Chicago By Night
Kickstarter Sneak Peek
LASOMBRA + OBLIVION

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Lasombra

The Night Clan, Magisters, Keepers, Shadows, Abyss Mystics, Turncoats, Traitors

ART NOTES: PLEASE LAY THE BELOW OUT AS A HANDWRITTEN LETTER BY LITTLE LAMB

When you enter the dark, and can see nothing but blackness, you are truly alone. Voices become distant. Even the dim light of the stars feels like a fading hope, devoured by the black. There is nothing.

Nothing but you.

Now you’re one of us, you realize you are the center of it all. Nothing matters except you. Everything will die except you. Does this make us nihilists? Perhaps so, but better to be pragmatic than to cling to the hope of redemption or the light.

Our elders believe we can only grow in strength through enlightened self-interest and through preying on the weak. The weak will always be prey, so it is far better that their predators are competent enough to handle them with grace.

You will find yourself clad in the trappings of religion. You will find Kindred and kine falling to their knees and begging you for guidance. Fight the urge to send them to some Ministry preacher, and take them to your bosom. Hold them. Nurture them. Enslave them. Destroy them.

We promise those who serve us a place in heaven, a bounty when they slay our enemies: a glorious cocktail of dogmatic faith and absolute nihilism.

Does this make us evil? No. Don’t be silly. The concept of evil is something elders sell their ignorant childer on. We Lasombra are the only ones awake. They are awake because they stepped into the darkness, opened their eyes, and saw what was staring back at us.

There is nothing out there, and there is everything.

You are one of the flock, and I’m overjoyed to have you among us.

LITTLE LAMB LETTER ENDS

Childe, I write to you now under my warden’s gaze. He wishes for me to pen my truth, and I can only hope this last testament reaches you before Talley puts me to the flame.

We Keepers claim to court your souls, but all we want are your lives. We masquerade as your priests and counsellors but in reality, we are nothing more than destructive accountants and crime bosses. We demand your service for a higher power, but all we want is for you to fall into lockstep and do what we command. We are a clan of power, and though we wield it with raw might when pushed, we skillfully deceive, break down, and puppeteer our victims through brainwashing and fanatical devotion.

We are a clan of darkness. We wield the night as a weapon and prefer the security of shadows. We are creatures of the night, and take comfort in that fact. Take comfort that no matter what, the night is always your friend.
Though I am to burn by Camarilla decree, I know it is so my clan can receive sanctuary within the Camarilla’s arms. I wish my life was not forfeit, but accept the cost. The night is still our friend. From now onward, the Camarilla is the night.

I die so the Lasombra may live.

This statement was not extracted under torture.

Carolina Valez

Who are the Lasombra?

Lasombra sires favor mortals who fit the mold of the clan. The Lasombra have been of a Darwinian philosophy since before the term existed. They have no time for weakness, feel the only way to survive is to excel, and cut away the trappings of sympathy and petty morality wherever it might slow down their ascent to power.

The Lasombra Embrace those who fight against the odds, survive dangerous situations, and exist at the pinnacle of excellence. The Magisters describe their Embrace tradition as “targeting those fit for more than a simple human life.” Sociopaths, counter-culturalists, deviants, and scarred survivors all hold appeal for the Lasombra. Anyone who can say they have seen the dark on the other side, and subsequently came back stronger, is a potential candidate for the Embrace. Many become vampires obsessed with the accumulation of social power, prepared to mislead and use mortals to elevate themselves. Others were like that before the Embrace, with such pragmatic traits leading to their ascent in Lasombra eyes.

The Lasombra lean heavily into the institutions of organized religion to find their prospective childer. They do not look for the truly faithful, or the truly depraved, but the priests who gained their role through a desire to have complete control over the spiritual destination of their congregations. Those nuns, monks, vicars, and rabbis who use their institutions as a tool to increase their power, often shaking hands with gangsters behind closed doors, are the kind of cold-hearted bastards Magisters adore.

The mortals Embraced into this clan surprise those who underestimate their ability, rising to positions of power in Camarilla cities more swiftly than anyone can predict.

Lasombra Archetypes

Activist

The Lasombra have claimed to exult the virtue of rebellion and opposition to tyranny for the last half-a-millennium. Though the clan now attempts to hold membership in the Camarilla, many younger Lasombra still refuse to kneel before unknowable ancients. In life, this character was likely a political or religious activist, recognized for the Embrace by a Lasombra who shared, or at least appreciated their vision. Such a character could be a Libertarian, Anarcho-Capitalist, or even a member of a terrorist cell.

Legate

Clan Lasombra values the art of the deal and those who make it. Whether in attempts to court power and influence, broker peace or instigate a war, a Lasombra found this character capable of the required task and Embraced them. In life, they were likely a diplomat or successful trader, or
perhaps a marriage counsellor or Mafia consigliere. They are well-equipped to handle negotiations on behalf of the clan, likely using the title “Legate.”

Masquerade Templar
The Lasombra target fighters for the Embrace. Any mortal who has overcome extreme adversity draws the eyes of Clan Lasombra, often because the Lasombra place that adversity in the way of prospective chilnder. This mortal survived and triumphed over great and punishing odds. As a vampire, they fought on and proved worthy of their sire’s respect, going on to fight against greater oppressor in the form of the Second Inquisition and the Sabbat.

Religion’s Parasite
This Lasombra hid among the religious in life, continuing to do so in death. Whether a leader or simple congregant, this character holds allies within the faithful and at least some sway over like-minds. Not a true believer, this Lasombra coldly manipulates others who hold faith, using the religious institution to serve their own elevation.

Winner at Life
The beaming athlete holding medial aloft, the mother proud of her rosette-winning daughter, the investment banker tossing cash at strippers, the actor with cocaine lining his lungs — all exemplify the winner. Clan Lasombra loves winning more than they love the battle, and they will do anything to win. Weak humans who succumb to stressful failure hold no allure to the Keepers. This character is possibly braggadocious, almost definitely envy-inducing, but few can deny their perpetual success.

Disciplines

Dominate: The power to mentally compel others into action, and remove and alter memories. The Lasombra speak lovingly of their ability to crush wills and command obedience without the unnecessary pretense of the Ventrue and Toreador. The callous way in which they exert this Discipline on victims earns antipathy from the other clans, yet few deny the Magisters’ ability in brainwashing and subjugating prey. Without hesitation, a Lasombra uses Dominate to tell a victim to bare their neck and ready for feeding.

Oblivion: The ability to manipulate darkness as a weapon or tool. This power, envied by some Kindred, loathed by most, is the Lasombra’s greatest strength and deepest weakness. Lasombra may use shadows to attack a foe, intimidate a victim with a cloak of darkness, or pass into one shadow and exit another to evade observation. Many claim there’s a cost to one’s soul for using Oblivion, or that it draws the eyes of the clan founder.

Potence: This power enables a vampire to hit unnaturally hard, lift with an inhuman strength, and bound across impressive distances. Few Lasombra use Potence for the purpose of assisting their feeding, considering it a vulgar exercise to manually grab and hold a vessel. The clan favor popping an enemy’s skull with their hands, driving a boot through a punk’s stomach, or ripping a door off a hinge to command respect and fear in other circumstances, however.

Compulsion
Lasombra: Ruthlessness
To the Lasombra, failure is not an option. Their Blood will urge them to any act conceivable to reach their goals, whether in the moment or in Byzantine plots lasting centuries. Any setback is
felt profoundly and they quickly escalate to the most ruthless of methods until they achieve their aims.

The next time the vampire fails any action they receive a two-dice penalty to any and all rolls until a future attempt at the same action succeeds. Note that the above penalty applies to future attempts at the triggering action as well.

**Bane**

While all vampires lose something profound at their Embrace, the Lasombra exhibit the most telling signs of this spiritual deficiency. When viewed in a reflective surface or a recording medium, their image appears distorted, sometimes almost invisible. Whether flickering, twisted on transparent, their reflection betrays their undead state and lineage. Similarly, modern technology relying on touch or other form of direct interaction tends to glitch or simple act unresponsive to Magisters, and electronic detection systems easily pick up the tell-tale signs of their passing.

Anyone seeing the reflection or recording (live and otherwise) of a Lasombra vampire can instantly recognize them for what they are, provided they know what they’re looking for. People with no prior knowledge will know something is wrong, but likely attribute the distortion to irregularities in the reflecting surface or recording errors. Note that this will not hide the identity of the vampire with any certainty, and the Lasombra are no less likely to be caught on surveillance than any other vampire. In addition, use of modern communication technology, including making a simple phone call, requires a Technology test at Difficulty 2 + Bane Severity as microphones have similar problems with the voice of a Lasombra as cameras with their image. Avoiding electronic vampire detection systems is also done at a penalty equal to Bane Severity.

**Oblivion**

_The sudden blast of heat from the gasoline-steeped Cardinal Renate made Talley step back, shielding his eyes. A very mortal gesture. Talley corrected himself to watch the body burn. Tracking Renate, seizing her, and staking her ultimately came down to which of them was better skilled in the Lasombra arts. It had been a gruelling task, but not an unpleasant one._

_As he started typing “It is done” into his phone, the few lights in the alley blinked off one by one. The shadows drew in, plunging the entire area into blackness. Talley cast about, looking for the source of this sorcery. His eyes pierced the unnatural gloom, but found nothing. A sound made him turn toward the fire. The Cardinal’s body was gone, nothing left but the flames dying down. A stump of the stake was resting in the ash. “Maybe we’ll meet again sooner than planned, my dear.”_

_Talley dusted ash from his jacket as his accomplice at the other end of the alley, spoke up. “By order of the Friends of the Night, you’re next to go, Sir Talley.” Shadows throughout the alley rapidly converged on the Templar, snaking along the walls and across the ground while his assailant maintained their distance. Talley watched as the flat tendrils approached, and considered for a second before nodding respectfully at his murderous childe, before vaulting into the dark._

**Nicknames:** Obtenebration, Necromancy, Shadowboxing, Abyssal Mastery, Tenebrae Imperium, Mortis, the Dark Arts, Black Magic, Entropy
Few Kindred outside Clan Lasombra and the Hecata know the Discipline of Oblivion, and as far as the Camarilla is concerned, this is a good thing. While the Lasombra favor the Discipline’s raw power, the more necromantically-inclined Hecata explore its ritual uses. With this power, vampires wield the very stuff of shadows and unlife as weapons. Some call the power’s source the Abyss, while other practitioners refer to it as the Labyrinth. The one certainty is Oblivion channels the darkest arts, from where the dead go to die.

The masters of Oblivion call upon the it to wreath themselves in night, enslave spectres, or throttle victims with their own shadow. Each time they use it, wielders run the risk of losing their soul and Humanity to the something darker than death and twice as hungry.

**Characteristics**

The powers of Oblivion allow for the control of forces or spirits of an extradimensional element, originating from a plane of death and nothingness. When manifest, this element projects into our reality as two-dimensional shadows on the surface of three-dimensional objects, either by themselves or as extensions of the wielder’s own shadow, snaking along the ground, walls, objects or people. This makes them impossible to attack with most physical means as any blow will only hit the surface they’re projected on rather than the entities themselves.

Oblivion projections and spirits sustain damage from fire and sunlight, counting as vampires with Blood Potency 1 in this regard. They also take one level of Aggravated damage per round from bright, directed lights, and may also be damaged (Superficially or Aggravated) from blessed weapons and artifacts, depending on the strength of the blessing and any True Faith of the wielder.

Oblivion’s powers are ineffective in brightly lit areas. Daylight and rooms without shadows are particularly prohibitive, preventing the Discipline’s successful function, though ultraviolet light and infrared light places no restriction on the Discipline’s use. Moderately lit rooms add one to the Difficulty of skill rolls involved.

The use of these power takes a heavy toll on the psyche of the user, and many powers cause Stains as the numbing emptiness of Oblivion seeps into the spirit of the wielder. When making a Rouse Check for an Oblivion power, a result of “1” or “10” result in a Stain, in addition to any Hunger gained.

**Type:** Mental

**Masquerade threat:** Medium-High. The abyssal shadows rarely show up well on cameras but are obviously unnatural if witnessed in person.

**Blood Resonance:** Psychopaths and the emotionally detached. Blood empty of Resonance.

**Level 1**

**Shadow Cloak**

Subtly applying the influence of Oblivion on ambient shadows, the user masks their appearance or seems more sinister and threatening.

**Cost:** Free

**System:** The vampire gains a two-dice bonus to Stealth rolls as well as on Intimidation versus mortals.
**Duration:** Passive

**Oblivion’s Sight**

The vampire closes their eyes. Upon opening them, the irises of their eyes are black against the white of their sclera, and they can now see clearly within pitch blackness, and can perceive ghosts who are not actively hiding their presence.

**Cost:** Free

**System:** On activation, the users eyes become supernaturally attuned to darkness, allowing them to ignore all low-light penalties, including those of supernatural origin. They still need their eyes to see and are affected by blindfolds and the like as usual.

If a ghost is present and not attempting stealth or using a power to conceal its presence, the spirit becomes visible to the vampire using Oblivion’s Sight. In such cases, ghosts appear as they wish to appear, whether as humans bearing the wounds that caused their death, as spectral monstrosities, or as perfectly immaculate corpses. Ghosts do not automatically realize when a vampire spots them, but if they do, many react with fear or anger rather than passivity.

This power does not grant the ability to make physical contact with ghosts.

**Duration:** One scene

**Level 2**

**Shadow Cast**

Oblivion is powerful but can often be foiled by the simple lack of appropriate shadows from which to summon it. This power draws upon the darkness within the user to project a supernatural shadow from which to manifest other powers, no matter the ambient lighting. This shadow usually mimics the movement and shape of the user but can sometimes grow distorted and even monstrous, resonating with the current temperament its owner.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**System:** Activating the power conjures a supernatural shadow from the vampire’s body. As long as the power is active the user casts this shadow, which cannot be removed except by direct sunlight.

Anyone witnessing the practitioner notices the shadow cast from no visible light source on a Wits + Awareness roll (Difficulty 3). The vampire can direct their shadow, elongating or distorting (but not detaching) it at will, though it can sometimes act on its own accord, at the Storyteller’s discretion. For the purposes of other powers such as Shadow Perspective, the shadow can be lengthened to up to twice the practitioner’s Oblivion rating in yards / meters.

**Duration:** One scene

**Arms of Ahriman**

**Amalgam:** Potence 2

The vampire summons abyssal appendages from unlit spots in the area. Local shadows distort as murky tentacles snake out from them and converge on one or more hapless victims. Whether by gliding up the body of the victim or engaging in a mystic grapple with the victim’s own shadow, the arms are able to hold them in place or smother them.
**Cost:** One Rouse Check  
**Dice Pools:** Wits + Oblivion

**System:** The user takes one turn and pays the cost, summoning the shadow appendages. Using these, the vampire can perform bludgeoning and grappling attacks against distant targets every subsequent turn, splitting the dice pool if engaging more than one. The arms use the vampire’s Wits + Oblivion to attack and deal Superficial damage or grapple, adding half the user’s Potence rating as damage bonus. The vampire can do nothing else except control the arms while this power is active. They can also be used to perform simple actions (such as opening doors and pulling levers) but nothing as advanced as typing or controlling vehicles. The arms have a length (in yards / meters) equal to twice the Oblivion dots of the user. (Note that the arms, being shadows, move across surfaces, not air, and any distances must take this into account.) The arms have three health levels and use their owner’s Wits + Oblivion to avoid attacks.

**Duration:** One scene or until ended or destroyed

**Level 3**

**Shadow Perspective**

The vampire can project their senses into any shadow within line of sight, seeing and hearing as if they were hiding within any part of it. This includes their own shadow, as manipulated by Shadow Cast (see p.XX).

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**System:** Following a Rouse Check, the presence of the vampire in the shadow is undetectable by anything but supernatural means. (Sense the Unseen, for example). While this power is active the vampire perceives both their surroundings as well as what can be gleaned from the Shadow Perspective, as if looking through a screen or hole.

**Duration:** Up to one scene

**Touch of Oblivion**

The vampire using Touch of Oblivion channels the power through their vitae. When they make physical contact with a victim, the annihilating element runs through the vampire and into their prey like an electric current, except the effect is to physical wither the target area.

Effective on any part of the body, the touch shrinks and shortens muscles, snaps tendons, and makes bones brittle, effectively aging the affected part catastrophically. Its main use is in the withering of a limb, the choking of a throat, or the blinding a pair of eyes.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**System:** Following a Rouse Check, the vampire grips their victim (requiring a Strength + Brawl roll if the victim is trying to avoid the vampire), with the victim suffering two levels of Aggravated damage as well as a crippling injury.

If this injury is inflicted to an arm or leg, the targeted limb is rendered crippled and will in the case of mortals require lengthy rehabilitation, while vampires can mend the damage as regular Aggravated damage. Likewise, Touch of Oblivion may render a target mute, deaf, or blind. See
crippling injuries in *Vampire: The Masquerade* (p. XX) for details on the mechanical effects of crippled limbs.

**Duration:** One turn

**Level 4**

**Stygian Shroud**

Darkness spews out of a nearby shadow as the vampire blankets the area around them in gloom equivalent to a moonless night, while sounds are muffled and indistinct. Anyone viewing the effect from without see it as a shadow expanding over every surface, including the bodies of the victim, in the area. Those apart from the invoker caught in the effects find themselves struggling to see and hear their surroundings, and mortals are drained of their very life by the suffocating power.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check.

**System:** The user makes a Rouse Check and spends a turn concentrating, spreading the shadow over the desired surfaces. The effect covers a circular area with a radius equal to twice the user’s Oblivion rating in yards (or meters). The area is centered on the user or a spot in their line of sight.

Anyone caught in the Stygian Shroud receives a three-dice penalty to all rolls, unless they possess the ability to see through supernatural darkness. Any mortals caught in the Stygian Shroud suffer one level of Superficial damage for every turn they remain within it, due to the power’s suffocating effects.

**Duration:** One scene

**Level 5**

**Shadow Step**

Stepping into a nearby shadow, the user disappears only to reappear from the same or another shadow further away. Whether they enter the Labyrinth or merely pass along its surface is a source of conjecture among many Lasombra and Hecata, but the spiritual damage with which they can emerge imply they are touching something foul as they use this power.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**System:** The vampire must enter a shadow large enough to cover them, and emerge from another one turn later. The target shadow must be within sight, though it can be perceived by mystical means, such as Shadow Perspective, if desired.

It is possible to bring another through the passage, but unless that person is willing they must be held by a successful grapple. If a Stain is incurred as a result of using this power, the passenger also receives one.

**Duration:** One turn

**Tenebrous Avatar**

The vampire gains the ability to change their very substance into that of a shadow, becoming a two-dimensional patch of darkness able to slither over any surface and through miniscule gaps and cracks. While in this form the vampire is only harmed by fire and sunlight.
Cost: Two Rouse Checks.

System: The transformation takes one turn, during which the vampire is unable to do anything else. Once the transformation is complete the vampire can move at walking pace across the ground or along walls, hampered only by hermetically sealed barriers.

Vampires using Tenebrous Avatar can envelop victims, causing the victim to reduce all their dice pools by three and suffocating mortals as with Stygian Shroud, above. If surrounding a mortal, the vampire can feed from them without penetrating the skin with fangs.

Practitioners of this power take no damage from physical sources but can be harmed by fire and sunlight as normal. Mental Disciplines can still be used at the Storyteller’s discretion.

Duration: One scene or until ended