

## Linear Guidance

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Rules laid out in this document:

For STs/ASTs:

- Storytellers are able to remove players from linears if they are not following the code of conduct.
- STs will aim to make sure that all players are included and involved at various points on the linear.
- STs will allow players some roleplay time to finalise any plans and preparatory actions.
- STs will aim to arrange linears in a timely manner and players will aim to be responsive in order to help arrange a time and date. (Caveat: life happens, we all accept that).
- For players who volunteer to be the STs “Book Goblin” (see section 7), any knowledge gained during the course of the linear is ooc knowledge and any use of it in game IC is metagaming which is a violation of the code of conduct and would be dealt with as such.

For Players:

- Once you have received a response in orders that something is going to linear you cannot:
  - Put in further orders towards this event unless invited to do so by the ST.
  - Participate in a linear you have not committed orders to. Involvement in a linear will always require at least 1 orders point to be committed in the relevant order cycle.
  - Make declarations of what happened in the plot based on your assumptions of how the linear will go. (Technically you can do this but it is up to you to then manage the IC consequences of their actions if they are wrong)
- Linears are scheduled whenever the most players involved in the plot can make it. Gameplay should be adjusted where possible to accommodate the gap between when something should happen IC and when a linear actually happens Irl.
- Please bear in mind the code of conduct when attending linears and while everyone is free to ask questions and challenge a ruling, the Storyteller has final say on what that ruling is.
- Linears as a general rule of thumb are limited to 6 players. STs may choose to run linears with less or more players than that at their discretion.

- Before attending a linear, players should have their character sheet to hand and be aware of the full capabilities of their character as per the code of conduct.
- As a player it is your responsibility to take actions that you are happy to play out the consequences to.

For clarification's sake, in this document we refer to the "orders cycle": this is the time period between games. Players have a week and a half to write orders, storytellers have around a week and a half to respond and a week to answer any order related queries before the game itself.

## 1. What is a Linear:

Linears are when we come together as a small group to play out a specific scene in the tabletop setting. They can occasionally be social events but are almost always when combat is likely to occur. Running combat in orders is exceedingly difficult. Players do not get a real chance to contribute the full scope of what choices and actions their characters would make, and Storytellers might not have the time available to write out the considerable amount of text in an order response that a combat-based action would take.

Important words:

Time Freeze – Time freeze is when the Storyteller halts all in character interactions in order to adjudicate a call or to narrate an event.

## 2. When Linears are needed:

Usually, you can tell if something is going to go to Linear if combat is likely to occur, if more than 3 players are involved and if the order you send in is quite complex. This is always down to the storyteller's discretion, according to available time as STs are trying to provide an equitable experience for all players. Linears are infrequent as we are a Larp and things should happen at game as much as possible. If your plot is going to need a linear you will be notified in your orders response.

You can always ask an ST if a plot is likely to go to Linear any time soon and they will answer to the best of their ability, but it always comes down to what you as players decide to do.

Some scenarios that will almost inevitably go to linear:

- attacking a sabbat pack
- a blood hunt
- a coordinated military type attack against an enemy
- infiltration of an npc kindred haven/ clan haven.

- attack or infiltration of a large human run place e.g. a bank heist.

-PvP which requires action outwith orders. For example: a character ambushing another character in their haven during the month.

Sometimes Storytellers will run single person linears to develop backgrounds or run social scenes within a clan setting. This is most commonly done for public clan rituals and prestigious events. These types of linears are very much just to add flavour to the event and are very dependent on the storyteller at the time.

### 3. Timey wimy wibbly wobbly – Irl vs ic timing:

This is something that needs compromise and understanding from all players in the game. In real life demands on the volunteers that run the game and the players will always take precedence over linears. Some linears may have to change at the last minute if people drop out. It can't be helped, we all have real lives to lead. In an ideal world, linears would take place in the same order cycle as you receive the response to your order that it is going to linear. Unfortunately, in reality that would mean creating and scheduling a linear between orders getting back to players and the next game which is often a week or less. This isn't a feasible expectation of anyone so linears will usually be arranged after the court night game.

Linears are scheduled whenever the most players involved in the plot can make it. Sometimes this means that ic time constraints placed on a character by their elders may need to be fudged a little. E.g. saying "Let's discuss this later somewhere more privately" could help to bridge the gap between what takes place ic before game but Irl happen during a linear planned for after the game night.

A player who has been asked to give info on something that would happen at the linear can respond by making the out of character sign and stating, "my pc would have an answer for you but the linear has yet to happen so can we skip past this just now". We ask that everyone be considerate of this.

Some basic rules as stated above to help keep things clear:

Once you have received a response in orders that something is going to linear you cannot-

- Put in further orders towards this event unless invited to do so by the ST.
- Involvement in a linear will always require at least 1 orders point to be committed in the relevant order cycle. Players who have already committed their orders elsewhere may not be added to the linear. Players who have not submitted any orders during that cycle may only be added to the linear by discussion and agreement with the STs – and this would be by exception rather than the norm. Players who join a linear in this manner will have the equivalent to an action to prepare as laid out below in the Orders and Action section.

- Make declarations of what happened in the plot based on your assumptions of how the linear will go. (Technically you can do this but it is up to you to then manage the ic consequences of their actions if they are wrong)

Following these rules will help prevent too many ic issues about the lack of a coherent timeline on linears and make it simpler to sort who is doing what and who is attending.

#### 4. Storytellers Calls:

Each storyteller will run linears in a slightly different way. Some may prefer to run them more “cinematically”, meaning that it is run with more emphasis on descriptions and natural reactions than specific dice rolls for individual interactions and actions. This is also a common style to use if time to complete the linear on the night is limited.

Some STs may lean towards more logic puzzles and traps than direct combat.

Rules calls made on a linear will differ based on several factors:

- Is everyone playing new to the game?
- Are there potential factors that could link into other plots?
- Have previous scenes interfered e.g is someone under the influence of Dominate or Dementation?

There are a lot of factors that each ST will interpret slightly differently and there will often be things behind the scenes that you might not be aware of that influence their calls.

- Is it a PVP or a PVE linear?

STs are more likely to give some leeway against npcs than against pcs. What a pc chooses to do is out with ST control as long as they are following the general rules of the game, but they may give a player a heads up if their action is likely to have far reaching consequences. That being said, it is up to the player to be prepared to face any ic consequences of their actions. If you choose for example to diablerise during a linear, do not expect your next court game to be an easy one. STs may give a heads up but they are not obligated to do so and cannot always predict how the rest of the game will react to your actions.

- Is the Big Bad an established VTM canon npc?

Then they may have some ST created abilities from previous use in game or STs may have updated the character sheet given in the books to better match the GV power levels at play in the linear.

There is a lot of ambiguity when it comes to VTM V20 rules, especially in regards to some disciplines. Please bear in mind the code of conduct when attending linears and while everyone is free to ask questions and challenge a ruling, the Storyteller has final say on what that ruling is. Drawn out

debates over calls made will only serve to cut the linear short and reduce the enjoyment of those involved. Storytellers are able to remove players from linears if they are not following the code of conduct.

Linears as a general rule of thumb are limited to 6 players. This is because once you reach a table of 6, any more and combat becomes heavily drawn out and difficult to manage (ask older players about the 17 person combat that took 45 minutes a round). STs may choose to run linears with less or more players than that but the time the linear itself takes will change based on that. The more players there are, the more preparation and planning should be done beforehand to allow for as much time as possible on the linear to be spent playing the linear itself. If little to no preparation has been done beforehand, this can easily eat up over an hour before play actually begins.

Guidance for STs: If you are running a linear for more than 3 players, this will usually take more than 3 hours to run. Please plan accordingly.

#### 5. Player responsibility:

Before attending a linear, players should have their character sheet to hand and be aware of the full capabilities of their character. It helps speed the process along if you have a basic inventory of what your pc would be likely to have with them in terms of weapons and armour plus any specific rituals dealt with in orders prepared in advance. Ideally attendees will have worked out a plan of approach before the linear starts as well but STs know this isn't always possible.

Linears are what can make or break a character. They are designed to be challenging but always within the capabilities of the players present. The potential for character death is real but usually avoidable depending on player actions, the only exception to this is potentially a PVP linear where another pc is going in with the direct intention to kill another pc. Sometimes you are just out matched.

As stated above, STs do not control player actions. Nor are they responsible for how the rest of the game reacts to actions taken during a linear. They can control how the world setting reacts to a degree but the reaction still needs to be in keeping with the game itself.

E.g. if you choose to diablerise someone during a linear: Without an attempt to disguise your aura this will be visible to any kindred using auspex for the next several months at the very least. As this is a taboo in camarilla society there could be penalties to status (or gains for infamy), allied kindred would avoid contact with your pc, your clan may punish your pc. There is a real risk that the prince torpors, executes or banishes your pc, rendering them unplayable at game.

As a player it is up to you to take actions that you are happy to play out the consequences to. While most players do attempt to come to a compromise that everyone is ok with to avoid ruining someone's fun, players do not have to, nor are they encouraged to dilute their pc reactions because you, for lack of a better way to put it, are upset at the consequences of your actions. Similar to rolling a 1 in D&D sometimes the best games are made from these big dramatic events and can be fun for all involved. We play a communal story that we all build together and sometimes that means a pc going down in a glorious sunrise. It is an exciting event and a chance for your pc to be front and centre of something that will be talked about for games to come.

If you feel that the consequences of an action taken are having a negative affect on your mental health, you may find it easier to draft a new pc and allow the storytellers to run your previous pcs consequences as an npc so that you can take part in the gossip and political ramifications left behind in your previous pcs wake instead. However this means placing your pc fully in ST hands.

All players and STs have a responsibility to be familiar with the code of conduct at all times and Linears are no different. Please refer to the previous section for challenging ST calls if you feel that it is needed.

## 6. Orders and Actions:

An order that you believe will result in a linear should include as much information as you can about what you do to prepare. This should include relevant rituals (although certain rituals that take a lot of prep may require a dedicated order point).

An example of what to prepare:

What weapons do you procure and how?

How do you get there?

What ghouls/npc allies would you call upon to come with you?

What research/investigation do you do beforehand?

What are your main aims with the plot/linear?

As stated above, once you have received an order response saying that the action will result in a linear, no further orders can be submitted towards the linear without permission from the ST. Again, if you are unsure if it could go to linear, please ask.

Some players choose to "bank" an order point. This is submitting a blank order which you will then specify at the start of the linear what you are spending it on.

An example of this would be if you are unsure what the plan is but may need to spend xp to up a skill to 4 dots or obtain something big like a tank for an assault or do some last minute investigation. Maybe you want to keep an order to guarantee any potential masquerade clean up gets done afterwards.

Most STs will allow some actions to be taken between orders responses and the linear itself that don't need an order dedicated to it. If you want to make any phone calls, exchange items between players, blood up etc. As a general guideline, this would be any action that you can complete in a few hours at most. How far you can go with these actions are dependent on the ST at the time. Don't be afraid to ask what you can do.

## 7. What to expect on a linear:

Most linears are run on a voice channel on discord to make it easier to schedule and run for all involved.

Most linears will take at least 2 to 3 hours of dedicated play time to complete and will usually be run in the evening between 8pm and 11pm but obviously this depends on everyone's schedule at the time.

Linear content will vary depending on the plot but usually involve some level of combat so come prepared for it.

STs will allow players some roleplay time to finalise any plans and prep actions. Try to remember that while it is not at court, if you choose to roleplay discussing plans then the game hierarchy system is active. You are talking to each other IC after all.

STs will aim to make sure that all players are included and involved at various points on the linear. While sometimes it may feel that you have nothing to do, usually certain bits of the linear will cater to different people taking part. E.g. a puzzle bit for IT/Intelligence based pcs, then a social interaction for social skilled pcs, then combat for combat based pcs. That way everyone gets to participate and showcase their main strengths. However this can't always be guaranteed within the time constraints of the evening itself or the plot is too specific (you're not likely to get much social interaction hunting down a sabbat pack).

STs will often have other members of the ST team or volunteer players to act as their "book goblin": someone who sits in on the linear with the source books in front of them to help with rules calls as needed. For players who volunteer in this role, any knowledge gained during the course of the linear is ooc knowledge and any use of it in game is metagaming and would be considered to be a violation of the code of conduct and dealt with as such.

VTM is a heavily varied system and having someone on hand to help manage the immense amount of knowledge needed to run a linear can make running it considerably easier and less time consuming so any help volunteered is greatly appreciated by the ST team and player alike.

STs will aim to arrange linears in a timely manner. Often over Facebook messenger for ease if they have everyone added on the site. If not, calls may be put out on the game Facebook page Glasgow Vampire Larp for attendees to get in touch so please make sure that you are a member. If all else fails, STs will be in touch via email to arrange a suitable method of communication. Please try and be responsive so that arrangements can be made as soon as possible to allow everyone involved to manage their schedules accordingly.

As a final note, linears are meant to enhance the Larp experience and are not meant to take away from it. They are rare and should always be rare as the main plots should happen in up time on court night. If you want to experience a linear, STs can write plot that will specifically go in that direction but as with all things in GV, it comes down to how your character acts.

Linears are tough to write and difficult to run. They can be high risk but give high rewards. Most linears take upwards of 5 hours to write and prepare just from an ST perspective and are often the culmination of a years worth of plot, orders and roleplay for some players so please be patient with your ST and fellow players but most importantly have fun and don't be afraid to blow stuff up. It can only go well.....right?