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Codex: G - Developing Conflict

Prescene Context: The player has traveled to the Vatican in Rome to steal an ancient text with instructions on how to locate the entrance to Hell. After several unsuccessful attempts, the player is walking back to their hostel, on the verge of accepting defeat.

FADE IN:

EXT. COBBLESTONE STREETS OF ROME NIGHT

On a secluded section of the street, A COUPLE is entangled in each other's arms. THE MAN presses his date against the wall, whispering into her ear. She giggles but pushes him away.

THE WOMAN

No, non stasera. (*No, not tonight*)

The man whispers something again and begins steering her down the street. She struggles against him.

THE WOMAN (CONT'D)

(louder)

No! Lasciami andare! (*No! Let me go!*)

The player frowns and begins walking towards them.

THE PLAYER

Hey! Stop!

The man quickens his pace. Just as the player moves their hand to their weapon...

The man and his victim teleport through the wall in a shroud of dark smoke.

The player looks up at the wall of the house, following around to the front door.

INT. OLD ITALIAN MANOR CONTINUOUS

The player looks around, entering the house and goes upstairs.

INT. MANOR HOUSE, DRAWING ROOM A SHORT TIME LATER

THE MAN/ALTERMO steps out from the shadows, draining the last drops of blood from his date. He is elegantly dressed in outdated clothes. His dark hair falls past his shoulders. The victim slumps over on the dining table.

ALTERMO

(taking a surprised look at the player)  
A half-blood.

[Half-bloods are people like the player with a divine bloodline.]

Altermo silently tilts his head, disregarding the body. He opens a crystal decanter and pours a glass of dark red liquid, holding it out to the player. The player hesitates.

ALTERMO (CONT'D)

Wine.

[Player Choice]

- 1) Take the wine
- 2) Refuse

[Player Choice 1]

The player takes the glass, tentatively.

[Player Choice 2]

Altermo flashes the player a dark smile and sets the glass back down with a flourish.

ALTERMO (CONT'D)

What brings you to Rome? A dangerous place for someone like you.

THE PLAYER

"But not for vampires?"

Altermo smiles, taking a seat in front of the fireplace.

ALTERMO

I saw you yesterday, on the rooftop.  
Chasing that boy into the Vatican.

THE PLAYER

(raising their brow)  
What do you know about the Vatican?

ALTERMO

(smiling wider revealing fangs)  
More than you.

The player takes a sharp breath and sets the glass down on the table.

THE PLAYER

I need to find a way into the  
archives.

ALTERMO

Of which there are many. But not  
for you.

[TACTIC 1: INTIMIDATION]

THE PLAYER

I think there are. And I think you're  
going to find me one, unless you want  
the Vulgata knowing about your little  
snack pad.

[The Vulgata is a brutal, secret organization of the Vatican responsible for securing papal secrets for the Vatican Archives or destroying them. They have a fanatical desire to kill supernaturals, especially anything they deem demonic, like Vampires.]

ALTERMO

Vampires have existed in Rome for  
millennia without pause. We have no

qualms with your *Vulgata*.

THE PLAYER

I find that a little hard to believe.

ALTERMO (CONT'D)

But your kind... your kind have no contract. There are no half-bloods in Rome.

THE PLAYER

Contract. What do you mean a contract?

ALTERMO

Your kind aren't the only ones that know about the Vatican archives. And mortals aren't the only tourists Rome attracts. The *Vulgata* enjoys our services from time to time. And in exchange for our assistance, we enjoy the safety and protection of the Holy See.

THE PLAYER

So you're not all parasites after all. And how does "downstairs" feel about this little arrangement?

ALTERMO

The demonica is none of my concern.

[TACTIC 2: BRIBERY]

THE PLAYER

So how about a deal of our own? That archive has-

ALTERMO

(interrupting)

Countless treasures? Believe me, Nephilim, I know more of those artifacts than you could ever dream of.

THE PLAYER

Then why ignore them? What's so valuable about your treaty when you could be doing this (the player motions to the body on the table) anywhere in the world.

ALTERMO

That contract protects every vampire in the city of Rome, and stretches back nearly as far as your lineage.

[TACTIC 3 - APPEAL TO ETHICS ]

THE PLAYER

No, no, no, you said the demonica is none of your concern. You're here to kill demons just as much as I am. So prove it. That archive is the only thing standing between me and the birthing ground of every demon spawn on earth. You make a contract with me, and it's the only one you'll ever need.

[[FINAL NO]]

ALTERMO

Get into the archive first. Then we can talk about whether or not you're in a position to make that deal.

[[YES BUT]]

THE PLAYER

You can get someone into the archive any time, any eon. But this deal? This deal is temporary. And a mortal like me? I might not be around tomorrow to offer again.

ALTERMO

I can get you into the archive, this is true. But I have no way of knowing whether or not you can make it out.

ALTERMO (CONT'D)

I will help you under one condition.  
There is a vampire in the city  
notorious for his... eccentric taste.  
He likes to enjoy his meals in the  
company of his friends. I want you to  
sneak into one of his parties and bring  
me back one of his captives. Unharmd  
of course. If you can do that, we have  
a deal.