

BRINKWOOD

The Blood of Tyrants

Four words that describe this game: “Robin Hood versus Vampires.”

Introduction

Brinkwood is a production of the **San Jenaro CoOp**, and is a *Forged in the Dark* tabletop roleplaying game.

The **San Jenaro Co-Op** is a 100% creator owned and profit shared group of workers who have come together to make tabletop role-playing games, focusing on people first, equitable profit distribution, creator ownership and making kick-ass games. If you'd like to learn more, we recommend checking out twitter at [@sanjenarocoop](#).

Who do I play?

Players take on the role of ordinary people: peasants, wastrels, craftsmen, laborers, and more, who have experienced a tragedy. You live in a high fantasy world, and can likely trace your ancestry back to mythical creatures such as elves, dwarves, merpeople or plant-folk. Tragedy radicalized your character, leading you to leave your old life behind and flee into the woods with the hope of building a movement capable of overthrowing the current order. You and your fellow players are allies, bound together and sworn to your mission of creating a better world, free of the vampire menace.

What's the world like? How do we fit into it?

The world is *castlepunk*, a mix of gothic, early industrial, and anachronistic high fantasy. Vampires control the world, feeding, quite literally, off the blood and rent of the poor and oppressed. When your character ran into the forests, they discovered the *Fae*, powerful, alien beings that share your disgust for vampires. After swearing yourself to a pact, you and your companions received gifts, a set of **masks** that give you the power to feed upon the vampires and use their abilities as your own. You will use these gifts to honor your pact, fighting against the vampires, gathering allies, and building a movement that can overthrow their bloody reign.

The game takes place in Cardenfell, a county on the island of Orslae, itself part of an archipelago called the Bloody Isles. Collectively, the Bloody Isles are ruled by a multi-tiered hierarchy of vampires known as the Crimson Crown. The Bloody Islands are culturally and ethnically diverse, though firmly under the heel of the oppressive Vampire Lords.

What's the game system like?

Brinkwood is based on the *Forged in the Dark SRD*, a system renowned for its purposeful mechanics, negotiated stakes, tension management, and narrative focus. In *Brinkwood*, play cuts straight to the action, with planning taking place in as-needed flashbacks. The stakes and effectiveness of each action and roll are quickly negotiated between GM and player in an easy to follow, step-by-step process. *Brinkwood* does not try to trick players with its mechanics, or paralyze them with indecision. The system is highly integrated, meaning that there is really only one type of roll, and the few variations of that roll are intuitive and easy to grasp.

Brinkwood departs from *FitD* by allowing players to take different roles each session. One session you might wear the mask of Violence, acting as the bruiser, fighter, or defender of the party. The next you might wear the mask of Lies, serving as a trickster, diplomat, negotiator, or “face.” This ensures that no matter your current adventure, you will always have the abilities necessary to participate and contribute fully to the adventure.

BACKGROUND READING

Our story begins in Cardenfell, a county on the island of Orslae, itself part of an archipelago known as The Bloody Isles. Cardenfell is rich in natural resources, with deposits of coal and silver, as well as large tracts of fertile farmland. In many ways it is the beating heart of the Isles, as the saying goes, “Blood flows from Cardenfell.” It is controlled by one of the most powerful and favored Vampire Counts of the entire Crimson Crown, and is as jealously guarded as it is viciously exploited.

The vast majority of the population of Cardenfell is kept at or below a subsistence level of economic growth. Most of the population is made up of peasants, obligated to pay rent in blood, silver, or labor to the liege lord or landlord who owns the property they live and work on.

Blood Sterling is the currency of the “civilized” world, and is a powerful mixture of silver and blood, capable of transforming a person into a vampire. Imbibing Blood Sterling grants otherworldly powers at the cost of drinking human blood.

Important to note is that Vampires are not born, or forced into their life, or even incapable of leaving it. A vampire who stops drinking blood will find their power wither away and their mortality slowly return. But most are unwilling to sacrifice the “gifts” of the blood, even if it means they would no longer need to feast upon their fellow man.

Along the edge of Cardenfell, straddling it’s border, lies the forest known to all manner of folk as the Brinkwood. Since time immemorial, it has been left unmolested as all know it as a realm of the Fae. Mothers and fathers warn their children away from it, telling legends of wights, wisps, beasts of snapping teeth, birds of sharp talons and vines of twisting thorns. Few are foolhardy enough to venture within.

But you are not to be deterred by bedtime stories, and where vampires fear to tread, you might find allies. The forest proved itself dangerous and wild, snagging you with thorns, harrying you with beasts, and disturbing your nights with strange cries and calls. But still you persisted, and in time, the Fae, curious as they were, sought you out. Under the great trees of the forest, on altars of ancient stone, you spilled your blood and pledged yourself to your cause, and the Fae pledged their assistance.