

A dark, red-lit nightclub scene with silhouettes of people dancing. The lighting is predominantly red, creating a moody and intense atmosphere. The silhouettes of people are visible in the foreground and middle ground, suggesting a crowded dance floor. The background shows some structural elements of the club, like pillars and ceiling lights, all bathed in the same red glow.

SKULL-NUMBING HEDONISM WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES

A BLOODSUCKERS ADVENTURE

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You need shelter. I need work
doing.

Come to the Snake Pit. Midnight.

Bring friends.

-Gloria

Skull-Numbing Hedonism Without Consequences



*"So go back to the club."
-Adam Driver, Megalopolis*

Skull-Numbing Hedonism Without Consequences is a short Adventure for Bloodsuckers with a long title. It's set in Los Angeles. It can be run as an introduction to the politics of the city, or as a single session within a broader campaign.

If you plan to be a player in a game of *Hedonism Without Consequences* and your Referee is weird about you reading modules ahead of time, stop reading here to avoid spoilers. Seriously, the first paragraph on the next page is just an outline of the entire module for the Referee to run with.

Introduction:

Welcome to Hollywood. You've got a front row seat to tomorrow morning's gossip columns.

This adventure starts in a two story whiskey bar called the **Snake Pit**, a wretched dive of scum and villainy that's six months away from demolition and fifteen years since *needing* demolition. A crumbling facade outside exposes the decay underneath, and that decay is what **Gloria Caravida**, the proprietress, thrives on. Gloria maintains tacit neutrality in the local conflict between the House Undying and the Chorus, and the Snake Pit is explicitly neutral ground. Characters of any Allegiance can mingle freely in the Snake Pit. If they can handle the pushy customers and customary pushers. And if they can handle the smell.

Carrots and Sticks:

- **Negotiators:** The player vampires are here in their capacity as 'neutral' vampires within the city to collect a package from Gloria Caravida. In return, they (or whoever organized the job for them) want them to do a job for Gloria.
- **Renegades:** The player vampires may have angered one of the major political players within the city. Gloria feigns neutrality in all conflicts, so it suits her purposes to make a show of harboring these renegades. She will shelter the characters from their enemies, but it won't come cheap.
- **Shit! We Killed The Queen:** The player characters may be fleeing to Los Angeles after 'incidents' in other cities (especially if they've just completed *Off With Her Head!*). Gloria is the first (and for some, only) port of call for new vampires entering Los Angeles. The player characters have pulled in every out-of-town favor they have to get invites tonight, and it's safe to assume that Gloria will want something in return for shelter.

With all Hooks, stress that the characters have initiated traveling to the Snake Pit to use the club as a backdrop for a meeting with Gloria Caravida with the expectation of a *quid pro quo*. This prevents a potentially embarrassing (for the Referee) scramble to try and get the player vampires back in the club should they leave without meeting her.

A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Quest-Giver:

...Or it *would* be embarrassing, if meeting Gloria was actually the start of this adventure. She's actually long dead, and the set-up for her being an important quest-giver goes out the window the second players walk into the club and realize the vibes are *very* weird tonight. This adventure is actually about the little things that happen on the way to the railroad. Let the players get distracted, explore, and make their own fun. The only thing they have waiting for them when they finally meet the NPC they're 'supposed' to meet is a nasty surprise.

It is crucial that the players not feel like they have been punished for wasting time when they discover Gloria has been killed. She was dead long before they entered the club.

Here's what Gloria Caravida *would* want, were she not currently pre-occupied with being a pile of ashes on the floor of her office:

- Meet with her bodyguard and retainer, **Felix Almeida**, at a local BuckStop Coffee and get their instructions directly.
- Felix is instructed to tell them that their job is to kill **Ruby Rapture**, a vampire operating in South Central.
- He will purposefully leave out the fact that Ruby Rapture is a key ally of Gloria's, and that Gloria plans to pin the murder on **Marcus Ardizzone** (the vampiric Director of Hollywood) as a justification for challenging his claim to the territory.

Gloria sent Felix to give the players instructions remotely because she believes her club is being observed by her enemies (she's correct) and that they would not pick tonight to strike at her. (she is very incorrect) Should they decide to investigate the murder, a vampire 'in-the-know' about how Gloria operates can tell them that Felix was conspicuously absent. Should they later meet with him, he will relay what Gloria's plans were, but (as instructed) leave out Ruby being an ally of Gloria's. The players can unravel that mystery through further investigation.

The Vibes in the Bar:

It's dark, smoky, and loud.

If Your Campaign Takes Place in the 1980s: *The band playing is **Velvet Damsel**, a hair metal band that portends the horrible fate that will befall the blighted remnants of LA's 'underground' music scene in a few short months, when Axl Rose becomes someone we need to take seriously.*

If Your Campaign Takes Place in the 1990s: *The band playing is **Longinus**, a band that blends pilfered 2 Tone rhythms and reggae inflections with a fervor that would make the British Museum blush. They're singing 'ironically' bleak lyrics over a bouncy bassline, and there's at least three trumpet players.*

If Your Campaign Takes Place in the 2000s or later: *The band playing is **Amityville Horror**, a 'Warped Tour' era pop punk band with vaguely emo iconography, thirteen word song titles, and a closet full of skeletons. Think Cobra Starship, but somehow worse.*

No matter what era, the Snake Pit is a who's-who of who sucks blood. Feel free to work in any recurring NPCs among the party-goers. If you want to introduce a quick complication, throw in the subject of any living Person memories hanging around a party-goer they don't know is a vampire and see whether the player bites on ushering them out before the Weird Vampire Shit really gets started. Otherwise, here's a few people who are here tonight:

Jody (a heavily-tattooed werewolf wearing boot cut jeans and a flannel shirt with the rolled-up sleeves) is looking frantic on the upper floor. She has recently discovered that this club has **vampires** in it after seeing someone without a reflection in the woman's restroom, and is looking for anyone she can ask for help.

Maya (a heavy-set woman with a ready smile and spiked pink hair) is the bartender tonight. She knows about 'the vampire shit' going on in the club but keeps it quiet, largely because the job pays well. If Jody's questioning starts to pick up steam, Maya will be the one to put in a quiet word with the pack to throw her off the scent. Without violence, if possible.

Vivo (a bald man in a cheap suit) is a loud, boistrous Hollywood photographer who is trying to get a photo in the tabloids tomorrow morning. He hasn't yet realized that half of his subjects aren't showing up on film.

Marchand (a portly man with a greasy ponytail) is nervously smoking on a couch. He's bleeding, and trying to hide it; somebody jumped him in the alleyway behind the Snake Pit and stole the package he planned to deliver to Bodhi Ward (a prominent vampire in Santa Monica). He needs it back, and fast. Marchand is a fixer among the living of Hollywood and an 'Alex' among the dead: he can, within reason, get the pack anything they need. Players can search the alleyway, where they will find a pink handbag containing plastic explosives. If players help him recover the package before leaving, they can use the fact he owes them a favor to get equipment out of him in future. Two nights later, they will hear that the Key & Labyrinth's headquarters have been blown up-- Bodhi planted the explosives on a patsy to send a message to the School to stay out of Los Angeles.

Theodore "Big T" Thomas is a bullish investment banker at Lucas Paxman Lucas with a linebacker's build, a ragged suit, and a cocaine habit that would make the rockstars in the club blush. He's not initiated into the mysteries of the undead, but his talk of backroom deals and criminal could easily be mistaken for the scheming of a vampire to an unassuming bloodsucker. Should the players spill too many details about vampires to him, he will find a ready ear in Jody.

Robyn Trant is a wide-eyed heiress with thick blonde hair trying purposefully not to look extravagantly wealthy tonight. She's almost pulling it off in a black leather jacket and matching mini-dress, but the Prada logo on her sunglasses are a dead giveaway that she comes from money. Her father owns a film studio, Robert Trant Productions, who have made the a king's ransom through producing low budget movies that make their tiny budgets back in the home video market. (In a more contemporary setting, they produce those zero-budget public domain horror movies. Robyn is embarrassed about this fact, if the characters recognize her father's name.) Robyn is looking for her third wheel, Lori, who is presently in the men's restroom being necked by a fuckboy vampire.

Robyn's date for the evening is the Siren **Lira Calm**, who is pulling off her own imitation of performative poverty slightly better in distressed jeans and an over-sized black T-Shirt depicting the album cover of The Cure's *Pornography*. Vampires who have been around the block will know her better as **Carmilla**. Roll 1d10 if the player characters recognize her based on her anagram. On an 8 or above, she owes them twenty dollars under an assumed name (which is absolutely another anagram of Carmilla.) If Robyn overhears the player characters referring to 'Lira' under another name, she will get a 'bad vibe' about the woman. While Lira is distracted, she will sneak outside and hail a cab.

Roscoe is a bird. He's a talking bird, if the player vampires **Command Lesser Beasts**, and can be found perched in the alleyway behind the club. He's seen everyone coming and going from the bar tonight, but seems more concerned with a shiny object one of them left behind. (Investigation reveals this to be the pink handbag Marchand was carrying.)



Most importantly: **Isaac** (a gaunt man with a thin face and thinning hairline) is Gloria's mortal consigliere, and he has recently discovered that his employer is a pile of ashes on the floor. He is running frantically around the club trying to stop things from falling apart, which is normal. What is not normal is that he is trying to hide the fact that Gloria is dead until he can find someone to frame for it (he did not see her killers) and find a new employer (rent is due on Friday, and Gloria has not yet paid him for the prior month). When cornered about his attempts to obstruct the pack from meeting Gloria, he will try to get them to employ him as a contact. If these attempts fail, he will attempt to frame them for the murder. If the players ruined Carmilla's date, she will side with Isaac when questioned by the House Undying's investigators, becoming a thorn in the pack's side as they try to clear their names.



How Things Play Out:

By the time Isaac is actively impeding the pack's efforts to meet with Gloria, the players will probably have an inkling that something is up. Socially inclined characters (either through threats or bribes) can be led upstairs by Isaac, who will explain his perspective as the one who discovered Gloria's body.

Otherwise, there are multiple ways upstairs to the office, including air vents (too small for a human, but a vampire who **Takes The Form of a Beast** will have no trouble scurrying through) and a skylight. Shattering the skylight will attract the attention of the bouncers. Guests will start to filter out, assuming that something is up. The door to Gloria's office is locked with the keycode 6248, which only Isaac knows. He's also very forgetful, so it's written down on a post-it note on a computer monitor in an adjoining office, alongside several audio recordings where he details his gradual descent into madness (Isaac is a fan of the 'Immersive Sim' genre, and does this mostly as a joke to himself to survive the stressful work of running a vampire's nightclub).

When the pack get inside, there's the unmistakable ash pile of a recently deceased vampire. It's slightly caked into the carpet, as Isaac tried to sweep it up but gave up when he realized he was making it worse. Footprints lead to the door (Isaac's) The broom he used to sweep the ashes up is propped up by the door.

There's a desk in the office (with nothing interesting within it, Isaac handles the actual business of running the club and Gloria knew better than to keep written records of vampire business), some plush couches, a fake plant that Isaac has nevertheless tried to water, and some memorabilia of bands who have performed in the club. A phone number has been scrawled on a notepad on top of the desk. If the players try to ring it (and possess cell phones), one of the player characters' phones rings.

Truths:

- Gloria knew her murderer. She turned her back to them to write something down (the player vampire's number), which is when the murderer struck.
- The murderer left no footprints. They were a vampire who took the form of a beast to enter and leave through the air vents.
- Gloria was killed with a single strike that punched a hole in her back. The killer ripped out her heart.

Who killed Gloria Caravida, and why, is left up to you and your players to determine. Here's a rundown of potential clues and red herrings dropped within this booklet:

- The House Undying and the Bleak Chorus are at war in LA. Playing both sides makes a lot of enemies.
- Gloria wanted Ruby Rapture dead, and wanted to blame Marcus Ardizzone for it.
- Bodhi Ward was abusing the neutrality of the Snake Pit to organize attacks on the Key & Labyrinth. Killing Gloria sends a message from the Brides that these actions won't be tolerated.
- Laura *did* get that prophetic dream in Sheridan la Fanu's *Carmilla* to "beware of the assassin." It's possible that Lira Calm is in the Snake Pit because she's a hired gun for whoever wanted Gloria out of the picture. Who hired her, if this is the case, is another question entirely.