

A Guide to Ofrendas

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“Ofrendas” is a word meaning Offerings. They can be found in many forms in many cultures. From flowers on a gravesite to sugar skulls on Dios de los Muertos, their forms vary widely but their meanings are common. They represent an emotion the living wish to convey to the dead. Honor, respect, and deference to ancestors are common themes.

The Bound have much more direct ways to let the dead know how they feel. However, there are times when the ghost will have desired information, or maybe the Krewe just wants to keep some local ghosts placated. Then they too will offer ofrendas to the dead. The particular offerings that will please a certain ghost or group of ghosts changes from one ghost to another. Dead soldiers might want flags placed on their graves, while a rebellious youth might want their mark spray painted onto a wall.

The effectiveness of ofrendas changes with how particular they are. General gestures, such as flowers on every grave or ribbons worn to remember fallen soldiers will be generally pleasing, often enough to put a ghost in a good mood. Specific gestures, such as pouring the dead’s favorite whiskey on the site of their murder, are more specifically pleasing, and likely to garner greater help.

While finding specific offerings for ghosts immediately available is fairly easy, learning what the dead in the lower depths treasure is much harder. Some of these ghosts have been a long time away from the living and may not treasure the same things they did in life. Stories on the Twilight Network speak of a Kerberoi who is pleased by screams of living pain, requiring a great cost of any Krewe who wishes to barter with it.

Discovering the correct ofrendas to offer the spirits of the depths can often become a quest of its own. One way is to make an initial journey and ask the being what it wants, but there is no guarantee it will answer. Or answer honestly. Another way is to research, scouring the lore of the dead and the books of Necromancers who have come before seeking clues on what will appease the great lords below. Other beings might know the answer, but it is unlikely they will give such information up for free.

Once a ghost’s preferences are known, transportation might be tricky. Perhaps a dead loves “the smell of fresh baked bread”, which would be difficult to transport on a long journey across the rivers. Perhaps one wants to see a living descendent, which leaves the Krewe stuck between kidnapping someone and dragging them to the underworld, or not making the deal they were seeking. Nobody ever said dealing with the dead would be easy.

In summary, ofrendas are not so much about the item, but the emotion behind the item. The dead have no practical use for food, trinkets or decorations, but they are pleased by the effort that went into procuring and offering such things. The greater the effort and/or sacrifice behind the offering, the more effect it will have.