

The Roma: an Association for T.J. Carella's WitchCraft

By Jason Vey

General Information

Why, you ask, do we paint our words with silver and gold, but treat them as though they were paper? Among the Rom we do not, but you are not Rom. You are gadje, and like all the gadje, you are enchanted by our stories and song, by our dances and fires and ancient ways, but you cannot understand us. You wandered on the road alone at night, and when the loup-garou attacked, you found yourself defenseless. It was lucky for you we were there. Devlesa araklam tume—in the Romany tongue, that means “It was with God that we found you.” We took you in and made you our guest. If you awoke to discover that we liberated a small sum for our services, what of it? Neither money nor the Devil can remain in peace. Our silver tongues and strong drink led you to peace for one evening, and now we leave you. Why, you ask, did we trick you? When surrounded by gadje, a Rom’s only defense is his tongue. But take heart, my friend. The Reckoning approaches, and in the days to come, you should count yourself lucky if your wallet is all you lose.
--Boris Illyovana, Romany Baro

One madman makes many madmen and many madmen make madness. So you would burn me for these petty crimes? By God above, before my tears have dried and before these fires have died, may the glass of your minds be broken and may you die moaning at your brother’s hands!
--Last words of Anelka Baillie, Shuvani

Description: For as long as history has decorated the pages of mankind’s archives there have been tales of the Roma, the Travelers that come in the night, to sell their wares, mystify audiences with their carnivals and fortune telling, then fade away with more than their fair share of profit to show for it. These are the people commonly known as Gypsies. It is a rare occasion, however, that one will ever hear a Rom (pronounced Rome) call herself as a Gypsy. The Roma consider the term to be racist and insulting at best, though in more recent times there has been an effort to “reclaim” the word as one of racial pride. They are an ancient people who are believed to have originated in India but have been wanderers for centuries. Stories as to why the Roma have no homeland of their own are wide and varied, with each *kumpania* (family unit or tribe) having their own explanation, but almost all involve a curse or imposed exile of some sort in the distant past. They are a dark haired, dark eyed, dark skinned people who live by their own code of honor, a code that generally does not apply when dealing with the *gadje* (non Gypsies; pronounced “GAHD-zuh”). Roma generally will behave with the utmost courtesy and loyalty to one another, especially when there are *gadje* around. This isn’t to say that the Roma don’t swindle one

another; on the contrary, among the Roma it is almost a game to see how effectively one can pull the wool over his neighbor’s eyes. Within their culture, however, this is not a malicious act but merely a way of life; practical jokes taken to the limit. The Roma don’t believe in the concept of ownership. After all, even one’s own body is only borrowed for the time she inhabits the world. When she dies, it returns to the Earth, as does everything. Unfortunately for the Roma, the *gadje* don’t share their views and the Roma often find themselves the targets of criminal charges or worse.



Attributes: The Roma are a hardy people, and quite willful. Male Roma tend towards high Strength and Willpower scores, while women tend towards high Dexterity and Willpower. Many Roma also possess high Constitution scores.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Roma tend to be a strikingly attractive people, and Attractiveness and Charisma are very common Qualities among them. In addition, music, stories, and dance are a part of the Romany way of life, so many have Artistic as a Quality. Full-blooded Roma possess the Pureblood Romany Quality, and Romany mystics possess the Shuvani Quality. Drawbacks often include Adversary (*gadje*, Combine, Feral, and Undead are common), Covetous, and Cruel (often, the pranks and schemes of the *gadje* are performed at the expense of others). Finally, many Roma have lower than average

Status and Resources levels due to the mistrust the *gadje* hold for the people and their ways.

Metaphysics: A typical Romany character is created as a standard Gifted, Lesser Gifted, or Mundane. These characters are considered “diluted,” as the Romany blood has become less pure with the passage of the centuries due to interbreeding with *gadje*. Male characters are restricted to Tao Chi abilities or Inspired powers, and female Romany to The Sight (Mindview, Mindtime, and Mindsight only) or Inspired. All Romany may learn Lesser Curse, but no other Invocations. Romany characters must choose one type of metaphysics, and can never learn any others. Characters wishing to learn multiple schools of metaphysics, or learn Invocations or Necromancy abilities must purchase the Pureblood Romany Quality at character creation, and the Shuvani Quality. Both of these Qualities may be purchased with either character points or metaphysics points.

Special Abilities: The Roma gain a +2 to any Resisted Task involving Willpower; they are very hard to dominate or to mentally break. They also gain a +1 to any roll involving the use of The Sight.

Common Professions: Many Roma make a legitimate living as craftsmen, carpenters, metalworkers, and cobblers.

Roleplaying the Rom: You dance in the flickering, orange-red light of the campfires, singing ethereal songs and telling ancient tales about heroes who swindled the *gadje* in legendary ways. You are both the epitome and the antithesis of the Gothic lifestyle; your music is haunting and dark, and your curses strike fear into the hearts of even the staunchest unbelievers, and yet you live cheerfully, with a smile on your face and a love of life in your heart. Perhaps that’s why it’s so important to you that the Reckoning be stalled, for when it arrives, you fear that all the joy will go out of life, that the world will be a place of darkness and despair. Your people have endured quite enough of that throughout their long history, and if you have your way, they won’t ever have to again.

You will keep your word of honor, but you don’t give your word of honor easily. Swearing a vow upon your honor is of the utmost importance to you and reserved for the most solemn and serious occasions. It’s rare that an occasion is serious at all, let alone serious enough to merit that sort of blood oath! When supernatural threats present themselves, however, you steel yourself for such moments. Particularly offensive to you are undead and ferals, and you tend to consider it your duty to put these abominations to rest. You spend many days on the run from the Combine, who view your free-spirited ways as a threat to their control and dominance. They seek to destroy you, but they can’t succeed. They’d have to catch you, first.

Chronicles’ Section

The Roma

The Roma are the Gypsies of myth, legend, and history. They are a people without a home, a nation without borders. They are by their very nature wanderers, and while some have settled down into ordinary lives, there are still many who live as they did at the dawn of their race, traveling from place to place and acknowledging no laws but their own and no authority but that of the matron of their *kumpania*. They take great pride in their heritage, and get offended easily. Those who would insult a Rom should take care; an angered Gypsy is not to be trifled with. At the same time, however, they are fiercely loyal to those they call brother, and it is not unknown for clanless Gypsies to form familial bonds with those who have proven to be good and loyal friends, even if such companions are *gadje*.

History

Composing a history of the Roma is difficult at best, as every tribe and *kumpania* tends to have their own take on the creation story of their race. Some Christian Roma claim that when Christ was to be crucified, the Romans set out to find a metal smith who could fashion nails to do the deed. Try as they might, they could find no smith in the area who was willing to play a part in the crucifixion of Jesus. They traveled further and further out, until at last they came upon a Romany smith who, unaware of the purpose of the nails he was to forge, agreed to the job for forty pieces of silver. After the crucifixion, the Rom became aware through a series of disturbing dreams of the purpose of his nails. Upon waking one morning, he found one of the nails in the middle of his campsite, still glowing and red hot as though it had just been taken from the coals. He packed up his family and belongings and fled in terror. A few weeks later, the nail re-appeared in his campsite and he was forced to again move on. Ever since that day, all of his descendents have wandered the world, for if they stop their travels, the nail and whatever curse it carries with it will catch them and they will have to pay for the crime of the Rom who crucified Jesus.

Another story—this one supported somewhat by historical records dating as far back as 940 C.E.—places the blame for the plight of the Roma on a curse levied by a Turkish sultan. As the legend goes, the sultan’s land was plagued by famine and pestilence, and his people were beleaguered and downtrodden. Desiring to lift the spirits of his people in hopes that they may still come through the trials ahead, the sultan brought several hundred travelers from northern India to entertain and cheer up his people. In return, he offered supplies and grain that the travelers could use to resettle and farm the lands he would grant them for their services. These people were the Roma. Instead of farming or establishing a community in the area, the Roma squandered all of the supplies the

Sultan gave, making no effort to farm the land or settle and intending to go on their way when they had worn out the land. Enraged, the Sultan banished the Roma, sending with them a curse that they never would have a homeland of their own. The Roma have traveled ever since.

The two most common theories as to their origins are that they were either a mercenary force built to counter the threat of invasion by the Aryan peoples in the late tenth century, or that they were a group of wandering minstrels. The former theory is based primarily on their language, due to the fact that many of their words translate into military terminology in ancient Indian. The secondary theory stems from various historical records such as the story of the sultan, above. Most likely the origins of the Romany people lie somewhere in the middle, a combination of the two. Estimates based on linguistic and anthropological evidence have produced the generally accepted notion that the Roma as a race originated in India and left sometime around the tenth or eleventh century C.E., moving west and integrating with the general population of Europe, where they enjoyed a relatively peaceful, if nomadic, existence for approximately a century. Why exactly things changed is anyone's guess, as the Roma don't keep written records (in fact, there is no standard written version of the Romany language), but many historical records show that the people—or at least certain groups of Roma—did make nuisances of themselves in their travels. It was a commonplace during the Middle Ages for a group of Roma to appear in a town or village, claiming to be pilgrims or displaced Christians from Egypt (hence the origin of the term “Gypsy”) and displaying “writs of travel” purportedly with Papal sanction. These travelers would demand hospitality from their fellow Christians, and would stay until they had more than worn out their welcome, preying upon the gullibility and naivety of the *gadje*. Eventually, the Roma were seen as nuisances, thieves and beggars, though most likely it was the actions of the minority of the people that afflicted the group with this stigma. By the 13th century, official state records appeared in Eastern Europe that referred to the Roma as a slave race, and a great many laws were enacted against the people. The Vlax Roma, from which the current four “nations” of Roma are said to descend, spent centuries in slavery to the various princes of Wallachia in the 1400's—including the infamous Vlad Dracula—before finally finding their own freedom hundreds of years later, a freedom that was imposed without any education, assistance, or availability of housing or resources and that resulted in the deaths of thousands due to poverty and lasting racism.

Since that time, the Romany people have endured almost constant discrimination, slavery, and even genocide from otherwise civilized governments. In World War II, the most conservative estimates show that hundreds of thousands of Gypsies were murdered in concentration camps as “enemies of the state,” alongside

the Jews, but they have not yet received any share of the reparation granted to the latter, and were excluded from the founding of the Holocaust memorial in Washington, DC. To this day they remain the only racial group in the United States that still must contend with laws applying specifically and expressly to their race. Some European governments have as recently as thirty years ago listed expulsion, sterilization, and even genocide as “solutions to the Gypsy problem.”

The life of the Rom is not an easy one by any stretch. She encounters hatred, bigotry, and oppression on a scale rarely seen by any other race wherever she goes. Such notions still stem from a judgment of a people based on the behaviors of hundreds of years ago. As any Rom will point out, one cannot judge a group's actions from hundreds of years ago by the standards of the present, and yet the Romany people endure a daily struggle against these outdated and prejudiced notions. The media constantly presents a romanticized and often exaggerated or entirely fictional portrait of Gypsies, which most people mistakenly take to be an accurate portrayal of modern Roma. In fact, the sight of a horse-drawn *vardo* is a rarity even in rural Europe; in the United States, the Kalderash Roma still wander, but utilize RV's, motorcycles, and even regular automobiles to move from place to place, and as many stay in hotels, campers, or trailers as stay in tents. There are far more Roma that make legitimate livings as general laborers and merchants than there are who engage in criminal activity. Romany leaders encourage their people to live and operate within the boundaries of *gadje* law in whatever society they may currently live.

Even so, there is a strong racial pride evident within the group, as well as a strong magical tradition. Many Roma still engage in the practice of *dukkerin'*, or fortune telling, to make their way in the world of the *gadje*, although it is rare to see a Rom practicing any sort of scrying or fortune telling among her own people. The Roma believe that having too much knowledge of one's future is a dangerous thing, but also recognize that most *gadje* are too skeptical to take such knowledge seriously. Thus they are able to justify their practice of reading for the *gadje*. Furthermore, the *gadje* are *marhime*, or unclean, anyway, so they cannot be spoiled.

In the 1990's, the Roma achieved a great victory for their people when the United Nations recognized the people as a nation, and the International Romany Union still maintains a delegation in the U.N. today, the only nation recognized by the U.N. that does not have a homeland. Even still, the fight for the civil rights of the Roma throughout the world continues, and many Roma hide their true nature rather than face bigotry and oppression. Still others cut themselves off from the *gadje* out of fear and mistrust, a practice that many believe hurts their efforts in the long run. There is a quiet, almost unspoken fear that the end result of the struggles of the

Roma will be the complete integration of their culture into *gadje* society, and that they will utterly lose their cultural identity in the process. As such, many fiercely guard their traditions and culture; it is difficult for a non-Rom to gain accurate information regarding Roma society, and even that which is written by Roma in widely published books and articles could be looked upon as suspect; much of it is contradictory and sketchy.

In the world of *WitchCraft*, the Romany people are hunted actively by the Combine, who view their free-wheeling and nomadic ways as a threat to the world government and covert control over society that the Combine wishes to engender. As such, a very practical reason for Romany wandering exists; whenever a Rom stops her wandering, there is usually a team from the Combine waiting for them. The Combine has been engaged in a campaign of genocide against the Roma for hundreds of years, and may have been directly or indirectly responsible for the slavery of the Roma, their extermination during the Holocaust, and many of the various laws and attitudes that shape so many peoples' beliefs about the Gypsies. The Roma consider the Combine to be the single greatest threat to their continued existence, but also realize that a stand-up fight against an organization with the resources of the Combine is futile at best and outright suicide at worst.

There are four "nations" of Romany: the Machwaya, the Kalderash, the Lowara, and the Churara peoples. Of the four, the Kalderash are the most populous and widespread, but also the nation that most of the Romany people would consider to be the most "diluted" by *gadje* society and the least "pure" in racial terms. Historically, their area of expertise was crafts and tinkering. They were and still are known as coppersmiths, carpenters, and tinkers. Many Kalderash today make livings as automobile mechanics, craftsmen, and laborers. The Machwaya are the least populous of the Roma, but they are the foundation for Romany custom, tradition, and culture. They are generally considered to be the most traditional of all the Roma nations, and many Shuvani come from the ranks of the Machwaya people. In terms of the general conception of Gypsies by the *gadje*, the Machwaya fit the expected mold better than most. They uphold all Romany laws and customs to the fullest degree and are the most likely to maintain the old ways, traveling in elaborate *vardo* wagons and horse-drawn carriages, telling stories around the campfire and immersing themselves in the Old Ways. The next most traditional among the Roma are the Lowara people. Lowara are known as animal wranglers and horse traders, and they have a strong affinity for the natural world and with the animals they raise and handle. They are hunters and trackers, and are known as expert weavers and tailors. In fact, many modern Lowara make their livings as horse breeders and tailors. Finally, the Churara people are probably as close to a pariah among the Roma as one can get. They have traditionally been sword makers and

weapon smiths, and many assassins have historically come from this nation. They are aggressive and angry as a group, and while it is probable that in modern times many of the criminal elements among the Romany people come from the Churara nation, the clan views itself as the defenders of the Romany ways. Their venom towards the *gadje* is great, and they see no crime in victimizing the non-Roma. Unfortunately, such attitudes and actions tend to increase the negative view of the Roma by *gadje* society and as such other Roma sometimes make an effort to distance themselves from the Churara people. Still, when push comes to shove, the Churara are Roma and other Gypsies will shelter and defend them if necessary.



Beliefs and Goals

Beliefs and Goals among the Roma are as diverse as the people themselves and it is difficult to put together any sort of cohesive code. Roma tend to take to the dominant faith of the land in which they travel, perhaps in an effort to lessen the bigotry directed their way. Thus, there exist Christian, Muslim, even Hindu Roma throughout the world. Historically speaking, such practices made it easier for the Roma to not only co-exist with the *gadje*, but to trick the non-Roma into sometimes undeserved hospitality that the Roma would not hesitate to take advantage of. Over time, however, pretended religions beliefs gradually integrated themselves into the Roma philosophical and worldview, creating a unique tapestry of beliefs that not only varies from group to group, but continues to evolve and change with every new society the individual Rom encounters. However, certain factors do seem to be universal: the belief in the forces of good and evil, represented as *o Del* (God or Good), and *o Bengeh* (Evil, or the Devil). The Roma believe that the

Earth, called *De Develski* or the Divine Mother, is the mother of all, and it is from their connection with her that the Roma draw their magical power. Interpretations of these concepts, however, vary depending upon the faith that an individual *kumpania* holds.

The most popular figure of reverence among the Roma is a saint known as Black Sara, Sara Kali, or the Black Madonna. Stories about Sara vary widely, but the common thread is always her use of her skirts, which turn into a boat or raft, to rescue those she cares for from the sea, or join them upon it. Who exactly Sara rescues or joins varies from tribe to tribe, and ranges from her mistresses, to Mary Magdalene and Mary Salome, to the Saints who were present at the death of Christ. Worship of Black Sara is one of the few events in Roma society at which *gadje* are welcome, and every year thousands of Roma travel to a shrine erected to Black Sara in the south of France to honor their matron saint. Some scholars believe that, given the likely origins of the Roma and the names of their saint, Sara is an evolution of the Indian goddess Kali, who functions as a mother goddess for the Hindu faith, and it certainly seems that this is plausible, if not likely. It remains to be seen what, if any, role the figure of Black Sara will play in the coming trials for the Roma.

The Roma in Armageddon

The Roma in the days following the Reckoning are staunch supporters of the Alliance, and those in occupied territories have returned to their traditional traveling ways, staying out of the populated areas, and giving the Church of Revelations a black eye whenever the opportunity arises. While they are not necessarily official members of the Alliance, there are rumors that Michele herself uses the Roma as a sort of “special operations” unit to undermine the CoR where she can. Some even claim that Michele masquerades as the Roma’s beloved Black Sara, though such claims are unproven and likely unfounded. If Black Sara exists, she is likely either one of the Old Gods returned (perhaps Kali), or a rival Mad God who has for thousands of years been manipulating the Roma to her own ends.

The cycle of life and death is integral to the Romany world view, and much of their traditions revolve around it. They consider themselves champions of this cycle, and will go out of their way to destroy or prevent perversions of the cycle. As such, Vampyres and Relentless Dead have much to fear from the Roma, as do Ferals and Pariahs, who the Roma view as perversions of nature and earthly manifestations of *o Bengeh*. The Roma have very elaborate and specific rituals for the treatment of the dead, to prevent their return as *Upyr*, the Romany word for Vampyres, or as *Mulo*, the Romany term for Relentless Dead. As Undead appear more and more frequently with the coming of the Reckoning, the Roma turn more often to the Necromancers among them to help in the battle

against these great evils. The return of the Mad Gods is of great concern to the *Shuvani* and they are beginning to actively seek the guidance of Black Sara in dealing with the coming crisis. Due to some recent and startling portents in dreams and readings, however, there is a quiet but growing apprehension that even Black Sara may not be the guide and guardian that she seems, and that those *Shuvani* who use magicks to seek her wisdom through direct contact may wake up one day to find themselves perverted to dark and sinister ways. Is Black Sara one of the Mad Gods? Only time will tell.

As the Reckoning approaches, more and more Roma begin to exhibit a tendency towards the Gift, and even men among their ranks are appearing with skills as seers and *Shuvani*, which in days past was unheard of. To the Roma this represents a startling change in their culture, and they fear the portents that it may herald. As such, Romany attitudes towards the Reckoning very much turn towards stalling it until the people can understand what the portents mean. However, a belief in predestination is strong amongst the Roma, so they realize that the Reckoning is coming, and there isn’t anything that can be done to stop it. Until that happens, though, the Roma continue their age-old battle against the Undead and other perversions of nature, considering it part of their duty to protect humankind from unnatural evils. If it is their destiny to help to battle, weather, or stave off the Reckoning, then the Roma will be there to serve their purpose. If it is not in the cards, then they will fulfill whatever purpose they are intended to fill, for good or ill.

Organization

Organization among the Roma is as informal as it comes. Despite apocryphal tales of a Gypsy King or Queen, there is indeed no such thing among the Roma. Many Roma will adopt the title of Gypsy King or Queen, but do so for no other reason than to impress *gadje* that they have dealings with, and usually those Roma accompanying whomever adopts the title will play along, for amusement’s sake if for no other reason. The people recognize no one leader who presides over all. There is a delegation for the International Romany Union that speaks for the people amongst the United Nations, but these representatives are far from actual leaders of the Romany people. Even the four nations of Romany do not have governing bodies; the divisions among nations are divided solely by bloodline, history, and tradition, and not by any sort of political structure or division.

The Roma travel in groups called *kumpania*, which are similar to tribal units and often organized as extended family, but which can include unrelated Roma as well. These groups follow the ethnology of tribal structure and are usually led by a man chosen for his wisdom and strength, called the *Baro*, or Big Man, of the tribe. Many *kumpaniyi* also have a *Shuvani*, or holy woman, who acts as a spiritual guardian for the group. In times gone by,

Romany groups were recognizable by their now-fabled *vardo*, or Gypsy wagons, and tents. While there are some (very rare) Roma who still travel in horse-drawn carriages, modern Gypsies are far more likely to travel in RV's, motorcycles, or vans, though they still sometimes refer to these as *vardo*.

It should also be noted that not all Roma are nomadic in the modern times. There are many Roma who settle down and live quiet lives in *gajikane* society, though quite often these are ostracized by their peers and viewed as turning their backs on their heritage. Nomadic Roma refer to those Roma who have settled down, gotten college educations, and live among the *gadje* as *marhime*, and just a step above the *gadje* themselves. Interestingly enough, it is these *marhime* Roma who are often at the forefront in the battle for Romany rights.



The Romany have their own code of behavior and set of laws and punishment that they view as outside of and above the laws and systems of the *gadje*. This is not to say that Romany leaders encourage their people to break the laws of the *gadje*; on the contrary. It is believed that to eventually overcome the prejudice and bigotry they endure from *gajikane* society, the Roma must do what they can to get along. Still, when a Roma breaks a law among her own people, the tribe does not rely on *gajikane* police or courts to resolve the dispute. Laws among the Roma are enforced at the *Kris*, the court of the Roma. Whenever a Romany man or woman commits or is accused of an offense that cannot be deliberated by the

Baro, a *Kris* is called. This court is usually held at an impartial *kumpania* and several elders are present. The *Baro* of the *kumpania* where the *Kris* is to be held is called *Krisatora*, and acts as the judge of the trial. All evidence, both material and circumstantial, is weighed, and hearsay is not only accepted, but is encouraged. Sentences for the guilty include *marime*—effectively a sentence of banishment from the tribe by declaring the recipient unclean—caning, and execution, though the latter two sentences are all but unheard of in modern times. Sentences of *marime* can range from several days to a lifetime and are met with great sorrow by the *kumpania*. Readmission to Romany society following a sentence of *marime* is an occasion for celebration.

Allies and Enemies

A list of Romany allies is thin at best, as most Roma consider only other Roma to be true allies. The hatred of the *gadje* has driven the Roma to hide their faces from even Gifted society. However, some associations are acceptable to a few Roma.

The Wicce: Some among the Wicce are looked upon as kindred and a Rom separated from his *kumpania* may seek solace among a Wicce coven. Enemies include all Undead and Spirits, and Ferals, all of whom are seen as abominations.

The Sentinels and Rosicrucians: the Roma have disdain for these two groups, both of whom are seen as representatives of the religious organizations who have persecuted them in their past. Often, even Christian Roma are forbidden from entering churches to worship. These two societies, in the eyes of the Roma, are examples of the corruption organized faith engenders.

The Twilight Order: On occasion, some Roma have had dealings with this society when more necromantic power was needed than a given *kumpania* could bring to bear. Dealings with the Order, however, are cold at best.

The Cabal of Psyche: The Roma have great respect for the powers of the Cabal, whom they view as fellow Seers, but are hesitant to have dealings with *gadje*, no matter the abilities they display.

The House of Thanatos: The Roma view this organization as an affront to nature, and will have no dealings whatsoever with them.

The Pariahs: Pariahs, like ferals, are perversions of nature, and while they are often viewed with pity and sorrow, they still are mistakes that must be rectified. While the Roma don't go out of their way to confront and destroy the Pariahs, much like the House of Thanatos, they will have no dealings with the Covenant, and if they encounter a Pariah, a confrontation is likely.

The Combine: Without a doubt, the most feared enemy the Roma have is the Combine. The Combine hates the Roma passionately, and embodies all of the prejudice and hatred of the *gadje* within its ranks. The Roma spend much time on the run from the Combine, for the latter wishes the ultimate and complete genocide of the Romany race.

Other Associations: The Roma view most other associations with either antipathy or cold indifference. After all, they are universally *gadje*.

Romany Stories

Romany stories will almost universally revolve around conflict. The battle against the hatred of *gajikane* society, the fight against *upyr* and *mulo* and all abominations of nature, the flight from the Combine, all are possibilities for Romany chronicles. Romany life is one of hardship and oppression, but at the same time the Roma engender a spirit of individuality and will, and a strength of tradition rarely seen among any culture today. These traditions and this sense of individuality should always be stressed when dealing with the Romany people in a chronicle.

Rage of the Mulo: A victim of a *kris* execution who was sentenced to death has returned as a *Mulo*, or Relentless Dead, to seek revenge for his unjust death. Because of his acts of vengeance, the *kumpania* is scattered and all but destroyed, and the characters are his next targets. Through the course of this Chronicle, the *Mulo* will not rest until it is either destroyed, appeased, or can finish its grisly task. The players will have to continually deal with the forces this *Mulo* can bring to bear against them, which could be any sort of supernatural menaces. A clever *Mulo*, realizing that it is already an abomination, may even play the *gadje* as pawns in its scheme for vengeance against his *kumpania*.

The Combine: The characters' *kumpania* has drawn too much attention to itself. Perhaps they have had too much of a hand in recent supernatural events, or they have directly wronged a member of the Combine. For whatever reason, someone in the Combine wants them dead, and has made it personal. This story would revolve around shadowy dealings and an even shadier nemesis, who rarely if ever shows her face to the characters. Yet, her agents are everywhere, all waiting with their guns and less blatant weapons to destroy the characters.

Curse of the Gypsy: A Greater Curse called down unjustly by a member of one of the characters' ancestors still haunts the family line to this day. The characters must find a way to appease the forces of evil that have taken notice for this unjustified use of power, and must discover the source of the curse, and remove it in order to appease the dark forces that hunt them.

New Qualities and Drawbacks

Pureblood Romany

10 Point Supernatural Quality

Over the centuries, Romany blood has become diluted with that of the *gadje* due to interbreeding, loss of contact with heritage, and even sexual assault on the part of both the Roma and the *gadje*. The vast majority of

Roma in the world today possess this diluted blood, and as such are not as attuned to the Essence of creation as their ancestors were. Yet there exists a minority of the people who are still pureblooded. These are those Roma who are destined to become *Shuvani*, the true mystics of the Rom. This Quality must be purchased at character creation, and grants several special features to characters. First, all Pureblood Romany are considered Gifted and do not need to purchase the Gift Quality (when creating a Gifted character, Pureblood Romany may be purchased instead of the Gift and satisfies that requirement.) Second, all Pureblooded Roma gain the Mindtime Art at Strength 1 and Art 1 for free, and can advance the ability as normal. In addition, all Pureblood Roma gain the Invocation Lesser Curse at level 1 (and can, in time, learn Gypsy Curse). However, as a beleaguered minority, Pureblood Romany suffer a -2 penalty to any roll related to social or business interactions with *gadje*, due to misunderstanding and bigotry.

Shuvani

2 Point Supernatural Quality

Prerequisite: Pureblood Romany)

Shuvani are the true mystics of the Romany people, who guide their people and possess magical powers unlike those any others in the race do. Most tribes in Romany society have one Shuvani among them, who serves as a Wise and spiritual guardian of the people. In days gone by, Shuvani were exclusively women, but as the Reckoning approaches, some men among the Roma have begun to exhibit Shuvani traits. Purchasing this Quality allows a Pureblooded Romany character to learn Invocations and/or Necromancy abilities, allows the full range of Seer Powers (to both men and women), rather than the limited three listed on page [?], and allows female Roma to learn Tao Chi abilities. Magicians among the Romany cannot learn Elemental, Levitate, or Spirit Limbs Invocations.

Ward

1 Point/level Supernatural Quality

Characters with the Ward Quality are better at staving off the effects of curses or Bad Luck inflicted by the Evil Eye quality. Whenever a character must make a willpower roll to resist the effects of Bad Luck or a curse, she may add her levels of the Ward quality to the roll.

Evil Eye

2 Point/level Variable Supernatural Drawback

Those poor unfortunate souls who are cursed with the Evil Eye are the bane of all those around them. Characters with this drawback afflict others with Bad Luck, so long as they are nearby. Each day, those characters who interact with one who has the Evil Eye must make a Willpower (doubled) roll or be afflicted with Bad Luck for that day, as though they had the Drawback equal to the levels of the Evil Eye drawback. Each success level on the Willpower (doubled) roll negates one level of the Bad Luck inflicted by the Evil Eye. Characters afflicted with

Bad Luck by the Evil Eye gain no character points for Bad Luck, nor can the character with the drawback “turn off” the Evil Eye; it always works. Fortunately, this “curse” only lasts for the 24 hours after a person interacts with one afflicted by the Evil Eye drawback.

New Greater Invocation

Gypsy Curse

Prerequisite: Lesser Curse, Pureblood Romany Quality

This invocation is variable in its effects and can range from very minor to catastrophic. How it functions is relatively simple: the Gypsy gestures with her hand outstretched, her pinky finger and thumb extended, and utters her curse at whoever has wronged her. The severity of the curse determines the effect and the Essence cost. When this invocation is used, the victim gains the Accursed Drawback, but gains no character points in return. The Chronicler determines based upon the exact

wording of the Rom’s curse the Essence cost for this invocation, but generally speaking, for each level of the Accursed Drawback inflicted, the invocation costs 3 Essence. This Curse can be invoked as a ritual, and powerful uses of it have been said to have the capability to destroy entire villages of people. Indeed, it is possible to affect more than one victim with the Gypsy Curse, but this requires the expenditure of one additional point of Essence per person to be afflicted. The downside to this Curse is that it must be used with great care; a curse thrown carelessly almost always rebounds upon the caster, and a Roma who misuses this curse must make an additional Dismissal task at a penalty equal to the level of the curse or suffer half its effects herself (gains the Accursed drawback without gaining character points). Curses that bring about the deaths of their victims often also attract the attention of the Grim Reapers. Chroniclers are advised to keep close tabs on how a Rom character uses this invocation, and the possible effects to her character.

Shuvani Hunter of the Dead

You are one of those among the Romany people chosen to bear a great gift and terrible burden: you are blessed with the Sight and looked to as a spiritual guide and guardian of your people. Your power over the spirits of the dead is invaluable to your tribe's battle against those who walk in the shadows, and you never hesitate to use them when they are needed. As the Reckoning draws near, you sense that you and all of your people will be called upon to make sacrifices in defense of the world, but are willing to make these sacrifices if that is your destiny. You only wish that you had as clear a vision regarding the outcome of the Combine's efforts to exterminate all of your kind.

Origins

You were born at the side of a road outside of Budapest, in a tent outside your mother's *Vardo*. Your power awoke within you early on and marked you as destined for a special place within the *kumpania*. It started with visions in dreams when you were just a child, visions that at first you couldn't control, but that allowed you to save your *kumpania* from a mob of villagers who were intent upon using your group as a scapegoat for a young girl who had disappeared from their village days before. At first the visions terrified you, especially in the nightmares about the poor child's brutal murder at the hands of her father, and you hungered for justice. Your parents called you blessed, but explained that the only justice the *gadje* were interested in was the destruction of your people. It wasn't till years later that you heard that your older brother had visited his own brand of justice upon the murderer, and discovered the truth of the rumor when you had to drive off the angry spirit of the girl's father, who sought vengeance for his own murder.

The *Shuvani* of your tribe recognized your power early on and you went to live in her *Vardo*. She taught you to control your powers, and to use them for the good of the people. She told you of the *Mulo* and the *Upry*, the *Loup-Garou* and their shape shifting brethren, and how all of these were abominations that had to be laid to rest. She told you of the Mad Gods and their slumber, and how the Reckoning was drawing near. You learned of Black Sara and how she was the source of your power, and your guide and protector in the Realms of the Dead. You learned your lessons with an eagerness bordering on obsession. You knew your calling and were determined to heed it. This was what you were meant for. This was your purpose.

Allies and Enemies

You can always trust other Roma to aid you in your time of need, and can sometimes call upon the spirits of those passed to assist you in your destined path, although communing with those who should be resting their final sleep always means a brief (and self-imposed) sentence of *marhime*, exile from those who may need you, even if only for twenty four hours. Among the *gadje*, you have few allies, though on occasion you have called upon a few of the more traditional among the Wicce, and upon the Twilight Order and their necromancers for aid. You trust none, however, who are not of the Blood. You fear the Combine above all else, and have awakened in a cold sweat more than once, wondering desperately if your nightmares are borne of fear or of the Sight. You actively hunt the undead with the purpose of putting them back to rest.

Roleplaying the Character

You are dedicated beyond reason to your destined (or chosen) purpose, a dedication that sometimes puts those you try to help in danger. Your visions of the Combine destroying your people drive you to move around more than even most Roma, and your dealings with the spirits of the passed often requires you to spend time away from your *kumpania*. Your greatest fear is that after one of your exiles due to *marhime* status, you will return to find your people dead and yourself a fugitive from the Combine. Perhaps it is this fear and rage that drives you to hunt the undead and the shape shifters with such ferocity. You have "adopted" a group of *gadje* Gifted who you sometimes travel with while enduring a sentence of *marhime* and much to your own disgust, you are beginning to trust and genuinely care for them. You must never let the other Roma know of your grudging acceptance of any among the *gadje* as equals, but when companions prove themselves true and worthy, it is difficult to feel otherwise. Still, you often force yourself to remain emotionally distant, torn between your loyalty to your people and your *gadje* friends. You secretly wonder if every *Shuvani* is as alone as you.

Character Type: Gifted

Association: Roma

Concept: Fanatic

Channeling Level: 3

Strength: 2

Dexterity: 2

Constitution: 2

Intelligence: 3

Perception: 3

Willpower: 3

Life Points: 24

Endurance Points: 26

Speed: 8

Essence Pool: 30

Qualities:

Pureblood Romany – 10

Shuvani – 2

Essence Channeling (3) – 6

Hard to Kill – 2

Increased Essence Pool (15) – 3

Drawbacks:

Adversary: Combine – 3

Status – 5

Resources – 2

Skills:

Cheating – 1

Dancing (Folk) – 2

Dodge – 4

Guns (Handgun) – 2

Haggling – 2

Hand Weapon (Knife) – 3

Intimidation – 3

Myth and Legend (Romany) – 2

Survival (Forest) – 2

Trance – 3

Metaphysics:

Lesser Curse 1

Shielding 2

Mindtime Art – 1

Mindtime Strength – 2

Necromancy Skill – 2

Death Lordship – 2

Expel Spirit

Enforced Obedience

Death Speech – 2

Glimpse the Dead

See the Dead