

FLESH FAIRS

The Camarilla's *Geist* chronicle focuses on local games, where players gather for a LARP. Similarly, their characters gather at events called Flesh Fairs, which they hold with some regularity. Flesh Fairs offer a storyteller an excellent tool to justify players showing up to a game with regularity, and to emphasize the political and social elements of the game. This toolkit examines Flesh Fairs as described in canon, discusses how the global chronicle will treat these elements, and some tools that storytellers can use if they want further justification for these sorts of gatherings.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL KIT

The section entitled **Why Flesh Fairs?** discusses the importance of Flesh Fairs in the global chronicle, and their use within a venue. **Flesh Fairs in Canon** examines what the core rule book has to say about Flesh Fairs. **How to Use Flesh Fairs** establishes a common framework for the global chronicle. **The Initiation of the Mysteries** introduces tools for emphasizing the importance of Flesh Fairs in your local venue, if you so choose. In this last part, you will find approval to use mechanical elements that you can use to customize your domain.

WHY FLESH FAIRS?

Have you ever been at a game and asked, "Why is my character here?" Very often, a game designed with an emphasis on tabletop play (as most games are) translates poorly to a LARP, simply because characters don't necessarily have a reason to show up in the same place. Luckily, the *Geist* core rule book describes larger gatherings of Sin-Eaters, including Flesh Fairs, which are semi-regular gatherings. Looking at the Flesh Fair Krewe merit, we see that Flesh Fairs range from 5 to 20 people... about the size you might expect for most games.

There is no requirement for you, as a VST, to make every game a Flesh Fair, or to use them at all. Some games might use them, some games might focus on other sorts of events. But Flesh Fairs can be used to establish a variety of important thematic elements in the game:

- **Regular Flesh Fairs help establish politics:** If a city is having a regular Flesh Fair, it will become a regular social and political event. If you use the guidelines in this kit, it will emphasize a jockey for position, based loosely on the krewes of New Orleans' Mardi Gras.
- **Flesh Fairs can emphasize the ritual that is vital to Geist:** This kit will discuss how to make every Flesh Fair into a sort of ritual, in particular, it will discuss how to emphasize and reinforce the rituals of the Krewes that run them.
- **It will give players one more thing to do:** If you choose, each gathering can have some sort of purpose... a wake, a market, etc. This will suggest specific activities for a player to do at game.

FLESH FAIRS IN CANON

The *Geist* core book discusses Flesh Fairs in several places. For your reference and further reading, this kit provides page numbers.

Flesh fairs are Sin-Eater Gatherings that are both rituals and social functions. Originally, they were held in conjunction with carnivals, but today Krewes typically host them at their Haunts (34). While anyone can host a gathering, an "official" Flesh Fair generally requires a Founder of the Krewe with access to both a Haunt and at least one dot in the Flesh Fair merit (185). Krewes hold Flesh Fairs for a variety of reasons, and generally at least one gathering around the time of a major local festival, although usually more often than that (34). The exact nature of these gatherings vary in protocol, although one standard holds true: "leave grudges at the door" (41).

The *Geist* core book allows for less formal gatherings, however, it does name the general types. The four most typical gatherings are wakes (a large and raucous party), convocations (a meeting to deal with specific problems or general business), markets (where goods and services are exchanged), and war councils (where Sin-Eaters prepare for violence) (41 – 43).

HOW TO USE FLESH FAIRS

In order to provide for a common framework of interaction, and encourage politics, the global chronicle will establish some general guidelines for how to use Flesh Fairs. Please note that you may vary from these guidelines in your venue... this is how they “typical” city will treat flesh fairs. The purpose of this section is to use Flesh Fairs in a local game that occurs once a month, with players all portraying characters from the same city.

- **A Krewe always hosts a Flesh Fair:** The Flesh Fair should take place in a Krewe’s haunt, and the Krewe is responsible for hosting it. Storytellers should facilitate this, and offer rewards for to players who assist. Remember, to gain the benefits of a Flesh Fair (an increase in the Fluidity of the Haunt), a Krewe must have a Founder with both a Haunt and at least one dot in the Flesh Fair merit.
- **You want more than one Krewe at a Flesh Fair:** If you sit down and eat dinner with your family, it’s just dinner, not a dinner party. It’s the same thing with Flesh Fairs: if a Krewe hosts one, they want other people outside their group to show up.
- **Holding a Flesh Fair is prestigious:** If you host a Flesh Fair, you’re acknowledging that your Krewe has some power in the area, and if you attend, you’re acknowledging the other Krewe’s power. Flesh Fairs are often used to recruit Sin-Eaters, both those who are not part of a Krewe, and the initiates who can depart one Krewe and join another.
- **Most cities host one Flesh Fair a month:** Some places might host more, or host less, and there’s no penalty if a city goes without Flesh Fairs for a month. But one Flesh Fair a month is customary in most places.
- **Flesh Fairs typically match up with local holidays:** The local Flesh Fair in December will likely be some sort of holiday party, while American Krewes will typically have a Flesh Fair near July 4th. If there’s a large local festival (such as a Feast Day in a heavily Catholic city, or a State Fair), the Flesh Fair might reflect that as well. Sin-Eaters are very aware of the power of holidays, and acknowledge them.
- **Every Flesh Fair is a social gathering AND a ritual:** Every Krewe that hosts a Flesh Fair is going to want to have a ritual of some sort. This doesn’t need to have mechanical effects, but every Krewe has a mythos, and they want to do things to support their world view. Storytellers should encourage players to hold rituals at every Flesh Fair, even if it’s just a simple ritual toast and greeting.
- **In larger Krewes, Flesh Fairs show the internal politics:** The *Geist* core book doesn’t have much to say about cliques, but this is where they would come up. In a Faction (a tier 2 Krewe), Sin-Eaters will naturally group into cliques. Individual cliques should have their own Haunts, and be led by a Hand. Hands will push to host Flesh Fairs to gain favor with the Founders (who must attend if they are to have a true Flesh Fair).
- **Flesh Fairs generally have a purpose:** Prior to the game, Sin-Eaters can learn of the Flesh Fair and its purpose through the Twilight Network. They will know if it’s a market or a convocation, a wake or a war council. Generally speaking, most cities will have one wake and one convocation every season.

THE INITIATION OF MYSTERIES

While there’s many ways to hold a Flesh Fair, some are more popular than others. The Initiation of Mysteries is one very common way. This kit presents the Initiation as one possible political structure for a venue, and offers specific benefits for characters that participate.

The Initiation of Mysteries is a ritual that can only be performed at a Flesh Fair. It has supernatural ties to the land, and will influence necromantic activity in an area (indeed, it’s purpose is to “stabilize” ghostly activity in a wide area). In order to perform the ritual, the group must meet two requirements:

1. The gathering must be a Flesh Fair (i.e. it must be hosted by a Krewe with both a Haunt and a Founder with the Flesh Fair merit).
2. There must be representatives from at least two Krewes there.

The ritual has six parts. Each of these six parts may be performed in a variety of ways, as described below, but each element has to have certain actions performed. The players and storytellers are encouraged to script out elements unique to their venues, and Krewes. The six parts are:

- The Warding: Prior to the Flesh Fair, the Conjure Men of each Krewe will prepare a ceremony for the Flesh Fair. Each Krewe should select one of the following ceremonies. This costs no Plasm, and automatically succeeds with a number of successes equal to the Haunts fluidity. However, the ceremony doesn't take effect until the Procession (see below). The ceremonies that may be cast as part of the Warding are:
 - o Lifting the Scales (affects all mortals who enter the Haunt, and lasts for the duration of the Flesh Fair)
 - o Lemure's Lure
 - o Loosen the Coil (willing subjects only, will affect a number of people equal to Fluidity over the course of the Flesh Fair)
 - o Ghostly Guardian (will protect the Flesh Fair for the duration)
 - o Warding the Household (covers the entire Haunt, and lasts for the duration of the Flesh Fair)
 - o Create Deathly Passage (requires four Sin-Eaters of different thresholds, passage lasts for the duration of the Flesh Fair)
 - o Dumb Supper
- The Procession: At the ceremonial start of the Flesh Fair, a founder of each Krewe enters the gathering, announces his or her name, the name of the Krewe, and the "gift" they bring to the Fair (the ceremony that their Conjure Man cast). When a founder does this, the ceremony activates, powered by the Initiation of Mysteries. In order to participate (and gain the benefits of the Tableau, see below), a Krewe must have a Founder cross the threshold of the Flesh Fair and make the announcement. This is typically the Old One of the Krewe, although any founder can do. Note that there are two special positions in the Procession:
 - o The Host: A Founder of the hosting Krewe enters first, and starts the Procession. From that point, all who cross the threshold must be Founders of different Krewes, or the ritual is ruined.
 - o The King: The "ruler" of the Flesh Fair, he is the last one to enter as part of the processional. He cannot enter if a Founder of an unrepresented Krewe is present... but if a Krewe shows late, he can effectively lock them out.
- The Tableau: After all Founders are gathered, the King announces for all Founders to gather their Krewes around them. All Krewes should move to surround their Founder, and generally assume a ceremonial pose. At this time, all Krewe members gain a amount of Plasm equal to the Haunt's residue... except for the King's Krewe, who all have the maximum amount of Plasm as allowed by their Psyche.
- The Festivities: The Host is responsible for the Festivities. This can be anything the Host can think of, but it must be some sort of activity. In order for the Initiation of Mysteries to continue, at least one member of each Krewe must participate in the Festivities.
- The Court: The King holds court, during which the King speaks and everyone listens. Each Founder who crossed the Threshold as part of the Processional must be accorded a chance to speak, and it is at this time that most will praise or admonish members of their Krewe (and announce status changes for Tier 2 Krewes). Immediately following the Court is the Judgment.
- The Judgment: At the end of Court, the King will thank the Host, and then choose who will host the next gathering. The new Host then choose the next King. The King cannot choose himself as the Host, nor can the Host choose himself as the King. Following the Judgment, the Flesh Fair will continue in spirit until the next gathering (meaning the new Host can increase the Fluidity of his or her Haunt until the Judgment next month).

Why should you use the Initiation of Mysteries? It adds a level of ritual and politics to the game. Ritual is exceptionally important to the game, you are encouraged to customize the Initiation of Mysteries by adding a script specific to your venue, or encouraging players to take specific ritualistic actions.

However, having specific actions repeated at each game will encourage a ritualistic feeling to gatherings. Also, the rituals enacted should reflect the archetypal role of the Krewe - resounding with their core themes and demonstrating them publicly. In addition, it adds a political spin to the game, as both the Host and King gain significant benefits.

Finally, this ritual was designed to give Sin-Eaters a regular reason to gather. Hosting a Flesh Fair in this manner gives a huge boost to Fluidity until the next gathering, and all participants gain Plasm. It establishes a cooperative structure for Krewes to exist, because it requires at least two to complete the ritual.