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Ventruue: Lords Over The Damned (Vampire The Requiem)



Synopsis

The first of the 5 clan books for requiem

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I find myself wondering where I should start the review for this product. Do I talk about the amazing art and the sudden change to color or do I discuss the mechanics or lack thereof? The book has great qualities but they seem to be obfuscated by an alarming number of bad qualities. The art is simply beautiful. Many of the pictures really bring to life the imagery of what is being discussed in the text. I found myself looking at the art like it was a coffee table book. Like older white-wolf clan books, nothing in this book is in stone. The book is masterfully put together to create an illusion that the book you are reading is a compilation of a vampire's years of investigative work. If this is the design that white-wolf was going for, it worked. The book does feel like a collection of works from a historian. Even the art and page layout gives the impression of a work in progress. The writing is top notch and completely consistent throughout the paperback tome (an odd change from the normal hardcover) however the story seems to suffer from a major problem; it's unnecessarily contradictory to other white-wolf products and is in many places simply pedantic. Rather than having a clear cut story or an easy to understand account, we are given a rather boring ancient text that suggests that divine forces did not like a king and cursed him. After you get through page after page of this, you begin to wonder why you just did not make up your own history. If you have read Requiem for Rome, you most likely had questions on the Julii. After all they looked just like the Ventrue, minus the flaw.

Are they Ventrue? Are they a new clan? Where did they come from? The Ventrue books slaps together some short hypothesis on the issue but does little more than what your gaming group could come up with in fifteen minutes. Yet another mystery unsolved. One of the new things added to this book is the Malkavians of the old game. Are they a new clan? No. Why? I don't know. Instead, they feel more like a "D&D template" that you apply to your vampire. It's a disease that can be spread and it is causing fear throughout the vampire community. I'm not going to lie, the Malkavians seem interesting and they have many plot devices, however, they would have been much more appealing as a bloodline or (heaven forbid) a new clan. Having them be a "D&D Template" that you apply to your vampire seemed a little forced, even in the text. (More on their Discipline later) If you have been wondering why the Ventrue are considered the lords of men and Vampires and why they have not been consistently overthrown by the Daeva, then unfortunately (to my great surprise) this book does not help. This leads me to Game Mechanics. I was hoping that after all these years; we would see some interesting Bloodlines and devotions for the Ventrue who consistently get little of both in all of white-wolfs books. This does not happen here. The first thing we are introduced to in the "crunch" section is the new bloodline called the Adrestio. They are without a doubt the most uninteresting bloodline I have ever read. With over 2000 years of the Ventrue history, we get a 20 year old bloodline that is an unprofessional (sex, drugs and rock n'roll) Ventrue that gets protean. At the very least, they could have tossed in a few other Ventrue bloodlines from the different ages. Very disappointing. Next we get Merits. The merits are both interesting and seem to add flavor to the Lords. Rather than going through all the different Merits that are here, I will say this. The merits are the best additions to this book. Not only are they easy to implement into your game, they also add many role play opportunities. The Devotions are fascinating but nothing that you would write home about. By the time you're done reading them you are not sure if you like them or you don't. The Devotions are not bad, but they seem like an afterthought. I can see using any of them but not necessarily going out of my way to put them on my character sheet. The new Discipline is for the Malkavians. If you played the old game then you know what this power is. Dementation, is a mixture of Nightmare and Dominate with a unique flare to it. If your PC's aren't crazy yet, they will be. Summary: Is the book bad? No. Ventrue Lords over the Damned does what it set out to do. It has unknown history mixed with fun vampire interviews with eccentric elders and unique individuals. The problem with the book is that really there isn't much more there. Where amazing opportunities could have been grasped by the writer in describing the Ventrue, I continuously wondered why other vampire did not simply wipe the Ventrue out. They were weak and really have not proved that they are Lords of anything. Then when we get to the "crunch" section, I find nothing but cobwebs and an

"IOU". I understand that this book is supposed to be an information supplement but...really? Nothing at all to distinguish the Ventrue from other clans? Wow. In closing, I will say this. If you like the Venture you may be disappointed in this book. It just doesn't have the kick that was really needed for them. If on the other hand, you are indifferent about the Ventrue, you may like this book. There is a lot of usable material that can be placed in your game right now. I for one am going to use very little from this book.

Thanks!

I just got Ventrue: Lords Over the Damned in the mail. I haven't had time to read it yet, but I have flipped through it and the production values for the book are out of sight. It's very nice. I'm glad I pre-ordered the others in the series.

I'm part of a strange sub-culture that reads these things but doesn't actually participate in the games (simply have no time). I also read a lot of the old V:tM books and the core material for V:tR, so despite being a non-gamer I'm not a noobcake. This book is eminently readable and highly enjoyable for non-gamers. The reason is it's not about the mechanics. As an engineer I appreciate the mechanics, so I read those too, but here are the real enjoyable aspects:- The stories. These are of course the meat of the book, and they're dark, with the barest of light peaking out often enough to avoid predictability. You see Ventrue cast not just as the stereotypical CEO, but in roles like king of a trailer park. Very creative- The art. Every page or two has a really interesting piece of vampire artwork. It's tough to find "monster art" that isn't cheesy or somehow silly. These guys have done a great job, and the artwork really complements the writing, particularly when you look back and forth between the portrait and the story and correlate the two; it really brings the story to the next level- The production. High quality. Between that and the artwork, that's where your money is going (as opposed to 8 clams for a simple paperback) I'd like to point out for any other horror fiction fans that due to this book's size (8.5 x 11 inches, think a full piece of printer paper in the US), the page count is a little deceiving. It's tough to justify paying a lot for a novel of 120 pages, but these are bigger pages, so it's probably closer to 200+ (not all of it is writing of course). Also, if you're not planning on playing the RPG, you don't really need to read anything before this, though obviously the core Requiem book would help. You can truly enjoy this book as a standalone. At any rate I hope this helps people looking for quality vampire fiction. Due to the fact that Ventrue is part of a larger world, if you like this you can count on more stuff right down your dark alley. Sorry, couldn't help myself.

I've never really seen the appeal of Ventrue, being generally aristocrats with a power to literally make people do whatever they want. This book didn't really change my mind about the clan, but it happily brought some depth and variety in order to avoid the upper-class pigeonhole. The artwork was also enjoyable, and the recurring theme of madness and degeneration kept me reading. The Merits, Flaws, and Derangements were the highlight for me, but it should also be noted that Malkavians are presented in this book as well. Malkavia in nWoD is a disease of madness with the accompanying Dementation Discipline, including the option of rolling Malkavians as a bloodline. I'm sure this is the result of popular demand, but given that the 2nd ed. Masquerade clan book for Malkavian was one of the best things White Wolf ever published, this offering pales in comparison. Sorry, still not enough to interest me in Ventrue. Worst of the Requiem clan books in my opinion.

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