

Krov: Blood and...More Blood

Knacks: Blinding Speed, Cloud Memories, Hunter's Might, Sanguine Poison, Terrifying Aspect

Apprentice Degree: Predator

Adept Degree: Butcher

Master Degree: Impaler

Over a thousand years ago, when Veche was an independent kingdom, the Tomiech family ruled the mountains with an iron fist. Their stone palaces were cold and dark, and their dungeons held all manner of secret horrors.

It is said that Saska wielded magic brought to her by Legion itself, that she bathed in the blood of young maidens to stay forever beautiful. Her father—who also became her husband after the death of Saska's mother—celebrated their wedding with a grand bath and salon, at which over 1,000 village girls were slaughtered for the young princess' pleasure.

Their palace, the Tara Oasului in the northern Mountains of Smoke, swirled with dark magic. When Grandmother Winter appeared, Saska snarled her defiance, prepared to summon Legion's hordes rather than surrender to the crone.

Matushka froze both Saska and her son in a block of solid ice at the mountain's core. That block is said to be the source of the constant smoke that surrounds the peaks of the Gora Sorivdgeastov.

— Ussura, p. 48

Should someone find a way to free Saska Tomiech from her eternal slumber—or worse, strike the same dark Bargain with whatever power she once consorted with—the fearsome Sorcery called Krov would once again be unleashed on an unsuspecting Théah.

Apprentice Degree

An Apprentice of Krov has pledged himself to the darkest of powers, and receives an unnaturally long life in return. The Apprentice only ages one year for every two years of time that actually pass. In addition, the Apprentice is immune to all natural diseases (but *not* the White Plague).

Krov Sorcery seems to leech the warmth out of the Sorcerer: his flesh turns unnaturally pale and cold to the touch. His hair and eyes, on the other hand, begin to develop a reddish cast that deepens as the Sorcerer progresses to higher levels of power. The Sorcerer's unsettling appearance provides him with a free Raise on all Intimidate and Torture (per the Numa e-book) Repartee Actions, but opponents receive a Free Raise to resist the Sorcerer's attempts at Charm or Taunt Actions.

Neither the Knacks nor the Mastery Level abilities of Krov require the expenditure of a Drama Die. Instead, the Sorcerer must sacrifice a live (human) victim every month and bathe in his or her blood to retain these powers. Should a month go by without this sacrifice being made, the Sorcerer loses all of his powers and may never regain them. Furthermore, any aging which has been delayed by virtue of the Apprentice ability is applied to the Sorcerer all at once, even if that ages him to the point of death from old age.

Adept Degree

An Adept of Krov finds his lifespan growing ever longer: he only ages one year for every *three* that pass. In addition, the Sorcerer's resistance to disease strengthens, rendering him immune to all poisons, whether manmade or naturally-occurring. The bonuses and penalties to the Adept's Repartee Actions as described above increase to two Raises in all cases.

At the Adept level of power, the Sorcerer must sacrifice *two* victims per month (individually or at the same time) and bathe in their blood or lose all of his powers and suffer the effects of any delayed aging as described above.

Master Degree

The rare Krov Master has given up so much of his humanity that physical harm is no more threatening than the ravages of disease or time. The Master multiplies the result of his Brawn roll by two when making a Wound Check, unless the wounds have been inflicted directly by fire. In addition, he only ages one year for every *four* that actually pass. He receives a bonus/penalty of three Raises to Repartee Actions as described under the Apprentice Degree.

As a Master, the Sorcerer must bathe in the blood of *four* victims per month (individually or at the same time) or suffer the negative effects described above.

Sorcerous Knacks

Blinding Speed: Rare though they may be, accounts of Sorcerers who have received the dark gifts of Krov often attribute them with the power to move faster than the eye can follow. For every Rank in this Knack, the Sorcerer rolls an extra Unkept die for Initiative. The Sorcerer may select which Action Dice he keeps from among all those rolled (up to his Rank in Panache, as usual).

Cloud Memories: Some Krov Sorcerers develop the ability to confuse the thoughts of other people. This requires some degree of eye contact between the Sorcerer and his target, and takes the form of a Repartee Action based on the Sorcerer's Resolve + Cloud Memories vs. the target's Resolve. If the Sorcerer is successful, the target loses all memories for five minutes, plus another five minutes for every Raise the Sorcerer takes on the roll.

Hunter's Might: The hideous gifts bestowed to the Krov Sorcerer allow him to channel the raw power of wolves, bears, and other fearsome predators to perform acts beyond the capabilities of ordinary men. The Sorcerer may add twice his Rank in this Knack to any rolls using Knacks in the Athlete Skill (including Footwork Active Defenses). If the roll is Brawn-based, the Sorcerer may add five times his Rank in this Knack, instead.

Sanguine Poison: A Krov Sorcerer's blood becomes inhumanly thin, and develops an unnatural, soporific quality as well. A single drop of blood in a victim's wineglass or bowl of soup is sufficient to send all but the heartiest of men or women into a dark stupor. Anyone ingesting the Sorcerer's blood must make a Resolve roll vs. a TN equal to five times the Sorcerer's Rank in this Knack. Failure means that the victim instantly falls into a deep sleep, from which he will not wake until eight hours have passed. During this time, the victim will be haunted by terrifying nightmares which will keep him from resting peacefully: he will gain no benefit from having slept, and will be irritable and exhausted the next day.

Victims who make the Resolve roll will experience a moment or two of drowsiness, then return to normal. Anyone who successfully resists the effects of the Sorcerer's blood is immune to its effects for the next 24 hours. Note that any creature which bites the Sorcerer may be subject to the effects of this poison.

Terrifying Aspect: Krov Sorcery often lends its users an unnatural presence that can cause others to run away, or even collapse in terror. The Sorcerer has a Fear rating equal to his Rank in this Knack.

Game Master's Secrets

Needless to say, this Sorcery—if it still exists—is not meant for Player Characters. Whether it comes from a particularly savage and powerful Bargainer or from some other source ("Legion

itself,” as Ussuran legend holds) is left to the discretion of the Game Master. Its effect on the Barrier is indirect, but gruesome: each victim sacrificed to sustain the Sorcerer’s powers is one less person to oppose the forces of darkness when the Barrier falls and the creatures beyond it march on Terra.

