

Camarilla Settings: Cross-Venue

Interaction between Genres in the Sanctioned Chronicle

Introduction

The purpose of these settings rules is to enable a coherent and enjoyable cross-venue environment in the Camarilla. Every member is responsible for making this a success. This document is sanctioned in the Camarilla's chronicle to describe how cross-venue play is conducted. The term 'cross-venue' refers to characters interacting with venues (and their characters) other than the one to which they are native, e.g. a werewolf character appearing at a mage game or interacting between games with mage characters.

While supplements such as *Chicago* and other White Wolf books describe the canonical cross-venue interaction, the books do not define an environment appropriate to a global chronicle of the scale played by the Camarilla. The unique structural and demographic characteristics of the global game necessitate this document.

The system described below must be rigidly adhered to by all storytellers within the Camarilla. Top and High level storytellers are empowered and obligated to enforce retroactive continuity changes in the event of a breach. Low level storytellers are still responsible for ensuring that such continuity changes are not necessary; they must monitor and review cross-venue play to maintain the integrity of the rules contained below. Storytellers found to be intentionally ignoring them will be disciplined. Scenes found to be in blatant disregard of them will be rewritten. High and Top Approval Storytellers must closely monitor cross-venue behavior found to be in violation of these parameters: irreparable harm can be caused to cross-venue play if these rules aren't followed. The most egregious example of such harm to cross-venue play took place in the old Mage chronicle in the United States: because high-level Storytellers thought the Mage genre couldn't 'play nice' with the other genres, it became subject to a 'firewall' limiting the Mages' interaction with everybody else. This can never happen again.

What is Cross-Venue?

Interaction between the genres in the *World of Darkness* (i.e. between supernatural races) is neither a freakish exception nor a normal occurrence. The *World of Darkness* was purposefully designed to enable cross-genre interaction and the Camarilla fully follows that principle. However, the majority of venue play must remain with characters native to that venue. It is normally assumed that at least three quarters of character interaction is within her own venue, and it's closer to 90%+ for the vast majority of Player Characters. Characters who spend less than that time interacting (at games, downtimes, etc.) with characters native to their venue must be reviewed by the Storyteller chain, as they are extremely rare. The same applies to storylines (plots) run by local Storytellers: the vast majority of plot must be native to that venue, i.e. Forsaken Player Characters can't be primarily engaged in fights with Awakening-type characters.

Additionally, cross-venue interaction cannot change the paradigm and the flavour of the affected venues, especially as it pertains to information about supernatural genres and their details: Requiem Player Characters, for instance, must remain largely ignorant of the specifics of the Awakening genre. As per the Camarilla Addendum, characters are limited in what they can know about non-native genres. Storytellers must ensure that this general state of disinformation and ignorance persists. One of the primary reasons why the venues are not completely intermixed is a state of distrustful wariness of other supernaturals. If a mage Player Character were to be fully aware of the (true) details of vampire mythology and powers, for instance, that state of wariness would largely disappear. If Player Characters are disseminating information they should not know, or information that is actively undermining that state of distrust and lack of information between genres, High and Top Approval Storytellers must permanently remove that information dissemination from the chronicle, e.g. by freezing scenes, retroactive continuity, etc. One such example would be a vampire who engages in cross-venue play at a Forsaken game, is told most relevant details as outlined in the Forsaken book, writes them down in-character, and then proceeds to forward them to local (or even global) lists. Another would be the example of a character who – through approvals and much cross-venue – creates a library of accurate information on other supernaturals and lets others access it. Both those examples would irreversibly change the World of Darkness paradigm of lack of accurate information and wary distrust between genres, and must therefore be disallowed.

Within those restrictions, the Camarilla's Storyteller chain cautiously encourages cross-venue play. Unlike the previous incarnation of the World of Darkness, this world is meant to be reasonably fluid in allowing such interaction. There is no built-in 'hatred' of other supernaturals, but at the same time there is no permanent cross-genre play: we need to find a happy medium that doesn't alienate those who wish to play primarily their native venue whilst allowing for the 'unified WoD' nature of the game world. Cross-venue is intended to be an experience of encountering the unknown, the strange, a fairly uncommon event that creates intrigue and mystery.

Guidelines for Determining what Interaction is Allowed

The following three-level scales demonstrate what is usually allowed as cross-venue, rarely allowed as cross-venue, and never allowed as cross-venue. Any attempts at performing the actions described in 'never' are to be disallowed by the supervising Storytellers. Exceptions to these are to be granted (rarely) by scenes supervised by Top Approval Storytellers. Attempts at performing the actions in 'rarely' are almost always to be disallowed by the supervising Storytellers. Exceptions to these may be granted on a case-by-case basis, but must be reported and are subject to High and Top Approval Storyteller review and possible retroactive continuity.

This Never Happens During Or As A Result of Cross-Venue (Master Approval)

- The creation of semi-permanent or permanent cross-genre groups of Player Characters (or PCs and NPCs) that stay in constant communication or always meet at conventions.

Although it's possible that Top or Master storylines will make changes to this, by default it's not possible.

- If the word 'superfriends' could in any way conceivably be applied to what is happening, then it's not actually happening and will never happen.
- Enacting any action that could be reasonably described as engaging in cross-venue warfare between Player Characters. There will never be a general (Player Character) 'War between Kindred and Uratha' nor any intimation thereof or anything remotely similar. This also applies to 'local' warfare, as these things tend to spiral in an interconnected global chronicle with email lists, IRC, etc.
- Cross-venue proxy attempts to engage in any sort of combat between Player Characters. Examples:
 - A nasty vampire is menacing your mage's mortal friends, so you send your Forsaken ally to teach her a lesson.
 - A werewolf has been trapped by some evil vampires for experimentation and only his mage buddy can come to his rescue.
 - An Ordo Dracul character needs to deal with a competing Dragon, calling in a hit to be performed by his mage ally.
- Access to full and/or accurate information about an entire type of supernatural non-native to your own venue.
 - Example: For a Mastigos to have access to accurate information as described in *Lancea Sanctum*.
- Any sort of background connections violating any of the above rules or trying to redefine the principles outlined in this document. Despite what some may think, there has never been a League of Extraordinary Supernaturals or a group of supernaturals solving crimes driving around in a van.
- Permanent or regularly scheduled cross-venue games, unless specifically allowed by the Camarilla Addendum or the Master Storyteller office. Mages and werewolves don't meet at the pub down the road on the last Saturday of every month. This may be revised at some point in the future, depending on the non-disruptive success of cross-venue play.
- Disclosing the existence of other supernaturals to the otherwise unsuspecting mortal world. This should be obvious, but let's state it again just to be sure.
- PC-versus-NPC/plot game or scene play that occurs while a Player Character is cross-venued and uses her powers to completely 'solve' or 'fix' a storyline or plot. Many venue-specific antagonists or plot effects are difficult to deal with for the PCs in that venue. This is the case for a reason. Werewolves sometimes have trouble with Spirits. Mages have some effective ways of dealing with Spirit-related trouble. Mage PCs will never just completely 'fix' that problem for werewolves. Some small exceptions do apply (see below). Storytellers may still of course use non-native NPC antagonists as they see fit, as per the Camarilla Addendum.

This Rarely Happens (Top Approval)

- Cross-venue meetings, discussions and treaties (at any level of the chronicle) between Player Characters that have lasting mechanical effects (these always have to be promoted by a Top or Master Approval storyline).

- Example: Werewolf and Mage Player Characters in a domain agree on a treaty that is magically enforced by permanent in-game mechanics. (the only exception to this would be brief local plots)
- PC-versus-NPC cross-venue proxy play (meaning you have to send your PC somewhere else to deal with plot affecting a different genre there).
 - Example: A mage's vampire acquaintance has been kidnapped by dastardly Belial's Brood plot. The mage sends his cabal to rescue the vampire from their clutches. If the Storyteller in question has planned for this, it's OK (although it should be rare). If the Storyteller in question hasn't planned for this, then it falls under 'never allowed' (as above).
- Magical items that are the combined efforts of more than one type of supernatural; if those follow published mechanics (e.g. an item that has two types of by-the-book supernatural enhancements, one enacted by a mage, the other by a vampire), they require Top Approval. If they create any sort of combined custom mechanic, they are Master Approval.

This Can Happen (Mid Approval as per the Camarilla Addendum)

- Cross-venue meetings, discussions and treaties (at any level of the chronicle) between Player Characters. Whether those have any actual effects or repercussions is, of course, entirely up to chronicle development.
 - Example: Werewolves and mages in a domain send their representatives to agree on 'territories.'
- Local PC-versus-NPC game or scene play. If a Player Character is cross-venued into a game or scene and an NPC threat arises, they shouldn't be stopped from trying to help in ways that don't disturb the plot unduly.
- Background connections that have no mechanical effects are to be allowed unless they have the potential of leading to 'never allowed' scenarios. Think this through very carefully. High and Top Approval Storytellers may review background connections that appear to be causing harm to the chronicle or paradigm.

This Is Almost Always OK (No Special Approvals Required)

- Brief cross-venue soft RP that has no significant consequences on Player Characters. We are very much encouraging soft RP between local venues (or even on a limited scale at conventions, e.g. in dark back rooms, etc.) that is meant to forestall major conflict. Example: Let's say your local mages are aware of your Domain's werewolf territory and have agreed not to go through it unless absolutely necessary. What if they have to go through and just briefly want to talk to the one werewolf they know how to reach? That sort of brief soft RP scene doesn't require special approvals as long as it has absolutely no repercussions and effects on the game. It's an example of good RP that tries to prevent the 'never allowed' scenarios.

- You need to let your Storyteller know that you've had brief cross-venue interaction, such as calling up the werewolves and saying 'driving through.' This is mandatory and avoids a lot of confusion and later problems. ("Your character's been talking to... WHAT?")
- If there's a Storyteller with jurisdiction over all local characters, regardless of venue (e.g. Domain Storytellers in the US), she will usually handle 'off-stage,' indirect conflicts between characters from different genres. Examples of such are resource and influence conflicts between retainers and allies, struggles over control of mortal resources, etc. (typically this could be mages and vampires both trying to gain influence over the local police or media, or similar disputes). If there's no local Storyteller with jurisdiction over all local venues, the direct Storytellers of those venues have to negotiate the outcome.

Cross-venue interaction not described above is acceptable as long as it conforms to the standards of the paradigm as outlined in the sanctioned books in play in the Camarilla. If in doubt, you ought to allow harmless cross-venue: only disallow cross-venue interaction (that isn't described above) if it is considered as leading to any of the 'never allowed' scenarios. This isn't meant as a huge endorsement for cross-venue, merely as an encouragement to try it if it doesn't appear disruptive or harmful to the game. If there's any suspicion that it could be bad, please say 'no.' Although it has been stated before, it bears repeating: scenes, games, characters, etc. considered harmful to the cross-venue settings of the Camarilla will be permanently struck from continuity or desanctioned.

Examples of Cross-Venue Circumstances

Here are a few factors that influence what cross-venue should look like in the Camarilla.

- **Quality of Storyteller oversight and planning ahead of time**
 - o "Hey, I just dropped a call to my werewolf buddy. We're meeting in the McDonald's parking lot to hang out! He said he'd bring some friends." This is *not* a good example. The Storyteller needs to be aware of what is meant to happen so she can plan in advance. Cross-venue is unusual and it has consequences.
- **Lack of information exchange due to stereotypes, paradigm differences and tension**
 - o Stereotypes are dumb because they are the result of incomplete information, fear and prejudice. Those factors define what cross-venue feels like. "Your prejudices are foolish. I in fact know what the noble Uratha are truly like, and your childish preconceptions will soon be dispelled" is *not* a good example of cross-venue information / reactions. Sage wizards or ancient vampires who just know that the other supernaturals aren't a danger or aren't to be feared don't work in this paradigm.
- **Cross-venue must lead to good story**
 - o The above "Let's meet in the McDonald's parking lot to hang out" isn't necessarily a good story. There must be story reasons for the meeting and planned story for the aftereffects. "We combine powers to destroy Great Evil!" is a cliché for a reason; don't fall back on it. The WoD is about a lot more than stopping the bad guys. Also see the 'superfriends' line above.
- **Above all, the Storyteller must be educated regarding mechanics**

- You *must* know details of how powers interact *before* running cross-venue with characters likely to want to use their powers. If you're not 100% sure how powers ought to work in a given situation (there are a whole lot of books out there, after all), freeze the scene and make sure. If you're not comfortable with handling a mechanics-heavy scene and unless the characters absolutely need to use their powers for some story-related reason, simply stipulate that it's soft RP. Unless they intend to throw powers at each other or have to interact with plot mechanics, there's no real reason why cross-venue has to use hard RP.
- **As a Storyteller, set a time constraint**
 - Open-ended cross-venue is an invitation for trouble.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *This is telling me how to role-play!*

A: Yes.

Q: *But that's unfair! What if...*

A: The world you're playing in is shared with more than five thousand other player characters (and plenty of NPCs). They follow the internal logic of the game world. To share this world and not have it collapse in a smoldering heap of destruction, some limitations exist.

Q: *Why can't we just be more lenient about some of the 'never allowed' stuff? It won't do any harm! My friends and I are really responsible!*

A: It sucks that the rules are the same for everybody, responsible or not, you're right. If you can come up with a good way to pinpoint only the responsible people without alienating a lot of others, please let us know. We've tried, and we've never heard the end of the 'Old Boys' Network' argument, trust me.

Q: *What's wrong with cross-venue groups? Why are you using this demeaning 'superfriends' term? We all have really good IC reasons for being allied with each other, and...*

A: It's very difficult to completely separate IC and OOC. We all try, but it doesn't always work. For reasons already discussed, werewolves and vampires and mages would be wary and distrustful of each other. Example -- IC: *This lupine has visited our gather and is offering his aid if we in turn provide assistance to his tribe. I don't trust him, but I'll go along and see what can be gained from this brief alliance.* OOC: *Oh hey, it's Tony's werewolf, Barry Bloodtalon. He's OK, of course we can team up! Hey man, can you make sure nobody messes with my body while I project?*

Q: *What exactly do you mean by 'superfriends'?*

A: Cross-genre coteries, basically. Groups of different types of supernaturals that hang out together (or are on permanent or semi-permanent cross-genre email lists, IRC channels, etc), eat Cheetos and drink Mountain Dew (ok, the last one is exaggerated... slightly). MST/NST-level plot may use the concept in a limited fashion, but it's not otherwise possible.

Q: *But let's say we can perfectly separate IC and OOC perceptions! What then?*

A: All right. Then we have the simple paradigm problem: supernaturals don't team up like that, semi-permanently or permanently. It just doesn't happen. It's not part of the *World of Darkness*. It's a D&D party of wizards and barbarians and clerics and liches. In the Camarilla, MST/NST-level devices may use the concept from time to time for specific storylines, but it's rare.

Q: *So should I always approve cross-venue?*

A: Depends. If it's cross-venue to cause trouble (which you should be able to spot as a good Storyteller), then always deny. As a game's supervising Storyteller, you have the right to deny any character entry to that game or game session. It's that simple. If the cross-venue is intended to find out 'the real truth' about another genre, also always deny. Supernaturals aren't meant to know the absolute truth of another venue. We strongly recommend that you approve cross-venue that isn't intended to be disruptive or potentially harmful to the paradigm.

Q: *I'm a Storyteller – should I add cross-venue to my VSS in some fashion?*

A: Yes! Definitely! Modify your current (or new) VSS to include a brief section on how common cross-venue is in that venue. It's very possible that the majority of your players don't want to deal with any PC-on-PC cross-venue, for instance. Similarly, add one of the normal ratings (from 1 to 5, 1 meaning 'rare' and 5 meaning 'very common') to the type of cross-venue: is it largely to follow up on mysteries (plot etc) or action-focused, or maybe based on grand ceremony?

Q: *OK, anything else I need to do to run cross-venue as a Storyteller?*

A: You absolutely have to talk to your fellow venue Storytellers in a Domain and collaborate with your Domain Storyteller (if you have one) or appropriate Regional staff. Make sure the other venue STs know what's going on, who's going where and doing what. You need to avoid any sort of confusion, since it's very easy to mix up what's been happening if you have supernaturals interacting.

Q: *What's the role of the Domain Storyteller in Domains that have multiple VSTs working under one DST?*

A: The role of the DST is vital in coordinating cross-venue goings-on; some DSTs may even want to appoint an assistant who does nothing but keeping track of this sort of stuff. One major concern are cross-venue storylines: if the Ordo Dracul do something with certain areas of great magical importance, the other supernaturals may want to get involved, right? Similarly, if the werewolves get too cocky, the potential repercussions in the spirit world will definitely be felt by the other supernaturals – certainly by the mages and quite possibly by the vampires.

Q: *If I'm sending a character proxy in cross-venue across the world, whom do I contact to make sure everybody knows I'm running around in their backyard? What Storytellers need to be kept in the loop?*

A: That's a difficult question to answer. On the one hand, Storytellers always like to know about weird stuff happening in their areas of jurisdiction. On the other hand, the #1 membership concern in a recent survey was the reduction of bureaucracy. Nobody is served by having to send off dozens of emails or even database application if it's not absolutely necessary.

The rule of thumb is this: If you are engaged in brief soft RP that has no mechanical repercussions, let your direct Storyteller know (on both sides). That direct Storyteller needs to put it in their report to let others above know that this has been happening (for example “The werewolf Dame Edna from the Seattle Domain has been trying to get in touch with mage characters in Edinburgh she ran into at ICC last year to squeeze some info on the nature of the Azlu out of them. So far not much has been accomplished. We’ll update if it goes any further.”)

If you are engaged in ‘hard’ RP such as full proxies into another region or nation, the Storyteller in charge of the venue into which you are proxying (e.g. the VST of the Requiem game your Mage is proxying into to get some information on the weird magical phenomena they are experiencing) needs to both put this into his report and to send an email notification to the appropriate High Approval storyteller to let them know. The High Approval Storyteller in question will then compile a list of ‘hard cross-region/nation proxies’ that happened in her region/nation and put them in her monthly report. If it’s something particularly dangerous or potentially harmful (“A Mage cabal is trying to proxy into Dundee to collapse the city into the sea!”), the High Approval Storyteller may also notify the National Storyteller to coordinate any potential reactions. Unless the effects of the proxy appear to contradict the **Rarely/Top** or **Never/Global** rules outlined above, however, the High/Top Approval Storytellers should never have to interact with the scenes, minimizing bureaucratic overhead and the number of involved Storytellers and necessary coordination. Let the VSTs run the scenes unless something’s clearly wrong.

Q: *OK, so I’m a Requiem VST and a mage got hold of blood from a local vampire player character. She now says she has a sympathetic link to that vampire and wants to regularly turn up to our Requiem games!*

A: Cross-venue mechanical effects inside a Domain are up to the direct Storyteller of the affected character to adjudicate. If it goes against the paradigm of the game, you can always say no. If it comes from outside of the Domain and has a mechanical effect, the Storyteller in charge of the entire Domain (if there is one; in the US this is often the Domain Storyteller) can also deny any such effects based on the same concerns.

Q: *So a character in my venue met a werewolf and now she’s meant to forget all she learned about the stuff she was told? That makes no sense!*

A: If a quantum physicist came up to me and told me details about quantum physics, I would be likely to forget the correct details by next week as well. Yes, quantum physics isn’t the same as ‘stuff’ about other genres, but that’s the general principle we apply to make sense of a world in which everybody could email out the entire details of their supernatural genre to everybody else in a few hours. There isn’t a much more elegant way of keeping genre knowledge separate, otherwise we’d end up with ‘one combined venue’ really soon. If she wants to remember that stuff, get the appropriate approvals, otherwise the memories fade quickly.

Q: *Can I have a permanent cross-venue style sheet?*

A: If cross-venue goes well for a while and there are no major disasters, who knows?

Q: *I'm a Storyteller and some characters in my game are involved in some sort of cross-venue plot. Do they need approval every time they interact with it?*

A: The MST (or your NST) may designate specific storylines to further cross-venue interactions that don't require further approvals. You will be informed by the MST/NST-level officers in question if this is the case.

Q: *But what if the characters in those plots then find out lots of things about other genres and start telling everybody about it? How can we follow the 'Appropriate Knowledge' limitations then?*

A: Taking part in those stories will not provide them with any way of bypassing the approvals limitations to find out detailed cross-genre knowledge. They may discover plot details that affect other venues globally (which doesn't require any approvals to know) but if they find out other genre-specific information, they still have to apply as usual. You are free to deny approving in-depth information about other genres they find out this way: these storylines aren't meant to encourage complete cross-pollination of genre knowledge.

Q: *See, our Domain is a bit weird. What if...*

A: You can use your Domain-wide VSS/history or individual Venue Style Sheets to further refine the guidelines given here to make sense in your game; although this can't change any approval levels in any way, you can explain things in more detail to your players.

Q: *I read through all nine pages of this, but I'm still fuzzy on exactly what I can do?*

A: In short, cross-genre role-play is fine if it's non-invasive and non-disruptive to any of the venues involved, if nobody involved gets any knowledge the genre shouldn't have, and if it doesn't result in some sort of semi-permanent or permanent cross-venue situation (like characters being on out-of-genre or fully cross-genre email lists, etc). If you want to do anything that's above and beyond those things, you need to check with the higher-level Storytellers (see above).

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The latest version of this document can be found at <http://camarilla.white-wolf.com/rules/>