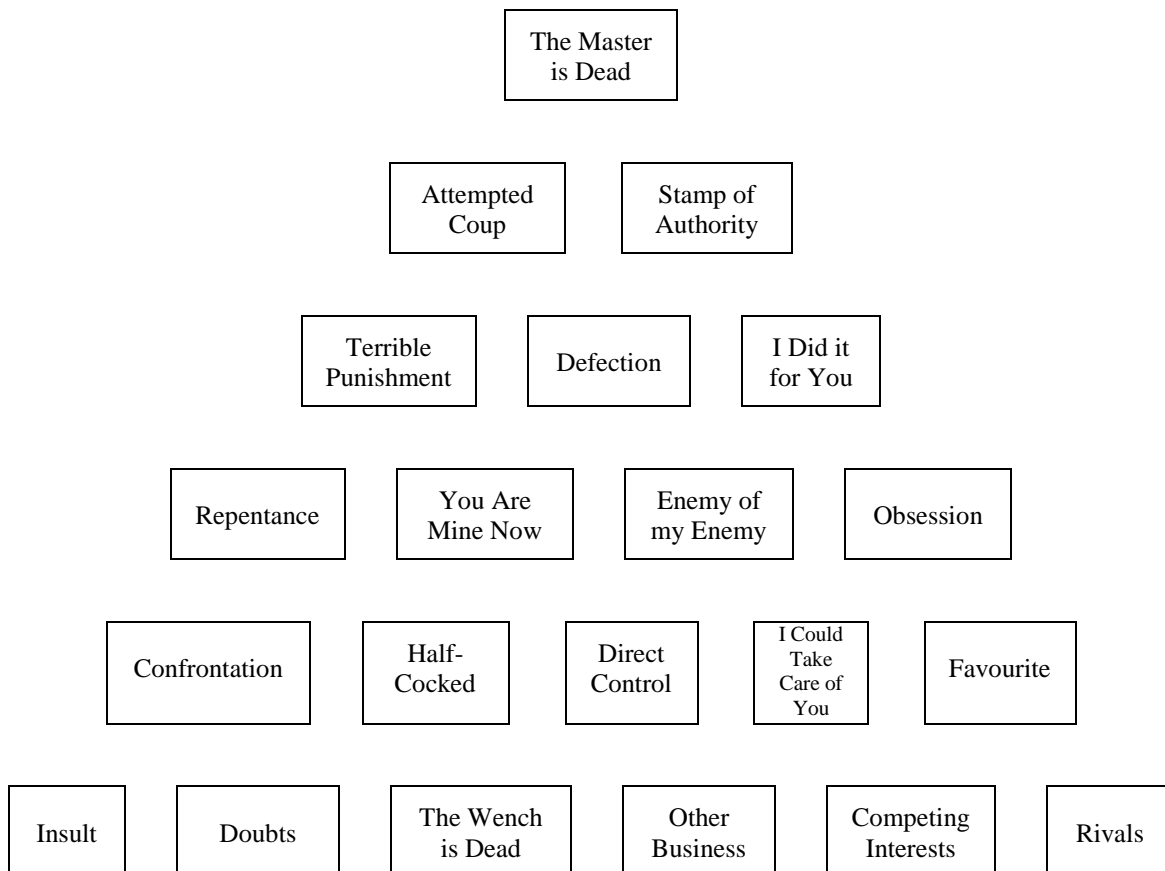


Dracula Suspyramid

Dracula is a singular lord, brooking no equals in his rule over his empire; at the same time, he is a hands-on master, unusually willing to exert direct control over even minor assets. Consequently, a Dracula Dossier Conspiracy is likely to be a tighter ship than most conspiracies faced by Agents in a Night's Black Agents campaign. Nevertheless, it's not immune to fracture: minions may compete for Dracula's favour, let their baser instincts lead them into actions that go against his interests, or even see the error of their evil ways.

Dracula is also an unforgiving master, who feels little loyalty to those he controls. Furthermore, what Van Helsing calls his "great child-brain" turns quickly to violence and punishment. Therefore, each tier of responses suggests ways for Dracula's presence to be felt in his Conspiracy's stresses.

One concept referred to in the descriptions below is the Vassal. Vassals are the highest-ranking servants of Dracula - the ones whose presence might count as a proxy of his own. Who counts is mostly a matter of atmosphere: the Brides, any vampirised members of the original 1894 team, or powerful individuals listed under the Third Forces, such as Bathory or Orlok, are all logical candidates. Vassals make particularly appropriate Suitors and Beloved.



Tier 1

Insult: Members of one node insult another, whether unintentionally, such as by arriving late and unprepared to a critical meeting, covertly, like cracking a joke at someone else's expense that's deliberately passed on, or overtly, like calling attention to their failing in front of a mutual boss. Fray the connection between the two.

Doubts: One node, or an important member of it, begins to waver in their loyalty. This may be motivated by genuine stirrings of conscience, or by fear. Either way, its uncertainty makes it less effective against the Agents - strip 1 point from each pool of the node's assets.

The Wench is Dead: Evidence of a past sin reemerges, or is remembered. Perhaps a dead girlfriend's body is found, marked money shows up, or a past affiliation with the police revealed. Fray any one connection.

Other Business: One node becomes intensely involved in its own affairs, ignoring its work for the Conspiracy in favour of drug-smuggling, hunting children, murder for hire, or other unpleasant pastimes. Fray one connection between the node and its superiors.

Competing Interests: Two nodes find their outside interests in conflict, such a detective assigned to investigate the activities of a criminal node, whilst finding himself under scrutiny from his superiors in the police. Fray the connection between the two competing nodes, and a connection from one of them to their mutual superior if any.

Rivals: The competition between the Suitors intensifies. Fray any connection between the Suitors.

Dracula's Presence

Dracula keeps tabs on his minions at all times. His means vary, but if they can parallel the way he is Scouting the Agents, it should: if they're targeted by Shadow Agent, let them see rats, owls, and other "meaner things" following Conspiracy members; if he has targeted an Agent with Enhanced Interrogation, let those minions whose dreams he has entered see kinship with her; if he has resorted to Quid pro Quo, have minions obsessively write journals that there's surely no way Dracula is reading, right?

Tier 2

Confrontation: A meeting between two nodes, or two Vassals, becomes heated, though not physically violent. Tensions between the two worsen, and the strife spreads elsewhere. Fray the link between the two, and two additional links.

Half-Cocked: One node launches a hasty and ill-considered operation in a bid to win favour or bury their qualms. This may be a hit on the Agents, but not necessarily – regardless, it should fail, leaving a clue to the node at the scene, and most likely weakening it for later. As Dracula makes his displeasure at the mistake known, fray the connections between the node and its immediate superior and subordinates.

Direct Control: One of the Vassals, or even Dracula himself, takes direct control of a node that is foundering. Unfray one link that has previously been frayed as a direct result of the Suspyramid, but fray two more (as other nodes grow fearful of associating with it), and plant a clue as the new leader's location or other activities.

I Could Take Care of You: A lower level node feels unhappy or unprotected by its superior, and so looks for new protection, most likely from one of Dracula's Vassals. Stress the connection with the superior, but draw another connection to a node on the same level as or one level above the superior, and plant a clue to the Vassal's current location and activities..

Favourite: The Beloved picks one of the Suitors to favour, bestowing previously withheld powers, blessings, or attentions. The favoured Suitor receives +2 to all pools, and the disfavoured +2 to all Difficulties. (This is a general guideline intended to represent the increased assets and more robust connections of the newly favoured Suitor, and vice versa for the one out in the cold. The Director should take this status into consideration, even if she alters or limits the specific additions.) Fray the links between the disfavoured Suitor and two other nodes.

Dracula's Presence

At this point, Dracula responds to failures in his minions by entering their dreams and emphasising his mastery. Those engaged in the Confrontation or who have betrayed their Doubts, the node looking for new leadership, and the un-Favoured Suitor may all feel this pressure (Direct Control takes care of itself in this regard). Either they are worn down, with one point stripped from each of three relevant pools, or they are enervated by the Master's touch and have a dedicated pool of three they can use for any roll.

On the other hand, Dracula responding in this way to failures at tier 1 may *prompt* the failures at tier 2 - rule by fear is not always the most effective. This works particularly well with Half-Cocked and the longing for protection that drives I Could Take Care of You.

Tier 3

Repentance: One node (most logically one represented by only one or two people, or else a single member of a larger node) repents of serving Dracula and his Conspiracy. As with Doubts, the Director should decide whether they're motivated more by fear or genuine conscience, but either way they go on the run and trade what they know to the Agents in exchange for help escaping. Stress every connection from the node they came left (or if they were the whole thing, from their direct superior) and the rest of the Conspyramid.

You Are Mine Now: One of Dracula's Vassals tries to secure the personal loyalty (over and above that to Dracula) of a node. Should they be successful, draw a new connection to the Vassal and fray every connection to other superiors - should they be unsuccessful, stress any connection between the Vassal and node, and fray any three other connections the Vassal has to the rest of the Conspyramid.

Enemy of my Enemy: One node provides information for the agents to fatally strike at another node, seeking to use this new force to do down their rivals. One of Dracula's nodes is almost certainly going to try to take the Agents out as well. Stress the connection between the two nodes.

Obsession: One Suitor (or both) becomes obsessed with the other or with the Beloved, following and watching them (or employing their minions to do so) constantly. They receive +4 to the Difficulty of any roll that doesn't involve the other Suitor or the Beloved, save for direct physical confrontations. (As above, the Director may alter this modifier to suit specific game conditions, but she should remember that the other Suitor's operatives are almost certainly always on the scene). Fray the connection between the two Suitors again, and plant a clue as to whereabouts and activities of whomever is the focus of the obsession..

Dracula's Presence

Dracula's Vampyramid responses at this level are things he's especially likely to handle personally, which could be taken to suggest his hand being taken off the reins of his Conspiracy - all the Suspyramid options at this tier could work as consequences of that. In a Dust or Stakes mode game, Dracula's presence should still be felt in much the same ways as at tier 1, in order to make him seem omnipresent (respectively, to emphasise his power relative to the Agents, or to emphasise the need to destroy him). In a Burn or Mirror mode game, it might be worth easing off on such signs (respectively, to suggest the Agents do have ways of weakening his grip though it may come with great losses for them, or to demonstrate that even Dracula is not exempt from a world of betrayals).

Tier 4

Terrible Punishment: Dracula steps in to inflict, well, a terrible punishment on a node or Vassal that's been disloyal or ineffectual. Should they survive this, stress every connection they have to the rest of the Conspyramid - should they be wiped out, stress every connection from their direct superior - unless that's Dracula himself, in which case fray every connection in the Conspyramid as everyone wonders where he might strike next.

Defection: One of Dracula's Vassals tries to leave his Conspiracy - along with whichever nodes they control - and set up for themselves. Whether this is successful should depend most on whether the Director judges the stresses the *Agents* have placed on the Conspiracy point to it. Should the Vassal succeed, break any connections between them and their nodes with the rest of the Conspyramid (and draw a new map of connections among them), and fray every remaining connection among what's left - should they fail, break the Vassal's connections anyway (and have Dracula brutally kill them), and stress every connection from and among the nodes they tried to take with them.

I Did it for You: One of the Suitors murders the other as a token for their beloved, but then dies themselves, either fatally wounded by the other Suitor or as a punishment by the Beloved. In larger groups, this is a major hit or other deathblow to the rival node, followed by a minicoup within the rogue node that paralyzes it and exposes its activities. Stress all the connections from the Suitors' nodes.

Dracula's Presence

By now, Dracula's minions must have made several failures against the Agents, for which he would be inclined to punish them. And he himself must have made several failures, for which he would be inclined to punish... them. His Vampyramid responses at this point are about Strategic Retreat, and he would think nothing of sacrificing his minions to cover this. Terrible Punishment goes well with these options: the node he targets may be wiped out to make Marlow Has Left The Building look real; or Sacrificed Pawn may be repurposed to this node rather than Edom, used to the Agents into a dead end and/or ambush.

If he resorts to Testudo instead, the sudden absence makes him look weak, and leaves his Conspiracy adrift: it may embolden the Vassal for their Defection, or be the stress that finally pushes the Suitor into Doing it for Him. Either way, the Agents should notice a diminution in whatever general signs of Dracula's presence the Director has used. Whether this is worth a refresh - they must be getting to him - is up to the Director.

Tier 5

Attempted Coup: One of Dracula's Vassals, emboldened by the fractures in his organisation, moves to eliminate him and seize power for themselves. For dramatic purposes, this should almost certainly fail - Dracula being killed by a subordinate at the eleventh hour has little chance of avoiding anticlimax. Either way, fray every connection in the Conspyramid.

Stamp of Authority: Dracula takes direct control of every part of the Conspiracy, suppressing both dissent and infighting. Remove one level of fraying from every connection in the Conspyramid, even restoring broken links to stressed (thus ensuring what's left of the Conspiracy will be up to providing a somewhat unified front for the final act). However, plant one extra clue to Dracula's location and endgame in every node, and refresh one point in every pool for each Agent (they know they got to him).

Dracula's Presence

Dracula's direct presence is felt all through the Conspyramid here. Whether he is Stamping his Authority or punishing everyone who might have supported the Attempted Coup, example killings and ravaged dreams are the order of the day, and talk of the Master is on everyone's lips. The Director should step up whatever general signs of him she has been using.

As with tier 2, some minions will be crushed by Dracula's direct attention, while others will be bolstered. Mix the two results - reduced pools, or an extra pool - between individuals, but double the effects in each case.

Tier 6

The Master is Dead: Dracula is dead. His hands-on, singular form of leadership now works in the Agents' favour, as none of his underlings have the wherewithal to take control of his collapsing empire. There will certainly be messes if the Agents feel like cleaning them up, but the true work is done.

Dracula's Presence

Once it comes to the final battle, Dracula's presence is simple and direct. Afterwards, hopefully, the worst he can do to the Agents, his minions or anyone else is make them sneeze should the breeze blow his dust into their nostrils.