



Charlatans, Deceivers, Gypsies, “Shifty Assholes”

(Note: Since you are here I assume you already know about this clan from previous versions of the game. If not, [go here](#) to read the official lore on them.)

Disciplines

Celerity, Obfuscate, Presence (*Chimerstry is now an amalgam of Obfuscate and Presence -- see below for more details.*) For an explanation of why I made these changes, [go here](#).

Bane

The Ravnos are widely believed to be criminals of some sort, be it thieves, ruffians, or purveyors of vice. This is not wholly true; the curse of the clan is such that that whenever anything goes wrong and there's a Ravnos about, they get blamed for it. It's not that all Ravnos are criminals, although many of the clan believe that if they're going to be treated as such as they might as well reap the rewards from crime; rather, it's that everyone believes they are all rotten scoundrels that they are and treats them that way. Even if they're innocent, the effects of their powers and their Compulsion make it easy and convenient to blame the Ravnos for anything and everything, including things over which they have no control. Because of this, they make handy scapegoats: "I've no idea who vandalized your limousine, my Prince, but I'm certain it was one of those awful Ravnos."

Blame is likely to fall upon you when things go wrong in your presence. Furthermore, when defending yourself from an accusation of blame you

lose a number of dice equal to your Bane Severity. This penalty applies *whether or not you're truly guilty*.

Compulsion

The Ravnos belief that all life is inherently paradoxical: All knowledge is based on what we perceive, yet our own perceptions are imperfect and easily fooled through illusion and bias; and yet, even without these perceptions, reality soldiers on without us. Therefore there is an ultimate truth to the word, if only it can be found. Seeking this ultimate truth is the goal of all Ravnos, as is bringing that truth to others and enlightening them, albeit at the risk of damaging their sense of self.

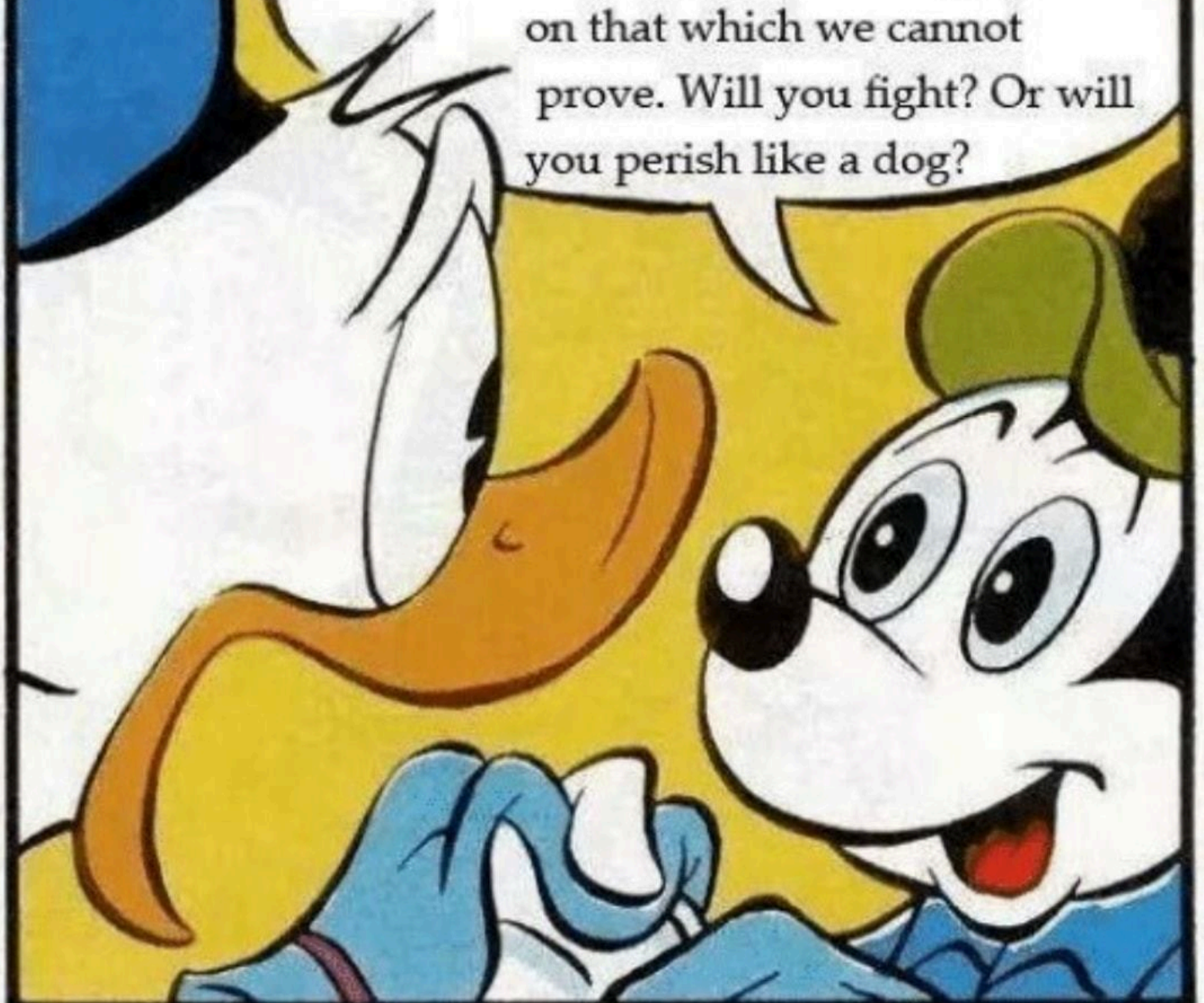
You have a 2 dice penalty to all rolls that do not make someone question their own reality. This Compulsion ends by either dealing Bane Severity in Willpower damage or by triggering a Clan Compulsion in another. If you choose to take the Willpower damage yourself, it becomes Aggravated damage.



spookyscaryskeletitties

Everything that we know and love is reducible to the absurd acts of chemicals, and there is therefore no intrinsic value in this material universe.

Hypocrite that you are,
for you trust the chemicals in your
brain to tell you they are chemicals.
All knowledge is ultimately based
on that which we cannot
prove. Will you fight? Or will
you perish like a dog?



Two Ravnos, deep in the throes of their Compulsion

Chimerstry

Nicknames: Chicanery, Glamour, Illusion, Maya, Mirage, Jedi Mind Tricks

Characteristics

Chimerstry, the signature ability of the Ravnos clan, is actually an amalgam of Obfuscate and Presence. Whereas nearly all uses of Obfuscate are versions of “You don’t see me”, the addition of Presence -- the discipline of “You *want* to see me” -- energizes its powers of mental illusions. Regular Obfuscate (other than Mask of 1000 Faces and Impostor’s Guise) subtracts from perceived reality, but Chimerstry adds to it. It’s a subtle distinction, and a somewhat paradoxical application of a power meant to hide, but those suit the Ravnos just fine.

In addition to being defeated by the Auspex power *Sense the Unseen* (Wits + Auspex vs. Resolve + Obfuscate), illusions created by Chimerstry can be seen for what they are by someone who disproves their existence, such as by putting their hand through an illusory wall. At higher levels of mastery this disbelief becomes more difficult as multiple senses are engaged by the illusion; Wits or Resolve + Insight must defeat the vampire’s Resolve + Obfuscate by a margin of the illusionist’s Obfuscate rating. Frequent targets of Chimerstry sometimes end up attempting to disbelieve everything around them, often leading to mental impairment (and, quite often, to the amusement of the Ravnos).

Chimerstry effects typically fade at the end of a scene, although they can be made permanent by taking one point of Aggravated willpower damage for each power level (1, 3, or 5) of the illusion. Such illusions remain permanent until struck by the rays of the sun or until any of the Aggravated damage is healed, whichever comes first. (To prevent confusion between this kind of Willpower damage and others, use a **+** instead of an X.) A permanent illusion does not count towards the limit of the number of illusions a vampire can actively maintain. A vampire may make a number of simultaneous illusions equal to their dots in Obfuscate.

■ **Type:** Mental

■ **Masquerade threat:** Low to high, depending on application. An illusionary rose or brick wall is unlikely to draw notice, but an illusionary T-Rex down the main drag utterly violates the Masquerade.

■ **Blood Resonance:** Sanguine. Poets, painters, sculptors, and musicians; writers of fantasy; young children, the delusional, and those on hallucinogenics. (Even though Obfuscate has the Melancholic resonance, Chimerstry (being an amalgam of Presence) has a different resonance.)

Level 1 Obfuscate Power: Mirage

■ **Amalgam:** Presence 1

With this power, the vampire is able to craft a stationary illusion to fool one or more senses. It is not able to interact with a use except in the most passive of ways; an illusory wall could be given the texture of brick, but attempting to climb it will disperse it; an illusory gun would feel cold but disappear upon being picked up, etc.

■ **Cost:** Free

■ **Dice Pool:** Resolve + Obfuscate

■ **System:** The vampire rolls to make a stationary illusion which engages one sense. Raise the difficulty to manifest the illusion by one for each additional sense engaged; movement (such as a waving flag or rippling water) counts as an additional sense. For example, an illusion of a crackling bonfire which emits heat and smoke would have a difficulty of 5 (sight, motion, smell, sound, and touch), whereas an illusion of a smelly pile of garbage would have a difficulty of 2 (sight and smell) and an illusion of a poster would only need 1 (sight).

■ **Duration:** One scene, unless made permanent.

Level 3 Obfuscate Power: Mithyātva

■ **Prerequisite:** Mirage

From the Hindu word meaning “false belief”, this is a more advanced and interactive form of Mirage. Illusions crafted with this power can appear to move about, and so long as the vampire concentrates on the power they can even realistically interact with others. Without such guidance, however, their actions revert to what video gamers would call a “programmed NPC behavior loop.”

■ **Cost:** One Rouse Check

■ **Dice Pool:** Resolve + Obfuscate

- **System:** The vampire rolls to make a mobile, interactive illusion which engages one or more senses as explained in *Mirage*, above. These illusions can also be given an emotional component; for an additional level of difficulty the illusion can be particularly fearsome, alluring, or otherwise believable. For as long as the vampire is within earshot and line of sight, she can control the illusion's reactions and use her own skills to maintain interactivity. However, if she is not present, then the programming reverts to Resolve + Obfuscate. A vampire may upgrade a *Mithyātva* illusion to a *Maya* illusion (if they have that power) by making a second Rouse Check.
- **Duration:** One scene, unless made permanent.

Level 5 Obfuscate Power: Maya

- **Prerequisite:** Mithyātva

Another Hindu word, this one means “magic” and the effects this power creates are truly magical; not only do the illusions take on a life of their own but they can even convince people they are being harmed by them.

- **Cost:** Two Rouse Checks

- **Dice Pool:** Resolve + Obfuscate

- **System:** As *Mithyātva*, above, but now the illusions can cause harm.

- ❑ To attack, the vampire rolls Wits + Obfuscate.
- ❑ The victim may dodge as normal, or if they believe the attack to be an illusion, roll Composure + Awareness to resist.
- ❑ If the attacker wins, the victim takes the margin in Willpower damage.
- ❑ Upon taking Willpower damage, the victim may roll Wits + Awareness to realize the damage is to their mind instead of their body; otherwise, they perceive physical wounds upon themselves. The difficulty for this is usually the vampire's attack roll, although this may be adjusted depending on the method of illusion; being attacked by an illusory dragon is enough to make anyone doubt its reality, but an illusion of being attacked by a Malkavian with Dementation might actually increase difficulty as one would expect Willpower damage in that instance.
- ❑ A Willpower track filled with Aggravated damage in this manner results in the victim being knocked unconscious for [Margin] hours.

- **Duration:** One scene, unless made permanent.

Author's Notes:

I really do like my 3-power version of Vicissitude the best, because it does distill the essence of the discipline into its core components: shape flesh, shape bone, turn into horrible monster. Anything other than that is just padding in my opinion, and since I folded it into Protean it doesn't need to be padded out further.

I applied the same philosophy to Chimerstry. Its main elements seem to be "Make static image, make moving/interactive image, hurt people with image." I don't think I'm missing anything more than that, and so it also gets the three-level amalgam treatment.

And honestly, the first two powers of Obfuscate could just as easily go to Chimerstry. *Cloak of Shadows*? "I project an image in front of me that I hide behind." *Silence of Death*? "I produce illusionary countersound." *Unseen Passage*? "The image in front of me moves with me as I move." Heck, *Mask of 1000 Faces* might as well be Chimerstry in that it's a moving image laid over the owner's body.

Okay Erin, but why change the other disciplines?

To make them distinct from the Gangrel.

As written, I don't see anything unique about them other than Chimerstry and I think this is a missed opportunity. They are far too similar to the Gangrel for my tastes, with both having Animalism and Fortitude and a propensity for wanderlust. If you're going to go that route, you might as well just swap out Protean for Obfuscate and make them a Gangrel bloodline.

Why not instead further differentiate them from the Gangrel? In fact, why not make them the "reverse-Gangrel" clan? Both Gangrel and Ravnos as written are wanderers, but -- and this is the critical point -- while Gangrel are loners, the Ravnos are based off the Romani who travel in caravans. Shouldn't this make the Ravnos *anti*-loners? Shouldn't they travel in broods or troupes or covens or whatever the term is, along with their living relatives and ghoulded servants?

I think they should. That would actually make them distinct from other kindred, tie in to their Romani heritage without being racist, and make playing them more interesting. In modern times they'd basically be the carnies of the vampire world.

This focus on family is why I removed Animalism and Fortitude. Those are great disciplines *for loners*, but less useful when traveling with an extended family in a caravan or carnival. Instead I asked myself “What disciplines would be useful both for the carnies of today and the ‘gypsy caravans’ of yesterday?” Presence is useful because not only is that great for the people who want to play up the stereotypical huckster and con man, but it’s also useful for protecting your family from angry mobs and vengeful princes. It’s the silver tongue only helps bring in money and helps get you across borders to escape persecution. Between that and Obfuscate, it’s how you protect the people who protect you during the day... and because you have family to protect you during the day, you don’t need to forage for food in the wilderness (Animalism) or run screaming from Lupines and/or the sun (Fortitude).

As for Celerity, I confess that my decision was mainly based on “rule of cool” meets “gypsy stereotype.” I’ve seen too many movies where the Romani women were sensual dancers, the men were devilishly clever musicians, and they were all good with knives. Celerity both compliments and enhances this concept, and it also allows them ways to escape when they’re inevitably blamed for things going wrong in the city.

And now we come to the weakness. I changed it for three reasons:

1. It’s racist AF. “The Ravnos are vampire Romani, and all Ravnos are criminals, so by extension all Romani are criminals too.”
2. It’s not in tune with folklore.
3. It makes them difficult to play, because now you have a character who **MUST** cause trouble and stir the shit. Moreso, this is a great way for a “chaotic asshole” player to ‘justify’ conning the other PCs and that could lead to inter-party strife.

So instead, I used a variation on the “aura of unease” weakness from first edition, but changed it to reverse the racism. Instead of “All gypsies are thieves”, it’s “All Ravnos are blamed for everything that goes wrong, and so that scapegoating falls upon their families as well.” This is an in-game justification for why the Romani are hated and suspected of crimes. I suppose you could argue that this is moral whitewash which takes the fault of racism and xenophobia away from humanity and blames it on

supernatural causes, and to an extent I guess that's true. But it's not explaining away ALL racism as the fault of vampires, just the racism towards this one type of people. Maybe you'll think it's awful, but I think it's a hell of a lot more palatable than "Ravnos are criminals and Ravnos are Romani, so the Romani are either criminals themselves or tacitly permit the existence of such within their community."