the Toreador haven't piped in jungle sounds! Unsurprisingly, few Gangrel have ever actually seen the chapel, and most modern Toreador view it with a fair degree of embarrassment. Recently, some of them asked Duncan if they could redesign the chapel to "better reflect reality." Duncan just snorted, "Redesigned into what? A trailer park?"

### **Chapel of Heraclitus**

Unlike the other chapels of the Kindred, the Malkavian chapel welcomes all visitors—it functions as a piece of installation art, and is redesigned every few decades to accommodate evolving styles and changing perceptions of the clan. The design team responsible for this ongoing project was traditionally led by William Danzig, who made it a point to recruit Luther Bates whenever he was in a Toreador phase. Working against the grain of the cathedral itself, the iconoclastic duo spared no expense in pursuing their visions, and frequently managed to distress, offend, or appall their aesthetic brethren. In the wake of Danzig's assassination, Bates has taken over as lead designer.

#### *The Asylum Café (1999–Present)*

The Asylum Café is the most elaborate Malkavian chapel to date. Working with Spinning Jenny, Bates used the space to install a fully-operational coffee shop "located" in an alternate New York City, one where the Prince is a Malkavian and the clan rules supreme. The illusion is delightfully complete, down to a magazine rack boasting fictional periodicals with bizarro-world headlines: "Prince Wanda Declares the Lex Tremarianus," "Sabbat to Hold Their 1999 Tickle Fight at Santa de Bates," and "Bunnies?" The walls are adorned with "signed photographs" of Malkavian idols such as the Mad Hatter, Krazy Kat, Willy Wonka, and the Joker. Although the *Twin Peaks* soundtrack is a clear favorite, the jukebox is stocked with free jazz, power electronics, and Dr. Demento songs. Behind each faux window, Bates has devised a jeweled cityscape in molded plastic, tiny electric lights twinkling in the scaled distance. Each window looks upon a different vision of New York, from a Seussian world of precarious skyscrapers to a Gotham City complete with airships and tiny superheroes moving about on invisible wires.

The Asylum Café is staffed by ghoul “actors” and blood dolls who operate the coffee shop as a going concern. These actors have been instructed to play their roles as faithfully as possible, and each has been promised a Toreador Embrace at the end of their performance—“You aren’t the first actor waiting tables before they land that big part, baby!” Interestingly, since opening its doors in 1999, the Asylum Café has attracted a steady flow of Kindred visitors who come for the spectacle, but stay for the ambiance.

Seven other Malkavian chapels have preceded the Asylum. They are listed below in chronological order.

*Chapel of Heraclitus (1889–1918)*

The original Malkavian chapel, this was the most earnest, and featured elements devoted to change and transfiguration, including a classical statue of Heraclitus stepping into a swirling fountain. Designed by Duncan Capelthwaite himself, the chapel was considered “typically overwrought” by Red Henry and his nineteenth-century Malkavians, who were hoping for something more Shakespearean. Despite this, the Malkavians frequently brought their ghouls here to be Embraced, a tradition that has only recently been reestablished since the Lex Malkavianus drove the clan into hiding.

*The Mystery Box (1918–1929)*

The original inspiration for Danzig’s Hall of Textures, this chapel was kept in total darkness and was filled with random objects. Malkavians were allowed to remove one item from the chapel as long as they replaced it with another, and it soon became a popular game for Malkavians to find the most outré objects possible. The chapel had its vogue in the 1920s, but was discontinued after Alexander Sark smuggled in a starving Lupine. The werewolf killed two ghouls and a Toreador neonate from Chicago, triggering an inter-city conflict that resonates to the present day.

*The Tea Party (1929–1956)*

The Tea Party was designed by Luther Bates while William Danzig was in Europe gathering samples for the Hall of Textures. The floor was a large chessboard, the walls were plastered with the text from Lewis Carroll’s books, and the Mad Hatter’s table was littered with various “found objects” remaining from the Mystery Box. Bates’ chapel was considered too “on the nose” by the Toreador, but the Malkavians seemed delighted, and it holds the record for the Malkavian chapel with the greatest longevity.

*The Labyrinth (1956–1967)*

The return of Danzig reflected his visit to the Parisian Toreador, who were renowned for the creativity they displayed when interacting with the humans of their city. This chapel took the form of a twisting maze of mirrors, a two-story funhouse situated above a meandering basement of pitch black rooms. In the center of the Labyrinth was the Athenaeum, a round room with opaque white walls, a ring of comfortable seats accommodating a dozen visitors. The Athenaeum was always occupied by a human, Dominated into reading aloud from various works of Beat literature. These readers were selected by a small committee of Toreador and Malkavians, and were drawn from all walks of life—university professors, housewives, street performers, state senators. On more than one occasion, the reader was the author himself! Each reader was treated respectfully, and was only detained at the cathedral for a few days. No Kindred was permitted to harm these readers; and after their tenure, they were returned unscathed, their experience expunged from their memories.

The basement, however, was a different matter entirely, and spoke to the darker side of both clans. Known as the House of Asterion, this lightless maze was stocked with naked human vessels. Those wearing bronze masks were blood dolls, and were not allowed to be slain. However, every midnight a “Minotaur” was introduced, a drugged figure fitted with a leather bull’s head. The Toreador assured their visitors that these Minotaurs were marked for death, and were recruited from the ranks of murderers, rapists, psychopaths, and critics. While the more whimsical Malkavians avoided the basement—indeed, some boycotted the Labyrinth altogether—a few expressed satisfaction that the Toreador had finally recognized their clan was more than mad hatters and court jesters. The House of Asterion generated its share of controversy outside the Malkavians, especially when it was revealed that some of the blood dolls were slumming celebrities. In 1966 Duncan discovered that a captured Anarch had been “fitted with the horns” and secretly condemned to death by diablerie. He banished the Toreador responsible and quietly instructed Danzig to “wrap it up.”

#### *The Invisible Chapel (1967–1988)*

Generally ranked as the finest Malkavian chapel, Danzig’s Invisible Chapel was made entirely from clear glass and transparent acrylics. With the exception of the internal mechanisms operating the fountains, lights, and sound system, no color was allowed to taint the illusion of total transparency. The furnishings were minimal, and the walls were hung with “unstained glass” windows featuring geometric designs reminiscent of Mondrian. Music was a constant presence in the chapel, with Philip Glass, Morton Feldman, and Brian Eno in frequent rotation. At the center of the chapel was a glass reading desk supporting a single book, a spurious epic poem entitled *The Complete History of Clan Malkavia*. Written by Luther Bates, the book was bound in Perspex, its text etched into thin pages of transparent plastic. Impossible to read by any but the most sensitive Kindred, the book was stolen by Spinning Jenny in 1986, who replaced it with a transparent Trapper Keeper filled with Saran Wrap.

#### *The Wrong Chapel (1988–1993)*

In 1988 St. James issued the *Lex Malkavianus*, transforming his hatred of the clan into law. With Luther Bates currently in a Ventrue phase, the Toreador appointed Darius Wrong to design a new chapel. A recently-Embraced installation artist with a reputation as an *enfant terrible*, Wrong decided to mock the Tremere by depicting a Malkavian world suddenly upended by the Prince’s arbitrary tyranny. His Malkavian chapel was an inverted reflection of the Chapel of Myrddin, built from inferior materials and literally installed upside-down. Visitors were forced to walk across a concave floor of tarnished copper, gazing up at murals depicting performances of cheap stage magic. The stained-glass windows were replaced with television sets looping B-grade fantasy movies such as *Beastmaster* and *Krull*, and lighting was provided by fluorescent tubes of mercury-vapor encased in Mylar sconces. Upside-down caryatids represented pop-culture witches like Grandmama Addams, Samantha Stephens, and the Wicked Witch of the West. Instead of a font of liquid mercury, an inverted champagne fountain produced a shower of cheap white wine—and later, Zima. Although some Malkavians agreed it was a good joke, the clan was too traumatized by St. James’ mendacity to really appreciate the satire, and many Toreador dismissed it as an appalling travesty. After Wrong departed Santa de Luzarches in 1993, the chapel was demolished.

Darius Wrong is now a neonate in the Los Angeles Camarilla, where he operates a gallery called “Oxymoron.” One of its permanent pieces is an extreme slow-motion video of the chapel being dismantled. Unfolding over forty hours, the sardonic work is named “Righting a Wrong.”

### *Saint Finnegan of the Wake (1993–1999)*

Another Bates construction, this chapel was entirely empty, save for an oversized copy of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* bound in a spiral and fixed upon a cylindrical plinth. The chapel walls were made of slate, each sporting a wooden box of colored chalk. Considered a flop at its première, the chapel eventually grew in popularity, attracting Kindred to fill the walls with their thoughts, speculations, poetry, graffiti, and even occasional analyses of Joyce's text. A pair of Malkavian ghouls named Shaun the Postman and Shem the Penman were appointed to photograph and erase these scribbles, the most interesting of which were collected in private volumes known as "fadographs." After Shem secretly published some of the Joycean musings under his real name—Tim Conley—invitations to speak at Joyce conferences came rolling in. Meanwhile, Shaun began writing bad vampire fiction under an anonymous moniker, eventually designing a cheesy Web site called "New York by Night." In 1999, the chapel's copy of *Finnegans Wake* was stolen and replaced by a Trapper Keeper full of Saran Wrap, and Bates declared his work complete.

### **The Chantry**

In a traditional cathedral, the chantry is a chapel reserved for the priests themselves, and is dedicated to holding specific masses for powerful donors, usually intended to hasten their souls through purgatory. Chantries are often endowed with great treasures and wealth. The chantry of Santa de Luzarches is no different in this respect, and is devoted to celebrating Clan Toreador. Occupying the position of axial chapel, the chantry is located past the ambulatory directly behind the high altar. Technically one of the "Chapels of the Kindred" described above, the elaborate chantry merits its own extended description.

### **Chapel of Dionysus**

The Toreador's chapel is encircled by thirteen stained-glass windows by Veronica Tryst, each depicting a famous tableau from Toreador history. They gaze upon a central statue of Dionysus, carved from porphyry and surrounded by a ring of satyrs, maenads, and frenzied musicians. Rather than holding aloft the traditional cluster of grapes, this Dionysus grips a human heart, igneous streams of blood pouring down to overflow his goblet. A single altar stands in front of the statue, supporting two precious treasures: the Domesday Book described below, and a crystal urn, described later under "Toreador Relics." The chapel is illuminated by hundreds of purple candles; these are tended by Przepiórka, a long-suffering ghoul whose sole job is to keep the candles burning.

### **Domesday Book**

One of the most important possessions of the clan is the Toreador's Domesday Book. A massive volume bound in mahogany and human skin, the Domesday Book contains the history of Clan Toreador, inscribed and illuminated with the fussy detail of a monastic text. The Domesday Book contains the family trees of over twelve hundred Toreador stretching back to Arikel, the "first Toreador" of legend. Of course, many of these early lineages are highly speculative; but even the most skeptical historians accept the last two millennia as gospel.

### **The Thirteen Windows**

The thirteen windows are a *tour de force* of creativity and style, and feature some of Tryst's finest work. Taken collectively they are known as *Stained Glass Forty-Two Forty-Eight*, after the 4248 years of Toreador history depicted. Known for her mischievous sense of humor, Tryst reputedly gave each window a secondary, "secret" title. According to Bevel and Glaze, the ghouls Tryst

abandoned when she defected, the windows are part of a larger puzzle solved by the application of numerology and gematria. The prize is the revelation of Tryst's "true" final masterpiece.

*Chantry Window No. 1, 2348 BC—Before the Flood*

This window features Arikel, the mythical progenitor of the Toreador clan, later known as Ishtar. After being Embraced by Enoch, Arikel spent a century working on a mosaic that spiraled down the walls of a massive well. Entitled the "Fate of the Cainites," the mosaic depicted the past, present, and future of the Kindred. The window shows Arikel and Caine reaching the bottom of the well, only to gaze into a yawning, endless abyss. Tryst has depicted Caine's outstretched hand posed to touch Arikel's heart, capturing the second before he inflicted her with the curse of obsession that marks the Toreador to this day. Tryst also hints at the fate of Arikel's mosaic. The top of the window shows a terrifying angel with a flaming sword, preparing to unleash the Great Deluge that wiped the First City from the face of the earth.

*Chantry Window No. 2, 1347 BC—Horizon of Aten*

Another scene drawn from Kindred legend, this shows the sculptors Bek and Thutmose, unveiling their master plan for the royal statuary of Akhetaten. Holding hands, Akhenaten and Nefertiti look approvingly at the sprawling maquette, while the architect Parennefer holds aloft the solar disc of Aten. The famous bust of Nefertiti may be seen on Thutmose's shelf, along with various occult symbols of the Egyptian underworld. While the Domesday Book indicates that only Thutmose was a Toreador, nineteenth-century Kindred scholarship suggests that he was Embraced by his predecessor, and Bek and Thutmose worked more closely together than was previously believed. Both were murdered during the reign of Horemheb.

*Chantry Window No. 3, 690 BC—The Apple*

The whole of this window is occupied by the Hanging Gardens of Nineveh, designed during the reign of King Sennacherib by Geshtinanna, the "Invisible Engineer." A common figure from Kindred legend, the Assyrian Princess is shown walking along a garden wall, an apple in her hand and the sun shining brightly overhead. This reflects the commonly-held belief that Geshtinanna was that rarest of Kindred, a Daywalker.

*Chantry Window No. 4, 88 BC—Tragedy*

This window depicts the final moments of Tyndarios of Athens, whose theatrical masks were legendary works of incomparable verisimilitude, each one capturing the nuances of a different, and often indescribable, emotion. The only Toreador among the chantry windows whose face remains hidden, Tyndarios is shown destroying his ancient workshop, smashing two centuries of irreplaceable treasures before the Romans arrived to sack his studio and drag him flaming into the sunlight.

*Chantry Window No. 5, 1066 AD—Jackals and Birds*

Window No. 5 shows Jackal, a Bantu craftsman who was Embraced in 495 AD in modern-day Mpumalanga. Although his human name is unknown, according to the Domesday Book, his Sire was the Ethiopian Toreador Itiyopis III, known as "The Aksumite." The creator of the famous Lydenburg Heads unearthed in the 1960s, Jackal was a master of terra-cotta and soapstone, and first rose to prominence during the Mapungubwe era. The window shows Jackal working on the Plaza of Birds, a fabled sculpture located in Great Zimbabwe. A ring of gilded soapstone monoliths topped by fantastical birds, the Plaza was completed over the course of three centuries, and each new monolith was inscribed with the notable events of the last ruling king. The birds

themselves contained hollows to trap and funnel the wind into a series of fluting sounds, from the gentle cooing of doves to the shrieking of storm-tossed eagles.

*Chantry Window No. 6, 1288 AD—In Which Veronica Admires the Door*

One of the most complex windows in the chantry, this piece displays Ambroys of Morimondo installing his infamous “great door” in the abbatial church of Sacra di San Michele. Following the written account of Adso of Melk, a Benedictine novice who visited the Piedmont abbey in 1327, Tryst has attempted to recreate the famously intricate door, which was destroyed by fire shortly after Adso recorded its wonders. Ambroys of Morimondo was later discovered by the Inquisition and burned at the stake, a scene Tryst has opted to include among the grandeurs and grotesqueries of the door itself.

*Chantry Window No. 7, 1469 AD—El torero de la luz de la luna*

This window occupies the central position among the thirteen, and for good reason—it depicts Sebastián de Trastámara y Luna, *the* toreador in Clan Toreador, the Kindred *torero* who became so famous he bequeathed his sobriquet to the entire clan. Depicted in the prime of his career, “The Moonlight Matador” is shown fighting a bull at the wedding of Isabella and Ferdinand. The very soul of *duende*, Sebastián is aflame with passion and style, astride an Arabian mount and poised to deliver the killing blow. As part of Tryst’s homage to the clan’s modern namesake, she has filled the stands with admirers from her other windows, with “Arikelites” to the left of Sebastián, and “Toreador” to his right. In a characteristically mordant detail, Tryst has included a young onlooker holding a blue rose—the symbol of *Máscara de bestia*, the secret branch of the Inquisition that claimed Sebastián’s life 141 years later in Logroño.

*Chantry Window No. 8, 1492 AD—The Ravens of Andalucía*

This window portrays Ziryab, the famous “Blackbird” of the Umayyad caliphate of Qurṭubah, reciting his lost epic *Memories of the Sun* to the birds of Qalat al-Hamra before his dawn suicide. As the sun peeps over the Sierra Nevada, a group of Nasrid soldiers approaches the Córdoba heretic with wooden spears upraised, while the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella sprawl across the valley below. Although Tryst consulted with Robert de Luzarches for details on fifteenth-century Granada and the Alhambra, the landscape has been obviously distorted to accommodate the entire tableau.

*Chantry Window No. 9, 1576 AD—La peste nera*

The most macabre window in the chantry, this shows Venerio Brexiano directing *Judith and the Holofernes*, his infamous sequence of *tableaux vivants* staged at the Palazzo dei Senza Sangue. Conceived and enacted while Venice was in the grip of the Black Death, the performance unfolded over four bloody weeks, and is often cited as the inspiration for the Marquis de Sade’s *Les 120 Journées de Sodome*. In a vision of horror to rival Hieronymus Bosch or her own future progeny Harry Clark, Tryst depicts Kindred and humans alike as malformed, freakish monsters, reveling in bloody spectacle while piles of stinking corpses poison the canals with blackened pus. One of the clan’s most notorious “Black Toreador,” Venerio Brexiano was soon pried from a Venetian galley and beheaded by the Turks. The window caused a sensation when it was first unveiled in 1863, but with the mortal world consumed by war, Tryst insisted that the dark side of the Toreador be unflinchingly represented as well.

*Chantry Window No. 10, 1804 AD—La principessa*

In a marked contrast to the previous window, this delightful portrait is a pleasure to behold, and shows Renata di Medici painting a panel from her masterpiece, *Firenze di notte*. Positioned beside the Arno and surrounded by jugglers, lovers, musicians, and astronomers, the youthful Renata is placing the final touches on her vision of the Ponte Vecchio during Berlingaccio, bedecked by colored lanterns and hosting a parade of costumed celebrants. The progeny of Prince François Villon, Renata di Medici became Prince of Florence during the construction of Santa de Luzarches. After Renata visited New York for the unveiling of her window, she returned to Florence and removed the relevant panel from her great work. Returning it to the guildhouse a week later, observers were surprised to discover a new figure among the Carnevale dancers, a red-haired woman blowing bubbles of stained glass.

*Chantry Window No. 11, 1888 AD—Unveiled*

Surprisingly controversial when it was first revealed, this window celebrates the première of Adrian Wren's chamber opera, *The Rape of Salomé*, first performed at Dorian Ives' infamous Lamia Club in London. Although the opera is now regarded as a masterpiece, many of Wren's contemporaries dismissed it as "atonal caterwauling," a "regrettable misreading of Wagner," and "decadence of the sake of decadence." While Wren's dancers were applauded for their erotic energy, his choreography was lambasted as being "incomprehensible." Tryst's homage was not disparaged solely for its subject; it was also considered a shocking lapse of judgment on behalf of the artist herself, who had attended the première in person. The general consensus was that Tryst violated the spirit of the chantry, making an arbitrary decision to include something so recent—and so poorly reviewed!—among the great masterworks of the Toreador.

As a final insult, the window was a brash departure from Tryst's beloved Pre-Raphaelite style. In an attempt to capture the opera's modern energy, Tryst employed an impressionistic approach that anticipated cubism—a geometric storm of panes spiral outwards from Salomé, whose infamous dance is represented as a series of superimposed images. Close examination reveals several interesting figures among the audience, including Veronica Tryst, several scandalized Toreador, and a mysterious cloaked figure, eyeing a prostitute-dancer with gleaming eyes.

*Chantry Window No. 12, 1889 AD—La cathédrale engloutie*

The chantry's eleventh window was completed just in time for the Grande Carnevale of 1889, and as might be expected, depicts Robert de Luzarches and the construction of the cathedral itself. A brilliant return to Tryst's signature style, the window proceeds in several panes surrounding Robert de Luzarches, each showing a different aspect of the cathedral, from the hollowing-out of St. James Vault to the installation of Aoidé. In the lower right corner, a small section depicts a diminutive, red-haired woman designing a miniature copy of the window itself!

*Chantry Window No. 13, 1900 AD?—Fin de siècle*

After the chapel was completed in 1889, Veronica left one window "blank," setting the frame with a placeholder window composed of interlocking geometric panes of milk-white glass. Expecting that the turn of the century would be greeted by a Toreador masterpiece somewhere in the world, Tryst believed that she'd soon be called upon to replace the abstract pattern with a genuine thirteenth window. As the new century dawned eleven years later, it brought only disillusionment, with various enclaves of Toreador bickering over which new "masterpiece" to enshrine, and Tryst rejecting them all. The "White Window" remained in place for another

sixteen years, gradually acquiring the status of an important work in its own right—especially as Modernism began to penetrate the Toreador’s collective imagination.

On April 7, 1916, Veronica Tryst left Santa de Luzarches forever. When the confused Toreador awoke the next night, they discovered that her ghouls, Bevel and Glaze, had smashed the white window and replaced it with a single pane of opaque black glass. Working under Tryst’s strict instructions, they had completed their task during the daylight hours and stood ready for judgment. Rather than have them executed, Duncan turned them over to William Danzig, who Embraced them and set them free. Duncan ordered the window to be covered by a black curtain, and the scattered fragments of white glass were carefully collected. They are now stored in the columbarium, in a crystal box engraved VERONICA TRYST, 1801:1825–1916.

The thirteenth window remains covered to this very day. Like the bottom of Arikel’s well, its abyssal mystery is a fertile ground for endless speculation. Some wonder if its matte-black surface has the power to tell fortunes, reveal the future, or transport the viewer through a portal to another time and place. Some have called it Tryst’s most powerful statement, while others want the White Window restored. Some clamor for it to be replaced with a “true” thirteenth window, while others insist it should be destroyed, just in case it harbors dark powers within its depthless interior. Today, almost a century later, the most widespread belief is perhaps the most reasonable—that Duncan should remove the drapes, acknowledge the window as Tryst intended, and rename it *Chantry Window No. 13, 1916 AD—Barcelona*.

### **The Four Relics of Santa de Luzarches**

Among the many works of art in the cathedral, there are four items granted the status of holy relics. These are the Toreador’s most sacred possessions.

#### **The Helm of the Iliad**

The first of these relics is displayed in a crystal case in the choir; carefully positioned so the light from the Achilles’ Shield window falls upon it with a revealing blaze of illumination. It is Hector’s flashing helm, the ancient and reputedly magical headpiece worn by Prince Hector during the Trojan War. It was presented to the Toreador by the Prince of Athens in 1889; he insisted that nothing less could have repaid them for the gift of their cathedral to the world. In return, Duncan appointed one of the most beautiful galleries in the South Wing as a permanent residence for Hellenic Kindred; but after Athens fell to the Sabbat in 1941, the gallery was rededicated as a memorial to the slain Prince and his fallen city.

#### **The Grail of Childe Harold**

The second relic is less mythic but no less sacred—the skull of Lord Byron, encrusted with amethysts and fashioned into a chalice. Carried to the New World by Sir Robert Drinkwater, the skull is housed in a gold monstrance located near the altar, and is only unveiled on All Hallows Eve. The Toreador claims that blood imbibed from Byron’s skull ignites a burst of creative inspiration in the most jaded mandarin, and it is considered an honor beyond expression for a non-Toreador to be offered “communion.”

#### **El Espejo de Don Quijote**

A gift from the Barcelona Sabbat, this massive mirror is framed in elegant mahogany and crowned by a golden ass. Fixed to the wall of a chamber near the columbarium, the mirror may only be accessed with Duncan’s express permission. During the majority of the year, it behaves

like a normal looking glass. However, beginning at the stroke of midnight between October 31 and November 1, the mirror reflects not the room of its physical location, but a vast Library located somewhere beyond the boundaries of the normal world. This Library—always capitalized!—contains works “lost” to history through disaster, carelessness, malfeasance, and despair. Priceless scrolls sacked and looted from the libraries of antiquity, manuscripts consigned to the flames by spiteful lovers, drafts of future masterpieces abandoned by dispirited creators; the Library is a catalog of trampled achievements, might-have-been wonders, and forsaken treasures.

The otherworldly reflection lasts until sunrise, but the viewer is at the mercy of the unseen librarians, and is allowed to observe only what has been specially prepared. A large reading table occupies the majority of the reflection, several white candles providing just enough illumination to read the contents of the works displayed upon the table. Each year brings a different arrangement; tantalizing glimpses into unattainable possibilities. Solon’s *Atlantis*, the complete text of Sappho’s Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 7, Aristotle’s *Second Book of Poetics*, the Emperor Claudius’s autobiography and his Etruscan dictionary; lost plays by Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus; a gospel relating the life of Jesus Christ from the viewpoint of the woman who loved him. William Shakespeare’s *Queen Elizabeth* has been observed on three separate occasions, each time opened to a different page. During the 1940s, the Library revealed works lost to fire: the *Libri Sibyllini*, burned by the Cumaean Sibyl in defiance of King Tarquinius; Jean Genet’s original copy of *Notre Dame des Fleurs*, written on brown bag-paper and destroyed by a prison guard; Emily Brontë’s second novel, burnt to ash by her sister Charlotte. In the 1960s, the collection was expanded to include musical treasures: Monteverdi’s first opera, a polonaise by Chopin, the prelude from Wagner’s *Jesus Christ*. Recent revelations include the first page of Herman Melville’s *Isle of the Cross*, the list of *Dramatis Personae* from James Joyce’s *My Brilliant Career*, a poem written by Federico García Lorca the night of his murder, and a diary page in Kafka’s handwriting describing the anatomy of a good joke.

A reading room called the Scriptorium has been constructed near the mirror, commissioned by Duncan to hold copies of every title, every page, every note recorded by the Toreador selected to hold vigil each All Hallows Eve. Access to the Scriptorium is closely monitored by Duncan, who understands the power of these salvaged relics, and is all-too familiar with the Sabbat’s potential for mendacity. William Danzig once conjectured that the Library was actually an elaborate joke perpetrated by Prince Gratiano, and was destined to conclude with a view of a forgery studio staffed by laughing Malkavians.

### **The Ashes**

The final relic is the most personal to the New York Toreador, and has no ancient provenance, no arcane powers, no golden reliquary redolent with ritual.

Upon finishing his great cathedral, Robert de Luzarches dismissed his Kindred assistants. He then disposed of his human ghouls in a most unexpected, if somewhat time-honored, fashion. He stranded them, still living, in the architecture. (Legend has it that every year, upon the night of its completion, the ghouls awake and moan for blood; the Toreador are said to find this charming.) After bidding a quiet farewell to his dearest friends, de Luzarches declared that his work on earth had come to an end. Sailing across the dark Hudson, he dropped anchor above his subterranean masterpiece and waited for dawn.

The central relic of Santa de Luzarches is kept in the chantry, located in a crystal urn at the center of the altar. After visiting the cathedral for the first time, many Toreador feel compelled to visit this urn, where they find themselves transfixed by the dust of the cathedral's creator. As Robert de Luzarches raised his slender hands to greet the rising sun, legend claims he was laughing. In his time as a New York Toreador, Robert de Luzarches left behind two things: a legacy of stone, and a future of dust.



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### Sources & Notes

This document was first uploaded to New York by Night on 7 July 1995. For this 2017 revision, I have added a significant amount of new material—although the year may be frozen around 1999, this Santa de Luzarches is a great deal more detailed than the previous version.

I'd like to thank Chris Gross, Allan T. Grohe, Amanda Huber, James Dignan, and Michael Cisco for their assistance in creating the Mirror of Don Quixote, which had its original inspiration from Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* comic. I hope that one day Lucien the Librarian will accept Duncan's invitation to attend Carnivale. The fiction of J.K. Huysmans, H.P. Lovecraft, Jorge Luis Borges, and Umberto Eco was also inspirational. Regarding *Messa di Requiem per Shuggay*, I have taken the liberty to "correct" the title of the opera and the name of its composer. Although I am certainly grateful for the scholarship of Professor Aniolowski, his study was incorrect on several important points. (Salieri? I think not!) Prince Renata di Medici is not my creation; I borrowed her name and biography from a [Vampire](#) site that used to borrow my own material, so consider the favor returned! There are numerous other references scattered throughout my description of Santa de Luzarches, and I apologize to any living, dead, or fictional figure I have enrolled among the ranks of the Toreador against their will.

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