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### **BARE BASICS**

#### **(what you should know before you start looking at cards)**

The basic run down of the game works like this. Each player starts with 30 pool (your life). Your pool is used for 3 things:

- 1) It is used to bring out your minions (typically vampires) who you use to defend the rest of your pool, as well as attack the pool of others.
- 2) It is used to power cards (like when you want to give your minion's big guns, or hunting grounds where they can gain blood, etc.)
- 3) It is your life. When it is gone, you can no longer influence the game world and have lost (you are 'ousted' from the game).

The goal of the game is to win more victory points (VP's) than any other player on the table. It is possible to do this even if you are ousted in the game (although that's quite rare). There are two ways of getting VP's.

- 1) Your prey is ousted (more on this later) – you earn 1 VP.
- 2) You are the last remaining survivor – you earn 1 VP.

In games with a time limit, you also get ½ a VP if you are one of the remaining players when time is up.

At any given stage of the game you have a prey, which is the player to the left of you, and a predator, which is the player to the right of you. If there are only two players left than your predator and prey is the same person. So, you will try to attack and remove your prey from the game, while defending yourself from you predator. Your minions (usually vampires) are the key to achieving this aim.

## **BASICS** **(the first things you should learn about the game)**

You begin the game with two sets of cards – one with a green back (your library) and one with an amber back (your crypt). From your library you draw 7 cards, and from your crypt you draw 4 cards. Your 7 library cards are put in your hand, and your 4 crypt cards are laid face down in front of you. The cards with the amber back are your minions (usually vampires, occasionally vampire hunters). The cards with the green back are cards that power your minions, or give you some direct influence in the game.

Your first concern at the start of the game is bringing your minions out into play. This is done in your influence phase (more on this later) by moving counters from your pool and putting them on your minion (as blood) at a measured rate. The more powerful the minion – the more counters you have to put on him/her before they come into play. This means bringing out many minions and/or powerful minions come at the cost of your life. Thus, the first lesson of V:TES strategy is learning the right balance of minions against your own life.

Once you have minions in play, you'll be able to play many more cards from your hand (your library cards), and begin to tear your prey apart. The most direct form of this kind of attack is called bleeding, which is an ability any of your minions can do during your minion phase (more on this later too) and is aimed (directed) towards your prey.

A BIG difference between V:TES and most other card games is that the norm is to draw a card immediately from your library after playing one (a card needs to explicitly say otherwise for you not to replace it). This means that you should ordinarily have 7 cards in your hand, unless there is a card that says otherwise.

Everybody has their own turn. The starting player is determined by a dice roll (or other random method). Once that player is finished, the player to their left (their prey) has their turn.

The typical turn follows these phases (in order):

Untap (untap all your cards)

Master (used to play master cards – your direct influence on the game world)

Minion (your minions chance to do something in the game world)

Influence (your chance to influence more minions to join your cause by transferring pool to them as blood)

Discard (used to play events, or just discard a card you don't want at that time).

When your minions attempt to do something (an action), only your predator or prey can stop (block) that action, unless the action is considered a directed (or D) action, in which case only the person you are directing the action towards can block it (directed actions against yourself become undirected actions). Your prey gets the first chance to stop you.

If someone tries to stop you, there are two things you can do:

- 1) You can play cards that allow your action to bypass the blocker.
- 2) You get blocked and your minion fights with his minion (enters combat).

Cards that allow you to bypass the blocker typically include stealth. For every point of stealth you have, the blocker needs to match it with intercept in order to block you. You can't play cards that give you stealth unless you need it, and s/he can't play intercept unless s/he needs it.

If you were bleeding – remember this is an action directed at your prey, meaning only s/he can block it, and you are successful, not only do you cause damage to your prey's life, but you also gain 'the edge', which is a token that can be used to tweak the game in your favour in a few ways.

If you end up in combat because you were blocked, then you will have the chance to play those red-faced cards that have been sitting in your hand (hopefully). Combat in VTES is very structured and each combat round has the following phases (typically called out by the acting player).

Cards before maneuvers (range)

Maneuvers

Cards before Strikes

Choose Strikes

Strike Resolution

Damage Resolution

Additional Strikes

Presses

During each step, both players involved have a chance to play cards. The acting player always plays cards first, and can play as many as s/he likes until s/he passes over to the other player. Then the other player can play cards until s/he passes it back to the first player. If the second player (the defending player) passes without playing cards, or anyone passes without playing cards after that, then combat moves onto the next step.

Combat is rather complex, and it is best you learn it by experience.

The only other action type worth mentioning is political actions. In political actions (votes), each player gets to cast votes that will either make the vote succeed or fail. Some cards give you votes, and some vampires have titles (like Archbishop of New York) which also give you votes. A referendum is held and if there are more votes in favour of the political action than against, the political action succeeds, otherwise it fails and has no effect. During political actions all players/minions on the table can vote.

And there you go. That's the basics of the game.