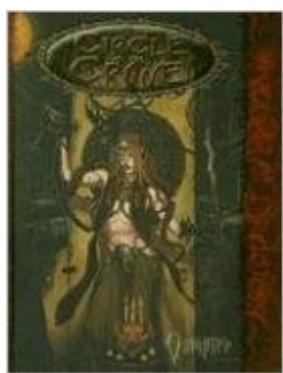


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# Circle Of The Crone (Vampire The Requiem - World Of Darkness - WOD)



## Synopsis

"We don't worship the same gods, you and I, but we're more alike than you think. Together, we are keeping something alive - something that has lived for thousands of years despite the wavering faith of mortal men. The old gods are not dead. They live within us. We give them life, warm blood, and they keep us from death. That's our covenant, our promise. Everything else is fashion." - Gwenyth the Grey, Acolyte Princess-in-Exile

This book includes:

- \* A look at the religion and culture of the Circle of the Crone - the vampire covenant made up of myriad pagan cults - and the Circle's worship of venerable creator goddesses
- \* Details about the nature of an Acolyte's Requiem, including guides to mythic roles, spirit contact and holy nights - useful whether you play a member of the Circle or have dealings with priests of the covenant
- \* The secret powers of the pagan Damned, with new bloodlines and factions drawn from as far away as Ireland and Japan, new mystic Disciplines and more than 25 new blood sorcery rituals

Circle of the Crone is a supplement for Vampire: The Requiem. For use with the World of Darkness Rulebook.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Given the thorough reviewing of content done by others here, I'll keep it short. This covenant book is good, and provides the colorful imagery and huge section of rituals and Disciplines that you would expect. My personal favorite section is "Roles in the Philosophy," which draws on archetypal figures and mythology (Maiden, Hermit, Crone, etc). The artwork is awesome and the verbal aesthetics are catching as well. My one criticism of the book is this: In White Wolf's effort to avoid creating an "official version" (metaplot/canon) of things this time around, they leave things a bit vacuous in

places. Thus, much of the book comes down to "one Crone cult does it this way, while another..." Oh, and everyone practices Cruac, which is really what the covenant boils down to anyway. I found it to be the most vague of the covenant books in terms of nailing down the philosophy and practices of the group, though given the loose affiliation and great variety between Crone cults, this suits the covenant well enough. (Not like it's the first offering in which White Wolf has written so much only to say so little.) All in all, a good read and a cool covenant.

I have been playing White-Wolf's "World of Darkness" games for years, even before the new "World of Darkness" came out. I remember when I first saw the previews for the new "Vampire: the Requiem" and was fascinated by the Circle of the Crone, a faction of pagan vampires focused on tribulation and creation. I've awaited the release of this, the last of the Covenant, books for quite some time, and now that its finally out I can say I am not disappointed. This book lays out the background, beliefs and practices of the Acolytes, and finally fleshes out WHY they do what they do. A much needed book. It opens up with a piece of fiction focusing on Trey "Loki" Fischer, a signature character from the Chicago setting. I would have preferred to have the "Litanies of the Crone", or some other IC mythology, but the fiction is interesting and does a good job of introducing the Acolytes. We then go on to the introduction, which tries to give an overview of the Acolytes and their beliefs, explaining what they are (and what they aren't). Essentially, they are a network of cults sharing some common beliefs, but with many regional differences. We also get some info on Cruac, and the Circle's relation with spirits. Theres also an interesting bibliography of books on Paganism that can be used as inspiration, though imho it leaves out some key titles (like say, "The Golden Bough", with all the accompanying myths of sacrifice and rebirth). But then, thats just my opinion. On to the real juicy stuff. The first chapter gives details on the history of the Circle of the Crone, mostly as a network of pagan cults organized by a shadowy figure called the Blind Queen, and forced together by persecution from the Lancea Sanctum. From there, we go on to a chapter of the Circle's beliefs, practices and organization. The roles of the Heirophant and Chorus are explained and expanded upon, alongside less common positions like the Skald (a bard or tale-teller), Valkyrja (warriors), Haruspex (diviners), and so forth. More interesting, there are also mythic roles like the Maiden, the Fool, the Hero, and the Crone. These are more spiritual roles, and each is given examples from various pagan myths the world over. Beyond that, we also get a look at Cruac, the Acolytes' relations with the spirit world, views on tribulation and creation, holy nights, worship and other topics. A new background, Temple, is given, along with a connected Cruac ritual. Essentially, it's a place of worship that functions much as a Haven. This chapter alone should be essential

reading for any chronicle involving the Acolytes. However, it also requires a lot of work for the ST, since the Circle of the Crone can vary so much from location to location. Chapter three focuses on politics of the Acolytes, how they find converts, how they seek out tribulation (often through conflict with other Covenants) and how they fit into a given domain. There's some interesting ideas in here, including the idea of Acolytes creating underground communities. The next chapter focuses on the factions and bloodlines, often a big draw for players. Numerous examples of factions are given, including the People of the Land (small rural covens), the Second Descent (devotees of chthonic gods of darkness), the Hag (vampires who are haunted by nightmares of a Crone like figure), Disciples of the Silence (nihilist worshippers of nothingness), Siapn (violently anti-Christian cultists from South America), Amanotsukai (who follow a corrupted form of Japanese Shinto), Daughters of the Goddess (fanatical feminist Goddess worshippers), and the Semioticians (scholars who study Cruac and other forms of blood magic). Examples of the variations on Cruac practiced by the different factions are given, mostly for flavor. There's also an Acolyte ghoul family, the Bellsmeade, hidden in there. They are a small, inbred cult of mortals in an isolated hotel, who are taught to worship their creator as a god. Fun stuff! The bloodlines are really exciting. A bit slanted, but still exciting. Of the five bloodlines, three are Gangrel (my favorite Clan ironically), and three are heavily female focused. The Asnam are a Daeva lineage that consider themselves gods, and have a Discipline that lets them connect with their worshippers (the final level actually allows them to reincarnate!). The Carnon are a lineage of Gangrel who live like pagan rock stars, and usually burn out fairly quickly. They embody the Horned God, and learn Nightmare in-Clan. The Childer of the Morrigan are mostly female warriors, and are a Gangrel lineage with Potence in-Clan and the ability to learn the Touch of the Morrigan ritual without knowing Cruac. The Gorgons are a serpent-themed bloodline of Ventre claiming descent from Medua, and have a snake-like Discipline called Amphivena. The Mara, or Lampreys, are a lineage of aquatic Gangrel who learn Obfuscate as a Clan Discipline. Once again, variations on Cruac are presented for the Mara, whose rituals are all conducted underwater. It's mostly flavor, but still very cool to work with. The next chapter explores the magics of the Circle, including the two new Disciplines for the above mentioned bloodlines (Ralab and Amphivena), several Devotions, and a huge amount of information on Cruac. All in all, we get some 25 Cruac rituals, including a few others hidden throughout the book. Information on how Cruac works, alternative styles of Cruac, creating and learning new rituals, and how it interacts with the spirit world is given. The rituals given are incredibly varied. There are rituals for calling upon spirits, divining the future, manipulating the weather, creating gargoyles and homunculi, storing blood in buboes, gaining power through sacrifice, changing one's Haven temporarily, and creating

weapons that draw blood from an opponent. Many rituals for Acolytes to play with. The final chapter gives a number of NPCs for the Storyteller to use, including both combatants and non-combatants. Archetypes like Liason to the Lupines, Soothsaying Whore, and Acolyte Sheriff are given, all of which can easily be adapted to any chronicle with a little work. Or serve as inspiration for players, if they are so inclined. This is ultimately a great book, probably the best of the Covenant books, and it has been well worth the like. I came away from it with lots of ideas for my games. It exceeded my expectations. If you have no idea how to play or run the Circle of the Crone, then this book will help you. It does require you to flesh out how the Acolytes function on a local level, given that they are more a network of cults with a few shared beliefs and practices, but it does a good job giving you ideas to work with. I especially like how it draws upon mythological archetypes and how it details the different styles of Cruac. The factions and bloodlines were pretty interesting too. This book is essential for STs, and for any player who wants to play an Acolyte. Theres just so much useful stuff in here.

I have to admit, when I first picked up the book I was full of anticipation. I hadn't really liked the Crones at first, because all I could get out of them was a neo-pagan femi-nazi kind of stereotype. I was hoping the book could expand upon, alter or outright kill those stereotypes and present the Acolytes as something more than what they appeared. Boy was I right. The book is excellent. The introduction and intro fiction set the tone for what is to be an exploration of teh darker sides of Vampire. The 3 1/2 pages of introduction does wonders to establish a very different relationship with the Covenant than what lept at me from teh write-up in teh core book, while still being true to what must have been the original vision of the Covenant: Dark, inhuman and primal, yet also divine, pure and natural. There is something ancient to the Crones that none of the other Covenants can muster, something primeaval that hints at forbidden truths and forgotten lore. The introductory piece of fiction is very dark and moody, and establishes the Acolytes as more than neo-hippies and feminists. Me like! biggrin.gif Chapter one discusses the history of the Circle, or as much of it as can be told. Because the Circle is made up of individual cults with differing belief structures and myths, mapping out the history of the Covenant is difficult at best. Instead, the chapter focuses on how teh individual cults rise to power, and eventually fall from grace, only to rise once more. The focus on this aspect of the Circle was very refreshing, and helps establish the Circle as something organic and unique that teh Storyteller can play with and mold as he desires. Chapter two discusses life (or unlife) in the Circle. The various cults views on Amaranth, Golcond, Torpor and teh Embrace, as well as other subjects, are discussed, and the chapter provides examples of the various rituals, practices and

beliefs that cults can hold. The addition of example cult rituals and traditions is very satisfying, as St's can copy-paste them wholesale into their chronicles, or simply take them as inspirations for his own creations. There is also a part of the chapter dedicated to titles and roles more or less common throughout the Covenant. I especially found the archetypal roles of Maiden, Fool, Scarlet Woman, Hero, Mother, Father, Crone and Hermit intriguing and exciting. I like the way they can be twisted to fit nearly any belief structure, as well as the political avenues it opens within the Circle while still staying true to the Covenant's religious bent. However, chapter three is where the book comes into its own right. It debates Acolytes' role in the politics of the Kindred, and masterfully so. The views and beliefs of the Acolytes color their approach to the Danse Macabre in very special ways, and it was a joy to realize just how different and alien their mindset is to other, more politically minded Kindred. The way they place their religion above political gain is very unique among Vampires, and it is still made plausible within the world of Requiem. The themes of Tribulation and Creation are everywhere in the book, and after a while they become a very natural part of the way I think about Acolytes. I found that I especially enjoyed the concept of the Crucible. Basically, the Acolytes put mortals through extreme tribulation, often in the form of staging extreme tragedy in their lives, and attempt to push them towards enlightenment. This is an act of Creation unlike any other, as it creates true enlightenment. Very cool, very inhuman. Very fitting. The Factions and Bloodlines chapter was cool, but not what I bought the book for. I'm not a huge fan of Bloodlines. Still, I found myself inspired by the factions and Bloodlines both, and before long I had incorporated at least one of the Bloodlines into my ongoing chronicle. Of the Bloodlines, I especially liked the Gorgons (though I had to think hard to realize I liked them) and the Carnon. The factions were very cool. Basically, they are cults like the ones discussed in chapters one and two. They have their own (often very unique) views on their Covenant and their Requiems, and many of them are masterfully written and fit into practically any chronicle. I particularly liked the Second Descent and the Semioticians. I HATE the Daughters of the Goddess, but that has more to do with personal opinions than the quality of the faction. The rest of the book is basically just Disciplines and Crucible rituals and Devotions, as well as some quick-NPC's/character concepts. All in all, a superb book that redefines the Circle for those who never got them, and provides some solid material to work with for those who did! I give it eight thumbs up!

Circle of the Crone has been one of my favorite Covenants. The book follows the format as I found it to be in Carthians and Ordo Dracul and presents a good covering of Vampire Pagan in a very dark and gritty light. With this being the last Covenant book out, the wait seems well worth it.

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