

SONS OF KHALIL BLOODLINE

VIZIERS AND JUDGES

ALL YOUR CRIMES WILL BE JUDGED

Within domains across Persia the Middle East and beyond, the elusive yet influential lineage of Shadow councillors known as the Ibn Khalil have held sway for centuries. Behind the thrones of beggar Princes and witch Queens, behind the might of undead Caliphs and blood thirsty tyrants from South East Asia to the Mediterranean, Judges are synonymous with the iron fist of Kindred authority. Wreathed in laws they are bound to uphold, studying power that is forever denied them, they are the ultimate embodiment of the power behind the throne, and as ambassadors, councillors, scholars and judges, the Sons of Khalil have followed in the footsteps of their ancient founder to become known as the Viziers of the night.

Background: The tales of the bloodline's dark father were born from bloody beginnings in an unnamed city almost two thousand years ago. In his mortal life Khalil bin Haquim was a principled man, a magistrate and an authoritarian. Embraced in his elder years against the strict laws of the bloody 'Caliph' who ruled the domain, he was forced to destroy his own Sire when his embrace was discovered or share in her fate. Taught the lessons of Kindred justice he was treated as a pariah and an outcast for decades. He faced many trials in the years that followed as the balance of rule shifted throughout the domain during his first centuries. Surviving numerous plots and schemes he steadily began to rise in power, until his knowledge and influence grew to win him favour, and in time the position of Vizier of the Sultan's ruling council. A century of power later ended with the destruction of his childer in a plot that was meant to assassinate him, and in the nights that followed he unleashed a bloody maelstrom of vengeance that nearly tore the city apart against those who had robbed him of the only connection to what remained of his dwindling humanity. Over the following nights he sought out and destroyed the conspirators one by one in the intricately woven plot, until he finally discovered that it was in fact the Sultan himself who had instigated his assassination from the paranoid fear Khalil would some night take his throne.



That night the dark father reaped his final vengeance and left the city forever. With the strength of his now eldritch blood he created a new brood of sons, and forged a path of righteousness and council to aid them. He instilled in them the arts of politics, history and law and in time they spread far and wide to follow in his footsteps and bare his name.

These Sons became infamous, Judges known and feared throughout the night. They helped bring low the wickedness of a bloodline of undead demon Kings known as the Jinn,

they passed judgement on the laws of both high and low, and when the Jinn were hunted to the point of destruction by the holy men of the Magi, they protected and bound them to their will through the power of their blood. During the following decades the bloodline forged alliances with neighbouring domains, aided in disputes and embraced childer of their own. With the eventual rise of Islam the bloodline's influence spread west throughout North Africa and into Europe across Mediterranean shores where their legend grew powerful.

Though the Sons of Khalil are not a numerous bloodline to this night, the weight of their influence is unmistakable in any domain in which they reside. The Elder council of the bloodline exists somewhere out in the mountains of what is now Iran where the resting place of Khalil and his first sons still resides.

Nicknames: Viziers, Judges

Parent Clan: Mekhet

Weakness: As well as the weakness shared by their parent clan all Judges are bound by the will of their ancient founder to adhere to the Kindred laws of the domains they are in. Any Judge that fails to uphold a legally held and undisputed Kindred law *knowingly or otherwise* feels the weight of judgement laid upon them, and in turn suffers a -3 penalty to all actions until they are judged by the laws they have broken. As a reinforcement of this, no Vizier is able to singularly wield supreme Kindred authority outside of their role as councillors without facing the same penalty. For this reason the often politically neutral Viziers are viewed by many Princes to be the first choice for the position of Seneschal; efficient, sagacious, law bound and most importantly, unlikely to ever claim praxis from their undead lords.

Character Creation: As masters of Kindred law and undead politics all Viziers hone their mental and social attributes until they are as sharp as blades. For with such a weapon as the law on their side and the power to influence Kindred opinion, Judges can execute enemies and exact revenge against those who would stand against them more deftly than direct action could ever achieve or allow. Similarly the skills of Academics, Investigation, Politics and Persuasion are each coveted, studied and refined through years of mentoring upon first entering the Bloodline, and these along with the Merits of Status, Contacts and Retainers (See the Jinn Retainers sidebar) are actively cultivated.

Lastly, the patriarchal views of the Bloodline rarely consider women worthy of direct embrace into its ranks, however in recent decades a hand full of formidable female Mekhet have joined the bloodline to share the title of their brothers as one of the 'Sons' of Khalil.

Covenant: While many Judges retain their impartiality in relation to the covenants, a number of the nominally unbound Sons of Khalil have come to claim membership of the ruling covenant in their domains. While the bloodline is largely secular, that is not to say that terrifying Inquisitors of the damned cannot be found enforcing the divinity of gods law within it's ranks. Similarly the innate laws and edicts of the Invictus and Carthian Movement lend themselves well to the Judges. Recently as the phenomena known as Carthian Law has come to their attention, many Elder Viziers among the bloodline's ruling council whisper the name of a shadowy triumvirate of Carthian Mekhet known as the Troika that some say are connected to outcast members of the Bloodline's recent past and were instrumental in its inception.

Disciplines: Asha, Auspex, Majesty, Obfuscate

ASHA

Named from the ancient Zoroastrian concept of truth, justice and order, Asha is considered as much a path of enlightenment as it is a discipline within the bloodline. As Judges progress in their understanding of this discipline they are often afforded the right to a minimum level of status within in the bloodline as a result.

Opening the senses to the righteous power of Asha often takes the form of visions and portents, which the Judge must interpret; a Kindred murderer may appear with their hands covered in blood and ash, a liar may appear with the tongue of a snake, or a poacher may appear to have stolen blood dripping from their fangs. These powers are always seen through the lense of the Kindred laws (not mortal laws) specific to the domain in which they are used, and where some Princes may decree that feeding on the blood of 'children', 'police' or 'holy men' is a crime, the Princes of other domains may not. For this reason domain law must be clear and undisputed for this power to function correctly.

VIGILANCE •

The first step on the path to Asha is understanding when a Kindred law is about to be broken in their presence. This brief flash of insight occurs even if the Judge has not formally studied the Kindred laws of the domain in which they are in, and gives the Judge the opportunity to address the crime about to be broken. To some extent this power mitigates the possibility that a Judge may accidentally commit a crime and fall prey to the Bloodline's weakness, while the other more fundamental use is to stop others committing crimes in their presence.

Cost: –

Dice Pool: Wits + Academics + Asha

Action: Reflexive

As long as one success is gained on the reflexive roll the character receives a brief flash of enlightenment showing what crime is about to be committed and how. Exceptional success gains no further insight. Failure means the Judge receives no premonition, and a botch means this power cannot be used by the character for the rest of the night.

TONGUE OF THE BETRAYER ••

It is said that a single lie can damn a thousand souls. As keepers of law and order Judges have the ability to sense the foul touch of lies through the use of this power. When a Vizier employs Tongue of the Betrayer they focus their senses and infuse them with the essence of Asha.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Investigation + Asha – subjects Manipulation

Action: Instant - Lasts until the end of the scene

Upon successfully initiating this power any lies the subject of the power communicates will be recognised as such, and appear distorted or warped. Contrary to its name this power works for both written and spoken methods of communication and are often accompanied by visions such as a liars tongue dripping with black bile, a screeching sound to their voice, or written words smoldering with deceit. This power only works from the perspective that the conveyor of the lie must know they are lying. If they are giving an accurate account of something they don't know is a lie, or if they have been Dominated into believing what they are saying is true then this power does not come into effect. However, on an exceptional success a Judge can even discern a lie that is being told through mind affecting powers such as Dominate. In this case the subject must originally have known that what they are now communicating is a lie. Failure on the roll means that the lie is not perceived, while a botch means all lies from the subject for the duration of this effect are fervently believed.

WEIGH THE HEART •••

This dread power, possibly above all others, is feared among Kindred law breakers high and low, and takes the Judge's understanding of Asha a step further, enabling her to look into the shadowy recesses of a Kindred heart and search for the dark taint of corruption or crimes against Kindred law.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation + Asha versus subjects Composure + Blood Potency

Action: Instant

The Judge must make eye contact with the target for this power to work, no matter how briefly. The reflection of the subjects heart they perceive depends on the number of successes they achieve on the contested roll. Each success achieved above those rolled by the subject give the Judge a brief vision or image of a crime the subject has committed. The most serious crimes against the current domain law are shown first in descending order, followed by crimes under previous domain laws. So powerful is this level of Asha that mind affecting powers such as Domination cannot hide the subjects crimes, as the Vizier is literally seeing the scars of crimes left on the subject's soul, not merely reading their mind. When receiving visions of particularly bloody crimes the Vizier may need to roll to keep the Beast in check. Searching for a specific crime can be done at a -2 penalty to the roll.

BLOOD OATH ••••

The social currency of personal agreements and favours between Kindred, sometimes referred to as boons, often rely solely on the word and reputation of individuals involved. While breaking a boon can and will have dire social repercussions for the Status of the oath breaker, it still is possible to withhold a boon with relative ease.

A Blood Oath however takes the words of a formal agreement, which is either spoken or written and agreed by all parties, and binds it to the will and blood of a presiding Vizier. Agreements can be made amongst any number of Kindred and no participant can act against the tenets of the pledge once their words have been made bond.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Academics + Asha – the highest resolve score among the participants (excluding the Judge)

Action: Instant

Many Viziers make the drawing up of the formal agreement a great ritual. This can include; requesting blood from all parties, oaths to be written in their own vitae, the velum used is harvested from their undead skin, the oath is to be written using their own finger bones, or the words of agreement are to be spoken at precisely midnight amongst a gathering of peers etc. What truly binds the contract however is the will and blood of the presiding Vizier. All parties in a Blood Oath must undertake the agreement under their own free will without supernatural compulsion (though the motivating factors behind that decision remains their own concern), the Oath can only pertain directly to those Kindred involved in the contract not third parties, and each party must make a formal acknowledgment that they agree with all the terms of the agreement through either a deed, word or signature.

As long as a single success is gained on the roll (and the agreement does not contain any contradictory clauses) the oath will hold true for all concerned. Failure means the oath has not been bound, which the Judge and all the parties involved will intuitively be made aware of, while a botch means this power cannot be used for a full lunar month. Exceptional successes offer no further benefits to the resulting bond.

Should one (or more) of the parties attempt to break their side of the bargain they will find themselves completely unable to work against the power of the bond and must *'to the best of their ability'* uphold their side of the agreement. It should also be noted that Oaths remain even if one or more members of the oath fall into torpor or meet final death (including the Judge) unless a specific clause in the agreement regarding this is stipulated. In fact such is the power of these contracts that Blood Oaths can only come to an end under two circumstances; when the agreement has been met, either by fulfilment of an action, its duration expiring or some formal prerequisite having been met, or, if all the parties involved in the forging of the contract agree of their own free will (again without supernatural compulsion) to formally end it.

The power of the Blood Oath is not to be taken lightly, but through such agreements peace has been brokered in warring domains, oaths of allegiance formed and banishments enacted.

BURDEN OF GUILT •••••

Often those who have committed crimes in the eyes of Kindred law will seek to avoid facing their just punishment. However, by focusing his will on such a criminal in their domain a Vizier can, at will, inflict them with a demoralizing sense of guilt and Damoclean foreboding for the rest of the night that weighs down their soul with the burden of their crimes.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: Presence + Persuasion + Asha versus subjects Resolve + Blood Potency

Action: Instant

In order for this power to be used three criteria must be met; the Vizier must have met the criminal in person at least once, their guilt must have been proven against the domains current Kindred law (usually through using the power of Weigh the Heart) and not have been brought to justice for the crime, and lastly the criminal must still be within the borders of the domain in question when *Burden of Guilt* is enacted. As long as each of these are met a Vizier need not even see or be in the presence of the subject of their righteous ire, but can unleash the effects of this power from anywhere within their current domain.

On achieving success on the roll the criminal suffers a crushing backlash of guilt for the rest of the night that corresponds to the seriousness of their crime. This in large part is based on the edicts of the domains Kindred laws and is measured on a scale from a penalty of -1 to all actions for a minor crime, to -5 to all actions for the worst crimes imaginable such as diablerie. Storytellers are encouraged to decide what level of punishment is fitting depending of the severity and type of ruler or government in charge of their domain. An example can be found below:

Penalty Crime

- 1 *Accidental domain trespass, feeding in sight of Elysium, breaking a minor Elysium law*
- 2 *Breaking a boon, not providing an agreed blood tithe, failure of presentation to the Prince upon entering the city, breaking a feeding restriction, poaching, killing a court retainer*
- 3 *Poaching from a Herd, breaking Elysium peace, attacking an Inner Circle member, creating progeny without court consent, aggravated domain or Haven trespass*
- 4 *Destruction of an Elder without legal cause, treason, giving aid or sanctuary to an enemy of the domain, accidental Masquerade breach, practising satanic worship*
- 5 *Diablerie, wanton Masquerade breach,*

On an exceptional success the target is also drained of the same number of Willpower as the penalty number, causing them to suffer a vicious failure of morale. Failure on the roll means that the criminal is unaffected, while a botch means the Judge is deemed unworthy and suffers the penalties themselves as a failure against Asha.

JINN RETAINERS

Outcasts and Assassins

In ancient Persia the Sons of Kalil laid low the demon Kings known as the Jinn, wiped their history from the night and orchestrated their pogrom through the wrath of Magi holy men. The bloodline's influence and adherence to the laws of justice allowed the Sons of Khalil to mediate a truce and negotiate for the Jinn's protection. The result was slavery. Any Jinn not bound to the will of a Judge would be hunted to destruction, and only those Jinn shackled by the blood bond to a Judge would be spared. So it has been for centuries. To this night Viziers who hold status and prestige within the ranks of the bloodline are afforded the use of these most cunning Retainers as assassins, spies and bodyguards. With Storyteller approval a single Jinn Retainer may be used by characters who hold Status in the Sons of Khalil Bloodline and must be purchased with Merit points or experience as a minimum ●●● Retainer. A Jinn Retainer's Attributes, Skills and Discipline levels should follow the Retainer guidelines found on p.116 of the World of Darkness Core Rulebook, and their Retainer level may be increased through experience or Merit dots as normal. Jinn Retainers must be blood bound to their Vizier masters. For more information see Bloodline: Jinn - Outcasts and Assassins pdf. It is said that some of the most influential elders within the bloodline are able to call upon cadres of these deadly Retainers to do their bidding at any one time, though the influence needed to be able to wield this level of power is reserved for only the eldest and wisest Viziers who sit on the bloodline's ruling council.

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A Prophecy

Members of the High Council, Guardians of Asha, consanguineous of Khalil (peace be upon him)

I write to you now with a dire warning, a reflection of things to come that appeared to me when the sun reached its zenith. I looked and I saw in the darkness three lights shining in the heavens. The first light wore the face of a prophet, and he foretold the end of days, but he spoke with a snakes tongue and had a thousand eyes. The second light was of a burning pillar that resides in the hearts of all men, and a great shout went up across the land, and the people of many nations called out to the heavens for the light to be free, empires fell and mighty Kings were laid low by the people, and thus the earth moved beneath my feet. Then came the third light, and it shone with fury as the crescent of a blood red moon, and in its light a chain was broken, a black stone was sundered and a host of demons were set loose upon the world. A mighty snake gave birth to a serpent with three heads that turned on the first and devoured it whole, though it had birthed them. And I wept as the third light guttered and faded to nothing, and all that was heard were the edicts of Asha fading to nothing as the last embers of the crescent moon crumbled to ash and blew away on a mighty wind.

I fear in my heart that we are part of this. That we will be caught up and spread to the four wind. But most of all I fear this time is soon upon us.

Wisest of the wise, Elders to The Eldests black blood, I beseech you for council, I beseech you for answers and pray that these events may yet not come to pass.

*Nazeem bin Haskim bin Ali bin Nicodemus bin Khalil
Vizier to the Caliph of Tehran
Seer of the Scorched Eye*

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