



# ***The Wages of Sin***

## ***Troupe Style Sheet***

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**MES Domain:** Sundered Lands

**Domain Code:** MA-005-D

**Domain Boundaries:** [413 Area Code](#)

**Troupe Area Focus:** Springfield, MA

**Storyteller Name:** Janet Brennan

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**Player Resources:** [The Wages of Sin: Public Folders on Google Drive](#)

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## **Themes**

**Morality:** Who are the keepers of morals and ethics? Are there morals that transcend individuals, cities, nations, worlds?

**Faith & Hypocrisy:** What is faith and how do we know we have it? How do we find or keep our faith in the face of pervasive hypocrisy?

**Rebellion:** Why do we rebel, and from what? Where is the breaking point between accepting and rejecting authority? Is rebellion always necessary to effect change?

**Betrayal:** Why do we betray the people and things we love or that we are sworn to protect? What price does betrayal exact on our souls? How does it feel to betray and to be betrayed?

**Chaos:** Why do things fall apart? Can anything truly last?

**Love & Hate:** Can vampires love? Does love endure? What would we sacrifice for love? How do the seeds of hate take root, and what do they drive us to do? Can we ever be free of hate?

## **Moods**

**Exciting:** The action rarely stops as the characters contend with a never-ending cavalcade of threats, enemies, and challenges.

**Desperate:** Characters are reckless in their excitement, fear, or despair, willing to take greater risks in order to achieve some goal or put things to rights.

**Mysterious:** No one is what they seem, and nothing is as it appears to be; enigmas and secrets abound, each merely scratching the surface of the next.

## **Inspirations**

**Visual:** [Pinterest Board](#)

**Audial:** [YouTube Playlist](#)





## Scale Descriptors

Will Not Factor	○○○○○
Unlikely to Factor	●○○○○
Likely to Factor	●●○○○
Expected to Factor	●●●○○
Guaranteed to Factor	●●●●○
Already a Factor	●●●●●

## General Setting Attributes

❖ Physical	●●●●○
❖ Social	●●●●○
❖ Mental	●●●●○

## Physical

### Action CvE (Combat and Challenges vs the Environment)

❖ ●●●○○

### Action CvC (Character vs Character Conflict)

❖ ●●●●○

### Darkness (Tragedy / PC Death)

❖ ●●●●●

## Social

### Intrigue (Politics and Negotiation)

❖ ●●●●○

### Manners (Social Etiquette and Peer Pressure)

❖ ●○○○○ to ●●●●○

### Drama (Ceremony and Grand Story)

❖ ●●○○○ to ●●●●●

## Mental

### Mystery (Enigmas and Investigation)

❖ ●●○○○ to ●●●●●

### Character Development (Personal Development, Dilemmas, Choices, and Corruption)

❖ ●●●●○

### Graphic Content (Heavy and Dark Language)

❖ ●●●●●



## Teasers

*"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to the father must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."*

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of the father is eternal life..."*

## TSS Description

The story focuses on vampiric happenings which are centered primarily in Amherst (current seat of Camarilla power in the region), the Hamptons, Holyoke, and Chicopee (all neutral territory loosely claimed by the Anarch Movement at present), and Springfield (current seat of Sabbat power in the region). Any and all denizens of the World of Darkness can be found within the wider boundaries of the troupe, however, and should any brave souls go venturing forth to find them they would not do so in vain; though it's important to remember that "here there be dragons" absolutely applies regarding such endeavors and their outcomes.

## TSS Timeline: What Is Commonly Known

	In the Sabbat	In Springfield
Early 15th Century	A faction of young vampires usurps Koldunic sorcery to break free of their blood bonds, initiating the Anarch Revolution.	The region is inhabited by several Algonkian-speaking Native communities, culturally connected but distinguished from one another: Agawam (low land), Woronco (in a circular way), Nonotuck (in the midst of the river), Pocumtuck (narrow, swift river), and Sokoki (separated from their neighbors). People have been living upon these lands in one form or another for over ten thousand years.
Late 15th Century	The Camarilla is founded and the Anarchs are forced to sign the Treaty of Thorns; the few extremists who refuse to sign declare themselves "Sabbat" and burn down the entire city where the treaty had been signed. Markel is made the first Regent of the Sabbat.	
Early 17th Century	Marozia is made the second Regent of the Sabbat when Markel resigns. The Sect struggles to reconcile within its ranks between the fanatically religious and the fanatically militant, leading to the formation of both the Inquisition and the Black Hand. Marozia dies under mysterious circumstances just 30 years after ascending.	In 1634, Dutch traders trigger a devastating smallpox epidemic among the region's Native peoples. With so many dead, rotting above ground for want of burial, British colonists were emboldened to attempt significant settlement of the region.
Mid 17th Century	Niklas is made third Regent of the Sabbat. In an attempt to build new strongholds for the sect, the Sabbat travel to and explore the New World; however, without strong leadership from their sect elders and absent the kind of deep rooted influence of the Camarilla pervading the old world, packs resort to vying with one another for powers of the blood and for control of territories.	In 1635 the land known today as Springfield is first settled by William Pynchon as Agawam Plantation, part of the Connecticut Colony; but by 1640 he rebels and joins the Massachusetts Bay Colony from which he had come, changing the settlement's name to Springfield and ultimately reshaping what would become the border between the State of Connecticut and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



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Late 17th Century	Regent Niklas calls for the Synod of Orphans in an attempt to mend relations between the newly formed Ultra Conservative and Loyalist factions. The Synod results in codifying the Auctoritas Ritae which by law must now be shared freely while allowing the Ignoblis Ritae which may be kept secret within individual packs. Despite the concessions of the Synod, however, political rifts within the sect deepen as the Lasombra and Tzimisce clans each seek to solidify their mastery of the New World. Niklas is destroyed in sacred Monomacy soon after the Synod by Gorchrist, who names himself the fourth Regent of the Sabbat. Many question the righteousness of this ritus, which finally sparks the flames of the First Sabbat Civil War.	Decades of English encroachment on Native settlements erupts in bloodshed on sacred lands, triggering all Native communities to unite and precipitate King Philip's War. The English attempt to pacify their Native neighbors, igniting a network of hostility that culminated in a massive attack against Springfield which destroyed most of the village. Its prosperity wanes and suffers for the next hundred years.
Late 18th Century	Lulled into a false sense of security as the sole vampiric power in the New World for over a century, the Sabbat fails to remain steadfast to its founding cause as civil war rages and inevitably the Sabbat turns all eyes away from its true enemy; so while they focus on their own internal conflict, the Camarilla quietly moves in over long decades and bides their time, preparing their plans. By the time the Sabbat reach something sufficiently resembling peace enough to cast their gaze out beyond themselves, it's too late - the sect is surrounded by the Ivory Tower and its territories are seized one by one in a meticulously orchestrated takeover. The sect forfeits its dominance in North America, maintaining only a few strongholds in the northern US and Canada with only a few more in Mexico; and even those are only held through the sheer might of the Black Hand, who are equally lauded and feared for the strength they displayed in single handedly rescuing the sect in the Americas. Gorchrist moves the Regency to Mexico City.	Springfield's fortunes recover on account of the Revolutionary War when George Washington selects the town as the site for his army's main arsenal. Washington chooses Springfield for its centrality to important American cities and resources, its easy access to the Connecticut River, and because the city serves as the nexus for well-traveled roads: "The plain just above Springfield is perhaps one of the most proper spots on every account" for the location of a national arsenal. Just a decade later Shays' Rebellion erupts against the Massachusetts Bay Colony's elitist rule from distant Boston in what becomes the new United States' first populist rebellion. Massachusetts' Governor Bowdoin – along with Boston's former patriots, like Samuel Adams, who had, it seemed, lost touch with common people – were utterly unsympathetic to the rebels' cause. These rebellious Regulators very nearly captured the US Arsenal but for the unauthorized and illegal use of the arsenal's federal weapons by the Massachusetts militia.
Early 19th Century	At suddenly finding itself out of power and surrounded by their enemies, the First Sabbat Civil War comes to an abrupt end. The Sect regroups within its few remaining strongholds and for a short time there is an uneasy truce among the now numerous factions. Taking advantage of weakened leadership as well as their own heroics and shows of strength, however, the Black Hand emerges as the apex faction and appoints its own internal hierarchy, declaring its own mandate to be above the jurisdiction of the	Nicknamed "The City of Progress", Springfield becomes a vital center of the Industrial Revolution and leads the way in commercial invention, ideological progress, and technological innovation. The lathe is invented here which leads to a quantum leap in human productivity by making the setup and maintenance of assembly lines possible. The modern car, American-English dictionary, vulcanized rubber, monkey wrench, and even postcard are invented in Springfield. The seeds of abolition begin to grow as well and soon



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	Regent and Clergy, and especially their most powerful rivals: the Inquisition. Gorchrist signs a first attempt at creating proper sect law, known as the Purchase Pact, which would re-empower the Clergy and its Inquisition to stand against the Black Hand, results in swiftly rekindling bitter rivalries among all the various factions and ignites the Second Sabbat Civil War.	Springfield also produces the nation's first organized radical abolitionist group, led by John Brown who would go on to conduct the famous raid on Harper's Ferry. Nearly all citizens of Springfield, from the most humble to the most exalted, enthusiastically support abolition.
Mid 19th Century	The Black Hand, blind to their pride and hubris, come to believe themselves infallible. Enemies of the Sabbat take advantage of this to slowly usurp the will of the Hand for their own purposes. Gorchrist begins working to return the Sabbat to rule of law by revising the doctrine first laid out in an 11th century manuscript known as the Code of Milan. Gorchrist is assassinated. Melinda is named the fifth Regent of the Sabbat.	Springfield is swept up in the maelstrom of the US Civil War. The Underground Railroad flourished under citizens' support and John Brown's moving up to organizing militant abolitionist groups to protect escaped slaves who fled to Springfield for sanctuary from slave catchers and officers of the law; after Brown's founding his first militant group in 1850, no slave was ever again captured within Springfield.
Early 20th Century	At the height of the Black Hand's hypocrisy they wipe out the vast majority of Inquisitors, claiming they'd allowed power games to take precedence over their sacred duty to the Sabbat, leaving the Sect without its champions of faith and principal defenders against the infernal. The Inquisition reforms and within a few decades returns to its full power but the two factions remain bitter rivals to this very night. Melinda sponsors and then signs the revised Code of Milan which replaces the Purchase Pact and bestows power within the Sect to a more politically tolerable group of unspecified "leaders". Although the signing of the Code brings an end to the open hostilities of the Second Sabbat Civil War, still there are some factions who balk at anyone ruling over them and refuse to adopt the Code.	Not much is known prior to this point in time of how the Sabbat fared within Springfield, though old tales and whispers hint that the Sect has had a hand in it since the first Old World settlers set foot here. It's believed, though, that the vendettas between the Hand and the Inquisition were so violent and all encompassing here that almost none survive to tell the tale; certainly if there are any witnesses to the happenings of those days they're not coming forward to talk about it. Springfield truly thrives as newly-invented basketball, Indian motorcycles, manufacturing enterprises of all kinds and especially wartime manufacturing only continue to grow. Springfield boasts the highest concentration of elegant homes in the nation as even those of modest means can afford lifestyles far out of reach for most other Americans.
Mid 20th Century	A coup is attempted briefly against Melinda to revoke the new Code of Milan, but it fails and she survives. This failed coup is dubbed the Third Sabbat Civil War.	Though not much more than rumors and second-hand tales survive, it is said that the Sabbat ruled unchallenged over Springfield during this time, with as many as 30 or more Childer of Caine within its streets at the zenith of their power. They held the Camarilla at bay to the north and east, as well as the Anarchs to the west and northwest.
Late 20th Century	The Year of Fire. The Nights of Turmoil. The Red Star rises - it is seen as a holy revelation of the End Times and so all the Sabbat unite under the auspices of a glorious impending Gehenna. Melinda declares a holy Crusade against the sect's enemies and legions of	In 1999 then-Archbishop Polonia departed from New York and led nearly every last Sabbat of the region in a holy crusade to take the entire East Coast from the Camarilla. The crusade was largely successful, driving the Camarilla entirely out of Atlanta in only one night and taking



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	<p>Sabbat go forth mass-embracing legions more Sabbat, driving waves of crazed starved neonates into Camarilla territories with a naked abandon never before seen by mortal or immortal. The Sabbat revels in blood in what they believe will be their final nights... except, the nights don't end. Gehenna doesn't come.</p>	<p>nearly all of Washington, D.C. Polonia was credited for the bulk of the crusade's success, and was elevated to the rank of Cardinal by Regent Galbraith. Springfield was left nearly empty of all vampires as the Sabbat had annihilated the Camarilla in greater Amherst and the Anarchs in the Hamptons before following Polonia south.</p>
Early 21st Century	<p>Sabbat factions that had allied for the first time ever during the Year of Fire fall to panic and suspicion as the Red Star fades and Gehenna does not happen. The bloody excess of their year of open warring against the sect's enemies left behind a trail that leads a new wave of mortal hunters straight to them, and the sect's enemies are only too willing to point these frighteningly deadly new hunters in the Sabbat's direction, away from their own precious havens. The Sabbat loses its most powerful warriors and scholars. Melinda is slain by unknown assailants; it's whispered soon after that she was suspected of serving the infernal. The few remaining packs scattered across the Americas are a hair's breadth away from annihilation... Temoch is named the sixth Regent of the Sabbat - he is the first Regent to have been embraced in the New World. He revokes the independent mandate of the near-completely destroyed Black Hand and swiftly rebuilds their ranks, sending them as elite strike forces to extract known surviving packs and bring them to safety in Mexico City. He gathers the remaining Inquisitors to his side and leads them in rooting out the worst of the infernal infestations within the sect. Temoch "The Jackal" single handedly pulls the Sabbat back from the brink of oblivion and inspires the grizzly survivors of the sect to renew their faith "by Caine, the Regent, and the Ritae".</p>	<p>Existence is brutal for the Sabbat as more and more of their very best are destroyed by mortal hunters and by bitter vicious infighting, until they're nearly wiped out entirely. And the mortal hunters do not spare Springfield. It takes several years to even begin rebuilding the Sabbat's presence in the city but when they do return, they find that the Camarilla's been busy grooming the city for a takeover including using their significant mortal influences to crack down on "crime" so as to choke out the Sabbat's preferred free-feeding methods in Springfield while allowing their own discreet use of ghouls in Amherst to go largely undetected as they carefully survey their options in the area. A small handful of Anarchs move back in as they always do and make their own play to reclaim the Hamptons, with limited success due to the persistent focus of hunters in the area. Eventually the Camarilla do return to Amherst and reestablish their foothold there, ever scheming to finally claim the long-sought prize of Springfield for their own at last. Without sufficient numbers to hold the mortal population in its sway, and due to shunning the practice of ghouls, those few Sabbat who can be spared from greater efforts by Temoch and Polonia struggle every night to keep themselves safe while locking their rivals out of the city. November 2020, however, all contact with the few Sabbat working to hold Springfield was lost. Polonia sends in a small recon team of revenants and neonates in February 2021 but they return claiming they could find no evidence of any of the missing packs. He sends another team of neonates and ancillae in May 2021; none of them is heard from again. The sect has precious few resources to continue to throw at this contested city but Springfield is the crossroads of the North East and Polonia cannot afford to lose it; so he puts out a call for aid to anyone willing to fight to hold what the Sabbat has always claimed as their own.</p>





## **TSS Specific Rules**

- This is a troupe game local to the Domain, with no connection to any National chronicle nor to any other Venue within MES.
- The MES Code of Conduct is in full effect.
- Players must maintain current membership in order to play.
- The published MET VtM vol's 1 & 2 comprise the entirety of the mechanics in use for this TSS:
  - The published materials, however, comprise only a subset of the IG world building, knowledge, history, etc. in play (collectively referred to as "info") - players should expect that additional IG info, not necessarily known to them OOG, will impact/influence the story.
- Players start with 50 Initial experience points to spend creating their character. Membership Class gains a player a one-time award at a rate of MC x 3 to add to their total Earned experience points. 10 additional Earned experience points can be awarded per character (will be awarded separately for each new character and will expire when the character expires) for submitting either a freeform background writeup or a standard MES VtM Character Creation Document.
- 6 Earned experience points are awarded to each player per month that the troupe game is in play, available on the last day of each month, regardless of attendance for that month.
- Each PC is allowed one unique tie into the troupe's history or NPCs, as a substitute for spending MES VIP; players should work with storytellers to define their character's unique tie.
- Only one active character per player is allowed. A player's active character must be irrevocably retired or deceased in order to bring a new character into the story. Players may then spend their total Earned experience points for the troupe game when building successive characters.
- A Google Drive folder for each player will be provided for managing character sheet, background, and downtime submissions. A downtime submission template will be provided that can be used each month and updated as needed. Downtimes will be due before midnight on the 7th day before the next game, to allow sufficient time for processing. Anything submitted after the deadline is not guaranteed to be processed. Please contact staff with any questions as you create downtime submissions, they can help provide guidance and suggestions.

## **Background Restriction:**

- **Characters cannot have been active in nor traveling through the TSS boundaries from late October of 2020 through mid August of 2021.**





## Storyteller Notes

- **Adulting Required**
  - Make a point to genuinely communicate with one another. Good communication is essential to successful LARP. Bring your listening skills, your willingness to give and accept critiques with grace, to discuss and mediate, process information, motivate and support one another.
- **Be Groovy**
  - Take time to foster validation within the troupe. Validation is more than a basic human need, it's a fluid give-and-take that nourishes a group dynamic. It develops among members of a group with experience and familiarity. Validation gives us guideposts for our interactions so we can find the right track that works for us. It gives us the assurance as players to feel safer portraying our characters as they explore a plot, relationship, or endeavor. It alleviates anxiety and builds support.
- **Speak Up If You're Struggling** *[thanks to Josh Fischer for inspiring this content]*
  - If you ever feel sidelined, ignored, or like you've just 'lost the plot' please try the following:
    - Poke the storytelling staff - we're here to help!
    - Poke players who portray characters in leadership roles
    - Use downtime actions to "go looking for trouble"
    - Use influence actions between games if your PC has them
    - Tap the Oracular Ability merit if your PC has it
    - Tap any backgrounds your PC may have, they can provide info and/or aid
- **Baby Dragons Have No Gold**
  - Diablerie of another PC will have no benefit for the first three months after the PC is approved for play.

## Live Play/Virtual Play

This will be a primarily live game. Some virtual soft RP may be hosted at staff discretion according to the Best Practices documents shared in google drive. Note that 24/7 gaming is discouraged by MES and will be actively mitigated by staff. During times when live play is rendered unfeasible by factors beyond MES officers' control or when a moratorium is called on live play by the MES Board of Directors, virtual play may be incorporated into the troupe's principal logistics in order to enable gaming to continue. Staff understand that virtual play is very different from live play and may not suit all players; should live play remain unfeasible for extended periods, staff will work with all players to manage the impact of extended virtual play on engaging fully with the story.







## **Proxies**

Because this is a troupe game local to the Domain with no pre-arranged network storytelling across any nationally sanctioned venues, no proxies of characters will be allowed. Visiting members who wish to play should make arrangements to submit a character for approval before the anticipated date they wish to begin play.

## **Quests**

Quests will be employed both during downtime windows and as part of live play [details forthcoming].

## **CvC**

It should not be assumed by any player that Character vs. Character actions will be successful against the intended target. The storyteller presiding over the scene will facilitate CvC with discussion amongst involved players and with the rules as published.

## **CCR**

Character Conflict Resolution (CCR, formerly Killboxes) and other extremely aggressive actions within the troupe should be carefully considered for their possible negative impacts on play which may be against the concept of the troupe and not allowed. By attempting such actions, you will also be placing your own character at risk of dire or even fatal consequences; PCs will not be protected against fallout from their own aggressive or negative actions. Players should strive to preserve OOC goodwill amongst one another as separate from and priority over the complex (and sometimes antagonistic) IC relationships that may develop. Be Groovy.

## **Mass Combat**

Mass combats which can be anticipated will have available cost sheets. Combat may be handled either through full chops or via cost sheets. Should combat begin using full chops but those involved elect to resolve the combat faster, mediation can be employed; such mediation can be freeform or may make use of an available cost sheet to guide the negotiations.

## **One Minute / Two Post Rule**

When a player disagrees with a rules call made by a member of staff, they will have one minute (or two posts during virtual play) to make their case. After that, the storyteller presiding over the scene will make a decision and the scene will progress. Players are expected to follow the MES Code of Conduct when making their case, remaining courteous and calm. If the issue is not immediate, players are encouraged to choose to contact the lead storyteller outside of the live/virtual play window to discuss and resolve the issue.





## **TSS Specific Mechanics**

### **New Language: Springfield Sabbat Graffiti Tags**

- An impossible mix of ancient and modern linguistic practices from across the globe, unique to the city and the Sabbat who dwell within it, this Skill Specialty represents a fully developed language unto itself. Evolving organically over the last few centuries it has taken on a life of its own, morphing with its practitioners' changing needs. For the most sensitive of communications it's common to include various secret code techniques in conjunction with the language itself to protect the message from unworthy eyes.
  - This language can be bought as a Specialty under the Linguistics Skill.
  - Decoding its secret messages relies on a separate (appropriate) Skill, such as Computers or Academics or Investigation or perhaps some other approach -- a Skill your character has invested in that reflects their ability and approach to unraveling secret codes.

## **Change Log**

- | 2022-03-30 | v.2.0 |
  1. Added "TSS Specific Mechanics" section
  2. Added "New Language: Springfield Sabbat Graffiti Tags"
  3. Added "Change Log" including major changes to date
- | 2022-02-27 | v.1.2 | Further clarified details in "Early 21st Century / In Springfield" section
- | 2021-10-24 | v.1.1 | Clarified details in "Early 21st Century / In Springfield" section
- | 2021-09-04 | v.1.0 | Initial Release