

Dark Gates WEREWOLF



Dark Ages WEREWOLF™



By Gavin Bennett, Brian T. Bøe, Ally Chilson, Ben Grivno, Heather
Grove, Harry Heckel IV, Heather Heckel, Shannon W. Hennessy,
Ellen P. Kiley, James Kiley, Carrie Ann Lewis, Kristopher M. Michl,
Matthew J. Rourke

Werewolf created by Mark Rein • Hagen

Credits

Authors: Gavin Bennett, Bjørn T. Bøe, Ally Chilson, Ben Grivno, Heather Grove, Harry Heckel IV, Heather Heckel, Shannon W. Hennessy, Ellen P. Kiley, James Kiley, Carrie Ann Lewis, Krister M. Michl, and Matthew J. Rourke.

Storyteller game system designed by Mark Rein•Hagen.

Additional Contributions: Lisa Charlton, Jonathan McFarland and Hanneke van Keulen.

Developer and Additional Material: Matthew McFarland

Editor: Carl Bowen

Art Direction, Layout & Typesetting: Becky Jollensten

Interior Art: Mike Chaney, John Cobb, Steven Eidson, Tom Gianni, Steve Prescott, Mark Smylie, James Stowe and Richard Thomas

Front & Back Cover: Becky Jollensten



1554 LITTON DR
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

© 2003 White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden, except for the purposes of reviews, and for blank character sheets, which may be reproduced for personal use only. White Wolf, Vampire, Vampire the Masquerade, Mage the Ascension, Hunter the Reckoning, World of Darkness and Aberrant are registered trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Werewolf the Apocalypse, Wraith the Oblivion, Changeling the Dreaming, Werewolf the Wild West, Mage the Sorcerers Crusade,

Wraith the Great War, Trinity, Dark Ages Storytellers Companion, Dark Ages Werewolf, Dark Ages Vampire, Dark Ages Mage, Dark Ages Europe, Bitter Crusade, Under the Black Cross, Cainite Heresy, Constantinople by Night, Jerusalem by Night, Libellus Sanguinis I Masters of the State, Libellus Sanguinis II Keepers of the Word, Libellus Sanguinis III Wolves at the Door, Libellus Sanguinis IV Thieves in the Night, The Ashen Knight, The Ashen Thief, Iberia by Night, Transylvania by Night, House of Tremere, Wolves of the Sea, Fountains of Bright Crimson, Wind from the East and Veil of Night are trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters, names, places and text herein are copyrighted by White Wolf Publishing, Inc.

The mention of or reference to any company or product in these pages is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright concerned.

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. This book contains mature content. Reader discretion is advised.

For a free White Wolf catalog call 1-800-454-WOLF.

Check out White Wolf online at

<http://www.white-wolf.com>; alt.games.whitewolf and rec.games.frp.storyteller

PRINTED IN CANADA.

Dark Ages WEREWOLF™

CONTENTS



Legends of the Garou: The Mettle of a Leader	5
Introduction	14
Chapter One: The Darkening World	22
Chapter Two: The Garou	50
Chapter Three: Characters and Drama	78
Chapter Four: The Gifts of the Spirits	110
Chapter Five: The Invisible World	157
Chapter Six: The Enemy	180
Chapter Seven: Storytelling	199
Appendix	220



Silver Howl paced restlessly

amidst the patches of wildflowers in a small grove just outside the valley that housed the Sept of Sun's Glory, the set of her ears against her head clearly conveying her displeasure. The guards failed to notice her presence until she howled a second time. Finally, an answering howl gave her permission to enter. *Homid*s, she thought, curling her lip in disdain. *I should teach them to hunt.*


Her presence finally acknowledged, she darted swiftly down the narrow path toward the caern, finally emerging into the forest at the bottom of the valley. Her silver coat blended well with the sun-dappled underbrush, and she felt a certain amount of amusement when she thought of the homid guards trying to track her progress as their duties dictated. She left them behind all too quickly. Rather than dwelling on the triumph, she lost herself in the run through the serene stretch of woods. Her nose picked out the scents of small animals, the green of growing things, the distant, sharp smell of the frozen lake waters. She outran her displeasure and finally stood at the edge of the caern, sides heaving, politely waiting for the guards to catch up. They finally emerged, sporting looks of equal shame and gratitude for not embarrassing them in front of the sept.



LEGENDS OF THE GAROU: THE METTLE OF A LEADER

The three of them entered the caern together, a lithe silver-coated bitch with two larger and more awkward brown-furred wolves. Once they had escorted her as far as was required, she released them with a chuff and a toss of her head, and they were off, trying to make an impressively quick exit to make up for their prior tardiness.

Silver Howl approached the central fire with the proper respect, waiting at a distance with head down and eyes averted so that the elders would not think her an eavesdropper. They completed their conversation with a young Garou whose name she could not quite recall and sent him on his way. Finally, after some conversation, Guillaume Sun's Glory, the sept leader, beckoned for her to approach. He was a striking figure, old enough to be a great-grandfather, with steely gray eyes, white blonde hair and an aristocratic profile. All in all, his was not an authority that she ever questioned.



The Master of the Challenge attracted her attention with a soft cough. Hyperion's Eye was a Child of Gaia, born of wolf, and while some might think it odd that she worked so closely with a human-born Silver Fang, Silver Howl was of the opinion that the two complemented each other well. Hyperion's Eye was in the Homid form, presumably for ease of discussion with the sept leader. At times, Silver Howl found that the nuances of wolf speech were lost when conversing with Garou wearing the human-skin, and she could only assume that the opposite was true. Still, she herself was most secure when in Lupus form, and there she would stay unless requested to do otherwise.

Hyperion's Eye wasted no time in asking the question that was foremost on her mind. "Did you complete your challenge, Silver Howl?"

Silver Howl lowered her head and released the golden claw that she had been carrying in her mouth. She stepped back and sat in front of the two elders, revealing a new scar that curled down her belly to end near her right flank. "Yes," she replied. "I found what you asked for."

The Master of the Challenge's gaze flickered to the sept leader, who responded with the barest nod of the head. "Yes, I see. We will celebrate tonight. You are now adren, Silver Howl." She paused and smiled kindly, "You have done well."

Guillaume Sun's Glory looked at her for a long, piercing moment and finally added, "You have done well indeed."

Silver Howl felt a wave of pride at being praised so by the sept leader. He was her sister-father, litter-mate to her grandmother, but still his praise was hard to come by. Perhaps even more so because he held his relatives to higher standards than Garou from lesser stock. She felt an unusual sense of reluctance, something she had never felt before. But, still, she spoke. "I saw something. I must tell you of it."

She had their attention instantly. "What did you see?" asked Sun's Glory, watching her intently.

"I ran for many moons to find the talisman. It was hidden in an Umbral realm very far from here. When I was returning to the sept, I scented blood in the air and heard a voice in my mind speaking my name. It led me to a falcon who bled from a tear in its wing, a broken arrow on the ground behind it. I offered healing, but the spirit refused. It said, 'Thus it begins. Bring this message to Sun's Glory, Silver Howl. Thus it begins.' Then it flew away, and I could not track it." Silver Howl reported this last piece of

information reluctantly, for she was proud of her reputation as a hunter and hated to diminish it.

The two elders did not answer, but looked into each other's eyes for a long moment. Silver Howl surmised that they were speaking mind-to-mind, and she sat to wait until she was excused. Her stomach rumbled, low and quick, but the two elders did not notice. They finished their conversation a few minutes later and looked down at her with twin implacable expressions.

"How long ago was this?" asked the sept elder.

"Two moons ago," she replied.

"I will consult with the elders on this mystery," Hyperion's Eye said. "You have done well to bring this to our attention."

"You will repeat your tale to the Master of the Rite. I am interested to hear what he has to say," rumbled Guillaume Sun's Glory. Then, he looked down on her with amusement in his eyes. "Afterwards, you may eat and rest if you like."

The three of them rose from their seats and left the fire flickering in the light afternoon breeze.

...

The fire was blazing along merrily when the entire sept gathered that night to recognize Silver Howl's deeds and celebrate her promotion to the rank of adren. Her packmates took the lead in the telling of tales, much to the delight of Wildfire, their Galliard. Eventually, one of the younger Garou asked to hear the tale of her latest challenge, since none of them had heard it.

As she stood to face the gathered sept, Silver Howl looked to the elders, wondering if she should include the message from the falcon or if that knowledge was meant only for their ears, but neither Guillaume Sun's Glory nor Hyperion's Eye gave her any indication either way. She told the story in full, pacing to and fro before the fire as she related her discussions with the spirits, her journey through the Umbra and her battle with the Banes that guarded the sacred talisman that she had been charged to retrieve. Although she was not a Galliard, her eye for detail served her well, and the sept listened intently as she told the full story of her encounter with the falcon. She brought the story to a close with her arrival at the caern, politely leaving out the earlier mistakes by the guards.

A few of the younger pups looked confused when she had finished her tale, and they tugged on sleeves or nudged their noses into fur to urge the older Garou to explain. But the older Garou were too busy speculating

aloud as to what this strange message might mean for the sept, or whether it was meant for the sept leader in particular. The air was full of too many voices talking at once, and the trees stirred as if restless. Then a wizened Garou with one eye scarred over from a long-ago battle stepped forward and held up a hand to ask for silence. The crowd noise subsided quickly, for the Garou was the Master of the Rite, a Silver Fang named Montgomery Songs of Glory, and he was known for his words of wisdom. Surely, they thought, he would know what this all meant.

"I heard this story from our new adren this afternoon," began the Master of the Rite, "and I have thought long on the old tales that might bring some light to our dilemma. Then I consulted with the Theurges in our sept, in the hopes that their longstanding relationship with the spirits might give them information I lacked. I do not offer you a solution, but I have learned to trust the old tales and legends, for they hold much in the way of lost wisdom. To guide your way, I offer you this." He paused, straightening, and his voice intensified until the leaves shook with its power as he recited:

"I saw Falcon and heard his voice in my mind. He gave warning of a knife that glinted in the belly of a king."

Behind Falcon lay a pale pool of blood and he left red footprints on the cold and smoking ground. Forces gathered and clashed in small battles of swirling dust and silver fur. They tore apart the darkness with swords and claws, shields shattering, men dying in a noble yet pointless cause. Finally a crown rose up above the field of battle and all fighting stopped, until shadows consumed the moon and the crown fell into darkness."

Before the last echo fell into silence, Montgomery Songs of Glory returned to his seat, an old man once more. The Garou who were gathered around the fire exchanged looks, some elated and others skeptical. Silver Howl felt more of the former than the latter, because the Master of the Rite spoke of an old prophecy that had recently surfaced once more. All of the tribes had their prophecies, and she felt a surge of mingled pride and fear that the Silver Fangs' should be proven true. But whether it meant good or ill for her tribe remained to be seen, and she realized that some of the other tribes represented at the Sept of Sun's Glory might not recognize a Silver Fang prophecy. Doing so would mean recognizing that the Silver Fangs were, in fact, the rightful leaders.

Her intuition proved to be right. As if on cue, the assembled werewolves broke out in heated debate.



Some insisted that the falcon was obviously a herald of the prophecy, and others just as adamantly proclaimed that the prophecy was no more than an old wives' tale and the recent happenings were clearly signs of something much more sinister that affected all of the tribes. The argument raged for some time, with both sides scoring points against the other, when one voice broke out above the din.

The voice belonged to a Ragabash Fenrir who often found issue with the elders' decisions and eagerly voiced his concerns under the guise of "questioning" his elders as his auspice dictated. Numerous discussions with the elders proved futile, since he would listen to no one but a Fenrir, and the local Fenrir were indisposed to silence him. Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm was his name. For her part, Silver Howl did not enjoy his company and she avoided him whenever possible, but she had to admit that he often had good ideas even if he had a disrespectful way of presenting them. Truth be told, this was the only reason she could think of that kept Guillaume Sun's Glory from putting him in his place. Although the Fenrir was also an adren, this did not by any means excuse his disrespectful treatment of the elders and particularly Guillaume himself.

Silver Howl watched as Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm stepped forward out of the circle of Garou to address the elders. "You don't expect us to believe in this prophecy, do you? If we panicked at every prophecy we heard, we would hardly have time to do anything else. The bawn would be in shambles; our Kinfolk would be scattered and dying. Prophecies are tools, nothing more. Shall we jump just because our tools suggest it?"

"You are quite right," replied Montgomery. "I present this to the sept as part of my duty. It goes to greater authorities than I to decide what shall be done with this knowledge and whether it is relevant at all."

The Fenrir laughed without much in the way of merriment. "But that is the problem, do you not see? The Silver Fangs lead — own — this sept. It is even *named* for a Fang! But what of the rest of us? Shall we be forced to react to a prophecy that we do not believe in?" At this, there was some murmuring among the crowd, as if in supporting anger or in fear that he had gone too far this time.

"We will react to the problem that has been set before us," replied Guillaume Sun's Glory gruffly. "The prophecy is what you say it is. A tool that may help us understand the problem."

"And how do we know that the problem isn't yours, sept leader? The falcon said to tell Sun's

Glory, did she not? Which did she mean? All of us? Or just you?" There was a hint of anger in his voice as Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm spoke, and Silver Howl's hackles rose in response. The entire circle tensed and, for a moment, it seemed as if the fire and the breeze and Luna herself froze in suspense, waiting for the inevitable reaction.

Guillaume Sun's Glory rose to his feet, and the light glinted on steely eyes. The assembled group watched the aged Garou's still-powerful form as he loomed over the smaller Ragabash, his fury so strong that it made the air around him crackle with unspent force. His voice, when it came, was not the roar that they expected, and they craned forward as one to hear him speak. "Enough."

Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm maintained his composure, by what means Silver Howl could not say. But he could not speak, so he merely waited for the end of this confrontation that he himself had begun.

"You have a choice," continued the Silver Fang. "Challenge me or be silent. But do not play the Shadow Lord, inserting clever daggers into your words and pretending they are innocent." The elder's distrust of the Shadow Lords was widely known, and few of that tribe could meet his standards or stand his persistent mistrust, so they quickly left. To Guillaume Sun's Glory, this was the strongest of insults, and the Fenrir knew it.

"I could not stand up to you in a fight, sept leader, and both of us know it. Why should I enter into a battle that I stand no chance of winning?" responded the Ragabash, with a derisive sniff. Silver Howl growled with anger, for it was clear that he meant to imply that Guillaume, though an Ahroun, was too old to stand up and fight.

But Guillaume Sun's Glory waved a hand to hush her, refusing to rise to the bait. "Challenge me and all will be overseen by Hyperion's Eye. Surely you do not accuse her, a Half Moon, of preference of one tribe over another? She will select a fair challenge."

"You are trying to goad me. I have struck a nerve, so you are trying to goad me into making a mistake," snarled the Ragabash.

Sun's Glory replied with unflappable calm. "No. But I will show you that words have power, and a Garou must have the will to stand behind his, or they mean nothing. Challenge me or submit."

Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm looked up at his sept leader with an equal mixture of anger and bravado. Before he opened his mouth, Silver Howl knew what his answer would be, knew that the sept

leader has given him no way out. "I, Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm, Adren Fenrir Rotogar, challenge you, Guillaume Sun's Glory. Do you accept this challenge?"

For the first time in many moons, Guillaume Sun's Glory smiled. "I accept your challenge."

• • •

A short time later, the sept gathered in a circle around the fire to witness the challenge. Hyperion's Eye had retired to her den to ask for guidance from the spirits in her arbitration. The sept waited restlessly, and Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm paced back and forth before the fire, clearly beginning to question the wisdom of his actions. On occasion, he looked up at the still muscular figure of Guillaume Sun's Glory. Silver Howl followed his gaze without much passion. If the Ragabash was foolish enough to be so disrespectful to an elder in the presence of the entire sept, he should be willing to face the consequences. She was quite certain that if the challenge was combat, the Ragabash would lose.

When the Master of the Challenge stepped out into the circle of light thrown by the fire, the restless whispers ceased immediately as everyone waited with tense interest to find out what the challenge would be. She spent a long moment watching the fire before she spoke in a clear, calm voice.

"The challenge before us is the test of a true leader. A leader must have equal measures of honor and wisdom to lead his people in times of peace and in times of war. He must possess a strong will to lead his people in serving Gaia, regardless of what his personal interests are. He must possess a calm heart to meet adversity with firmness. And he must possess a keen eye to see what must be done. On this night of celebration, a problem has come to us. For now, the nature of this problem is irrelevant. This challenge does not judge which of these Garou can best deal with this problem. It asks which of these Garou can best solve any problem, meet any enemy, and protect our sept.

"It is a difficult task to judge the fitness of a leader. Should he be strong in body? Should he be swift in stride? Should he be quick in thought? Should he be honorable or kind? Or do you believe as I do, that leaders come in many sizes, and what is best for one sept may not work for another?"

"Guillaume Sun's Glory and Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm, your challenge shall be a test of will, to judge which shall be the better leader. We will ask for Hyperion's blessing on our fire this night, for this will be the instrument of your challenge. You will sit

facing each other on opposite sides of the fire, and you will stare into the flames. You will not blink. Your gaze will not waver. The first to falter loses. What say you? Do you accept this challenge?"

Both of the Garou formally accepted, and Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm looked highly pleased. Clearly, he felt that he would be the victor.

"Silver Howl," called Hyperion's Eye. "As we are interrupting a celebration in your honor to conduct this business, I offer you the honor of assisting in the blessing of the fire and name you the Firekeeper for the evening. Do you accept this honor that I have placed upon you?"

Silver Howl paced into the circle with her head held high. "Most humbly," she replied.

With that, Hyperion's Eye led the sept in a dance around the fire, and they honored Hyperion with the song of their throats and their bodies. When they were done, they formed a loose circle around the fire, which blazed tall and bright in the dusky night. Guillaume Sun's Glory and Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm took their places on opposite sides of the fire, and the Master of the Challenge officially ordered them to begin.

Both Garou stared raptly into the bright flames, and it was not long before tears ran down their cheeks, but they did not look away. Silver Howl paced in and out, feeding the fire with twigs and branches, but they did not look away. Many minutes passed, and the assembled Garou shifted in discomfort from sitting so long, but they did not look away. The moon rose high and full in the sky, but they did not look away.

Hyperion's Eye waited patiently, and Silver Howl marveled at her composure, just as she marveled at the force of will that held the two Garou in check without movement. She felt a surge of pride in her sept elder, her sister-father, for his calmness throughout this entire confrontation. And somehow, she was certain that he would win. He had pushed for the challenge to take place; surely he would not have done so if he had not been sure of winning.

Then, after many minutes, there was a howl from the northern edge of the bawn, and the Garou all stood alert at the familiar sound of an Anthem of War. There was a sudden tension in the air. The werewolves did not know what to do, since they had been ordered to witness the challenge but wanted nothing more than to go and defend their caern from whatever threat was lurking on its borders. Upon hearing the howl, Guillaume Sun's Glory calmly

looked away from the fire and ordered two packs to attend to the problem. He told them to set up a perimeter of guards within the valley, then he sent another pair of scouts to patrol the bawn. Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm still had not moved from his seat by the fire.

Silver Howl was dumbfounded. Guillaume Sun's Glory had lost the challenge. She joined with her pack as they charged out to fight a rampaging group of Wyrm-tainted boar whose heads resembled grinning skulls. They were quick and tenacious little beasts, and it took some time to track them all down and kill them. But all the while, Silver Howl thought of nothing but the challenge and the fact that her kinsman had lost.

She returned to the caern slightly winded but untouched; the creatures were no match for two packs of Garou. Gradually, the sept returned to the fire and sat down, eager to hear the outcome announced before the evening was through. Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm quickly stood to face the sept and spoke excitedly.

"He looked away. Guillaume Sun's Glory looked away, and now I am the sept leader. He lost the challenge."

The sept's reaction was not a positive one. In fact, the assembled Garou shifted nervously and looked at the Master of the Challenge, clearly wishing that the Ragabash had looked away instead. In fact, the only one who would meet his gaze was Guillaume Sun's Glory. The Silver Fang stood and faced the sept.

"As Hyperion's Eye stated before we began, the purpose of this challenge was to determine which of us has the will to be the better leader. Clearly, we both have the strength of will to persevere under difficult circumstances. We spent many long minutes staring into the fire, and I am very impressed by the Fenrir's tenacity. But I did not lose this challenge."

"You did!" shouted Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm. "You looked away, so you lost!"

"Did I? Which is the better leader, the one who risks a position of honor to ensure the safety of his people or the one who is so determined to win at any cost that danger to his home means nothing to him? Which of these two is stronger in will?"

The answering howl was deafening, and all of the sept pointed at Guillaume Sun's Glory, who will forever be renowned among the Garou for being the only sept leader who retained his position by losing

a challenge. Silver Howl joined in the celebration without reserve, for her kinsman had retained his position once again, and she was a newly made *adren*. But her feeling of triumph was short-lived, and she watched Guillaume Sun's Glory slip tiredly into the caves where he made his home.

After some hesitation, she followed him. She padded to the mouth of the cave and inquired softly for permission to enter.

"Silver Howl," came the always calm voice of the elder, "I am waiting for you."

"Can I bring you food or drink?" she inquired, masking her sudden worry under simple politeness.

"No," he replied, smiling slightly. "It is rare to find a wolf-born with the tact to hide her purpose. But I know what brings you here. And I will tell you this; you are nearly ready."

She shifted uncomfortably, a prickly feeling rising behind her ears. "Ready?"

Guillaume Sun's Glory rose to his feet, and the firelight glinted off his coat, turning it into silver fire. "Today's lesson was meant for you, Silver Howl. I will soon be leaving. I have things to attend to. And you will be sept leader when I am gone."

With that, the elder waved her out. The young Philodox, dazed with this revelation, wandered out into the sept grounds. She would watch the sun rise, she decided. The sun rising over the frozen lake always calmed her spirits.

She sat there watching as the lake changed from the deep blue of night to the blood-red and shimmering pinks of dawn, and she thought about the lesson she'd learned. Was Guillaume, by dint of being leader, exempt from the terms of the challenge? She thought that the terms of the challenge had been the true test, and that Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm, a No Moon, should have realized that. She decided that a leader must know *truth*, above all things — the true challenge, the true nature of prophecy, the true threat — even before it was revealed.

As she thought on these things, the ice of the lake slowly darkened back to indigo. In horror, she looked toward the sun, and found that it was going dark. From the sept, she heard the Wail of Foreboding, warning of great danger, but she did not take up the call.

Silver Howl looked up at the darkening sun and knew that she was not ready to lead the sept. Not in a world where the things she trusted most — her tribe, the sun, the truth — could so easily be called into question.



Aneurin ap Rhys spat dirt from his mouth once again.

His uncle, a Full Moon, chuckled. "Come on, boy. I'm not even trying. It's a wonder you survived that last battle with no skill. You'll not live through another. Get up."

Aneurin growled and sprang to his feet. The stick in his hand — meant to represent his *klaive* — pointed at his uncle's heart, he charged. He feinted right, then swung upward, intend to strike the older man on the side the head. Instead, he saw only the gray rain and the Welsh hillside. Too late, he realized his uncle was behind him, and then he felt the gentle touch on his back and the sickening loss of balance as his uncle's favorite Gift took effect.

"You're closing your eyes when you strike," his uncle said, helping him up. "That's going to get you killed. A seasoned warrior — like me — will just sidestep you and plant his claws in your arse. An animal might not sidestep, but it'll be moving the whole time, and you've got to keep your eyes on it."

Aneurin nodded. "Those things that we fought when I met Yvonne — they never stopped moving. Seven-Lights said they were Banes."

The older Garou grunted. "Maybe so. Don't know. Never saw them before."

Aneurin cocked an eyebrow. "Something wrong, uncle?" His mentor shrugged. "Come on. You wear your displeasure like a favorite shirt."

In spite of himself, the Ahroun smiled. "You should have been a Moon Dancer, boy."

"Well, I speak with spirits and entertain them. Maybe I've a bit of the Galliard in me."

"Maybe." Uncle Hew opened his mouth and caught some rainwater. "What happened between you and Yvonne?"

Aneurin looked shocked. "Nothing, uncle."

Hew snorted. "I've had 'nothing' happen between me and lots of women. I mean it, boy. What happened? You get a look on your face when you say her name, and it scares me."

Aneurin grew wide-eyed. Nothing scared Hew Splits-Stones. "No, uncle. I have no thought — no intention — before Gaia, I never—" He was on his back again before he could finish.

"Don't ever swear something before Gaia unless you're willing to die for it, lad." Hew was in Glabro form now, and Aneurin knew he was angry. His eyes had taken on the blue cast they always did before he was lost to Rage. "I saw you looking at her. Yes, she's comely, but she's *Garou*, and I'll not have any nephew of mine breeding a fucking metis!"

Aneurin did not try to stand. He simply waited, throat exposed, for his uncle to calm down.

"I'd sooner take back my *klaive*. I'd sooner see it melted down for an Englishman's boot spurs."

Aneurin winced.

"I'd sooner kill you, boy, than see you sire a metis. I know what you're thinking about when you say her name, and it isn't her strong body or those pretty German lips. You're thinking of her spirit and they way she fought. You're thinking of the way she tore into those bastards and the way she helped you heal the wounded afterwards, even those not of her own tribe." Hew leaned down, and Aneurin extended a hand, thinking that his uncle would help him up. Hew batted it away and knelt, leaning close to his nephew's ear.

"I'd sooner kill you than know there was another metis with a claim to the Rhys name."

Aneurin pushed himself up to sitting. The rain grew more intense, and he wiped his soaking hair from his eyes. "Another?"

"You don't know that, boy. No one does except me and my son, and I just haven't found him yet. But I'll not let you bring disgrace on this family. Do you understand me?"

Aneurin could only nod. He didn't dare tell he uncle of his vision — a stag and a gray wolf walking together in a strange, dark wood where the trees bled.

"I understand, uncle."



INTRODUCTION

For I know this, that after my departing shall
grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing
the flock.

—Acts 20:29

People have their legends. They say that the wolves of the forest are the Devil's children, that they come in the night to steal human babies. They say that the woods are haunted by spirits that can drive men mad. They say that sometimes wolves bite innocent Christians and change them into *werewolves*, shapeshifters that hunger for human flesh.

The legends are right, in their way. Spirits do haunt the woods, and the wolves that inhabit them are very much aware of the humans that cower in their hovels. But the wolves do not hunt humans for food, nor can they change "innocent Christians" into werewolves.

The werewolves have their own legends, their own spirits and their own devils. But unlike the humans, who believe in such things out of fear and tradition, the werewolves have seen the world of the spirits, and they know their place within it.

THE DARK MEDIEVAL

Dark Ages: Werewolf is not a complete game. You will need a copy of **Dark Ages: Vampire** to play, as that book contains the core rules for game play and character creation. While **Dark Ages: Werewolf** shares themes and systems with the World of Darkness game **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, it is a **Dark Ages** game, and the assumption is that players and Storytellers have read **Dark Ages: Vampire**.

The Garou

Werewolves refer to themselves as *Garou*. They believe that they were created by Gaia — the Mother of All — to safeguard her from her enemies. While it might seem strange that the very spirit of the world could have enemies, the werewolves know it to be true. They tell stories of the Triat — three spirits called the Wyld, the Weaver and the Wyrms that must exist in balance for all to be right in the world. As anyone in the Dark Medieval could attest, something is deeply wrong with the world, and therefore the Triat is out of balance.

The Garou are warriors, first and foremost. They were created to be guardians and predators, mergers of two of the best hunters on Earth, wolf and man. Every werewolf is capable of startling brutality, regardless of breeding or training, because every werewolf carries in her heart a seed of Rage. This primal fury is interpreted differently by different werewolves. Some of them see it as a tiny sliver of Gaia's pain that the world is imperfect, some see it as a Gift from Luna, the moon, their patron and spiritual guide. Whatever the truth, this Rage drives them in their hunts and allows them to summon their killing fury at will — but when the moon shines down, any werewolf can become lost to this Rage.

Not every moment of a werewolf's life is spent in combat, however. The Garou have a complex, shamanistic society. They are divided into 10 tribes, dispersed throughout Europe and Outremer. Some of these tribes are allied and some are opposed, and these lines can blur in different regions.

Each tribe has its own take on the history of the Garou, the purpose that werewolves fulfill for Gaia and (especially) how to interact with humanity.


This last is probably the biggest sticking point between the tribes.

Wolf and Man

Some werewolves are born as humans and live among their families until their First Change. This traumatic event usually occurs around adolescence and is often triggered by a threat or a stressful situation. Unhappily, the young werewolf often destroys anything in reach in a blind rage before he can be found by members of his tribe and inducted into the Garou. These human-born Garou — called homids — are often more tolerant of humanity than other werewolves. Humans might burn forests and despoil the countryside with their wars, but they don't *know* about Gaia and the damage they cause. Even homids, however, agree that humans must be protected from their own ignorance. Some tribes advocate teaching the humans; others wish to rule them so as to eliminate the need to suffer their stupidity.

On the other side of the coin are the lupus. These Garou are born as wolves and grow to adulthood with their packs, until they too undergo the First Change. While lupus might enter the First Change under much the same circumstances as homid Garou, their initial frenzies don't tend to last as long or be as destructive. Lupus, after all, have lived with their animal instincts all their lives and this helps them temper their Rage somewhat. Lupus Garou do not, however, have any kind of inborn respect for humanity. Like natural wolves, they will not attack a human without reason, but if they feel threatened, they often advocate a much harsher response than a human-born werewolf would. After all, a human who is trained not to cut down a tree might forget his training, but a dead human will never trouble Gaia again.

There is a third breed of Garou called metis. These sinful abominations are born of two werewolves and are born deformed and sterile. For this reason, Garou are forbidden to mate with each other and must instead seek out partners among wolves and humans. (All tribes have special bloodlines of humans or wolves — called Kinfolk — into which they breed to increase the chances of Garou children being born.) Metis are few and far between — werewolves rarely violate this law, and the offspring of such crimes are normally slain at birth, usually along with the



parents. What few are allowed to survive grow up in werewolf society and therefore are more prepared for their lives as Garou than any homid or lupus. They can look forward to nothing but scorn until the end of their days, though. A metis's attitude toward humanity is largely shaped by the community — or sept — to which she belongs.

For their part, humanity knows little or nothing about the Garou. As stated previously, they have their legends, but these tales are woefully inaccurate. The werewolves work diligently to keep their existence secret, partially because their work in defending would be greatly impeded if humanity were to know of them, but chiefly because even the proudest Garou warrior understands that humans outnumber them so greatly that if the world at large became aware of their existence, the noble Garou would likely be completely wiped out.

Fact and Fiction

Humanity knows fragments of information about werewolves, but few real truths. Specifics vary by region, but in general, most humans believe that werewolves are mortal sorcerers who have sold their souls to Satan for the powers of shapeshifting, or that they are ordinary humans who have become werewolves by any one of a number of means. A bite from a werewolf, drinking water from a wolf's paw print, consuming wolfsbane or belladonna, or being born under an eclipse are only a few of the supposed methods of becoming a werewolf.

Many people believe that werewolves can only change from man to wolf, and only under the full moon. Werewolves are supposedly unable to be killed by mortal weapons, yet repelled by various methods (wolfsbane, a blessed crucifix and pure silver being three of the more common remedies).

While some of these legends contain a warped bit of truth, none are completely accurate. In fact, werewolves are born, not made. No method exists to change a normal human into a werewolf, though the child of a werewolf might well grow up to be one. Werewolves do suffer an allergy to silver, but none of the other methods offer any true protection. Likewise, werewolves do not serve — or, indeed, even acknowledge Satan — but have their own spirituality that predates Christianity by thousands of years.

Werewolves are very much mortal, however. While it is true that ordinary weapons rarely injure them for long, luck, skill or persistence can indeed

destroy a werewolf. Werewolves travel in packs, though, so the chance of catching one alone and by surprise — and therefore destroying it — is slim.

Finally, the Garou can change shape any time they wish, not simply under the full moon. They can assume a variety of forms, including that of a man, a wolf, and several forms in between including a monstrous dire wolf, a muscular near-man, and the most deadly of all, the half-man, half-wolf horror called the Crinos.

Enemies

The Triat might be out of balance, but the three spirits that comprise it are not the sort of enemies that any pack of werewolves can confront directly. Instead, the Garou concentrate on maintaining their holy sites (called caerns) and attempting to stop humanity from encroaching on the wilds too badly. Along the way, however, the werewolves have made several dangerous enemies.

Werewolves

Territory, honor, familial feuds, breeding rights or even a simple loss of temper can set one sept against another. Werewolves are their own worst enemies in some ways, because when two Garou fight, the battle usually ends over the corpse of one combatant. If that weren't enough, an entire tribe of Garou fell to the Wyrms centuries ago and dedicated itself to destroying (or converting) the rest of the Garou. Although they are insane, these Black Spiral Dancers are just as capable in battle as any other werewolf.

Vampires

The Garou and the Children of Caine have an enmity that stretches back to the First City. Cainites are usually led to believe that werewolves labor under a curse from God, just as they do, but the Garou know the truth. Vampires are simply the unholy spawn of the Wyrms and the Weaver, and they weaken the living fabric of the world by their very existence. The Crusades in the Holy Land were fierce, but they cannot compare to the sheer fury of Faithful Cainites battling the Garou. Both sides *know* that they fight on the side of the divine, so neither gives quarter.

Humanity

Whether in the form of a hunter killing wolf Kinfolk or a cell of inquisitors hunting down a

SILVER

In truth, the Garou are probably numerous and mighty enough to destroy the biggest cities in Europe and return humanity to a more primal state, but several things stand in the way of such a campaign. First, several tribes of Garou — the Children of Gaia, the Bone Gnawers, and the Warders of Men in particular — would fight against such an act with all their might. Second, while humans by themselves could be defeated, the vampires would almost certainly add their considerable might to humanity (as the Leeches love the cities), and this could well turn the tide. Finally, once such a war began, the humans would eventually discover the truth about silver.

Even Garou have their weaknesses. While they are all but immune to most wounds, silver is their most feared bane. Silver, the lunar metal, burns werewolves, and they have little defense against it — even a silver arrowhead can slay a Garou. This weakness is not widely known, however, and the humans most likely to know of it are also the least likely to be able to afford enough silver to forge into a weapon. If the Garou went to war against humanity, however, *someone* would bring their weakness to light, and that could spell doom for the werewolves.

pack of werewolves, humanity has proven to be the biggest thorn in the collective side of the Garou. It isn't, of course, that one human is dangerous, but a city of them can be lethal for the surrounding area. Once, thousands of years ago, the Garou carried out an Impergium wherein they culled human numbers, but this practice ended at the instigation of the more humane werewolves. Factions in nearly every tribe regard this act of mercy as the greatest mistake the Garou ever made, but the humans are too advanced and too deeply entrenched to begin it again.

Theme and Mood

While many of the themes and mood mentioned in Chapter Seven of **Dark Ages: Vampire** apply to this game as well, a few are worthy of special mention.

Themes

Dark Ages: Werewolf is a horror game, but the horror is different from the more personal horror of **Vampire**. Vampires are undead, blood-drinking monstrosities, and as each vampire has died to become what she is, she is all too aware of what she has lost. Werewolves, however, have become monsters and then been told they were *born* as monsters. A human-born werewolf must cope with losing her faith in God (or at least having it seriously rattled), her family, any normal future *and* being told that she is to protect the Earth from hideous monsters. A wolf-born Garou is no better off. Where once she had no concerns beyond the acquisition of food and shelter, she must now learn to appreciate concepts such as sacrifice and bravery.

One of the key themes of **Dark Ages: Werewolf**, then, is *heroism*. The characters are terrifying monsters, true, but they have a chance to rise above what their ancestors (both among humanity and the Garou) have done. The Garou have made horrible mistakes in the past that have bordered on genocide, and every time the werewolves have made such a mistake, they have hampered themselves even further in doing their appointed tasks. But the characters — your characters — might well be the next generation of true heroes among the Garou. Perhaps they can end old feuds or destroy deeply entrenched enemies. Perhaps they can call the moots that change policy or help educate the humans. Many hero stories end in tragedy, of course, but such stories are quite appropriate for **Dark Ages: Werewolf** chronicles.

Another major theme is *righteousness*. Whether the Garou are right in their assertions or not, they often believe with every fiber of their being that Gaia is on their side. This self-righteousness makes them little different from human crusaders, except for the fact that where the crusaders take God's Word on faith (and occasional benediction from the pope), the Garou can enter the spirit worlds and converse with Gaia's representatives directly. This gives them a righteous fire powerful enough to take on the world for their causes. The Garou are harsh and uncompromising in their campaigns, but this isn't because they are cruel or bloodthirsty (at least, not all of them). It's because they have no choice, given what they are fighting for.

Mood

The mood of the Garou Nation changes dramatically in May of AD 1230. A major eclipse darkens the sky, sending many workers back to their homes thinking that night has fallen. For the werewolves, it sparks an almost apocalyptic fever. They remember a cryptic forecast of calamity called the Prophecies of Shadow and that, when Constantinople fell, one of those prophecies came true. Now, the eclipse seems to herald the beginning of new tragedy and all of the Ten Tribes worry that their prophecy might be the next to occur (except for the Warders, of course, who lick their wounds and play the martyr when possible). The mood, then, is one of growing concern, a calm before a storm — but where werewolves are concerned, that calm can shatter in an instant.

Chapter by Chapter

Dark Ages: Werewolf assumes that you have **Dark Ages: Vampire**. None of the core rules for the game (the information found in Chapter Four of the latter book) are repeated herein. Everything that you need to use the savage werewolves, however, either as characters or fleshed-out antagonists, is here at your fingertips.

The **Legend of the Garou** introduces the Sept of Sun's Glory and gives the reader a taste of life in werewolf society.

The **Introduction** — the part you're reading now — contains basic information on the Garou, themes of the game and a lexicon of terms.

Chapter One: The Darkening World contains information on the world of the Garou, their history, their strongholds in Europe and their current concerns.

Chapter Two: The Garou details the breeds, auspices and tribes of the werewolves.

Chapter Three: Characters and Drama explains how to create **Dark Ages: Werewolf** characters and enumerates the special Abilities and Backgrounds for these characters.

Chapter Four: The Gifts of the Spirits explains Gifts and rites, the "magic" of the werewolves.

Chapter Five: The Invisible World details spirits, the Umbra and the day-to-day life at werewolf caerns.

Chapter Six: The Enemy reveals the worst foes of the Garou including the savage Black Spiral Dancers and the disgusting fomori.

Chapter Seven: Storytelling gives ideas for running **Dark Ages: Werewolf** chronicles and presents a sample setting with plenty of story suggestions.

Finally, the **Appendix** provides sample fetishes, spirits and totems.

Lexicon

auspice: The phase of the moon under which a werewolf is born; this determines his societal role among the Garou.

breed: A werewolf's parentage; either human, wolf or werewolf.

caern: A holy site for the Garou, where Gaia's blessings can be felt. All caerns have a *totem* spirit.

Curse, the: The feeling of uneasy dread that werewolves engender in humans and animals.

Delirium: The blind panic that werewolves induce in humans who see the Crinos war-form.

Fera: A blanket term for any shapeshifter. The Garou killed most of the other Fera in the *War of Rage*.

Gaia: The Mother of Earth. Gaia supposedly created all life on Earth and made the werewolves to be her guardians and soldiers.

Gauntlet: The barrier separating the *Realm* and the *Umbra*.

Garou: A werewolf (the term "Garou" is both plural and singular).

homid: A werewolf born to human parents. (also *Homid*, the human form of a werewolf)

Impergium: A period of several thousand years during which the Garou brutally culled human numbers. It is a deeply ingrained ancestral memory of this period that causes the *Delirium*.

Kinfolk: A human or wolf with Garou blood. Such beings cannot shapeshift, but their children can become werewolves.

lupus: A werewolf born to wolves. (also *Lupus*, the wolf form of a werewolf)

metis: A werewolf born to Garou parents; such werewolves are shunned, but most are killed at birth.

Penumbra: The spirit world directly surrounding Earth. Most beings and phenomena

on Earth have a spiritual "shadow" in this part of the Umbra.

Prophecies of Shadow: The 10 visions brought to the Garou by Songs of Shadows, a mighty seer. Each vision corresponds to a tribe; one of them has already come to pass.

Realm, the: The physical world (as opposed to the *Umbra*).

sept: A large community of werewolves, usually centered around a *caern*.

Triat: The three spirits responsible for keeping balance in the universe.

tribe: One of 10 cultures of werewolves, each bonded by a tribal totem and by ideology and shared history.

Umbra: The spirit worlds as a whole, encompassing the *Penumbra* and the 13 Umbral Realms.

urrah: An insulting term for a werewolf who chooses to live too close to humanity.

War of Rage: The war the Garou fought against the other *Fera*. The ones they did not slaughter were driven into hiding, and most now hate and fear the werewolves.

Weaver: A member of the *Triat*; the spiritual force of order and stasis.

Wyld: A member of the *Triat*; the spiritual force of chaos and creation.

Wyrn: A member of the *Triat*; originally the spiritual force of balance, the Wyrn has now become a force of corruption and entropy.





Filthy pagans, thought Hasta Dei.

It was a strange thought for a werewolf, but there it was. His tribemate, a wolf-born Ahroun called something like "Render of Spiders" straightened herself up and continued on her tirade about Christians. She seemed to feel that they were destructive and ultimately useless. Hasta Dei felt his hackles rising as his faith was insulted, but he bore it quietly, asking God's forgiveness each time a blasphemy escaped the Ahroun's lips. Finally, she brought up the fall of Constantinople and how the Red Talons' prophecy had foreseen it, and Hasta Dei — the Staff of God — could bear no more. He stood up, driving the iron spike at the end of his staff into the ground hard enough that the werewolves assembled there jumped. "Constantinople fell, yes," he said, the word struggling to escape his clenched teeth, "but to what? Not Christianity, no." "Then what?" A Ragabash would have questioned Hasta Dei to test him. The Ahroun simply wanted an answer.



"To money," he snapped. "Money. The humans will go on holy crusades, yes, but do so only for profit. When the money ran out, the crusaders attacked the first thing they saw." The Ahroun snapped at a fly, the lupus equivalent, Hasta decided, of shrugging. "And so what if money did spur them to sack the city? Christians take money every week, or so you tell us, Staff of God. If the Church desires money, then is it not as corrupt as the money itself?"

Hasta Dei smiled. The Ahroun might be born of wolf, but she thought like a university scholar. "The Church is corrupt. But tell me: If a sept of Silver Fangs is corrupt, spoiled, fat and lazy, does that invalidate the Litany? Does it tarnish Gaia? Or do those spoiled Garou instead do themselves discredit by behaving thus and then calling themselves Garou?"

Render of Spiders dropped her head into her paws and considered this. The other Garou around looked at one another and murmured. Many of them had been Christian before their First Changes but had abandoned the faith because it didn't seem to fit with what they could see and feel as werewolves. Hasta Dei disagreed. God's Grace was all around them, if the Garou would simply see it and not be misled by the prophecies of the beasts.

The Ahroun raised her head again. "So how did those crusaders break with their faith? What does their faith say?"

Staff of God grinned. "I'm rather glad you asked."




CHAPTER ONE: THE DARKENING WORLD

The world is coming to an end, the sun declines,
And darkness grows as justice fades and love repines:
The Devil all his conquering host in ranks defines,
To search the sky for Holy Scripture's Final Signs.
—"The World is Coming to an End," author unknown,
trans. by Dr. John Thorp and Dr. Stjepan Kresic

Howls echoing from the deep forests interrupt calls for curfew. Parents check twice to make certain that their doors are barred. Grim watchmen stand at their posts, jumping at every noise, straining their eyes to glimpse what lurks in the dark. Priests ask God to protect His children through the night. Drawbridges rise, portcullises fall. Walls keep the beasts away. Yet the land is not safe.

This is the Dark Medieval, the setting for **Dark Ages: Werewolf**. It is a time of turmoil and ignorance. Most never travel more than five miles from home. Knights ride through the lands, fanaticism in their eyes, searching for any sign of blasphemy or heresy. The nobles turn slight offenses into justification for battle.



Vast stretches of the wilds remain unexplored, and thick stretches of forest shroud the land. No one knows for sure what dwells in the deep woods, but everyone has a tale to tell of the horrors that befall careless travelers. To travel beyond the knowledge of men, one only has to walk over the next hill. Any travel, even on the roads of kings, invites danger. When the sun sets on the forest, the darkness is so encompassing that it swallows a man's hand before his face.

The night shrouds outlaws. Followers of ancient cults gather, cloaked in the darkness, worshipping in defiance of the Church. Bandits lurk near the roads, waiting for the opportunity to waylay travelers. Escaped serfs make their way through the night, fleeing their land in search of freedom. But no human finds safety in the wilds after sunset. The moon listens to the howls on the wind, knowing well that not all of them belong to wolves. They are the hunting songs of the Garou, the werewolves.

Wolves Who Walk as Men

Simply put, in **Dark Ages: Werewolf**, players take the roles of werewolves. These shapeshifters refer to themselves as Garou. Lycanthropy is neither a disease nor a sign of madness. If a wolf bites a man, he will not become a werewolf (although certain other diseases might result). Werewolves are not creations of a Christian Devil, cursing humans with bestial forms for their dark thoughts. They are also not the result of vile rituals cast by hidden covens of mages. All of these tales exist only as perversions of the truth.

Humans and wolves do not become werewolves. Werewolves are a species apart. They share the blood of wolves and humans. They have a natural ability to shift from wolf to human and back. They are capable of other feats as well. They regenerate wounds far faster than any animal heals them. Werewolves possess tremendous strength, making them capable of smashing an oak door or clawing through a stone wall. A chain shirt cannot stop the claws of a Garou. Werewolves also have powerful senses, surpassing those of true wolves.

Werewolves have a deep spiritual bond with the earth. Garou have the power to bridge the gulf between the spirit world and the physical world. Spirits speak to them and teach them special powers, their Gifts. Werewolves receive protection from the spirits. In turn, all Garou have a sacred duty to protect Gaia, the spirit of the living world. They are her children and her chosen defenders.

To the Garou, humans are confused creatures. Religions cause conflict and pain for humanity. Faith sends humans to war. Christianity teaches self-denial and celibacy as paths to purity. These things are almost incomprehensible to werewolves. Many Garou believe that humans will outgrow these monotheistic beliefs and return to the old ways.

For Garou, Gaia is everything, the world and life. A werewolf should enjoy the natural world, including expressing her own instincts and emotions. She should hunt and kill game. She should mate and raise cubs. Though werewolves have many differences, their shared faith in Gaia and the spirit world holds them together. They protect sites of spiritual energy and defend the humans who still worship the Earth-Mother.

Born For Gaia

Not all werewolves come from the same environment. Garou are either born to humans, wolves or other werewolves. They retain their birth form until puberty. Until the time of the First Change, they usually believe that they are just like other children or cubs. Signs might appear to warn them of the truth, however. They might have dreams of other forms. Spirits might speak to them. For wolf cubs, these strange happenings usually don't bother their families or packmates. For human children, such troubling events might drive them to seek help from the Church. Fortunately, at least one of the parents of a werewolf must have Garou blood. They are Kinfolk, and they might know about the family "legends." A father might carefully warn his son not to speak of such visions, telling him stories of lost princes hidden away for their own protection. Strangers might watch children who show these signs from a distance, and they might even act to protect them from danger.

The vast majority of werewolves fall into two breeds: homids (human-born) and lupus (wolf-born). The third type of Garou is born to two werewolves. The ancient laws of the werewolves, the Litany, strictly forbid the mating of two Garou. Still, the attraction between the sexes can defy any law. When two werewolves mate, their offspring is born in the dread Crinos, or wolf-man form. These cubs always suffer from deformities, and they cannot breed. They are called metis. Most sects of werewolves kill these deformed cubs (and often their parents), rather than live with the reminder of this violation of the Litany. Sometimes, a group of werewolves will take pity on the cub and raise it. Metis have no place among humans, wolves, or even the Garou. Isolation makes them bitter and lonely, and the heart of a metis hides the fiercest rage of any werewolf.

WEREWOLF FAITH

Garou possess faith equal to that of any crusader, priest or religious zealot. Werewolves experience the spirit world in almost every moment of their lives. They don't question Gaia or spirits any more than they would question breathing or the sun rising. Even a werewolf raised in human society with deep Catholic, Islamic or Eastern Orthodox views cannot deny the animistic nature of the world around him. At best, he could try to fit the truths of the Garou into the framework of a human religion, but in this day and age, he would be considered a heretic. Spirituality is such a strong part of a werewolf's life that without Gaia, a Garou would lose his Gifts, leave werewolf society and slip into Harano, the great despair. He would slowly waste away alone and in pain.

The many pagan religions in Europe all share some of their beliefs with the werewolves. The Garou see most of these practices as the best attempts humans can make to connect with Gaia. The tribes keep Kinfolk among these pagans, but the relentless advance of Christianity threatens these non-believers. Some werewolves have declared war on the Catholic Church and the knightly orders devoted to the pope. Unfortunately for the Garou, the Papacy and its allies have their own power and resources, making it possible for them to kill even raging werewolves. Other Garou choose to wait for this phase in human history to pass. Werewolves still pay homage to Gaia and Luna, the Celestine of the moon, and humans will certainly come to their senses in time. After all, humans have worshipped spirits for millennia.

This is not to say, of course, that the Garou look on every pagan religion with favor. Some human pagans worship beings that the werewolves *know* to be spirits in service to their enemy the Wym. The Fenrir, for instance, respond harshly to any evidence of Odin-worship among their people, while in Poland, the Shadow Lords snarl the name *Kupala*.

Kinfolk

To successfully reproduce, Garou must breed with Kinfolk, humans and wolves with the blood of werewolves in their veins. Tribes gather and protect their Kinfolk, and in some cases, Kinfolk play a vital part in the tribe's activities. Usually, a tribe's Kinfolk live in a single town or village near a caern. In the case of wolf Kinfolk, they often have packs with nearby ranges.

Kinfolk have some advantages over those without Garou blood. They are not subject to the Delirium. The werewolf blood makes them stronger and more resistant to disease. They live longer than the average life span of 40. Garou sometimes provide meat for them, which means they have a better diet than most people in the medieval world.

Kinfolk offer some benefits to werewolves as well. They can interact with normal humans or wolves more easily than the Garou. They often provide the werewolves with resources, such as money or food. Some noble Kinfolk might protect the forests of the Garou from hunters. Nobles might also cover up incidents among the local populace caused by frenzy. Kinfolk with ties to the Church can alert the Garou of pogroms or the presence of knights.

Most Kinfolk have no supernatural abilities, but a select few might learn Gifts. Some can speak with spirits, and others possess unnatural vitality. On rare occasions, these special Kinfolk turn out to be lost cubs, but such is extremely rare. Tribes make sure that Kinfolk with such abilities mate with Garou because they believe that the offspring is more likely to be a werewolf.

Forms

Werewolves can assume five different forms. In their human form, they can pass for any other person. They are not nearly as strong or fearsome as the other forms, but the advantages to interacting with humans are obvious. As a werewolf changes from human to wolf, she must pass through three forms. The first, *Glabro*, is a wild savage, tall, muscular human. *Glabro* can pass for humans with a casual glance, though they appear possessed or barbaric upon close inspection. The second transitional form is the *Crinos*, or war form. The *Crinos* is the wolf-man, eight to nine feet tall with claws capable of shredding the strongest steel. This monstrosity is a beast from the darkest nightmares. It is a nigh-unstoppable juggernaut of muscle and talons. The third form is the *Hispo*. This massive form is even larger than the prehistoric dire wolf, six to seven feet long, with powerful jaws capable of snapping iron. Finally, the werewolf can assume the form of a normal wolf.

Auspices

Every werewolf has an auspice, determined by the phase of the moon under which she was born. Garou born in the darkness of the new moon are *Ragabash*, or tricksters. They do not have much of the *Rage* that gives werewolves speed and ferocity in combat, but they learn Gifts of misdirection and stealth. Many times, combat alone is not enough to protect Gaia.

The children of the crescent moon are the Theurges, the mystic scholars and explorers. They travel the spirit paths and learn secrets that other auspices cannot understand. They protect against the magics of other supernatural beings. Most of them know the secrets of healing as well.

The half moon brings balance, and the Philodox are the judges and lawgivers of the Garou. They can command the spirits and enforce the will of Gaia. Without them, the hierarchy of the Garou would fall into chaos.

The gibbous moon signals the birth of Galliards, the bards and storytellers of the werewolves. They keep the histories and legends of the werewolves alive. They celebrate life and inspire others to greatness. Galliards often open the sacred rites and rituals of the Garou, pleasing the spirits with their dance and song.

The light of the full moon brings out the beast in the Garou. Werewolves born on the night of the full moon are Ahroun, the spirit warriors. They are incarnations of the Gaia's Rage. They have unmatched skill in combat, and they bring dread to the hearts of Gaia's enemies.

Tribes

The Galliards sing that all Garou belonged to a single tribe during the First Times. If that ever was true, it is no longer. Many different tribes of werewolves now exist. Some are tied to certain human groups and cultures, such as the Fenrir and the Fianna, while others cross many boundaries and borders, such as the Bone Gnawers and Warders. Garou divide themselves among tribal lines, and battles between tribes are not uncommon. Werewolves, like their human counterparts, are the greatest threat to themselves.

Although all tribes revere Gaia, each tribe has its own totem spirit whom they venerate. These totem spirits set rules and teach special Gifts to members of their tribe.

Black Furies

Tracing their lineage back to the Amazons of Greek legend, the Furies are the only all-female werewolf tribe. Male children are either exposed to the elements or turned over to other tribes to raise. They have strong caerns in the Middle East and the Byzantine states, although the tribe has spread across Europe. They see themselves as the protectors of females of all species. In their wolf forms, they are noted for their black fur. Pegasus is their totem.

Bone Gnawers

The Bone Gnawers are survivors. They have always associated with the lower classes, particularly

the growing numbers of urban poor. Bone Gnawers have little time for nobility, either human or Garou. Gnawers also pay little mind to laws that go against common sense. They have spread throughout Europe, and along with the Warders, they even have caerns in the midst of human settlements. Although most other werewolves look down upon them, the Bone Gnawers make up one of the most resourceful tribes. Rat looks after this tribe.

Children of Gaia

At one time, all tribes were one. The Children of Gaia long for those times to return. They are known as the peacemakers among the Garou. Tolerant to a fault, the Children of Gaia rarely turn away members of other tribes from their caerns. The Children search for peaceful means to control the Wyrn. They see the Impergium as the greatest failure of the Garou. Despite their gentle nature, the Children of Gaia are fierce warriors when they have been pushed too far. Unicorn is their totem.

Fenrir

The wolves of the North make up a harsh tribe. Steeped in the traditions of the Norse, the Fenrir see themselves as the warriors of Fenris. They are proud, brave and strong. They believe in action and deed, instead of the politics of other Garou. The Fenrir have little tolerance for the Wyrn, and they see weakness among the other tribes as a sign of possible taint. If the other Garou cannot take care of their territories, the Fenrir will. They take their name from their totem, Great Fenris himself.

Fianna

The Fianna spread with their Celtic kin across Europe, but they are strongest in the British Isles. Fianna pride themselves on their passions, both in love and war. They drink hard and fight hard. They have a strong oral tradition, incorporating song and storytelling, and even the Silver Fangs defer to their knowledge of history. Other tribes worry about the Fianna's strong ties to the otherworldly fae, and the tribe's great sense of loss regarding the White Howlers. Stag watches over the Fianna.

Red Talons

The Talons consider themselves the last of the true defenders of nature. All Red Talons are lupus, and the tribe avoids associating with humans, except as predator to prey. They see human culture and influence corrupting other tribes. They long for an unspoiled wilderness, free from farms, roads and buildings. Although the Impergium has ended, the Red

Talons still pay careful attention to the humans who enter their territories. Woe to any unfortunate person lost in the lands of the Red Talons. The Prophecies of Shadow were originally gifted to a Red Talon, and the wolf tribe has been the most aggressive in spreading word of the visions and trying to impress their importance on the other tribes. Griffin is their totem.

Silent Striders

Silent Striders have a distinctive jackal-like appearance, making them resemble incarnations of the Egyptian god, Anubis. Mysterious to other tribes, the Silent Striders are wandering nomads. The Striders do have Kinfolk in the Iberian Peninsula, where they are caught on both sides of the *Reconquista*. The Silent Striders keep to themselves, yet they have the most contact with other tribes. Silent Striders serve as messengers between the xenophobic septs of Europe. Owl is their totem guardian.

Silver Fangs

The Silver Fangs are the greatest of all tribes of werewolves. They are the rulers and nobles of the Garou. All the greatest heroes, bards, scholars and artists among the werewolves were Silver Fangs. At least, that is what the Silver Fangs tell other tribes. Much of what the Silver Fangs claim carries some truth with it, but now, they are a tribe in a slow decline. They have many old caerns in Eastern Europe, particularly Russia, and they have Kinfolk among many of the noble families of Europe. As the nobility intermarries, other werewolves speak of madness among the Silver Fangs. Still, the Silver Fangs receive a degree of homage from most other tribes, and in times of crisis, the other tribes often expect them to provide leadership. The soaring Falcon is their totem.

Shadow Lords

Dark and menacing, even to other werewolves, the Shadow Lords see themselves as the future rulers of the Garou, destined to replace the Silver Fangs. This tribe seeks power in all its forms, ostensibly so that they can defeat the Wyrms and its minions. They trust few among the other tribes, and political infighting keeps them from trusting each other. Still, the Shadow Lords will tread where other Garou would not dare. Rumors abound that the Shadow Lords consort with Leeches and other vile Wyrms creatures. The Shadow Lords know that the ends justify the means. They are willing to pay the price for power in order to save Gaia and themselves. Grandfather Thunder guides the Shadow Lords.

Warders of Men

The Warders have the strongest ties to humans of all the tribes. Some see them as consorting with the Weaver over the Wyld. Cities provide homes for the Warders, in particular the city-states of Italy. If any tribe can exert true influence over human society, it would be the Warders. They also make a particular study of industry and invention. They pay attention to the scholarly works of humans. Warders have caerns hidden in or near many cities. Cockroach considers the Warders his children.

The First Change

Garou experience the First Change at puberty. Usually, it occurs during a time of stress, such as a confrontation with an adult, or a fight for dominance in a wolf pack. When the wolf first unleashes itself, the Garou usually flies into frenzy, tearing everyone within reach limb from limb. The young werewolf usually has little to no control, and he might seriously hurt or even kill others.

Spirits and Kinfolk attempt to contact the local Garou shortly before or just after a cub undergoes the First Change. Several werewolves come to retrieve the cub. They attempt to draw as little attention as possible, but they will complete their mission. Anyone or anything foolish enough to bar their way doesn't live long. Sometimes new werewolves resist, but after the First Change, they often don't have the strength to put up a fight. Most of the recently changed want answers, so they come willingly to join their extended families.

Some septs take a direct approach to inducing the First Change. When a cub comes of age, several werewolves seek him out on the night of the full moon. They terrorize the cub and chase her over great distances in hopes that the chase will scare the cub into undergoing the First Change. These attacks have led to the folk legends that the bite of a werewolf induces lycanthropy.

Once the change has occurred, the Garou bring the cub to a holy place known as a caern. After the young one has a chance to rest, the elders begin to instruct her in the ways of her people. Her teachers are harsh but fair, and absolutely resolved that she learn the ways of the Garou. In most cases, she remains at the caern until she is ready for her Rite of Passage. Completion of this test makes her an adult member of the tribe.

Lost Cubs

Not all werewolves have it so easy, however. Some do not experience the First Change until much later in life. Others lose their spirit guides, and when they do transform, no one comes to rescue them. Lost

A FIRST CHANGE FOLK TALE

The young girl ran through the darkened woods, her crimson hood flashing between the trees. She knew they were coming for her. She had to get to her grandmother's house, or else... the wolves.

A howl echoed through the forest.

She ran. Her heart pounded in her chest. She tried to catch her breath. Her skin was hot and scratchy. She thought she could hear the wolves, running, chasing her. She gritted her teeth. They would not catch her.

She saw her grandmother's house ahead. She pounded on the door, hoping that grandmother would open it for her. The wolves were coming.

Her head pounded. Her vision swirled, and everything took on the same reddish cast as her cloak. The door opened, and grandmother opened the door. She smelled strange. The girl's head pounded.

"My dear, are you all right? My, what big eyes you have... and what big teeth!"

The Theurge raced to the house in the woods. The spirits had warned him that the girl's time had come. He took on his human form, resembling a lone woodsman. Sounds of violence echoed from the house. He smashed down the door, but he was too late.

A wolf wearing a red cloak howled in shame and horror as it lay on the torn and shattered body of the old woman.

cubs often succumb to the temptations of the corrupter spirit, the Wurm. Enemies of the Garou actively search the land for these potential lost werewolves, hoping to enslave them for their own foul purposes.

Returning Home

Once a Garou has undergone the First Change, humans and wolves can sense something different about him. The Rage burning within him makes humans uncomfortable. They know that he is a predator, and they instinctively act like prey. They won't openly run from a Garou in human form, but they find

excuses to leave his presence. Strong-willed or aggressive people might even become hostile.

Wolves act in a similar way. Although wolves do not usually run from a Garou in Lupus form, even the alpha male of a pack won't challenge a werewolf. Wolves can sense the dominant predator in a Garou, and they respectfully acknowledge his power. Some werewolves have more Rage than others do. Depending on the strength of the predator, wolves might react more extremely when a Garou approaches.

For this reason, most werewolves give up their former lives after the First Change. They can maintain contact



with Kinfolk, including parents, but they live out their lives in the wilds. The Warders and the Bone Gnawers are notable exceptions, but most other werewolves consider the urban tribes tainted or at least strange.

Rite of Passage

Once a werewolf has undergone the First Change and arrived at a sept, she receives training and instruction from the elders. Septs tend to have a member who takes special responsibility for new cubs. During this time of training, the young werewolf is not a full member of the sept. She has no pack and no voices in the affairs of the tribe. Cubs who voice opinions during moots tend to get cuffed.

Eventually, if her mentors agree, the sept sends the cub on a Rite of Passage. This is the most important event in the young werewolf's life. If she completes the Rite of Passage, then she becomes a full member of her tribe and sept. Most Garou form their first pack during the Rite of Passage. This is also the first chance she has to make an impression on the caern spirit and the sept leadership. Her deeds during her Rite of Passage will stay with her throughout her life — many Garou earn their names during this trial.

Rites of Passage often involve a quest on behalf of the tribal totem or the caern spirit. The quests are never easy, and many young Garou do not survive. Experienced members of the tribe do not help. If possible, several werewolves undergo the Rite of Passage simultaneously. If they return, the sept has a new pack, forged in the fires of battle.

Werewolf Society

Garou society possesses its own caste system, dating back to the First Times. Few werewolves challenge this hierarchy. In fact, it resembles the feudal system spreading across Europe and the hierarchy of a wolf pack. Elders rarely find the need to prove their prowess to their inferiors, and most contentedly serve in their roles. Werewolves gain renown for their deeds. This renown translates into rank among the Garou. Other werewolves can usually ascertain the rank of another Garou simply through his body language and mannerisms. Renown crosses tribal lines, so a perceptive Bone Gnawer could tell if a Shadow Lord shared his rank. Respecting ranks across tribal lines is still a matter of dispute. Few tribes respect Bone Gnawers, but the Silver Fangs see themselves as superior to all other tribes.

Cubs are the youngest werewolves who have not completed their Rite of Passage. They are children and treated as such. Until they are adults, they have no duty but to learn.

Cliaths have passed their Rite of Passage. Packs of cliaths perform many small tasks for their sept, such as hunting game. Elders constantly have work for cliaths, and these youngsters rarely have time to themselves between tasks.

Once cliaths have gained some renown, they become fostern. They have enough experience to visit other septs and interact with other tribal caerns. Strong septs sometimes send packs of fostern to help serve and defend weaker caerns.

Once a werewolf attains the rank of adren, he can start holding offices at a sept. Many packs settle into tribal politics at this point. Adren start looking beyond the pack and concern themselves more with the sept as a whole. Many Garou never rise beyond the rank of adren.

Athro are the heroes of a tribe. They might receive summons from a caern halfway across the continent for aid. The deeds of the athro provide material for Galliards all over Europe. Athro start to consider the affairs of their tribe as a whole, and they are held up as examples to other members.

Elders are the highest ranking and greatest of the Garou. Most elders serve as sept leaders or hold other high offices. They guide the destiny of their tribe. They discuss matters of great significance, convening grand moots and even concolations with other tribes. The wisest of elders even look beyond their tribe to develop an awareness of the whole of the Garou Nation.

Hierarchy of Wolves

Although the social hierarchy of werewolves is well defined, conflicts still arise between Garou of equal rank. To resolve these challenges, werewolves test one another. The Garou don't want to lose a good warrior every time a dispute arises, though, so several methods of resolving challenges exist in Garou society, including gamecraft, facedowns and actual duels. Game systems are provided for these challenges in Chapter Three. These three methods of dominance are not the only options, merely the most common. The Fianna, for instance, have singing contests and compete in drinking games with faerie brew, while the Bone Gnawers sometimes go on scavenger hunts.

Werewolf packmates compete with each other for dominance as well. Most alphas delegate certain decisions to other members of their pack. In matters of warfare, packs look to the advice and leadership of the Ahroun. In diplomacy, a Galliard or Philodox takes the lead. Theurges handle riddles, and Ragabash deal with matters of deception. Ultimately, the alpha's word is final. Some packs have an alpha male and alpha female, but for most Garou, there is only one supreme authority. Some packs even take the name of a well-renowned alpha.

Caerns

Caerns are the homes of the Garou. Werewolves gather at these sacred places where the Gauntlet — the barrier between worlds — thins. The Umbra nearly touches the physical world at a caern. Garou can feel the spiritual energies, the Gnosis, flowing around the caern. It feels comforting, like a gentle wind ruffling his fur on a spring day.

These sites are places of natural beauty or historical significance. The wise believe that when a great event occurs, the spirit world comes closer to the physical world. Some famous caerns include the Sept of the Blood Fist, where the Fenrir turned back the Romans from Germany and the Sept of Bygone Visions, an island that the Black Furies guard fiercely.

The caern spirits empower the septs, giving them special Gifts and allowing werewolves to recover after their battles. All of the sacred rites of the Garou work far better at a caern, and the werewolves can't perform some rites unless they are at a caern. Caerns are key to holding a territory, and almost all the caerns in the Dark Medieval belong to single tribes. Septs in Europe are every bit as xenophobic as wolf packs and human villagers.

Every caern can open a moon bridge — a pathway capable of allowing almost instant travel through the spirit world — to another caern that is willing to accept the bridge. Septs use moon bridges to link their caerns, but with only one exception — the strange multi-tribal Sept of Sun's Glory — different tribes do not often accept moon bridges from each other.

The value of caerns leads to war between tribes. The Fenrir and Black Furies have fought savage wars for ages over caerns, with each side claiming a fair number of triumphs and suffering its share of defeats. Garou accept these struggles as part of their nature. The Children of Gaia try to stop battles between the Garou, preaching that all are part of Gaia. Tribal struggles over caerns have pushed even the Children of Unicorn into warfare, though, and they surprise many adversaries with their resolve and determination. These continual conflicts keep tribes wary, and most septs attack outsiders who enter their territory. Only the Silent Striders go where they please, serving as messengers between the other tribes.

Septs

Werewolves form septs to tend their caerns. Almost all septs in the Dark Medieval draw members from a single tribe, or two at most. Each sept has its own history and traditions. The deeds of a sept glorify the caern and change its importance within a tribe.

Although most septs represent a single tribe, some septs have internal conflicts among breed lines.

Most septs tend to have either more homids or lupus members; rarely does a balance exist. Lupus-dominated septs concern themselves with humans only if humans encroach on their lands. They focus on the wild lands between cities. Homid-dominated septs develop some ties to human cultures. They might become involved in human affairs, and even fight for one side or another in human wars. Some metis believe that a sept exists somewhere in the high mountains of France where metis of all tribes gather and are welcome. Homids and lupus are excluded from this mythical sept. Most Garou scoff at such fanciful tales, and none of the few living metis claim to have actually seen this sept.

Every sept has leaders. These officers conduct the affairs of the sept. Their words carry great weight among members of their tribes. Although every tribe and sept conduct their affairs differently, most have the same set of officers. The sept offices are detailed in Chapter Five (page 169). Overseeing even the largest sept, however, is a single leader.

Each tribe has its own qualities which it seeks in a sept leader. For the Silver Fangs, good breeding means as much as renown. The Fenrir look for a great warrior. Bone Gnawers want someone who can find food when times are lean. Sept leaders are the alphas of alphas. Only a foolish leader fails to consult the other officers or take into account the opinions of his sept members, but the final word belongs to the sept leader.

Packs

The pack is the primary unit of werewolf society. Usually packs are made of members of a single tribe of a similar age. Packs function as extended families, and the members share a totem spirit. Strong packs feel a tight bond; reputedly, a few packs can sense each other's actions even over great distances. Over time, packs might break apart. Members might take positions of authority within a sept or seek their own paths. Once a pack forms, however, its members never lose their ties with each other. The greatest bonds of love and friendship among the Garou form between packmates. The actions of any member of the pack reflect on the entire pack. Galliards immortalize the great packs in song, and the totem of a renowned pack rises in importance in the spirit world. The Garou believe that the founders of each tribe formed a single pack in ancient times, the First Pack.

Moots

Moots are the great gatherings for werewolves. During these meetings, the Garou reaffirm their loyalty to Gaia and each other. All werewolves who are invited to a moot are expected to attend. Immediate

suspicion of Wyrn-taint (or at least dishonor) falls on Garou who make a practice of avoiding moots.

Moots take place at caerns, usually during a night of the full moon. Galliards arrange the moots and perform rituals, while the Philodox conduct business. The participants debate questions of the Litany and sing songs to honor past heroes. Leaders defend their positions from challengers. Cubs who have passed their Rites of Passage receive honors. The Gnosis expended during the moot recharges the caern and the Garou in attendance.

Many different types of moots exist, varying by size and tribes involved. Most moots fall into three different categories.

Sept Moots

These are regular meetings of a sept, usually occurring monthly. Garou of the sept are expected to attend, and occasionally a visitor might be present. The members conduct all of the business of the sept during these meetings, and elders expect to hear a pack's deeds over the last month recounted. These events are important to honor the caern spirit and recharge the Gnosis of the caern.

Grand Moots

When matters concern an entire tribe, the elders call a grand moot. All werewolves in the tribe from the surrounding region travel to attend. Grand moots are weighty affairs, usually involving members of five or more septs. Tribal wars might be declared during these events, and great threats are discussed. Yet, these are also the occasions when the entire tribe has a chance to meet and bond. Garou form new friendships and the tribe stays united. Special ceremonies are performed at grand moots to honor the tribal totem. Werewolves from outside the tribe are rarely tolerated at these events.

Concolation

The most important moots are concolations. Most Garou attend only one of these in a lifetime. At least five elders from five different tribes must call these meetings. For three months, messengers travel the lands announcing the concolation. Regardless of the tribes that call the concolation, every Garou is welcome to attend. Only the greatest of crises provide a reason for a concolation.

Revels

At the end of a moot, the werewolves shift to Crinos and go on a great hunt, destroying all enemies that threaten the caern. These runs are strenuous, and elders sometimes avoid these hunts, choosing to wait

at the caern for the younger Garou to return. With the full moon high in the sky, the Garou often frenzy. Revels encourage werewolves to vent their rage, and they last from the end of the moot until dawn.

Language

The Fianna claim to have invented the High Tongue, the language of the Garou. The language bridges the gap between lupine speech and human tongues. All Garou are immediately taught the language upon completing their Rite of Passage, although some tribes teach it sooner. This language allows all werewolves to communicate with each other, even when in different forms. Dialects and accents come through depending on the regional background, but for the most part, every werewolf can understand the language. Although the Garou call the language the High Tongue, it relies heavily on body language and gestures.

Howls

Howling is one of the most important forms of communication for the Garou. Galliards learn many different howls and can convey information even across tribal lines. Howls echo for miles through the forests. A series of howls, repeated by septs that hear them in turn carry information over hundreds of miles in a single night. Different tribes and septs vary their howls, so a Garou with good ears might be able to determine the howler's tribe, sept or even auspice. The most common howls are the following.

- **Anthem of War** — Ahroun as well as Galliards use this howl in times of trouble. For the Ahroun, the howl is more of a battle cry, a call to attack. For a Galliard, the howl is rallying cry, inspiration for warriors to redouble their efforts. This howl conveys the location and numbers of enemies. It also informs combatants of when reinforcements will arrive. During times of tribal warfare, some tribes (such as the Shadow Lords) have been accused of using false Anthem of War howls to deceive their enemies.

- **Call for Succor** — A pack member uses this howl to cry for help. The howl sounds like a cub's wailing, so many Garou are loath to use it. Some Garou have the skill to convey information about what type of danger threatens them.

- **Call to Hunt** — When a pack hunts, this call lets them know the location of prey. It also can tell pack members other information, such as the nature of the prey and the type of wounds it suffers.

- **Chant of Challenge** — Although this howl sounds like an introduction, it quickly turns into a mockery of the intended target. The howl satirically describes the deeds and lineage of the challenged, leaving no doubt of impending conflict. The best

Galliards send other werewolves into frenzy with the Chant of Challenge.

- **Cry of Elation** — Some young werewolves believe that they are invincible. In combat, the Cry of Elation serves to warn others and to declare to others that a Garou intends to do something incredible. Known to older werewolves as the "I'm about to try something stupid" howl, it explains what deed the werewolf will perform. It also states any objects involved and how they will harm the enemy, and it prepares the healers for whatever might go wrong.

- **Howl of Introduction** — The Litany commands that a werewolf must announce himself when entering the territory of another. This howl describes the Garou's breed, auspice and tribe. Some werewolves also describe their past deeds and use the howl to give reasons to enter the territory. Silver Fangs have a reputation for being a bit long-winded with this howl.

- **Symphony of the Abyss** — This strange twisted howling is the hunting cry of the Black Spiral Dancers. Known best to the Fenrir and the Fianna, this song threatens the life of its target, conveying all manner of unholy tortures that await their victim.

- **Wail of Foreboding** — This howl serves as a warning, but unlike the Anthem of War, it does not warn of enemy attack. Instead, it calls on the Garou to ready themselves for something unusual, such as a natural disaster or Umbral event. The event that prompts the howl usually needs investigation. Galliards describe elements of the event, but due to the strange causes for this howl, another Galliard might need to interpret.

- **Warning of the Wurm's Approach** — A sharp piercing howl, followed by short staccato bursts, this howl signals the presence of the Wurm and its minions. Any werewolf who hears this howl can feel the dread and vile nature of their foes. Skilled Galliards can even describe the enemies for all Garou within earshot.

Honorifics

Werewolves often refer to each other using honorifics in social settings. The Silver Fangs have a particular love for such titles. When referring to those greater in station, a Garou might add -rhya to the name. Equals, such as packmates, use -yuf. Lessers receive no honorifics. The High Tongue names those tainted by the Wurm with -ikthya. Use of -ikthya with one's name is a great insult to any werewolf, certainly worthy of a duel.

The Litany

Sung by Philodox and Galliards, the Litany has guided the Garou for ages. It is an oral tradition, and

although particulars of it vary from tribe to tribe and sept to sept, the basic tenets remain the same. All werewolves learn the Litany after the First Change. Werewolves throughout the Garou Nation respect the Litany, and no tribes hesitate to judge and punish a werewolf who violates them.

Garou Shall Not Mate with Garou

Werewolves are forbidden to mate with one another. Metis are deformed, sterile creatures. Most tribes kill the metis, but a few, such as the Children of Gaia, tolerate them. Werewolves see the metis as aberrations, crimes against nature. The Fianna are particularly harsh on this part of the Litany, exiling or slaying the offending parents, and often leaving the offspring exposed to the elements.

Combat the Wurm Wherever It Dwells and Whenever It Breeds

Gaia's children are the protectors of the Earth. First among their duties, they must defend their Mother from the depredations of the Wurm. The foul Corrupter seeks to destroy and defile everything that Gaia has created. As the Wurm's minions settle into an area, they spread their corruption and decay. If Gaia's protectors allow the Wurm to breed, it becomes ever more powerful. The Fenrir take their responsibility of combating the Wurm seriously. They even seize areas from other tribes that they believe are too weak to stop the enemy.

Respect the Territory of Another

Territory is essential to wolf packs. Respecting a territory usually involves showing deference to the tribe and spirits that protect an area. All Garou are expected to announce their presence when entering another's territory through a Howl of Introduction. Hunting in another's territory without permission is forbidden.

This part of the Litany is open to interpretation by many tribes. The Fenrir only respect territory that they feel is held properly. The Silver Fangs promote the idea that all territory is to be respected, regardless of the opinions one has for the tribe holding it (but of course, they hold much of the territory).

Accept an Honorable Surrender

Despite their differences, all Garou realize that they are united in their duties to Gaia. There are too few werewolves active in the world for them to be

slaying one another carelessly. When a foe surrenders honorably, a werewolf must honor that surrender. The defeated must drop the dispute and acknowledge the superiority of his opponent. If he does not, then the surrender is not honorable. This rule never applies to creatures of the Wyrms.

Submit to Those of Higher Station

The instincts of the pack are strong in the Garou. This tradition is strong among werewolves, and most cubs who forget their place are quickly put back in line. The Silver Fangs and Shadow Lords will go out of their way to enforce this part of the Litany, while the Bone Gnawers ignore it for the most part.

The First Share of the Kill For the Greatest in Station

This part of the Litany refers back to the Garou's wolf heritage. Although it is self-explanatory during hunting, it also applies to loot in warfare. A mighty fetish discovered on a fallen foe might go to the werewolf with the greatest renown, even the sept leader, despite who did the lion's share of the fighting. The more traditional tribes such as the Silver Fangs and the Shadow Lords, enforce this rule harshly.

You Shall Not Eat the Flesh of Humans

This part of the Litany was added after the time of the Impergium, and it is attributed to the Children of Gaia. Most tribes have noticed that werewolves who devour humans become subject to more intense frenzy. A few develop a taste for human flesh and start attacking Kinfolk or even other werewolves in Homid form. The Red Talons make a point of ignoring this section of the Litany when possible, although the wise among them use special rites to purify their meat.

Respect Those Beneath You – All Are of Gaia

Werewolves are the protectors of Gaia. As such, they are expected to show respect for all living things. Young cubs, animals, even some humans are accorded a degree of respect. The Children of Gaia go out of their way to help and take care of the young. The Bone Gnawers tend to ignore this part of the Litany. No one is beneath them, after all. The Shadow Lords show only lip service to this rule, while the Silver Fangs can be arrogant and overbearing about it.

The Veil Shall Not Be Lifted

This tenet means that Garou should not reveal their presence to humans. Although a single werewolf can slay many humans, the Garou know that humanity poses a great threat to all of them. Warriors in service to Christ sometimes have abilities that can overwhelm werewolves. Some humans are pawns of the Wyrms, gifted with dark powers. Kinfolk and wolves are vulnerable even if Garou are not. Humans can burn down woodlands. Sacred sites can be despoiled. The Garou do not wish to unite humans against them. All humans suffer from the Delirium, which protects most werewolves from casual observations. Werewolves who reveal themselves to a community of humans threaten all Garou, and they will be brought to a sept for judgment.

Do Not Suffer Your People to Tend Your Sickness

All Garou have a duty to not burden their packs or septs when they become too old to hunt. Most werewolves realize when the time has come and go out to battle the Wyrms for a last time or wander off into the wilds to die. Packmates or sept members may threaten, or even kill, any old ones without enough sense to leave. The Children of Gaia care for their elders long after other tribes would let them pass, although when an elder is too sick or wounded to fight, they strongly suggest that he seek an honorable end.

The Leader May Be Challenged at Any Time During Peace

All leaders must be willing and able to prove their strength. Like a wolf pack, members of a pack of Garou might seek to overthrow their leader via challenge. These challenges are not always violent. Riddles, races or contests of spiritual power are all acceptable. If a leader is unwilling to accept a challenge, then he loses the respect of his pack and tribe.

The Leader May Not Be Challenged During Waptime

During times of warfare, a pack must stay united. Although members of a sept might not agree with the orders of their leader, they are expected to obey. The danger to the pack, sept or tribe outweighs any individual concerns. The Garou need all their warriors to fight the enemy. They cannot afford to weaken themselves with infighting.

You Shall Take No Action That Causes a Caern to Be Violated

Caerns are the homes of the Garou. Every caern is sacred, a place of spiritual renewal where the werewolves speak to the spirits and learn the will of Gaia. These holy sites represent the Garou's home, spirituality, identity and lifeblood. Any werewolf who allows a caern to fall (by action or inaction) had best end his own life, before others of his tribe find him.

In the Beginning...

Despite their differences, werewolves have cultural ties that run across tribal lines. The Garou all believe in Gaia, the Earth Mother and greatest of spirits. They can feel the power of life and speak to the spirits of the world. Each tribe has a totem spirit, to which it gives special homage. All werewolves follow a set of rules called the Litany, descended from the First Times. The Garou also have a shared history. Each tribe tells the same stories with different emphasis, favoring their own kin.

The First Times

In the Time Before, all was in balance. Gaia gave birth to three children. These beings were the Triat, and they would build Creation by working together in harmony. The Wyld formed all things, the stuff of raw chaos. The Weaver shaped the Wyld's creations, giving them form and substance. Then the Wyrn destroyed the excess forms or chaos, keeping all things in balance. No separation existed between the physical world and the spirit world.

Not even the wisest of the Garou know how long this blessed utopia lasted, but unfortunately, it did not endure. Something terrible happened, and a great catastrophe tore Creation apart. No one knows how it happened, and no one knows whom to blame. The time of harmony came to an end.

Some believe that the Weaver gained intelligence and grew upset with the Wyrn for destroying her creations. She tried to control the Wyrn, entangling him within her great Pattern Web. The Wyrn escaped, but he was out of balance, partially crystallized. Creation ran amok. The Wyrn watched and struggled, unable to prevent the mad creations of the Weaver.

Insanity gripped the Wyrn. Pain from being attacked caused him to lash out. He became the corrupter and the despoiler. He no longer cared about

balance, only destruction and suffering. The Wyrn became the enemy of all life.

The Warders say the Wyrn tried to corrupt the Weaver. They believe that the Weaver crystallized the Wyrn to defend herself. They agree, however, that the Wyrn is now a force of destruction and the greatest threat to Gaia.

After this event, the Pattern Web sealed the spirit world from the physical world, creating the Gauntlet. The Weaver has grown strong, and her special children, humans, transform the world with their ingenuity, making her stronger.

The Impergium

Gaia created the Garou as her protectors to maintain the balance of life. For a time, the werewolves and other Fera lived in harmony with humans and nature. Then the humans drove the great beasts to extinction. They destroyed the wilderness, cutting down forests to build cities. They cleared more woods for cultivation. They domesticated animals, enslaving them to the Weaver. Humans mastered fire and forged sharpened blades of metal to kill predators.

Werewolves saw the humans become a threat to Gaia. The Garou agreed to cull humans and prevent them from destroying nature. This dark period was the Impergium. The Garou descended upon human settlements at night, slaying humans at their whim. While this savagery served to keep the human population steady, it also ensured that the humans hated and feared the werewolves. This fear eventually drove them to find dread allies. The Wyrn readily accepted humans who sought power. The first undead and dark sorcerers rose to power, and these godlike entities could slay even Gaia's chosen. They offered humans protection from the monsters. In return, they demanded worship and sacrifices of blood or slaves.

The Weaver also gave humans better tools to defend themselves. Walls rose up around cities. She taught them to use fire aggressively to destroy entire wild lands so that humans could live safely. Humans learned to change the course of rivers. They found new spiritual guidance, not from the spirits of the natural world, but harsh religions dedicated to the ascent of humanity.

The Impergium changed humans. They no longer wished to live in harmony with nature. They wanted vengeance against it. Vampires now dwelled as gods among humans, protecting their servants and luring more of them to the embrace of the Wyrn. As the Garou began to lose their battles against humans, several of them realized what had happened. Werewolves had driven humans to the enemies of Gaia. They ended the Impergium, but the damage was done. Garou and humans would never live in peace again.

The War of Rage

At one time, many different Fera defended Gaia. Wererats, werecats, werebears and others all had a place and duty in protecting Gaia. Some of these shapeshifters died fighting the Wyrms. Most of the others fell to the claws of the Garou.

According to legend, a dispute arose among the shapeshifters as to which ones were Gaia's favorite children. The Silver Fangs spoke for the Garou and maintained that the werewolves were most important. The other shapeshifters disagreed, but the Silver Fangs held their ground, offering to prove their point with claw and fang. The Fera responded in kind to the threats of the Fangs. Finally, argument escalated into bloodshed and warfare.

The Gurahl, or werebears, were the first to fight the Garou. They had territory next to the Silver Fangs' homeland. The werewolves slaughtered the Gurahl. The other shapeshifters learned of the attacks by the Garou and joined into a war against the proud werewolves. Pressed on all sides, the Garou lashed out with full ferocity against this alliance of enemies.

In the end, the werewolves stood triumphant over the Fera. The War of Rage was a tragic victory, and Gaia mourned for her lost children. Some Garou realized what a terrible mistake they had made, but they could not undo the past. The Silver

Fangs had said that they were the greatest of Gaia's children. Now, the werewolves must try to fill all the roles set for Gaia's protectors. Some tribes try to justify the War of Rage, while others, like the Children of Gaia, see it as one of the great tragedies of the Garou. The Fera, for their parts, have not forgiven or forgotten.

The Rise of Christendom

Humans spread like a plague after the Impergium, changing the world. Vampires helped humans build the Roman Empire. Where the Romans once ruled, the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches now spread their influence. Christian fanatics execute pagans who still pay homage to the spirits. Crusaders despoil caerns and sell people into slavery in the name of Christ.

Although werewolves don't worry much about the affairs of humans, the militant Christian orders are constantly on the lookout for "holy places," and this search occasionally leads them to caerns. Plus, they take the presence of spirit worship as an affront to their God, and pagan Kinfolk have died for their unwillingness to convert. Some Theurges have even noticed that the Gauntlet feels stronger around Christian strongholds. Divisions exist among the Garou regarding the rise of Christianity, however. Homids raised in Christendom have trouble relinquishing their own faith, often rever-



STRANGE CRUSADERS

Alrik Thunderclaw pressed himself against a tree, trying to remain motionless and silent as the Christian knights picked their way through the forest. He could hear their horses' hooves crunching dry leaves and the soft chink of their armor. His pack was ready. Everyone held their positions. Now, these humans would learn what protectors the pagans of the land had. Then, Alrik's ears picked up a strange sound.

The horses started to sniff the air, taking deep rasping breaths. The knights started to laugh, and their voices echoed strangely in their armor. Alrik wondered if this was some type of Christian magic. Then, the air changed, growing as putrid as meat left to rot in the sun. He heard Brunhild's voice in his mind. "Wyrn," she hissed.

"Indeed, beast, we serve the dragon," came the voice of one of the knights.

The knights charged into the pack's hiding places. Alrik saw that their horses had glowing green eyes, and the riders sprouted tendrils. The crosses on their shields and armor shifted from white to a deep crimson. A lance embedded itself into Alrik's gut.

"Fomori," he gasped. An ambush had sprung, but not for the knights

werewolves fall to the Wyrn, they might come under the influence of the Black Spiral Dancers. The Wyrn draws its forces together, and now its werewolves hunt in the wilds as well, seeking to claim caerns as their own. They draw upon corrupted humans, infernalists and the living dead as allies. Although werewolves have fought each other since the dawn of time, no tribe is accustomed to a foe allied with the Wyrn, a foe with no honor.

The Children of Gaia hope to reform the Black Spiral Dancers. The Fianna stand divided on the Black Spiral Dancers. Many members of the tribe hunt them with extreme determination, wanting to avenge their fallen brothers and sisters. Others cling to the hope that something of the White Howlers remains. Although claims of "pure" White Howlers surface every time a lost cub with a white coat is discovered, all hope for the tribe seems to have been lost.

For more information on the Black Spiral Dancers, see Chapter Six.

The Prophecies

Thirty years ago, a Red Talon Theurge, Songs of Shadows, emerged from the northern wastelands during the Winter Solstice and visited each sept of his tribe. He was a pure bred Garou, with the bearing of a werewolf of elder rank, although no living Red Talon remembered him. His fur was a dark, bloody crimson, with several strands of gray. A few stronger wolves challenged Songs of Shadows when he entered their caerns, but when their eyes met, a terrible fear filled their hearts. They tucked tail and submitted. The spirit of each caern greeted the strange Red Talon in its own way, further intimidating the Garou.

Songs of Shadows did not stay long at any sept. He addressed all Garou present, from cub to elder. He gave each sept the same message: "I am Songs of Shadows. I bring ten prophecies for ten tribes. These matters affect all Garou. Remember what you have heard, and tell all the tribes. Each tribe must act on its own prophecy. Heed these words for Gaia's sake." He then delivered the terrible prophecies. When he had finished, he walked out of the caern and into the night. Some septs sent packs out to track the stranger, but even though the Red Talons pride themselves on being the greatest hunters of all Garou, they found no trace of Songs of Shadows.

The Red Talons held a grand moot. The elders agreed quickly that the other tribes should hear the messages meant for them. A few Talons still did not trust the message. They wanted to know more about Songs of Shadows. Who was he? Why did he come? Who gave him his message? The tribe chose a pack of


ing God and Gaia. No werewolf denies that members of the Church have proven instrumental in fighting the Wyrn-tainted undead.

Black Spiral Dancers

It was horrific enough when the humans turned to the Wyrn for power and it spat forth vampires and other monsters. Now, the Wyrn has Garou in its service. The White Howlers were once a proud and great tribe of Garou living among their Pictish Kinfolk. Yet on the darkest night in the history of Gaia's protectors, the entire tribe entered a Wyrn pit, a gateway to the Wyrn's home in the spirit world. None of the White Howlers returned. The Garou that climbed back out of that pit were Children of the Wyrn. They were Black Spiral Dancers.

Now, the Wyrn has its own defenders. The Black Spiral Dancers have their own Gifts. They retain their abilities to shift forms and their skill as warriors. Deep tunnels burrow through the Earth and perhaps into the Umbra, linking their foul caerns — called Hives — to each other. Banes and other foul spirits serve as the totems of these dark Garou.

The Black Spiral Dancers are not limited to the fallen White Howlers and their Kinfolk. As other



athro to go and find out the truth about the visitor. They left for the far north in hopes of finding him.

The Red Talons spread the tale of the prophecies throughout Europe. The Silver Fangs gently chided the Red Talons for letting this phantom wolf scare them. The Shadow Lords dismissed the story as some attempt by the Talons to gain respect. Everywhere the reaction was the same. Tales of doom did not scare the other tribes. The Fenrir considered attacking the Red Talons for being so easily manipulated. The Warders openly mocked the wolf tribe.

A year passed, and the elders of the Red Talons called another grand moot. They somberly discussed how none of the tribes would listen. Some of the werewolves voiced dissent about the decision to tell the others. Frustration and anger entered the howls and barks of the Red Talons. As the tribe stood on the edge of infighting, the pack that had left a year before returned. The pack members panted with exhaustion, and they had a haunted look in their eyes.

They told of their journey to the unforgiving northern wastes. They spoke of the Umbra and the Realm. They told of vile monsters and Wyrms beasts. The pack had grown weary. Its members had started to doubt their quest, and they had begun fighting among themselves as to whether to go back or to press onward. Then Songs of Shadows had walked out of the snow and ice.

He told the pack that ignoring the prophecies would only lead to suffering. Gaia had gifted him with the prophecies. She'd told him to go to the Red Talons and spread the word. He'd told the pack that when they returned, the tribe would be on the verge of fighting. Songs of Shadows had said that even if the other tribes didn't believe the prophecies now, no one would deny them as they came to pass.

The elders listened. As they fell silent, the Northern Lights suddenly raced across the sky, glowing with all manner of strange color, then retreated. The display occurred again and again, a total of 10 times.

The Red Talons united as a tribe and again began to preach the Prophecies of Shadow. Again, they sent messengers and packs to other tribes. They howled the prophecies across the lands. The other tribes laughed. In some cases, packs of Talons fell under attack. After a second year, the Red Talons again grew less passionate about spreading the word.

In the fourth year after the appearances of Songs of Shadows, Constantinople, the greatest city in the world, fell to the swords of the crusaders. The city was sacked and its people were slaughtered. In this horror, the Garou saw the first of the prophecies, the Warders' prophecy, come true.

The Silver Fangs, Black Furies, Children of Gaia, Shadow Lords and Warders called for a concolation, a moot open to all Garou from any tribe. The fall of Constantinople shook the Garou Nation. The prophecies of the Red Talons seemed frighteningly sinister. The Fenrir attacked Red Talon septs, demanding answers from the Red Talon elders. Old enemies sat down next to one another to discuss the Red Talon oracle and the meanings of his visions. The tribes proved unable to agree on how to confront the prophecies, but a dialogue opened. On matters of the prophecies, the Garou would stay united.

Unfortunately, cooperation lasted only until the tribes separated. Each tribe sent its own packs into the lands of the Red Talons to find Songs of Shadows. Many packs went deep into the Umbra, looking for more information from the spirit world. If Songs of Shadows could have visions from Gaia, they reasoned, so could the wise among their tribe. The Fianna scoured the Silver Record, the history of the Garou, for any Red Talon who could be Songs of Shadows. Ties between some septs strengthened, while other tribes became more restless. Shadow Lords claimed caerns from Warders in Italy, justifying their actions by blaming the Warders for ignoring their prophecy.

The prophecies changed the stature of the Red Talons among the Garou. The Silver Fangs encouraged other tribes to listen more closely to the words of the Talons. Some tribes, such as the Warders, saw the wolf tribe as somehow responsible for their woe, and they looked for a way to discredit the Red Talons. For their part, many Talons felt as though Gaia has chosen them for a great task above all other tribes. For nearly three decades, an entire generation, no Garou saw any sign of any of the other prophecies coming true.

But now, in the year 1230, a great eclipse darkens the sky. The Umbra grows as black as pitch in some places, and the werewolves recognize this event as the beginning of dire things. In response to this eclipse, many Full Moons lose themselves to Rage, and entire villages are decimated. Galliards of all tribes feel a lingering sense of recognition in this eclipse. And yet, this event doesn't seem to relate directly to any of the Prophecies of Shadow. All of the tribes are on their guard, though, waiting for the hammer of Fate to fall once more.

ENEMIES of the Garou

Werewolves are incredibly powerful creatures, especially by Dark Medieval standards, but they have adversaries and enemies with abilities of their own.



Not all of these beings serve the Wyrms, though most feel the Wyrms' influence in some way.

First, werewolves are their own worst enemies. Rival tribes, Errants and Black Spiral Dancers can all threaten Garou. Wars over territories, especially powerful caerns, are not uncommon. Packs of Black Spirals can surface anywhere, using their stinking labyrinths to travel. Sometimes, even an ally might become an enemy. A member of a sept might turn away from Gaia, or a friendly rivalry might become vicious.

Vampires (or Leeches) infest every city in Europe in the Dark Medieval. They wield tremendous influence over human affairs. During the Impergium, humans turned to the occult might of the undead to aid them. Descendants of those foul beings still lurk in the shadows of human society. Many of them have great resources in addition to physical abilities and mystic Disciplines. They are undying, so they think in the long term. A pack of Garou might think it has defeated a vampire, only to have the monster resurface to threaten the werewolves' grandchildren.

Wyrmspirits, Banes, sometimes infest and possess humans and animals. The sick creatures that result are called fomori. They have Gifts of their own from the Wyrms, and they exist to cause pain and suffering in the world. In the past, entire tribes of humans have become fomori, such as the Fir Bolg in Ireland. The Garou watch the knightly orders formed during the Crusades carefully for signs of fomori.

The Church is a threat to the werewolves as well. Crusaders gladly slay pagan Kinfolk, and they try to eliminate even non-Christian thoughts from the land. They defile pagan sites, many of which are places where caerns could have existed. Some people with True Faith have the ability to negate Gifts and even force Garou into their breed forms in some circumstances. Not all werewolves hate Christianity, but they remain wary of the human followers of the Church.

Covens of sorcerers practice the dark arts. Some of these groups summon infernal creatures to aid them. Others try to use their magic for the good of humanity, but they might not see werewolves as good for humanity. A few bold mages even try to enslave werewolves to use as servants. Others hunt the Garou for the potential mystic properties of their teeth, claws, fur and blood.

The Circle of Red

In the chaos following the fall of Constantinople, a Silver Fang caern near the city of Sofia came under attack and was destroyed. The Warders of Men there were hunted down, and the city was closed to the Garou. This was the first time the Garou encountered the Circle of Red. As the years passed, caerns in

London, Kiev, Moscow, Beograd, Cologne and Paris came under attack and were claimed by this new foe. It took years of investigation, but the culprit was finally identified as the Circle of Red, a coven of mortal occultists.

The Circle of Red is a guild of mortal sorcerers and merchants that draws membership from the lower nobility and the burgeoning merchant class. Members are expected to be literate, numerate and fluent in several languages. The society is primarily mercantile, concerned with underwriting marine transport and bonding loans; most of its activity is legitimate and lawful. Yet the members are also magicians and assassins. Rivals and enemies can be intimidated, spied on and disposed of. Though they remain a small concern, they have become incredibly wealthy. But such power did not come cheaply. The Circle sold itself to the Wyrms years ago.

The Circle is loosely organized into three "castes." The bulk of the membership belongs to the merchant caste. The merchants are responsible for the day-to-day running of the operation; they make the money, negotiate the deals and ensure that everything is in order. The next caste is the assassins, but few truly deserve that name. The Circle calls this caste the Facilitators. Membership consists of cheap leg-breakers, poisoners, footpads of all kinds and beggar spies. A few, though, are professional assassins drawn from the Dacian hinterlands and the Levant. The smallest caste is the sorcerer caste. The sorcerers ensure that no one interferes with the operations of the Circle. They also work to further the ends of their obscene masters. Rumor among the Garou has it that this smallest caste also has some connection to an order of Christian monks, but no werewolf has been able to substantiate this assertion.

Since the events in Sofia, the Circle has become adept at hunting Garou. Members have killed many of Gaia's warriors and destroyed septs across Europe. Fortunately, their power does not extend far outside their cities, and without their money, hirelings and resources, they make easy prey. But the Circle knows not to travel overland; if travel must be undertaken, they travel by sea or use proxies to deliver messages.

The Flaying Plague

Not all enemies of the Garou can be battled with fang and claw. Indeed, one of the most frightening dangers the werewolves face is the silent, invisible specter of disease.

In the winter of 1229, the Garou of a sept in Lithuania fell victim to a strange fever. At first it

seemed to be some strange offshoot of consumption. Then the boils appeared. Then the boils become ulcers that grew into huge abscesses, then the skin fell, agonizingly, from the bones. Every Garou of that sept died. Then the fever struck again, a little further west, this time at a Red Talon caern in the Polish forests.

That summer, the strange fever would literally decimate the Garou of Europe.

The plague advances ever westward. Hundreds of Garou die; hundreds more are left hideously scarred. Theurges fight to cure the plague, but the best they can do is contain it. The plague, the Warder doctors say, is spread by the miasma of breath, but they know precious little else about it. It seems to affect only wolves and werewolves; no normal human, Kinfolk or otherwise, has fallen to the Flaying Plague.

The Garou still have no idea what caused the plague. Speculations abound, but no solid evidence has emerged proving any theory. The plague is particularly devastating to the Red Talons, as it kills their Garou and Kinfolk with terrifying swiftness. Even now, the Garou Galliards are whispering that the plague has forever altered the holy balance between wolf and man. Packs of Garou have spread out across Europe, seeking the cause of the plague as well as a cure. None have reported any success yet.

The Vast Land

A map of Europe in 1230 provides a start for understanding the Dark Medieval world. Werewolves, however, aren't interested as much in political boundaries or cities as they are the places between cities. The following section provides brief overviews of the regions in the Dark Medieval. Since Garou are more interested in septs and caerns, some of these places receive special mention. For further information on the geography, see **Dark Age Europe**.

British Isles

The Fianna, the Fenrir and the Silver Fangs all have caerns in the British Isles. The Fianna have the deepest ties to the isles, but the Fenrir are well established after centuries of occupation and warfare. The Silver Fangs have come more recently, but they have many kin among the nobility.

The British Isles have a varied terrain. Thick forests climb toward mountain peaks. Rivers cut through the rolling hills and the lowlands as they make their way to the sea. Misty moors and dark bogs hint at evil forces hiding just beyond sight. The high cliffs and green hills of the British Isles give the lands charm and beauty.

These are magical places. These isles gave birth to legends of the sidhe, King Arthur and the monster of Loch Ness. The druids made their homes here. A large number of caerns lie open in the British Isles.

The isles also birthed the Black Spiral Dancers, however. These twisted Garou worship the Wyrms from despoiled caerns. Dancers have tunneled deep beneath the earth, creating great labyrinths that they use to travel unnoticed from place to place. These dark tunnels twist through the Umbra and the physical world, shifting between the two in a chaotic fashion. Only werewolves seem to have the ability to follow these tunnels. Humans can't pass into the Umbral sections of the tunnels. For them, each tunnel only comes to a dead end. Tunnels now extend from Scotland to mainland Europe. The Black Spiral Dancers are slowly spreading outward in the name of the Wyrms.

ENGLAND

The largest kingdom in the British Isles, England stretches west to Wales, north to Scotland and south to encompass all of Cornwall. Fenrir hold many of the caerns in England, but the tribe has divisions between the Germanic Fenrir and the Scandinavian Fenrir. Sometimes these differences lead to bloody battles within the tribe. The Fianna hold a number of caerns as well, concentrated in Cornwall, but mixing with the Fenrir in the central midlands. Fianna and Fenrir share many of the caerns of the central region. The Silver Fangs have made their presence known as well with the Norman invasion. The Fangs counted William the Conqueror among their Kinfolk, but they've shown discretion when lording over the Fenrir and the Fianna.

THE FENRIR AND THE FIANNA

For centuries, the Fianna and Fenrir united against the Romans, driving the legions from their lands. Werewolves fought alongside their Kinfolk, and bonds grew between the Fianna and Fenrir as they struggled against a common foe. The tribes grew to admire each other's ferocity and penchant for heavy drinking.

But everything changed with the destruction of the White Howlers. The Fianna blamed themselves for the transformation from White Howlers to Black Spiral Dancers. Many Fianna fell into fits of melancholy. Galliards howled songs of tragedy and failure.

The Fenrir reacted with outrage at the creation of the Black Spiral Dancers. Never had such an atrocity occurred among the Garou. They went to the Fianna to plan a counterattack, and instead of finding bold warriors, they encountered drunks lamenting the passing of their brethren. The Fenrir returned to their jarls with stories of their allies. The mighty warriors among the Fenrir felt betrayed. How could the Fianna have let such a thing happen? Since the tribe was wracked with guilt, surely they must have aided this horror in some way. Now, faced with the new threat of the Black Spiral Dancers, the Fianna were sobbing drunks. The Fenrir determined to seize the Fianna's caerns and lands and slay the Black Spirals, since the Fianna could not.

The Fenrir came to the lands of the Fianna in waves. Some came with Germanic tribes, such as the Jutes, Saxons and Angles. Others came with Viking raiders from the North. They expected to sweep away the Fianna and claim the territory so that they could defend it from the Wyrms.

The Fenrir misinterpreted the Fianna's deep rage at the tragedy for weakness. When the Fenrir came to take their land and their heritage, the Fianna unleashed their anger at their former friends. The Fianna had been betrayed when the White Howlers became the Black Spirals, but that was because of the Wyrms. The Fenrir betrayed the Fianna's trust of their own accord.

When the Fenrir met the Fianna in battle, they learned the measure of their former allies. Both tribes fought with passion and rage. The Fenrir won many battles with the Fianna, but the Fianna made them pay in hot blood. Every time the Fenrir would claim territory, they would only hold it until the Fianna seized it back. The heat of battle re-forged the bonds of respect between the tribes. The Fianna never reclaimed all of the lands from the Fenrir, but the Fenrir realized that the Fianna were great warriors and knew that they would never take the British Isles from the Fianna in a thousand years of war.

While the tribes fought, the Black Spiral Dancers grew in power. They launched attacks against both the invading Fenrir and the defending Fianna. As before with the Romans, the two tribes soon united against a common enemy. Now the tribes share territory and caerns. Although old scars sometimes erupt into violence, the Fianna and Fenrir have one of the closest relationships of all the tribes. The leaders of the tribes do not agree on much, save exterminating the Wyrms, but they are quick to defend each other, especially from the more political tribes, such as the Silver Fangs and Shadow Lords.

Wales

Cymru, or Wales, borders England to the west. The land stands divided between warring kings and a cutthroat nobility well practiced at fratricide. Unlike tamed England, Wales has many wild areas in its hilly countryside, and its low population makes it a good home for werewolves.

The Fianna are the dominant tribe in Wales, but they have divisions just as the humans do. A strange Welsh faction of the tribe holds some of the caerns. The Fianna say that these Welsh wolves have faerie blood and possess strange Gifts that seem more in keeping with the fae than Gaia.

Scotland

Divided between highlands and lowlands, Scotland has many secret places and deep wilds. For the Fianna and the Fenrir, it is a place of ghosts. Once, Scotland was the home of the White Howlers and their Pictish Kinfolk. Now, both Fianna and Fenrir search the land for untainted traces of the former tribe.

The Black Spiral Dancers have many Hives hidden in Scotland, and the Garou relentlessly strive to find and cleanse these sites. The Highlands are not safe, and the war against the Wyrms manifests itself in claw-to-claw combat. The Fianna hold the Highlands, and the Fenrir hold the Lowlands. Both tribes work together on a level unknown in the rest of Europe. In the face of the Black Spiral Dancers, tribal divisions and human conflicts seem inconsequential.

Ireland

In Ireland, the Fianna reign supreme among the Garou. They live as their forefathers did, in magical caerns and strongholds. Faerie glamour and spiritual gifts mix in the homes of the Fianna. Tales of the hospitality of the Fianna even reach the continent, and many Fianna have more renown for song and drink than for battle. Ireland is a land divided between many human kings, but among the Garou, even the Norman Silver Fangs recognize the High King of the Fianna and the court at Tara. The surging tides of Christianity haven't made an impact on the Irish Fianna.

The Fianna do know that magic is slowly fading from their homeland. The prophecy of the Red Talon bothers the elders of the Fianna. Many Fianna debate and argue about the prophecy, even down to the cubs of the tribe. Theurges obsess about the meaning of the Red Talon's words. Some Fianna believe that the prophecy signifies the fall of their tribe. They worry that the Wyrms will consume them, just as the White Howlers transformed into the Black Spiral Dancers.

Many Fianna believe that a war will erupt between the courts of the fae. Others suggest that the meaning of the prophecy is not so obvious. They know that the words of the prophecy carry great meaning, but the fae only give them aid in the form of cryptic riddles.

Sept of the Tri-Spiral

One of the most important septs of the Fianna is the Sept of the Tri-Spiral at Brugh na Boinne. This sacred area contains three caerns, all in close proximity to each other. The Fianna claim that they opened the caerns with the help of the fae. Some believe that the last of the Fir Bolg, a race of fomori who once infested Ireland, was slain here by the Fianna. Each of the three caerns has its own mystic properties. This sept is second in power and importance among the Fianna only to Tara, home of the High King.

Iberia

The *Reconquista* dominates the affairs of the Iberian nations. The Muslim Almohad State to the south is under constant attack from Castile and Aragon to the north. At one time, people of all religions lived in peace in the region, but now Christian knights push back the Muslims and the Jews who live among them. A sense of resignation exists in the Muslim lands as though they accept their defeat as inevitable.

Leeches have infiltrated the Church and the *Reconquista* movement. They have manipulated knights into slaughtering towns of werewolf Kinfolk, all in the name of Christianity and conquest. So far, the Children of Gaia have directed their attentions in human affairs to trying to end the violence and end the senseless hatred. Now, members of the tribe have started waging their own war against the vampires.

The dominant tribes here are similar to those involved with the Holy Land and the Crusades. The Children of Gaia attempt to keep the peace. The Silent Striders have Kinfolk among the Islamic peoples. Now, with the construction and growth of cities, both the Warders and Bone Gnawers have begun moving into the region. The Shadow Lords also keep a strong, but uncharacteristically quiet presence in the region.

The Meseta, the great central plateau of Iberia, has burning hot summers and terribly cold winters. The Garou have claimed it for themselves. The Children of Gaia and Silent Striders hold joint moots on the Meseta during the winter months. A number of opened caerns lie on the plateau. The area is wild and safe for werewolves, far from the warring humans and their vampiric masters.

Sept of the Wounded Unicorn

In the war-torn Iberian peninsula, the Children of Gaia have found their beliefs challenged. Despite their efforts to bring understanding and peace to the land, different religious faiths have led to war. Located on the Meseta, the caern lies far from the human wars, but the caern spirit still suffers as death plagues the land. The Wounded Unicorn is a caern of Healing, both physical and emotional. The sept members have great renown among their tribe and other Garou for their skills at healing. The sept welcomes all werewolves who need succor, although the Children of Gaia are wary of who they let near their caern's heart. They have fought off attacks in the past, both from Shadow Lords looking for territory and from human and undead crusaders. The caern accepts moon bridges from the Sept of Sun's Glory. It has an understanding with Guillaume and provides healing services in return for past deeds.

France

France is home to many tribes. The Silver Fangs and Children of Gaia have strong ties to the French and Norman nobility. In the wilds of France, the Red Talons, Fenrir and Children of Gaia hold caerns. The Fianna also have a scattered presence throughout the land.

Paris is growing rapidly, and the great city is home to many Leeches. The Silver Fangs, Warders and Bone Gnawers all fight to keep the minions of the Wyrms in check. Some Garou believe that Ratkin hide within the city.

Southern France has rugged terrain, high mountains and great plateaus. Wyrms creatures dwell in the wilds of southern France, and Fenrir, Red Talons and Silver Fangs make a point of hunting down these vile monsters. Multi-tribal packs from the Sept of Sun's Glory also scour the land for Wyrms taint.

Sept of Vigilance

When crusaders came to the town of Béziers in France, the townspeople and their vampiric masters refused to yield the town to their tender mercies. The commander of the crusade ordered his men to seize the town and let God sort out his own. Twenty thousand people died at the hands of the crusaders. The Garou believe that the entire event was due to some sick battle between vampires, which cost the lives of thousands of innocents. Now, as the town is rebuilt, vampires have moved back in, but the Garou are present as well. The Silent Striders have opened a caern on the outskirts of the town, and other tribes believe that they commune with the

spirits of the dead. The spirit of the Sept of Vigilance provides warnings to the Silent Striders about the activities of the Wyrms. Not only do the Silent Striders use the sept as a base from which to investigate (and hunt) vampires, but they've also gained knowledge about the mysterious Circle of Red. Members of the sept seem to be resolute and determined in their activities, although most other Garou feel that they have fallen under some taint. The Silent Striders suspect that their enemies will soon launch an attack on the caern.

Holy Roman Empire

The Holy Roman Empire is the largest and most powerful country in 13th-century Europe. The Holy Roman Empire contains the Kingdoms of Germany, Burgundy and Sicily. King Richard of England swore fealty to the Holy Roman Empire, and the King of Aragon is a vassal of the emperor. The empire receives tribute from Tunis and Tripoli in North Africa. Cyprus and Armenia have left the Byzantine Empire to pledge their loyalty to the Holy Roman Empire.

The city of Vienna has become home to dark forces. The foul vampiric sorcerers of the Tremere clan manipulate the populace. The knightly orders of the Crusades also have strongholds in the Holy Roman Empire. The Teutonic Knights, the Knights Templar and the Hospitalers of St. John all have chapters here. Some of these knights possess the weapons and knowledge to slay a werewolf.

The Fenrir, the Shadow Lords and the Silver Fangs all have septs in this vast land. The Black Forest firmly belongs to the Fenrir, centered around the Sept of the Blood Fist. Warders have established a presence along with Bone Gnawers in the major cities. The Warders have Kinfolk among the merchants, and the Bone Gnawers have Kinfolk among the beggars, but both tribes find themselves at war with Leeches within the cities. Red Talons hold septs in the wilderness.

Sept of the Blood Fist

A stronghold of the Fenrir, the Sept of the Blood Fist holds a great caern in the center of the Black Forest. The Fenrir claim that the original founders of the sept defeated the Romans at the site of the caern. A clearing opens in the thick forest, and a stone carved with the names of Fenrir heroes rises from the center of the clearing. All who enter the bawn must pass a challenge of combat. For other Fenrir, this is usually a friendly wrestling match. Members of other tribes face much more serious combat. The Fenrir claim that the Black Furies tried to take the caern



from them during a 19-year war, and the antipathy between the Fenrir and the Furies is still bitter here. A Black Fury who loses the challenge of entry may well lose her life. The Wild Boar serves as the totem here, and his gifts of strength are legendary.

All is not well in the Black Forest, however. A brutal pack of Feral vampires hunts these woods, and unlike most Leeches (who seem most comfortable in the cities), these monsters seem to be thriving. The leadership of the Blood Fist is growing concern, as they have lost several packs of Guardians to the so-called *Schwarze Rudel* — Black Pack — over the last few years.

The Sept of Sun's Glory

Hidden away in the Kingdom of Burgundy, the Sept of Sun's Glory welcomes all Garou, regardless of tribe. This large and powerful sept maintains strict neutrality between the tribes. This is the only sept with members from each tribe in Europe; only the Shadow Lords do not maintain a presence here. Guillaume Sun's Glory, an elder Silver Fang originally founded the sept as the Sept of the Great Mountains (see Chapter Seven for the full history of the sept). His great deeds eventually caused the Garou to rename the sept after him. Now, Guillaume only broods about the vampires. Many members of the sept whisper

that his time among the living grows short. The noble Silver Fang has become short-tempered and subject to speaking to himself. Members of the sept have tried to break his obsession with the murderer of his pack. Guillaume seems to have little faith in the prophecies. In fact, he grumbles that if the prophecies did have meaning for all tribes, then surely they would have mentioned his sept where all Garou are accepted.

Italy

Europe was once ruled from the geographical region of Italy. According to ancient Roman legend, a she-wolf suckled Rome's twin founding brothers, Romulus and Remus. Now, Rome is the home of the Papacy and the heart of Christian power in Europe. The entire Italian peninsula seethes with underlying currents of revolution, however.

In 1230, the cities of northern Italy prepare for war with the Holy Roman Empire. Frederick II, King of Sicily and Holy Roman Emperor has claim to the lands. For generations, the Italian city-states have fought to retain their independence from the empire. An alliance of cities and towns, the Lombard League, stands ready to defend the land if Frederick tries to press his influence.

Pope Gregory IX watches warily for the Holy Roman Emperor to act. Sicily, Frederick II's hereditary kingdom, controls the south of Italy. The Holy Roman Empire claims the north. The Papacy governs the middle third of the land, but the pope fears that he does not have the might to stop Frederick II if he tries to conquer the entire peninsula. The pope would definitely marshal all of his resources to prevent the loss of papal territories, though.

The many city-states of Italy are the master merchants of Europe. They have no choice. If they do not trade, they cannot import grain, so they would starve. The Italian countryside doesn't produce enough food to support the cities. The prospect of war scares many of these powerful merchants. Warfare would disrupt the economy, destroy valuable farmland and prevent trade. Other merchants feel that the reality of taxation by the Holy Roman Empire would do the same damage.

Conflict between city-states and between groups within them is constant. Declared and undeclared wars start and stop constantly, usually over trade or resources. Within a city, feuds can lead to literal cutthroat politics, where factions fight for control over a city.

The two strongest tribes in Italy are the Warders and the Shadow Lords, but Kinfolk of nearly any tribe can be found there. Human politics strains the Warders as residents of different cities come into conflict. The tribal leadership sees this as a problem, but they are uncertain how to settle matters. The Shadow Lords seek to gain resources by taking advantage of the humans. In a few rare cases, they've even come to share caerns with factions of the Warders to help protect them from other members of the tribe.

Sardinia

Sardinia is an island in the Mediterranean off the coast of Italy. The terrain is mountainous, and numerous ruins that date from the Phoenicians through the Muslims cover the island. Wild Gangrel dwell on Sardinia. Since ancient times, these vampires have claimed the island as their territory, driving away invading foreign Cainites. An unspoken truce seems to exist between the Gangrel and the Shadow Lords who dominate the septs on the island, or at any rate, the vampires don't seem to bother the Garou. The southwestern area of the island has rich silver mines, claimed by the Shadow Lords. Many other tribes, including the Silver Fangs, the Silent Striders, the Children of Gaia and the Black Furies have tried to gain control over some of the silver mines. The Shadow Lords have allies

among the Warders back in the city-states who receive part of the silver from the mines for their continued support. Many tribes believe that the Shadow Lords send silver to the Fenrir in hopes of gaining favors from the mighty northern warriors. Many Galliards tell stories of a lost caern on Sardinia, a caern in the midst of the veins of silver, dedicated to Luna herself. The Shadow Lords firmly deny such legends.

Sept of the Sibyl

This caern of Visions has gained prominence among the Garou since the appearance of the strange Red Talon. Werewolves say that the Sibyl of Cumae, a legendary prophetess, was a powerful Theurge who helped guide the Kings of Rome. Originally a sept of the Black Furies, the Sept of the Sibyl is now home to the Shadow Lords, who took the caern from the Furies over some long-forgotten issue. The center of the caern is a deep cavern. According to legend, those who sleep within the cave receive visions from Gaia. A Theurge holds the title of Sibyl, and she offers to share her knowledge with other tribes in exchange for a service to the Shadow Lords.

Scandinavia

The Fenrir still protect and lay claim to their lands. The lands surrounding the Kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden remain untamed. Most Europeans believe that Scandinavia is a harsh unforgiving land, and they are haunted by stories of terrible Viking raiders. Ragnarok has come for the Vikings, and by 1230, Christianity is firmly entrenched. A few cling to the old ways, but such adherents are mostly Kinfolk of the Fenrir who can hear the war cries of their ancestors when they sleep.

Denmark

The Danish peninsula juts out from the Holy Roman Empire. The Kingdom of Denmark controls the peninsula and a number of islands that surround it. Unlike Sweden and Norway, the Holy Roman Empire exerts great cultural influence on Denmark. The Garou see it as a land made weak by its devotion to Christianity.

Valdemar II had many conquests in the early years of his reign, expanding south into areas claimed by the empire. He also conquered Estonia, where he claimed that a banner fell from the sky and into his hand. Unfortunately, these golden times have passed. Successful rebellions by the German nobles in the conquered territories led to Valdemar II's defeat and capture. Although he was

eventually released, he has not regained his former territory or glory.

Many of the Fenrir want Denmark to undergo a civil war. The current state of the land bodes well for a return to the plunder and mayhem of Viking times. The Fenrir only want to make certain that the influence of the Holy Roman Empire doesn't extend to the forests of Denmark. Many of the islands have strongholds of the Fenrir with hidden caches of fetishes and talens that were taken during Viking raids.

Norway

The Kingdom of Norway was once home to the Vikings, and these fierce warriors were once feared throughout the world for their pillaging and violence. The longboats are now gone. Norway now is part of Christendom and unified under a single king, Haakon Haakonson. The king has brought civilization from the continent to Norway, fostering a time of peace and stability. The Kingdom of Norway resembles the land of the Vikings less with each passing month.

Norway relies heavily on the sea. Bjorgvin (Bergen), the capital, sits on the west coast of Norway, and it serves as a port to the rest of Europe. Oslo sits to the south. In the center of the country, Nidaros (Trondheim) is the center of Christianity. The only cathedral in Norway, the Nidaros Dome, is the final resting place of Olav the Holy who brought Christianity to Norway. Every year, pilgrims trek to Nidaros to honor the man who saved the souls of the Vikings. The Fenrir resent few humans as much as Olav the Holy. Some sept leaders have offered fetishes and other rewards to any packs who can remove the body of this saint. Most Fenrir simply grumble about how a religious zealot can destroy a way of life, and they hope that humans will return to the old, pagan ways.

Even werewolves are not safe in the vast wilderness of Norway. Ancient undead, the *einherjar*, wander the Northern Wastes, seeking nothing but battle, lusting for revenge for the destruction of the Old Ways. Other horrors, such as trolls and even giants are said to live in the great forests.

The Fenrir of Scandinavia take pride in their battles against the monsters of the North. Many of them see their brethren on the continent as complacent and tame. These Northern Fenrir have dedicated themselves to exterminating the undead worshippers of Odin who roam the wilds. About a century ago, a pack of Fenrir achieved a great victory for their totem, defeating an ancient vampire known as the All-High. This victory broke the power of the undead, and now the Garou dominate the northern wilds. The remaining undead are scattered,

wandering alone through the wastes, while packs of Fenrir hunt down the last of the ancient vampires.

Sweden

The Kingdom of Sweden lies to the east of Norway and west of the Baltic, making up the rest of the Scandinavian peninsula. Like Norway, it is a big country with vast stretches of wilderness. The south has fertile lands, and the north is a hostile wasteland filled with chances for warriors to test their mettle.

Only in the last century have the Swedish kings completely converted to Christianity. Uppsala, the site of a great caern and the focus of the war between the Fenrir and the Odin-worshipping vampires of the North, is now a center of Christian worship. Yet some pockets of Swedes still pay homage to the Aesir alongside Christ. Some ancient vampires as well as the Garou promote pagan beliefs among the people, but Christianity is winning the war.

A struggle for power exists in Sweden between the descendants of Sverker the Elder and Erik the Holy. The two major areas of southern Sweden, Gotland and Svealand have taken sides in this conflict. Currently, Canute Holmgerson rules Sweden, but he wields little true power. The German Hanseatic League has usurped the trade in southern Sweden, rendering Swedish merchants impotent. Many other nations see Sweden as weak, including Denmark.

The feudal system has yet to replace all of the old ways in Sweden. Each province has its own governing body or *thing*. Commoners have a number of freedoms, which the feudal system inevitably threatens. Traveling to villages away from the cities is like walking back in time.

The Baltic

The last pagan states of Northern Europe are Livonia and Prussia. Christian knights now force conversions at the point of a sword. They hunt down and kill non-Christians. These foreign invaders also bring a feudal system and force free commoners to become thralls. Even though the werewolves of these lands see conversion as inevitable, many fight against the Christian invasion.

Latvia

The Latvians were a warrior people who worshipped ancient pagan gods. They have lived in their homeland to the south of Finland for thousands of years. Latvia is perfect, however, for merchants and traders, as it is south of Russian ports and across the Baltic from Sweden. The forces of Christianity have decided that Latvia will be a home of merchants.

German forces with papal support founded Riga on the shores of the Daugava River. A knightly order, the Brethren of the Sword, was founded and based in Riga as well. The Brethren of the Sword set about subduing the pagan natives. They destroyed pagan sites and killed many pagans in the name of Christ. The Germans now rule Latvia. German merchants are firmly established. All native Latvians are members of the lower classes.

The Christian knights have defiled caerns and slain many Kinfolk. Red Talons gladly fight against the cross-bearing humans, but their efforts only bring more fervor from the knights. Silver Fangs and Children of Gaia have struggled to protect their Kinfolk in the region, but the efforts have been too little and too late. Still, most Latvians cling to their pagan traditions. As long as the people are not broken, the Garou have something for which to fight. Unfortunately, many werewolves in the region don't care about the plight of humans. Lupus among the Red Talons and the Fenrir are still strong, and they believe that the Garou born of wolves will protect Gaia regardless of human struggles.

Lithuania

Lithuania sits to the south of Latvia, between the empire of the Tartars and Muscovy and Christendom. The people here hold many deep pagan traditions, going back to ancient times. Now, they are the targets of a crusade by the Teutonic Knights. As a matter of politics, the country has been declared Christian, but the faith only goes as far as the lance of a Teutonic Knight.

Many Lithuanians refuse to recognize their Christian king. They fight against the forces of the knights to protect their faith. Massacres of Lithuanians are a seasonal event. The knights take losses of their own, however, and they haven't succeeded in converting the people.

Most werewolves side with these people who have honored the spirits. Lithuania is home to many diverse pagan beliefs. Some people worship a trinity of pagan gods. Others believe in the ancient spirits of the earth. They worship these spirits at an *alka*, a sacred grove for rituals and sacrifices. They believe that truth comes from the natural world and that animals show the will of the spirits.

Prussia

For centuries, the pagan tribes of Prussia have resisted the conquests of the Holy Roman Empire. The Kingdom of Poland has proved unable to break these warriors. Now, the Teutonic Knights have come from the Holy Land to the Baltic to pursue their

crusades against the Prussians. The knights are well financed and have veteran soldiers with excellent arms and equipment. The knights have fought with the Prussians for only a few years, but they've had more success than centuries of other attacks. They slaughter Prussians who resist. The knights also sell Prussians into slavery. The tribes have no champion, no single leader to unite them against this coordinated onslaught. At this point, bloody conversion appears inevitable.

The Iron Wood Sept

This young sept formed around a sacred site where a few Christian knights attempted to slaughter a group of devout Prussian pagans. The knights disrupted a religious ceremony among a grove of ancient trees. As they slaughtered the pagans, each knight watched his sword shatter when it struck one of the trees. Finally, the knights stood unarmed, and the pagans turned upon them, tearing them apart. Tales of the event spread to the Fenrir, and the Garou sent a pack to investigate. The pack opened the caern, awakening the spirits of the grove. Now, the Iron Wood Sept has become a base for Fenrir who wish to strike back against the knightly orders infesting Prussia.

The Russian Principalities

After years of glory, Kiev now barely maintains its grip on the villages surrounding her. Invasions from the east, harbingers of the Golden Horde, have left the Russian principalities in chaos. Eastern Orthodoxy reigns as the religion of choice, but the pagans haven't given up on the land.

Despite confusion in the land as to whether villages should look to Novgorod or Kiev, the Garou have no doubt who rules these lands. Russia is the land of the Silver Fangs, now and forever. Some Fenrir roam the eastern edges of the land, the Red Talons lay claim to a few protectorates, and the Black Furies have established a few septs between the villages, but these other tribes keep their holdings with the blessing of the Silver Fangs.

Septs in Russia tell stories of horrible dragon beasts (incarnations of the Wyrms called Zmei) that dwell out in the wilds of Russia. Ancient vampires live in the cities of Russia, concealing themselves from the Silver Fangs. Now, wolf Kinfolk bring tales to the Fangs about the advancing Golden Horde, but the kings of the Garou have complete confidence in their abilities to deal with any Eastern threat.

Sept of the White Nights

Although most werewolves think of Russia as the land of the Silver Fangs, the Red Talons have a slightly stronger presence in the wilderness. The Sept of the White Nights lies to the far north, beyond the settlements of humans. This was one of the first caerns to receive the prophecies, and as a result, the sept has gained much respect for its wisdom from other Red Talons. The spirit of Helios has strong ties to the sept, some werewolves there spend the long days basking in his glory and the long nights howling for his return.

Byzantine Empire

The recent sack of Constantinople has the Byzantine Empire in chaos. Refugees have fled into the surrounding lands. Fear fills the hearts of the faithful. The Wyrms slithers into open hearts of broken men and women.

For ages, Constantinople was the greatest of all cities. Like Rome in its glory days, all roads in the east led to Constantinople. It was the heart of the Byzantine Empire and the center of the Eastern Orthodox faith. Now, it has fallen to the sword and torch of crusaders, and thousands of residents have died. If Constantinople can fall, what can anyone believe in? The city of God is no more.

The entire event reeks of manipulation by Leeches. The carnage and chaos left in the wake of Constantinople's fall only benefits the Wyrms. Banes swirl through the land, feasting on the despair and suffering. Pieces of the Byzantine Empire teeter on the edge of revolution. Bulgaria has already chosen to liberate itself from the empire.

The Garou see the fall of Constantinople as the first of the 10 prophecies coming true. Many packs have come to the Byzantine Empire to investigate, even this many years after the event. The Black Furies embrace the possible freedom of Greece, and the opportunity for the rebirth of paganism. The Red Talons hope that this event marks the end of human civilization. Even though Constantinople fell almost a generation ago, many Red Talon septs still celebrate the fall of the city.

Greece

The Greek peninsula is the protectorate of the Black Furies. The ancient myths of humans hide the truths of the werewolves. Many powerful caerns still stand in Greece, despite Macedonian and Roman invaders. Other tribes of werewolves rarely venture into Greece for fear of angering the Furies. The homeland of the Black Furies offers little safety

for servants of the Wyrms, either on the peninsula or the islands.

Sept of Bygone Visions

The island of Ecube, called Miria by the Black Furies, holds a powerful caern. Protected by the Sept of Bygone Visions, only females may visit the island. Many say that the island brings visions to those who visit, but in truth, the caern is home to a Wyld glen, where the energies of the Wyld flow freely into the world. Attempts to take the island by other tribes have left the invaders with only failure and death. Since the prophecies from the Red Talons, many Black Furies have undertaken pilgrimages to the Sept of Bygone Visions. They hope that the caern will give them an understanding of the events to come.

North Africa

With no native wolf population and the strong Islamic beliefs of the Almohad Empire, North Africa has little to offer the Garou. Powerful ancient Leeches, apparently of a different sort from those of Europe, dwell here. The Warders come to Marrakech as merchants, hoping to establish a foothold in the human population, but so far, they have had little success. The Silent Striders have human Kinfolk here, and they occasionally venture into the mysterious land of Egypt. Children of Gaia live among the humans of the Almohad Empire as well, but they are few in number, primarily refugees from Iberia.

The Islamic culture doesn't share the European legends of werewolves. To Muslims, the Garou are demons, evil spirits intent on harming the faithful. To the horror of werewolves in the Almohad Empire, the Muslims have warriors with faith every bit as dangerous as the knightly orders of Europe.

The Crusades and the Holy Land

For centuries, nobles have set forth from Europe to reclaim the Holy Lands from the infidels. The Crusades have been hard fought, and Jerusalem and the port city of Acre have changed hands recently. The grip of the crusaders on the Holy Land is tenuous. The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem stands besieged on all sides.

Three tribes of Garou have taken on major roles in the Crusades. The Silent Striders have carefully watched the battles and cautiously intervened to keep both sides from awakening dark spirits buried beneath the ancient land. The Striders have Kinfolk among the Muslim defenders. They see the invaders recklessly attacking and destroying ancient structures, many of which have mystical significance.

They also fear that the Muslims will rend the Veil and discover the werewolves in their midst. If so, the Silent Striders worry that the Garou will face more foes with mystical abilities and True Faith. The fanatical zeal possessed by knightly orders disturbs the Silent Striders as well. Many leaders of the tribes believe that the undead and other dark powers have influenced this perpetual war.

The Children of Gaia wish to put an end to the mindless violence. Tribe members know that the seeds of hate sown by the Crusades will have repercussions for hundreds of years. They do not care whether the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem endures or if the last crusader is swept back into the Mediterranean, as long as the split between these religions heals. Many Children have to control their Rage as they watch the sides with such similar beliefs, supposedly worshipping the same God, cut each other to ribbons.

The Warders have watched over the cities for ages. They have come with many of the crusaders from Italy. They've helped to build the new castles and fortifications of the Crusades. The Warders worry about the forces on both sides. Too many fanatical warriors fight in both armies, and if they only knew about werewolves, a terrible force of hunters could come from the Holy Land.

Although those three tribes have the greatest presence in the Holy Land, other tribes have representatives as well. The Black Furies have sent packs to look after the suffering women of the land. The Fenrir have come with the Germanic knights to establish caerns. Young Silver Fangs have followed nobility as well to find glory in the Crusades. Most werewolves, who come wishing to use their abilities in the glorious Crusades, discover the true horror of these wars. Many are considered demon-possessed, and the Knights Templar have ways of dealing even with Garou. In addition, stories abound among the Garou of ancient undead from the time before the Great Flood sleeping in the land. Some believe that demons roam the battlefields of the Crusades looking for souls to steal from both sides. The Silent Striders claim that powerful immortals, avatars of the ancient Egyptian gods, protect both sides from supernatural interference.

The fall of Constantinople has affected the Garou in the Holy Lands as well. Rumors have spread among the werewolves that the prophecies all involve the Crusades. After all, crusaders sacked Constantinople.

The Garou have concerns that the constant fighting in this land of faith might awaken something from the dawn of time. Other werewolves believe that the land hides secrets that will enable the Garou to defy the prophecies. A few new packs have come from Europe to investigate the events in the Holy Land and interpret what the prophecies mean for the Crusades. In all, the prophecies have just added confusion to a messy environment.

The werewolves who have gone to the Holy Land find themselves out of their element. Like the men of both sides mired in the conflicts, events far beyond the control of the Garou sweep them along. The leaders of both sides seem to have protections against any type of supernatural forces. It is a dark time that has seen successes and failures for both sides in the conflict.

The Umbra

The world of the werewolves goes far beyond any path traveled by wolves or vistas seen by humans. The Garou tread not only the paths of the earthly forests, but the home of the spirits and the gods, which they call the Umbra. A thin layer called the Gauntlet separates the Umbra from the Realm. Most werewolves believe that the Gauntlet is a creation of the Weaver, a web that separates the physical from the spiritual.

The closest part of the Umbra is the Penumbra. This layer of the Umbra reflects everything on Earth. Places and creatures all have an Umbral counterpart, a spiritual side to them. Places with vibrant spirits appear to be vibrant in the Umbra. Places without spirit or life appear cold, dead and dying. The Penumbra reflects the true nature of things. Decay and disease can't be hidden in the Penumbra. The undead appear as black glowing swirls. Places of True Faith are bright lights, beacons in the spirit world. Most werewolves see places of Christian faith as a searing bright light, while sites of pagan faith have a comforting soft glow like moonlight.

Most of the Umbra contains the homes of spirits. Moon paths guide the Garou through dark mists to these places. Each tribe has a home, or realm, in the Umbra. Some places hold a great deal of spiritual energy. These places are known as great realms or true realms, with names such as the Abyss and Wolfhome (see Chapter Five for more information).



Hides-in-Bright-Sun waited, almost motionless, for the riders to pass.

His pack was on the other side of the sept guarding the bawn, for it was on that side that most humans encroached. Hides knew, however, that this tiny game trail sometimes led humans dangerously close to the unguarded shrine to the Glade Child that dwelled in the sept. He would sooner be skinned and worn than see a human defile that shrine.

He knew that these humans were called "bandits." He could smell other humans' blood on them, as well as the sickening scent of a human female's musk on one of them. He nearly retched at the thought of these beings mating. Some of his tribe likened them to rabbits, because they bred so fast, or rats, because they ate so much. Hides-in-Bright-Sun disagreed. Rats and rabbits were both good prey. Humans were more like hornets — once you upset one of their nests, all you could do was run or be stung.

The bandits stopped and congratulated each other on their work. They had hurt and robbed another group of humans, and although Hides understood only snatches of their language, he knew that they had killed some of humans that they had robbed. Hides paused, crouching low behind a tree. He had been planning to spring upon them and bring their heads back to the sept to prove to his pack that all sides of the bawn needed to be guarded, but now he wondered. Should he leave these humans alive to prey on others?

They dismounted, and Hides saw that they were not going anywhere, so he reached back through the howls of other times and asked the question of his ancestor, Teeth-Split-Bone. *Great alpha, these humans kill their own. Shall I let them go?*

The mighty Full Moon answered, and Hides-in-Bright-Sun was humbled as always by the power the spirit's voice commanded. *No, cub. They kill their own, yes, but what if someone offered them money for your hide?*

Hides understood immediately. He crouched low and leapt, changing to the war-form only seconds before landing on the biggest of them. He tore the man's head from his shoulders, then sank his teeth into the next one's throat. The last one cowered from the Red Talon's massive form but drew his weapon and slashed at Hides' arm, drawing blood. The young Ragabash yelped in pain and backed off instinctively. He had been struck by swords before, but unlike his pack's Philodox, he could not easily shut out the pain it caused.

The bandit leapt onto his horse and spurred the beast on. His pride stung more than his shoulder; Hides reached out to the animal's mind, freeing it from years of training and enslavement by humanity. It bucked, throwing its rider into a tree. He landed in a heap of broken bones and lay there moaning until Hides-in-Bright-Sun reached him. The horse that had thrown him fled, but the others were still tethered, and they screamed in panic. Hides rubbed his shoulder, already healing, and stepped away from the bandit's corpse toward the horses.

It is hard to be a No Moon where humans are concerned, he reflected as he hurried back toward the sept, carrying the bandit's heads. The human-mind plays tricks, tries to make me change things. But humans do not change — and thus neither can the Red Talons.



CHAPTER TWO: THE GAROU

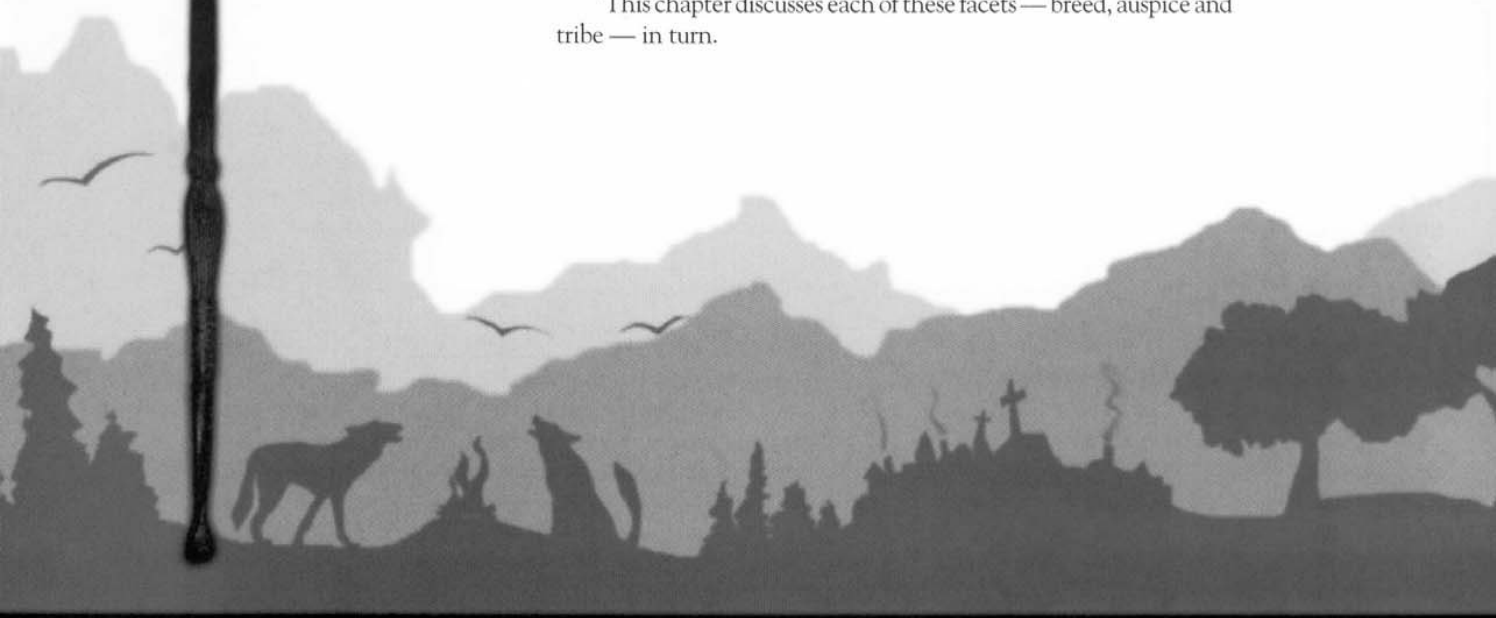

These warriors were of valiant temper, young and stalwart, of splendid bodily presence, renowned for victories over giants, full of trophies of conquered nations, and wealthy with spoil.

—Saxo Grammaticus,

The Nine Books of the Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus

The Garou of Europe divide themselves in a number of ways. A werewolf's breed indicates his lineage, be it of man, wolf or werewolf. His auspice dictates his profession with the Garou Nation — no matter how much a werewolf born beneath the full moon wishes to speak with spirits, his talents will always lie in battle and leadership. Finally, nearly every werewolf belongs to one of 10 tribes, extended families and cultures that give him identity and heritage.

This chapter discusses each of these facets — breed, auspice and tribe — in turn.



Breeds

Werewolves are born, not made. No method exists for changing a normal human or wolf into a werewolf. Only the cursed metis know of their status as Garou from birth, however. Most werewolves are born as normal-looking humans or wolves.

These breeds are matrilineal. A child conceived by a Garou male and a wolf bitch is born a lupus; a child born from a human woman is considered a homid, and a child produced from the forbidden union of Garou and Garou is a metis.

The werewolf's breed determines such things as her outlook on life, her development and which spirits watch over her (and, therefore, some of the Gifts she is eligible to learn). The breed form is the werewolf's natural form, the form in which she feels most comfortable.

h o m i d

A "homid" Garou is one born of a human mother and raised by human parents. Her parents might have been Kinfolk, and the blood might have simply bred true after generations of dormancy, or she might have been born of a night of illicit passion with a stranger from the woods.

In 1230, the homid breed is becoming more common, and the balance between man and wolf is failing. Werewolves of the homid breed share some of humanity's essential separation from the Wyld and from Gaia, and their lupus brethren regard them with some contempt.

The homid werewolves, however, are familiar with human society. Although they are physically weaker than lupus or metis Garou, they are more versatile, and homid characters can start the game with any Ability. They can also handle silver in their human form without any penalty.

Natural Form: Homid

Beginning Gifts: Master of Fire, Persuasion, Smell of Man

Initial Gnosis: 1

M e t i s

The first law of the Litany states that *Garou shall not mate with Garou*. Occasionally, however, two werewolves break this sacred law and produce a metis cub. Even more occasionally, this abomination against Gaia's natural law is permitted to survive. Metis are sterile and deformed, and they reflect badly on any sept that fosters one. Those who do grow to adulthood, however, have the benefit of being raised within Garou society, so they know more about it than any other werewolf.

Being metis means a lifetime of pain and abuse. Even the Children of Gaia, who treat their metis better than any other tribe, still view them as walking violations of the Litany. Under normal circumstances, the best that a metis can hope for is the chance to die in honorable combat with the Wyrms (and the pragmatic septs are only too happy to send metis into combat as shock troops or distractions). Metis do have some

advantages, however, apart from their intimate knowledge of werewolf society. Their natural form is Crinos, and they learn the Gifts of their form and tribe from birth. They are equally adept at human logic and animal instinct. Metis characters may choose any set of Abilities, and their First Change is rarely traumatic. In fact, the First Change happens early in life for most metis, under the watchful eyes of the sept elders. Regardless of what deeds a metis performs, though, she will always be metis, and the best she can hope for as eulogy is for others to mutter, "She did well, *for a metis*."

Natural Form: Crinos

Beginning Gifts: Create Element, Sense Wyrms, Shed

Beginning Gnosis: 3

Deformity: The Metis character must choose at least one deformity.

- **Cleft Lip:** You have a malformed upper lip, which appears as either a small, inverted U-shaped gap in your mouth or a raised scar where the two parts were joined together. Either way, the deformity detracts from the functions of your mouth, leading to a slight speech impediment. This detracts from attempts at singing, oratory and seduction. Add an extra two to the difficulty in performing these actions.

- **Hairless:** In human form, you are bald, pale and somehow "wrong" looking. In wolf form, however, you are a hideous pink-skinned hairless freak. If you have hair at all, it is patchy and mangy. In Crinos form, you are a monstrous, revolting mass of thin skin and randomly sprouting hair. You are prone to painful sunburn, and your difficulty to soak any environmental damage (such as extreme cold or heat) increases by one. Plus, your Appearance is always considered to be zero when dealing with other Garou.

- **Human Face:** When you take a Lupus or Crinos form, your human face does not change. You are left with your out-of-proportion human face staring out at the world. You do not receive the Perception bonuses associated with shapeshifting. Other Garou, even your packmates, are always uncomfortable around you.

- **Hunchback:** Your back is so hideously bent that you cannot walk straight. The difficulties for all Dexterity (except those associated with fine motor control) and Social rolls increase by one. You appear normal in wolf form, but the change is incredibly painful.

- **Madness:** Your deformity is psychological, not physical. You are twisted inside and suffer from some form of madness. Use the listings in **Dark Ages: Vampire** pp. 261-263.

- **Malformed Limbs:** One or more of your limbs are gnarled, withered and useless. You might have arms with only one or two fingers, or a normal arm that has no strength. Add two to the difficulties of all Dexterity rolls, and reduce movement speed by half in wolf form. In some situations, the Storyteller might choose to add two to the difficulties of rolls involving Strength. You are strong, but you cannot apply that strength properly.

- **Malformed Tail:** You either have an ugly ratty tail, or no tail at all. This deformity does not express itself in Homid form, but your lower back causes you endless pain, and you



have problems balancing. Add one to the difficulties of Social rolls when in Glabro, Crinos or Lupus forms, and one to Dexterity-based difficulties in all forms.

- **Musk:** Your body betrays you — you stink. The smell might take the form of constant arousal, a sweat-stench of fear or some other offensive body odor. In any case, the difficulties of all Social rolls increase by one when dealing with humans, or by two when confronting animals or Fera.

- **No Claws:** You have no claws (or perhaps no teeth, or both) in any form. You cannot inflict aggravated hand damage. If you have no teeth, you drool constantly in human form and you have a speech impediment, which adds one to the difficulties of all Social rolls. If you have no claws, the tops of your fingers are ugly, twisted stumps in human form.

- **Oversized Limbs:** Your limbs are out of proportion to the rest of your body. Your arms hang to your knees, or perhaps your legs resemble tree trunks. You move awkwardly, and your balance is affected. The difficulty of both Social and Dexterity rolls increases by one.

Lupus

Once the most common breed, the numbers of these children of wolf or lupus Garou mothers are slowly failing. Lupus characters are born and raised as wolves away from human civilization. They do not understand humans; indeed, most fear them. Human hunters set traps for their kin and kill wolves with little provocation.

Lupus can not understand human speech or comprehend human manners without practice and training. They cannot start

the game with certain Abilities (as listed). They have a strong natural form, however, as well as powerful sensual awareness. While lupus are capable of using logic and the higher mental functions of humans, they choose to trust instinct most often.

Natural Form: Lupus

Beginning Gifts: Hare's Leap, Heightened Senses, Ley Lines

Beginning Gnosis: 5

Restricted Abilities: You cannot purchase the following Abilities if you are creating a lupus character, except by spending bonus points.

Skills: Etiquette

Knowledges: Law, Linguistics, Medicine, Politics, Science

Auspices

The Garou are bound to the moon. Luna's pull influences a Garou cub from birth. The Garou Nation recognizes five auspices, representing five archetypal roles of Gaia's defenders.

Auspice defines character; it defines what strength and weaknesses the Garou has, as well as what spirits watch over her. Auspice defines a character in terms of who she is, what she does and how her contemporaries esteem her. Auspice also defines one's place in Garou society. When the Rite of Passage is completed, an elder of the cub's auspice takes her

under his wing to train her in the duties, responsibilities and Gifts of her auspice.

Some Garou feel that Luna has erred and that their auspice is misplaced. These Garou can reject their auspice and choose another, but many Garou see such an act as a blasphemous insult to Gaia and an omen of evil to come. Anyone who renounces his auspice can undergo the Rite of Renunciation (see p. 145), which is a torturous stripping away of spirit and identity. Some Garou, who feel that they have failed in their auspice role will undergo this rite as penance. The newly marked Garou starts again at the rank of cliath, and retains none of his accumulated Glory. He does retain his Rage and Gifts, though. The apostate is never fully trusted by Garou society again. Many leave Garou society to fight and die as Errants.

Ragabash, the New Moon

The dark of the moon breeds monsters and tricksters. Myth speaks of devilish figures of the night — Old Nick, the Pooka, the Erl Konig, Loki — who bring wisdom and danger. Born under a new moon, the Ragabash bring wisdom, trickery, insight and danger to the Garou Nation. Every king needs a fool to sneer at his faults and draw laughter at his foolishness. The king must stay silent and bear this humiliation. If he does, he is a better king; if he does not, he is weak. Yet even still, the king remains a king, and the fool remains a fool. That is the role and the fate of those born under the new moon. They make jokes and provoke cynical laughter against the flaws in their superiors, and the Garou Nation emerges stronger for it. Ragabash, true to form, do not always accept the role of the fool or jester, however. Some no-moons rise to become great leaders among the Garou, whether by ruling a sept or simply inspiring an entire generation.

By undermining authority, the Ragabash reveals that the emperor has no clothes. By undermining tradition, the Ragabash constantly questions every facet of the life of the werewolves. The Ragabash teaches the leader humility and strips young warriors of overconfidence. In the end, though, the Wyrms must be fought, and the greatest must lead the weaker, so the Ragabash is frequently the weakest part of Garou society. Their pranks are tolerated to a point, but the Litany is still the law, and the elders may not be unduly questioned. And worse, the Garou are not known for their sense of humor. Ragabash must learn to watch their backs.

Initial Rage: 1

Beginning Gifts: Blur of the Milky Eye, Scent of Running Water, Snow Running

Stereotype: The Ragabash are clowns; accepted, but not respected. Other Garou know not to take a Ragabash at his word, and even when seriousness is called for, other Garou will not heed the Ragabash. Jesters born under the waxing moon seem to be born to a sense of gentle comedy and verbal wit, whereas the waning-moon jesters seem born with a cynical sneer on their lips and a sharp tongue. Some Ragabash

indulge in practical jokes, others imitate human jesters, and still others perform near perfect imitations of their targets. But as they age, the Ragabash grow somber and enigmatic. As they age, Ragabash seem to draw close to the dark side of the moon that spawned them.

Quote: I know what the Litany says. I also remember the time that both of these noble Garou fought bravely on the night that the Pestifer swarmed out of the Umbra. Does one night of passion remove the glory of that battle? If so, why did they fight to begin with?

Theurge, the Crescent Moon

The sharp curve of the crescent moon shines on this world and the Otherworld of the Umbra. Garou born under this fickle light are attuned to the spirit world and the lands beyond. These Garou are born to insight into the ways of the spirits, the ways of magic and the ways of other creatures beyond the lands of the Garou.

The Theurges are the tribe's medicine men and shamans. They undertake voyages deep into the spirit world, finding insight, prophecy and secrets that few other Garou could understand, and fewer still wish to hear. Few other Garou can follow them on these quests. The Theurges stand alone, aloof from Garou society, isolated by their auspice and their knowledge.

The Theurge communes with tribal spirits and caern totems. The Theurges are the healers of the sept and the spies who use spirits to watch their enemies from afar. The Theurges use their magics to create the fetishes that the other Garou carry into battle, and when battle is joined, it is the Theurge who calls down the power of the moon against the forces of the Wyrms.

Initial Rage: 2

Beginning Gifts: Mother's Touch, Sense Wyrms, Spirit Speech

Stereotypes: The Theurge is marked by the moon, and by the spirits, be they ghosts of the dead or the animistic spirits of the land. Many walk paths and make deal with powers that no other Garou would dare countenance; some journey roads that no Garou should, and many never come back. The Theurge's powers are valued, but her ways cause suspicion and fear. A Theurge born under the waxing moon often specializes in healing her fellow werewolves and in ferreting out corruption, whereas a waning Theurge binds spirits to her will and investigates the darkest parts of the Umbra.

Quote: The spirits are far from silent. They speak of laws broken, vows exchanged, hot passion and, just possibly, of destiny for the cub.

Philodox, the Half Moon

The half moon is a moon of balance, between light and darkness, between complete and unformed. The half moon represents the balance of the werewolves, between human and wolf, flesh and spirit and between instinct and reason. The Philodox, the child born under that moon, represents that balance, and there-

fore stands among the judges, peacemakers and leaders of the Garou Nation. The Philodox is a pack mediator and arbiter of disputes. The Philodox are trusted to bring balance, insight and common sense to the passionate arguments and conflicts between the Garou.

Many great leaders are Half Moons. Though the Ragabash sneers and the Ahroun rages, the Philodox brings balance and demands responsibility. There is a time, the Philodox knows, for everything under Gaia wills, and all must happen in its own place and time. Therefore, the Philodox knows when to make war and when to sue for peace. The Half Moon also knows when to delegate, and it is often the Half Moon who appoints war leaders, Masters of the Challenge and other important functions of the sept.

Among both lupus and homids, the Philodox stands out for her desire to experience all aspects of werewolf life, running as a wolf, learning the ways of man, walking the world of earth and traveling the world of spirit.

Initial Rage: 3

Beginning Gifts: Resist Pain, Scent of the True Form, Truth of Gaia

Stereotype: The Philodox is expected to be honorable, trustworthy, respectable and unbiased. Obviously, such platitudes are difficult to measure up to in real life. Philodox are expected to put personal biases and loyalties aside for the greater good — but such selflessness is hard to come by. Some see this lack of bias as a betrayal, others always suspect that some bias exists somewhere. Only the greatest Philodox have ever fully resolved all these issues. Waxing Philodox are fair and impartial judges, willing to compromise when necessary and hold fast when possible. Waning-moon judges are obsessive and tightly regimented, and brook no lip from anyone once they reach a decision.

Quote: *The Litany is quite clear on the matter. Both "lovers" must be put to death. That's the way we've always done things here.*

Galliard, the Gibbous Moon

The gibbous moon is almost full, and it shines a bright light on the earth below, but a little part of it yet remains hidden. The Garou born under this moon are entranced by that darkness, and they drink in the bright light of the moon's favor. These Garou are the storytellers and inspiration of the Garou Nation, bright in the moon's rage and dark in passion and song.

The Moon Dancers are the singers, entertainers and lore keepers of the Garou Nation. The Galliard raises her voice in song or poetry or story to ward off the shadows of the night and to gladden the weary hearts of all around. The Galliard howls in rage as she screams her defiance against the Wyrms. The Moon Dancers are the soul of the Garou Nation. They are the beating, living heart of their packs and the ones who will tell the story of the pack's heroes before Gaia at the end of all things.

The Galliards' songs and war chants echo across the battlefield, and the Wyrms know to fear their enemy. All rely on inspiration, all live in the moment and in passion. They can be seductive and wild and alive or quiet and mournful and grim, but they are never staid, and they never fear.

Initial Rage: 4

Beginning Gifts: Beast Speech, Call of the Wyld, Waking Dream

Stereotype: The Galliards are expected to be wild, passionate, true-blooded Garou. They are expected to be fearsome warriors and inspiring entertainers. This constant expectation could wear a lesser character down, but the Galliards have a surfeit of Rage, and that anger and passion drives them on. Those Galliards who are born under the waxing moon are born to sing, record stories and entertain. Those born under the waning moon are enamored of darkness and violence.

Quote: *I guess no one remembers the story that the visiting Garou from the Red Hills Sept told us four moons back, about the metis cub who was seduced by the Wyrms and gave away all of his sept's secrets. Do we want to risk that?*

Ahroun, the Full Moon

The full moon is Luna revealed in beauty and rage. Her light shines down out of the night sky, illuminating all below and revealing the hiding places of the black, obscene things of the Wyrms. The moon sees these things squatting in the shadows, and she demands that they be purged from her sight. The full moon is Luna at the height of her rage, her lust and her passion, and the Ahroun Garou are born to that passion for violence, death and true Rage.

The Ahroun are the warriors, the leaders and the enforcers of the Garou Nation. The Ahroun is the monster of the wild, hunting down the wicked and feasting on their entrails. The young Ahroun lives for blood, death and adventure; Garou and minions of the Wyrms alike have nightmares of the Full Moons.

Many Ahroun live fast, seek glory, gain fame and die young on some forgotten battlefield. That is what Luna expects of them. But as they age, surviving Ahroun often see themselves as guardians of life, rather than takers. These old warriors make fine generals and wise councilors. They plan strategies that will maximize an enemy's loss while minimizing friendly casualties. They watch over the forlorn, the lost and the helpless, and many see their duty as guiding the young so that they can live beyond their prime. These old warriors do not grow soft, though. They are demanding taskmasters who remain a terrible threat in battle. Yet pain brings wisdom, and Ahroun find a lot of pain in their lives.

Initial Rage: 5

Beginning Gifts: Falling Touch, Inspiration, Razor Claws

Stereotype: The Ahroun is all that is violent, unstoppable and valiant in the Garou Nation. Yet the Spirit Warrior is also all that is foolish, impetuous,

vicious and destructive among the werewolves. Those born to feudal humans see their roll as being akin to those who war in European society — the defenders of those weaker than they — but they also demand fealty and tribute in return. Others start to see themselves as the big brother of the pack. The Philodox solves the problems of the mind, and the Theurge puzzles out strange riddles, but the Ahroun must defend them. Ahroun who survive into late adulthood are usually wise, tempered and calm, but that violence is never far from the surface. The older Ahroun merely find ways to channel that energy to better use. Ahroun born under the waxing moon are leaders, inspiring their packs and septs. Waning-moon Ahroun are vicious, savage killers, and woe betide a pack with such an alpha.

Quote: *No matter what they have done in the past, they lost their honor when they conceived this bastard. Tonight, we shall perform the Hunt, that they may die with a bit of honor.*

The Ten Tribes

In **Dark Ages: Werewolf**, 10 tribes of Garou stalk the wilds under the night skies. Hailing from all the corners of Europe, these tribes set their finest warriors, shamans, bards, judges and tricksters to the task of protecting Gaia. These tribes all have different traditions, outlooks and practices, but many Garou run in packs with werewolves from other tribes. Thus they stand united despite their tribal differences.

But some Garou do not run with their tribe or their pack. Some are cast out for transgressing against the Litany. Some deliberately seek out solitude as a form of grief or solace. Others have different reasons all together. What is common to all these Garou, however, is the fact that they are not recognized by werewolf society. Either of their own volition or as castigation, they have been subject to the Rite of Renunciation and therefore been excommunicated by their tribe. They are known as Errants, and their path is a lonely one. An Errant can expect no mercy, no aid, no understanding. These pariahs are not even acknowledged, let alone spoken to, by other Garou.

Legends among the Garou hold that once there were more than 10 tribes. Songs of the past tell many glorious stories of sturdy Pict warriors known as the White Howlers. Sadly, this tribe, under the totem Lion, fell to the Wyrms. From these savage warriors, it is said, a new, dark tribe is emerging to wage an underground war on the rest of the Garou. They call themselves the Black Spiral Dancers, and they burrow deep underground and strike where they are least expected. Others scoff at these dread tales, dismissing the Dancers as more of a cult of lost cubs and vengeful Errants. Nonetheless, all agree that a dark threat thrives underneath the lands of Europe and is constantly growing.

The world is still a place of mysteries. At sea, damp mists obfuscate the horizon that is thought to be the Edge of the World. It is deemed too dangerous to approach, and it discourages sailors to venture outside conventional

routes. At land, travelers fear the Moors and Nubians in the south and the Arabs to the east, who seem to almost jealously guard whatever secrets lie beyond their borders. The wastes that stretch out almost infinitely past those lands and the foaming, angry seas outside the safe waters of Europe's ports could possibly hide foreign tribes of Garou. Travelers from far-away lands speak of rumors of these tribes with foundations in ancient tales. If such alien tribes should prove friends or foes to the Ten Tribes is impossible to say, for none can attest to having met one of these fabled werewolves. Yet the legends speak of them as guardians of strange places yet to be seen by the eyes of men. Some say that they were once part of the Garou Nation and that they traveled all the way through the lands of Russia for some reason to unknown realms beyond, but few believe this to be true. If such is the case, though, why would they not bring word to their western cousins? A few Red Talons growl silent tales of Umbral encounters with alien Garou from across the sea, and some among the Fenrir claim that their ancestors sailed to those foreign shores in the west and traded stories with the Garou of those lands. Few believe these accounts. There is nothing beyond the Great Sea.

Then there are tales of a mysterious and strange tribe unlike any other in the lands of the East. A precious few among those who run with the Mongol hordes tell tales of warrior wolf-men, and what else can these be but Garou? Silent Striders venturing far into the dark Eastern lands claim to have heard these tales of how they nestle high in the mountains like birds on a branch. What are their goals? Who are they? The Garou of the Ten Tribes do not know.

Descriptions of the Ten Tribes follow. They all adhere to the same format:

Prophecy: The Prophecy of Shadow that corresponds to the tribe. Note that as word of these visions has traveled, the wording occasionally does as well, so a tribe member might not have heard the prophecy exactly as it appears here.

Overview: A brief description of the tribe's mythology, history, outlook and current affairs.

Appearance: What a pure-bred member of the tribe might look like.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: The areas of Europe that the tribe frequents and notes about their chosen Kinfolk.

Character Creation: Suggestions (and suggestions *only*) for creating a character of the tribe.

Tribal Totem: The spirit that the tribe reveres.

Beginning Gifts: The three Gifts from which the player chooses for a beginning character of that tribe.

Background Restrictions: Any restrictions on which Backgrounds a member of the tribe may possess. These Backgrounds may not be purchased at character creation, not even with freebie points. A character may benefit from a Background pool including a Background that his tribe could not normally possess.

Quote: A brief word from a member of that tribe.

BLACK FURIES

I saw a dying mother birth her child in lands that wept black tears. Maiden, Mother and Crone all stood by and watched the mother die at the hands of a great frozen darkness — their choice echoed in the hallways as hollow footsteps on marble. When the blood on the floor dried, the death-play ended, leaving only children and their sisters to pick up the bones and ligaments and weave them back together again into a semblance of life. The lady of bone and sinew deserted the Furies then, leaving them to shift their faces, one to another. All must change before the great night falls.

The Black Furies are fierce defenders of the Wyld and vengeful protectors of women everywhere. According to legend, Luna herself walked Ancient Greece as the goddess Artemis the Huntress. She gathered together the Black Furies, a cult of warrior women and appointed them the protectors of the Wyld. According to other legends, Gaia herself formed the Furies. They are all female so that each one might know the value of the lives she bears.

The Furies have an unusual view of the Triat. Instead of the Triat, they speak of the Triptych — the triple goddess — Maiden, Mother and Crone. The Maiden, also known as Moirai Clotho and the Wyld, spins threads into the possibility of life. Lachesis, the Mother or Weaver, is also known as the Namer. Her job is to put limits on the Wyld's possibilities. Atropos, the Crone, or Wyrn, cuts the threads of life.

Furies live by few laws. They speak their minds as they please and are largely encouraged to do so. This practice results in clashes and differences of opinion,

particularly with other tribes, but it also keeps the truth out in the open. It has, however, given the Furies a bit of a reputation for being belligerent and argumentative.

The Furies protect women wherever they are victimized. They take in female cubs from other tribes, ones who have been mistreated by their brothers and fathers. They sometimes allow human women who have escaped desperate lives to live with Fury Kinfolk. They have little respect, however, for women who refuse to take the freedom that is offered to them. While their totem, Pegasus, requires her followers to aid helpless women wherever they can be found, even Pegasus has no desire to help those who will not help themselves.

The most inviolate law of the Black Furies is that of the tribe's gender. Throughout history, many Black Furies have ceremonially sacrificed male children in order to preserve the tribe as it is. A growing number of Furies, however, argue that this practice is wasteful and foolish. A small faction of the tribe has already made arrangements with some Children of Gaia and Silent Striders to have their male cubs adopted into

OUTLOOKS

Catherine Web-Breaker, Black Fury Theurge, shares her mother's wisdom:

Bone Gnawers: Ugly as sin and twice as dirty, but if you need to enter a city you won't find better help.

Children of Gaia: The Children have raised two of my children, strong sons who have made great names for themselves. It takes courage and strength to raise other people's children, no matter what the other tribes say.

Fenrir: Most Fenrir are egotistical, brutal dogs with little to redeem them. I doubt it will be long before their men sink to level of the Black Spiral Dancers.

Fianna: Many Furies respect the Fianna for their passion and skill. I think they're arrogant but ultimately harmless, which at least makes them better than the Fenrir.

Red Talons: Their hatred could lead them to the Black Spiral someday. But the Prophecies of Shadows give me pause. Why weren't those visions given to us?

Shadow Lords: These dark ones walk a fine line between consummate information-gatherers and traitorous bastards. They're too helpful to ignore, but watch your back when you speak with them.

Silent Striders: Perfect traveling companions, entertaining storytellers, messengers beyond compare and close allies. Never turn a Strider away from your caern.

Silver Fangs: You'll find true heroes among the Silver Fangs — shining, honorable, and brave. Or so most of the other tribes say! If you have to deal with the Fangs at all, deal with their women. It takes all my strength not to scrape the smug grins off of the faces of their men.

Warders: The Warders of Men set my teeth on edge. Maybe it's just the name, though.

those tribes. Doing so spreads the blood of the tribe further and prevents needless killing. Sometimes the Furies keep track of these adopted males, watching to see if they sire females with strong Fury blood who might be convinced to return to the tribe. Metis are the only exception to the rule of gender. Many Furies believe that it sets poor precedent to hold a child responsible for his parents' sins, so they allow metis to live. Foisting a metis off on another tribe would, however, be shirking responsibility for the sin that started the problem in the first place. Therefore, metis are allowed to stay, whether or not they are male (though they are rarely given the opportunity to undergo a Rite of Passage and thus truly join the tribe). They are rarely seen by other tribes, however, and so the ideal of an all-female tribe is outwardly maintained.

The Furies give their lives to protect Wyld places, and their septs are some of the most beautiful, remote places on earth. The tribe claims Greece as its homeland, but it has spread outward. It is proactive in acquiring new caerns as the tribe sees the opportunity and the need, moving in to safeguard unprotected places of power wherever possible.

The tribe keeps quite a few treasures and fetishes at these septs, believing them fit only for members of their own tribe. When these treasures fall into the wrong hands, Furies retrieve them with all necessary force. Such actions have led to some of the more vicious stories of Fury warriors.

Despite the gender issues that influence many of the tribe's activities, attitudes toward men in general are seen as a personal thing. Some tribe members hate all men, as the popular conception of the Furies would have it. Others have no problems with men at all — they simply honor their tribe's ways. Various Furies run with members of other tribes, and some carry out deep and soulful relationships with either men or other women. Individual Black Furies are allowed to ally themselves and carry on relationships as they choose, though tribal elders do sometimes try to influence these choices.

The elders have recently urged particular caution in dealing with

other tribes. No one really knows how the Flaying Plague spreads, how to deal with it or how it might (or might not) connect to prophecy. The Outer and Inner Calyxes, the high councils of the tribe, have both issued warnings about dealing with outsiders in this difficult time. Many Furies regroup at the tribe's septs, collecting resources and preparing as though for a siege.

Appearance: The Black Furies are primarily found in Greece and the surrounding countries, and they reflect the typical physical appearance of these areas. Their fur is unusually dark, often with white, gray or silver highlights. The Furies sometimes recruit mistreated women from other tribes as well, resulting in a scattering of Furies who have appearances that are typical of other tribes.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: The Furies are highly protective of their female Kinfolk. They also value their numerous male Kinfolk, as these men are essential to the tribe's survival. Kinfolk, particularly males, are not allowed on sept grounds. Fury Kinfolk might be directed to cultivate influence in the mortal world, and a few Furies treat Kinfolk as little more than breeding stock. It is not unusual, however, for individual Furies to develop deep and lasting ties with particular Kinfolk.

The Furies are reclusive, keeping to Wyld places as much as possible in order to protect sacred lands from Wym and Weaver alike. Sacred groves and holy islands make up most of the Fury septs, and the tribe protects them fiercely. Greece is the traditional homeland of the Furies, but they have spread outward in order to protect other Wyld places.

Character Creation: The Furies are flexible, and although physical Attributes are most often primary, anything goes. While Furies respect mental prowess and knowledge as well as battle skills, each Fury is expected to be able to take care of herself.

Tribal Totem: Pegasus

Beginning Gifts: Breath of the Wyld, Man's Skin, Sense Wym

Background Restrictions: None

Quote: *I gave her the chance to leave the bastard. She clung to that door so tightly you'd think he'd actually chained her there. Well, of course she was frightened, but to be so ungrateful...*



rjt

BONE GNAWERS

I saw a man reaching out begging for food, and with the same hand he offers help. He offers his hand to all those who live below notice, to the beggars and the diseased. He offers his hand freely and forgets that his tail is visible, and the people come for him in the night with fire in their eyes. But the man holds his other hand behind his back, and in it he holds a black rat that he strokes and keeps safe and warm. When the people with fire come for him, he drops the rat and it scurries off into dark places, bruised and angry.

Where man congregates, the filth of litter, sewage, offal, disease, vermin and waste grows around them. The human paupers live and work in that filth, and the rich dwell above it, and neither can escape the smell. But in that filth, the forces of the Wyrms hide, nesting, infesting, growing fat on the stench of humanity.

The Bone Gnawers live in that filth, too, ready to pounce the minute the Wyrms move. The great Royal Tribes of the Garou Nation — the Silver Fangs, the Fianna and the Shadow Lords — look down on these mongrel wolves, with their foul ways and dirty skin.

Those filthy peasants, the others say, are no better than the humans. But without the Bone Gnawers, the Garou Nation would have fallen millennia ago. In the alleys, in the crypts, in the sewers and labyrinths of the human towns, the Wyrms' minions grow, sleep and become strong. Left to their own devices, these things would have overwhelmed Gaia. But the Bone Gnawers were there, fierce and cunning killers, vicious magicians and wild, rabid tricksters. They do not seek glory; they simply know that they have a place in the scheme of things, and that Gaia will reward them. This life is horrible, they whisper to themselves

while scratching lice and ticks from their fur, but the future will be better.

These filthy creatures can be found among those who toil, the peasants and the small serfs and laborers, but many can be found in Holy Orders, as monks, and nuns and priests, who tend to the poor and the sick. Of all the tribes, the Bone Gnawers find the most affinity with Christianity, surpassing even that of the Children of Gaia. They call upon the Blessed Virgin of the Sick and St. Jude to aid them in their work. The Gnawers are not philosophers or theologians by nature, and they do not even seek to find a commonality with the Gaian spirituality of the werewolves and the religion of the humans. The Gnawers just shrug and say that they need every little bit of help they can get. Many Gnawers wear the robes of the new Dominican and Franciscan orders. Even now, though, the outcast werewolves who exist in the Church are under threat. Many have spoken out about the abuses and greed of the Church, and these hotheads have attracted attention from the Inquisition.

OUTLOOKS

Brother Belvedere, a road-stained Philodox, reveals the following for a gold coin:

Black Furies: Sometimes these women fight alongside us. Sometimes they know the realities of the world. But often, they don't. Let them fight alongside you, and let them on their way.

Children of Gaia: They have this vision. They have a lovely, shining vision. Somehow it never works down here in the gutter.

Fenrir: Scary bastards and ruthless fighters, but they have been kind to us before. They admit, sometimes, that our struggle makes us tough, and they respect toughness.

Fianna: Good for a drink or a story, but sometimes they change, and then you see why we name them among the Royal Tribes.

Red Talons: They judge us, call us filth and call us a disease. In their domains, they kill us. But we would never turn them away.

Shadow Lords: Stay away from them. Stay away from their lands. Stay away from their whispers. Stay away from their friends, and the hell away from their enemies.

Silent Striders: Listen when they speak. Relax when they leave.

Silver Fangs: The Silver Fangs fight bravely and most gloriously against an endless foe, and they stain the earth red with the blood of their foes and the blood of their champions. Try to be somewhere else when they start.

Warders: The lords and masters of the cities; dreamers and doers. Stay on their good side.

Ratkin: Watch over them, because they are sacred to our totem, but also because they are not to be trusted.

The Bone Gnawers hold the Rat sacred. The Rat, the creature of the filth and leavings of the world they share, and the Rat, the great survivor, whispers the guidance of Gaia to its adopted children. Better still, the Rat is a practical spirit, and the Rat lives for the moment, for the day. It does not care for posterity or posthumous glory. The Rat does not care for bold words or pretty speeches. The Rat is a survivor. By surviving, therefore, a Bone Gnawer honors the Rat.

Though they seem to revel in the dirt and poverty of their existences, the Bone Gnawers are as obsessed with the future as any Warder. They believe that by living in the dirt, by fighting their wars amidst the sewage of humanity and its crushing poverty that things will be better for the next generation of werewolf and human. Though they are at home in the foul-smelling holes in the cities, the Bone Gnawers dream of a better world that is as clean and wealthy and peaceful as any fantastical Warder utopia.

But deep in their souls, all Bone Gnawers know that if there is one truth of existence it is that there will always be poverty, need and especially hunger. So the Bone Gnawers are resigned to their lot, watching over those who cannot fend for themselves. The "Royal Tribes" might be glorious and fearful and noble, but to the Bone Gnawers, it is survival that is glorious. It is seeing yet another sunrise that is wondrous, and it is in ensuring that one's charges eat that one finds the Will of Gaia.

Appearance: Members of this tribe are skinny, ragged, dirty and smelly. Their fur is matted and infested with vermin. In human form, they are gaunt and stooped, and they wear the rags of beggars. Yet under the dirt and grime, they are strong and healthy. In some ways, the dirt is a camouflage against their enemies. In Lupus form, they are half starved, they have a nasty, cunning gleam in their eyes, and their hunger only makes them more dangerous.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: The Bone Gnawers have no claimed ranges, no dominions and no protectorates. There is no "common" place to find the Bone Gnawers. The Bone Gnawers are everywhere. Small packs roam near tiny, starving human villages. Bigger packs and septs gather in the catacombs of the old cities and in the brothels and alehouses of the new towns. The Bone Gnawers live off human waste and neglect, and that can be found anywhere.

Likewise, the Bone Gnawers are not choosy about Kinfolk. Though many of their kin are beggars, poor serfs and the dregs of medieval society, the Bone Gnawers have kin among the Italian banking families, merchant folk and sailors. Though some are born to comfort, those with the "curse" of the werewolf always seem to find their way down into the muck of humanity. Still, the Gnawers have many Kinfolk in places no other Garou — or enemy — would think to look.

One secret the Bone Gnawers protect dearly is that the other Children of the Rat still exist, and they are breeding. There is a plague coming, not soon, not in this lifetime, but one that will sweep all before it. For now, the Bone Gnawers try to ignore this fact, fearing discovery or perhaps fearing the wrath of their totem.

Character Creation: Either Physical or Mental Attributes might be primary, but most Bone Gnawers favor Talents over Skills and Knowledges. Some Bone Gnawers have allies, but the vast majority have contacts, either specific informants or simply a finger on the pulse of a city.

Tribal Totem: Rat

Beginning Gifts: Cookery, Resist Toxin, Scent of the Honeycomb

Background Restrictions: Bone Gnawer characters may not purchase Pure Breed or Resources.

Quote: We are the vermin of the Tribes? Well, your holiness, perhaps you've wondered why those fomori haven't returned to trouble your court since they fled into the city....



CHILDREN OF GAIA

I saw a werewolf struggling with human clothes, trying to wear the garb of the human priests. But the vestments did not fit the werewolf, and she Raged, tearing them from her body, only to regain her calm and try again. She struggled with clothes of many different colors and many different human-cities, but she could find none that fit her. All the while, a unicorn pranced behind her, trying to catch her attention, but she would not turn from her task. All the while, the humans around her were dressed in the garb she tried to wear but never changed them. They wore their clothes as the years wore on, until when the werewolf finally found human-clothes that fit her, the humans were nearly naked themselves.

The Galliards of the Children of Gaia recount how they originally hailed from disgruntled Garou who opposed the Impergium and pleaded for harmony. They banded together to form a new tribe whose fate would be to continue fighting for peace and concord. Together they managed to sway the other tribes long enough to end the Impergium, but their mission to bring peace to the Garou Nation and the world did not end there. Mocked and harassed for being weak and naïve, the Children of Gaia nonetheless claim that the other tribes fail to see the true demands of Gaia—demands that only the Children fulfill.

At the best of times, other werewolves see them as mediators instead of traitors. In harsher times, the more militant tribes demand the blood of the Unicorn's tribe. The Children continue promoting peace and harmony, not only among the Garou, but among all of Gaia's creatures.

Among the Phoenicians, the Children found open minds worthy of their causes, and their homid origins can be traced back to those lands. Their wolf-kin are few and far between, mainly because of the Children's lack of proper territories in the Dark Medieval, but they support the largest number of metis known among the Garou.

The most open-minded of the tribes to say the least, the Children also accept defectors and strays from other tribes into their fold. Philosophy and free thought are encouraged among their ranks, and

many of the Children can actually boast an academic education, especially among their Middle-Eastern ranks.

The Children of Gaia traverse

Europe from sept to sept, spreading doctrines of just war and, when possible, peaceful resolution to conflict. To cull the constant expanse and destruction of the humans and their deterioration of Gaia, one must bear them

OUTLOOKS

Askha, Theurge and protector of the Isle of Aries, considers others:

Black Furies: We understand their devotion and respect their rites, but unlike us, they seem to treasure violence and vengeance.

Bone Gnawers: How loathsome and smelly they are does not erase the fact that they are our brothers. But why do they not accept our alms and get out of the gutter?

Fenrir: I suppose that if you are born in blood and battle it must obliterate your judgment and become your life.

Fianna: They make for fine allies and comrades, but their wild spirits confuse and alarm me. These are not the spirits of Gaia alone, they are the spirits of madmen.

Red Talons: I honestly do not understand why they reject their human side. If they would wear the human skin once in a while, perhaps they could see things from another perspective.

Shadow Lords: What do they want? They are not the same as the rest of us, that much is certain.

Silent Striders: I wonder if they would join our struggle? They seem honest and open-minded enough to understand, I believe.

Silver Fangs: They lead us from courtrooms and chambers, but they should be out here in the world, seeing what we see.

Warders: Legends say the Weaver is rising. Could they have anything to do with this?

The Inquisition: They worry us. The Church has long stood in our way, but these inquisitors seem bent on seeking us out and destroying us. Who pointed them toward the Garou? What are their true objectives? Who controls them?

the message with peace, not with teeth and claws. Gaia loves all living things, and both human and Garou must realize this. One must help the weak and unfortunate, not ostracize or destroy them. The Dark Medieval is a demanding time for the Children. Few Garou listen to their gospel, and the Church hinders them at times. Wars and suffering require their services almost everywhere, and they feel the strain of being too few. But the Children of Gaia keep pushing, hoping to unite the Garou.

Over the last years, a new and troubling institution has arisen within the European Church. It is called the Inquisition, and the few Children of Gaia who know of it look to it with horror in their eyes. They risk being persecuted as devils should they be too careless while helping the weak and unprotected. This tribe is also one of the ones that is most aware of the growing power of the Wyrms. While several of the tribes fail to see the growing shadow falling across Europe, the Children see it on their travels promoting peace as well as among those they help and save. They see it in the eyes of those Garou fighting each other, and those without respect for "lesser" beings, such as humans. Yet the only other tribe that feels it as

strongly as they do, the Red Talons, refuses to combine forces with them.

Like the Warders of Men, the Children of Gaia have taken to chronicling some of their legends and tales as written word in the Middle Ages, but they take care in securing these documents well within their few septs.

Appearance: The Children of Gaia is perhaps the tribe least concerned with color and creed. Their homids may come from any culture across Europe or Outremer. Lupus Children are lean yet strong of build, coated in brown with white or gray spots across their hides. Lupus Children appear calm and graceful instead of the threatening and dire impression the lupus of other tribes exude.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: The Children of Gaia claim descent from the Fertile Crescent, but the Children declare all of Gaia their protectorate. As such, the Children are found all across Europe, although many Children hail from the lands of the Middle East. The Children choose their mates among those who are sympathetic to their beliefs, which cover many layers of society and culture. The Children of Gaia live by human ideals, so they seem to be made up of more homids than any of the other tribe, except, perhaps, for the Warders of Men. They maintain a strong and extensive human Kinfolk networks, and thus choose to locate their Kinfolk's dwellings near their septs. Apart from the Warders and the Bone Gnawers, the Children are the most urbane of the tribes.

Character Creation: Most characters from this tribe favor Social or Mental traits as their primary Attributes, and few are without at least secondary priority on Knowledges. Children of Gaia characters value the Kinfolk Background, but also Ancestors, Allies and Resources.

Tribal Totem: Unicorn

Beginning Gifts: Eve's Blessing, Mother's Touch, Resist Pain

Background Restrictions: None

Quote: *I am aware that you bite your thumb at me, spit behind my back and think me a fool for not assailing you. But though I think it sad that you cannot find better ways to use your Rage than to taunt me, I refuse to give you the power to make me angry.*



FENRIR

I saw the Northern lands bathed by the bile of a black beast, and the dead humans who feast on blood tore at each other's throats in rage or in fear. And then, from the sullen, stark skies, a hanged man laughed, and I saw his red-robed rogues lurking about on sinister paths. I saw the blood of an innocent boil, and as the smoke wafted over the snow, I saw a legion rise from the ashes and dust, and the fate of the Fenris-wolves was signed, softly unto stone.

The proud lineage of the Fenrir springs from the North. They are the grandchildren of Fenris, the Great Winter Wolf. The dark and harsh lands of Scandinavia and the lands of the Holy Roman Empire are their homes, but they have spread all across the continent.

The Fenrir are warriors, so they respect strength more than anything. From the wickedest Ragabash to the mightiest Ahroun, the Fenrir are fell killers and terrible foes. The children of the Winter Wolf believe that force of will and strength of body are the measures of a warrior, and the measure of a Garou. All are born to fight, and although they do not fear death, they strive to live a long life of war, taking the battle to the enemy, using all of their talents and skills to achieve this. To die young is glorious. To die old, after a lifetime of savagery, and war upon the Wyrms — that is divine.

The Fenrir of Dark Medieval Europe do not meddle much in the affairs of men, preferring instead to search for glory and battle. All Fenrir share the hungry, adventurous soul of their

forefather. When they walk among humans, the Fenrir serve as mercenaries and bounty hunters, using petty mortal concerns to hone their skills and pass the time. Despite what other Garou might think of the Fenrir, who are seen as brooding, angry extremists, the Fenrir are also a joyous lot, reveling in dance, song, laughter, adventure and drinking. A Fenrir feast is something not to be missed, though outsiders rarely chance upon them. Their attitudes toward others color the views held on them. They are arrogant, proud, condescending, haughty and supremacist, and it is a rare Fenris-wolf indeed who will pass up the chance of a fight, especially if he or anything he stands for has been insulted.

Contrary to common belief, the Fenrir are among the tribes in which women have the most status. Their Scandinavian Kinfolk see females as powerful beings with the ability to create life. Many septs boast women holding important positions, and female warriors who match males are revered as champions. It is hard for a female to live among the Fenrir, though. She can expect no consideration or sympathy beyond that which is given a male. The Fenrir treat



OUTLOOKS

Kveldrida, a brooding Modi of the Fenrir, shares her views on allies and adversaries alike:

Black Furies: That the Furies fight well stems from their heritage as Garou, not their sex, despite what they think.

Bone Gnawers: Pathetic and feeble — as a tribe they are a joke. However, they make for good scouts and vassals, and if you throw them a bone they are loyal. Much like dogs.

Children of Gaia: Peace? What is peace, other than absence of battle? What then shall we rejoice and feast over? They truly are children.

Fianna: O little brother, will you never learn? They are the closest tribe to us, and though we, too, like a good feast, we never forget to fight. Otherwise, we'd become blabbering fools whose brains are never clear from mead.

Red Talons: They are worthy cousins, but we would die out without human kin.

Shadow Lords: Bastards and back-stabbers. Dance with the devil and see what happens.

Silent Striders: What is the point in roaming constantly, if you do not do it for renown but to sulk and whine about your lost lands? Go and take them back, by the beard of Fafnir!

Silver Fangs: Aye, they are our lords, and valiant fighters they are, but are they really so much better than us that they should rule? We challenge them from time to time, and thus make sure they are forever vigilant.

Warders: Pfah! If there is a lowlier tribe than the Gnawers, it is those vile mutts who cower at the feet of men and wear collars. What possible use can they have?

Corax: The Children of Raven have been honorable comrades, bringing us news and tales whenever they are near. Trust not strangers, but listen to their tales.

Vampires: In our homelands of Scandinavia roam the foul blood-suckers who call themselves *Gangleri*, after Odhinn. They are followers of Jormungandr and must be destroyed. Be also wary of the snake-people. They might be a myth, but never travel too deeply into the earth without caution, young one.

everyone as equals, and it is a harsh treatment indeed. The Fenrir have no place for weaklings.

The Fenrir culture is quite colorful. The Fenrir's passionate storytellers chronicle their exploits as fervently as any other tribe, proudly singing songs and quoting sagas of their majestic heroes. In addition to the practice of the glyphs of the Garou, the Fenrir also use a runic alphabet in rituals and in chronicling of events. When something of importance occurs, the Fenrir will carve it onto a piece of wood or a side of stone so that future generations can learn of it. Runestaves are also common fetishes among the Fenrir. Magnificent craftsmen, the tribe is prone to excess ornamentation, a trait they share with their brethren the Fianna, and several similarities can be found in the crafts of the two tribes. They commonly use intricate knots, dragons and various animals (stag, bear, wolf, boar and raven) in wood and stone carving. Most Fenrir are familiar with the bardic arts in one way or another. Several musical instruments are common — chiefly wooden flutes and drums, but also ocarinas and various early string instruments such as harps and lutes.

The Fenrir believe that their progenitor was the Ahroun of the First Pack gathered by Gaia to defend the Earth. They believe that the Wyrn, Jormungandr, is held at bay by the Weaver, Edda, and is thus prevented from doing harm. Jormungandr occupies Edda, thus ensuring that she does not enthrall everything that the Wyld, Mothir, creates. Therefore, the Fenrir believe that the Triat is relatively stable, in the Wyld's favor. With the appearance of the Black Spiral Dancers and the horror of the Flaying Plague, the Fenrir Theurges are dismayed, since they failed to predict these atrocities. In the high councils of the distant north, the children of the Winter Wolf gather together and prepare for a war that they did not foresee but fully intended to win.

Appearance: Most Fenrir are tall and proud; strong in body and resilient of mind. Though strength is important, it does not mean that all Fenrir are hulking brutes. Many Fenrir are nimble and quick, with swift feet and stinging fists. Red or blonde hair is the most common among Fenrir, but variations exist in abundance. Those of Italy and Iberia are fairly dark and swarthy.

Lupus Fenrir are almost exclusively gray and white of fur, with streaks of black and silver, like the giant wolves of Siberia from whom their wolf-blood comes.

In Crinos form, a Fenrir is easily recognizable from its size, which is slightly larger than most Garou. Also, their fur is wild and lengthy about the head, and it is traditional to wear long braids. Their fur is often tattooed with glyphs telling of their renown, and it is a rare Fenris-wolf indeed without a Battle Scar or five.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: The tribe originally hails from Scandinavia, which they consider their homeland, though home to a Fenris-wolf is wherever he claims territory. The tribe is strong in Scandinavia and the Germanic lands where the majority of their Kinfolk live, but many Fenrir live in Southern Europe. Tales even circulate of Fenrir joining the Crusades and traveling to Jerusalem and the Middle East. The Fenrir proudly boast the only Garou settlements on Greenland, Iceland, Svalbard and the Faeroe and Orkney Islands.

The tribal center of the Fenrir lies in Uppsala, Sweden. Here the Sons of Great Fenris rule, in Fenris's place. They are wise, just and greatly respected by the tribe, and many wish for a place in the pack. Only those whose deeds are so great, whose accomplishments are so awe-inspiring and whose skills as warriors are nigh-unmatchable are elected by Great Fenris himself to be among them.

The largest Fenrir caerns lie in Germany, Sweden, Britain and Russia. They also hold lands in much of Europe, notably Iberia, the British Isles and France.

In Britain, the Fianna have mockingly taken to calling the Saxon Fenrir of southern England "the Get of Fenris" which has become a popular sobriquet among these Fenrir (much to the Fianna's dismay, as they meant it as an insult). The Fenrir of the North still go by their old name, and those of Scandinavia never fully accept the coming name change.

Character Creation:

Fenrir characters, being the greatest warriors among the Garou normally have Physical traits as their primary

Attributes. All Fenrir characters have dots in Brawl and Melee, and most also have a few in Performance, Expression or Crafts. Academics is highly irregular among Fenrir, and few, if any, know much about the sciences.

Tribal Totem: Great Fenris

Beginning Gifts: Hunter's Harmony, Resist Pain, Visage of Fenris

Background Restrictions: Fenrir characters may not purchase the Contacts Background. After all, only a true friend can be trusted with your life.

Quote: *Until Luna sets for the final time across Gaia, we will be there, and we will fight. The true glory of being Fenrir is the glory of battle and victory! But for now, a mug of mead and a tale of the Old Days will suffice.*



FIANNA

I saw a red wolf and a black wolf, both running in the mist. They called and sang to one another, then they both became lost. As they ran, panicked, each trying to locate the other by howls and by scent, I saw other things moving in the mist with them, but I could not see them entirely. These things jumped upon both wolves and the wolves fought the unseen things, tearing their throats out and scattering their bodies. Then the mist cleared, and both wolves were alone in a great valley, surrounded by bodies of those they had killed, some foe, but mostly other wolves both red and black. And the wolves howled together in unison, in shame and regret for what they did.

Some say the Fianna consider themselves a breed apart, kin to the faerie folk. True, these Garou of the western lands seem touched by the magic of Faerie, but the Fianna make no such claim. They do not hold themselves distinct. They say that the entire Garou Nation is the prodigal kin of the faerie people. The Fianna Galliards claim that only they remember this truth. The Fianna legends remember the sidhe and the Tuatha De Danaan and the first of the Fera. The other tribes sneer at such tales, but then, all of the Ten Tribes have their legends.

Fianna bards sing of an ancient grandsire of the clan, a warrior of the Fir Bolg. The Fir Bolg ruled Ireland before the coming of the Tuatha De Danaan and were corrupted by the Wyrn. Those few who survived pledged allegiance to the De Danaan. The warrior, named Lochlainn, had the war goddess Morrigan's favor on the night before the last battle of Moy Tura, the battle where the great high king of the Danú fell before the forces of the Wyrn. Morrigan, the say, bore that doomed warrior's child, and that child grew to be a great warrior of the De Danaan; wise in the ways of man and beast, song and war and bound to the cycles of the moon. That child's descendants became a great house among the Faerie Folk until they abandoned their immortality to save their

people. The warriors of that house could run as wolf and bear and wildcat, and they could soar as ravens. When the battle lust came upon them, they called upon their forefather's curse, Morrigan's fickle blessing, and their forms would warp into terrible, monstrous shapes. From this mortal, prodigal house of the fae, came the Changing Breeds, or so the Fianna bards say.

One lineage of that prodigal house took the form of the dire wolves of the western lands and served their sidhe lords for centuries, claiming no title save that of Fianna — soldiers in old Gaelic. Though legend remembers the great warrior Fionn, and his Fianna, there were other soldiers before him and others in all the years following. All of them hounded the Wyrn's minions across the world and sang of great victories.

The Fianna have a deserved reputation for revelry — on a cold winter night, when mortals fear to go abroad, the Fianna dance in the heaths and on the hills, drinking Uisce Beatha, the water of life, distilled into a draught so strong that it would kill the sturdiest mortal. In summer, they eat honey-mead-flavored apples that are reputed to be magical. Yet though they drink and dance, these

OUTLOOKS

Kierain, a war-weary Fianna Ahroun sips his mead and speaks to the assembled cubs:

Black Furies: Terrifying warrior women of the ancient world. Be honored to fight beside them.

Bone Gnawers: Though they smell vile, they are doughty and smart. Listen to their wisdom. Stand upwind.

Children of Gaia: The old Romans said it best: Let he who desires peace, prepare for war. Though these healers are peacemakers, never underestimate them.

Fenrir: Worthy foes.

Red Talons: These murderers of the wilds will draw our enemies to us. Humans fear the dark enough without them. Their killings of men doom us by making them hate wolves.

Shadow Lords: Don't trust them. Don't listen to them. Be polite and let them on their way.

Silent Striders: Though they are foreign to us, they are welcome strangers. Their tales are fascinating, and their ways are strange, but though they warn of danger, they are fearsome allies.

Silver Fangs: They our are kings. We are their knights.

Warders: They creep amongst the shadows of the cities, and have turned their back on the wilds.

Faeries: The lords of the faerie are departing, but we shall remember them, and wait for their return.

revelries serve another purpose. They bring the Fianna together and allow them to share stories, songs, jokes and glory while enjoying a little relief from the constant warfare of their lives. For a time, rivalries and politics are ignored at the fireside when the whiskey flows. But these revels are also about remembering. No Fianna celebration is complete without a retelling of old tales by Fianna bards. In poetry and song, the Fianna pay respect to their ancestors.

In the dark hours before dawn, the Fianna shake their heads clear of merriment and drunkenness and take to the roads to return to war.

Appearance: The Fianna retain traces of their distant fae heritage, something betrayed by their odd eye colors, their slightly otherworldly appearance and their distinctly fey Crinos features. These features are subtle, but noticeable — a brightness of the eye, a point to the ear, a strange tint to the voice. In wolf form, the Fianna retain their heritage of dire wolves; big, mean and vicious creatures.

Despite assumptions otherwise, there is little commonality of appearance among the Fianna (or their Kinfolk) in Homid form. Fianna can be found anywhere in Western Europe. There are blond-haired, brown-haired, black-haired and red-haired Fianna. There are even Fianna with Moorish ancestry to be found in Italy and Spain.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: Born of Gaelic, Scottish, Briton, Occitanian and Iberian stock, the Fianna guard the forests and villages of the west from the enemy. The Fenrir guard the north, the Shadow Lords guard the east, and the Furies guard the south, but the Fianna guard the west. Yet their power is failing and their time is passing. The fae are departing, and the White Christ's power spreads across the land.

The dire wolves died 9,000 years ago,

but somewhere in the blood of the Fianna's lupine kin, they live, a little. The dire wolves were slow, slower than modern wolves, but strong and heavy. Fianna lupine kin are strong, and heavy, but very fast indeed. They move as fast as other wolves, but Fianna wolf Kinfolk weigh up to 200 pounds and have powerful jaws.

The Fianna claim several old and powerful caerns in Brittany, and in the Irish midlands, and on the Welsh Island of Anglesey. The Irish caern is a triple caern, drawing on the Hill of Tara, a complex of passage tombs near the human town of Drogheda, and the source of the River Boyne. As the power of the Fair Folk fails, the Wild Ones have placed many of their old, fading, sacred places into Fianna care.

Therefore, the Fianna are perhaps the most powerful tribe in Europe for the time being.

Character Creation:

Social Attributes are just as common a choice for Fianna as Physical Attributes. Stag's tribe is renowned for its zeal for life and revelry. Even the gruffest Ahroun typically has some skill at Performance and Rituals. The reverse is also true, however, so even the most scholarly Theurge of the Fianna knows how to fight. Like their rivals and cousins the Fenrir, the Fianna accept nothing less.

Tribal Totem: Stag

Beginning Gifts: Distract the Fool, Faerie Light, Resist Toxin

Background Restrictions: None

Quote: *This is the calm hour before a season of storms. Tonight we drink, though tomorrow will bring war. Tonight we drink. Drink to the setting of the sun!*



rjt

RED TALONS

I saw humans, staggering sick, clutching their throats and scratching at sores. Even in their pain, they found strength to curse the wolves. But the wolves ran and hunted in the forest and outnumbered the humans. I saw so many packs of wolves, and I saw great red wolves on the edge of the forest, and they called timidly to their fellow wolves to slay the humans in their weakness. But the red wolves called so meekly that none of the other wolves paid attention, even as the humans' sickness faded. And as the humans regained their strength, I saw them sharpen shining blades and look hungrily toward the forests. I heard a scream as if from a great bird of prey, and I knew all was lost.

Out past the flimsy stockades of the outlying human settlements, the wolves roam. Outside, in the cold, in the dark, in the wilderness, the land belongs to the wild things, some of which can walk as men. These things — these wolves, the peasants whisper — hate men utterly and have the intellect of God's children. These wolves stalk the mightiest of the feudal hunters and are driven, not by hunger or instinct, but by some terrible mission. The peasants' priests call these wolves creatures of the devil and pray that their God will deliver them.

But no idle words to a distant god will save those isolated, terrified settlers. These settlers, carving out tiny farms and tiny communities in the hostile, empty wastelands are but doomed intruders in the domain of the Red Talons.

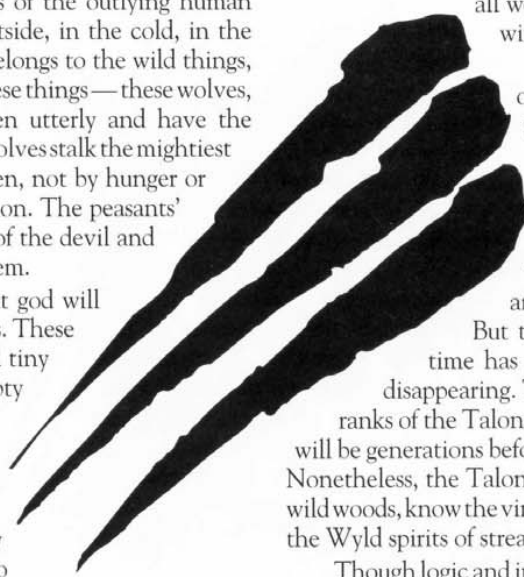
The Red Talons are not born of human stock. They do not deign to learn the languages of man. They do not ape those hated invaders who burn the wild woods and stab the soil with ploughs. They are

all wolf-born — if a human child is born with Talon blood, she is killed instantly.

The Red Talons are the memory of the Garou Nation. They are the wolves, the true hunters of the wilderness. While the other Garou keep to their human pretences — singing, dancing, politicking, some even worshipping that foolish Christian "God" — the Talons know who they are and who they have always been.

But they are merely the memory. Their time has passed. They are wounded, fading, disappearing. The Flaying Plague tore through the ranks of the Talons, and their cubs suffered the most. It will be generations before the Talons recoup their numbers. Nonetheless, the Talons are powerful now. They know the wild woods, know the virgin wilderness, and hold allies among the Wyld spirits of stream, earth, tree and wind.

Though logic and intelligence separates them from their predator kin, the Red Talons do not hold with human



OUTLOOKS

Torments the Foe, a Red Talon Ragabash, growls her opinions of the others:

Black Furies: Women are still human. Women bear more of *them*. Women heal the hunter when they escape us. What superiority do they have? What reason do we have not to slay them equally?

Bone Gnawers: They smell of cities and men and filth and their own leavings.

Children of Gaia: They spoke. We listened. We did not slay men in sufficient numbers. Now our cubs lie dead, twisted and warped.

Fenrir: They at least know the true face of the enemy and the true ways to victory.

Fianna: When the fallen ones came for us, they did not aid us. When the time comes and their songs fall silent and their flirtations with the tricksters end, we shall turn away from them and not hear their howls of despair and fear.

Shadow Lords: I do not trust them, these strange betas snapping at the heels of the king-wolves. They know things they should not, and they seem to treasure the very worst traits of humanity.

Silent Striders: Their arrival never bodes well. They listen too much. They know too much. They walk in places none of us should contemplate.

Silver Fangs: The great white-furred alpha wolves speak of many things. They speak too much and ignore our visions. Are they wise in this? I doubt it.

Warders: They dwell in those rotting scars on Gaia's skin. They stink of everything that is wrong. And they speak of logic? Of numbers? And claim that they are the future and we are the past? One day, we shall have to slay them, when the Apocalypse comes.

philosophical discourse. They do not name things in this world or in the other. They *understand* things. What they do not understand, they ignore. The Weaver they know as the encroachment of man, the tilling of land, the hewing of wood, the clearing of the heathlands. The Wyrn they hate as the unnatural, rotting scent of the unnatural, the undead, of the festering cankers of the black things that ooze from the eastern plains. The Wyld they simply respect. The Talons make little distinction between the Weaver and the Wyrn. They slay things that smell of either.

The Red Talons have long been the prophets of the Garou Nation, and they always bring riddles that no Garou wishes to hear. Although the Red Talons can see the echoes of the future, they do not understand them. In recent times, following the horror of the Flaying Plague, Theurges from other tribes have traveled to Red Talon moots, listening to the whispers and recording the visions of the Red Talons. The Silver Fangs recorded the Prophecies of Shadows at these moots. These prophecies are all true things and worthy of the greatest Garou prophets, but these visions have only deepened the hatred and suspicion toward the Talons shown by other tribes.

For the time being, the Red Talons continue to assert that ending the Impergium was a mistake. Some take this position a step further and actively hunt humans. Others, such as the renowned Ragabash Stains-Glass, seek to scare the humans away from the forests. But all Red Talons have heard the Prophecies, and they know that their time is coming. Many young Ahroun are determined that the tribe will not stand idly by, should the humans ever be as vulnerable as Song of Shadows' vision suggests.

Appearance: The Red Talons are born of wolves and are rarely, if ever, seen wearing human form. When they do, they are fearsome, feral people, with wild eyes and shaggy hair. The Curse is manifest in them. Sensible mortals stay out of their way. In their natural forms, the Red Talons are huge, hulking timber wolves. But even as wolves, it is obvious that the Red Talons are something *other*. There is wisdom, intelligence and almost logic to their actions. They strategize, they learn and those few mortals who survive an encounter with them all note this. Even now, reports are filtering back across Europe to the eager ears of the Inquisition of the terrible "devil wolves."

Kinfolk and Protectorates: The Red Talons do not have human Kin-

folk. Rather, the Red Talons run with the wolves and protect their animal kin. The Talons do not claim fixed borders to their ranges, so any land that has not been claimed by man or other Garou belongs to the Talons. They make caerns in the deepest expanse of the wilds, in the Pyrenees, in the Finnish fens, in the far distant wastes past the lands of the Rus. As perhaps the largest tribe with the widest ranges, their powerful howls echoing across the empty lands between the cities, the Red Talons mark everything that happens in the world. Yet much happens of that they are aware of but do not understand, so the Leeches and other foul things can walk with some impunity between the cities.

Character Creation: Physical Attributes are nearly always primary. As all Talons are lupus, they grow up as wolves and must learn to run and hunt. A Red Talon with a Primal-Urge score below 3 is rare and probably deficient in some way. Talents are normally primary, but all Talons have some rating in Stealth and Survival.

Tribal Totem: Griffin

Beginning Gifts: Beast Speech, Prey's Cry, Wolf at the Door

Background Restrictions: Talons may not take Allies or Resources, and any Contacts they have are usually spirits. Their only Kinfolk are wolves.

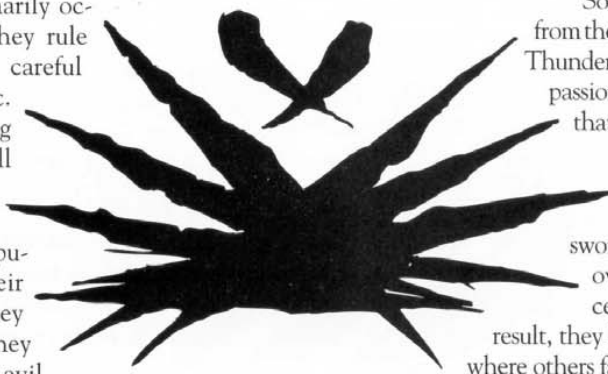
Quote: *You! Ape-lovers! You brought this onto us. This sickness that killed our cubs; these scabs on Gaia's flesh; the stink of the Wyrn on the winds! Where is your wisdom now? Where is your learning? Where is your compassion? What good has it done us?*



SHADOW LORDS

I saw a hand reach out and grasp the night sky, and I saw each silvery star wink out one by one. Thunder roared and lightning flashed. Black armies gathered in the snowy mountains and threatened all the world with their rage until the moon's light parted the clouds and quieted the very thunder itself. Luna plucked the squirming darkness from the heart of the lightning flash and twisted it back upon itself, leaving the armies to battle each other. One shadow, however, was late to the gathering and did not fall into the trap. It continued on its way to complete its fellows' mission.

The Shadow Lords primarily occupy Eastern Europe, and they rule their lands with sword, fist, careful words and dark ritual magic. They believe that winning means using anything that will get the job done, and this has given them a foul reputation among their brethren. Manipulation and cunning are their favored weapons, although they are no strangers to violence. They believe that in order to best evil, one must know evil, which leads the Lords into sinister places indeed.



Some say that this attitude comes from the patron of the Lords, Grandfather Thunder, a totem with dark and stormy passions and plans. The Lords point out that their philosophy simply works. They strike into the very hearts of their enemies, sometimes without having to lift a single sword or claw. They enforce their rule over humans with a fervor reminiscent of the Impergium, and as a result, they keep many of their wolf-kin safe where others fail to do the same.

When the Lords are alone and they know that no one listens, they tell very different stories to their own

OUTLOOKS

Nikolai Eyes-of-Shadow, Shadow Lord Philodox, carefully considers his views:

Black Furies: Most of these women cannot be reasoned with, and you'd be a fool to try. Be careful what you say around them. You'd be best advised to send one of our own women to do the talking if you do have to deal with them. They'll be less eager to see her words as insults.

Bone Gnawers: These Garou are far better at the arts of information-gathering and stealth than the other tribes give them credit for. Unfortunately, siding with them openly is a sure way to look foolish. A little covert aid, however, can be a quick way to gain help from members of this tribe — and they love to feel as though they're in on a secret.

Children of Gaia: This tribe's efforts at peace give us time to prepare for war at best. At worst they weaken the Garou, making the tribes easy prey for the forces of the Wym.

Fenrir: Simple, stupid but almost unmatched as warriors. Use their pride and thirst for glory against them. It is rare indeed for one of their warriors to admit that there is an enemy he cannot fight. Make careful use of this flaw, and the entire tribe could die fighting for you.

Fianna: The Fianna are little better than drunken layabouts. They're barely useful and hardly worth considering. Even the Children of Gaia do more good.

Red Talons: The Red Talons are useful in the same way that the Fenrir are useful. They take a little more care to manipulate, though. Feign sympathy with their views and send a lupus to speak with them.

Silent Striders: Beware Striders who visit your caern. They will spy on everything you do and take note of anything that piques their interest. Then, when they travel on to the next caern, they'll spread rumors against you. Be outwardly civil, but keep them away from anything important.

Silver Fangs: Our honorable lords betrayed us long ago, and we have never forgotten. Do not trust them, and do not underestimate them!

Warders: The less this tribe fits in with the others, the more they find themselves in need of friends. Assist them as long as it serves us.

Vampires: We fight battles, both physical and political, with many vampires. They think our homelands belong to them, but we shall show them otherwise.

Mages: A mage is a powerful ally, for he can strike at his foes in unusual and mysterious ways. He is also a dangerous enemy, for he can strike at you without revealing his involvement. A mage is only human, however, and as long as you can see him face to face, you can easily shred him with your claws.

tribemates. They long saw themselves as the dedicated right hand of the Silver Fangs, the advisors who could afford to get their hands dirty in the service of what was right. They could do what the Fangs could not, and they did it for their alphas. The Fangs had but to crook a finger or nod a head, and the dirty deed would be done (the Fangs' hands none the blacker for the doing).

When the Impergium was ended, the Lords believed that the truce that did so was merely a delaying tactic. They believed that the Fangs wanted an excuse to re-instate the Impergium, so the Lords continued to wage war while the other tribes pledged peace. As a result, they earned a reputation as betrayers and deceivers among the Garou, for which they have never forgiven their kings. They did their duty as they saw it, and in return, they were scorned and reviled.

The manipulative nature of the Shadow Lords and their every-Garou-for-himself attitude has long split the tribe into various camps, factions and secret societies. Each group has a somewhat different take on the duties and obligations of the Lords. The Lords of the Summit, for example, seek power at any cost, believing that only the Shadow Lords are fit to lead the Garou. The Bringers of Light, on the other hand, delve into unclean places in search of knowledge, purity and strength.

The Shadow Lords carry out their business as usual in the face of the Flaying Plague and the fierce whispers of prophecy — or so they would desperately like the other tribes to believe. Beneath their brooding façade, fear and recriminations fly fast and fierce. Their tribe has a long tradition of ritual magics and spirit bonds, and they know the value and danger of prophecy. While the Bringers of Light travel as boldly as ever and speak of the Flaying Plague as just one more test to overcome, they watch carefully for the sick and send messages back to the borders of their territory. More than one victim of the Flaying Plague has simply vanished near Shadow Lord lands, never to resurface.

Appearance: Shadow Lords cultivate a commanding and intimidating appearance. Some prefer to make use

of a glib tongue and a charismatic personality to achieve this end; others favor a dark, brooding and dangerous air. Shadow Lords tend to be large and stocky, particularly in Crinos and Lupus forms, and they have coats almost as dark as those of the Black Furies.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: Most Kinfolk families are of Eastern European heritage, but the Lords like to cultivate “flocks” of breeding stock in other locations as well. Intelligence and temporal power are the traits most valued in such flocks.

Kinfolk don't receive much in the way of coddling or protection except when necessary. (Weaklings and victims have no right to breed.) This isn't to say that the act of procreation is all business, however. Kinfolk who breed with Shadow Lords often find themselves involved in long, tempestuous and dysfunctional romances.

The Lords have a deep and abiding love of beautiful, bleak, gloomy landscapes. Little satisfies them more than craggy mountains, shadowed forests and expanses of snow and ice. These are the perfect settings for their rituals and meditations. Storms are common around caerns due to the Lords' fervent worship of Grandfather Thunder.

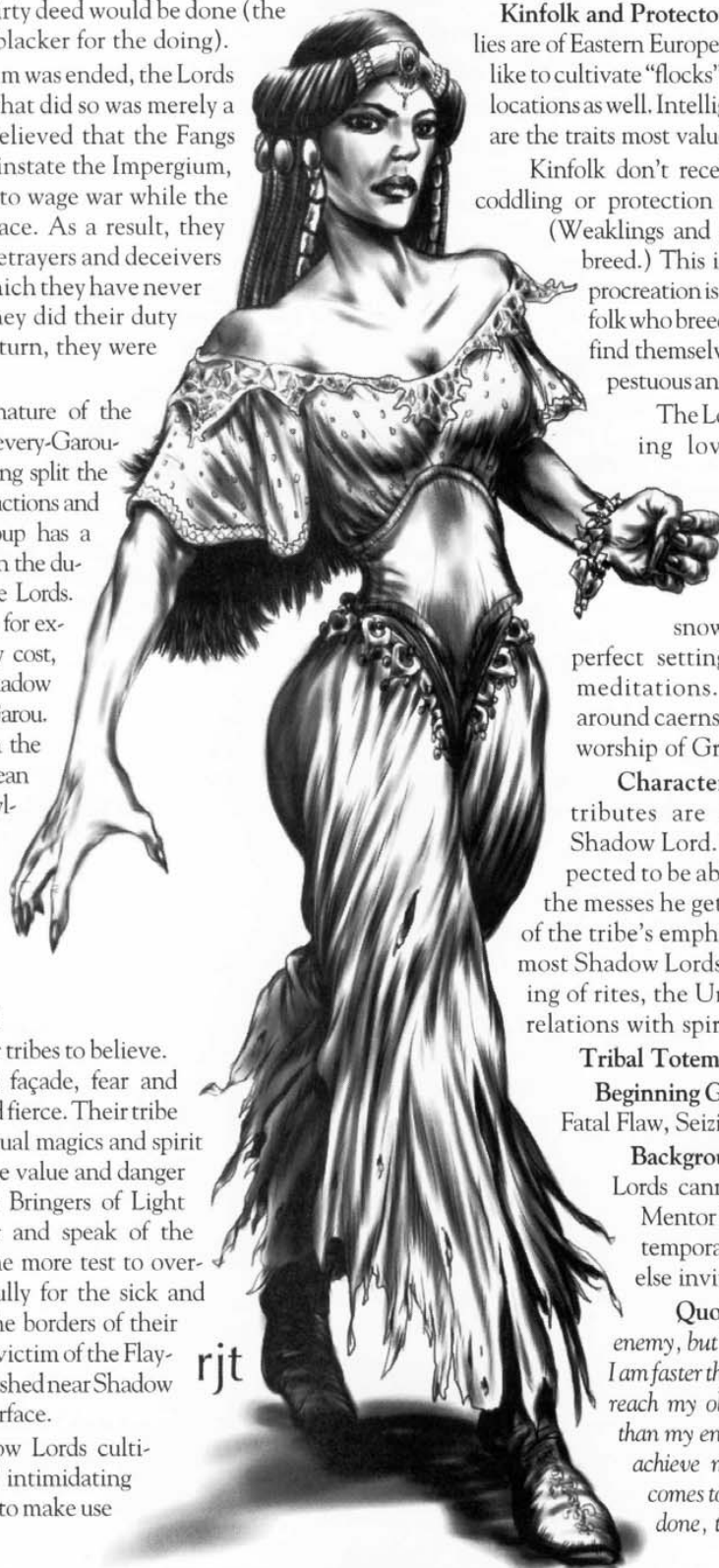
Character Creation: Mental Attributes are usually primary for a Shadow Lord. (Even an Ahroun is expected to be able to think his way out of the messes he gets himself into.) Because of the tribe's emphasis on ritual and magic, most Shadow Lords have some understanding of rites, the Umbra, the occult and/or relations with spirits.

Tribal Totem: Grandfather Thunder

Beginning Gifts: Aura of Confidence, Fatal Flaw, Seizing the Edge

Background Restrictions: Shadow Lords cannot choose the Allies or Mentor Background. Alliances are temporary at best, and anything else invites betrayal.

Quote: *I am stronger than my enemy, but I need not best him at arms. I am faster than my enemy, yet I need not reach my objective first. I am smarter than my enemy, so I shall allow him to achieve my goal for me. When he comes to understand what it is he has done, then I have won.*



rjt

SILENT STRIDERS

I see a pure land that opens up before the jackals, yielding to their wandering feet. They explore it as they do all other roads, walking roads of dirt and stone, obsidian and turquoise. Into their hands fall moonlit metals and silvered fetishes, and their smiles turn to ash. They traverse new roads of steel. They see sights that blind their children's children. They step on brilliant lines of dust and crush painted shells beneath their feet. Foul shadows rise up out of the ground, and a white tide rises out of the ocean to wash away the purity of the earth. The shape of the land is forever altered.

Of all that the Garou have taken from their lupine heritage, two things in particular hold a strong, instinctive grasp upon them: the desire for territory and the need for packmates. Therefore, it is easy to see why life leaves the Silent Striders restless, edgy and unsatisfied. Ever since they were driven from their homeland of Egypt, nothing has been right with them. They feel the need to travel, to journey, usually alone.

This also explains other tribes' ambivalent attitudes toward the Striders. On one hand, the Striders bring valuable news, messages and warnings. On the other, they aren't natural. They go against everything the Garou instinctively know to be important to life. Many septs allow the Striders entrance, but

some actively drive them away and even kill them when possible. Like many little-seen beings of legend, they are feared as much as they are respected. Many believe that without packmates to watch over them, the Striders are unusually susceptible to corruption.

Even the septs that allow the Striders entrance watch them carefully. Many try to sweep their own troubles and secrets under the rug when Striders

come to visit. Everyone knows the tribe's propensity for gleaning valuable information out of the most innocuous conversation, and this leaves many unwilling to give the Striders the time of day, much less indulge in extended pleasantries.

The Striders, however, understand that their lot in life is to be alone. Many centuries ago, they fought against an



OUTLOOKS

Aten Kills-With-Fire, Silent Strider Ahroun, considers the people he has met:

Black Furies: The Furies are worthy of your respect and can hold their own in battle or exploration. You'll have to put up with their rhetoric when you deal with them, of course, but if you can handle Black Spiral Dancers, then you can listen to a little blustering.

Bone Gnawers: You must put aside your liking for basic hygiene when dealing with the Gnawers, but it's worth it. They know unusual secrets.

Children of Gaia: The Children are fine companions when you need a drink and some rest. They're irksome when you need a sept to kick into action, however. It can take some real work to push them into battle.

Fenrir: They have the potential to work great deeds in their zeal for battle or to fall over the edge into destruction for its own sake. Stay as far away from them as possible.

Fianna: The finest caerns to visit are all guarded by the Fianna. There you can have music, drink, companionship, and all the stories you could ever want. Be careful of their brews, and always stay more sober than they do. More than a few of our pups have been born to Fianna Kinfolk.

Red Talons: The Talons are short-sighted and pig-headed, but they seem to have a talent for prophecy that we previously disregarded. Perhaps they deserve a second look....

Shadow Lords: The Lords could do stunning things if they threw their energies into worthwhile battles. As it is, they waste their talents on politicking, back-stabbing and treachery.

Silver Fangs: The Silver Fangs are indeed noble leaders, but I wonder where it is they are taking us. Personally I've never liked following another's dictates. Give me the open, uncluttered road any day..

Warders: Are the Warders stunningly adaptable, the most likely tribe to survive our interactions with man, or have they lost a part of themselves, much as the Talons have? Only time will tell.

Vampires: A Leech took our homeland away in the most horrible act we have ever witnessed. Never, ever trust a vampire. Never work with one. Never pretend to yourself that *this* vampire is different or that one can be trusted. You'll be wrong.

Ghosts: Our connection with the dead runs long and deep, and it is as much a part of us and our heritage as is the open road — if not more so. You must always put yourself and your tribe first, but try to help a few of these unfortunates when possible. Just be careful. A "harmless" request might be more dangerous than it seems.

army of vampires led by a monster known as Sutekh. Sutekh wove a curse that drove the tribe from Egypt, their homeland, and scattered them across the earth. The werewolves can find no rest in Egypt, and the curse severed all contact with their ancestors.

The entirety of the tribe became nomads, wandering the earth in search of knowledge, understanding and wisdom. They kill vampires whenever possible, or even better, convince other Garou to do it for them. They search out Wyrmlairs and notify the nearest sept of the danger that needs to be crushed. They glean valuable information from those they speak with and explore places that no one else has ever visited.

Since the tribe could no longer return to the home of its Kinfolk, and since the Striders spend so much time on the road, they bred with other peoples. They favored wanderers and nomads. Sometimes they bred with other tribes' Kinfolk when they could not find their own. They incorporated bits and pieces of other cultures into their own, while retaining as much Egyptian lore as possible. It can't help the Strider's popularity that they have bred with groups of outcasts and wanderers who are, at the least, unpopular with the cultures with which other tribes breed.

Religion is a particularly difficult subject for a tribe so scattered across countries and continents. The tribe remembers the gods and goddesses of its own homeland. As Garou, the Striders revere Gaia and contemplate the nature of the Triat. Yet as the Striders are born, live and die with new and unusual groups in distant lands, those people's religions become caught up in the whirlwind that is the cultural background of the Striders. Some Striders believe that their curse came not from a monster with the name of an Egyptian god, but from the Christian God or devil. There are others who believe that the Wyrmlair itself cast the Striders out, merely acting through the mouth of one of its servants. At least the Striders, given their propensity for exploring, are known for their religious tolerance, so fights over the "truth" rarely break out.

Now that the Flaying Plague has beset the Garou, septs are more wary of visitors than ever. At best, Striders are told to deliver their messages without approaching any member of the sept too closely. At worst they are killed without question when they are found in other tribes' territories. Some septs subject them to whatever mystical (and possibly dangerous) forms of testing they can come up with, in hopes of detecting the spread of the plague before it's too late.

For the Striders' part, their presence in Outremer has led them to some information that the other tribes don't have. They've heard rumors among the spirits that the

contagion might have originated with a powerful vampire somewhere in Egypt. Of course, they are barred from their homeland by Set's Curse, so they are caught between two unpleasant alternatives — brave a mission into a dangerous land where they cannot rest or reveal their suspicions to the Garou Nation.

The Striders have told no other Garou about this yet. They worry that it will only exacerbate an already violent political situation and tempt the Silver Fangs to move in with force. For now, they gather as much information as they can and try to decide what to do about it.

Appearance: The Silent Striders originated in North Africa and spread first to the Middle East, so most of them still bear the physical attributes of these regions. The Striders' travels, however, have caused them to interbreed with other tribes' Kinfolk as well as other nomadic peoples. Regardless of their background, almost all Striders are lean and fit from constant travel. In Lupus form, they resemble the jackal-dogs of Egyptian art.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: Strider Kinfolk are scattered across the known world. Most come from nomadic groups. Others share kinship with other tribes of Garou. Some live out their lives within those tribes, never aware of their unusual parentage. Others develop the desire to travel and roam the world, and perhaps even meet up with their Strider family somewhere.

The Striders sometimes claim that the entire world is their territory. They roam its forests and roads spreading information where needed and protecting whatever they can. Still, at their core, the Striders will never entirely feel at home unless they can return to Egypt.

Character Creation: Most Striders have reasonable Physical Attributes, thanks to the demands of constant travel (and the need to run from septs that drive them away). Striders have few possessions; they limit themselves to items that they can carry on their person. They don't stay in one place long enough to attend a university or study under one mentor for years. Because of their wide travel, however, they tend to pick up bits and pieces of useful or interesting skills and information. This means that their education is likely more broad than deep.

Tribal Totem: Owl

Beginning Gifts: Heavens' Guidance, Sense Wyrmlair, Speed of Thought

Background Restrictions: Silent Striders may not take the Ancestors or Resources Backgrounds.

Quote: *Each road I travel is merely one small part of a larger journey. Yet each road has its own charms, its own mysteries to explore.*



SILVER FANGS

I saw Falcon and heard his voice in my mind. He gave warning of a knife that glinted in the belly of a king. Behind Falcon lay a pale pool of blood, and he left red footprints on the cold and smoking ground. Forces gathered and clashed in small battles of swirling dust and silver fur. They tore apart the darkness with swords and claws, shields shattering, men dying in a noble yet pointless cause. Finally a crown rose up above the field of battle and all fighting stopped, until shadows consumed the moon and the crown fell into darkness.

The Silver Fangs are the proudest and most noble of the tribes. Each individual traces his lineage carefully and can recite the deeds of his great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers. The tribe as a whole embodies everything that is best about Garou:

strength, nobility, loyalty, magnificence, authority and dedication. Its warriors set heroic examples for the other tribes, leading and uniting them through sheer force of personality and deed.

Note every Silver Fang can be perfect, however, and imperfect Silver Fangs can cause a disproportionate amount of trouble. Some such Fangs sit on their thrones and insist that their subjects come to them, isolating themselves and failing in their duties. Others try desperately to be the heroes

their fathers were, going too far too fast and taking the Garou who follow them into death.

It doesn't help that the Silver Fangs prefer to raise their young in the halls of nobility. They reason that they gain more influence over humanity by doing so, and that their decisions can affect the actions of humans directly, without as much need for bloodshed and war. Some have argued, however, that this practice results in soft Garou with a taste for the petty material desires and politics of humans. They have also argued that the Fangs are losing touch with their lupus heritage out of a desire for temporal power.

The Shadow Lords use these arguments and more to sow discontent against the Silver Fangs. Most of the tribes still



OUTLOOKS

Masha Bitter-Wine, Silver Fang Ragabash, evaluates the tribes:

Black Furies: The Furies are both honorable and ferocious. They sometimes chafe under our guidance, but they recognize the wisdom of our rule.

Bone Gnawers: It is natural that this lowly tribe resents our grace and power. Speak to them nicely in public, but don't invite them home.

Children of Gaia: Good intentions do not always lead to good ends. Still, it is hard to fault this tribe for the desire for peace. Listen to them, but only with one ear.

Fenrir: These warriors number themselves among the few who can almost match us in battle. They are honorable and strong, and it is a wise ruler indeed who cultivates the Fenrir as soldiers and allies.

Fianna: We can understand the higher virtues of this tribe in a way that few other tribes can. Their songs soothe our troubles and ease our cares, and for that we are grateful. Still, anyone with such an eloquent tongue is potentially dangerous.

Red Talons: Are their prophecies true, or are they some misguided attempt to cause chaos among us? Perhaps the other tribes are right about these Garou.

Shadow Lords: The Lords slip from shadow to shadow and make noise about overthrowing us, but they simply aren't a match for us. Watch them carefully, but don't give them more credit than they deserve.

Silent Striders: Pity the Striders, who have lost their homelands. Perhaps it is time for a crusade?

Warders: The Warders of Men are valuable for their understanding and knowledge of foreign things. They are also dangerous for the very same reason.

Mages: We occasionally ally with these powerful humans, as they have ways of knowing things at a glance that we could spend years trying to learn. Witches and shamans sometimes prove to be friends of Gaia. A few even travel the Umbra and make bargains with spirits. However, mages do things in different ways than we do. Any long-lived alliance is likely to be doomed by our differences.

look to the Fangs for their leadership, but a few Garou here and there grumble that it is only a matter of time. They say that the Fangs will lose touch with their Garou heritage altogether and lead the Garou into poison and pain.

So far, the tribe has proven most such accusations wrong. Some younger members of the tribe, however, have started to realize that they cannot simply rely on tradition and the status quo to keep them in power. These Garou do their best to be proactive, seeking out corruption and danger and eliminating it. They travel, intervening wherever they feel that other tribes need their help. Unfortunately not everyone appreciates such unsolicited aid.

The Silver Fangs, like their noble human Kin, have a fascination for and appreciation of ritual and tradition. Territory is divided up into "protectorates," each of which is ruled by an Ahroun who presides over a court. The court is divided into the Lodge of the Sun and the Lodge of the Moon. The former handles temporal matters (business, commerce) and the concerns of human kin, while the latter presides over spiritual affairs and the concerns of the lupus population. Courts and moots are lengthy and involve a great deal of ritual. Debates over important issues can last for days.

The tribe is broken up into houses. The Gleaming Eye holds influence in the Holy Roman Empire and northern France. It rules with an iron grip, but it fosters ideals among the humans that aid in the rise of chivalry. It is a power to be reckoned with, and even the other houses harbor resentment against it.

House Crescent Moon endures despite difficult times in Russia. Its members insist that the Motherland will rise again under their guidance, and they refuse to listen to any prophecy that seems to indicate otherwise. The Shadow Lords maintain that this house's pride will be its undoing.

The Unbreakable Hearth's strongest territory lies in southern France, although the house claims some influence in Italy and Iberia. Its members have a way with business and commerce, which causes other Fangs to look down upon them. At the same time, its members' reputation as being steady and reliable makes them favorites among other tribes.

The Austere Howl fights alongside its Norman Kin in England. While it has made quite a name for itself with acts of heroism, it has also succeeded in alienating both the Fianna and the Fenrir. Neither tribe appreciates the intrusion into what they see as their territory.

House Wise
Heart carries the
nobility of the
Silver

Fangs a bit further afield. It holds power in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. This house grows slowly in power. Some of its members have heard rumors that the Silent Striders know more than they're saying about the Flying Plague, and they're determined to find out what that is.

Appearance: Lupus Silver Fangs are graceful, with silver or white fur, long slender jaws and full tails. Homid Silver Fangs do their best to breed with aristocratic families (primarily of European and Middle Eastern descent), and they have refined, distinctive features. Many Fangs breed for physical beauty, so they suit the standards of beauty appropriate to the nobility of a given region.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: The Fangs keep precise and detailed track of their Kinfolk, who can trace their pedigrees back through generations. Despite the rare irregularity caused by a Silver Fang who decides to breed for love or physical attraction without regard for social standing, Kinfolk come almost exclusively from the nobility and aristocracy. Russia in particular houses many families of Silver Fang Kinfolk. Breeding is considered more important than money. (Penniless royalty are far more valuable Kinfolk than a wealthy merchant family.) The tribe also keeps careful track of its lupine Kinfolk.

The Silver Fangs have taken caerns all throughout Europe and beyond, so they wield much greater influence on the Garou at large. They often occupy the choicest lands, which they sometimes take from other tribes under the aegis of being better able to protect those lands. Their territory boasts splendid views of sparkling lakes, seaside cliffs, great mountains or majestic forests.

Character Creation: Most Silver Fang characters have strong Social Attributes. They also tend to have many points in Backgrounds, since social ties and resources are paramount to the Fangs. Members of the tribe are usually well educated.

Tribal Totem: Falcon

Beginning Gifts: Eye of the Falcon, Lament Flame, Sense Wyrn

Background Restrictions: Silver Fang characters must spend at least three Background points on the Pure Breed Background.

Quote: *The Garou cannot help but prosper and thrive under our leadership. There are always setbacks and difficulties. Such is the way of Creation, and how else could we prove our worthiness? Still, we shall prevail.*



rjt

WARDERS OF MEN

I saw a wolf in a great maze of stone and glass, but he was unafraid. He knew the maze completely, as he had been there when it was built, and so he had no fear of the spiders that clung to the walls and drank the blood of the humans who dwelt there. The wolf strode proudly in the streets, sure that the spiders could not see him, ignoring them and their webs. And then a great shadow in the shape of a cross fell over the maze, and the ground shook, and the spiders leaped at each other and tore one another limb from limb. And the humans fought as well, and the maze burned and fell, and the wolf could do nothing but sit by and howl.

Constantinople has fallen, and the Warders of Men were warned. The Fourth Crusade burned the Rome of the East, and the Warders of Men were sleeping.

The Warders of Men proclaim their long, proud, heritage of association with humanity loudly and at length. The Warders make their homes in the cities, in the towns and amidst the throng of humanity. Once, they spoke vociferously in opposition to the Impergium. They are now the source of a new controversy. Strange whispers abound that the Warders (far from a noble tribe and dedicated to the protection of humanity), are nothing but arrogant, upstart cousins to the Bone Gnawers. Perhaps this is a lie, but many Garou want it to be true.

Since Constantinople fell, it has become common practice to deride the Warders. Their word no longer carries much weight in the councils of the werewolves. Their advice is not sought, and few self-respecting Garou will associate with them. Failure is not tolerated among the Garou, so the Warders of Men keep to themselves now. The Warders loved Constantinople, but they watched it fall. Worst of all, they were warned well in advance.

While some Theurges of the other tribes fear that the holy balance between wolf and man among the Garou is badly off-kilter,

the Warders are proud of their humanity. Although they claim wolves among their kin — the Warders sometimes capture wild wolves for this purpose — many more of this tribe are born between unions of human and Garou. Nothing good can come of this, the others whisper. While the Warders praise the great works of humanity (the art, the literature, the illuminations of the Bibles, the great cathedrals), others see that this is just the beginning of a disaster that will tear Gaia asunder. Mankind will spread, and the Wym will follow in his wake.

To be a Warder is to be an idealist. Warder cubs learn to read so that they can enjoy the wisdom of the ancient Greek philosophers, the old Roman poets and the Arabic scholars who have codified mathematics. Science, the Warders say, will lead humanity out of the dirt and filth and poverty of this world and lead them into a bright, glorious future. And as humanity makes these steps, the Warders will be there to help them. When other tribes caution the Warders against doing so, the Warders reply that humanity's relentless advance toward this glorious future will take them forever out of the reach of the Wym. When all men and women stand equal, enlightened and literate, disease vanquished, hunger banished, and bright, beautiful cities grace Gaia's creation,



OUTLOOKS

Joseph of London, a Warder Galliard, answers questions from his students:

Black Furies: These warrior women are terrifying in battle, but their insistence on the superiority of women rings false.

Bone Gnawers: They are our brethren of these new cities, the world of men, but they needs must remain amongst the lost and the dispossessed. We would hope that we could remake the world sufficiently so our brethren can give up their tasks.

Children of Gaia: Their naiveté becomes them. Their faith in God and higher truth is admirable, but here, in the glory and light of the city, is the future. It is to civilization, not to Heaven, that we should look.

Fenrir: Terrifying warriors and honorable foes, the Fenrir may wish to destroy everything we have wrought, but there is a purity in their ways that we respect.

Fianna: Entertaining companions and fierce warriors, but their obsessions with the past will undo them.

Red Talons: No matter the pure confection with Gaia that they claim, I cannot — *will not* — believe that they had nothing to do with the fall of Constantinople. They must have at least concealed something from us.

Shadow Lords: When our enemies came for our kin in Beograd, we called to these guardians of the eastern realms. They did not listen, and when all were dead, they claimed our caerns.

Silent Striders: We see these stranger prophets of the distant orient but rarely. Pay close attention to what they have to say.

Silver Fangs: Our lords and masters. Our betters. Our noble lords. But their influence ends where the cities begin. They would do well to realize this fact.

Vampires: These Leeches are blights upon our cities and parasites feeding on our work and our progress, but some are fascinating to speak with. If you can tap such a source of lore, the vampires are occasionally worth sparing. Occasionally.

then — the Warders say — the Wyrms will be conquered. Perhaps they are right. After all, the Warders suffered the least from the Playing Plague; even the Warders of Men of the hinterlands were hardly touched by the disease's progress. At the outset of the horror, some Warder Theurges claimed that they would use mortal knowledge to cure the sickness. They failed. Whatever the cause of the Plague is, it is well beyond human medicine.

The Warders love experimenting with politics. The Shadow Lords might be the best power brokers and politicians, but the Warders of Men see the evolution of mortal political debate as part of a process, a science that will one day bring about this future heavenly state that the Warders dream of. The fact that some cities are now considered to be free from feudal obligation is seen as proof positive that the Warders are doing the right thing.

The Warders admit privately, however, that they have little true influence in the growing human cities. Cities of this age are not the tiny settlements of the ancient world. Cities of this age are huge, eternal things, which began long before mortal memory and will continue long after all who dwell there now are dead. The Warders are long-lived by human or even Garou standards, but their

lives and influences are mayfly things, gone within a generation or two. The true lords of the cities are the vampires, and they do not brook competition. The Warders oppose the vampires — blocking their interference, rivaling their trading arrangements and attempting to give mere mortals a greater say in their future. Despite the Warders' hard work and Herculean struggles, though, it would appear that the vampires barely notice.

Yet, one of their rivals in the human sphere — the Circle of Red — has most assuredly noticed them. These mortal sorcerers have cut a swathe through Warder interests. Worse, they, more than the vampires or other humans, know the Warders for what they are, and they seek to destroy them. In London, Paris, Aachen, and Beograd, the Warders of Men made war on these twisted Wyrms-riden upstarts and lost. In response, the Circle of Red hunted their adversaries out of those cities, and more than one Warder pelt now serves as a rug in a Circle of Red guildhall.

Appearance: The Warders — even those of lupus stock — are mostly found in human form. They are clean, well dressed, educated and seem somewhat arrogant and superior. As they do not restrict their breeding to one segment of humanity, Warders appear to hail from any land across Europe or Outremer, even more so than the other tribes.

Kinfolk and Protectorates: The Warders of Men make their homes among mortal men in the cities and town and in the small farming settlements scattered throughout Europe. Where a Warder pack dwells, it attempts to defend the human inhabitants against all threats. They are, after all, the Warders of Men. If they cannot protect humanity, then who can?

Warder Kinfolk are not drawn from any particular part of society, since the Warders know that the divisions between nobility, clergy, freeman and peasant are artificial and unnatural. Some must rule, they believe, because that has always been the way, but that does not mean that everyone else must retain some arbitrary social position as a result. Warder Kinfolk are also better educated than their fellows — the werewolves insist on it. Writing, the Warders say, means everything can be recorded. And if everything is recorded, then everything will eventually be known. Many Kinfolk can be found in the universities, as students and teachers, or in the service of the great monasteries.

The greatest Warder centers — Kiev, London, Paris and Constantinople — are all well past their prime. Their bigger caerns have been destroyed, either by the Circle of Red or vampires who *did* notice them. Nonetheless, the Warders operate smaller caerns within these cities, and continue their work. The Warders make the often-perilous pilgrimages across these cities to harvest the Gnosis from these old, fallen caerns. Mongol magicians have claimed the caern in Kiev, and they have slain many Warders who have attempted to reclaim it. The Circle of Red now controls the old Great Caern of Paris.

In Constantinople, a caern still flickers with Gnosis, but the Warders must sneak into the sacked city like beggars. If it weren't for the Bone Gnawers, the caern would have been lost years ago.

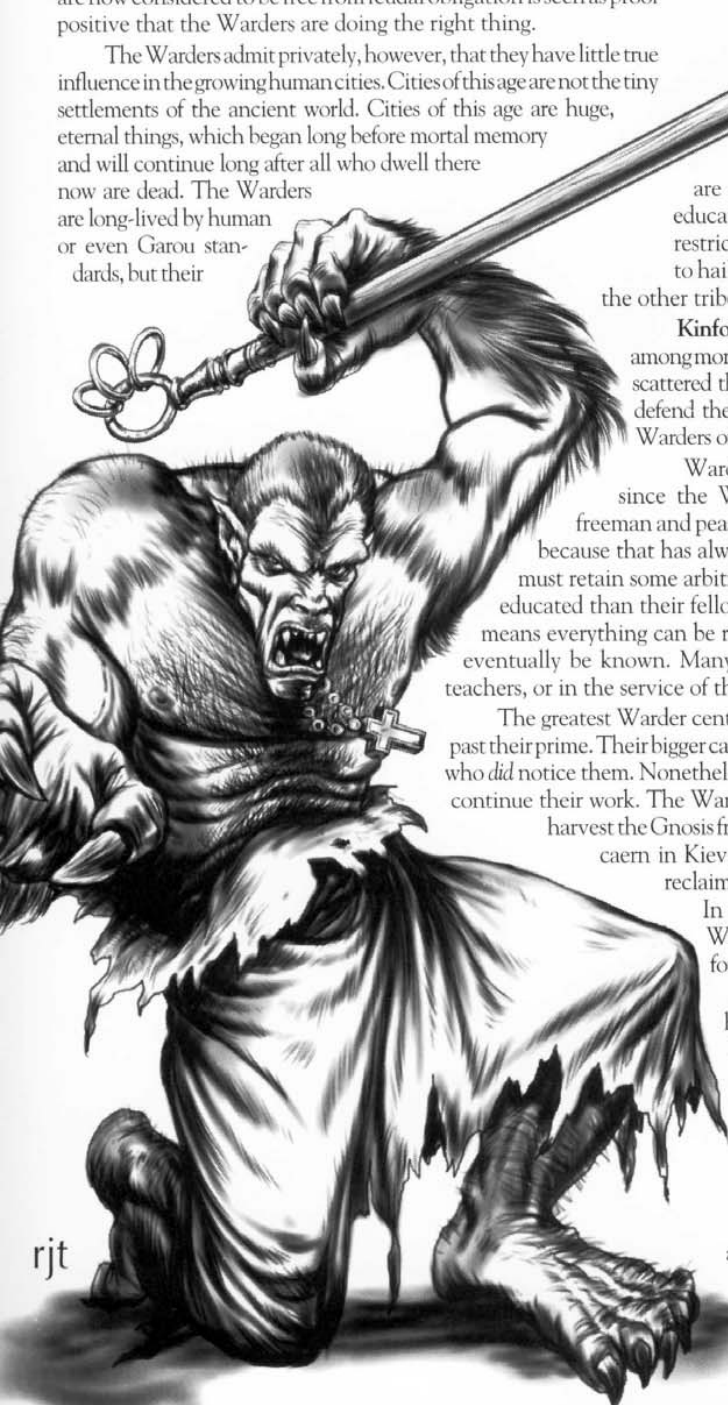
Character Creation: Warder characters typically have high scores in Perception, Intelligence, Manipulation and Dexterity. Talents such as Brawl, Expression and Intimidation are encouraged, and Skills such as Commerce and Etiquette are treasured. Common Backgrounds include Allies, Contacts and Resources.

Tribal Totem: Cockroach

Beginning Gifts: Artisan's Command, Gift of Salt, Persuasion

Background Restrictions: No restrictions, but Pure Breed and Ancestors cost double (two Background points or bonus points per dot).

Quote: *Our Kinfolk in the Levant have spoken of a peculiar ritual of the folk there. It's called "washing." You bathe in hot water with smelling salts and perfumes and steam, then clean the vermin from your body. Have you heard of it? I thought not.*





Elizaveta of Blovice Looked out From her window.

The room wasn't high, but she felt as though the people below were miles away. The sky was rapidly darkening — tonight would be doubly black, as no moon would shine, and the clouds would obscure what feeble illumination the stars could provide.

Elizaveta sighed. She glanced over at her plate, empty but for a few chicken bones, and was shocked to find she was tempted to pick up the tiny scraps and gnaw what tiny bit of meat might remain. This was not behavior becoming a lady. Lonely as she was, she was also glad that no one could see her these last few weeks. Her 13th birthday had been the start of it. That night, she recalled, had also been without moon, and her womanly flow had begun the very same day. She had been terrified to see the blood, but just the same, she had *felt* something wake inside her. A hunger, she supposed. Secretly, she felt it might be desire for a man's touch, as her nurse had so often described, but she wasn't sure. All she knew was that it frightened her, and that when she had communicated her fears to her mother, Elizaveta had been locked in this room. Now here she remained. She started as she heard the howls of wolves and the screams of horses. Perhaps one of the animals had gotten loose and been brought down — it had happened before. Wolves were commonplace around Blovice, but the common folk were convinced that Elizaveta's family was protected from the beasts somehow. The young noble didn't know, but she felt oddly comforted when they howled in the dark nights. The sound made her feel as though all was right in the world.

The last thing she expected was to see one leap through her window.

The night wasn't cold, so the window was not shuttered. The creature landed next to her, a massive, black-furred animal. It turned to her and sniffed. Elizaveta drew in a breath to scream, but felt a soft voice in her mind.

"Do not cry out, child. I am not here to harm you."

The voice was like a dream lover, like the kind she had seen in those fevered visions of late. She sat quietly and gazed at the wolf, wishing for the voice to continue. It did.

"Elizaveta, your family holds you here to keep you away from your true life. They knew and cherished their heritage once, but your father was a coward who felt himself damned when his sister Changed. I hope that you are made of stronger stuff."

The wolf stepped toward her, and Elizaveta felt her heart pounding. She looked down at her hands and saw that coarse black hair had sprung up from the backs.

The wolf seemed to smile at her helpless look. "Let it come, little sister. You'll know the answers soon." "What is happening?" Her voice was thick, as if her throat were full of blood.

"You are becoming a woman," answered the wolf. "But so much more. When you visit our sept in the high mountains, deep in the forests, you will know freedom for the first time."

Elizaveta smiled and relaxed. She thought perhaps this might be a dream, so convincingly and natural was the voice in her mind.

"Then, of course," said the wolf, "we shall return you to your rooms."

Elizaveta started. "What?" Her voice was deeper now, and more of a growl than a sound that should issue from a woman's throat.

"I'm sorry, dear, but we need you here. Your father made such a horrid mess of your family's affairs, and we can't afford to let them know anything is wrong."

The girl fell to her hands and knees, her body already contorting, the hunger she felt before increasing until she was the howl, was the rage, was the wolf.

She tried to speak, but only growled. The voice in her head was still there, however.

"Come, child of Thunder. Come and meet your family. As I said, the answers are coming."



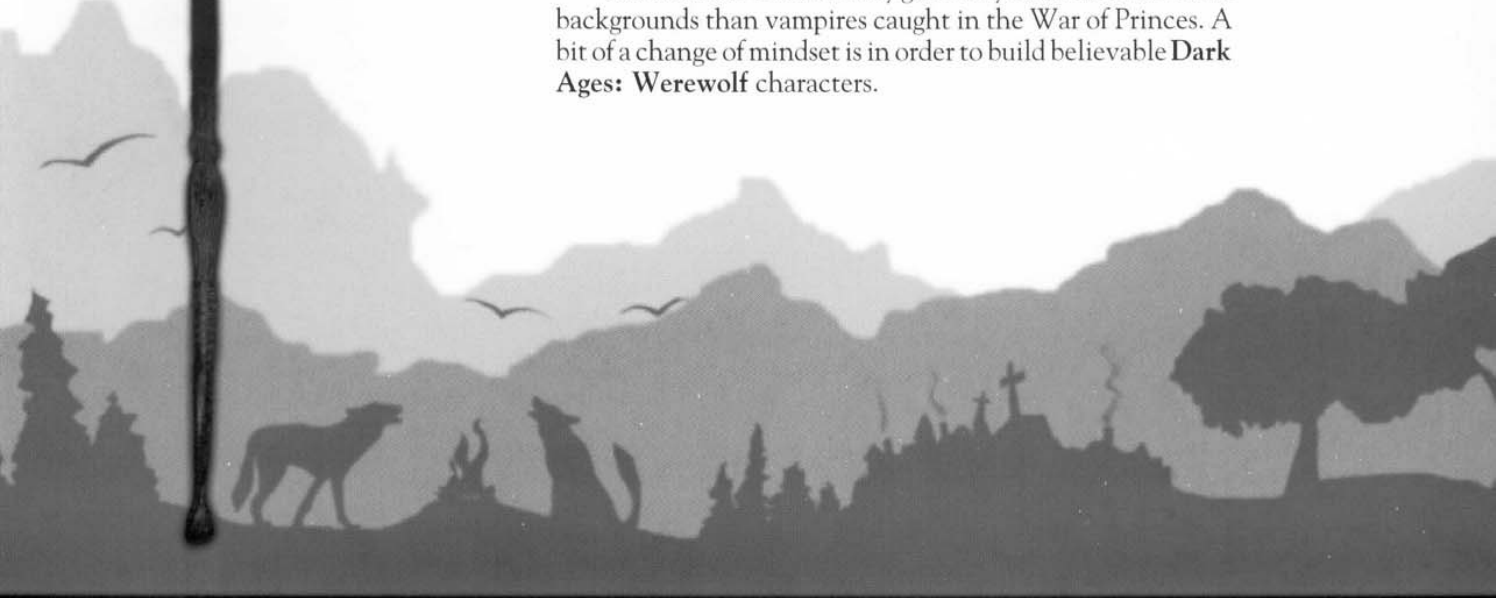

CHAPTER THREE: CHARACTERS AND DRAMA

“There once many a man
moon-glad, goldbright, of gleams garnished,
flushed with wine-pride, flashing war-gear,
gazed on wrought gemstones, on gold, on silver,
on wealth held and hoarded, on light-filled amber,
on this bright burg of broad dominion.”

—“The Ruin,” author unknown

Character creation for **Dark Ages: Werewolf** follows much the same format as for **Dark Ages: Vampire**. This chapter provides all the necessary information for creating werewolf characters, but the player might wish to reread Chapter Five of **Dark Ages: Vampire** for the basics.

Garou of the 13th century generally come from different backgrounds than vampires caught in the War of Princes. A bit of a change of mindset is in order to build believable **Dark Ages: Werewolf** characters.



Garou society holds itself somewhat apart from human society. European society is split into the "three pillars" of medieval life: the nobility, the peasantry and the priesthood. There are nearly no Garou priests or nuns. The Gaian religion is incompatible with the dogma of the Church, and the few priests and nuns with True Faith can repel Garou with a prayer and outstretched cross. The Silver Fangs and Shadow Lords have some Kinfolk among human nobility, and a few might even reign as lords themselves, but outside of those circles, few Garou live as human nobles.

That leaves the more than 90% of human society made up of the peasantry as the main source of Garou Kinfolk. Garou themselves tend to live outside this group, and Kinfolk who follow the werewolves' animistic faith are often cast to the outskirts of society (except in the few hamlets that they dominate). As a result, many Garou come from families that live outside towns. They are the woodsman's children, the tinker's family or the boatman's get. This idea isn't universal, but most Garou are used to being among their own, rejected by nearby human society.

Remember that Garou come into their abilities and true nature around puberty; few of them have extensive adult experience before they know that they are werewolves. As a result, most Garou think of themselves as Garou first and foremost, and their human life as a guise of sorts. Yet, some Garou are Lost Cubs who learn of their heritage only after they have begun their adult lives. These characters might be built along the lines of the templates listed on pp. 135-137 of **Dark Ages: Vampire**. In particular, the Crusader, Fugitive Criminal, Heretic, Worldly Monk or Nun, or Virtuous Monk or Nun might be appropriate for Lost Cubs. Those running Shadow Lords or Silver Fangs with close relationships to worldly power might also wish to take a look at the Power Behind the Throne suggestion on p. 136 of **Dark Ages: Vampire**.

New Traits

Garou are not Cainites. Among other things, they aren't immortal and don't depend on the unholy consumption of human blood to remain active. Accordingly, Garou have different Abilities and Backgrounds than those described for Cainites in **Dark Ages: Vampire**.

Abilities

Garou use the Abilities listed in **Dark Ages: Vampire**, with the following changes:

- The Leadership ability is a Skill for Garou, not a Talent.
- Garou gain the Talent: Primal-Urge.

• While Garou may possess the Commerce Skill, it is far less common for werewolves than for vampires. Warders and other *urrah* are the Garou most likely to make use of it.

• Werewolves replace the Theology Knowledge with Enigmas and the Seneschal Knowledge with Rituals. While nothing prevents a werewolf from understanding Theology, most Kinfolk come from peasant stock and are untrained in the technicalities and specifics of religious theory. Likewise, few werewolves have any idea how to administer holdings — the Curse keeps them from such positions.

New Talent: Primal-Urge

This Ability — common not just to Garou but to all Fera as well as ordinary animals — reflects the unconscious, instinctual abilities that guide wild beasts. Characters with a high rating in Primal-Urge find it to be easier to tap into their wolf natures than those with a low rating or none at all. Garou use Primal-Urge to hunt, especially when in Lupus form. They can also exercise their Primal-Urge to induce a raw, animalistic passion in others they encounter (see **Dramatic Systems**, p. 105, for details on this). Primal-Urge is also paired with Stamina in order to shapeshift.

- **Novice:** Either a young animal or an untrained homid Garou.
- **Practiced:** You are familiar with your animal instincts, but they do not yet govern your activities.
- **Competent:** You can slip your mind from the human to the beast from moment to moment.
- **Expert:** Your wolf nature guides you without your consciously choosing to do so.
- **Master:** You are closely tied to Gaia and the Wyld. Even the beasts of the wood are further removed from their environment than you.

Possessed by: Werewolves, Wild Animals, Hunters

Specialties: Shifting Forms, Hunting, Animal Attraction

New Knowledge: Enigmas

Dealing with spirits requires a level of abstract thought that most people cannot achieve. Spirits don't exactly speak in riddles (not all of them, anyway), but they do act in accordance with their natures, and they can only speak from their own perspectives. Years of dealing with spirits has created a strong tradition of wordplay and riddles in the Garou Nation. Gamecraft, in fact, is a common form of challenge (which is resolved by opposed Wits + Enigmas rolls).

The Enigmas Knowledge measures how well a character can interpret metaphor and puzzles and how quickly she can create her own.

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

• Step One: Character Concept

Choose a concept, breed, auspice and tribe.

• Step Two: Select Attributes

Choose primary, secondary and tertiary categories of Attributes. Start with 1 dot in each Attribute; divide 7 additional dots among primary Attributes, 5 dots among secondary Attributes, 3 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

• Step Three: Select Abilities

Choose primary, secondary and tertiary categories of Abilities. Divide 13 dots among primary Abilities, 9 dots among secondary Abilities, 5 dots among tertiary Abilities.

Talents: Innate aptitudes. All werewolves must begin with at least one dot in Primal-Urge.

Skills: Learned abilities

Knowledges: Academic and intellectual lore.

No Ability can have more than 3 dots at this stage.

• Step Four: Advantages

Choose 5 points worth of Backgrounds, which are restricted by tribe. Choose three Gifts (one breed Gift, one tribe Gift, one auspice Gift).

• Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Rage (by auspice), Gnosis (by breed), Willpower (by tribe), Rank 1 (clan), and Renown (3, distributed per auspice). Spend 15 bonus points.

Breed

See Breeds, p. 51.

• **Homid:** Born of human stock, homid characters mesh better with humanity than any other.

Initial Gnosis: 1

Beginning Gifts: Master of Fire, Persuasion, Smell of Man

• **Metis:** Born of the blasphemous union of two werewolves, all metis are sterile, deformed and reviled, but they know Garou society better than any other werewolves.

Initial Gnosis: 3

Beginning Gifts: Create Element, Sense Wurm, Shed

• **Lupus:** Born to wolves, lupus Garou are in tune with the natural world, but they are often confused and shocked by human behavior.

Initial Gnosis: 5

Beginning Gifts: Hare's Leap, Heightened Senses, Ley Lines

Auspice

See Auspices, p. 52

• **Ragabash, the New Moon:** Spies, tricksters, questioners and assassins.

Initial Rage: 1

Beginning Gifts: Blur of the Milky Eye, Scent of Running Water, Snow Running

Beginning Renown: Three as you wish to distribute them

• **Theurge, the Crescent Moon:** Shamans, seers, spiritualists and healers.

Initial Rage: 2

Beginning Gifts: Mother's Touch, Sense Wurm, Spirit Speech

Beginning Renown: 3 Wisdom

• **Philodox, the Half Moon:** Judges, philosophers, lawgivers and ritualists.

Initial Rage: 3

Beginning Gifts: Resist Pain, Scent of the True Form, Truth of Gaia

Beginning Renown: 3 Honor

• **Galliard, the Gibbous Moon:** Storytellers, Moon Dancers, lifters of spirits.

Initial Rage: 4

Beginning Gifts: Beast Speech, Call of the Wyld, Waking Dream

Beginning Renown: 2 Glory, 1 Wisdom

• **Ahroun, the Full Moon:** Warriors, leaders, and tacticians.

Initial Rage: 5

Beginning Gifts: Falling Touch, Inspiration, Razor Claws

Beginning Renown: 3 Glory

Tribe

See Tribes, pp. 56-75

• **Black Furies:** Fierce warrior-women of the Mediterranean.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: No restrictions

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

Beginning Gifts: Breath of the Wyld, Man's Skin, Sense Wyrn

- **Bone Gnawers:** Survivors and lurkers in human refuse.

Initial Willpower: 4

Backgrounds: May not take Pure Breed or Resources

Beginning Gifts: Cookery, Resist Toxin, Scent of the Honeycomb

- **Children of Gaia:** Missionaries of peace among the Garou.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: No restrictions

Beginning Gifts: Eve's Blessing, Mother's Touch, Resist Pain

- **Fenrir:** The howling warriors of the frozen North.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: May not take Contacts

Beginning Gifts: Hunter's Harmony, Resist Pain, Visage of Fenris

- **Fianna:** Bards and revelers from the British Isles.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: No restrictions

Beginning Gifts: Distract the Fool, Faerie Light, Resist Toxin

- **Red Talons:** An all-lupus tribe that distrusts and hates humanity.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: May not take Resources, Allies or human Contacts or Kinfolk.

Beginning Gifts: Beast Speech, Prey's Cry, Wolf at the Door

- **Shadow Lords:** Scheming and manipulative werewolves of Eastern Europe.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: May not take Allies or Mentor.

Beginning Gifts: Aura of Confidence, Fatal Flaw, Seizing the Edge

- **Silent Striders:** Wandering werewolves cast out of their Egyptian homelands.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: May not take Ancestors or Resources.

Beginning Gifts: Heavens' Guidance, Sense Wyrn, Speed of Thought

- **Silver Fangs:** The ruler tribe, the Silver Fangs hold dominion in the Rus.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: Must take at least three dots of Pure Breed.

Beginning Gifts: Eye of the Falcon, Lambent Flame, Sense Wyrn

- **Warders of Men:** City-dwelling wolves who encourage the progress of humanity.

Initial Willpower: 3

Backgrounds: Pure Breed and Ancestors cost double.

Beginning Gifts: Artisan's Command, Gift of Salt, Persuasion

Backgrounds

Werewolf characters may take the following Backgrounds listed in **Dark Ages: Vampire** (pp. 153-156): Allies, Contacts, Mentor and Resources. In addition, players may purchase dots in the following new Backgrounds.

- **Ancestors:** Your contact with your tribe's ancestor spirits, who can possess you and temporarily lend you their Abilities.
- **Fetish:** Spirit-woven sacred items of power.
- **Hunting Grounds:** Territory you (and your pack) claim.
- **Kinfolk:** Human or wolf family, immune to the Delirium.
- **Pure Breed:** Your lineage and pedigree among the Garou.
- **Rites:** Mystical and ceremonial rituals that you know.
- **Totem:** Your pack's communal spirit ally.

Bonus Point Costs

Attributes	5 bonus points per dot
Abilities	2 bonus points per dot
Ability Specialties (max. three per ability)	1 bonus point each
Backgrounds	1 bonus point per dot
Gifts	7 bonus points per Gift (Level One only)
Rage	1 bonus point per dot
Gnosis	2 bonus points per dot
Willpower	1 bonus point per dot

- **Dabbler:** You played at riddles with your siblings.
- **Student:** You never had to ask your village priest what the meaning behind Christ's parables was.
- **Learned:** You can speak with spirits that are allied with your tribe's totems without much difficulty.
- **Scholar:** Everything in nature has a pattern, and you can unravel these patterns easily.
- **Master:** You learn Gifts from spirits in moments and from other Garou in hours. You've created riddles that people will still be puzzling over centuries from now.

Possessed by: Priests, Jesters, Wise Men and Women, Theurges

Specialties: Spirits, Riddles, Deduction, Quick Solutions

New Knowledge: Rituals

The Rituals Knowledge covers how much the character knows about the rites and spiritual practices of the Garou. It allows a werewolf to understand the various types of rites and how they keep a caern running smoothly. A character must have a Rituals rating equal to or greater than the level of any rite she wishes to learn.

- **Dabbler:** You pay attention at the monthly moots.
- **Student:** You know a few minor rites and can take part in a sept moot easily.
- **Learned:** You could hold a minor sept position; other Garou come to you with questions.
- **Scholar:** You know details about the rituals of other tribes, and could be called upon to perform seasonal and punishment rites.
- **Master:** You can devise your own rites.

Possessed by: Werewolves, Other Fera, Rare Kinfolk

Specialties: Accord, Caern, Death, Mystic, Punishment, Renown, Seasonal, Minor

Backgrounds

Backgrounds represent a character's ties to the world around him in the form of associated characters (Allies, Contacts, Kinfolk and Mentor), valued possessions (Resources, Fetish and Hunting Ground) and spiritual qualities (Ancestors, Pure Breed, Rites and Totem). Backgrounds are nearly always beneficial for the character, but they come with obligations for both the character and the player. For the character, obligations include protection of the person or thing in question or certain expected behaviors. For instance, a character with high a Pure Breed rating is expected to "live up to his poten-

tial," and a totem spirit exacts its own demands of any pack devoted to it.

In addition to the Backgrounds listed here, Garou have access to Allies, Contacts, Mentor and Resources, just as described in **Dark Ages: Vampire**. Garou may pool their Backgrounds, just as Cainites do (see p. 157 of **Dark Ages: Vampire** for details). Of the new Backgrounds listed here, Ancestors, Fetish, Pure Breed and Rites cannot be pooled Backgrounds; Hunting Grounds and Kinfolk can be pooled. Totem is a special case, as it is assumed to be a pooled background. It cannot serve as the Anchor for a pack or be part of a larger Background pool (see the Totem description on p. 85).

Starting Garou receive five points of Backgrounds and may purchase more with bonus points.

Ancestors

Ancestors are the spirits of dead Garou who reside in their tribe's ancestral homeland. The ancestor-spirits of a werewolf with the Ancestors Background pay close attention to his activities and can lend him their strength and skill in time of need. The ancestors of such a Garou possess him and supplant his Abilities with their own. Garou with this Background also often have hazy and indistinct visions of the past, being tied closer to it than to their

WISDOM OF THE AGES

For the most part, ancestor-spirits contribute Abilities that make up their core essence when called upon by their descendants. The player who takes the time to personalize his character's ancestor-spirits might wish to call upon knowledge, rather than Abilities, from the spirits. If, for instance, the pack is tracking down an ancient Roman vampire, a character might wish to contact one of his Roman-era ancestors and ask if she has any information about the vampire's activities from her living days.

Detailed information is very difficult for ancestor spirits to dredge up, though, so the player should roll against a difficulty of 9 (rather than 8). For every success, he can ask a single question of his ancestor spirit. Doing so counts as the one use of Ancestors per session. A botch on this roll causes the spirit to be mistaken, or to actively lie. In a heavily Wyrms-tainted area, the Garou might become possessed by a Wyrms-thing instead.

The spirit's answers are likely to be shrouded in allusion and symbolism rather than being straightforward factual responses. This is not because the spirit chooses to play games with its descendant, but rather because hard factual information is hard to retain in the afterlife.

current lives. Werewolves with the Ancestors Background often have a close relationship with their tribe's history, and many show an inordinate interest in the sagas of ancient days.

Once per game session, the character may call upon his ancestors for aid. The player rolls a number of dice equal to the character's Ancestors Background. The difficulty of this roll is 8 (but see the sidebar). For each success, the player adds one die to the Ability of his choice, even if the character has no rating in the Ability. All of the dice must be added to the same Ability, and that Ability cannot be raised above 5. The bonus dice last for the remainder of the scene. A botch on this roll prevents the character from using Ancestors to improve the chosen Ability until the next new moon, or it might result in the werewolf's possession by a malevolent spirit at the Storyteller's discretion.

The most forward-looking tribes, the Bone Gnawers and the Warders of Men, are slowly losing their relationship with their ancestor-spirits and few of them exhibit this Background. The Silent Striders have been cut off from their tribal homeland, and as a result, their ancestor-spirits are nowhere to be found. They cannot purchase Ancestors at all.

Players of Garou with Ancestors might wish to personalize the Background, choosing particular ancestor-spirits who excelled in certain Abilities in life. He might look to Arn the Cleaver when he needs to improve

his Melee or Athletics, but summon up the essence of Mara Soothers-the-Senate when he needs diplomatic abilities. Players might wish to go so far as to roleplay their characters differently when their characters are possessed by different ancestor-spirits.

- The Garou has occasional hazy visions.
- The Garou has unreliable ties to a few minor ancestors.
- The Garou has strong ties to his heritage.
- The Garou regularly evinces skills he's never learned.
- The Garou is heir to the bloodlines of half a dozen fabled heroes, who speak to him regularly.

Fetish

A Garou with the Fetish Background owns items with great spiritual power bound into them. These items could be heirlooms, gifts or treasures taken from defeated foes. An experienced Garou's Fetish rating might even represent fetishes she made herself.

Any werewolf can have a fetish. Every point of the Fetish Background represents one level worth of fetishes. A character with three points in the Fetish Background can have a single three-point fetish, a two-point fetish and a one-point fetish or three one-point fetishes.



Young Garou with powerful fetishes (ones worth four or five dots) are likely to come under intense scrutiny from elder members of their tribe. Such characters are expected to live up to their fetishes' names, and if they are shown to be dishonorable, they might face whispers that the fetishes are stolen, if not outright challenges for ownership.

- You have a Level-One fetish.
- You have a Level-Two fetish, or two Level-One fetishes.
- You have one or more fetishes whose total ratings equal three.
- You have one or more fetishes whose total ratings equal four.
- You have one or more fetishes whose total ratings equal five.

HUNTING GROUNDS

The Hunting Grounds Background typically represents a large stretch of wilderness in which a Garou (or pack) can freely hunt and breed. This wilderness generally contains no humans, though the Garou might choose to have a few living therein. (These humans might be Kinfolk, allies, contacts or just ordinary humans who happen to live in the area.) If the player prefers, the Hunting Grounds may represent part of a city, though typically such is the case only among *urrah*. Hunting grounds in a city aren't empty of human habitation. Quite the contrary, they are as populous as any other part of town. The influence of the Wyrms and Weaver is kept at a minimum in such areas, however, as the very territorial Garou are quick to burn out any such infestation in their homes.

This Background differs from the vampires' Domain Background in a few respects, but the most important of them is that the Garou do not rule their hunting grounds. They protect and nurture the land. They might hunt for food within them, but they do not despoil them. The Garou are almost never the "official" rulers of their hunting grounds. They are the caretakers, but they let the human nobility think that it rules the place while it passes laws regarding it and so on. The Silver Fangs and Shadow Lords are the only exceptions, and most of the time, even they don't formally rule over humans in their territory.

Hunting Grounds is probably the best choice for an Anchor Background for a Background pool. Any people living within the hunting grounds might then be represented as Allies, Contacts or Kinfolk.

A single pack rarely, if ever, controls a caern, so a pack's hunting grounds probably won't contain one. If the pack manages to successfully perform the Rite of Caern Building (p. 147) and open a new caern, it will likely become the ruling body of the caern, but other

members of their tribes will arrive in short order to help with the maintenance of the caern.

Just as dots in Domain can be used to increase the area's size or security, a player (or troupe) may allocate dots of Hunting Grounds for any of the following:

- Reduce the Gauntlet within the grounds by one (to a minimum of 4).
- Make the area more amenable to human (and Garou) survival: Reduce the difficulty of Survival rolls by one. (This can be bought only three times.)
- Make the beasts of the area more amenable to the Garou: Reduce the difficulty of Animal Ken rolls by one. (This can be bought only three times.)
- Make the flora of the area more useful: Reduce the difficulty of rolls involving plants (including Medicine and Hearth Wisdom rolls to employ them for healing) by one. (This can be bought only three times.)
- The troupe might also decide to *increase* the difficulties of the preceding rolls, in order to gain points toward their Hunting Grounds rating. For example, the Hunting Grounds might be located primarily in a rolling field that is almost completely devoid of healing or useful herbs. The troupe might decide to apply a +2 difficulty to any rolls to use these plants then add two points to the Hunting Grounds rating (which might then be applied to size or to a different modifier).

Note that changes to the difficulty of Abilities apply throughout the hunting grounds, and they do not affect the difficulty of supernatural abilities within the area. Additionally, these modifiers cannot take a difficulty below 2 or above 9.

Hunting Ground size:

- An acre or so — space to run, perhaps a hiding place, but nothing to hunt except small game and that which is just passing through.
- A small wood, perhaps with a stream running through it. A few acres.
- Several acres, with plenty of native wildlife.
- A broad swath of land. Dozens of acres.
- A large and verdant wilderness, with a heart more than a day away from civilization.

Kinfolk

Garou blood is a rare trait. Like blue eyes, one's ability to turn into a werewolf does not always pass to one's children. Only one in 10 children of Garou are Garou themselves. As described on p. 24, however, wolves and humans with Garou blood do gain a few benefits. Any children they bear might be Garou, and they do not suffer from the Delirium.

The Kinfolk Background represents the number of Kinfolk that the Garou has in the area that he can

call upon for aid and succor. These Kinfolk will not always be willing to go out of their way to aid the Garou, but they are family, and they can be called on for shelter, information and perhaps a few coins now and then. Kinfolk designated by this Background do not hold positions of power (either political, mercantile or religious). Such individuals should be bought with the Allies Background.

Note that Red Talon Kinfolk are always wolves, which means that a Red Talon with a high Kinfolk rating might have almost a dozen packs of kin roaming the wilderness for scores of miles. Wolf Kinfolk aren't as intelligent as humans, but they have a wider range and keen senses. For instance, they might not be able to tell the difference between a sword and a spear, but they'll know about violent humans on the march hours (if not days) before humans 10 miles away do.

Human Kinfolk might be small farmers, ordinary laborers, townsfolk, soldiers, serfs or slaves. Kinfolk are more likely to be woodsmen or otherwise live on the edge of the wilderness than ordinary humans are.

- Two Kinfolk (perhaps the character's siblings or parents)
- Five Kinfolk (perhaps a family)
- 10 Kinfolk (an extended family)
- 20 Kinfolk (multiple towns or a major force in a single village)
- 50 Kinfolk (a broad network extending across many towns)

Pure Breed

The Pure Breed Background represents the strength of a werewolf's bloodline. A Garou with a high Pure Breed score has the archetypal look of her tribe. Additionally, a Garou with a high Pure Breed rating has a well-known lineage, and she descends from famous Garou heroes. She unconsciously carries herself as befits someone of such rank. This Background does not grant the character additional Renown.

Other Garou recognize the character's bearing and lineage, and unconsciously defer to her as a result. The character receives a number of dice equal to her Pure Breed rating to Social or challenge rolls against other Garou, including both Errants and Black Spiral Dancers.

This Background is not available to Bone Gnawers, who spend their days and nights surrounded by ordinary humans and breed with them freely. Likewise, the Warders of Men occasionally still produce pure-bred Garou, but very rarely (which is why the Background costs double for Warden characters). Silver Fangs must take at least three dots in Pure Breed. Note that many metis have at least one dot in Pure Breed, even though they themselves will never produce children.

- The character has a similarity to her Garou parent.
- There's a noteworthy hero in the character's recent ancestry.
- The Garou has many of the favored features of her tribe.
- Many heroes of the last few centuries can be found on the Garou's family tree.
- The character is the embodiment of her tribe's greatest heroes.

Rites

The Rites Background represents the number and power of rituals the Garou knows. Rituals are lengthy invocations of Gaia's power. They might have relatively simple results (like finding a lost knife) or hugely powerful ones (like building a new caern). Rituals are listed and described in detail on pp. 145-155.

For every dot in Rites, the Garou has one level worth of rites. A character with Rites 3 might have three Level-One rites, a Level-One and a Level-Two rite or a single Level-Three rite.

Unlike Gifts, Garou learn rites from other werewolves. When purchasing the Rites Background, the player should determine how the character learned the rites in question. Does she have a mentor who taught them, or were the rites simply part of the cub's education?

- The character knows one Level-One ritual.
- The character knows one Level-Two ritual or two Level-One rituals.
- The character knows three levels worth of rituals.
- The character knows four levels worth of rituals.
- The character knows five levels worth of rituals.

Totem

No pack of Garou is a true pack unless it has a patron spirit to act as its collective totem. Just as caerns and tribes have their own totem spirits, the gathered energy and mutual affection of a pack empowers a minor spirit (usually a Jagglings) to serve, aid and direct the pack. The Jagglings is a servant of an Incarna. It is something of an avatar of that Incarna, in fact, having the same general characteristics of that great spirit. A pack totem that serves Griffin is a Griffin-spirit, for instance.

Many packs go on an Umbral quest to gain the attention of an Incarna and thus attract a pack totem, but some totem spirits are attracted to packs of Garou based entirely on the pack's actions in the Realm.

Any Garou can have the Totem Background, but none has it for himself alone. Totem is automatically a pooled Background, but it cannot be an Anchor or part of a Background pool. A pack's points in Totem are added

together to determine the spirit's abilities. The pack must first purchase the totem spirit's basic abilities (determined by its patron Incarna, see Pack Totems, p. 227), and it can purchase qualities as listed here with leftover points. The Storyteller may make other abilities available for a pack totem spirit, at similar costs to those listed here. Players may contribute experience points to the totem spirit as the characters advance. The spirit can purchase new abilities by spending two experience points for every point of Background cost of a given ability. For instance, after the pack has collectively contributed four experience points to the spirit, it could learn a new Charm. The spirit's purchases and new abilities are determined by the Storyteller, not the troupe (though the Storyteller should certainly accept suggestions).

Every starting pack totem spirit has the following traits:

- Eight points to split among Willpower, Rage and Gnosis
- **Charm:** Airt Sense
- **Charm:** Re-form

Additional points of Totem can spent as per the following chart.

Cost	Power
1	Per three points to spend on Willpower, Gnosis and/ or Rage
1	Totem can speak to the pack without using a Charm or the Spirit Speech Gift
1	Totem can nearly always find each pack member
2	Totem is nearly always with the pack
2	Other spirits respect the totem
2	Per additional Charm known
3	Per extra pack member who can use the totem's powers in a single turn
4	Totem can communicate with every pack member simultaneously regardless of the distance between them
5	Totem is feared and hated by agents of the Wyrms (which can be useful for intimidation purposes, but dangerous if they decide to hunt the spirit down)

Merits and Flaws

As in **Dark Ages: Vampire**, Merits and Flaws can add a little more spice and life to your character. All the Merits and Flaws from **Dark Ages: Vampire** (pp. 303-310) may be taken, except for those listed in the "Forbidden Traits" sidebar. Remember, Merits and Flaws are *always* optional.

Players controlling metis characters might choose one of the Flaws listed here as the character's deformity. If so, the character gains no bonus points for the Flaw. Such Flaws are noted in their descriptions.

Physical

Animal Magnetism (1-pt. Merit)

You are especially attractive to others of your breed. You receive a -2 difficulty on seduction or animal attraction rolls (which might inspire some jealousy in others who view you as competition).

Mixed-Morph (1-pt. Merit)

Transforming certain body parts only, such as your hands into claws while in Homid form or changing your Lupus vocal cords into a human voice box, is easier for you than for most werewolves. The difficulty for this change is 6, although doing so still requires a Willpower point (see p. 105).

Bad Taste (2-pt. Merit)

Your flesh exudes oils that taste so bad that anyone who bites or licks you becomes nauseated. The would-be biter must make a successful Willpower roll each turn for the remainder of the scene or be unable to act due to retching. Lupus and wolves might react poorly to you; they obviously won't lick you. These oils aren't odorous in any way, but you must constantly wipe oily sweat from yourself.

Fair Glabro (2-pt. Merit)

Your Glabro form can pass for a human, albeit a large, bulky one. You lose no Social Attributes when in Glabro.

Lack of Scent (2-pt. Merit)

You produce no scent, or your scent is extremely faint. Garou or other hunters who use scent find you hard to track. Any attempts to track you are at +2 difficulty.

FORBIDDEN TRAITS

Some Merits and Flaws may not be taken for **Dark Ages: Werewolf** characters.

- **Physical:** Eat Food, Blush of Health, Efficient Digestion, Smell of the Grave, 13th Generation, Ragged Bite, Leper, Permanent Wound, Child

- **Mental:** Prey Exclusion, Religious Prohibition, Flesh Eater

- **Social:** Apostate (Note: Merits and Flaws referring to a character's sire, such as Infamous Sire or Prestigious Sire, are usually allowable, except that they refer to the werewolf's mentor.)

- **Supernatural:** Initiate to the Road, Repulsed by Garlic, Cannot Embrace, Cast No Reflection, Blood Madness, Grip of the Damned, Weak Blood

Unobtrusive (2-pt. Merit)

You are fairly average in both appearance and action. You don't attract attention to yourself. Others have a +1 difficulty when trying to remember anything particular about you, be it your hair color or a wild frenzy from last night.

Animal Musk (1-pt. Flaw)

You smell like an animal in Homid form. You suffer +2 difficulty on Social rolls where your smell is obvious. This scent does not bother other animals, only humans.

Asthma (1-pt. Flaw)

You have difficulty performing strenuous tasks because you cannot breathe properly. Your lungs only draw a fraction of the air that they require. You can exert yourself for only a number of turns equal to your Stamina rating, after which you must make a Stamina roll against a difficulty of 6 or be unable to perform any action in the next round while you catch your breath.

No Partial Transformation (1-pt. Flaw)

You cannot take any mixed forms at all.

Strict Carnivore (1-pt. Flaw)

You derive no nourishment from plant life, and you must only eat meat — preferably raw. Surviving long winters where prey is scarce is difficult for you.

Wolf Years (2-pt. Flaw)

Your life span is that of a wolf, rather than that of a normal Garou. In other words, you've got 12 to 20 years at most. You start to lose dots of Attributes after approximately six years of life. The exact effects of aging are up to the Storyteller.

Mental

Shy (1-pt. Flaw)

You are distinctly ill at ease when dealing with people, and you try to avoid social situations whenever you can. All Social rolls are at a +1 difficulty. If you are the center of attention, your difficulty is at a +2.

Speech Impediment (1-pt. Flaw)

You stammer, stutter or slur your words whenever you speak (even when speaking in Garou tongue). All Social rolls influenced by speech are made at a +2 difficulty.

Pack Mentality (2-pt. Flaw)

The pack is your life; you are nothing without them. You closely identify with your place in your pack, and you think in terms of "us," not "me." You receive a -1 on all pack tactics difficulties. When alone, you receive a +1 to *all* difficulties. You are so dependent on your pack that you find it hard to make decisions without them. In stressful situations when you are without your pack, the Storyteller might require you to make a Willpower roll to act on your own.

Short Fuse (2-pt. Flaw)

The difficulty of your frenzy rolls is always two lower (minimum three), regardless of the phase of the moon or how you might be provoked. The Wyrms touch on you is stronger than normal, and you naturally fall more easily into the Thrall of the Wyrms (see p. 95).

Callous (4-pt. Flaw)

You are unusually cold and heartless toward others (human, Garou or otherwise), even when they are in the worst of trouble. You will help, but only when you actually feel like it and if there is some payment to you. You would even turn your back on your mother, unless there was some good reason not to. You must spend one Willpower point to come to someone's aid. You may not take Caretaker as either your Nature or Demeanor, nor may you possess the Empathy Ability. The bond between you and your pack is weak. You may not take part in pack initiative, and all pack tactics are at +1 difficulty.

Devil's Own (5-pt. Flaw)

You believe that your powers as a werewolf have been given to you by the Devil himself. No matter what the other Garou tell you, you are still convinced that the Devil gave you these "gifts." Also, you are more than willing to tell other people how you were "given" the ability of shapeshifting. Needless to say, this attitude does not endear you to your fellow werewolves, and it will draw the wrath of the Church down upon you if you repeat your tale of woe to the wrong person. You receive a +2 difficulty to any Social rolls with other Garou who know of your foolish beliefs. Additionally, you must roll Rage to check for frenzy *every time* you change shape, except when assuming your natural form. Only homid characters may take this Flaw.

Social

Reputation (2-pt. Merit)

You have a good reputation among the Garou of your sept. The reputation can be your own, or it might

derive from your pack. You gain three dice for all social dealings with your sept's Garou. This Merit is not the same thing as Renown. A werewolf with little renown might have good reputation based on breeding, ancestors or an event for which she has already received Renown (such as something that occurred on her Rite of Passage).

Foreigner (1-pt. Flaw)

You are from a different country. This new surrounding looks odd to you, and you have a hard time understanding the language. All of your Social rolls are at a +1 difficulty. Your character must be from a different country than where your Storyteller is setting the game.

Persistent Parents (2-pt. Flaw)

Your parents refuse to let your memory lie, and they continue to actively look for you. How close they are to your trail is the Storyteller's decision. You cannot simply tell them what has become of you. Perhaps they have ties to the Church, or perhaps the news would simply crush them. Only homicidal characters may take this Flaw, and only if the parents have a reasonable chance of finding the character.

Notoriety (3-pt. Flaw)

You have a bad reputation among the Garou of your (or another) sept. The reputation might be your own, or it might derive from your pack. There is a two-dice penalty to all dice rolls for social dealings with your sept's Garou. This is not the same thing as Renown. A character with this Flaw may take the Merit: Reputation. The two traits simply don't apply to the same sept.

Wolf's Obsession (4-pt. Flaw)

Wolves mate for life, and before your Change, you were married, engaged or at least in love. You have never forgotten your lover, and you are obsessed with her and her well being. You cannot allow yourself to be too far away from your paramour, and if circumstances separate you, you cannot regain Willpower until you see her again. You also lose sight of the fact that you are dangerous on certain nights. When your auspice moon shines, you feel almost uncontrollably drawn to your love's side (roll Willpower every other scene to avoid searching out your love).

Supernatural

Ancestor Ally (1-pt. Merit)

You are strongly linked to one particular ancestor, so the difficulty to channel her is two lower than

normal. Create the ancestor; give her a name, Abilities for which she was known (and which you can easily channel) and decide how renowned she was among other Garou. You may channel a number of Abilities at the lower difficulty equal to your Ancestors rating. You must have the Ancestors Background to purchase this Merit.

Natural Channel (3-pt. Merit)

You find the Gauntlet between worlds thinner than most Garou do. Your difficulty to step sideways is one less, and spirits react a bit more favorably to you. Even if you aren't a Theurge, you won't find it difficult to obtain training from the Garou shamans.

Spirit Rapport (4-pt. Merit)

The spirits like you. For some reason, you are able to communicate with them a bit easier than many other Garou are. When dealing with spirits, you are at a -1 difficulty. If you are trying to bargain with them, you are at a -2 difficulty. Regardless of your auspice, you may purchase the following Gifts at the normal cost for Theurges: Spirit Speech, Name the Spirit, Command Spirit and Pulse of the Invisible.

Silver Tolerance (7-pt. Merit)

You have an immunity of sorts to silver. You are able to soak damage inflicted by silver, although it still causes aggravated damage. Also, any Gnosis loss from carrying silver items is halved for Garou with this Merit. Instead of losing one Gnosis for each silver item, you lose one Gnosis for each pair of silver items that you carry (round up).

Foe From the Past (1- to 3-pt. Flaw)

An enemy of one of your ancestors still seeks revenge through the only way left — you. If the enemy is supernatural, such as a vampire, mage or spirit, this Flaw is worth three points. If you are being stalked by a fanatical inquisitor or other human, it is worth one or two points, depending on how powerful your foe is. She doesn't necessarily pursue you all the time. She is out for revenge against your ancestor, and you are simply the best path to that vengeance. Of course, if your foe is human, there needs to be some history involved (e.g. long-standing family blood feud). You must have the Ancestors Background to purchase this Flaw.

Forced Transformation (1- to 4-pt. Flaw)

Some event or condition forces you to shapeshift uncontrollably. You must spend a Willpower point

each time to resist the change. Once you have shifted, you cannot change back until the condition forcing the change has passed. Choose one of the following or create your own.

- Every full moon, you must assume Crinos form (2 points)
- When your auspice waxes, you assume Crinos form (2 points)
- You change under influence of alcohol: to Glabro (1 point), to Crinos (3 points)
- When you are sexually aroused: to Glabro (1 point), to Crinos (3 points); if you are lupus: to Homid (3 points)
- When you get angry (just short of a Rage roll): to Glabro (1 point), to Crinos (3 points)
- When you frenzy, you take a form other than Crinos: to Glabro or Hispo (2 points), to Lupus (3 points), to Homid (4 points)
- At the sight of wolfsbane: to Homid (1 point)

Geas (1- to 5-pt. Flaw)

You are under some sort of *geas* at the beginning of play. This *geas* might be a family curse or duty that you have inherited. The difficulty of the *geas* determines how great a Flaw it is. Something minor, such as a ban against harming animals or a requirement to give occasionally to charity, would be worth only one point. A five-point *geas* is something that rules your life, like having to howl at the moon four times a night. The Storyteller decides the exact value of whatever *geas* you choose. The player and Storyteller should feel free to make up their own. A few examples:

- Give to charity at the turn of the seasons (1 pt.)
- Fast for one day per lunar cycle (2 pt.)
- Leave an offering for Gaia once a week (3 pt.)
- Spend an hour in complete solitude once per 24-hour cycle (4 pt.)
- Howl to Luna four times a day (5 pt.)

What happens when the character breaks the *geas* is up the Storyteller. Some possibilities include: losing access to Gnosis or Rage, losing access to Gifts, only being able to shift to breed form, fur or hair falling out, loss of Willpower, simple physical damage and horrid nightmares. The duration of these effects is rarely permanent. Typically, they last until the Garou can make recriminations (possibly by performing the Rite of Renunciation).

BANNED TRANSFORMATION (1- to 6-pt. Flaw)

Some circumstance prevents you to changing to any form other than your breed form. Choose one of the following or create your own. You must spend a

Willpower point and make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) to change to a form other than to your breed form when the event occurs.

- Soothing music (1 point)
- When wolfsbane is near (2 points)
- Without spending a Rage point (3 points)
- During the day (4 points)
- When silver is near (5 points)
- When the moon cannot be seen (6 points)

INSANE ANCESTOR (1-pt. Flaw)

One of your ancestors was mad. This spirit takes over during certain situations and is quite a hindrance. Choose an appropriate situation. Create the ancestor; give her a name and define the nature of her madness. Play it to the hilt. If the Storyteller deems you aren't playing the ancestor well, she can declare that you've spent a Willpower point to suppress your troublesome spirit. You must have the Ancestors Background to purchase this Flaw.

Slip Sideways (1-pt. Flaw)

You can't always control your entry into the Umbra. If you should confront a reflective surface during stressful situations, roll Wits + Occult (difficulty 7) to avoid making the shift. You must still make a Gnosis roll to pass the Gauntlet, although your difficulty is one less — but *only* when you accidentally step sideways. Deliberate entry into the Umbra remains at normal difficulty.

Mark of the Predator (2-pt. Flaw)

Herbivores fear you, carnivores see you as a threat. You cannot possess Animal Ken.

Sign of the Wolf (2-pt. Flaw)

You possess all the folkloric signs of werewolves. Your eyebrows have grown together, you have hair on your palms, and your second and third digits are the same length. Inquisitors are trained to look for these signs and can use them to identify you as a werewolf.

Rage

Whether the Garou wage total war on the battlefield or join in a drunken brawl, they fight with a ferocity unlike anything a human can comprehend. From where does this anger spring? The answer does not lie in Gifts or magic, but in an ancient and powerful force that all Garou are born with. They know of it as Rage, and to them it is both a blessing and a curse.

While Rage benefits them with terrifying speed, unfathomable strength, relentless stamina and an in-

instinctual canniness compared only to that of predatory animals, it is also extremely self-destructive. Many werewolves describe it as an inner beast that constantly attempts to force them into giving up any essence of reason in favor of its savage blood thirst and uncontrolled violence. Occasionally, this happens, and once they are lost to Rage, the Garou allow nothing to stand in their way. In fact, during the recent eclipse, many Ahroun frenzied and rampaged through hamlets and villages, leaving a trail of dead behind.

As a trait, Rage measures the amount of primal fury that seethes in a character and is noted on the character sheet as two separate lines. The top line symbolizes the character's permanent rating, while the lower is the temporary rating. These ratings work exactly as Willpower and Gnosis; the permanent rating acts as the dice pool when a Rage roll is called for.

BENEFITS AND DANGERS OF RAGE

Players may use Rage only during situations of extreme stress or when the Storyteller deems it appropriate. Players can spend Rage at any time during a turn except when they want to gain extra actions. They must state their intentions to do so during the turn's declaration stage for this usage of Rage. The following are some of the benefits and dangers of Rage:

- **The Curse:** Humans and animals sense the predator hiding within, and they attempt to avoid all contact with a Garou whose Rage is high. Described on p. 91.

- **Extra Actions:** By spending Rage points, a player grants her character additional actions for use in the same turn. She may not spend more points in a single turn than half the character's permanent Rage rating (rounded up), though. Also, the character's Dexterity or Wits rating — whichever is the lowest — determines the maximum number of extra actions that the character can safely take in one turn. If the character is in frenzy, this limit does not apply. Each additional action above the limit occurs at a +3 difficulty as the werewolf's body (Dexterity) or mind (Wits) struggles to keep up with the demands he has placed on it. Remember

that spent points are forfeit even if actions remain unused at the end of the turn. Extra actions are resolved in the same manner as those gained from Celerity (see p. 180 of *Dark Ages: Vampire*). Also, players may not take multiple actions (as described on p. 116 of *Dark Ages: Vampire*) when using Rage actions.

- **Frenzy:** Occasionally, Rage overcomes the Garou and forces them to frenzy. Described on p. 94.

- **Losing the Wolf:** Whereas the mad state of frenzy might be beneficial in



battle, losing the wolf is always a horrifying experience. This occurs when a character's temporary Rage and Willpower both reach zero. Until the character regains one point of Willpower, he is completely unable to regain Rage. Worse yet, the character immediately changes to her breed form and remains there until she can regain Willpower (and therefore Rage). Once the character regains a Willpower point, Rage replenishes as normal.

- **Remaining Active:** When a character's health levels drop below Incapacitated, the player is able to keep him active (or prevent him from dying) by making a Rage roll (difficulty 8). Each success on the roll heals one level of damage; this may only be attempted once per scene. Nevertheless, the aftereffects are different depending on whether the damage was bashing, lethal or aggravated. Garou who are healing bashing damage enter frenzy only if the player rolled four or more successes on the Rage roll. Meanwhile, those who are healing lethal or aggravated damage *automatically* enter berserk frenzy, in addition to suffering a Battle Scar because of the strain involved.

- **Withstanding Stun:** If a character loses more health levels in one turn than his Stamina rating, he is immediately stunned and unable to act during the next turn. By spending a point of Rage, the werewolf ignores the effect and acts as normal.

- **Ignoring Pain:** During combat, a player might wish to reduce the amount of dice penalties a character suffers. By spending a point of Rage, the character can ignore the dice penalty of one health level of damage. Doing so does not heal the damage or alleviate pain caused by other injuries, but it allows the character to take a focused action before the pain sets in again. This effect lasts one turn.

GAINING RAGE

While Storytellers are free to come up with their own ways to replenish lost Rage, the following are some examples:

- **The Moon:** When werewolves lay eyes upon the moon for the first time in the evening, their tempers flare for a short time. Under the new moon, a character gains one point; under the half or waxing moon, three points; while a full moon or eclipse grants four points. If the current moon phase and the character's auspice correlate, however, he regains his entire pool.

- **Botch:** Garou never take failure lightly, and with Storyteller approval, a character may receive a Rage point after a botched roll.

- **Humiliation:** Humiliating and scorning a Garou or his actions quite often proves painful, or on occasion, fatal. Being proud champions of Gaia, they do not respond well to such situations, and as their tempers rise, so does their Rage. Should a situation be extremely embarrassing for the character, the Storyteller may allow the werewolf to regain a Rage point.

- **Confrontation:** The muscles tense. The pulse increases as the heart beats heavier. The sensation of death or victory fills the mind. The copper smell of blood permeates the air. This is life on the battlefield and a common experience to the Garou. At Storyteller approval, a character may gain a Rage point in tense situations right before combat erupts. This reflects any anticipation or heckling that happens when tempers start to flare.

- **Embrace Pain:** The first time a character is wounded in combat, he regains one point of Rage. This applies only once per combat, and only if the character can feel the pain (that is, not in frenzy and not using the Gift: Resist Pain).

- **New Stories:** At the beginning of each new story, players roll a die to determine the starting amount of Rage in their characters' pools. Players are strongly encouraged to provide the Storyteller with creative tales about events occurring between stories in order to explain the shift in Rage. Storytellers who wish to increase the speed at which Rage fluctuates may instigate this roll every *day* rather than every story.

The Curse

Humans and animals can sometimes sense when something is amiss; whether they credit a sixth sense or simply a natural talent. When it comes to the Garou, they often sense the predator hiding within, and as a result, they attempt to avoid further contact.

For each dot of Rage above a human's Willpower rating, the character loses one die on Social rolls made during encounters with that person. (This excludes supernatural beings including vampires and mages, but inquisitors do fall victim to the Curse.) Since the average person's Willpower ranges from 2 to 4, this is a serious drawback for the werewolf populace. The Garou call this "the Curse" as it renders keeping houses in cities or villages, or marrying non-Kinfolk almost impossible. The Curse also affects animals, who are likely to flee or at least grow uncomfortable in the werewolf's presence.

As Mother Church searches for enemies to torch, the Curse is growing into a more serious threat to the werewolves. While it does not reveal their secret, it makes it easier to spot the Garou and often gets them accused of all manner of *maleficum*. Several werewolves in Italy have already died because of the Curse, and the future looks even grimmer.

Gnosis

As beings partly made of ephemera, the Garou are able to interact with the spirits and the spirit world that surrounds them. Many believe that Gaia gave

them Gnosis when she gifted them with Rage so that they would never forget their true origin.

In addition to fueling their Gifts, Gnosis allows the Garou to step into the spirit world. A werewolf without — or with minor amounts of — Gnosis finds interacting with the spirit world difficult. Meanwhile, those who are deeply in touch with their spirit halves often find it difficult to sort out which side of the Gauntlet they are on as the worlds continually blur.

As a trait, Gnosis measures the character's tie with his spiritual side and is noted on the character sheet as two separate lines. Like Willpower and Rage, the top line indicates the character's permanent rating and dice pool, while the bottom line is marked off as the player spends Gnosis.

BENEFITS AND DANGERS OF GNOSIS

Gnosis imposes some restrictions, though not as many or as severe as Rage, and it makes it possible for Garou to deal with spirits and the spirit world in various ways.

- **Rage and Gnosis:** The meditative thought required to channel Gnosis is so antithetical to the overwhelming passion of Rage that the two cannot be called upon together. Therefore, players cannot spend or roll Rage and Gnosis in the same turn. This includes rolls to step sideways (meaning a werewolf can't step sideways as a Rage action). The only exception is certain Gifts that require the expenditure of both. In such cases, the teacher spirit has taught its pupil how to channel the powers simultaneously.

- **Carrying Silver:** Carrying silver objects has a negative effect on the werewolves' ability to interact with their spiritual halves. Each object reduces the character's Gnosis pool by one. Nevertheless, certain potent objects might decrease the rating even further. Carrying too much silver can cause all members of the pack to suffer a decrease of their Gnosis. Fortunately, the effect is only temporary, and it ceases after a day once they discard the silver. See p. 92 for more information on silver.

- **Using Gifts:** Many Gifts require the expenditure of Gnosis or a Gnosis roll. For more information on Gifts, see Chapter Four.

- **Fetishes:** The Garou uses Gnosis to attune or activate fetishes. See p. 84 for more information of fetishes.

- **Stepping Sideways:** Entering the Umbra requires a Gnosis roll.

REGAINING GNOSIS

As with Rage, there are several ways to regain Gnosis.

- **Meditation:** Although they are warriors first and foremost, werewolves must sometimes withdraw from both bloodshed and packmates to contemplate and explore their inner selves and their connection to the Sacred Mother. Through meditation, a character can sometimes regain Gnosis. The character must spend at least one hour in one place intensely focusing on his spiritual essence. The player must declare how long the character meditates before rolling Wits + Enigmas (difficulty 8). Each success on the roll equals one point of regained Gnosis. It is possible to regain only one point per hour, however, regardless of the number of successes. This special form of meditation is possible only once per day, and for each subsequent attempt during the same week, the difficulty increases by one (to a maximum of 10).

- **Sacred Hunt:** The Sacred Hunt is an important rite that is frequently performed at Garou moots for the good of the people and the caern. By summoning an Engling and hunting it down to slay it, the Garou sharpen their minds and senses. Once it has been slain, the participants give thanks to the spirit for the gift of its life force. Everyone who participates in the hunt replenishes his entire Gnosis pool.

- **Bargaining with Spirits:** Occasionally, the Garou encounters a spirit who they can attempt to bargain with for minor amounts of Gnosis. While some kind spirits grant their request without asking for anything in return, most ask the Garou to perform an errand or task in their service as exchange for a piece of their life force.

- **Between Stories:** During downtime, the players can make a Charisma + Enigmas roll (difficulty 7). Each success on the roll replenishes one point of Gnosis. Generous Storytellers may simply allow all characters to begin each story with their full Gnosis pool.

STEPPING SIDeways

Although the Gauntlet cuts humanity off from the spirit world, the Garou are able to penetrate it because of their half-spirit nature. Stepping sideways is as natural to them as walking. All have the ability and become aware of it shortly after the First Change passes. Inside, they feel the calling of the Umbra (the natural home of spirits), and hidden in their minds is the secret to get there.

While it is difficult to explain, a Garou might simply state: "Stop for a moment. Don't step backward or forward, or even up or down. Instead, close your eyes and feel the surroundings with your soul. Once you do, take a step."

The Gauntlet's strength depends on where the Garou attempts to step sideways, and it determines the difficulty to step sideways. Weaver-spirits constantly

work to strengthen it, and in areas of extreme Weaver influence, the basic difficulty can rise as high as 8. Should the roll succeed, the character emerges in the Umbra (see the Shift Time table). Failure means that the wall between worlds was too thick for the Garou to penetrate. If the character attempts to step sideways at the same location again, the difficulty increases by one (maximum 10) as Weaver-spirits begin to reinforce the Gauntlet. On a botch, the Pattern Web traps the character in the midst of spirit storms and other chaotic energies. After a few hours, or sometimes days, the werewolf returns to another location than where he attempted to breach the Gauntlet, with no memory of any events that transpired.

Reflective surfaces, such as mirrors, ponds or metal shields, work to ease the transition (-1 difficulty to the roll) and protect the character by allowing him to step sideways without the spirits discovering the breach in the Pattern Web. A botch renders the reflective surface useless (mirrors shatter, ponds become murky, and shields rust) before the actual breach occurs, instead of allowing the Pattern Web to trap the character.

In case of packs stepping sideways, the group can choose a single "opener of the way" to allow everyone to enter the Umbra. Usually this individual is the one with the highest Gnosis. The player rolls only once, and the roll applies to the entire pack. Only members of the pack can enter the Umbra this way. Allies or friends who are traveling with them must make their own way into the spirit world.

Instead of stepping entirely into the Umbra, Garou can also "peek" into the spirit worlds, or into the Realm from the Umbra. Doing so involves the same roll as stepping sideways, save that only one success is

required to peek, and there is no time lapse. While a werewolf is viewing one side of the Gauntlet, however, she has no perception of the side she is currently on. Therefore, peeking is best accomplished when one's packmates are about to act as guards.

Battle Scars

While werewolves heal most forms of damage without any ill effects, some injuries — especially those caused by other Garou — are severe enough to cause lasting damage. Such wounds often occur when the werewolf channels his Rage to remain active after a potentially fatal wound or in cases of suffering particularly brutal and localized attacks. Once the healing process begins, the wound becomes more than a mere mark on flesh — it becomes a Battle Scar.

A Battle Scar ranges from something as severe as a brain damage to the loss of a limb or minor cosmetic damage. While it might seem a disadvantage, Garou society rewards those who suffer Battle Scars in service of Gaia. It is a sign of honor and dedication, as well as a cause for respect. A character gaining a Battle Scar receives Renown in the form of temporary Glory. Healing a Battle Scar, however, causes the loss of one temporary Glory point.

While a list of all possible Battle Scars is too extensive to print, some examples follow. Storytellers and players are strongly encouraged to invent their own Battle Scars. When assigning Renown awards, keep in mind that visible scars tend to carry larger awards. Also, make sure that the Battle Scar suits the damage suffered. For example, the savaging of a limb is not the cause of severe brain damage, but it might constitute an Extreme Scar.

SHIFT TIME

Successes	Shift Time
0	Failure: Each further attempt in same location increases the difficulty by one.
1	Slow: It takes five minutes to reach the other side.
2	Normal: The shifting occurs in 30 seconds.
3+	Fast: The shift into Umbra, or into the Realm, is instant.

GAUNTLET DIFFICULTY

Area	Gauntlet
Major Cities	8
Most cities and towns	6
Villages, hamlets, farmed lands	5
Wilderness	4
Active caerns	3
Powerful caerns	2
Legendary caerns	no roll necessary

Battle Scar penalties are cumulative, so when an archer character lacks one eye and three fingers, it is definitely time to reconsider his occupation.

Common Scars: 1 Glory

- **Superficial Scars:** Massive, ugly scar tissues that cause hairless areas in every form taken mar the character. Superficial Scars have no other game effect than reducing Appearance in certain situations.

- **Collapsed Lung:** One of the character's lungs was punctured during battle, making it more difficult to breathe and exert himself. The character loses one die of Stamina on any rolls involving exertion and an additional die after five turns. Also, because of the decreased lung capacity, the character can only hold his breath for half the normal duration.

- **Broken Jaw:** During combat, something broke the character's jaw, and it is now out of alignment with the tongue. Add two to any difficulties involving verbal communication with human speech and one to bite attack difficulties. The character's speech is slurred, and the player should roleplay it accordingly.

Severe Scars: 2 Glory

- **Missing Eye:** The character lost an eye during combat. All difficulties on depth-perception rolls or when firing a missile weapon are at +3. All other perception rolls based on sight are at +2 difficulty.

- **Missing Fingers:** One of the character's hands is now missing at least three fingers. All Dexterity rolls involving that hand suffer a +3 difficulty, and claw damage from that hand is halved (rounded down).

- **Brain Damage:** Severe damage to the head or lack of oxygen caused the character to suffer minor brain damage. The werewolf loses one dot from a Mental Attribute (Storyteller's choice). Also, the player must roll one die and subtract the result from Gnosis, Willpower or Knowledges, divided as the she sees fit. Most likely, the character has no memory of the incident that caused the injury.

Extreme Scars: 3 Glory

- **Maimed Limb:** One of the character's limbs has been rendered useless, causing the werewolf's speed in all forms (in case of a leg) to be halved. If an arm is lost, the character moves at three-quarters of the original speed in Hispo and Lupus forms.

- **Extensive Scarring:** Where the character's skin once was, there is only massive scar tissues. Whether he was skinned alive or burnt by Wyrms toxins, the character continuously suffers. Reduce the character's Appearance to zero. Also, the character is in constant pain. The difficulty on Rage rolls is permanently

reduced by one, and the difficulty on any extended roll increases by one (the character can't focus well).

FRENZY

No matter how much discipline a werewolf exerts over himself, he always risks letting Rage overcome him. When this occurs, the werewolf enters frenzy — a madness that exists in two different forms: berserk frenzy and fox frenzy. When a player scores four or more successes on a Rage roll, the character immediately frenzies. What frenzy form he enters depends on the circumstances and what triggers it. For example, berserk frenzy is most common during combat, but if the pack is fighting some truly horrific monster, a young or inexperienced werewolf may well fly into fox frenzy.

Garou with permanent Rage ratings lower than four can frenzy if exposed to highly emotional and personal circumstances that boost their temporary Rage ratings above the permanent. (For example: A Fenrir who witnesses the defiling of an honored packmate.) A player may spend Willpower to avoid frenzy, but doing so forfeits any further actions that turn.

Once in frenzy, characters may not use special maneuvers and pack tactics. Nor can they use Gifts, activate fetishes or step sideways, and their attacks only go as far as to bite or claw. While frenzied characters may not take multiple actions, players can spend Rage points to gain *extra* actions. Garou in frenzy suffer no pain from injuries, so they ignore all dice penalties caused by the loss of health levels.

In order to leave frenzy, the situation triggering it must be over. The player may attempt a Willpower roll where the difficulty is equal to the character's permanent Rage rating (the automatic success rule described on p. 115 of **Dark Ages: Vampire** applies). On a failed roll, the player can try again on the next turn.

Berserk Frenzy

When a berserk frenzy occurs, the Garou sees everything in red, with movement as blurred images and shapes. He yearns to reduce the shapes to mauled carcasses, and in response to this, the werewolf immediately shifts form into either Crinos or Hispo (player's choice) and attacks.

A Garou whose permanent Gnosis equals or exceeds his permanent Rage is able to avoid attacking packmates, but no one else is safe. On the other hand, if his permanent Rage exceeds his permanent Gnosis, the werewolf attacks everything that moves; including members of his pack. In addition, such Garou cannot remember what happens during frenzy, and they often

collapse once it ends. Entering berserk frenzy sometimes causes a loss of Glory Renown.

Fox Frenzy

Fox frenzy occurs when a Garou enters frenzy in the face of something truly terrifying. It causes him to instinctively flee and fiercely attack anyone who is hindering his escape route. To accomplish this, the character automatically shifts into Lupus form and sets off in any direction to safety. Once he reaches his desired shelter, the frenzy slowly dissipates. Entering fox frenzy almost always results in a loss of Wisdom Renown.

The Thrall of the Wyrn

The Thrall of the Wyrn is a severe and uncommon frenzy that occurs only when a Garou has reached too deeply into his own Rage, which leaves him open for the destructive influence of the Wyrn itself. This happens when the player rolls six or more successes on a Rage roll. Willpower cannot be spent to prevent such frenzies. While the frenzy appears to be a berserk frenzy, it has some horrifying aspects (determined by the character's breed). In fact, the committed acts are often so frightening that some Garou end their lives once they regain self-control. In any event, a character in the Thrall of the Wyrn is certain to lose Wisdom and possibly Honor Renown.

- **Homid:** Homid Garou in the Thrall of the Wyrn commit savage acts

of cannibalism. When a Garou kills or incapacitates an opponent, the player must roll Wits (difficulty 7). On a botch, the character must feast on the flesh and blood of the fallen.

- **Metis:** Metis in the Thrall of the Wyrn often commit horrific and perverse acts of lust on their fallen opponents. When the Garou kills or incapacitates an opponent, the player must roll Wits (difficulty 7). On a botch, the character must remain and slake her lusts on the corpse (or helpless opponent).

- **Lupus:** A lupus Garou in the Thrall of the Wyrn is extremely violent and must savage his enemies until only pieces remain scattered across the area. When the Garou kills or incapacitates an opponent, the player must roll Wits (difficulty 7). On a botch, the character must continue to attack the opponent until it is torn from limb to limb.

The Delirium

The Garou spent thousands of years culling human settlements, and the humans never quite lost the memories of the slaving monsters that appeared in the dead of night to steal their families and friends. Since the humans could do precious little to fight



back, however (other than ally with darker forces), their fragile minds cloud the truth. The Garou refer to this self-imposed mental clouding as the Delirium.

Humans suffer the effects of the Delirium upon witnessing a Garou in Crinos form. Although a human's Willpower determines the detailed effect of the Delirium, most flee in panic or collapse. Needless to say, there are individuals who are able to recollect the event, but the majority of them are affected by the Delirium in such a way that they rationalize the encounter to fit with their beliefs. Unfortunately, some humans with weak hearts die as a result of shock, causing stories about murderous wolves and devil-spawn.

RENOWN

Like humans and wolves, Garou place a great deal of weight on relative status when interacting with one another. Renown is **Dark Ages: Werewolf's** way of measuring a Garou's status within the greater society of werewolves. The higher a character's Renown is, the more respect and deference he receives from other Garou. Those of low Renown — cubs and starting characters — are expected to be polite and deferential to their elders, lest they risk further loss of Renown.

Renown is measured along three types, and each type is measured along two scales (just as Willpower, Gnosis

and Rage are): Permanent Renown, and a Renown pool for each type. A character's Renown pool value can exceed his Permanent Renown. The Renown pool can vary widely, even over the course of a single story, while Permanent Renown improves slowly. When a character's Permanent Renown reaches certain values, he may improve in rank.

Remember that Renown is not merely a measure of the character's deeds and success — experience points are a better measure of those. Renown is a measure of the deeds and success that the character's sept and Garou society at large knows about. While a large part of this is based on self-reporting (telling tales of one's own or one's pack's exploits), spirits of all types watch over the Garou and spread tales of their own. Therefore, lying to gain Renown almost always backfires, causing the deceptive werewolf to lose Honor Renown as well as not gaining any of the type he desired. (Of course, a little embellishment doesn't normally arouse the spirits' ire.)

Types of Renown

There are three types of Renown: Glory, most often earned in battle; Honor, most often earned in matters of status and responsibility; and Wisdom, most often earned when dealing with ancient lore and the supernatural.



DELIRIUM

Willpower	% of Population	Forget the Encounter?	Reaction
1	13%	Yes	Catatonic Fear: The human collapses or faints upon seeing the Garou.
2	18%	Yes	Panic: The terrified human attempts to flee as far away as possible.
3	17%	Yes	Disbelief: The human is unable to accept the situation, believing what he sees to be peculiar visions or hallucinations.
4	14%	Yes	Berserk: Frightened and enraged by what he sees, the human attacks the monster with anything at hand as a purely instinctive response.
5	11%	Yes	Terror: The human attempts to escape the monster, just as with panic. He has enough self-control, however, to attempt to hide more safely (locking doors and barring windows).
6	10%	No, but will rationalize	Conciliatory: The human grovels and pleads for mercy; promising to do anything to avoid being hurt.
7	8%	No, but will rationalize	Controlled Fear: Diplomat, warrior or peasant — the occupation does not matter. While he is extremely frightened, the human remains in constant control over all actions.
8	6%	No, but will rationalize	Curiosity: Mother Church listens carefully to these people as they seem to recount much of what transpired. What they cannot remember they attempt to find out in whatever way possible. Many of them are scholars, werewolf-hunters or even inquisitors.
9	2.5%	No	Bloodlust: To this human, the tales of the savage werewolves are more than mere stories. In the farthest reaches of his mind, he recalls the depredations of the Garou. His soul is at once filled with fear, but even more so with anger and the lust for revenge.
10	.5%	No	No reaction: The human is not even slightly afraid or bothered by the Garou's presence. While Kinfolk are immune to the Delirium, not even they are this untouched by the encounter.

Glory

Glory Creed

*I shall be valorous
I shall be dependable
I shall be generous
I shall protect the weak
I shall slay the Wyrn*

Glory Renown comes to those who face the enemies of Gaia bravely and bring them defeat. Garou who perform well in grand tasks and noble quests also earn Glory. A Garou who wishes to be known as glorious does not surrender, no matter the odds, and he always finds a way to win. Glory Renown does not depend on the Garou winning the fight honorably or cleverly; he only

has to emerge victorious. Garou who enter into muddled political struggles where the goal is unclear do not earn Glory, nor do those who bait other Garou into battle. Garou who fail in their battle lose Glory, but those who die gloriously in victory may earn Glory Renown posthumously as the tale of their last battle becomes known.

Honor

Honor Creed

*I shall be respectful
I shall be loyal
I shall be just
I shall live by my word
I shall accept all fair challenges*

Honor is a more complex form of Renown than Glory. Honor Renown comes to those who uphold the Litany and the laws of Gaia and the Garou even when it is inconvenient or dangerous to do so. A Garou who wishes to be known as honorable is honest, respectful and ethical.

While the Garou who wishes to be known as glorious might boast of his prowess in battle, and one who wishes to earn Wisdom Renown might share of his knowledge in order to make himself seem more learned and wise, honor is evident through action and decision. Honor Renown might well be lost from boasting about one's honor. Garou can also lose Honor Renown in the throes of frenzy. It is dishonorable to frenzy in the first place, and the vile actions sometimes taken by those Garou in the Thrall of the Wyrms can result in even further loss of Honor.

Wisdom

Wisdom Creed

I shall be calm

I shall be prudent

I shall be merciful

I shall think before I act

I shall listen before I think

Wisdom Renown comes to those Garou who think carefully, value learning for its own sake and pass along that which they have learned. Garou often defer to those with high Wisdom Renown during moots and other great rituals, though Wisdom Renown does not always pass along knowledge of rites and spiritualism.

Wisdom does not only represent learning. It represents the careful thought to know when a particular action is suitable. Wise Garou rarely have high scores in Glory Renown, since the quick decisions and action that bring high Glory are not compatible with the care and consideration that are hallmarks of Wisdom Renown.

GAINING AND LOSING RENOWN

A character who has just completed his Rite of Passage begins at Rank 1 with three dots in Permanent Renown. The precise type of Renown each of these dots represents is based on the character's auspice (see Character Creation, p. 80). If the Storyteller wishes to run a pack of cubs before the Rite of Passage, the cubs should not have this starting Renown.

After this point, however, Renown fluctuates drastically. The sections that follow should give the players and Storyteller some idea of how to handle Renown in a chronicle.

RENOWN AWARDS

Characters gain and lose Renown for actions of all kinds. Renown awards represent the fame (and infamy) that a character gains among the wider Garou culture. Like wolves and humans, Garou are social creatures. They use Renown to improve their place in that society. Even the most isolated of Garou — say, a bitter Silent Strider loner — depends on his Renown to find his role in Garou society when he must. Spirits, too, notice a character's Renown, keeping Gifts from those who are not yet ready to learn them.

Renown does not merely represent the character's experience, so Renown cannot be purchased with experience points. Renown represents the character's standing within werewolf society; it is the collected tales of the character's deeds and misdeeds. No Renown is earned (or lost) if no one hears what went on, either from spirits or other Garou. Garou society is so relentlessly social, though, that often the retelling of a story to just one werewolf will result in the tale's spread throughout a local sept. Garou who wish to keep their deeds under wraps must be careful. There is relatively little shame in boasting, though, especially of acts that would earn Glory Renown.

Renown cannot be swapped from one category to another — a deed that earns two points of Wisdom Renown cannot be cashed in or converted to provide Honor Renown in any quantity, for instance. Certain activities can earn Renown in more than one category at once, however. Teaching the Litany in all its details to a young metis cub might earn a point of Honor and a point of Wisdom Renown both. Some activities can cost Renown, as well, and some deeds might earn one sort of Renown while costing a loss in another kind of Renown. For instance, a character might abandon a helpless litter of wolf cubs to engage a Wyrms creature in combat. If he defeats it, he might gain one Glory but lose two Honor (and if he loses the battle, he could lose Renown in both categories). Deeds that result in the loss of seven or more points of Renown in any category are punished as crimes and are far more serious than the mere loss of Renown would imply.

In game play, the Storyteller should keep track of the noteworthy deeds that a character performs over the course of a session, calculate Renown awarded or lost for each of them, then let the player know the character's total award in each category at the same time that he awards experience for the session. The Storyteller might wish to hold off on these until an appropriate time in game — perhaps the Rite of Accomplishment or at a moot, when the pack's deeds might be shared with the whole sept.

There are other schemes for awarding Renown, too. The Storyteller might personally track the

SAMPLE RENOWN AWARDS

GLORY

Sample Behavior	Award
Proving one's bravery in a routine situation; participating in a just challenge	1
Surviving an incapacitating wound in a battle that your pack won	2
Defeating an average threat; surviving a hostile Umbral realm	3
Defeating a strong threat; dying while defending a caern (posthumously)	5
Defeating a very powerful threat; sacrificing oneself to save a caern and its defenders	7
Refusing a sept position; entering a fox frenzy	-1
Not preventing a caern from being overrun by the Wyrms	-3
Conscious cowardice that results in the death of another Garou	-5

HONOR

Sample Behavior	Award
Helping guard a caern; performing regular duties and chores for the sept for a month	1
Performing a moot or punishment rite; participating in a just challenge; protecting a helpless human	2
Mediating a serious dispute fairly and impartially; protecting the Veil by covering up incidents that might reveal the existence of the Garou to humans	3
Being truthful in the face of extreme adversity; dying while defending a caern (posthumous); protecting a helpless wolf	5
Enduring torture to protect fellow Garou; sacrificing oneself to save a caern and its defenders	7

Speaking without permission at a moot; not protecting a helpless human; speaking ill of an allied tribe (depending on circumstances)	-1
Refusing any sept position; failing to perform regular duties and chores for the caern in the last month; failing to protect a helpless wolf	-2
Participating in an unjust challenge; abandoning one's post while on watch	-3
Harming/rending the Veil; not protecting a helpless Garou	-5

WISDOM

Sample Behavior	Award
Learning a new rite; creating a talen; healing a fellow Garou (not of one's pack) unselfishly	1
Giving good advice; discovering a fetish after following mystic signs and advice; summoning an Incarna avatar	2
Revealing, with certain proof, that an area or object is Wyrms-tainted; completing a spirit quest successfully; besting someone (including a spirit) in a riddle contest	3
Giving a prophetic warning that later comes true; ending a major threat without serious harm to any Garou	5
Discovering an ancient caern that had been lost; discovering or creating a new Gift	7
Refusing any sept position; suffering a frenzy; missing a sept moot	-1
Having poor relations with nearby Kinfolk; attacking a much more powerful force without aid	-3
Breaking a powerful and necessary fetish accidentally	-5

character's misdeeds only, and allow the players to track their character's Renown-worthy actions during a session, and go over each character's activities during session wrap-up, awarding points cooperatively. Or the Storyteller might keep the character's Renown a secret from the player, only letting the player know when the character is eligible for a new rank. This is arguably the most realistic — characters might have a vague idea of their standing in society, but they surely don't know that they're, say, 3/10 of the way to having enough Honor Renown to reach Rank 2.

The chart above has a list of suggested Renown awards (and penalties), but it is by no means comprehensive. The Storyteller must mitigate Renown awards and penalties, hopefully with some help from the players.

PERMANENT RENOWN

Once the character has earned 10 temporary points of Renown in one category, he must persuade another Garou of equal or higher rank who is not a member of his pack to perform the Rite of Accomplishment for her (p. 152). That rite trumpets the character's successes for the sept and spirits to hear. If the rite is successful, the Garou

loses all 10 temporary Renown, exchanging it for one point of permanent Renown in the same category.

If no Garou are available to perform the Rite of Accomplishment but the character has the requisite 10 points of temporary Renown in one category, the werewolf may instead challenge a Garou of higher rank than he whom he knows to have at least the same level of permanent Renown as that to which the young Garou wishes to rise. Again, that Garou cannot be a member of the character's own pack. If the young Garou is victorious, he exchanges 10 points of temporary Renown for one point of permanent Renown in that category.

Certain truly earth-shaking activities might also make the Garou eligible to convert 10 temporary Renown into one permanent Renown without either a rite or a challenge, but those events should be few and far between, and performed with plenty of Garou witnesses such that none can gainsay the deed. Such an event allows the gain of permanent Renown only at the Storyteller's discretion.

Loss of Renown

Not every activity that a Garou undertakes leads to a gain of Renown. Dishonorable acts lead to a loss of temporary Honor, cowardly acts lead to a loss of temporary Glory, and foolish acts lead to a loss of temporary Wisdom. The loss of Renown is not a terrible thing in and of itself. It happens to most Garou regularly, and temporary Renown in all three categories does go up and down over the course of a given story. Additionally, some actions might lead to a gain in one Renown category and a loss in another. For instance, a Garou might attack an unknown Wyrn creature without preparation, taking a terrible beating but eventually winning the fight. This could well lead to a loss of Wisdom Renown and a gain in Glory.

If a character does not have sufficient temporary Renown to pay for a loss of temporary Renown in a category, he has no choice but to "cash in" one point of permanent Renown in that category in return for 10 temporary Renown in that category. This turn of events is particularly disgraceful, and Garou who know they are low on temporary Renown in a given category must be especially careful. The Storyteller should be reasonable, however. If a character has just cashed in 10 points of temporary Wisdom and received a permanent dot, entering a Berserk frenzy isn't going to cost the werewolf that dot. (It happens to everyone occasionally, after all.) Garou with no permanent or temporary Renown in the category are excused from further loss, as they are assumed to have no concept of the appropriate type of Renown at all.

A Garou who loses permanent Renown in this fashion and no longer qualifies for his current rank will lose that rank and its attendant benefits. The character retains any Gifts he knows, but he cannot learn new ones of his old rank until he re-attains it. The character *does* have to re-challenge when his Renown increases sufficiently to allow him to rise in rank once again.

Rank

Before they undergo their Rite of Passage, Garou have no Renown or Rank. If they succeed at their Rite of Passage (and survive!) they become cliaths. The majority of werewolves are Rank 1. Assume that in any given sept, there are half as many Garou of Rank 2 as there are Rank 1 Garou, half as many Rank 3 as Rank 2, and so on. This is just a rule of thumb, of course, and even small caerns are likely to have at least a couple of athro and elder Garou. The number of cubs varies widely and does not fit into this rule of thumb.

Rank comes with benefits:

- **Rights and Responsibilities:** The Litany tells Garou how they must behave when dealing with others of different rank. Those of high rank receive deference and obedience from their lessers, but at the same time, they owe lower-ranked Garou responsible leadership and protection. A Garou who increases in rank over her packmates might find herself in a strange position as they unconsciously defer to her even though they might not have just a short time before.

- **Challenges:** An honorable Garou accepts all lawful challenges. By tradition and based on the Litany, only challenges between Garou within one rank of one another are legal. An adren will not challenge a cliath nor accept a challenge from him; such a thing is beneath her. But if that cliath character has a legitimate beef with the higher-ranked Garou, he can challenge her as soon as he reaches the rank of fostern. This is intended to prevent hotheaded youngsters from wasting the elders' time with frivolous challenges, but some werewolves nurse grudges for months or years, waiting until they are in a position to confront their enemies.

- **Gifts:** A werewolf generally cannot learn Gifts of a level higher than his rank. The spirits that teach the Gifts recognize a Garou's rank and are sworn not to provide such secret knowledge to Garou who are not prepared for it. When a Garou does reach the next highest rank, however, he becomes eligible to learn Gifts of that rank.

- **Self-Control:** Garou of high rank, even those with relatively low levels of Honor Renown or Willpower, have learned to control the feral impulses that lead them to frenzy. Starting at Rank 3, it becomes more difficult for a Garou to frenzy, per the following table.

Rank	Frenzy Bonus
0-2	-
3	+1 to frenzy difficulty
4	+2 to frenzy difficulty
5	+2 to frenzy difficulty, 5+ successes needed to frenzy

Improving Rank

In order to advance in rank, a Garou must accumulate sufficient Renown in each of the three categories to do so. The amount needed in each category depends on the character's auspice; a Theurge needs more Wisdom Renown than an Ahroun, for instance, who in turn needs plenty of Glory. See the accompanying chart for details.

Merely having enough Renown does not automatically bring the character up to the next highest rank. The Garou must find a werewolf of the desired rank and challenge him. This benefactor, in turn, may choose the form of the challenge, and it can take nearly any form the benefactor desires. The challenge might be a particularly easy one for a challenger that the benefactor favors, or it might be impossibly difficult for a challenger that the elder finds unworthy. Great legends are told of Garou who succeeded in rank challenges that were deliberately chosen to be impossible. A rank challenge does not have to be made against a Garou of the same auspice as the petitioner (although it is customary). Some sample challenges follow:

- Defeat the challenged werewolf in a fistfight in Homid form
- Find a hidden fetish within 24 hours
- Defeat the benefactor in a battle using only blacksmith's hammers
- Face brutal torment without uttering a sound
- Climb a mountain, returning with a stone from the summit within 12 hours
- Compose a hymn to Gaia's majesty, on the spot, of sufficient quality to impress all bystanders
- Bring the corpse of a powerful Wyrn creature to the elder within one month
- Invest a new fetish with an ability never before seen by any Garou of the sept
- The Garou must settle a dispute between two of the sept's packs
- Bring 10 pounds of gold in chiminage to the caern within one day without breaking any human laws

Combat

Generally, **Dark Ages: Werewolf** uses the same combat system found in **Dark Ages: Vampire**. Initiative,

RANK AND RENOWN

AHROUN

Rank	Glory	Honor	Wisdom
1 (Cliath)	2	1	0
2 (Fostern)	4	1	0
3 (Adren)	6	3	1
4 (Athro)	9	5	2
5 (Elder)	10	9	4

GALLIARD

Rank	Glory	Honor	Wisdom
1 (Cliath)	2	0	1
2 (Fostern)	4	0	2
3 (Adren)	4	2	4
4 (Athro)	7	2	6
5 (Elder)	9	5	9

PHILODOX

Rank	Glory	Honor	Wisdom
1 (Cliath)	0	3	0
2 (Fostern)	1	4	1
3 (Adren)	2	6	2
4 (Athro)	3	8	4
5 (Elder)	4	10	9

THEURGE

Rank	Glory	Honor	Wisdom
1 (Cliath)	0	0	3
2 (Fostern)	1	0	5
3 (Adren)	2	1	7
4 (Athro)	4	2	9
5 (Elder)	4	9	10

RAGABASH

Rank	Total Permanent Renown*
1 (Cliath)	3
2 (Fostern)	7
3 (Adren)	12
4 (Athro)	17
5 (Elder)	24

* A Ragabash's Renown may be in any combination.

attack resolution, defense, soak, movement and the affects of damage remain the same. Garou can use any of the basic maneuvers listed in **Dark Ages: Vampire**, and they can learn any of the special maneuvers available there as well.

RENUNCIATION

Some Garou become dissatisfied with the auspice under which they were born, or they commit a terrible crime and receive a punishment just sort of death: the loss of their birth auspice. A werewolf who rejects his auspice can use the Rite of Renunciation (see p. 145) to give up his old auspice and take on a new one. Undergoing this rite is considered by many Garou to be a grave insult to Gaia, and it is never done lightly. The Rite of Renunciation causes the werewolf to lose all of his Renown save the three permanent points of a cliath. Accordingly, the character drops to Rank 1.

The character does not lose Gifts that he has already learned, even if they are higher than level one, but he can never again learn any Gifts that are exclusive to his old auspice.

Garou never undertake this ritual lightly. For the unwilling, it comes as a punishment for heinous crimes, and the willing undergo it because they wish to sever their relationship with their old lives.

The differences between Garou combat and vampiric combat are discussed momentarily. Generally speaking, Garou handle aggravated damage differently than Cainites do, their tight pack bonds allows them to use a pack initiative and pack maneuvers, they can use Rage to improve their combat abilities, and they have access to special maneuvers that are specific to being monstrous engines of destruction.

DAMAGE AND GAROU

Garou deal with ordinary bashing and lethal damage just as other supernatural beings do: They can soak it at difficulty 6 in any form. Garou heal bashing and lethal damage at the astonishing rate of one health level per turn, however. Lethal damage is more difficult to regenerate. If the character wants to perform other actions while healing such damage, the player must succeed at a Stamina roll (difficulty 8). Failure on that roll means that the character does not heal while he undertakes this action.

Garou suffer aggravated damage from the teeth and claws of other Garou or vampires, some spirits' attacks, enchanted fetish weapons and silver. Garou can soak aggravated damage at difficulty 6 in any form except Homid. Silver, however, is another matter. Lupus and homid Garou in their breed forms can soak damage from silver weapons at difficulty 6, and wounds that are not soaked are considered lethal. Otherwise,

Garou cannot soak silver damage in any other way without the assistance of a fetish or Gift, and the damage is considered aggravated.

Using Rage

While Willpower and Gnosis have well-defined uses outside of combat, Rage is one of the Garou's most potent tools in a fight. Remember that Rage cannot be spent on a turn when the Garou spends Gnosis (and vice versa), with the exception of a few Gifts that require the expenditure of both energies at once. Rage can be used in several ways; see p. 90 for details.

Special Maneuvers

The maneuvers listed here are learned tactics that skilled werewolves pass from one to the next. Each takes advantage of special characteristics of the Garou forms. A character that has at least one dot in Brawl can begin the game knowing one of the following maneuvers. Others can be learned from other Garou given a week's training time, or a werewolf with Brawl 4 or better can figure them out on his own (which takes two weeks per maneuver). Players might wish to create unique maneuvers for their characters, and that's perfectly acceptable within the bounds of the Storyteller's discretion. Storytellers should be careful not to allow super-maneuvers (such as ones that inflict high damage with a low difficulty), though. The Storyteller may award Renown for creating a maneuver that is widely adopted.

In the descriptions of the following maneuvers, the "actions" entry refers to the number of actions required to complete the maneuver. If a maneuver requires more than one action, the player must reduce her dice pool as usual for taking multiple actions (see page 116 of *Dark Ages: Vampire*) or simply spend Rage.

• **Hamstring:** A Garou uses this attack to slow an opponent down. It is often performed by a werewolf who is trailing a large enemy that might escape before the rest of the pack can arrive. With a successful attack, the Garou rips tendon and muscle from the foe's legs, which severely hampers the opponent's movement. Humans and other bipeds can only crawl (and even then only slowly), while quadrupeds have their movement rates halved. A second such attack against a quadruped will slow its movement to nearly nothing.

Damage from this attack is considered aggravated; the hamstring effect will not fade entirely until the last wound level caused by it heals.

Usable by: Crinos – Lupus

Roll: Dexterity + Brawl **Difficulty:** 8

Damage: Strength and Cripple (see above)

Actions: 1

• **Jaw Lock:** The Garou locks his jaws around an opponent's neck and drives him to the ground, hoping to immobilize him. This attack inflicts relatively little damage to the foe but renders him motionless so that others can attack it.

The Garou first attempts a slightly more precise bite maneuver (difficulty 6). If he succeeds, he and the defender make contested Strength + Athletics rolls. If the attacker wins, he inflicts no damage, but the target is forced to the ground (the Garou lands on top of him). If the defender wins, he escapes, but suffers ordinary bite damage from the werewolf.

Once pinned, the target may use an action to attempt an escape. He rolls Strength + Brawl (difficulty of the attacker's Brawl + 4) while the attacker rolls Strength + Brawl (difficulty of the defender's Brawl + 2):

- If the attacker wins, the opponent remains immobilized.

- If the defender wins, he escapes without harm.

- In case of a tie, the defender must soak a number of health levels equal to the number of successes the attacker rolled. The defender remains immobilized if the attacker's Strength is higher, and he escapes if his Strength is higher.

- If the defender botches, the attacker may choose to apply bite damage (Strength + 1 aggravated) as a reflexive action.

On the attacker's subsequent actions, he may roll normal bite damage if the target remains immobilized.

Usable by: Crinos – Lupus

Roll: Dexterity + Brawl **Difficulty:** 6

Damage: None (see above) **Actions:** 1

- **Leaping Rake:** This complex attack lets the Garou start out of an opponent's reach, wound him and end up outside the opponent's reach once again. Typically, the Crinos-form Garou gets a running start, leaps into the air, slashes at her opponent and lets her momentum carry her out of reach. This maneuver leaves a lot of room for error, but it is spectacular (not to mention effective) when it works.

The player rolls Dexterity + Athletics to determine how far the character leaps (difficulty 3; see Jumping on p. 227 of *Dark Ages: Vampire*). The character ought to try for enough distance to get out of her foe's reach after the attack (six to 10 feet). The player rolls Dexterity + Brawl for a claw attack midway through this leap (after the distance has been rolled). The damage on that attack is as per an ordinary claw attack, and the character can substitute a punch, kick or weapon attack if she wishes, with damage and difficulty set by the type of attack.

As for errors: If the character does not achieve enough distance to get out of her opponent's reach, she

may still make her ordinary attack so long as she has enough distance to get within range. If the character misses on the attack roll, she may still complete her movement. If either roll botches, the character ends up on the ground within the opponent's reach and can not attack.

Usable by: Glabro – Crinos

Roll: Dexterity + Athletics, Dexterity + Brawl

Difficulty: 8

Damage: Strength + 1

Actions: 2

- **Taunt:** The Garou attempts to draw his opponent into a reckless attack or distract him from the fight itself. The taunt may take nearly any form. A lupus might roll around on his back, exposing his underbelly to the foe, while a Garou in Homid form might hurl insults at the target, the target's mother, the target's pack totem and so on.

The player rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (or Manipulation + Expression, depending on the style of taunt). For every two successes, the target loses one die from the dice pool of his next action (unless that action is a purely defensive one). A pack can join together, all taunting a foe. If the enemy is brought to zero dice, he cannot undertake any action other than defending himself. Garou who are successfully taunted in this fashion risk frenzy.

Usable by: Any form

Roll: Manipulation + Intimidation or Expression

Difficulty: Opponent's Wits + 4

Damage: None

Actions: 1

Pack Tactics

Certain combat maneuvers are best performed by a pack of Garou. The group of werewolves who try to perform these maneuvers must know and trust each other enough that they do not flinch or doubt even as the others' claws and teeth flicker mere inches away from them. Indeed, they must have the spiritual level of trust that only comes with a mutual connection to a pack totem spirit.

A pack can know a number of pack maneuvers no greater than the lowest Gnosis score in the pack.

Packs are encouraged to develop their own tactics. They might receive Glory Renown for their successful use, and Honor or Wisdom Renown for teaching other packs the maneuvers.

- **Fur Gnarl:** The Fur Gnarl maneuver is intended to reduce or eliminate an opponent's armor, permitting Garou to use their claws and teeth against the enemy's flesh without protection in the way. To perform it, one character tears at the foe's armor, and his packmates direct all of their attacks at the exposed flesh beneath immediately afterward. This attack may be directed at an ordinary foe with a thick hide (such

as another werewolf), a monstrous creature (be it Wyrmb-beast or dragon), or a foe wearing leather or metal armor.

The first attacker rolls Dexterity + Brawl (difficulty 7) to perform a claw attack and rip the target's protection away. For every two damage successes rolled before soak, the target loses one point of armor protection in the targeted area. Allies can then attack this area. Doing so adds two to the difficulty of the attack, but if the attack succeeds, the target must use its reduced soak instead of its full soak. Characters can continue to target the affected area until it heals (which means it either has to be repaired or replaced, or it heals as if it were lethal damage in the case of natural armor).

Packmates Required: 2 Performable Alone? Yes

• **Harrying:** Garou hunt in packs, just as wolves do. And just as with wolves, it is in the Garou's nature to run prey to the ground, snapping at it, surprising it, exhausting and bewildering it until the prey can no longer escape. This maneuver requires at least four werewolves in order to surround the target and snap at it and startle it from all sides. It does not work in situations where the target can easily see all of the Garou. In such a situation, the target is likely to simply initiate ordinary combat. It's the surprise and confusion that lets this maneuver work. Garou can perform this activity in any quadrupedal form. Many tribes use harrying to kidnap cubs from their birth families, in order to disorient and terrify them into early obedience.

The Garou surround the target, harassing and chasing it. One werewolf starts as the "chaser," with the others equally spaced out around the target. The chaser forces the target into another werewolf's vicinity, then that werewolf springs up, surprising the target and driving it in another direction. This continues, with the new chaser forcing the target into another werewolf's space, frightening and exhausting the target as it tries to flee the pack.

Every time a chaser drives the prey into another werewolf's vicinity, the prey loses a point of temporary Willpower. To successfully drive the prey into another werewolf, the chaser must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 5). The prey makes the same roll to resist this effect. If the chaser wins, he can drive the target into whichever packmate he prefers. If the prey wins, he can try to escape. To represent the escape, the Garou and prey must make the same roll again (Dexterity + Athletics). The prey's difficulty is still 5, but this time, the Garou's difficulty increases by the number of net successes that the prey got on that most recent roll. So, if the prey beats the Garou by two successes, the escape roll for the prey has a difficulty of 5 while the Garou's pursuit roll is a 7. If

the target gets more net successes than the Garou does on this roll, she escapes and must be tracked normally. Otherwise, the Garou is able to drive the target back into the rest of the pack.

Eventually, the prey loses all Willpower, rendering him incapable of running away from the chaser and rendering him easy pickings for the pack. If at any time during this process the prey chooses to fight his harassers, normal combat begins.

Packmates Required: 4 Performable Alone? No

• **Savage:** In this relatively simple maneuver, one Garou knocks a target to the ground, and his packmates leap onto the pile, biting and clawing at whatever extremities happen to be available for such treatment. No more than five Garou can attempt this maneuver at once against a human-sized opponent.

The lead Garou attacks the target with a maneuver that will bring him to the ground: a body tackle or a sweep attack. Each successive werewolf in Lupus or Hispo form leaps onto the target's prone form and bites at any nearby spot. The attacks have normal difficulty and inflict normal damage, but the target's attempt to stand or escape (if he survives through the turn to his action) requires a Strength + Athletics roll [difficulty 4 + (1 per Garou involved), maximum of 10].

Packmates Required: 3 Performable Alone? No

Dramatic Systems

Werewolves have natural abilities that vampires do not. The most basic and obvious of these is the ability to change shape, but several others also exist. This section details several of the natural capabilities of the Garou.

LONG RUNNING

Wolf packs can cover remarkable distances without stopping, and werewolf packs can do likewise. To do so, all Garou involved must assume Lupus form. A werewolf can jog at 16 miles per hour for a number of miles equal to the character's Stamina rating (in Lupus form, of course). After that, the player must roll Stamina + Athletics (difficulty 4). If the roll fails, the character suffers one level of lethal damage from exhaustion and muscle strain. The damage will not heal until the character stops to rest, and the difficulty of the roll to keep running increases by one for each failed roll.

If the player fails two consecutive rolls, she must spend a point of Rage or Willpower for the character to keep running. Wolves and werewolves both typically leave any pack member who falls on a Long Run. The Litany states, after all, that the Garou should not suffer their people to tend their sickness.

Tracking

While werewolves can use the Survival skill to track prey in the conventional, human manner, they have better avenues open to them. Any werewolf can track a target by scent in Lupus form. Doing so requires a Perception + Primal-Urge roll. The difficulty varies based on how fresh the trail is. Chasing a bleeding animal through a meadow would be difficulty 4, while tracking a vampire whose path crossed a stream would be difficulty 9.

Facedown

One of the most common challenges between Garou is the facedown. Both werewolves stare into each other's eyes, each trying to intimidate the other into looking away. The players must roll either Charisma + Intimidation or Rage, whichever is higher. The players *must* use the highest dice pool; a character with a high Rage score cannot simply use Charisma + Intimidation in hopes of avoiding frenzy. In either case, the difficulty of the roll is the opponent's Willpower.

The first player to accumulate a number of successes equal to the opponent's Wits + 5 wins; the defeated character looks away. If the character is using Rage and the player rolls four or more success on any one roll, however, the character enters frenzy. A werewolf who frenzies during a facedown challenge automatically loses.

Animal Attraction

Werewolves of both genders radiate an aura of danger and feral magnetism that is hard for ordinary humans to ignore. Most people find such traits attractive on an animal level that they are not entirely aware of. When a Garou wishes to, she can focus her attention on a human and evoke strong sexual desire in him.

The werewolf does not *seduce* the human in the ordinary fashion (for a discussion of that, see **Dark Ages: Vampire**, p. 232). She need only look him in the eye and let her raw sexuality overwhelm him. This sort of encounter does not lead to a romantic relationship, it leads to fairly feral sex. It's also worth noting that this isn't exactly a persuasive ability for the Garou. A character cannot get a human to perform a task for the promise of sex, though a canny werewolf might use his or her persuasive powers on a human afterward. It's sex, right now, or nothing.

The character must first look the target in the eye, though he does not have to maintain eye contact throughout the sequence. The player rolls Charisma + Primal-Urge. The difficulty is the target's Willpower, and the player must accumulate more successes than

the target's Willpower. This can be an extended test if the player doesn't pull it off on the first roll. Success on the test ends with the target becoming strongly and immediately sexually attracted to the character. Any failure during the test results in the target become uncomfortable with the Garou's attention and attempting to leave the area immediately. A botch during this test gives the target a look at the Rage within the character, and he succumbs to the Delirium as appropriate to his Willpower score.

The target must be of the opposite gender of the werewolf. Eunuchs and those incapable of sex (such as vampires) are entirely immune to this ability. At the Storyteller's discretion, a character who is truly in love with another or devoted to a vow of celibacy or chastity is immune to this ability, but in a setting as grim as the Dark Medieval those characters should be few and far between.

Shapechanging

The Garou have five forms. Each breed of werewolf claims one of these forms as its birth form — Homid for homids, Lupus for lupus and Crinos for metis. Each form looks different (obviously), has different effects on the werewolf and has different uses.

To change shape, the player rolls the character's Stamina + Primal-Urge. The difficulty is set by the character's current form (not the one he wishes to change to). The player must achieve a number of successes equal to the number of "steps" the Garou has to pass through to get to the target form, plus one. For example, if a character wants to change from Lupus form into Glabro, the player must roll Stamina + Primal-Urge (difficulty 6) and score four successes (one to begin the process, one to get from Lupus to Hispo, one to Crinos and one to Glabro). If the character does not achieve enough successes to do so in one turn, he can try to finish the job on the next turn. If the character fails, he cannot change shape but is not otherwise impeded. If he botches, he is stuck in his current form for the remainder of the scene. Note that "passing through" Crinos does not usually trigger the Delirium in human onlookers.

Garou can always revert back to their breed form instantly, without taking an action or making a die roll. Similarly, Garou can change to any form they desire instantly, without taking an action or making a die roll, by spending a point of Rage.

Skilled werewolves can shift parts of their bodies, manifesting Crinos claws in Homid form, for example, or Homid vocal chords while wearing the Lupus form. Doing so requires the player to spend a point of Willpower and roll Stamina + Primal-Urge (difficulty 9).

Homid: The Man

Attribute Changes: None

Shift Difficulty: 6

Appearance: In Homid form, the Garou looks like an ordinary human being and is indistinguishable from any other mortal. Animals and supernatural beings with strong senses of smell might notice something unusual about the Garou, and keen observers of human behavior might note slightly feral behaviors in some werewolves.

Game Effects: Homid Garou take no special damage from silver in this form, but they do not regenerate in this form. Metis and Lupus Garou take aggravated, unsoakable damage from silver in Homid form, but they do regenerate wounds as they normally would.

Glabro: The Near-Man

Attribute Changes: Strength +2, Stamina +2, Appearance -1, Manipulation -1

Shift Difficulty: 7

Appearance: The Glabro is a large, muscled, hairier version of the Homid form. The character gains about six inches of height and a proportionate amount of weight (around 30%). The teeth, nails and hair of the Glabro are longer than an ordinary human's, and the teeth and nails are sharper. A werewolf in Glabro form won't be mistaken for a human close up in daylight, but he can likely pass at night from a distance.

Game Effects: The Glabro's teeth inflict only lethal damage, not aggravated, and its claws cause no damage at all.

Notes: Garou who need the strength of a war-form without inducing the Delirium in nearby humans frequently use the Glabro form. The Glabro can speak the Garou tongue without difficulty, but human language is more difficult. While the character can be heard and understood, his voice becomes low and guttural.

Crinos: The Wolf-Man

Attribute Changes: Strength +4, Dexterity +1, Stamina +3, Appearance 0, Manipulation -3

Shift Difficulty: 6

Appearance: The Crinos is an enormous, powerfully muscled and furry man-wolf. When a Garou enters Crinos form, she increases her size by half again over her Glabro size (itself larger than Homid). A werewolf who stands five feet high in Homid form towers 8'4" in Crinos. The character gains mass in proportion, her weight increasing three and a half times that in Glabro. The character's Homid face extends into a muzzle, and her teeth and claws lengthen and sharpen. Fur covers the character's entire body, she grows a tail, and her arms lengthen to the point that her hands hang near her knees.

Game Effects: The Crinos's teeth and claws inflict aggravated damage. The penalties to Social Attributes listed previously do not apply to other Garou, who are familiar and comfortable with the Crinos form. Crinos

Garou senses sharpen, granting a -1 to Perception difficulties. Crinos is the breed form for

metis Garou, who can shift into it instantly.

Nonetheless, no Garou can soak damage from silver weapons or items in Crinos, and all



Garou regenerate ordinary damage rapidly in this form. The sight of a Garou in Crinos form triggers the Delirium in humans who see her. Rage difficulties drop by one in Crinos form.

Notes: Crinos is purely a war form. Except for metis, other Garou do not enter Crinos form casually, especially since that form brings the werewolf's Rage closer to the surface, making frenzy more likely. The Crinos muzzle and large, sharp teeth make it very difficult to speak. The Crinos can say one- or two-word sentences in human speech ("You die!" is a popular choice). Any more than that costs a point of Willpower per sentence. The Crinos can speak the Garou tongue normally, without cost or extra effort.

Hispo: The Neap Wolf

Attribute Changes: Strength +3, Dexterity +2, Stamina +3, Manipulation -3

Shift Difficulty: 7

Appearance: The Hispo is a massive dire wolf the size of a small pony. The Hispo is considerably more heavily muscled than the Lupus, in addition to the increase in height. Its haunches are heavier and its jaw stronger. Due to its lower center of mass, the Hispo is nimbler than the Crinos, though it cannot compare to the speed and grace of the Lupus form.

Game Effects: The Hispo's bite inflicts an additional die of damage over the standard Crinos bite damage, and both its teeth and claws cause aggravated damage. Its keen senses reduce Perception difficulties by one.

Notes: The Hispo cannot normally speak human tongues. With the expenditure of a point of Willpower, a Hispo could say a word or two in a human language, but that is all. The Hispo has no problems with the Garou language. The improved senses and general combat ability of the Hispo form make it ideal for standing watch over sleeping packmates or hunting for enemies (as opposed to hunting for food).

Lupus: The Wolf

Attribute Changes: Strength +1, Dexterity +2, Stamina +2, Manipulation -3

Shift Difficulty: 6

Appearance: The Lupus is an ordinary-looking wolf. The character's exact appearance depends on his tribal heritage and Pure Breed background.

Game Effects: The senses of a Garou in Lupus are very sharp; reduce Perception difficulties by two. A Lupus can run at twice the speed that the Garou can run in Homid form. Lupus-breed Garou do not take aggravated damage from silver in Lupus form, and they can soak such damage, but neither do they regenerate in it. Bite damage from Lupus-form Garou is considered lethal.

Notes: Lupus Garou cannot speak human languages under any circumstances. They can speak the Garou language with ease and fluency, though, and they may communicate with wolves easily.

Experience and Development

Characters in **Dark Ages: Werewolf** gain experience points in the same manner as described on pp. 165-166 of **Dark Ages: Vampire**. The costs for improving traits are listed in the following table.

SPENDING EXPERIENCE

Trait	Experience Cost
Attribute	Current level x 4
New Ability	3
Existing Ability	Current level x 2
Gift (character's breed, tribe or auspice)	Level of Gift x 3
Gift (outside character's breed, tribe or auspice)	Level of Gift x 5
Rage	Current rating
Gnosis	Current rating x 2
Willpower	Current rating



YVONNE HIDDEN-VOICES SAT CROSSED-LEGGED ON THE GROUND,

concentrating on the ax in front of her. Her younger sister-in-Fenris, an Ahroun called Sees-Only-Blood, had asked her to awaken the spirit of the weapon. This normally would be an easy task for the Theurge. Awakening weapons had become something of a specialty for her since her Rite of Passage had demanded that she perform the rite without really knowing how. Yet the ax sat inert in front of her. She tried to tap out the rhythm that would coax the spirit into wakefulness, whistled a battle tune and even considered finding another werewolf to stage a mock duel. It was all for naught, she knew. A spirit would not wake unless it was addressed directly, and that required full concentration on the part of the Garou. Yvonne had been able to give precious little her full concentration since her trip to Wales.

She stood, disgusted, and left the ax there on the ground for a moment. She untied the strip of leather holding her hair back and shook her thick locks free. *This is absurd*, she thought. *Not only is he Garou, but he's but a boy. Just out of his Rite of Passage. And he's half a world away, not that it's a bad thing that he is.*

"What troubles you, Hidden-Voices?" Yvonne started, but recognized the voice. A tiny cuckoo-spirit sat on the ax, looking quizzically up at her. She knew from experience that lying to the harmless-looking spirit was unwise, but she sat down so as not to attract any other attention.

"There is a man," she began, and then stopped. "A Garou. A Fianna."

"You met him on your mission east?"

Yvonne nodded. "He has yet to join a pack. He had just completed his Rite of Passage when I arrived. I don't know what kind of names the Fianna use, but he still uses his human name." She sighed, and shook her head. "He carries his uncle's klaive but does not boast. He has the strangest eyes. Many of them do in Wales, I found."

The spirit hopped from one foot to the other. "What do you feel for him?"

"I don't know, friend cuckoo. He is Garou, so even if I did wish to take a mate, it could never be him. But he had an honesty in his manner, in his eyes, that I have seen only in spirits. As though he knew..." she trailed off, trying to find what she meant to say. She reflected that Aneurin himself, ironically enough, would probably know exactly how to express himself. "As though he knew *himself*."

"Ah." The cuckoo-spirit was obviously displeased. Although the bird looked harmless, it was brave and powerful, and it answered directly to Great Fenris. "Will you see him again?"

"How would I know that?" Yvonne asked, confused.

"You are a Crescent Moon. What does your soul say?"

Yvonne looked up, and saw the crescent moon — Aneurin's moon and hers — shining down. "I think somehow I will. Gaia help me."

The cuckoo fluttered to her shoulder and pecked sharply at her ear. "Gaia says help yourself, daughter of Fenris. Now, wake that ax as you promised, and no more wasted breaths." The bird puffed itself up as Yvonne knelt again and began the rite. "Besides, if you do see him again, I'm sure it will be for a good reason." The Theurge glanced toward the bird, who promptly pecked at her cheek. "Pay attention to your work."

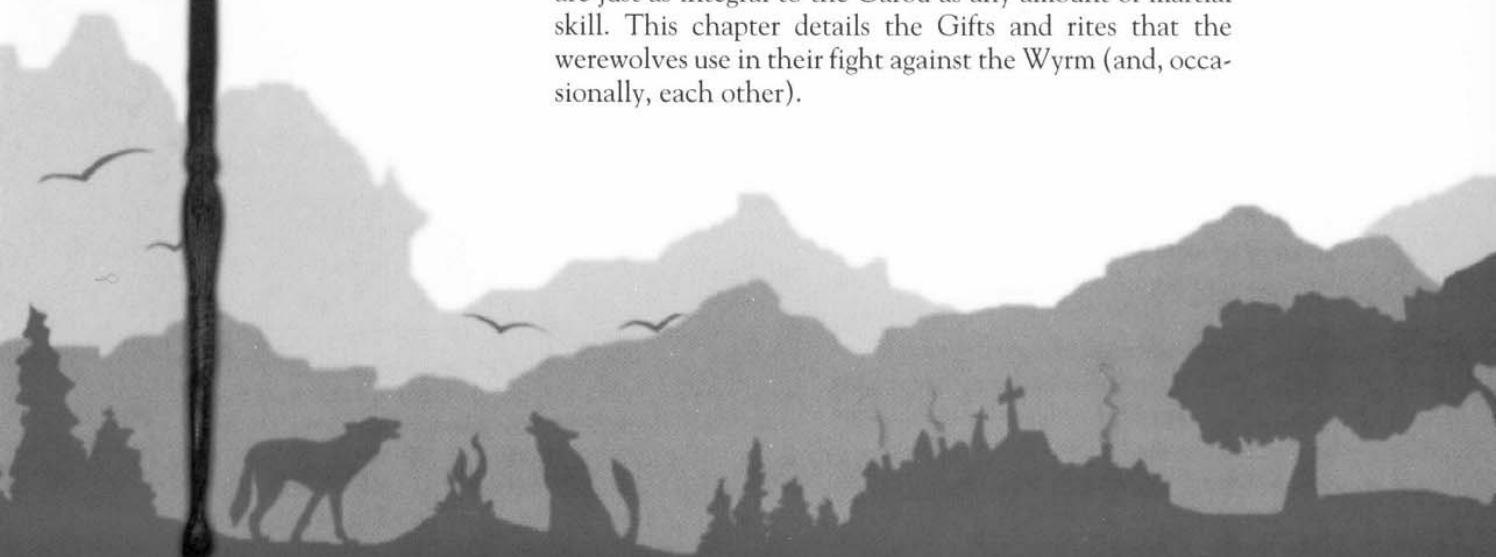



CHAPTER FOUR: THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRITS

“But swich a joye was it to here hem synge,
Whan that the brigthe sonne gan to sprynge
In sweete accord, ‘My life is faren in londe!’ —

For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Beestes and brides koude speke and synge.”
—Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

The physical prowess of werewolves is legendary, but the magical powers they wield gain them even greater advantage in the harsh world of the Dark Medieval. Gifts from the spirits and the rituals that keep alive their heritage are just as integral to the Garou as any amount of martial skill. This chapter details the Gifts and rites that the werewolves use in their fight against the Wyrms (and, occasionally, each other).



Gifts

Not every foe can be felled by simple application of fang and claw. Indeed, without these Gifts, the battle to protect Gaia would have been lost long ago. As the name suggests, these powers are neither hunted and captured nor purchased. They are given to worthy Garou who have demonstrated understanding in the ways of the spirits. Whether one learns from a spirit summoned by a Theurge or from another Garou, Gifts allow a werewolf to exert his spiritual power to alter the world around him in a manner that mere men cannot. Individual Garou factions guard their unique Gifts like a mother would her pups. Tribes rarely teach members of other tribes, the wolf-born do not immediately trust the human-born, and often members of an auspice wince at the thought of teaching a Gift to those who belong to other auspices.

Mechanically, Gifts are divided into levels, Level-One Gifts being the weakest and most common, and Level-Five Gifts being the rarest and most powerful. Beginning characters can learn only Level-One Gifts. The rank of a Garou always directly corresponds with the maximum level of Gifts available to him. He cannot be Rank 2 and possess Level-Three Gifts, but he may possess Level-One and Level-Two Gifts at Rank 2. Beginning characters receive one Gift each from breed, auspice and tribe. Bonus points may also be spent to purchase additional Gifts during character creation (see Character Creation Summary, p. 80). A player may spend experience points for Gifts during the chronicle (see Experience Chart p. 107 for cost).

Learning Gifts

Garou learn Gifts by four different methods. The most common practice is for a werewolf to beseech the elders of his sept to summon the proper spirit that will teach him a desired gift. The elders consider the Garou's worthiness and allow or deny the request. If the request is granted, a sept member performs the Rite of Summoning (p. 150) at the caern. Werewolves learn quickly from spirits. Learning a Gift in this manner takes no longer than an hour — at most a night.

Another common practice is for a Garou to learn Gifts from other werewolves. Typically fellow pack members are predisposed to teach Gifts to each other. Sept elders generally frown upon it, though, as they tend to view it as the blind leading the blind or the foolhardy attempting to teach what they scarcely understand themselves. Also, Garou rarely teach outsiders their tribal Gifts. (Woe

to the Black Fury who dares teach a tribal Gift to a Fenrir, for instance.) Other than the mishaps caused by inexperience, there are strong drawbacks to this method. Teaching a Gift to another Garou normally takes one month. Though it is possible for a student to use the Gift without fully learning it, doing so can go disastrously wrong. In mechanical terms, add one to the difficulty of a roll for any attempted use of a Gift that one has learned from another Garou if the student has not practiced for at least a month.

An uncommon, but not unknown method for learning Gifts is for a Garou to summon a spirit himself. This option requires the Garou to know and perform the Rite of Summoning, but it incurs risk because the spirit might be offended if the Garou is not careful. Spirits are also more likely to appear in caerns because they are drawn to places of spiritual power where the Gauntlet is thin. The Storyteller may add one to the difficulty of a roll if the Rite of Summoning is not performed in a caern or other place of spiritual significance.

Finally, some Garou go questing in the Umbra for the spirit who would teach the desired Gift. Only those Garou who are seeking truly rare Gifts use this method. Aside from the usual dangers of the Umbra, a Garou, with or without his pack, must face a spirit where it is most powerful. Encountering a spirit in its own home can be treacherous even if the Garou is cautious.

Breed Gifts

Many spirits teach breed Gifts to werewolves in accordance with ancient pacts or as rewards. The stories and legends of the past can be seen in some of the Gifts as they stand today. Legend has it, for example, that a wolf-born Garou once agreed that his kind would spare hare-spirits for one month per year if the hare-spirit would teach the werewolf the secret of his great leap. Many lupus Garou who learn the Gift: Hare's Leap find themselves unconsciously leaving hares alone during the month in which they learn the Gift.

Homid Gifts

Homid Gifts involve humanity's skills and abilities not only as toolmakers and cultural beings, but also as conquerors of nature. Humans have become strangers to the world of spirits, hence many homid Gifts are taught by ancestor-spirits rather than by nature spirits.

• **Master of Fire (Level One)** — Whether humans remember or not, they once made pacts with the spirits of fire so that they could tame and use it for their own purposes. Homid Garou call upon these pacts to avoid the worst aspects of fire's destructive nature. An ancestor-spirit or fire elemental teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. Thereafter, any damage from fire is considered bashing, not aggravated. This Gift lasts for one scene.

• **Persuasion (Level One)** — This Gift allows the character to become more persuasive when dealing with others, in such a way that their words seem to hold more importance and credibility. This Gift is taught by an ancestor-spirit.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Subterfuge (difficulty 7). If successful, the difficulties of all Social rolls drop by one for the remainder of the scene. Any subsequent Social rolls during the scene often have more of a dramatic effect than they would without the Gift.

• **Smell of Man (Level One)** — Many wild creatures have learned over the years that where humans walk, death follows. This Gift allows the werewolf to enhance the human scent around him, causing wild animals to feel nervous and on edge. This effect typically causes domestic animals to recognize the werewolf as their master. This Gift is taught by an ancestor-spirit.

System: The Garou can use this Gift at will. The player simply states when the character is activating and deactivating the Gift. All wild animals (not including supernatural creatures) lose one die from all pools when they are within 20 feet of the Garou unless they are defending themselves. Domesticated animals recognize the Garou as their master and will refuse to harm her unless they are attacked. (Even then, they are likely to flee.)

• **Speech of the World (Level Two)** — Those who wander can find a new dialect over the next ridge. This Gift allows the character to speak any human language that she encounters. The character speaks with an obvious accent, although smooth conversation is still possible. This Gift does not convey literacy, nor is it an encyclopedia of information. If the character wishes to use a dialect for an extended period of time (days or more), then the dialect must be learned by means other than this Gift. This Gift is taught by an owl-spirit.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Linguistics (difficulty 7). The effects last for the entire scene.

• **Staredown (Level Two)** — A werewolf's stare can strike fear into the hearts of mortals and animals, causing them to flee for their lives. When used against another werewolf, the target will freeze in place rather than run. A ram- or snake-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: This Gift affects only one target at a time. The player rolls Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty 5 + the target's Rank or Courage, if applicable). The victim flees for one turn per success, though he may spend a point of Willpower to resist the effects of this Gift for one turn. Should the player roll five or more successes, the victim will flee for the entirety of the scene. Other Garou will not flee, but they may not attack while this Gift is in use.

• **Calm the Savage Beast (Level Three)** — Even the most callous and heartless of homids can sympathize with their fellow Garou during times of need. This Gift allows for the werewolf to "lend" a frenzied Garou the will to loose the hold that her Rage has on her. This Gift is taught by a unicorn-spirit.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Primal-Urge (difficulty 8). If successful, the temporary Willpower point is "transferred" to the target Garou via touch, canceling the frenzy. This Gift may be used only when the target is in frenzy. At the Storyteller's discretion, this Gift might work on a frenzied vampire.

• **Reshape Object (Level Three)** — The Garou can shape once-living (though not undead) material into something else instantly. Stones become spearheads, trees become spear hafts, animal hides become armor, and flowers become perfume. The new object still resembles what it once was, though, so a bone that is turned into a chalice retains the texture and color of bone. A beaver-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Crafts against a variable difficulty depending on the complexity of the change (5 to turn a broken tree limb into a spear; 8 to turn a plank into a floatable raft). The created object is not necessarily permanent. It will last a length of time according to the following chart.

Successes	Duration
One	five minutes
Two	10 minutes
Three	One scene
Four	One story
Five	Permanent

• **Bury the Wolf (Level Four)** — It is important to hide one's true nature from time to time. A werewolf

can temporarily “restrain” her inner wolf and appear to be a normal human for a short duration.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis (difficulty of the character’s own Willpower). If successful, the character appears to all senses (Gifts, magic and Disciplines included) to be a normal human. While this Gift is active, the Curse is lessened. The Garou’s Rage is considered to be reduced by the number of successes on the Gnosis roll. The character cannot spend Rage or shapeshift while the wolf is buried, but she may use Gifts that do not require the use of Rage. The number of successes determines the duration. To “free” the wolf before the end of that duration, the player must spend another Gnosis point and a full turn to call his true nature to the surface.

Successes Duration

One	One Scene
Two	12 hours
Three	One day
Four	One week
Five	One lunar cycle

• **Spirit Ward (Level Four)** — This Gift allows a werewolf to protect herself from spirits by performing a quick warding rite. The werewolf traces a pictogram in the air that unnerves and repels any nearby spirits. An ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Rituals (difficulty 7). Spirits within 100 feet of the character must subtract one from their dice pools for each success. Any spirit that comes within 50 feet of the character (except caern spirits or the character’s pack totem) loses one point from its Essence per turn for each success the player rolled. This Gift lasts for one scene.

• **Assimilation (Level Five)** — A werewolf with this Gift blends smoothly into any culture, no matter how strange or unfamiliar he might normally find it. The Gift doesn’t hide racial differences, but it does allow the user to mimic the behaviors and mannerisms of a native. It also grants the ability to speak and understand the culture’s language, although this knowledge vanishes as the Gift ends. A chameleon-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Empathy. If successful, the character interacts with members of another culture as if he were one of them. The difficulty depends on how alien the culture is. The difficulty would be 5 for another Garou sept, but it could be as high as 9 when trying to blend into a Black Spiral Hive in a foreign country. The character does

not suffer Social-roll penalties when interacting with members of the culture, although he doesn’t receive any special benefits. The Gift lasts for one scene plus one day per Willpower point spent when activating it.

• **False Comfort (Level Five)** — Humanity has done much to surround itself with comfort and safety. People have developed armor to protect themselves from their own weapons, locks to keep out their own brothers and walls to shelter them from the beasts at their doors. But the ancestor-spirits remember when these comforts were but dreams in the minds of clever humans, and they can teach the Garou how to bypass them. A Garou using this Gift does not shred armor or smash through doors, he simply ignores them entirely.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis (difficulty 7). For one turn per success, the Garou is completely unaffected by human technology unless he chooses to be. The character can see, walk or reach through anything crafted by humanity including walls, armor and other clothing.

Metis Gifts

Metis are the embarrassments of Garou society. They have been born into and raised by a culture that despises them, and they are forever reminded of their second-rate status by their deformities. Along with all the abuse and hardship that other Garou heap on them, they harbor an inner rage that very few other Garou can understand, but this also lends a different tie with the spirit world, very possibly an escape from the horror of their real lives.

• **Create Element (Level One)** — The metis has the power to create a small amount of one of the four basic elements: fire, water, air or earth. For instance, she can light a fire without a flint or fill an empty lambskin with water. Metals, gases and acids are out of her grasp. This Gift creates only natural fire, water, air and earth. Any elemental can teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis. Each success allows the character to create approximately one cubic foot of the desired element, to a maximum weight of 100 lbs., anywhere she can see within 60 feet. The element remains in existence until it is used up (i.e., burned up in case of fire without any fuel to keep it going). Fire created by this Gift inflicts one health level of damage per success, to a maximum of three health levels of damage.

• **Sense Wyrm (Level One)** — This Gift allows for the Garou to sense manifestations of the Wyrm.

This is not a physical sense, but rather mystical. Many Garou, however, use terms connected with physical sensations, especially scent, for lack of better words. Using this Gift does require active concentration; it isn't a constant scent. Any spirit of Gaia can teach this Gift.

System: The player rolls Perception + Occult. The difficulty depends on the concentration and strength of the Wurm presence. All vampires register as Wurm-tainted, older ones more so. A Cainite's Aura modifies the werewolf's difficulty. Vampires who have advanced along the Roads of Heaven, Humanity and the Beast are more difficult to detect, whereas Cainites on the Road of Kings and Sin are easier.

• **Shed (Level One)** — The metis can shed a layer of fur and skin, slipping from an opponent's grasp or escaping from bonds with ease. A lizard-spirit or snake-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Dexterity + Primal-Urge (difficulty 7). If the roll succeeds, the character loses a tuft of fur, allowing her to slip free of grapples or bonds such as ropes or chains (-2 difficulty on any such rolls).

• **Curse of Hatred (Level Two)** — Metis suffer constant abuse throughout their lives, yet they know that they are the fortunate ones. Most metis aren't even allowed to live. The Garou can verbalize the hatred in her heart, disheartening opponents with the intensity of her emotion. A spirit of hate teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Expression (difficulty of the opponent's Willpower). If she succeeds, her opponent loses two Willpower points and

two Rage points. This Gift may be used on a given opponent only once per scene.

• **Sense Silver (Level Two)** — For reasons known only to herself, Luna has been kind enough to the metis to allow them to sense a werewolf's greatest weakness. This Gift, taught by Lunes, allows the metis to detect the presence of silver.

System: The Garou rolls Perception + Primal-Urge (difficulty 7). If successful, she can detect the presence of any silver in a 15-foot radius. Three successes allow her to pinpoint the silver's location.

• **Eyes of the Cat (Level Three)** — The werewolf can see clearly in pitch darkness. Her eyes glow a lambent green while this power is in effect. Any cat-spirit can teach this Gift, although werewolves who make enemies of the Bastet will be hard-pressed to find a spirit who is willing to teach.

System: The player must state when the Gift is in effect, but it requires no roll or expenditure. The character suffers no difficulty or dice-pool penalties from darkness.

• **Mental Speech (Level Three)** — This Gift allows for mental communication, even over vast distances. The user must either know the target personally (although the target need not be a friend) or have something that belongs to that person, such as a lock of hair. Bird spirits teach this Gift.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Empathy (difficulty 8) and spends a Willpower point; the effects last



for a scene. Her character may hold a mental conversation with a target at a maximum distance of 10 miles per success. This Gift does not allow mind-reading — any information conveyed must be conveyed voluntarily — but the metis can attempt to coerce or persuade the target (thus using social Abilities, such as Intimidation).

- **Gift of the Porcupine (Level Four)** — When using this Gift, the werewolf undergoes a startling transformation. Her fur becomes elongated, bristly and sharp like the quills of a porcupine. This change makes her an even more fearsome killing machine. A werewolf must be in Crinos, Hispo or Lupus form to use this Gift. A porcupine-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The character spends a Gnosis point to sharpen her fur. Anyone whom the metis tackles, grapples or immobilizes suffers aggravated damage from her quills (metis's Strength + 1). Furthermore, anyone who strikes her with bare flesh (and scoring fewer than five successes on the attack roll) takes damage based on the attacker's own Strength, although the metis still suffers normal damage. This Gift lasts for one scene or until the werewolf wills his fur to return to normal.

- **Wither Limb (Level Four)** — This Gift forces a victim's arm or leg to wither and twist, making it useless. Creatures with regenerative abilities regain the limb's full function after one scene. Otherwise, the effects are permanent. Venomous spider- or snake-spirits or spirits of disease teach this Gift.

System: The character must touch the targeted limb. The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Willpower (difficulty of the victim's Stamina + 4). If the roll is successful, the limb withers. The victim cannot use the limb, and she adds two to the difficulties of all Dexterity rolls. If her leg is affected, she can move at only half of her normal speed.

- **Madness (Level Five)** — Throughout the entirety of a metis's life, she struggles to find her place through horror and abuse. This Gift allows her to force her inner demons on others, inducing insanity and madness. The nature of the derangement varies among individuals, but it is always severe, making it impossible for the victim to function normally. Lunes and spirits of trickery and madness teach this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty of the victim's Willpower). The target suffers from a Derangement (see pp. 261-263 of *Dark Ages: Vampire* for examples). The insanity lasts a number of days equal to the successes rolled on the attempt. During this time, the metis can increase or decrease the

effects of the madness, granting the victim lucidity and then driving him into psychosis. Even after the Gift has ended, the effects haunt the victim for the rest of his life.

- **Totem Gift (Level Five)** — Despite the years of abuse that a metis endures while growing up, she does not come away from the experienced empty-handed. The strong ties she develops with her tribal totem serve her well, and she can plead directly with that mighty spirit, gaining some of its powers. The effects of this Gift depend on the nature of the totem in question. (Unicorn, for example, might send a Gaffling to heal the metis's pack, while Rat might lead the metis to hiding place.) Only the tribal totem teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Rituals (difficulty 7). The more successes the player rolls, the greater the effect is. One success might distract the foe, whereas five successes might result in the totem manifesting in the Realm to attack a foe on the metis's behalf. The character can make some general stipulations on what she wants the totem to do ("Save me from my foes," for example), but the mighty spirit will act according to its nature.

Lupus Gifts

Lupus Gifts involve the sense of survival that is inherent to the wolf-born Garou, and they reflect the feral world in which they live. They are the Garou most closely connected with Gaia, and their Gifts usually enhance their natural abilities.

- **Hare's Leap (Level One)** — The werewolf can leap truly incredible distances by invoking this Gift. As the name would imply, hare-spirits teach this Gift, although cat- and frog-spirits occasionally do so as well.

System: The player rolls Strength + Athletics (difficulty 7) to activate this Gift; this roll is considered reflexive. If successful, the character's leaping distance is doubled for the scene (see *Jumping*, p. 227 of *Dark Ages: Vampire*).

- **Heightened Senses (Level One)** — The werewolf with this Gift tunes in to the world around her, increasing her senses vastly. When she is in Homid or Glabro form, her senses become as sharp as a wolf's, allowing her to hear sounds beyond her normal range. In wolf forms, her senses become preternaturally potent, allowing her to perform feats that border on precognition. Wolf-spirits teach this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point. The effects last for one scene. In Homid or Glabro forms, all Perception difficulties decrease by two, and the

character can perform sensory feats that are impossible for humans, such as tracking by scent (which requires a successful Perception + Primal-Urge roll from the player). In Crinos, Hispo and Lupus forms, Perception difficulties decrease by three (which is not cumulative with the ordinary Lupus-form Perception bonuses), and the werewolf gains an extra die to Primal-Urge dice pools.

- **Key Lines (Level One)** — The werewolf can instinctively sense where the nearest caern is, though what tribe controls it remains unknown. Depending on the number of her successes, she can determine how far away and how powerful it is. An owl-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Perception + Enigmas (difficulty 7). With one success, the werewolf gets a sense that there is a caern nearby. Three successes give her the approximate distance and direction, and five success or more tell her its exact location so that she could pinpoint it on a map (if she can read one, that is).

- **Scent of Sight (Level Two)** — The werewolf can compensate for her vision completely by using her sense of smell. She can attack invisible creatures normally or navigate in absolute darkness. This Gift is taught by wolf-spirits.

System: The player rolls Perception + Primal-Urge with a difficulty based on how powerful local smells are. The Storyteller should require rolls only when something could cause the Garou to lose the scent of her target, such as a stream or the local pub. As the Obfuscate Discipline causes the target to ignore the Cainite, rather than affecting his sense, this Gift can be confounded by the Discipline. The Storyteller may rule that an opposed roll (the werewolf's Perception + Primal-Urge versus whichever level of the Discipline the Cainite is using) is necessary to see if the vampire remains undetected.

- **Sense the Unnatural (Level Two)** — The werewolf can sense any unnatural presence and determine its approximate strength and type. Supernatural presences include magic, spirits, the Wyrms, ghosts and vampires, although it won't pick them out specifically as such. Any spirit servant of Gaia can teach this Gift.

System: The player rolls Perception + Enigmas (difficulty 7). The more successes he achieves, the more information he is granted. Interpreting the information properly might require an Intelligence + Occult roll (Storyteller's option). This Gift detects supernatural presences as well as Wyrms-tainted phenomena, but doesn't necessarily differentiate them.

Therefore, a powerful spirit might register to this Gift, even if it is Gaian in origin.

- **Devil's Child (Level Three)** — Wolves are often seen as the offspring of the Devil himself, and while they don't fully understand that implication, the lupus are happy to capitalize on the fear it inspires. The Garou lets out a fierce snarl that terrifies opponents and cows them into submission. A wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Primal-Urge (difficulty of the opponent's Willpower or, if he is affecting a group, the highest Willpower represented). If he is successful, the werewolf invokes the full effects of the Delirium on any human who can see her. If the player spends a Gnosis point, this Gift affects supernatural beings such as mages and vampires. This Gift takes one full turn to invoke, and it may be used only in Lupus form.

- **Name the Spirit (Level Three)** — A werewolf with this Gift becomes familiar with the denizens of the Umbra. She can sense the type and approximate trait level (Rage, Gnosis, Willpower) of spirits. This Gift is taught by cat-spirits.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and rolls Perception + Occult (difficulty 8). The number of successes determines how much information the character receives about the spirit.

- **Beast Life (Level Four)** — The werewolf can communicate with and even command wild animals. Domesticated animals might speak to the Garou, but they have given themselves over to their human masters and won't normally provide any aid beyond information. Any animal spirit can teach this Gift, although lupus prefer to learn it from lion- or wolf-spirits.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Animal Ken (difficulty 7). The character gains the ability to communicate with all animals automatically. Each success equals a 10-mile radius (one success = 10 miles, two successes = 20 miles, and so forth) within which the werewolf will attract all animals. The animals will follow any requests the Garou makes, although if a character requests that an animal sacrifice itself, the Garou had better pay homage lest she anger Gaia. (A variation on the Prayer for the Prey rite is usually sufficient.) The effects last for one scene, but the player may extend the duration by spending one Gnosis point per extra scene.

- **Gnaw (Level Four)** — The werewolf's jaws strengthen to the point that she can chew through nearly anything. Her fangs inflict more damage in com-

bat, and only death will break her grip if she clamps her teeth into an opponent. Wolf-spirits teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and rolls Stamina + 4 against a variable difficulty (3 for wood, 6 for iron, 9 for steel). The length of time that it takes to gnaw through something depends on the number of successes. In addition, this Gift gives a character's bite two extra dice of damage for the duration of the scene.

- **Elemental Gift (Level Five)** — Gaia herself steps in to lend a hand, offering part of herself to the character. The werewolf gains the power to command his surroundings, directing the elemental forces of the world. Elementals teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis (difficulty 8). If successful, the Garou calls an elemental, who then grants her the ability to control a large volume of air, earth, fire or water that is approximately 20' by 20' per success. The effect lasts for one scene or until the elemental leaves or is destroyed.

- **Song of the Great Beast (Level Five)** — The Garou travels to the deep wilderness and lets out a long, mournful howl. One of the Great Beasts of ancient times answers the call, appearing in the Realm near the werewolf. Such creatures include Sabertooth Tigers, giant owls, mammoths and even stranger beasts that walked the earth before the humans overran it. Once the creature arrives, the Garou may make a request of it, but the Great Beast will fulfill it in its own way according to its nature. Using this Gift is risky, but the results can be truly spectacular. Few spirits know this Gift, and those that do can most often be found in the Dragonhome Umbral realm.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Primal-Urge (difficulty 8) to attract the notice of a Great Beast. Extra success make the beast more receptive to the Garou's request. Traits are left to the Storyteller's discretion, but these creatures are always impressive.

Auspice Gifts

These Gifts are the legacy of Luna's blessing upon the Garou. Each auspice is granted Gifts according to the role Luna set before them, so that the werewolves can fulfill their purpose as Gaia's defenders by working together.

Ragabash

The Ragabash are tricksters, but few even among the Garou find their actions to be funny. They are scouts,

ambushers without peer and insightful advisors, and they perform the necessary service of mocking the hypocritical and those who are hidebound by tradition.

- **Blur of the Milky Eye (Level One)** — The Garou's form becomes blurred and indistinct, as if viewed through the tired vision of a crone, allowing him to pass unnoticed among others. This protection is not infallible, and the protection of the Gift is negated once the Garou has been seen until the viewers are once again distracted. An ermine-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Stealth (difficulty 7). The Garou does not become invisible, but each success on the roll increases (by one) the difficulty on any Perception roll made to detect him.

- **Scent of Running Water (Level One)** — The Garou can mask her scent completely, making her very difficult to track. A fox-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The difficulties of all rolls to track the Garou by scent increase by two. Once learned, this Gift becomes innate and always active, so the player need not expend points or make rolls. The Garou can choose to suspend this Gift in order to leave a scent trail for social reasons (among wolves) or tactical ones (leading prey into an ambush).

- **Snow Running (Level One)** — The deep snows of winter in much of Europe bring privation at best and starvation at worst to the unprepared or snowbound. A Garou using this Gift can travel or hunt with ease by walking atop the snow. An arctic hare-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point to activate the Gift, which lasts an entire day. While this Gift is in effect, the Garou can run on ice and snow as easily as on solid ground without leaving footprints. It is possible to track him by scent, however, unless he also possesses the Gift: Scent of Running Water.

- **Blissful Ignorance (Level Two)** — When using this Gift, the Garou becomes invisible to all senses and even to spirits by keeping completely still. This Gift is taught by a moth-spirit.

System: The player rolls Dexterity + Stealth (difficulty 7), noting the number of successes. Any creature who is actively looking for the Garou in a specific area must exceed (not tie) that number of successes on a Perception + Alertness roll. If the character is not being actively hunted, one success is all that is necessary for complete concealment.

- **Sense of the Prey (Level Two)** — If the Garou knows anything about her intended prey, even a single part of its name or a crude description, she can

unerringly track it as quickly as she can travel. This sense of direction operates anywhere, so it is just as useful for tracking spirits in the Umbra as it is for finding a street urchin in a crowded city or a Garou who crosses between the worlds at will. A wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: No roll is required unless the target is actively hiding. A general intent to lie low is not enough to foil the Gift. If the target is hiding, the player rolls Perception + Enigmas (difficulty is the prey's Wits + Stealth). If the prey is a spirit, the difficulty of the roll is the spirit's Gnosis.

• **Open Moon Bridge (Level Three)** — The Garou has the ability to open a moon bridge with or without the permission of the totem of the caern. Only a Lune will teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. The initiating caern must maintain a pathstone to the destination. Also, the destination caern must be within 1,000 miles of the origin, or the moon bridge will not open. If the moon bridge is opened without the permission of the caern totem, the spirit may notice and alert the caern's guardians. See the Rite of the Opened Bridge (p. 147) and the Caerns section (p. 164) for more details on moon bridges.

• **Reynard's Lie (Level Three)** — A Garou who has learned this Gift can tell blatant, nonsensical lies, and listeners will believe him — for a while, at least. Even with contrary evidence in hand, a reeve will allow the guilty party to escape, only to rue his stupidity later. Naturally, this Gift is taught by a fox-spirit.

System: The character first tells his lie, then the player rolls Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty of the target's Wits + Subterfuge, or the highest rating in a group of listeners). One success on the roll convinces a single individual, but three successes are necessary to overcome the suspicions of a crowd. Note that there is risk involved — the success of the venture is determined *after* the lie is told, not before. A wise Ragabash chooses plausible lies, but a braver one can go down in song for passing off the most convoluted and ludicrous mishmash he can contrive. Failure on the roll arouses suspicion in measure equal to the outrageousness of the lie. A botch arouses immediate hostility in the listeners.

• **Leper's Curse (Level Four)** — The Garou can invoke a debilitating curse on her enemy, afflicting her foe with bodily weakness and diseased, insensate patches of skin and pelt. The use of this Gift on another werewolf is sure to create or escalate a feud that only ends with the death of one party. A spirit of pain or disease teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one point of Gnosis and rolls Gnosis (difficulty of her target's Willpower). The target resists with a Gnosis roll (or unmodified Stamina for those without Gnosis) at a difficulty of the attacker's Gnosis rating. Each net success allows the attacker to remove one point from any of the victim's Physical Attributes. This effect is permanent, though. The victim may restore the lost Attributes with experience points, thereby "curing" the disease (though identifiable scars remain). This Gift can be used against a given opponent only once *ever*.

• **Luna's Blessing (Level Four)** — This Gift is a mighty token of Luna's favor. When invoked, the light of the moon robs silver of its power to harm the Garou. The protection is so complete that the attacker's blows might even be turned back against him. A Lune teaches this Gift.

System: The player must spend a Gnosis point to activate this Gift. For each strike against the Garou with a silver weapon, the weapon's wielder must roll three extra dice on the attack; these dice are only checked for botches, and do not contribute to the success of the attack. Also, the protected Garou may soak and regenerate damage caused by silver as if it were bashing or lethal damage (dependent on the type of weapon). This Gift may only be used when the moon is visible in the sky; it may not be used during the new moon or when the sky is completely overcast.

• **Thieving Talons of the Magpie (Level Five)** — The Garou who learns this Gift becomes as gleeful a thief as the magpie, capable of stealing the magical abilities of others and using them herself. Any magical power can be stolen: a Gift used by another Garou, spirit Charms, a vampire's Disciplines, even a mage's spells. (Whether a werewolf can steal an inquisitor's God-given blessings is up to individual Storytellers.) A magpie-spirit teaches this Gift, of course.

System: The player rolls Wits + Stealth (difficulty is the target's Willpower). Three successes are necessary for the character to steal a power, thereby depriving the victim of its use. The power is taken piecemeal, so a werewolf who wishes to deprive an undead *voivode* of his terrifying battle form takes away only that form, leaving the vampire the remaining facets of his Vicissitude Discipline. The Garou may keep the power for as many successive turns as she wishes, as long as she spends a point of Gnosis each turn. The Ragabash uses her Gnosis in place of any required traits that she does not possess, such as a vampire's blood pool. The thief must know something about her intended victim's abilities, whether



from observation or through tales, but she may describe it in terms that are familiar to her. She does not gain any new understanding of the powers she has stolen except through trial and error, so botches incurred while using stolen powers tend to be dramatic and explosive.

- **Chimerical Form (Level Five)** — The great tricksters of legends are all masters of changing shape, and the Ragabash who has mastered this Gift is no exception. Using it, he can change his form into that of any animal between the sizes of a tiny finch and a massive walrus. The Garou gains all of the natural abilities of the animal: winged flight, underwater breathing with gills, venom, exceptional senses and so on. He may not take the form of a Wurm-beast, but it is possible (though difficult) to attain the form of a mythic creature like a unicorn or griffin, provided the beast remains within the same size limitations as those for mundane animals. This Gift is taught by a Chimerling, a dream-spirit associated with change.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Intelligence + Animal Ken (difficulty 6). One success allows the character to assume the shape of any normal animal. For the duration of the scene, he may make additional transformation rolls without spending additional Gnosis, provided he only takes the shape of normal animals. To allow

the character to take on a mythical form, the player must spend a point of Gnosis and succeed against a difficulty of 10.

Theurge

The light of the crescent moon grants insight to the Theurges, displaying the secrets of the spirit world to those who know how to see. Luna's Gifts to her most magical children give power over spirits and influence over the minds of others.

- **Mother's Touch (Level One)** — The Garou channels healing energy through her hands, easing the wounds of any other living creature. Even aggravated wounds can be healed in this fashion, although the werewolf cannot heal spirits or the undead. (Not that any right-thinking Garou *would* heal a Leech!) This Gift is taught by a unicorn-spirit.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Intelligence + Empathy (difficulty is the recipient's current Rage, or 5 for those without the Rage trait). Each success heals one health level of damage. The healer can even remove Battle Scars in this manner, if the Gift is used during the same scene in which the scarring injury was inflicted. The player must spend an additional Gnosis point for the Gift to function thus. There is no limit to how many times

this Gift may be used on an individual, but each use incurs the Gnosis cost.

- **Sense Wurm (Level One)** — As the metis Gift.

- **Spirit Speech (Level One)** — This Gift allows the Garou to understand the language of the spirit world (although, like the Garou tongue, it does not rely on sound alone to communicate meaning). He can therefore speak with any spirit he encounters. He can also eavesdrop on the conversations of spirits, though that is not something to do lightly. This Gift does not influence spirits' attitudes toward the Garou in any way, nor does it ensure that they will stay to listen to him. Any spirit can teach this Gift.

System: When this Gift is learned, the Garou gains an intuitive understanding of the language of spirits. Spirits from the Deep Umbra or particularly corrupt Banes might be more difficult — even painful — to understand. The player may be required to make an Intelligence + Enigmas roll against a difficulty set by the Storyteller for the character to puzzle out their meaning.

- **Command Spirit (Level Two)** — The Garou can give commands to spirits she encounters and expect them to obey. As always in dealings with the spirit world, it is essential for the commands to be precisely clear, as an unwilling spirit may twist an ambiguous wording to suit its liking. This Gift does not grant the ability to summon spirits. Any Incarna avatar can teach this Gift.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty is the spirit's Gnosis). A botch on this roll indicates that some slight has been given, and the spirit becomes immediately hostile and might attack. The character can issue successive commands once the spirit is under her control; each additional command requires that the player expend an additional Willpower point. Note that the spirit cannot be ordered to leave a place or object to which it is bound. That is the province of the Level-Three Gift: Expel Spirit.

- **Sight from Beyond (Level Two)** — Upon learning this Gift, the Garou becomes an oracle. In times of great danger or great opportunity, she receives visions that strike without warning. The message is veiled in metaphor, like most oracular sendings. A great battle might be foretold by a full moon red with blood, or the subtle encroachment of enemies might be represented by insects gnawing away at a foundation. A crow- or snake-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Granting and interpreting visions is a matter best left to roleplaying, but the Storyteller may grant the player a Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 7) to help decipher the omens.

- **Expel Spirit (Level Three)** — Use of this Gift forces a spirit from a place or object, whether it entered voluntarily or was bound against its will. An Incarna avatar teaches this Gift.

System: The Garou must concentrate for three uninterrupted turns. If the spirit does not wish to leave, the player must make a Manipulation + Intimidation roll against a difficulty of the spirit's Willpower. If the spirit was bound using the Rite of Binding (see p. 149), the player must make a Wits + Rituals roll (difficulty 7) and score more successes than the binder achieved during the ritual to allow the character to free the spirit or drive it off. If it was bound into a fetish using the Rite of the Fetish (see p. 150), the difficulty is 9. This Gift can be used to "cure" a fomor by expelling the Bane, but the former host will certainly die if he is not healed immediately with powerful magics.

- **Pulse of the Invisible (Level Three)** — While all Garou are children of both the spirit realm and the physical world, the werewolf who learns this Gift can perceive them both while standing firmly in Gaia's realm. While watching spirits is often as entertaining as watching the grass grow, those with this Gift will be immediately aware of notable events in the spirit world. Any spirit can teach this Gift.

System: If the Garou's permanent Gnosis equals or exceeds the Gauntlet, he can see into the Umbra automatically without conscious effort. Otherwise the player must roll Gnosis (difficulty equal to the local Gauntlet) to allow the character to pierce the wall between the worlds. One success is sufficient. The effect lasts for one scene or until the character enters an area with a higher Gauntlet, at which time the player must roll and succeed again.

- **Grasp the Beyond (Level Four)** — The Garou can take things into the Umbra without first dedicating them to himself (see the Rite of Talisman Dedication, p. 149). This Gift can also be used to transport willing or unwilling living beings into the spirit world. Garou often use this Gift to take favored kin with them on Umbral quests or to shake the faith of annoyingly persistent clergy. An opossum-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The Garou must have the item or being he wishes to transport in one or both hands. The player must then spend a number of Willpower points dependent on the size of the item: one for small items (a knife or locket), two for larger items (a baby or pair of saddlebags), and three for anything larger that can still be held in two hands (an adult person or a church altar). The player then makes the usual Gnosis roll to step sideways through the Gauntlet. If he is successful,

both the character and the item enter the Umbra. An unwilling individual may resist with a Willpower roll (difficulty 7); each success subtracts one from the roll to step sideways. A minimum of three net successes are necessary for the Garou to force the resisting individual into the Umbra.

Unless the transported individual can step sideways on her own, she must have help to re-cross the Gauntlet (most likely the Garou who brought her). If she can find a caern or a similar spirit-touched place where the Gauntlet is lower than 3, she may exit the Umbra there on her own, but not re-enter. Living creatures who are left in the Umbra for too long eventually lose their physical nature and become spirits.

- **Spirit Wassail (Level Four)** — The Garou drains power from a spirit to strengthen her will. The process is difficult even if the spirit is willing to help. A certain amount of pain seems necessary to transform the spirit's essence into the Theurge's mystic resolve. A rat-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player makes a resisted Gnosis roll against the spirit. If the roll succeeds, the spirit loses one Essence point per success; these points are lost for the rest of the scene. For every two points drained from the spirit, the character gains a temporary Willpower point. Any points exceeding her maximum are lost at the end of the scene.

- **Nightmare Possession (Level Five)** — A Garou with this degree of mastery over the spirit world can call up a dreadful spirit of the Wyld and bind it immediately to his target, sentencing his enemy to a twilight existence of constant nightmare. The victim suffers an immediate loss of intellect and most memory, and he begins to act in a bestial manner. Even if the spirit is later expelled, the damage to the victim's soul cannot be undone. This Gift is taught by a Wyldling.

System: The player rolls Wits + Empathy (difficulty is the target's Willpower + 3, maximum of 10) and spends a variable number of Gnosis points. For each two Gnosis points spent, one point of Intelligence is destroyed. The Garou can destroy, at most, as many points of Intelligence as successes scored on the roll. The player must also declare the total Gnosis expenditure before seeing the results on the target — neither the player nor the character know the victim's Intelligence Attribute rating. A botch on the roll indicates that the powerful Wyld spirit is summoned but not bound, and is free to wreak havoc.

- **Malleable Spirit (Level Five)** — The Garou can change a spirit's essential nature, remolding its

form, its purpose and even its allegiance to suit her needs. This Gift is taught by a Chimerling.

System: The player must make a resisted Gnosis test against the spirit. The player's difficulty is based on the sort of change the Garou attempts, while the spirit's difficulty is the Garou's Gnosis.

Change	Difficulty
Characteristics (Willpower, Rage, Gnosis; one point changed per success)	6
Disposition (Friendly, Neutral, Hostile) or Affiliation within Type (water to fire, etc.)	8
Type (Naturae, Elemental, Bane, etc.)	10

Philodox

The Philodox are the keepers of the scales of judgment, those tasked with maintaining the balance between truth and tradition. To aid them in this role, Luna grants them abilities that sense falsehoods and help them enforce the laws of their people.

- **Resist Pain (Level One)** — By strength of will, the Garou ignores the pain of his wounds and continues to act normally until he is completely incapacitated. A badger-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point, and the character suffers no wound penalties for the rest of the scene.

- **Scent of the True Form (Level One)** — This Gift allows a werewolf to determine a person's true nature. As the name of the Gift suggests, the Garou uses her sense of smell, which is not fooled by the target's outward seeming. This Gift is taught by a vampire-spirit.

System: The Garou can smell Kinfolk or a fellow werewolf automatically. In all other cases, the player must roll Perception + Primal-Urge (difficulty 6). It takes only one success to identify a normal human or animal; two successes to detect a vampire, faerie, or other shapeshifter; and four successes to discern if the target is a mage or fomor. The Blessed (see p. 287 of **Dark Ages: Vampire**) register as normal humans to this Gift.

- **Truth of Gaia (Level One)** — The Half Moons of the Garou are entrusted with the duty of settling disputes and dispensing justice. This Gift, which allows them to sense truth or falsehood in another's words, is vital to fulfilling that duty. A Gaffling of Falcon teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Empathy (difficulty is the subject's Manipulation + Subterfuge). This Gift reveals only which of the

words that have been spoken are true and which are false. It does not reveal the truth behind a lie unless the speaker utters it.

• **Call to Duty (Level Two)** — Names hold great power, especially in the spirit world. The Garou may summon and command any spirit she knows by name. Only one command may be given, and the spirit departs immediately after fulfilling it. Alternatively, all spirits in the area may be called in times of great need. An Incarna avatar teaches this Gift.

System: The Garou must know the name of the spirit she wishes to summon, whether through personal acquaintance, from the tales told by a mentor, or use of the Gift: Name the Spirit. The player rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty of the spirit's Willpower). The second mode of this Gift simply requires the player to expend two Gnosis points to summon all Gaian spirits within a one-mile radius. If the character has abused this Gift in the past (which is up to the Storyteller's discretion), however, the spirits might refuse the call.

• **Strength of Purpose (Level Two)** — Even more than most Garou, the Half Moons love a great cause. Once he has found one and taken it to heart, a werewolf can use this Gift to fortify himself, turning hot passions into cold, steely determination. A wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Once per scene, the player may roll Stamina + Rituals (difficulty 7). For every two successes, the character recovers one Willpower point, up to his maximum.

• **Spirit Witness (Level Three)** — The world is alive and aware on levels that normal men and women cannot perceive — levels that Garou too often forget, to their chagrin. A Garou uses this Gift to see clearly through the mists of time to any scene to which she can find a spirit witness, whether she wishes to study an epic battle or declare an isolated confrontation between two werewolves an honest challenge or a cowardly murder. This Gift is taught by a tortoise-spirit.

System: Before invoking this Gift, the character must find a spirit witness. The spirit does not have to be friendly, but Gaian spirits can not resist — their memories are a part of Gaia. Once the spirit has been found, the player rolls Charisma + Investigation against a variable difficulty. If the spirit has never left the area in which the event took place (the spirit of an ancient tree or tremendous rock), the difficulty on the roll is 7. If the spirit has roamed freely, the difficulty begins at 8 for events in the past year, 9 for the past century or 10 for even earlier events. Bringing the spirit back to the site of the event

reduces the difficulty by one. Spirits that are not of Gaia may choose to resist, rolling their Willpower against a target of the Garou's Willpower and directly subtracting successes from the player's roll.

• **Warrior's Eye (Level Three)** — All Garou become veteran combatants. A werewolf with this Gift has something more — an uncanny ability to quickly pick out and exploit the weaknesses in an enemy's fighting style. Some Garou insist that this knowledge comes from the last whispers of the enemy's dead foes. True or not, this Gift is taught by wind-spirits.

System: The character must concentrate for a full turn on watching the target fight or otherwise display his martial prowess. The player then rolls Perception + Brawl or Melee — dependent on the subject's current weapons of choice — (difficulty 8). Each success gives the player one bonus die to add to attack or damage rolls against this opponent. For example, if the player gets four successes on the roll, she may assign three to attack and one to damage. Once assigned, the bonus dice may not be re-arranged. This Gift can be used against a given foe only once per scene, and the benefits are lost at the end of the scene.

• **Roll Over (Level Four)** — A staredown pits one werewolf against another in a test of wills. A Garou with this Gift radiates command and power, allowing him to engage several others in a simultaneous test. If he succeeds, his opponents acknowledge his dominance — humans by bowing or kneeling, Garou by rolling over to expose their throats. Wolf-spirits teach this Gift.

System: The player begins an extended, resisted Willpower contest. The results are compared to each of the opponents in turn. When the player has scored three more successes than an opponent, that opponent drops out of the contest. If ever one of the opponents accumulates three more successes over the character, the contest is finished and the character has lost. When the player eliminates the last opponent, the character has achieved complete, if temporary, domination. For the remainder of the scene, the losers will not take any action without the approval of the character unless their lives are endangered.

• **Scent of Beyond (Level Four)** — With a moment's concentration, the Garou can send her senses to any place with which she is familiar, even an Umbral location, no matter how far away she may be. Because a bird spirit teaches this Gift, her senses perceive the scene from above.

System: The player rolls Perception + Enigmas (difficulty 8). If the location is in the Umbra, the

difficulty is 8 or the location's Gauntlet rating, whichever is higher. The character may continue to sense the location for as long as she wishes, but her body is left completely unaware, bereft of even the sense of touch.

• **Earthfriend's Pact (Level Five)** — Philodox and earth elementals have an affinity for each other. Both are usually dedicated, stalwart and slow to anger. In recognition of a legendary friendship between an ancient Garou and elemental, the spirits of the earth teach this Gift to the Half Moons. When the Garou calls for aid, the ground beneath his feet answers, shaking his enemies to their knees and swallowing the least fortunate into an early grave.

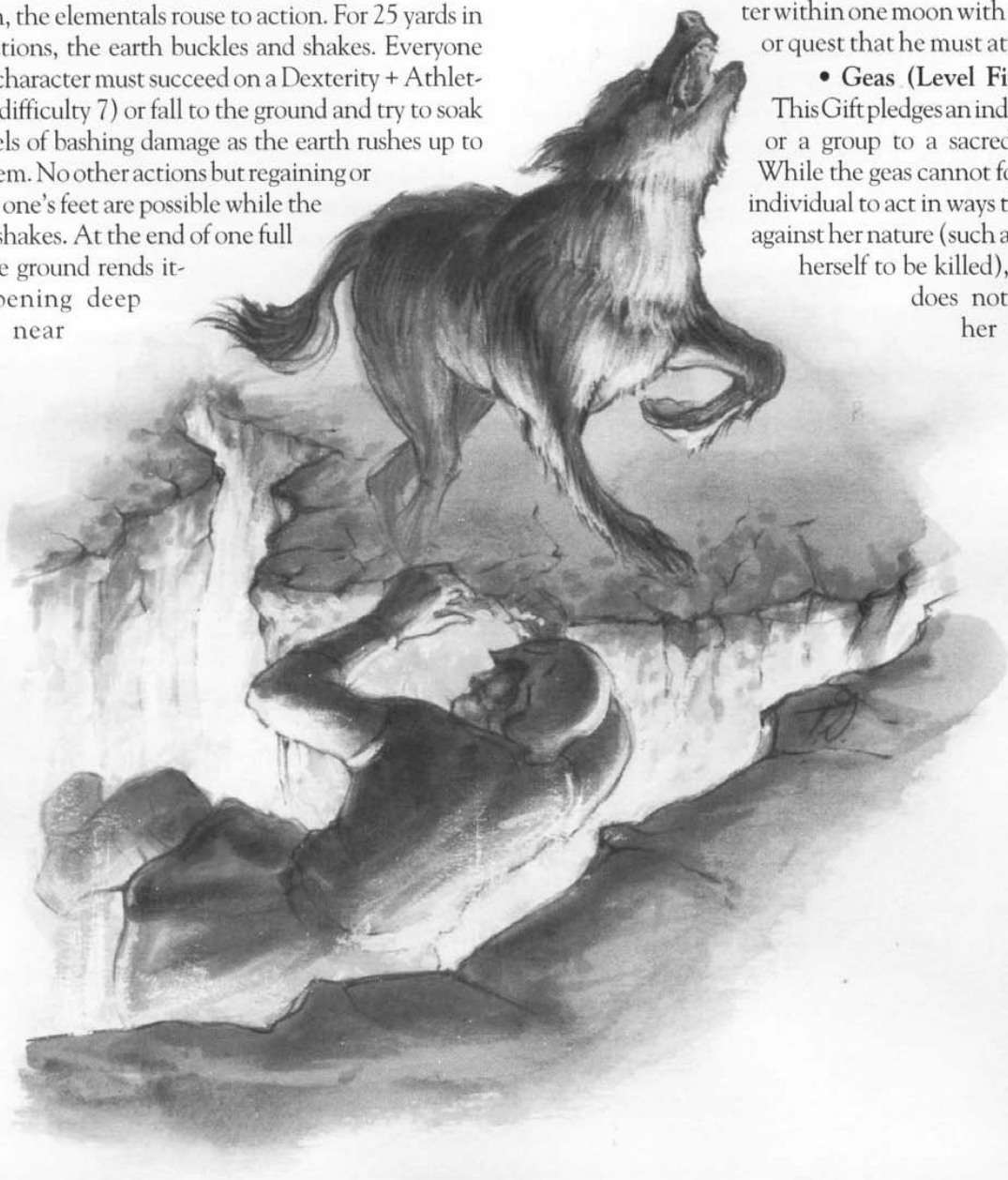
System: The player spends one point of Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Expression (difficulty 8). During the first turn, the elementals rouse to action. For 25 yards in all directions, the earth buckles and shakes. Everyone but the character must succeed on a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 7) or fall to the ground and try to soak five levels of bashing damage as the earth rushes up to meet them. No other actions but regaining or keeping one's feet are possible while the ground shakes. At the end of one full turn, the ground rends itself, opening deep clefts near

those on the ground. Those who are still on the ground must make a Dexterity + Dodge (difficulty 6) roll to avoid falling in. Those who fail must soak 10 levels of bashing damage as the rents smash closed. Survivors must claw their way out of the earth or die. Successes beyond four on the player's initial roll may be used to extend the tremors for one round per success or to increase its violence, adding one to the difficulties on the rolls to avoid falling and being swallowed. Additional successes may also be devoted to protecting packmates from the tremors at a cost of one success per protected individual.

The use of this Gift comes at great personal cost to the character. By the terms of the pact, an earth elemental will come to the character within one moon with a boon or quest that he must attempt.

• **Geas (Level Five)** —

This Gift pledges an individual or a group to a sacred oath. While the geas cannot force an individual to act in ways that are against her nature (such as allow herself to be killed), it also does not allow her to act



against the task that the Philodox has set before her — a task that is undoubtedly toward Gaia's greater good. This Gift is taught by an Incarna avatar.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Leadership (difficulty is the opponent's Willpower — in a group, use the highest Willpower rating). The compulsion to complete the task set out in the geas lasts until the task is completed or the target is harmed to the point of incapacitation in service to the quest. Only one geas may be laid upon an individual at a time. This sacred Gift is often used to bind together disparate individuals in order to achieve a goal of great importance to the Garou. If the Storyteller feels that the character has abused the Gift for personal gain, he is well within his rights to temporarily or permanently disallow the use of this Gift — the spirits will no longer sanctify the binding words.

Galliardo

The Moon Dancers' role is bittersweet. They share the joyful task of preserving Garou victories in legend and song, along with the onerous one of teaching caution and wisdom through tales of tragedy and defeat. While the Galliards are fierce warriors themselves when the moon swells, their most important task in times of war is to rally their packs and tribes to fight on against any odds.

• **Beast Speech (Level One)** — This Gift allows a werewolf to speak with animals, from fish and amphibians to birds and mammals. This Gift does not influence the animal's reaction, which might well be terror in the presence of a predator. Any animal spirit can teach this Gift.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Animal Ken. Each separate encounter and animal type requires another roll. The Storyteller may rule that communication with specific, familiar animals eventually becomes easier, requiring no roll.

• **Call of the Wyld (Level One)** — This Gift allows the Garou to send her howl beyond the normal range of hearing and imbues that howl with great emotion, stirring the souls of werewolves and sending a chill through all others. The Garou might use this gift to signal the beginning of the revel, to rally their fellows for battle or to send a potent call for help. A wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Stamina + Empathy; the number of successes determines how far away the Call can be heard and how stirring it is to those who hear it. This Gift should be used in combination with one of the Garou howls (see p. 30). The Storyteller must determine the effects, keeping in mind the howl used and the character's intent. Perhaps award the revel participants a bonus die to their pools for every two



successes, reward an exceptional battlefield howl with a point of Rage or Willpower for those who have emptied their pools, and allow a successful Call for Succor to bring every single Garou within its range running to help. Because of the bonds shared among members of a pack, a distant packmate may hear a howl that eludes the ears of those around him.

• **Waking Dream (Level One)** — The Garou reaches into the realm of dreams and pulls back enough dream stuff to forge a connection among individuals through which they can communicate. A Chimerling teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point per sentient being included. A Manipulation + Empathy roll (difficulty of the target's Willpower) is only required if an individual is unwilling to be included. Those included interact with each other in a dream-like fashion — even if they attack each other, no harm is done. They may also continue to act with their bodies, incurring a -2 penalty to dice pools. The Gift ends when all the participants want it to, when the initiating character fails a roll to bring an unwilling being into the link or when one of the participants leaves the line of sight.

• **Call of the Wurm (Level Two)** — This dangerous Gift spurs the minions of the Wurm into action, driving them toward the Garou who voiced the Call. This brave soul is the bait in an ambush or the one beating the bushes to drive the enemy into the open. Any spirit servant of Gaia can teach this Gift.

System: The player makes a resisted Manipulation + Performance roll against the Wurm creature's Willpower (both difficulty 7). If the Wurm creature loses the contest, it must come to the source of the Call. (In encounters with large numbers of Wurm beasts, the Storyteller might wish to simply test once for all creatures with a Willpower of 2, then those with 3, and so on.)

• **Distractions (Level Two)** — The Garou harries his foes with annoying yips, yelps and howls, diverting the attention of his target. A wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Wits + Performance (difficulty is the target's Willpower). Each success subtracts one from the target's dice pool on the next turn.

• **Eye of the Asp (Level Three)** — With a piercing look, the Garou can lure her enemy to within striking distance. A venomous snake-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Appearance + Enigmas (difficulty is the victim's Willpower). Three successes are necessary to bring the target to the alluring Garou's

side. Fewer successes just start him moving in the right direction. If the roll is a botch, the target has figured out the ruse and won't fall for it again during this scene.

• **Song of Rage (Level Three)** — To invoke this Gift, the Garou howls a note of pure fury. If his target is capable of frenzy (werewolves, vampires and other such creatures), it does so immediately. Humans turn into berserkers, flying into a blind rage much like a frenzy (though they gain none of the benefits). A wolverine-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Leadership (difficulty of the target's Willpower). The victim flies into a rage (or an actual frenzy) for one turn per success.

• **Shadows by the Firelight (Level Four)** — The Garou invokes shadows and dreams to set the stage for a play in which other werewolves play a part. The Galliard narrates the tale, and the actors are swept along in the story — willingly or not. This Gift is often used at moots, since it allows many to participate in the retelling of legends. It is also used as an object lesson for the wayward and stubborn. An ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Use with willing participants requires no rolls or expenditure. To press an unwilling actor into service, the player spends three Gnosis points per target and rolls Manipulation + Performance (difficulty is the target's Willpower). Three successes are required to puppet the target through the story. The effects last until the story ends (one scene), or until the actor is attacked.

• **Song of Mockery (Level Four)** — This Gift allows the Galliard to learn her rival's deepest, darkest secrets. Perhaps unfortunately, it requires her to sing of those secrets before a crowd. This Gift is taught by a mockingbird-spirit.

System: The player rolls Wits + Investigation (difficulty 8). The character begins to sing extemporaneously about her chosen subject; each success on the roll improves the quality of the song and reveals another secret. The secrets may simply be peccadilloes (the subject eats too many onions and therefore smells) or far worse (the subject sired a metis). Thankfully, poetic license may veil the worst from the ears of those who are simply expecting a song.

• **Dream Golem (Level Five)** — The masters of emotion and imagination can bring the creatures of dreams — or nightmares — to life. Chimerlings teach this Gift.

System: The player makes an extended roll of Intelligence + Performance (difficulty 8). She can create any creature she imagines, assigning it one dot

of traits for each success gained on the roll. The character continues to shape the creature for as long as she wishes (and the player keeps accumulating successes on the roll), but once she stops, the process cannot be taken up again. A manifested creature requires Gnosis to continue existing: one Gnosis point per scene unless the creature is engaging in combat or other strenuous activity, which requires one Gnosis per turn. If the roll is botched at any point, the dream being is free to act of its own accord.

• **Call for Vengeance (Level Five)** — When a crime against Gaia is too great to go unpunished, the character uses this Gift to bring the fury of the Garou down on the offender. He howls the name of the criminal and the crime to the heavens, and both worlds echo the Call. An ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Stamina + Performance (difficulty 7). The howl echoes for a 20-mile-per-success radius. Garou who hear are not obligated to join the hunt, but those who do have their Willpower rating increased by three (to a maximum of 10) for the duration. In addition, if the criminal can hear the howl, her Willpower is effectively reduced by two points for the next week. The character can not use this Gift again until the offender is caught and brought to Gaia's justice. (Appropriate justice is left to the Storyteller's discretion.)

Ahroun

Without doubt, the children of the full moon are the fiercest of Gaia's warriors. The very sight of Luna in the sky fills them with Rage. Luna's gifts to them temper that rage, forging it into a terrible weapon or improving their ability to lead their fellows in the fray.

• **Falling Touch (Level One)** — This Gift allows the Garou to send her foe sprawling with a touch. Any flying spirit can teach this Gift.

System: The player rolls Dexterity + Medicine (difficulty of the victim's Stamina + Athletics); only one success is needed. This attack counts as an action, and the touch causes no damage (though the effects of the fall might).

• **Inspiration (Level One)** — The presence of a true warrior is uplifting to her fellows. The werewolf can use this Gift to lend her resolve and righteous anger to those who share her cause. A lion- or wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. All allies who can see the Ahroun receive one automatic success on all Willpower rolls made during the scene.

(The invoking Ahroun herself does not receive this bonus.)

• **Razor Claws (Level One)** — By raking his claws over stone, the Garou hones them to razor sharpness. A cat-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Rage point. The character must spend one turn sharpening his claws. For the rest of the scene, his claw attacks inflict an additional die of damage.

• **Spirit of the Fray (Level Two)** — This Gift allows the Garou to attack with lightning speed, striking before any foe. A cat-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Once learned, the effects of this Gift are permanent. The player adds 10 to all initiative rolls, which will nearly always ensure that she strikes first. If she chooses, the player may spend a Gnosis point to add another 10 to his initiative roll. This expenditure, however, prevents her from spending Rage to gain extra actions.

• **True Fear (Level Two)** — The Garou can display his full martial might, adding one chosen foe's wits with fear for a short time. A spirit of fear teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Strength + Intimidation (difficulty of the target's Willpower). Each success cowers the target for one turn. The target can not attack, but she may defend herself normally and take other actions, though they will be guided by fear.

• **Heart of Fury (Level Three)** — A Garou uses this Gift to resist the pull of frenzy, steeling herself against Rage when too much is at risk to indulge in mindless fury. There is always a cost, though. The werewolf must fight against her anger when the danger is past, risking turning on allies if Rage overwhelms her. A boar-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Willpower (difficulty is the character's permanent Rage rating). Every two successes add one to the character's frenzy difficulties for the scene. At the end of that scene, he must spend a Willpower point or immediately check for frenzy at the regular difficulty. If the character does frenzy as a result, he will not attack his packmates (even if his permanent Rage exceeds his permanent Gnosis). Any others nearby might be the unfortunate targets of his pent-up Rage, though.

• **Silver Claws (Level Three)** — To those warriors who earn her favor, Luna sends her children to teach this painful but powerful Gift. When invoked, it turns the Garou's claws to silver.

System: The player rolls Gnosis (difficulty 7) to activate this Gift. Silver claws inflict aggravated



damage to all targets, which is unsoakable by Garou and most other Fera. Yet while his claws are silvered, the Garou suffers searing pain. Each turn, he automatically gains a Rage point, and all non-combat difficulties increase by two in the haze of pain. If his Rage points exceed his Willpower, the character must check for frenzy. The Gift lasts for one scene, unless the character ends it sooner.

- **Full Moon's Light (Level Four)** — The full moon is Luna's warrior phase, when she assumes the visage of Diana the Huntress, and searches out her enemies. The Ahroun can call upon her determination in finding her foes, illuminating any who oppose her. Lunes teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. For the remainder of the scene, anyone who is actively working against the Ahroun or her pack emits a soft glow, as though illuminated by moonlight. This Gift can be used to confound powers such as Obfuscate or magic designed to hide the caster, but only if the target is actively attempting to harm, compete with, or otherwise foil the Ahroun or her pack.

- **Stoking Fury's Furnace (Level Four)** — The Garou use this Gift to husband their Rage, portioning it out to last a full battle. Wolverine-spirits (themselves masters of maintained ire) teach this Gift.

System: Once learned, this Gift is innate.

The Garou regains one Rage

point in any turn during which he takes damage. This Rage does not cause a frenzy check, though other sources will induce checks as usual. In addition, the player can spend one Rage point per turn without losing any temporary Rage. If multiple Rage points are spent during any turn, however, all are marked off.

- **Kiss of Helios (Level Five)** — The Garou can invoke the sun's power to become immune to flame. Additionally, the character can ignite any portion of her body, and it remains alight for as long as she wishes. Commonly the Garou will light her mane to honor the sun during rituals, but the Gift is also used to wreak havoc among fearful humans or those impure things that hide from the sun's light. Any spirit servant of Helios can teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis. For the rest of the scene, the character is unharmed by any natural source of fire (even molten lava). Any supernatural source (such as a dragon's breath) inflicts one-quarter damage, and is treated as bashing. The character inflicts two additional dice of aggravated damage if she attacks with flaming fists, claws or fangs.

- **Strength of Will (Level Five)** — A Garou with this Gift is a pillar of indomitable will. He can share this terrifying single-mindedness with others, as well,

leading them even to certain doom without a moment of fear. A wolf-spirit or an Incarna avatar teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty 8). Each success grants all the Garou's allies within 100 feet (and her packmates anywhere within 100 miles) an extra point of Willpower. The extra points last for the rest of the scene and may raise an ally's Willpower above its maximum (and even above 10). This Gift can be used only once per scene.

Tribe Gifts

Each of the tribal totems have their own collections of secret lore and Gifts, which they parcel out to their chosen tribe as the Garou become more learned. Most totems become very offended if Garou outside their tribes exhibit knowledge of the Gifts, though they are more sensitive about higher-levels Gifts.

Black Furies

The Gifts of the Furies show the benefits of their affiliation with the Wyld. They also possess useful and powerful Gifts of war.

- **Breath of the Wyld (Level One)** — Furies embrace the energy of creation, and they can choose to share this inspirational energy with others. When a Fury uses this Gift on someone, she instills in him a feeling of lucidity. A spirit servant of Pegasus teaches this Gift.

System: The Fury must touch her target's skin. The player rolls Gnosis (difficulty 5 against Garou; difficulty 6 for others). Success grants the recipient a rush of mental vitality. In game terms, this Gift grants one extra die on all Mental rolls for the next scene. It also adds one to the difficulties of any Rage rolls made during that scene. This Gift works only on living beings.

- **Man's Skin (Level One)** — There are simply some places where women are not allowed in the Dark Medieval. This Gift allows a Black Fury to circumvent those rules. The Fury using this Gift effectively changes gender in the eyes of onlookers. Her features and build become decidedly more masculine, and her garb adapts to that of a man. Her hair color, eye color and skin color remain the same. The result is a man who shows a slight family resemblance to the Fury.

This Gift is taught by an ancestor-spirit, often one who needed to dress as a man in life to accomplish her own ends.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Subterfuge, difficulty 7. The illusion lasts for a scene, or until the Fury shifts form. The change even withstands cursory tactile contact, although heavy or violent contact will reveal the truth.

- **Sense Wurm (Level One)** — As the metis Gift.

- **Curse of Aeolus (Level Two)** — The Fury summons a thick, eerie fog that obscures vision and causes those who are enveloped by it to feel unnerved. Only the Fury can see clearly through the fog. A spirit in service to Aeolus, the fog totem, teaches this Gift.

System: The player makes a Gnosis roll. The difficulty varies with surrounding terrain and humidity: 4 near a body of water, 6 in a temperate climate and 9 in a desert. Those other than the Fury who are enveloped in the fog lose half of their dice on all Perception rolls (rounded up). Within the fog, the Fury and her packmates are immune to the unnerving effect. All others lose one die from all Willpower rolls.

- **Sense of the Prey (Level Two)** — As the Ragabash Gift.

- **Coup de Grace (Level Three)** — The Fury carefully studies her foe for a fleeting moment, searching for the most prudent spot to deliver this devastating attack. An owl-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and rolls Perception + Brawl. The target rolls Perception + Subterfuge. If the player rolls more successes than the target, the player doubles the damage dice rolled on the next successful attack on the target.

- **Flames of Hestia (Level Three)** — This Gift mixes the Furies' capacity to heal and harm. A Fury summons a corona of white flame to surround her hands. The flame purifies everything that the Fury touches. She may cleanse tainted food, purify contaminated water or cure the ravages of disease or poison. Her flaming hands also cause damage to Wurm-tainted creatures. A spirit servant of Hestia (an Incarna of purity and healing) teaches this gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis (difficulty 7). Each success allows the Fury to remove any taint from a barrel's worth of water or enough food to fill a trencher. Alternatively, each success heals one health level of damage inflicted by disease or poison (as well as cure either one). Finally, if a Black Fury touches a Bane, fomor or other Wurm-tainted creature while this Gift is active, the flames cause one health level of aggravated damage per success.

- **Body Wrack (Level Four)** — By focusing her anger and pointing her finger at an opponent, a Fury can cause immense, crippling pain. Victims of the

pain fall to the ground and convulse for a short time. Furies use this Gift as an effective intimidation tactic. A pain-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis (difficulty of the target's Stamina + 3). If successful, the target is left stunned and convulsing for one round per success. Additionally, the target subtracts one die per success from all Attribute rolls for the rest of the scene.

• **Bow of Pegasus (Level Four)** — A Fury infuses her bow with spiritual energy to become fantastically adept at striking targets from any distance. Arrows shot from her bow travel in a flash of light toward any target within her sight, as though there were no distance between them. A spirit servant of Pegasus teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Gnosis (difficulty 6). Success allows the character to shoot arrows that travel instantly to any target in the character's range of visibility, rendering the target unable to dodge. Additionally, the difficulty to hit a target drops to four while this Gift is active. The Gift lasts for one turn per success.

• **Gaze of the Gorgon (Level Five)** — With a gaze, the wielder of this Gift can turn living flesh into stone. Any target with whom the Fury makes eye contact can be changed into a stone statue, frozen in action for a short time. The Black Furies guard the secret of this Gift even more than most, and only trustworthy tribe members are allowed to receive it. More frightening still is the rumor that the elders know a way to make the hideous effect permanent. A Gorgon can teach this Gift, but a Fury seeking this Gift must be wary of approaching these rare and unpredictable spirits.

System: After making eye contact, the player rolls Perception + Occult (difficulty equal to the target's Willpower) to determine the number of rounds the victim remains stone.

• **Wyld Warp (Level Five)** — This Gift summons several Wyld-spirits to aid the Fury. When they arrive, they will behave in an unpredictable, but beneficial manner. They might fly about in a destructive frenzy, tearing the Fury's foes asunder, or they might increase the Rage in all Garou in the immediate area. There is no way to predict the actions of the summoned spirits. A Wyldling teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and one Rage point. She then rolls Wits + Enigmas, difficulty of the local Gauntlet. Success summons a variable number of Wyldlings that will alter the situation to the benefit of the character.

BONE GNAWERS

For all intents and purposes, the Bone Gnawers are the first line of communication between the Garou and the world of humanity in the Dark Medieval. Not simply flea-ridden vagrants, the Bone Gnawers assimilate into medieval society as craftsmen, farmers, soldiers and spies. Their Gifts — the blessings of Rat — are reflective of their versatility and their will to survive against any odds.

• **Cookery (Level One)** — The Garou can take any small, easily destroyed item that is available to him — bark, moss, bones and even leather will suffice — and stir it into a water-filled pot. Upon activation, the stirring transmutes the refuse into a foul-tasting, but edible, stew. The character must have a small pot and ladle or spoon for this Gift. This Gift is taught by a raccoon-spirit.

System: The player rolls Wits + Survival. The difficulty of the roll depends on the ingredients used — 6 for inedible but otherwise harmless materials, and up to 10 for hot cinders or rusted iron.

• **Resist Toxin (Level One)** — The Bone Gnawers are adept at — among other things — consuming foods, liquids and substances in their quest for survival that would drop a mortal straight into his grave. The ability to withstand poison is an important skill that most Bone Gnawers learn very early in life. A rat-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Stamina + Survival (difficulty 6). Success on this roll adds three dice to the character's Stamina for the purpose of resisting poisons that are supernatural in nature (such as that of the Wyrms and its minions) and completely cancels the effects of natural poisons. The effects of this Gift last for one scene.

• **Scent of the Honeycomb (Level One)** — The Garou attracts minor air elementals to a chosen target, causing the target to exude a wonderfully sweet aroma and sheen of sticky condensation. In short order, all manner of vermin are drawn to the target, and the target is quickly covered with swarms of gnats, locusts, bees, flies, et cetera. The swarms cause impaired vision for the target, annoying stings and bites, maddeningly distracting noises and the total inability to function socially. The exact effect of the swarm is completely up to the Storyteller's discretion. This Gift is taught by air elementals.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty 6). The effects last for one hour per success, and the smell and sugary lacquer will not wash away for the duration of this time.

• **Cornered Rat (Level Two)** — When a Garou is backed into a corner with nowhere to run, he can both surrender and beg mercy, or he can fight. This Gift allows the Garou to focus his Rage and lash out in dire situation. A rat- or badger-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The character spends one Rage point and rolls Rage (difficulty 8). Each success grants the character an additional die to his Brawl pool. When using this Gift, the werewolf automatically enters into berserk frenzy. This Gift lasts for the duration of combat.

• **Plague Visage (Level Two)** — Anyone in his right mind fears a leper. This Gift allows the character to draw an illusion of terrible disease on his features, repelling even the most stouthearted onlookers. A useful trick for survival, it can earn charity from a well-meaning monk, terrify locals and even serve as a way of blending in since lepers are all but ubiquitous in some places. This Gift is taught by a rat-spirit.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Medicine; the illusion of disease lasts for one scene. The imaginary disease may appear to be anything that the character is familiar with, such as leprosy or smallpox, or even something entirely invented. Players of humans who view the illusion must roll Willpower (difficulty 8), lest those humans shrink away from the character in revulsion. Supernatural beings that are immune to disease have less to fear, so their difficulty is only 6.

• **Call the Rust (Level Three)** — By whistling softly through his teeth, the character can summon sudden and destructive rust onto any metal within his immediate vicinity. Spearheads crumble, swords corrode, and armor falls to pieces at the werewolf's command. Some Bone Gnawers use this trick to protect their Kinfolk from armed thugs, while others prefer poetic justice — such as attending the nearest circus and causing the bars confining abused animals to suddenly turn to powder. This Gift is taught by a water elemental.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Wits + Crafts, difficulty dependent on the amount of metal being affected by the Gift (Storyteller's discretion). Each success allows the werewolf to corrode one ferrous metal object into fragile uselessness, although detailed metalwork such as a chain hauberk should count as at least two objects. The character need not be touching the object at the time, but he must be able to see the object.

• **Friend in Need (Level Three)** — The Bone Gnawers believe in solidarity. Among tribe and pack, a Bone Gnawer would sooner die than see a friend be hurt. This Gift allows the Garou to express that

loyalty in the strongest possible terms, lending his strength and very life to a packmate or a fellow Bone Gnawer. A dog-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The character may lend a packmate or another Bone Gnawer aid in the form of Rage, Willpower, health levels or any Gift that the character knows. She cannot lend a Gift of higher rank than the target could know, nor can she lend Attributes or Abilities. The player spends one Willpower point and rolls Willpower (difficulty 7). The transfer lasts for one scene unless the recipient (or the Bone Gnawer) decides to terminate it early. If the recipient dies before the traits are returned, they are permanently lost.

• **Blink (Level Four)** — Using this Gift, a Bone Gnawer can duck into a shaded area (an empty barrel, an alleyway or behind a church pew) and pop out in another shaded area some distance away. This Gift is taught by a rat-spirit.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Stealth (difficulty 6). The character can increase the radius in which he may reappear by 20 yards for every success scored, but he must emerge from a likely (or logical) hiding place.

• **Claws of the Glassblower (Level Four)** — When using this Gift, the werewolf can change his claws into razor-sharp glass. Upon clawing an opponent, the glass claws tear through leather, flesh and bone, breaking off in a target's wounds. The Garou is incapable of using the Gift or making a claw attack in the following turn, for his claws must actually regenerate. A sand- or lightning-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. If the Garou using this Gift damages her target with a claw attack, his claws break off, leaving large, thick shards of glass in the open wounds. The glass causes an additional aggravated health level of damage for every round that the shards remain in the wound. The glass can be removed, but removal takes the entirety of a turn, and the victim cannot be engaged in combat or any other action other than removing the glass.

• **Maw of the Whale (Level Five)** — The werewolf can open his jaws far wider than is normally physically possible and swallow objects—or beings—whole. A Garou with this Gift is even capable of gulping down an entire horse—including battle tack and shoes—only to regurgitate it all later. This Gift is taught by a catfish-spirit.

System: The player rolls Stamina + Primal-Urge (difficulty eight). Beings can resist being swallowed with a Dexterity + Dodge roll. In the case of a very large being or object, one extra success is required for every health level the target possesses beyond the standard seven, or for every extra three feet in size over the

character. Swallowed objects wind up in the Umbra, in a sub-realm that is a mystical "stomach" of a whale-spirit. The werewolf can store objects in this mystical stomach for a number of hours equal to his Stamina. After this time, the character automatically vomits them back into the physical world. The objects appear unharmed in front of the Garou.

• **Survivor (Level Five)** —

The Dark Medieval is a trying time for even the hardiest of Garou, but the Bone Gnawers are an especially resilient bunch. This Gift not only makes the werewolf immune to disease and poison, but it alleviates the need to eat, drink and sleep as well. This Gift is taught by a tortoise-spirit.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Stamina + Survival (difficulty 7). The effects of the Gift last for one day per success. The Garou does not need to eat, drink or sleep for the duration of the Gift's effects and he gains three extra points of Stamina, even if this takes the werewolf's Attribute over 10. Natural poisons and disease have no effect, and those of supernatural origin have only half their usual potency.

Children of Gaia

While they are not pacifistic by any means, the Children of Gaia's Gifts are spiritual reflections of strength — the strength of the individual and the strength of

those who surround the individual or who have need of the Child's vigor. While the Children of Gaia are makers and keepers of the peace, they are capable of making war most effectively when necessary.

• **Eve's Blessing (Level One)** — Childbirth is a risky endeavor in the Dark Medieval, and the Children of Gaia cannot stand to see unnecessary suffering. This Gift allows the Garou to improve a mother's chances of surviving a birth, as well as keeping the newborn disease-free for a short time. This Gift is taught by a cow-spirit.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point. The character need only lay her hands on the mother-to-be's womb. For the next week, the mother and child are treated as having an extra dot in Stamina each, for the purposes of surviving childbirth, carrying to term and resisting illness and infection. The Gift can be used on wolves as well.

The Gnosis point spent will protect the entire litter of cubs. In the process of invoking this Gift, the character automatically learns how many children are to be born.

• **Mother's Touch (Level One)** — As the Theurge Gift.
• **Resist Pain (Level One)** — As the Philodox Gift.
• **Grandmother's Touch (Level Two)** — This Gift is identical to the Level-One Gift: Mother's



Touch, with the exception that the Garou can use it to heal himself as well as others.

- **Luna's Armor (Level Two)** — The werewolf invokes the moon's sacred powers of protection to repel his enemy's attacks. This Gift is taught by a Lune.

System: The werewolf concentrates for one turn, then the player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Stamina + Survival (difficulty 6). Each success allows the Garou to add one to his Stamina for the purposes of soaking damage (including damage from silver, but only with the additional dice earned by the successes on the roll). The effects of this Gift last for one scene.

- **Dazzle (Level Three)** — The werewolf can flood a target's senses with visions of Gaia's true splendor. This Gift is taught by a unicorn-spirit.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Empathy, difficulty is equal to the target's Willpower. As long as the target is not attacked, he stands mutely in awe for the remainder of the scene. This Gift can be attempted against a given target only once per scene.

- **Spirit Friend (Level Three)** — The werewolf has learned to project a feeling of tranquility and friendship that spirits naturally perceive. Save for the mad or corrupt, spirits treat the Garou with courtesy and chivalry. This Gift is taught by a unicorn-spirit.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Expression (difficulty seven). Each success adds one die to all of the Garou's dice pools for interacting with any spirits in the vicinity (with the noted exception of Banes). The effect lasts for one scene.

- **Angel's Semblance (Level Four)** — The Children of Gaia do not believe in terrifying humans without appropriate cause. This Gift allows the Child of Gaia to act in Crinos form without invoking the stark terror of the Delirium. Instead of seeing a werewolf, onlookers see an angelic figure of exceeding grace and holiness. Witnesses might remember a Child's battle with a Wurm-beast as an angel's struggle with a demon, or a warning to leave the woods as the gracious guidance of a guardian angel. Onlookers need not be of the Christian faith to be affected. Islamic witnesses might remember one of Mohammed's fiery messengers, while Norse pagans might think the Garou was a Valkyrie. A spirit of hope teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point; this Gift lasts for one scene. Use the Delirium chart (page 97) to determine how strongly a witness is affected (using the converse, positive reaction). Responses of fear are replaced with rapture. Even "catatonic fear" should be seen as "complete bliss."

- **Beast Life (Level Four)** — As the lupus Gift.

- **Halo of the Sun (Level Five)** — The character speaks an ancient word that is sacred to Helios and is immediately surrounded by a sphere of blazing sunlight. Those Wurm-creatures who fear the sun might flee before the brightly shining Garou. This Gift is taught by a sunbeam-spirit.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point; the effect lasts for one scene. The character receives two extra dice to the damage of any hand-to-hand attacks and causes aggravated damage when he is in Homid or Glabro forms. Anyone directly facing the werewolf adds three to all attack difficulties because of the glare of the halo, and any vampires within 20 yards suffer damage as if exposed to true sunlight (three health levels per turn).

- **The Living Wood (Level Five)** — The Child of Gaia may call the powers of the forest to rise and aid him. Nearby trees will begin to move and attempt to protect the Garou. The trees will restrain, block and even fight foes attempting to harm the Child. A Glade Child teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Survival (difficulty 8). The character animates one tree for each success rolled.

FENRIR

The Fenrir use their might to battle the increasing presence of the Wurm. All Fenrir are expected to have great skill in battle, and their Gifts reflect that expectation.

- **Hunter's Harmony (Level One)** — When hunting, wolves communicate through various means to corral their prey. This Gift allows a Fenrir to convey thoughts to any of his packmates over distance without speech. This Gift is taught by a wolf-spirit.

System: The players rolls Charisma + Primal-Urge to send a single communiqué. Each success allows the Fenrir to convey an increasingly complex concept to his pack members. One success could convey "danger ahead," while three could convey "ambush in 30 paces by Silver Fangs." Only fellow pack members can receive the communiqué, they do not hear words and cannot reply. The Fenrir chooses who receives the message.

- **Resist Pain (Level One)** — As the Philodox Gift.

- **Visage of Fenris (Level One)** — This Gift allows a Fenrir to appear great and fearsome to his foes while commanding respect from his equals. This Gift is taught by a wolf-spirit.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty 6). One success is needed to affect non-Garou and Garou of equal rank. For one scene, foes flinch momentarily, losing a point from their initiative rating. Allies are awed by the grace and dignity of the Fenrir, gaining him a -1 difficulty bonus for Social rolls. To affect Garou of higher rank, the player must score a number of successes equal to twice the difference of rank between the Garou and the target. A cliath Fenrir would require eight successes to impress a Rank 5 Garou.

• **Halt the Coward's Flight (Level Two)** — The Garou slows a fleeing foe, making him easier to track or catch. A wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The Garou must spend one full turn concentrating, and the player rolls Charisma + Intimidation, difficulty the target's Willpower. If the roll succeeds, the target's speed is halved for one scene.

• **Sense Guilt (Level Two)** — By gazing into the eyes of another, the Fenrir can sense whether the target harbors guilt for some past offense. An overzealous or dishonest Fenrir could potentially abuse this Gift, so some are wary of those who possess it. A spirit servant of Fenris teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty 8) to reveal hidden guilt. One success detects a vague sense of guilt, while five would reveal specific facts surrounding a specific offense committed by the target.

• **Might of Thor (Level Three)** — In tales told by those from the frozen North, Thor was a mighty warrior-god known for his great strength. A Garou may call upon this legendary strength to help him in any situation. A wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis and one Rage point, then rolls Willpower (difficulty 8). The Garou's Strength doubles for one turn per success. Using this Gift places great strain on the body and mind of a werewolf, however. For one hour after using this Gift, a Garou's physical Attributes are reduced to 1 and his Willpower is halved, rounded up.

• **Redirect Pain (Level Three)** — If a Fenrir is struck in battle, he may rely upon this Gift to retaliate. His enemy immediately experiences the pain from wounds received by the Fenrir. A cuckoo-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Rage point and rolls Manipulation + Primal-Urge (difficulty 8). For one scene, the target incurs whatever wound penal-



ties indicated by the Fenrir's current wound levels, regardless of whether or not the Fenrir actually feels the pain. This Gift overrides such pain-avoiding situations frenzy and as the Gift: Resist Pain.

• **Berserker's Song (Level Four)** — A Fenrir can sing himself into a controlled frenzy that allows him to ignore wounds and shift to Crinos form immediately. Additionally, he becomes resistant to mental and emotional attacks of any kind. He ends the frenzy when he chooses. A wolverine-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The Garou begins singing a battle song of his choice. The player spends two Rage points and rolls Charisma + Primal-Urge (difficulty 6). The frenzy lasts for two rounds per success and may be ended at any time. During the frenzy, the character uses more complicated battle tactics than the usual bite-and-claw techniques available in frenzy, but he gains the usual benefits of the berserk state. Also, all mental and emotional attacks against the Garou using this Gift suffer a +2 difficulty penalty.

• **Iron Cannot Pierce (Level Four)** — This Gift makes a Fenrir unyielding in battle. After carving a sacred rune into his flesh, a Garou becomes invincible to all iron-based weapons, including steel. His hide can deflect spears and shatter swords. This Gift is taught by a war-spirit.

System: The Garou must carve a battle rune somewhere in his flesh, which causes no damage. The player spends a point each of Gnosis and Rage to activate the Gift (this must be done within one hour of carving the rune). No ferrous weapons inflict damage on the Garou, and they shatter if an attack causes more than two levels of damage. Other materials, including teeth and claws, cause damage normally.

• **Blaze of Glory (Level Five)** — Any Fenrir knows his final battle will be a glorious one. A Fenrir may invoke this single-use Gift to devour everything around him, including himself and his enemies in a blazing burst of fiery power. Aging Fenrir elders often receive this Gift before their final quest. This Gift may only be attained from an avatar of Fenris after an arduous Umbral journey.

System: The player spends one point each of Rage, Gnosis and Willpower and rolls Willpower (difficulty 6). Each success inflicts five aggravated levels of scorching fire damage on everyone and everything in a 30-foot radius, including the Garou himself. The Garou cannot soak this damage.

• **Horde of Valhalla (Level Five)** — When a Fenrir evokes this Gift, he summons Great Wolves to aid him. It cannot be used lightly, and it requires a

good standing with Fenris as well as a truly worthy circumstance. An avatar of Fenris teaches this Gift.

System: The player may spend as many points of Rage and Gnosis points desired, then he rolls Charisma + Animal Ken (difficulty 6). The number of Great Wolves that appear is equal to the number of Rage and Gnosis points spent. The wolves are functionally identical to the Hounds of the Wild Hunt (see p. 224), and they remain for the one scene.

FIANNA

Fianna Gifts echo their relationship with the fae and their vivacious nature.

• **Distract the Fool (Level One)** — A mischievous Fianna need only point and claim something remarkable, and everyone who hears him is compelled to gawk in the direction he points. A fox-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Expression (difficulty 7). Anyone (except packmates or allies) that can hear the character gawks in the direction the Fianna points for one round per success. A distracted person will immediately refocus on an incoming attack or similarly urgent situation.

• **Faerie Light (Level One)** — The Fianna can conjure an eerie ball of flame. The light is often shroud white, a pale green or faintly blue in color, and it moves as the Fianna directs, illuminating an area three feet in radius. This Gift is taught by a marsh-spirit.

System: The player rolls Wits + Enigmas (difficulty 6). The light appears within the Garou's line of sight, lasting for one minute per success. If bidden to move, it bobs along at 10 yards per turn. The Fianna may spend a point of Gnosis to make the light last for an entire scene.

• **Resist Toxin (Level One)** — As the Bone Gnawer Gift.

• **Howl of the Banshee (Level Two)** — The werewolf throws back his head and unleash a long, ululating howl. The howl can strike fear even into the heart of the undead, and peasants who hear it from afar cross themselves. A Banshee, a death-spirit whose task is to mourn and foretell, teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty 6). All who hear the howl must roll Willpower, [difficulty 8 (6 for allies of the Fianna)]. Those who fail will flee in terror for one turn per success on the player's roll.

• **Warrior's Draught (Level Two)** — By stirring a bit of his own blood into a jack of wine, beer, ale or mead, the Fianna transforms the drink into a potent

elixir. Once quaffed, this potion drives the drinker into a berserk rage. This Gift is taught by a boar-spirit.

System: The player spends one point of Gnosis as the Fianna mixes the draught. The elixir remains potent for one day. Once drunk, the draught drives the drinker into a berserk frenzy. For the duration of the frenzy, he gains an additional dot in Strength and Stamina.

- **Faerie Aid (Level Three)** — The Fianna can call upon ancient pacts between her people and the fae. By emitting a special howl, the Garou can call whatever fae are in the area to help. They will obey the Fianna, but not without question. A dream-spirit teaches this Gift, and the teaching normally involves a quest of some kind.

System: The player spends at least one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 8). Spending more Gnosis increases the raw power of the faeries that respond, while more successes on the roll means that more faeries answer. See pp. 298-299 of *Dark Ages: Vampire* for more information on the fae.

- **Woadling (Level Three)** — In preparation for battle, Celts paint war-figures on their skin with woad that contains a mild mind-altering substance that causes a frenzy-like state. This Gift allows the Fianna to carry on this tradition with a magical twist. After painting woad on his body, a Fianna may bring the figures to full-size life to harry his opponent.

System: The player rolls Dexterity + Occult (difficulty 6) to paint the woadlings; the character may draw one on her body per success. During combat, the player spends one Gnosis point per woadling to animate the drawings, and then rolls the character's Gnosis (difficulty 6). The woadling dances about a chosen opponent, distracting and harrying him, but cannot actually inflict any damage. The creature subtracts one die per success on the Gnosis roll from the target's attack and defensive dice pools, however (though soak and damage rolls are unaffected). The woadlings vanish when the scene ends.

- **Balor's Gaze (Level Four)** — One of the great kings of the Fomorians, Balor, could kill opponents with a glance, or so Fianna legend has it. This Gift allows the Fianna to emulate the tribe's great enemy, laying her opponents low with a wicked red light from her eye. A pain-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Rage and one Gnosis, then rolls Perception + Occult (difficulty 8). For the remainder of the scene, any foe who meets the Fianna's gaze must roll Willpower (difficulty 8) and equal or exceed the player's successes, or take a -5 dice pool modifier (as though Crippled). A character who

is already Crippled is considered Incapacitated. This Gift bypasses the pain-reducing effects of frenzy and the Gift: Resist Pain.

- **Semblance (Level Four)** — The Fianna have benefited from their continuing relationship with the fae. This Gift allows the creation of a still illusion that deceives all the senses. A grain-spirit, the so-called "spirit of spirits," teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point for each 10-cubic-foot area affected by the illusion. Then, the player rolls Intelligence + Expression (difficulty 6), recording the number of successes. Later, anyone who doubts the illusion rolls Intelligence + Alertness (difficulty 6) and must exceed the number of success achieved by the player to successfully see through the illusion.

- **Fog on the Moor (Level Five)** — This Gift transforms the Fianna into a ghostly outline of himself, allowing him to pass through anything except silver as though he were immaterial. He may communicate and strike opponents normally. He cannot be harmed by anything except silver. All incoming attacks pass through him. A fog-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and rolls Gnosis (difficulty 6) to instantly transform the Garou into a ghostly form. Each success allows the Garou to stay in that form for one turn, though the Garou may change back at will.

- **Gift of the Spriggan (Level Five)** — This Gift allows the Fianna to swell to the size of a giant or shrink to the size of a puppy. The Garou can grow to or shrink as much as three times his size or any size in between. A faerie or Chimerling teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one point of Gnosis and rolls Stamina + Primal Urge (difficulty 8). The effect lasts for one hour per success, the Garou may return to normal size at will. When the Garou increases size, he gains one dot of Strength and one of Stamina for every 100% increase in size. When the Garou shrinks in size, he does not lose any Strength or Stamina.

Red Talons

The Gifts of the Red Talons are savage and violent reflections of the tribe itself. The revulsion that the Talons carry against the overwhelming whole of humanity is without peer among the Garou, and their Gifts are spiritual weapons used to heal Gaia of the damage that humans have committed against her in arrogance.

- **Beast Speech (Level One)** — As the Galliard Gift.

- **Prey's Cry (Level One)** — Medieval legends tell of terrible beasts that mimic human voices or the

cries of game animals to lure travelers into their gaping maws. The Red Talons have learned this trick for themselves. Many a traveler has died at Talon jaws after following what he believed to be a fair, young girl's cry of distress. This Gift is taught by a mocking-bird-spirit.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Wits + Expression, difficulty dependant on the noise being imitated. A rabbit's death-scream or wild boar's call is difficulty 5, while a human's plea for help might be difficulty 7, or as high as 9 if the Talon wants "a voice that sounds like one of their priests" or a similarly complicated mimicry. If successful, any mortal or animal believes that the cry is that of the Red Talon's intended creature, even to the point of recognizing "a noble's inflection" or believing a female voice to be that of a "maiden of pure virtue."

• **Wolf at the Door (Level One)** — Despite their reputation where humans are concerned, not all Red Talons are indiscriminate murderers of humanity. Sometimes, the battle is won by leaving a human alive... for whatever reason. If the Red Talons need to get a message across, then the mouth of an ape is often the best way to do so. This Gift induces a terrible dread and unyielding respect for the wilds, and it makes a human being afraid of tampering with them in any way. Any predatory spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Primal Urge (difficulty of the target's Willpower). The character must make eye contact with the target, but she may be in any form when she does so. This Gift instills a sense of fear of the wilderness in the target for one day per success. The target must roll Willpower to leave his home, and he can not approach forestry or wilderness of any kind without spending a Willpower point. If the target does manage to leave his home, he loses two dice from Social and Mental pools.

• **Beastmind (Level Two)** — The Garou can reduce the mental faculties of a target to those of an animal for a short time. The victim does not necessarily become less intelligent, but human thinking (logic, theology, language and the like) becomes impossible. An avatar of Griffin teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Empathy against a difficulty equal to the target's permanent Willpower. The effects last for one turn per success. The target is rendered to a base level of sentience for the duration of a scene. The target might drool, wet itself, cry or immediately run away from the character, chasing after a butterfly.

• **Sight from Beyond (Level Two)** — As the Theurge Gift.

• **Snap Man's Chains (Level Three)** — The Red Talons look on humanity's domestication and subsequent abuse of animals as nothing less than a sin against Gaia. With this Gift, the Red Talon can undo that offense, if only for as long as a night. The Talon releases a howl that drives domesticated animals completely feral. Horses throw their riders and bolt as far as they can, oxen throw themselves against fences in a frenzy, and dogs turn on their masters at the first sign of weakness. Needless to say, this Gift's use often drives surviving humans on a quest for the witch among their number that surely must be responsible. This Gift is taught by any animal spirit, although the spirits of wolves and wild oxen are particularly generous with its secret.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Primal-Urge (difficulty 8). The number of successes indicates the area of the effect. One success drives any animals on a small farm feral. Three successes affect all the animals in a small village. Five successes affect all of the animals within good-sized city.

• **Trackless Waste (Level Three)** — The Talon calls upon the spirits of the wilderness to disorient any who invade his home. Humans and other travelers are completely confused by this Gift, and even the most skilled yeoman loses his bearings and becomes lost. Even werewolves are not immune to its effects. Any wilderness spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Intelligence + Primal-Urge (difficulty 6). The Talon can affect up to a two-mile radius for every success. Other werewolves can avoid the effects of the Gift by besting the Red Talon's success with an Intelligence + Primal-Urge roll (difficulty 7). Humans and other beings, however, get no such chance. The effect lasts for four hours.

• **Quicksand (Level Four)** — The Red Talon turns the surrounding area into an unstable and viscous substance that entraps and hinders his foes. The hapless victims can suffocate if not rescued. This Gift is taught by earth elementals.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Primal Urge (difficulty 7). Each success converts a 10-foot area of ground into dangerous muck. Anyone in the area except the Garou has his movement halved; weak individuals begin to sink. Trapped targets eventually suffocate.

• **Gorge (Level Four)** — Wolves never know when their next meal will come, and in the winters of the Dark Medieval, fresh kills can be hard to come by. When prey is available, wolves eat as much as they



possibly can. For the Red Talons, the same can be done with Gnosis, Rage and Willpower, storing such energies until the day when she needs it. A wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Upon purchasing this Gift, the player specifies which trait (Gnosis, Rage or Willpower) the character is able to store. After the choice has been made, the character is able to store three more points of her chosen trait than her permanent rating. These extra points must be regained through the usual means, and they do not add additional dice to pools involving these traits. That is, a character with a Rage rating of 3 who adds this Gift's effects to Rage has a pool of six Rage points, but still rolls three dice on any Rage rolls. To amplify more than one trait, the character must learn the Gift (i.e., pay the experience cost) a second time.

• **Gaia's Vengeance (Level Five)** — The Red Talon calls upon his intimate connection to Gaia, inspiring the land itself to enact righteous vengeance on his foes. Trees, rocks and other natural features hinder, hamper and batter the Garou's enemies. An avatar of Gaia herself is the only spirit able to teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and one Rage point, then rolls Charisma + Enigmas (difficulty equal to the Gauntlet of the area). The

character pleads with Gaia to cleanse the land, and Gaia responds with whatever weapons the area has to offer. The actual effects of this Gift are left to Storyteller discretion.

• **Share the Wolf's Skin (Level Five)** — The Red Talon can transform another being into a wolf. If the target is a werewolf, he becomes trapped in Lupus form for the duration of the current scene. If the target is a human or an animal, it becomes a normal wolf forever. This Gift is taught by a wolf-spirit.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis in a resisted roll against the target's permanent Willpower. Only one net success is required for the transformation to occur.

Shadow Lords

The Shadow Lords see themselves as the true nobility among the Garou, so their Gifts are a collection of ways to intimidate, control and assert dominance over others who do not share this view.

• **Aura of Confidence (Level One)** — The Shadow Lord seems surrounded by a dark halo of strength and command. Others find it impossible to read his aura or detect any of his weaknesses; he reveals no flaws whatsoever. This Gift is taught by an ancestor-spirit.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Subterfuge (difficulty 7). This roll must be made for each new encounter the Garou has. This Gift protects the Garou from the effects of the Auspex power Soulsight, but not from more sophisticated attempts to read his mind (such as Steal Secrets).

• **Fatal Flaw (Level One)** — The Shadow Lord can pick apart his enemy's weaknesses, gaining a distinct advantage in combat. A Stormcrow teaches this Gift.

System: The character concentrates for one turn, and the player rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty of the target's Wits + Subterfuge). Success grants the character an extra die of damage against the target. Extra successes allow him to discern additional vulnerabilities in the target, and five successes grant the Shadow Lord knowledge of every one of his target's flaws.

• **Seizing the Edge (Level One)** — To a Shadow Lord, there is no middle ground, only victory or defeat. If neither competitor in a contest wins, then both lose. This Gift allows a Shadow Lord to swing the balance of a contest in her favor. A spirit-servant of Grandfather Thunder teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point, and for the duration of the scene, whenever the Shadow Lord is involved in a direct competition (that is, an opposed roll), ties go to the Shadow Lord. This includes facedowns (see p. 70), wrestling matches and riddle contests.

• **Clap of Thunder (Level Two)** — The Shadow Lord may clap his hands together, generating a shockwave that stuns unwary foes. A Stormcrow teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. Everyone within 10 feet of the Garou, friend and foe alike, must score at least one success on a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) or be stunned and unable to act for one turn. A botch on this roll renders the target stunned for the duration of the scene. The Shadow Lord must be in Homid, Glabro or Crinos form to employ this power.

• **Luna's Armor (Level Two)** — As the Children of Gaia Gift.

• **Raven's Curse (Level Three)** — This Gift lays the curse of certain death by arrows on the Shadow Lord's enemy. While the curse is in effect, arrows, bolts, hurled spears and other missile weapons are strangely attracted to the target. Although this Gift can be used in battle situations, most Shadow Lords prefer to use it secretly on a chosen foe just before a

battle begins, ensuring an "unfortunate accident." This Gift is taught by a raven-spirit.

System: The Shadow Lord simply touches the intended target with his fingertips. At that time, the player spends one Gnosis and rolls Manipulation + Archery (difficulty 7). The number of successes determines the curse's duration.

Successes	Duration
One	One Hour
Two	One Day
Three	One Month
Four	One Year
Five+	Until the curse is broken

The difficulty to strike the target with any sort of missile weapon drops by two; archers in battle situations are also more likely to fire at the cursed target than at any other targets around him. Raven's Curse can be broken by certain methods at the Storyteller's discretion. A Rite of Cleansing, for instance, is usually effective.

• **Shadow Cutting (Level Three)** — The Shadow Lord can wound a foe by striking at his very shadow. This form of attack is difficult to dodge, and it can be a most convenient attack form in some conditions — such as sundown. This Gift is taught by a night-spirit.

System: The character spits into his opponent's shadow. The player spends a Gnosis point. For the remainder of the scene, the character may strike at his foe's shadow to wound him. The character may only use fetish weapons or natural weaponry such as claws to attack in this fashion; more mundane attacks do not carry any impact. The victim has two fewer dice to dodge attacks targeted at his shadow, and he cannot parry said attacks at all. The Storyteller may even opt to give the attacker extra dice in situations in which the shadow presents an even more convenient target. For example, if the target is standing in an alleyway out of reach, but his shadow still falls at the character's feet, the target is fair game.

• **Dolorous Stroke (Level Four)** — The Shadow Lord delivers a blow so merciless and terrible that it strikes fear into the hearts of those around him. Anyone witnessing the Dolorous Stroke becomes faint of heart and finds it difficult to oppose the Shadow Lord capable of such a strike. This Gift is taught by a death-spirit.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point then rolls to hit; the character can take no other action during this turn. If the character misses, the Gift's effects do not take place. If he hits, he gains two dice for his damage pool in addition to the normal successes. If he inflicts at least

three health levels of damage (after soak) to his target, any onlookers are dismayed by the brutal expertise of the character's attack, and they suffer a one-die penalty to any rolls made against the character for the remainder of the scene.

- **Strength of the Dominator (Level Four)** — The Shadow Lord, by force of command, draws from the anger of another to feed his own. A Stormcrow teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Wits + Intimidation (difficulty equal to the target's Willpower). For a number of turns equal to the successes scored, the victim loses one Rage point per turn, while the character gains that Rage point. This Gift can be attempted only once per target per scene.

- **Shadow Pack (Level Five)** — The Shadow Lord summons a shadowy duplicate of himself, or even multiple shadows, to stand beside him in battle. His shadow-duplicates possess the same powers as he does, and they can fight just as fiercely. A night-spirit or a Chimerling teaches this Gift.

System: The player must spend a variable number of Gnosis points and succeed in a Gnosis roll (difficulty 8). For each Gnosis point spent, the character summons an exact duplicate of him to fight by his side. These Garou have identical Attributes and Abilities, but not fetishes. They can not use Gifts, Gnosis or Willpower, and each has only one health level (any attack that is not soaked destroys it). The shadow-Garou last for one scene.

- **Obedience (Level Five)** — The Shadow Lord becomes the ultimate alpha, commanding others to do as he wishes. A Stormcrow teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty 8). All in the vicinity must make a Willpower roll at the same diffi-

culty. Failure to exceed the character's successes means that listeners must obey the commands of the character. The degree of obedience varies according to the number of net successes. One success means that the listeners can be persuaded to do something they do not mind doing. Three successes mean that the listeners will do exactly what the character tells them to do, as long as they are not utterly opposed to the idea. Five successes mean that the listeners will undertake virtually suicidal actions at the whim of the Shadow Lord.

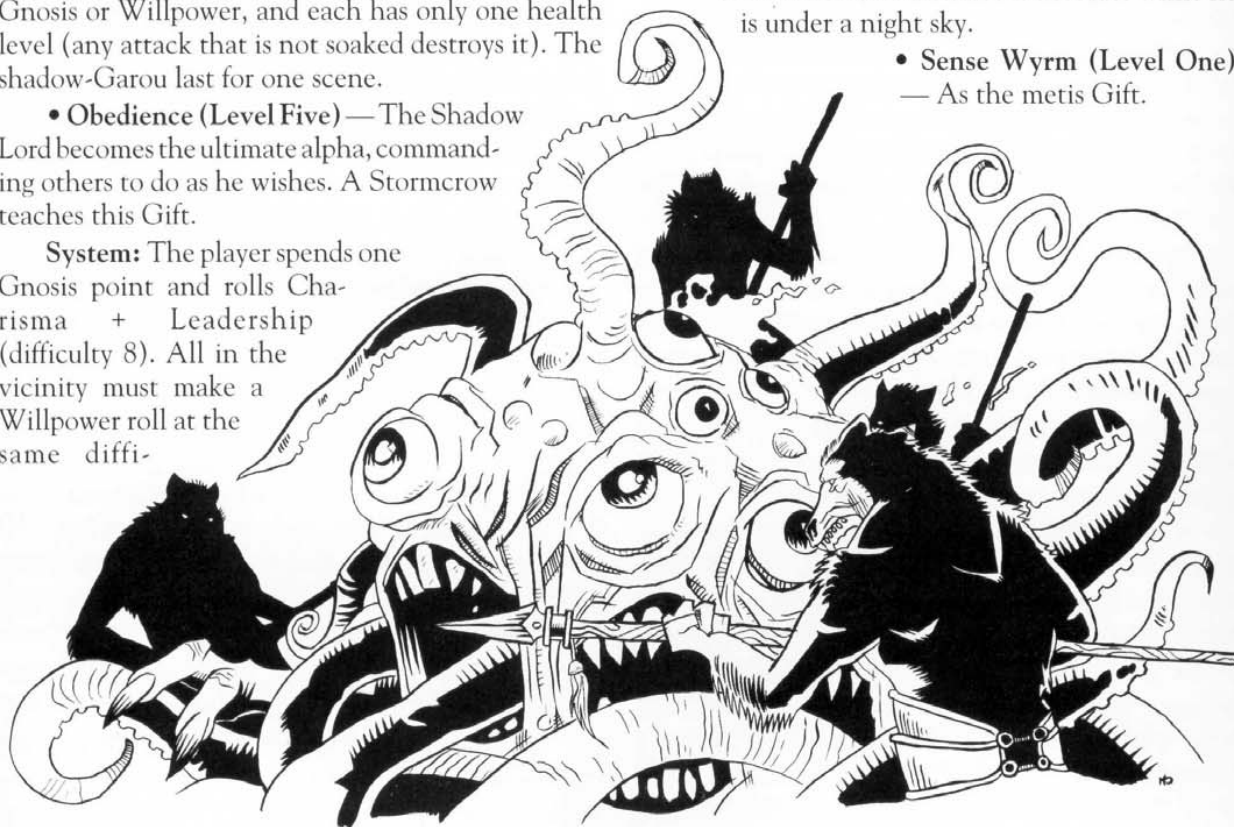
Silent Striders

The mysterious Striders are known for their Gifts of expeditious journey and for the Gifts that keep them safe from the horrors they find on their travels.

- **Heavens' Guidance (Level One)** — This practical Gift prevents the Silent Striders who have it from ever being lost. Under a cloudy night sky and without the benefit of a chart or compass, a Strider can still make his way through unfamiliar territory. Although he cannot tell exactly where he is at all times, the Strider will always have a perfect sense of direction. Also, he always knows the exact distance he has traveled. Various star-spirits and other inhabitants of the Aetheria (see p. 162) teach this Gift.

System: No roll is necessary. The Strider's sense of direction and distance is absolute while he is under a night sky.

- **Sense Wurm (Level One)** — As the metis Gift.



• **Speed of Thought (Level One)** — A Garou with this Gift becomes as swift as a gazelle, twice as fast as he was before. A roadrunner- or cheetah-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player need only spend one Gnosis point to double the Strider's running speed for one scene. This increase in speed does not grant extra actions.

• **Messenger's Fortitude (Level Two)** — This Gift allows the Garou to run at maximum speed for 72 hours without rest, food or water. When the Garou reaches his destination, he has 10 minutes before he collapses from exhaustion for another 72 hours. A camel or wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. The Garou can do nothing save running. If he stops prematurely, he cannot continue without rest equivalent to the amount of time he ran. For an additional Gnosis point, the Garou may imbue another person with this Gift's power.

• **Summon Talisman (Level Two)** — The Strider can summon to himself any dedicated handheld object (see the Rite of Talisman Dedication). The item disappears from wherever it currently rests, even from someone else's grasp, then reappears in the Garou's grip. A packrat-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. The Garou simply concentrates on the item, and it appears at the end of the turn.

• **Fleet Footed (Level Three)** — Silent Striders have a habit of getting into unpleasant situations, and in recent decades, these situations often involve arrows. With this Gift, a Strider moves so quickly that he can dodge arrows or other fast-moving projectiles. Air elementals teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Rage point and rolls Dexterity + Dodge (difficulty 6). Each success grants the Strider the ability to automatically dodge one incoming projectile. This Gift cannot be used against hand-to-hand attacks.

• **Great Leap (Level Three)** — The Strider with this Gift can jump truly astonishing distances. A jackrabbit-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and rolls Strength + Athletics (difficulty 6). For three turns, the character may jump 30 additional feet per success plus his normal jumping distance.

• **Dam the Heartflood (Level Four)** — The teeming numbers of Leeches in Dark Medieval Europe are an affront to the Striders. This Gift is a powerful weapon in their arsenal against the vampires. When used, it allows them to block the flow of

blood in a Cainite's withered veins, thus preventing the Leech from using blood-related powers and leaving him vulnerable. This Gift is taught by a cobra-spirit.

System: This Gift works on all supernatural beings who have a blood pool trait including vampires, ghouls and Ananasi. The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Medicine (difficulty of the target's Willpower). Each success prevents the target from accessing his blood-related powers for a full turn. Additionally, this Gift also inhibits the target's ability to use blood points to increase Attributes, heal, et cetera while the Gift is in effect.

• **Speed Beyond Thought (Level Four)** — In the Dark Medieval, the ability to travel long distances quickly is a rarity. This Gift grants a werewolf just that ability. Using this Gift requires unbroken concentration, but a Garou may accelerate his normal speed by a factor of 10 for eight hours. When the Gift's power has waned, a Garou must eat immediately or face a hunger-instigated frenzy. A cheetah-spirit or air elemental teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Stamina + Athletics (difficulty 7) to activate the Gift. Like Speed of Thought, this Gift is useful only for travel purposes and does not grant extra actions.

• **Gate of the Moon (Level Five)** — This fantastic Gift grants the Strider the ability to create a moon bridge that instantly transports him to his desired destination, which might be many leagues away. A Lune teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point for every 100 miles the Garou desires to travel. The Garou cannot travel to a place he has not seen, but beyond that, he is limited only by the amount of Gnosis the player wishes to spend.

• **Reach the Umbra (Level Five)** — Many Garou strive for balance between their spiritual and physical natures. Once received, this Gift allows a Garou to move fluidly between the spiritual and physical worlds. To a Garou with this Gift, the Gauntlet is, for all purposes, non-existent.

System: The Garou may step sideways instantly, anytime and anywhere without any effort (or roll) required. Additionally, all rolls made to enter or leave Umbral realms are at -2 difficulty. The Garou cannot step sideways and spend Rage in the same turn.

Silver Fangs

The noble Silver Fangs employ their Gifts to lead the Garou and to ensure that their places in the lofty seats of kingship remain secure.

• **Eye of the Falcon (Level One)** — This Gift greatly enhances a Garou's vision, allowing him to see with the acuity of a bird of prey. Silver Fang falconers especially favor this Gift. Any member of Falcon's spirit brood teaches it.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. For the duration of the scene, all Archery and visually based Perception rolls gain a -1 difficulty benefit.

• **Lambent Flame (Level One)** — Calling on Luna herself, the character blazes with the silvery glow of moonlight. While the light is not bright enough to blind onlookers, this Gift is useful for providing simple illumination and for impressing anyone who is gazing on the Silver Fang. A Lune teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point to activate the Gift, and it remains active for one scene and illuminates a 100-foot radius. Any hand-to-hand attacks made against the character suffer a +1 difficulty modifier, while any missile attacks receive a -1 difficulty benefit.

• **Sense Wyrms (Level One)** — As the metis Gift.

• **Empathy (Level Two)** — Leaders among wolves are largely chosen by physical dominance, but those hoping to lead men must consider other matters as well. One vital matter is to know the expectations of his subjects; to know how they feel allows a leader to lead effectively. With this Gift, a Silver Fang can do exactly that. A falcon-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Intelligence + Empathy (difficulty 7). One success indicates that the Garou knows the general feelings and expectations of any one group. The more successes the player rolls, the more detail the Garou knows.

• **Luna's Armor (Level Two)** — As the Children of Gaia Gift.

• **Exceptional Swordplay (Level Three)** — Silver Fangs train regularly to maintain excellent swordsmanship. This Gift further enhances a Fang's skill, allowing him to become increasingly deadly in a swordfight. A spirit of war teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Intelligence + Melee (difficulty 8). Use of this Gift is considered reflexive. Each resulting success grants the Fang an automatic success to strike an opponent in combat. Despite the name, this Gift works in conjunction with any melee weapon, not just swords. This Gift can be used only once per turn.

• **Wrath of Gaia (Level Three)** — With this Gift, Gaia's chosen warrior can reveal his full, terrible

glory to minions of corruption. His splendor overwhelms them, driving them to flee in terror before him. Few of the tainted can withstand such exposure. An avatar of Gaia teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty 6). Any minions of the Wyrms or those similarly corrupted who gaze upon the Garou for the scene must roll Willpower or Courage (difficulty 7) and equal or exceed the player's successes. If they do not, they will flee in terror.

• **Lordly Will (Level Four)** — Tricksters beware; a Garou possessing this Gift is all but impossible to deceive. Those attempting to impose their deceptions upon him will almost always be thwarted. An avatar of Falcon teaches this Gift.

System: The difficulty of all mind-control attempts, psychic assaults and other attacks targeting the mind of the Garou are raised to 10. Once this Gift is learned, its effect is permanent. This Gift protects the Silver Fang from the Dominate Discipline and most applications of Presence and Dementation.

• **Sidestep Death (Level Four)** — Old legends say that when the first Silver Fang died, he was reborn with this Gift. A Fang with this Gift simply sidesteps what would have become his deathblow. A lion-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Once per scene, the player may spend three Willpower points to evade a single attack that would inflict enough damage to place the Fang's health levels below Crippled (before soak). The Garou simply appears instantly at the nearest location not affected by the attack, which may be an inch, a mile or more.

• **Luna's Avenger (Level Five)** — A Silver Fang using this Gift embraces his greatest weakness, transforming it into his greatest strength. Invoking this Gift causes a Garou's body to become living silver, changing him into a resilient shimmering warrior.

System: The Garou concentrates for a full turn to activate this Gift. The player spends a Gnosis point. For one scene, the Garou is immune to the effects of silver. All damage from successful attacks against other werewolves (and most other Fera) is aggravated and unsoakable. Also, the Garou gains two additional points of Stamina and one extra health level for the duration of the Gift. A Lune teaches this Gift.

• **Paws of the Newborn Cub (Level Five)** — With but a glare and a snarl, the Silver Fang can temporarily deprive his foe of supernatural power.

Nothing terrifies an enemy more than suddenly losing whatever magics he relies on — and then realizing he faces the Silver Fang with only the mundane at his side. A falcon-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis (difficulty of the target's Willpower). Each success removes all special abilities (shapeshifting, Gifts, Disciplines or any other sort of supernatural or magical powers) for one turn.

Warders of Men

The Warders believe in, and act to encourage, the potential possessed by humanity. Their Gifts are a reflection of their close association with the society of men, and in their beliefs that humanity can be redeemed if protected.

• **Artisan's Command (Level One)** — By speaking with the spirits within mechanical devices, the character may operate the devices as he sees fit. He can discharge a crossbow, unbolt a door or raise a winch from a bowshot away. Any technological spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Crafts (difficulty seven). The character's control lasts for one scene.

• **Gift of Salt (Level One)** — This unassuming and yet highly useful Gift allows a Warden to preserve food at the peak of its freshness, that he might enjoy its bounty year-round. The Warders use this Gift often, not only to assure that they have a supply of food that won't offend their acute senses, but also to help maintain the health of their kin. The only drawback is that all of the food preserved in this manner takes on a slightly salty taste. This Gift is taught by a salt-spirit.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point for every 20 pounds of food to be preserved, and rolls Intelligence + Medicine or Hearth Wisdom (difficulty six). The food remains fresh and insect-free for one month per success.

• **Persuasion (Level One)** — As the homid Gift.

• **Mask the Predator (Level Two)** — Even the gentlest Warden unsettles horses, dogs and other domestic animals with his presence. This Gift allows a Warden to temporarily hide his inner Rage, allowing him to ride horses or work with dogs as if he were an ordinary human. The spirit of any domesticated animal teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Animal Ken. Success means that animals treat the character as if he were an ordinary human for the duration of the

scene, attacking the character in the event that they feel threatened or challenged. This Gift does nothing to mask the Curse as far as normal humans are concerned, though.

• **Reshape Object (Level Three)** — As the homid Gift.

• **Tongues (Level Three)** — A more effective version of Speech of the World, this Gift offers both fluency and literacy in any human language encountered, whether the King's English or ancient Sumerian cuneiform. This Gift is taught by a raven-spirit.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Intelligence + Linguistics. The obscurity of the language determines the difficulty (Storyteller's discretion). The number of successes determines the Warden's fluency with the language.

• **Attunement (Level Four)** — The Warden can commune with the spirits of a given city or town and learn anything that these spirits know (which is often considerable). The werewolf learns the rough population, the names and identities of any supernatural beings in the city, whether any of the inhabitants carry a plague, and so on. A cockroach-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Perception + Enigmas (difficulty 6). The amount and accuracy of the information depends on the number of successes rolled. On a botch, the spirits playfully lie or are simply misinformed (which can be fatal, depend on the nature of misinformation).

• **Doppelganger (Level Four)** — The Warden may assume the exact likeness of a particular human or wolf, or even another werewolf. A spirit of illusion teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Performance (difficulty 8). The effect lasts for one day per success, and character assumes the voice and mannerisms of the assumed target, as well as her physical appearance (though not her traits).

• **Command the Blaze (Level Five)** — Just as wood actually needs the occasional forest fire to cleanse away the dead underbrush, cities too are said to require the occasional blaze to sweep away the filth and allow new life to grow. The cities of the Dark Medieval, however, are often tarred, thatched fire-traps. This Gift allows a Warden to direct the inevitable fire, urging it toward areas that can suffer the burning and guiding it away from valuable territory (such as libraries or the homes of Kinfolk). This Gift is taught by a fire elemental.



System: The player must spend a Gnosis point and roll Willpower (difficulty 7). The character's area of control originates around him. The more successes the roll achieves, the further the character's area of control stretches.

Successes Radius of Control

One	Arm's reach
Two	One room
Three	A medium-sized building, such as an inn
Four	A city block or a small keep
Five	Three city blocks; a castle
Six+	An entire city

The Warder's consciousness extends with the fire within his area of control. It must be one single blaze, however, rather than a number of separate fires. The Warder must remain still with eyes closed and concentrate to maintain control. If he is attacked or otherwise distracted, the control is lost and the Gift must be initiated again to regain control of the fire. The fire cannot travel underwater or across bare stone, but it can otherwise leap and twist in an

unnatural fashion. The flames can extend up to 15 feet away from their fuel sources.

• **False Comfort (Level Five)** — As the homid Gift.

Rites

Gifts are the most spectacular spiritual practice the shapeshifters have, but they are not the most important such practice to the Garou. More complex and ceremonial than Gifts, rites are as much social conventions within the society of the Garou as anything else. Rites form an unseen bond between werewolves and also between the Garou and Gaia herself. Only Garou perform these rites (it is assumed that the other Changing Breeds have their own rites, of course), and this is because of their special bond and service to Gaia. It is a boon, one might say, for their fealty to her; that they are willingly putting their own lives and the lives of their loved ones at stake when fighting for her.

But what are rites, precisely? How do they work? It is through their continued interaction with the spirits of Gaia, building on a persisting relationship that has existed longer than anyone can remember, that the spirit-servants of Gaia can fuel the rituals of the werewolves. It is a pact that obliges the spirits of Gaia to accommodate the callings of the Garou ritemasters and grant their requests by allowing the rites to work. Rites are, therefore, boons granted by spirits through ritualistic callings, often in the form of tributes and chiminage. The Garou see rites as a way to affect the order of the natural world, and as such, the practice is part of the natural way of things. To the Garou this is more than peasants sacrificing to their gods to ensure a good harvest. To them, it is more than a mere tradition; it is a part of who they are and of their culture. It is also imperative that outsiders do not chance upon a Garou rite. They would not understand, and those involved may even be persecuted for working witchcraft. (Assuming the would-be persecutors survive — most humans who chance upon werewolf rituals do not.)

Types of Rites

Even though rites are a spiritual practice, they figure heavily into everyday life for the Garou. Rites, therefore, have been classified into several categories reflecting their purpose, both in mechanical and dramatic context. Rites of accord serve to restore balance, to cleanse and to mend. Caern rites have specific functions on and regarding the sacred places of the Garou. Rites of death honor the departed and maintain the connection the Garou have with the cycle of all things. Mystic rites are designed for connecting to and with the Umbra. Punishment rites form a sacred practice of reprimand, and rites of renown commemorate notable achievements. Seasonal rites celebrate the seasons of the year and represent Garou “festivals.” They also represent specific annual rituals that the Garou hold, such as solstices. Last but not least are minor rites. Nothing like the other, elaborate and public rites, the minor rites represent specific rituals that individual Garou perform every day.

Learning and Performing Rites

Rites are taught by tribal elders, who were in turn taught by their own elders. The rites of the Dark Medieval, already ancient by anyone’s standards, are predominantly the same ones young Garou of the future will one day learn. Characters with the Rites Background begin the game with some knowledge of

rites systems

The following is a chart providing the standard roll required for performing the different types of rites. If no roll is listed in the write-up, assume that a standard roll is required.

Type	Roll	Difficulty
Accord	Charisma + Rituals	7
Caern	varies(max. Gnosis)	7
Death	Charisma + Rituals	8 – Rank
Mystic	Wits + Rituals	7
Punishment	Charisma + Rituals	7
Renown	Charisma + Rituals	6
Seasonal	Stamina + Rituals	8 – CaernLevel
Minor	none	none

rites, but after the game has begun, the only way to learn more rites is by finding a teacher. It is not possible to purchase rites with experience points.

Young Garou are often taught rites based on their auspices. Usually, Theurges and Philodox, being the shamans and mediators of Garou society respectively, serve as authorities on rites among the Garou, and cubs from these auspices are initiated with rites early on. Theurges learn caern rites, mystical rites and seasonal rites, while Philodox learn rites of accord and of punishment.

This is not to say that the Galliards, Ragabash and Ahroun do not learn rites. A Garou is able to learn any rite, regardless of her auspice, provided she can locate someone who is willing to teach her (and provided the character has the requisite Rituals rating). In all likelihood, an elder is going to demand some sort of recompense or tribute to sharing his knowledge. Often this tribute comes in the form of aid or servitude. Sometimes the student is asked to provide chiminage to the teacher’s pack or tribal totem. The worth of the payment and applicable time involved should be based on how much teaching is required (determined by the level of the rite) and in what regard the tutor holds the character. (This regard takes her rank into account, though how the character approaches the tutor affects the tutor’s demands accordingly. Good roleplaying should be required of the player.)

A Garou cannot learn a rite of a higher level than her Rituals rating, and one week under the instruction of the elder per level of the rite is required to learn it. For every week of training, the player must roll Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 10 – the character’s

Intelligence). If any of the rolls fail, the player must expend a Willpower point to continue the studies. If a roll botches, the character is not worthy of the knowledge yet, and he must wait at least a three full turnings of the moon before trying again.

Most rites are extensive and tradition-bound social ceremonies held at moots and other caern assemblies. A ritemaster leads the procession, which generally includes three or more Garou. It is generally frowned upon for a Garou to perform such rites alone, although many minor and mystic rites are carried out by solitary Garou. The ritemaster is responsible for seeing to all necessary details concerning the rite, which includes the participation of the Garou present. The number of Garou present helps lower the difficulty of the rite (by one per five participants including the ritemaster; see the table for base difficulties). Good roleplaying on behalf of the characters involved could lower the difficulty further if the Storyteller sees it fit.

Carrying out a rite normally takes a minimum of 10 minutes per level of the rite, and often entails the sacrifice or use of some special object. Requirements for enacting a rite are included in the following listings.

Rites of Accord

Rites of accord are designed to restore and renew balance and harmony with Gaia in a place or a Garou. Rites of accord are also used to strengthen and reinforce such targets. The player must make a Charisma + Rituals roll, base difficulty 7 (unless otherwise stated) to perform these rites.

Rite of Cleansing

Level One

This rite cleanses a person, place or object by removing all taint of the Wyrms from it. A common way to perform this rite is to draw a circle upon the ground and walk clockwise around the afflicted person, object or place while carrying a smoldering torch. Then a tree branch must be dipped in pure water or snow and used to sprinkle the target. As this rite is performed, the participants join in on a terrifying howl to scare away and expel the corruption.

System: The difficulty of this rite depends on the level of taint. For instance, the taint of a spirit might be determined by the spirit's Gnosis rating. If performed at dawn, lower the difficulty by one. More than one target can be cleansed at a time, but then the player of the ritemaster must expend a point of Gnosis per additional target. Servants of the Wyrms (which includes Black

Spiral Dancers) and vampires suffer antagonizing pain if targeted by this rite, but they are not cleansed of their taint. This rite merely removes taint; it does not heal wounds or damage caused by the taint.

Rite of Contrition

Level One

This rite is used as a form of apology to a spirit or Garou who has been insulted or annoyed, or even to prevent war between septs or tribes. This rite requires the ritemaster to offer a gift or offering to the offended individual, or possess an aspect of the offended spirit, such as a clay likeness of it. The ritemaster must then perform an act of formal apology, such as groveling at the feet of the offended while whining and showing her throat. If performed well, however, the act need not be that drastic.

System: The difficulty of this rite equals the Rage of the offended Garou or spirit. The more successes, the more profound the apology is, although only one is needed to succeed. It is considered very bad form to refuse to accept a Rite of Contrition, and spirits will always accept a well-performed rite.

Rite of Renunciation

Level Two

Though it is extremely rare for this rite to be performed, it actually allows a Garou to abandon the auspice under which he was born and assume another. Doing so is considered highly inappropriate, especially among the more structured tribes, and a Garou who has changed her auspice should count on experiencing social difficulties for a long time after her change.

To perform this rite, the Garou in question must undergo a ritualistic cleansing, in which he is bathed and washed in water that has been exposed to moonlight for a full night. The water must be poured from a bowl of silver, and it cleanses the supplicant of everything about him.

When the supplicant has been cleansed and the rite has been completed, the Garou is now effectively Rank 1, regardless of his previous rank.

System: There exists a variation of this rite allowing a Garou to change his tribe, but it is almost considered heresy to invoke such a rite. Only the Children of Gaia and the Bone Gnawers are known to take up defectors. Regardless of which facet of herself the Garou is renouncing, the Garou in question keeps the Gifts that have already been taught to her, but she forgoes the right to purchase new Gifts of the old

auspice (or tribe). Needless to say, the Gifts of the new auspice can now be purchased at normal value.

Under no circumstances can a Garou who has defected from his tribe or auspice change back. He has forgone his past forever, and the tribal totem of a Garou who has changed his tribe is likely to bear a grudge against that character for the rest of his life.

Awakening of Gaia's Strength

Level Three

This rite is used to strengthen and fortify a structure, such as the walls around a city, or a door or gate. The rite works only on walls and doors made of stone or wood (not metal, glass or any other material). The Warders alone practice this rite as a way to protect their Kinfolk and caerns; the other tribes see it as heretical and often speak out against its practice at moots. The Warders have been called upon to perform this rite for other tribes, however, and it is becoming more and more accepted. The ritemaster must carry a small article of the same material as the object he wishes to be fortified during this ritual. The participants walk the length of the object while calling on Gaia to restore the stone or wood to its natural living strength.

System: Objects smaller than a wall (such as a door) decrease difficulties to perform the rite by one, while a larger object, such as an entire castle wall, increases the difficulty by two or more. If the article carried by the ritemaster is an exact match to the object (a splinter of wood from the same tree as the object or a stone from the same quarry), reduce the difficulty by two. If successful, difficulties to damage the object increase by one for each success, up to a maximum of +3, until the next full moon.

Rite of the Wilderness

Level Four

This rite prevents humans from settling an area, by calling on the spirits of the land to make sure that everything goes wrong for the would-be settlers. The interlopers find rope and leather gnawed through, food stolen or spoiled, and livestock driven away or scared so badly as to be unmanageable. Wells dry up or become infected by algae, and so on. Often called "Goblin Curse" by young Garou, it would indeed seem to the victims of this rite that goblins haunt their new home.

The ritemaster must possess an object that has never felt the touch of humans. The participants gather in the area for three nights while calling on the spirits of nature to defend themselves. If they are

successful, the woods are "haunted" for a full year. The affected woods take on an eerie, gloomy atmosphere, shadows lengthen and seem to move, and strange sounds can be heard.

System: Magic or True Faith could potentially counter the effects of this rite. If the woods are destroyed, the effect dissipates. If a caern lies within five miles of the area, the difficulty is reduced by one. Bear in mind that the affected area must be limited. Only a portion of a forest, a few acres wide, can be affected. Haunted forests also draw attention. The Inquisition or even infernalists might hear legends and come to investigate.

Caern Rites

Caern rites are among the most important of all rites, because they help maintain the very spirit of the land itself. These rites aid in opening, protecting and renewing these sacred places. Without them, the Garou would lose their most important sanctuaries. These rites can only be performed within a caern. The dice pool on any of these rites cannot exceed the ritemaster's Gnosis rating.

Moot Rite

Level One

The purpose of this rite is to recharge a caern with Gnosis, and a moot cannot be opened before it has been completed. It has to be performed at least once per month for the caern to remain consecrated. The participants of the rite must form a circle within the caern itself and join in a prolonged howl, led by a sept officer known as the Master of the Howl. This howl resonates like an eternal circle until the rite is complete.

System: Between them, the participants must sacrifice a total of five points of Gnosis per level of the caern in order to replenish it. This rite has many variations from sept to sept and from tribe to tribe, mainly aesthetic differences. For instance, the Red Talons are said to bite at their paws and scratch their blood into the ground, while the Children of Gaia bury their paws or feet in the earth.

Rite of the Opened Caern

Level One

With this rite, a Garou can tap into the caern's mystic energies and use them herself. The ritemaster must perform some sort of test to prove herself worthy. These tests depend on which type of caern is involved (see p. 168 for types of caerns), but they always involve making a connection to the spirit of the caern. If a caern

of Rage is involved, the ritemaster could take on her Crinos form and claw at her breast to bring forth the Rage. If it is a caern of Enigmas, she might have to solve a difficult conundrum within a limited time.

System: The level of the caern determines the number of successes needed on a resisted, extended Wits + Rituals roll (difficulty 7). The spirit of the caern must be overcome. The Storyteller uses the caern's level as a dice pool (difficulty of the character's Gnosis). The number of successes needed equals the character's Willpower. If the character is the first to acquire the necessary number of successes, she wins and may then add the caern's rating to her dice pool while performing actions relevant to the nature of the caern. If she loses, she must soak lethal damage equivalent to the caern's level. A botch indicates that the character receives aggravated damage as a manifestation of the caern's spiritual energies lashing out.

Badger's Burrow

Level Four

The badger has a special sense about what is going on in its burrow. Similarly Caern Warders have honed their senses to perfection regarding the holy places that they so passionately guard that they notice anything within the bawn.

The ritemaster must prepare a surface, such as a pool of water, a patch of sand or a shield, onto which he pours a substance of strong odor, such as an herb or urine. The other participants of the rite circle the ritemaster while growling softly. If the ritual is successful, the ritemaster gains knowledge of hidden things occurring within the bawn of the caern.

System: If the player makes a successful Perception + Rituals roll against the difficulty indicated on the chart below she can ask one question per success regarding a defined area (the difficulty is dependant on the size). A failure indicates that the vision comes up blank, while a botch lets the Garou see whatever she thinks she is going to see, regardless of the truth.

Area	Difficulty
Heart of the caern	5
Wide area; large meadow	6
Area from the caern's heart to the bawn	7
Square acre of Land	8
Small Forest	9

Rite of the Opened Bridge

Level Four

This rite causes a mystical gateway between two caerns, known as a moon bridge. These bridges allow

Garou to pass across the distance between the two caerns at one-thousandth of the time it would normally take. The ritemaster must have an Umbral gem, resembling a flat pearl with a wolf's paw print on one side, known as a moongem or pathstone. It is through the totem of the caern that a bridge is opened, by establishing (or reestablishing) a spiritual connection between the two caerns.

The ritemaster gathers all participants to walking and chanting in a circle around the moongem, and the Master of the Howl leads a plea to the totem spirit of the caern to establish contact with the totem of the other caern.

System: If the pack totem of the ritemaster is the same as that of the caern, add three bonus dice to the necessary Wits + Enigmas roll (difficulty 8 minus the level of the ritemaster's home caern, if this caern is one of the two involved in the rite). The number of successes needed to complete the rite is equal to the level of the target caern.

After a moon bridge has been established, it may be opened at any time using either Rite of the Opened Caern or the Ragabash Gift: Open Moon Bridge. If the rite is unsuccessful, a full 13 moons must go by before the rite can be attempted again. The rite must be performed once every 13 moons anyway to preserve the moon bridge. A botch results in the destruction of the very rare and valuable moongem, and the subsequent severe punishment against the offending Garou.

Rite of the Shrouded Glen

Level Four

This rite cloaks the entire spiritual reflection of a caern, making it invisible from any part of the Umbra. Five Garou must fast and be purified for three days before performing this rite. By sitting opposite each other in a star-shaped pattern and chanting a mantra to the appropriate spirits, the participants slowly make the area fade until it is completely hidden from sight.

System: The difficulty for this roll equals the caern's Gauntlet rating + 4. The number of successes determines the number of hours the glen remains hidden. It is possible to spend a total of 10 Gnosis to make the effect permanent, and any of the participants may spend Gnosis. The glen is not actually invisible; an Umbral onlooker simply does not see the caern's Garou inhabitants or any other evidence that a caern is nearby.

Rite of Caern Building

Level Five

To actually create a caern, a brave werewolf must perform this rite. It is an incredibly powerful rite, which often proves fatal to its participants, and draws

the attention of the Wyrms' minions. Only the greatest of the Garou are allowed to lead this ceremony, which ranks among the most sacred of all Garou rites.

Before the rite can be performed, a place must be chosen to be the caern's heart. This place and all participants must be cleansed, and the ritemaster must prepare by undergoing meditation and other preparations, including many minor rituals. The sept must post its greatest warriors as sentries to deal with the invaders that are certain to attack, as the ritemaster recites endless litanies and chants designed to draw forth a magnificent spirit to form the caern. It is common to let Gaia choose the type of spirit she grants the caern, but it is possible to influence the choice. To make this determination, the ritemaster performs several minor rituals asking Gaia for her guidance. Galliards and Theurges of the sept are usually given revelations through dreams and visions, most commonly in riddles or symbols.

System: The rite must be performed between sunset and sunrise during a waxing moon. A minimum of 13 Garou, one for each moon of the year, must attend this rite. The roll required is an extended Wits + Rituals roll, although this dice pool cannot be higher than the ritemaster's permanent Gnosis. The base difficulty is 8, but every five Garou participating (beyond the required 13) reduces this difficulty by one. The assembled Garou must spend a total of 100 Gnosis points for the rite to be successful. Forty successes are also required, and the ritemaster can channel the enormous amount of Gnosis only once per hour. Since the rite is performed at night, the player of the ritemaster usually has a total of eight rolls available, depending on when the sun sets and rises. For every three Gnosis points fewer than required, all present suffer an aggravated wound (which may be soaked).

For the minimum number of successes rolled, the caern is established as a level-one caern. Every five additional successes raise the level by one. Immediately upon completion the ritemaster must sacrifice a number of permanent Gnosis points equal to the level of the new caern. This is a legendary task worthy of generous reward; the Storyteller should award all participants a goodly amount of all three types of Renown, based on what role they played in the rite. (Sentries should receive Glory, while Garou who interpreted visions regarding the new caern should receive Wisdom.) The ritemaster herself should receive a minimum of three Glory, five Honor and seven Wisdom.

If the rite fails, everyone attending suffers five levels of lethal damage, which leaves a cascade of

tear-dropped scars on their bodies after the excruciating pain recedes. (This damage may be soaked.) These tears are seen as a sign from Gaia, crying out for her children's pain. The Garou view these scars as marks of bravery.

A botch during the rite causes seven levels of aggravated damage upon the participants. If any character is reduced below Incapacitated status, she suffers severe Battle Scars (see p. 93).

Rites of Death

These rites are performed to honor the departed and to strengthen the ties to life and rebirth. Death is a necessary part of existence, and by performing these rites, the Garou shakes off the burdens of fear and grief.

Gathering For the Departed

Level One

This rite honors the newly fallen. The rite is performed by the most respected Galliard, or one of the fallen werewolf's packmates. The form of the rite varies from tribe to tribe, from a Fianna wake to a Silver Fang time of lying in state.

System: The rite gathers the sadness, respect and Rage of the mourners and releases it into the Umbra. Some say that these feelings are an offering to Gaia; others say they are a prayer to the divine. Others still say that these emotions will somehow sustain the spirit of the dead Garou on her journey into the darkness. Sometimes, when this rite is properly enacted, it makes the departed spirit easier to contact through the Ancestors Background.

Rite of the Winter Wolf

Level Three

The Garou rarely die in their beds. Those who do not die in glorious combat with the Wyrms see themselves as a burden in their old age. Over the years, a tradition has developed in the Garou Nation, that when a werewolf reaches a certain age, he takes his own life honorably and does not put a drain on her sept's resources.

The werewolf announces that she will undergo this rite, then presents herself before her packmates and septmates. The sept's Moon Dancers solemnly recite the old wolf's great honors, happy times and personal tragedies. They sing songs of the past, of the future, about the wolf's descendants and about other lives as warriors for Gaia. When these songs have been sung, the old wolf utters her farewells and walks slowly through the assembled ranks of the sept. As she

passes, the sept bangs a slow, mournful beat on drums or on the hard earth. Galliard pipers play the laments, and the old wolf departs to a secluded place where she ends her life.

Once the rite has been completed, the sept performs the Gathering for the Departed.

System: This rite must be performed at night and typically under the moon phase of the departing character's auspice. If the character commits suicide, she usually uses a silver weapon. Three other Garou must be present to acknowledge the character's life and departure.

Mystic Rites

Mystic rites are rites that pertain directly to the Umbra and spiritual connections. These rites may even be performed solitarily.

Rite of Binding

Level One

This rite lets a Garou bind a spirit to her by entering a pact with it. A spirit will not let itself be bound unless it is friendly with the totem of the binder. A spirit can be bound into places (like caerns), objects (like talens) or even people.

To bind a spirit, the character must be in the presence of it (i.e., in the Umbra). It is customary to summon a spirit first, if the character is able to do so, then try to persuade the spirit to willingly be bound. A Garou can force a spirit into binding, but most generally attempt to convince it to be bound.

Failing this rite often results in angering the spirit, which can become very uncomfortable or dangerous for the Garou. The more powerful the spirit is, the harder it is to bind it.

System: A number of Gnosis points (minimum one) must be spent to reduce the spirit's Gnosis rating on a one-by-one basis. The player then rolls the character's Willpower (difficulty equals the spirits now-adjusted Gnosis rating), and the number of successes indicates how many weeks the spirit will remain in service to the Garou. In the case of talens, the spirit is freed when the talen is used.

Rite of the Questing Stone

Level One

By dangling a stone or a needle from a piece of string and concentrating on a person or an object he is familiar with (not locations), the Garou is able to locate his target. Whether a stone or a needle, the

object in question will gently point or tug in the direction of the target so that the Garou can follow.

System: Dangling the Questing Stone over some piece of the item or individual, such as a piece of clothing or hair, the difficulty of the Wits + Rituals roll decreases by one.

Rite of Talisman Dedication

Level One

When a werewolf runs four paws to the ground, she oftentimes needs to transport certain items — tools, weapons, clothes — along with her. This rite allows her to take some of her most important belongings with her when she changes form or enters the Umbra. The werewolf imbues the items with spiritual energy and binds them to herself. The items remain with the werewolf in all forms, disappearing as he shapeshifts. The Garou performs this rite during his own auspice's moon phase, and each auspice has its own way of performing this ritual.

System: Typically, human clothing will change to accommodate Glabro form, and disappear in other forms. Other, smaller, items appear as tattoos in Hispo or Lupus form. The player and Storyteller should agree on what change the dedicated item takes on.

It costs one point of Gnosis for a character to dedicate an object to himself, and he can never have more dedicated items than his Gnosis rating. (Fetishes attuned to the character do not count against this total.) Storytellers may demand the expenditure of several points for particularly large items, while allowing several small items to count for one. A simple set of clothing is generally considered one item.

Rite of Spirit Awakening

Level Two

This rite is performed to awaken dormant spirits. Dormant spirits exist in all things, and a spirit reflection of the mundane target manifests in the Penumbra when awakened. Awakened objects are immobile in the Penumbra, however, and they only move if their mundane counterpart does so. When used on plants, this rite is known as *sanctification*. Plant-spirits grant the ritemaster one use of its powers, like a talen. Foxglove wards against fae, for instance, while four-leaf clover bring good luck. Any book on herbalism should spark many ideas for such plants.

The ritemaster plays a musical rhythm (usually on some a drum of some kind), while any other participants stride around the ritemaster howling or growling in pace with the beat to awaken the spirit.

System: The difficulty of the roll is the spirit's Rage, but failure simply means that the spirit remains dormant. It is up to the Storyteller whether the spirit is friendly. Simply awakening it does not give the ritemaster any control over it. This rite does not work on sentient beings.

Rite of Summoning

Level Two

This rite allows the Garou mystic to call different spirits to her. The summoner compels spirits to seek out who calls them, and when the rite is completed successfully, the spirits feel obliged to attend the Garou. Lesser spirits have no choice but to follow the summoning, while greater ones come out of mere curiosity.

If performed in the Realm, this rite requires complex rituals and long periods of meditation and chanting. In the Umbra the summoner simply calls out for the spirit.

System: The difficulty of the summoning depends on the power level of the spirit. The accompanying table determines the difficulties for the various kinds of spirits. The difficulty drops by one per hour spent summoning the spirit, but it can never be lower than 3.

Spirit Type	Difficulty
Gaffling	4
Jagging	5
Totem avatar	7
Incarna	8-9
Celestine avatar	10

If the summoning is successful, the player makes a Gnosis roll. The following chart indicates result based on successes:

Successes	Effect
1	Spirit comes eventually, and is initially hostile
2	Spirit manifests quickly but is initially hostile
3	Spirit comes immediately and is neutral
4	Spirit comes immediately and is passively benign
5	Spirit comes immediately and is friendly

Botches generally lead to disastrous results, such as summoning the wrong kind of spirits (even Banes). A Garou who summon Incarnae or Celestines successfully is awarded Wisdom Renown.

Rite of the Fetish

Level Three

Trademark tools of the trade for the Garou, fetishes are objects with spirits bound into them. The

pride of the Garou arsenal, these artifacts are created with careful consideration. For a spirit to agree to be bound into it, the fetish-to-be has to be made appealing for the spirit.

Performing the Rite of Cleansing is generally a first step. Depending on the nature of the fetish, it is often placed under running water, buried in pure earth, exposed to constant breeze or suspended above an open flame for three consecutive nights. The more a character has taken care to prepare the fetish, the more likely it is that the spirit will agree without trouble. Then a spirit must be summoned or sought out and in some way persuaded — whether coerced or bribed (with Gnosis) — into entering the prepared object. See p. 84 for more information on fetishes.

System: The ritemaster rolls Wits + Rituals at a base difficulty of 10. Each point of permanent Gnosis spent during the rite reduces this difficulty by two. If the Storyteller agrees, the difficulty can also be lowered if the player has roleplayed the attempt to persuade the spirit well, for instance by having the character go to great lengths at proving her sincerity to the spirit. Should the player botch the roll, the spirit will most likely attack the character out of offense.

Rite of Foresight

Level Three

The Garou prepares a small, herbal sacrifice that she burns on a rise or mound, as an offering to the spirits nearby. She then engages in meditation. After a while her spirit passes into the Umbra, where the spirits, if pleased with the sacrifice, offers her visions of possible futures. It is not uncommon to experience memories of the past as well, and the two can occasionally be hard to tell apart.

System: Some werewolves, especially among the Silent Striders, the Children of Gaia and the Warders of Men, imbibe narcotic substances such as hashish or belladonna in order to encourage these visions. The player rolls Gnosis (difficulty 7), and the spirit of the character leaves her body for the Umbra. Should the physical form be disturbed, the Garou immediately returns to her body and the visions end.

Rite of the Totem

Level Three

This rite binds a pack of Garou together by adopting a guardian totem. To perform this rite, the participants all cover their eyes with a substance regarded as holy to Gaia, such as ashes, herbs or clay. When this is done, they step sideways, and the ritemaster leads his packmates in a hunt for signs of

the totem spirit. When the totem spirit has been located, the Garou might have to prove themselves worthy of it. Generally a spirit will accept them if they have completed the Rite of Passage. As always, the Storyteller has final say.

System: Standard roll, but the characters must have enough points in the Background: Totem to meet the required cost of the chosen totem (see Totems, pp. 227-231).

Punishment Rites

These rites are performed to inflict penalties on Garou who have seriously transgressed against pack, sept or tribe. These rites are only performed if ordinary punishment has proven insufficient. If a punishment rite fails, it is considered a sign from Gaia that the wrongdoer has not transgressed seriously enough to warrant a rite of punishment. Storytellers may wish to have such rites fail automatically if the target is truly innocent. Or perhaps not; even the spirits are not infallible.

Rite of Ostracism

Level One

This rite estranges an offending Garou from her tribe, sept and occasionally her pack. She will thereafter be completely ignored. The rite requires the participants to form a circle around the chastised Garou. Then each participant calls out the name of the offender, followed by, "Of all of Gaia's children, I have no such brother/ sister," before turning from the circle, until all stand with their backs on the target. Then they leave the site, and the offender is officially ostracized.

System: This punishment lasts for one phase of the moon, typically, but there is no real limit. Sometimes the punishment is made permanent, but only for truly heinous crimes. Ostracized Garou lose one point of Glory, five Honor and one Wisdom Renown.

Stone of Scorn

Level Two

The Stone of Scorn — already an ancient tradition in the Dark Medieval — is a rite in which a rock that is imbued with malicious spirit personifications of shame, sorrow and the like is passed from Garou to Garou while the offender is forced to sit and watch. For each Garou being handed the stone, a new sign or symbol of derision or shame is carved or painted into it, while that Garou tells a mocking or embarrassing tale about, or points out a weakness of flaw in, the

offender — often an exaggerated one. This rite lasts all night, with the stories often turning worse and worse with each passing hour. As the rite ends, so does the punishment. Mocking the offender after the rite has ended, even behind her back, is punished by temporary loss of Renown.

System: Standard roll required. The punished Garou must perform some honorable deed to rid himself of the taint of scorn. Garou punished by this rite suffer a loss of eight points of Honor and two points of Wisdom Renown.

Luna's Tears

Level Three

The ancient Gaels believed in trial by ordeal to determine guilt or innocence, and some Garou, particularly the Fianna, maintain this tradition. In the event of a Garou violating the Litany, or committing any capital crime, such as rape or murder, and if there is any doubt about the guilt of the violator, this rite is sometimes invoked.

The criminal is exiled and cursed for the time of one phase of the moon. The criminal will believe that all rain that falls on him is liquid silver. No permanent damage is done, assuming the criminal survives. But during that month, the violator will suffer terribly. The rain wounds him, and he cannot heal those wounds. He loses his Gnosis and becomes unable to eat.

System: The condemned is taken before the ritemaster and the judgment is pronounced. The judge looks into the sky and determines that the condemned is to be exiled from the protectorate for the period of one lunar month, and he cannot return until the moon is in the same phase.

The condemned is then splashed with ice-cold water and forcibly escorted from the protectorate. For the period of one lunar month, the condemned cannot regain Gnosis, and every rainfall feels as if he is being lashed by silver. This "silver" inflicts one level of aggravated damage per shower of rain the character suffers. It cannot be soaked or healed, and in the aftermath, the condemned tends to vomit violently. If the condemned spends a point of Willpower, she can convince herself that the rain is not really silver (and thus suffers no damage). This Willpower can be recovered normally. The wounds do not heal, however, until the time of exile is completed.

This punishment is more commonly given in Northern Europe, where it frequently rains, but it always seems to rain just a little bit more when this rite is invoked.

The Hunt

Level Three

A Garou who has been found guilty of murder or other serious crimes, but who still retains a vestige of his honor can be targeted for the Hunt. His final stand may even warrant posthumous renown. The participating Garou form a Hunting Pack, and everyone involved paint their bodies with dye or clay, representing ancient symbols of vengeance and justice. All make way for the Hunters, and it is considered a great honor to be chosen as one of them.

System: The ritemaster rolls Charisma + Rituals (difficulty equaling the rank of the offender + 4). If the roll fails, the condemned puts up a great final stand, thus earning posthumous Glory for his valor. If the roll botches, the offender escapes the Hunters, and becomes an Errant.

It is encouraged that this rite be roleplayed instead of simply making a roll to see if the rite is successful. Playing the role of the Hunters should be rewarding, and the Hunt itself should be an invigorating experience.

Gaia's Vengeful Teeth

Level Five

This horrid rite, performed only on werewolves who betray their sept or tribe, causes the very ground itself to burn the offender like jagged silver. Whatever he touches for the duration of the rite transforms into razor-sharp silver under his flesh. In this condition, hunters then chase the traitor, and he suffers excruciating pain before he finally dies.

The rite begins with stringing the traitor to a spot of hard-cracked soil and sharp stones. The ritemaster cuts her own hand and smears the blood across the eyes, ears and brow of the perpetrator while scornfully lamenting her rage and grief. As the blood drips from the traitor's face onto the ground, the rite takes effect. Every trace of him is removed from the records of the Garou, and his name will remain only as a curse from that day.

System: The traitor is unable to step sideways as long as the blood of the ritemaster touches him. Anything he touches causes aggravated wounds, and the participants of the rite hound him mercilessly, driving him on until he finally dies. No one survives this rite.

Rites of Renown

These rites commemorate the deeds of heroes. When a Garou has accomplished something worthy of it, a rite of renown is enacted to honor and acknowledge these deeds.

Rite of Accomplishment

Level Two

This rite honors great deeds. It recognizes a werewolf's sacrifice and effort and bestows renown on the deserving subject. An elder of the tribe calls the hero forward, and tells those present of the werewolf's accomplishments and qualities. The other Garou applaud the hero by songs, chanting or howling. The rite then commences. The hero's peers will speak on his behalf, and witnesses to the character's heroics sometimes tell the story (a little exaggeration is tolerated). As the rite concludes, the elder who initiated the rite will proclaim that the Garou has been made greater in the eyes of the tribe, sept and the Garou people. "Let this be known," the elder says, and the rite is completed. Some western Silver Fangs have adopted human knightly rituals into their performance of this rite, while a Red Talon might only receive a brief howl in her honor.

System: When a character has 10 points of temporary Renown, she may trade them for one point of permanent Renown upon successful completion of this rite. The difficulty of this rite is normally 4, and only one success is needed. If one person speaks against her, however, the difficulty rises to 6. If more than one person speaks against her, the difficulty rises again (+1 for each speaker, maximum 10). A failed roll means the ritemaster receives a portent from the spirit world, determining that the character has not done enough to justify such renown. Frequently, the ritemaster will dispatch the Garou on a quest before the Renown is awarded. If the roll botches, the Garou has to perform the Rite of Contrition before the rite can be attempted again.

Sometimes, those speaking against the candidate will heckle the ritemaster as she speaks. The disputers show no respect for the candidate, and their assertions are deliberately provocative. If that is the case, then the applicant might have to check for frenzy. If he succeeds and keeps his cool, then the rite continues as normal. When the rite is completed, no one will speak out against the character in any Rite of Accomplishments for three months. Moreover, at the Storyteller's discretion, the candidate may even gain Renown — after all, she has demonstrated patience and restraint. The hecklers may even lose Renown.

Rite of Wounding

Level One

The first battle wound of one of Gaia's warriors is a proud moment. More than a Rite of Passage or

spoken respect, this first cut marks the Garou as a true warrior. Each tribe has different ways of celebrating this wound, but all honor it. The tribe's Theurges rub ash into the wound, to make sure that it scars. The Fianna, with their obsessions with purity of body, actually heal this wound, leaving a ghostly scar — especially when the cub is being groomed for leadership. The Shadow Lords cauterize the wound and treat the pain as part of the ordeal of honor. The Children of Gaia treat the wound, and meditate on the sacrifices needed to save Gaia's love for the world.

System: Only the wounded character and the ritemaster need be present, but in many cases, this first scar is the focus for yet another Garou celebration. Some Septs consider this to be a second Rite of Passage. The wounded character receives two extra points of Glory if the rite succeeds.

Rite of Passage

Level Two

As a werewolf cub undergoes his First Change, a spirit alerts the tribe, and the cub is taken away to undergo the Rite of Passage. Until this rite is undertaken, the cub is not a true Garou, and not worthy of respect. To the Silver Fangs, they are mere squires. To the Shadow Lords, they are slaves. The cub does not become a member of the tribe until this rite has been completed.

The Rite of Passage takes the form of a quest, and it is usually dangerous. Garou elders like to use this rite as a way of solving two problems at once — the cubs are initiated into adulthood, and some problem that they cannot solve themselves can be taken care of. The sept might not be able to spare resources to hunt down a group of young vampires in the region, but those vampires can be made targets of the rite.

Few cubs undertake this rite alone, but it happens occasionally. In most cases, though, the rite also unites all of the new cubs into a new pack. It both brings the cubs into adulthood and forges the team spirit and pack dynamic that will ensure their survival. (The Rite of the Totem is typically performed soon after the Rite of Passage.)

The pack (or the individual cub) is sent out into the world with a definite goal and no support and warned not to come back until the goal is complete. In reality, the tribal elders are not so heartless. They will send spirits to watch over the cubs, and if the threat they face is overwhelming, they can quietly move to aid the cubs. There is no shame in this — what the elders are looking for is resourcefulness, toughness and bravery.

When the quest has been completed, the newly adult Garou are hailed by their sept and a revel is typically held. During this celebration, the ritemaster will paint a pictogram that marks them as full-blooded, adult Garou. The pictograms typically depict tribe, auspice and breed.

If the cubs fail, they are given other opportunities to succeed or die trying. It is very common for cliath-to-be to earn their Garou-names on their Rite of Passage.

System: Before this Rite has been completed, the Garou are not yet Rank One. They do not learn any Gifts until the rite has been completed.

Seasonal Rites

Every tribe has some seasonal rites, ways of celebrating the seasons of the year. Seasonal celebrations are very common during the Dark Medieval, and the fact that the Garou have their own such ceremonies should come as no surprise. Whether solstices or minor festivals, some sept hold such seasonal rites once a moon, while others merely celebrate the most important ones. Listed here are just a few such rites to give an idea of what these rites were like.

Rite of the Winter Winds

Level Two

This rite is in honor of Helios, and it is performed on the shortest day of the year. If this rite is not performed, Helios might think twice before lengthening the days again, and winter would simply never end.

This rite differs from sept to sept, but a common version involves the ritemaster gathering all participants into a circle around a small bonfire. An extended howl beginning as a low growl and ending in a magnificent climax marks the cue, and the ritemaster leaps forward with a burning branch from the fire, and sets off into the woods. The other participants follow his lead, and they all make as much noise as they can. The rite culminates by the ritemaster leading the others back and everyone throwing their flaming sticks back onto the fire. Then a massive feast in honor of the reborn sun is held until its appearance at dawn.

Rite of Reawakening

Level Two

This spring rite held on the vernal equinox is also a celebration of rebirth. At sundown the ritemaster leads the participants on a symbolic quest into the Umbra, involving a number of tests (often 13, representing the number of Umbral Realms or months in the lunar year). Each test requires the participants to

abandon something of themselves. This can be anything, from a fetish to an old grudge. The idea is that by mastering such challenges, the challenge of renewing the Earth is something in which the Garou can succeed. The rite culminates in a great feast of all sorts of pleasures.

The Great Hunt

Level Two

During the eve of summer solstice, Helios lingers in the sky longer than any other day of the year. This gives the creatures of darkness little, if any, shelter, and the Garou celebrate this by arranging a sacred hunt.

The rite entails the ritemaster calling upon Gaia at midnight the night before the solstice. The assembled Garou pray, chant, howl and tell tales. Some tribes practice bloodletting and mingle their blood in a large bowl before painting pictograms on their foreheads and chests with it. Gaia sends a sign to the sept at dawn, indicating the target of the hunt. This sign can come in any shape; often it is a raven leading the Garou to their target, or a vision to the ritemaster. The assembled then have until sunset to finish their prey. Should the rite fail, it is considered a terrible omen for the coming year.

System: On rare occasions, Gaia demands that a Garou sacrifice for this rite. Only the bravest, strongest warrior Ahroun can be chosen, and he becomes the focus of the Great Hunt. Only in times of dire need does Gaia demand such a sacrifice.

The Long Vigil

Level Two

The Long Vigil is performed during the autumnal equinox. For the Garou, winter is traditionally a time of war, and this rite is intended to prepare Gaia's warriors on the battles ahead.

The day before the rite begins the whole caern is decorated with trophies of war. At sundown the sept joins around a raging bonfire, and the ritemaster begins his praises, first to Helios, then to Luna, with pleas for aid. Then the Moon Dancers join in with their tales from the battles and victories in the past year. Each trophy around the caern is brought into their songs with the story of how it was won. As they finish, the rest of the sept joins in with their own tales of those deeds. This goes on all night, and as dawn approaches, the ritemaster once again beckons Luna for aid, dedicating all accomplishments of the past year to Luna, Helios and Gaia. Then the trophies are

all sacrificed on the bonfire, in hope that many more will be won in the coming year.

Minor Rites

These rites reflect the daily lives of the Garou. Some of these rites merely serve as homage and tribute to spirits and Gaia, while others are based in the folklore of humans or the ways of the wolves. The following are some minor rites, but players should be encouraged to make their own, based on where their character comes from and what beliefs and tradition are practiced there. The roleplaying experience can only benefit from it. A minor rite takes three days to learn and usually takes between two to five minutes to perform. These rites normally grant a one-die bonus to a particular kind of roll, which can be used only once until the "cycle" of the rite is performed again.

Bone Rhythms

As a tribute to her totem spirit, a Garou beats out the particular rhythm associated with her spirit with drumsticks made of bone.

System: By performing this rite three times a day for at least three days, the character receives a one-die bonus to *one* roll while in the Umbra.

Breath of Gaia

This rite merely requires the Garou to breathe deeply 13 times of Gaia's breath. This clears his mind for all things save his love for Gaia.

System: By the character performing this rite once per day for a full cycle of the moon, the player can lower the difficulty of *one* healing or detection roll by two.

Greet the Moon

Children of the Moon, the Garou howl greetings at Luna. There is a different howl for each moon phase.

System: By howling at the moon in this manner at moonrise every night for a full phase of the moon, a player can add one die to her character's social interaction rolls with other Garou of that phase's auspice during the next night of that moon phase.

Greet the Sun

Similar to Greet the Moon, this rite is performed at sunrise.

System: By singing the praise of Helios at sunrise for nine days in a row, the character is granted one

additional die for attempts to sniff out Wyrms or taint. This is a lasting bonus as long as the character keeps the practice. If even one day is missed, he has to start over again.

HUNTING PRAYER

Before commencing a hunt, the Garou praises Gaia and all her creatures. The Garou also carries an item, be it a tooth, a pearl or a belt, that carries her prayers.

System: By performing this rite for three turnings of the moon prior to every hunt, the character receives an additional die to all her tracking rolls, for as long as she continues this practice. If she loses her item or forgets even once to say her prayer, she must start anew.

PRAYER FOR THE PREY

As a sign of respect to Gaia, her children and to life, the Garou steps sideways after every

kill she makes and thanks the spirit of her prey for giving its own life to assure that the Garou could survive.

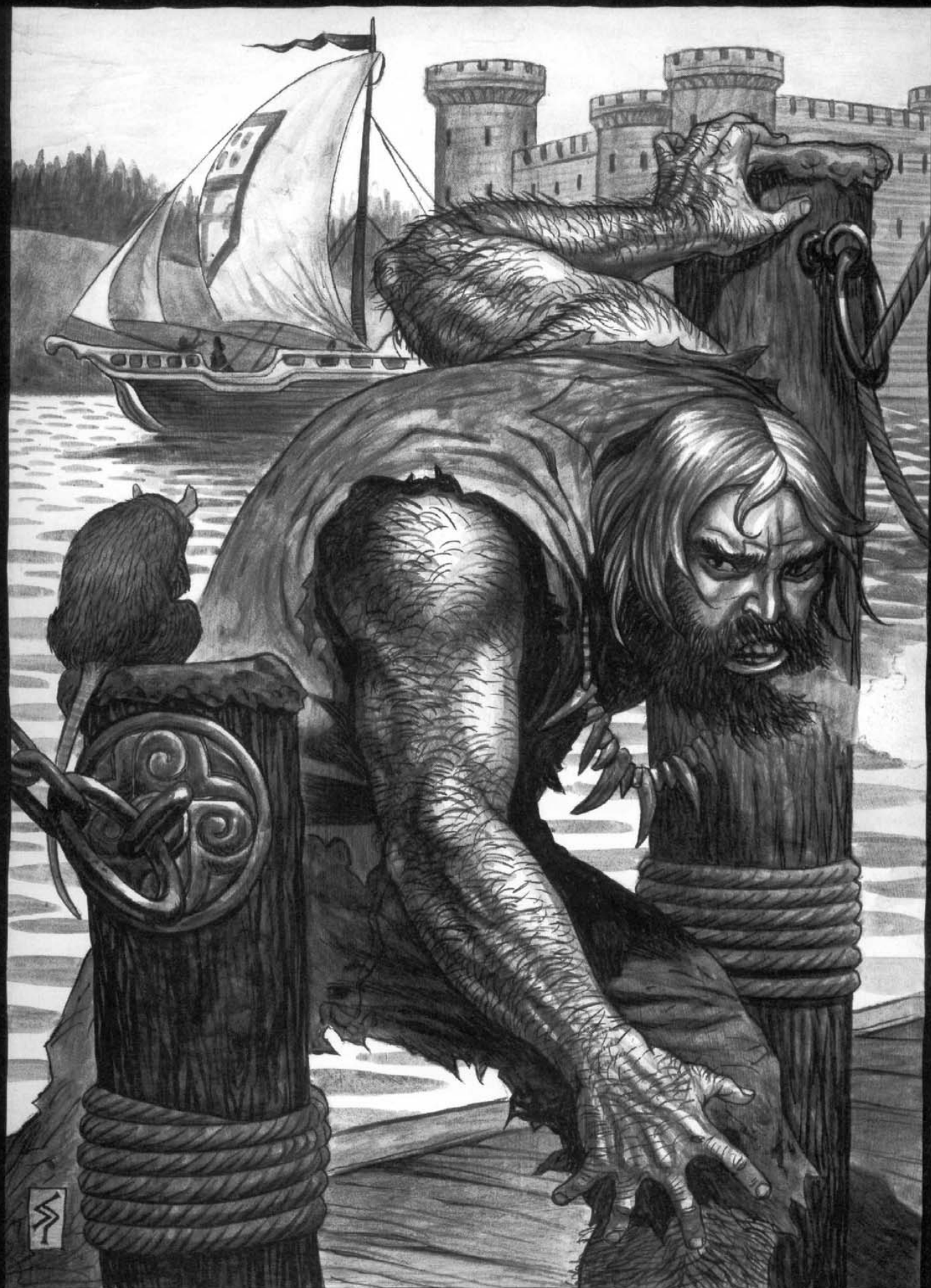
System: By performing this rite for every beast of Gaia she slays (not including Wyrms-creatures) for a full turning of the moon, the character receives a -1 bonus to all difficulties in dealing with nature spirits for as long as this practice is upheld.

RITE OF THE HUNTING GROUND

The Garou marks her territory by urinating on trees and bushes while in Lupus form. No wolf or Garou can enter without immediately realizing that they are on another's territory. This does not necessarily prevent them from entering, however.

System: The Garou spends anywhere from 10 minutes to a full hour marking her territory, depending on its dimension. Special messages, such as greetings or directions, can be left, but then the player must make an Intelligence + Primal-Urge roll (difficulty 7).





Thordor sat quietly on the dock and took a pull from his wineskin

as a man strolled along the pier and looked up at the ship with an admiring look on his face. Thordor had seen larger men, but not many. The fellow had a thick beard down the middle of his chest, and the young sailor could see bits of food trapped in the matted mess. The man was coarse, even for a docksman (if indeed that's what he was), and Thordor found him frightening, despite having faced stormy seas and hideous beasts from beneath the waves.

Thordor sat and tried not to look like a sailor, but it didn't work. When the man saw him, his face lit up, and he strolled over to speak. Thordor hid his wineskin beneath his cloak and tried to think of an excuse to walk off, but nothing came. He could only watch as the oaf grinned, bearing yellowed teeth and slimy lips.

"Sail on that you?"

Thordor frowned. The man's accent was odd. It didn't sound German, yet it was extremely guttural. "I do, sir."

"Good big ship!" The man waved in the direction of the vessel, gesturing for emphasis. "Carry men from other docks?"

"Travelers, you mean? Yes, sometimes." Thordor wondered if the man was an idiot.

"Travelers! Good!" The man's eyes narrowed. "Travelers pale like dead fish? Only see at night?"

Thordor shook his head. "No, sir, I do not know..." He trailed off. Something sparked a memory. There had been a man, actually, who had paid the captain to transport him here from England. Thordor had never spoken with him — had he? Suddenly the voyage seemed hard to recall.

The sailor's eyes snapped up and beheld the ugly man standing so close they could have kissed. His breath smelled of dead flesh and salt, and he panted like a wolf ready to hunt. "Sir, there was one such. I don't recall his name or his plans when he left the ship, but—"

"Where?" said the man. It sounded more like a demand than a question — and more like a growl than a word.

"As I said, I don't—"

"Where?" he snarled again. Thordor backed up, and likely would have fallen to his death in the sea if the man hadn't grabbed his cloak. When he put his arm forward, Thordor saw beneath his cloak and was horrified to note that his flesh was covered in scars and boils.

"Sir, I don't know! He left the ship last eve, when we put in! A carriage picked him up straight away, and they headed northeast. That is all I know!" Thordor's breath came heavy. He squirmed, ready to run, but the man held him fast by the cloak. The man sized him up, then grinned again.

"That enough for tracking," he said. "Thank you."

The man turned and loped off toward the town. Thordor shook his head and watched him go. He was an idiot. No man could track a carriage after the snow they'd had the night before. Not even a wolf could do that.

Off in the snows, Ice-Fangs, Ahroun of the Bone Gnawers, dropped into his natural form and began hunting for a spoor. The human had been an idiot to remember so little, but then, most humans were. No matter. He'd find the trail, then the Leech. His lands had enough problems without importing more.



CHAPTER FIVE: THE INVISIBLE WORLD

"Stared at so closely by that ghostly crew
I was recognized by one who seized the hem
of my skirt and said: 'Wonder of wonders! You?'"

—Dante, *The Inferno*

Faith has as much influence on the lives of humans as do practical realities in the Dark Medieval. The words of a priest can start a war. Many believers choose to die rather than betray their beliefs, looking instead to the next world for their reward. Cathedrals rise over the landscape as the most impressive achievements of architecture, but people see these buildings as triumphs of God, not engineering marvels. Heaven and Hell hold tremendous sway.

As humans look to places beyond, so do the werewolves. Where humans must rely on their faith for spiritual sustenance, Garou have proof of Gaia's existence. They know that the spirits are real. Werewolves can speak to their ancestors. They can travel to the spirit world, which they call the Umbra.

Although werewolves accept the Triat and believe in Gaia, individual tribes, septs and packs have their own understanding of spirituality. Some homids follow Christianity, and they struggle to reconcile the beliefs of the Garou Nation with the Christian worldview. Other werewolves, such as the Fenrir, try to relate their experiences with the spirit world to their ancient myths. A few members of the Fianna even believe that they are faeries, trapped away from Arcadia.

Belief shapes Umbral experiences. Garou don't know why, but every werewolf experiences the Umbra in a unique way. A Christian homid might see an arched entrance to a moon path as a pearly gate, while a lupus might see the same entrance as two trees with their branches entangled. Spirits flock to werewolves who will interact with them. Those who are not inclined to communicate with the spirits might see one only rarely.

Traveling

Why do the Garou travel to the Umbra? Earth has plenty to offer. They can speak to spirits at caerns. They don't need sustenance from the Umbra. Yet even still, the werewolves find many reasons to reach into the spirit realms.

Tactics

Garou use the Umbra as a tool for moving stealthily. Many werewolves slip in and out of human areas by using the Umbra to avoid detection. A noblewoman with a mirror can step into the Umbra and be free to hunt rabbits as a wolf in the nearby forest while the guards at her door suspect nothing. Sneaking into strongholds of enemies and stepping sideways to set an ambush or launch a surprise attack also make sense.

The Umbra makes a good escape route. Why should a werewolf allow huntsmen with bows to chase her down? She can simply find a convenient place and vanish. Few people protect their dungeons from spiritual escapes. A werewolf might need a moment to rest during a fight, or she might want to break off from the rest of her pack to surprise her enemies.

Garou can use the Umbra to become the ultimate spies. By stalking through the Umbra, Garou can sit in on important meetings, visit noble functions or stay in a nobleman's private chambers. By peeking (see p. 93), the werewolf can watch events on the other side of the Gauntlet. The Umbra is an excellent means of gathering important information.

Spiritual Matters

Most werewolves travel to the Umbra to seek out spirits. A warrior might need the spirits to teach him Gifts. A spirit could have valuable information for the Garou, for which he might have to perform a quest in the Umbra. He may also seek out spirits for the creation of fetishes.

When a werewolf is ready to learn new Gifts, the Theurges call upon a spirit to come and teach the Garou. They make supplications, and the spirit imparts her knowledge to the werewolf. Rarer and more powerful spirits teach rarer and more powerful Gifts. Often, the Garou must hunt these spirits through the Umbra. Going to the spirits usually makes them more amicable. It shows respect to the spirit, which they often interpret as wisdom. Certain spirits only dwell deep in the Umbra and refuse to answer summons, which means that finding them requires a quest.

Quests in the Umbra might also be necessary to please a spirit. A werewolf might need to cleanse part of the spirit world that the Wyrms has corrupted. She might need to fight a rival spirit. She might need to retrieve an item of importance to the spirit. These types of quests are often as much tests for the Garou as they are needs for the spirit.

When a werewolf wishes to craft a fetish, he needs a spirit to bind to the item. To find a spirit with the proper traits, he might have to journey far into the Umbra. To find a willing spirit with those traits, he might have to travel even farther. Galliards sing entire epics about the creation of fetishes.

Personal Reasons

Even the werewolves with the strongest belief in Gaia experience tests of faith. They wonder about their personal place in the world. They ask questions.

The Umbra holds answers for seekers. The spirits that dwell in the Umbra have accumulated great wisdom over the ages. They have seen the years change, and they know the lives of the Garou. Even the places in the Umbra provide symbols and signs for a werewolf. A vision-quest in the Umbra can be a journey through one's own soul. For seekers looking for reasons or meanings, the Umbra offers many choices. All one has to do is accept them.

Healing lies beyond the Gauntlet. For those who have lost a loved one, the Umbra can provide closure. Some werewolves have encountered the spirits of their ancestors. Others have found signs and symbols of lost packmates. Spirits can even teach Garou to forgive themselves for failures. Often a Garou will not



find what he went to the Umbra to find. Instead, he might come away with the knowledge the spirits know he needs.

The Penumbra

To the Garou, the Penumbra is the most important part of the Umbra. Lying just a breath away from the physical world, werewolves feel that that Penumbra reveals the true nature of things. When a werewolf peers from the Umbra to the material world, she usually stands in the Penumbra to do so.

Any spirit that wants to contact the physical world must do so from the Penumbra. Malefic as well as benign influences inhabit the Penumbra, just outside the perceptions of living beings. They observe and attempt to influence events from beyond the Velvet Curtain. Some of these spirits try to prey on Umbral travelers. They lurk in wait for Garou to step sideways, then attack — especially if part of the pack lies trapped in the Gauntlet, traveling slowly between worlds.

In addition, the spirits of earth creatures dwell in the Penumbra. As the Garou know, all things have a spirit. In forests, spirits of the trees and animals mix harmoniously with spirits of the wind and sunlight. Not all spirits of Gaia consider the werewolves their allies, however. The War of Rage left many spirits resentful toward the Garou. Some spirits feel that humans are out of control, and that the werewolves betrayed Gaia by letting them become so numerous. Spirits of dread beasts might see werewolves as food, attacking them as a wolf would attack a rabbit.

Wilds

The wilds appear vibrant and alive in the Penumbra. Many Garou who step into the Penumbra in the wilderness have to take a moment to make sure that they've gone into the spirit world at all. The two worlds can be nearly indistinguishable in a place where life is strong. The spiritual reflections of the environment will be healthy and seem to glow with colors.

Sometimes werewolves encounter things in the wilds that they do not expect. Forgotten caerns radiate spiritual power in the Umbra. Echoes of traumatic events replay themselves in a section of the Penumbra. A seemingly pristine wilderness might show signs of taint and malaise when viewed from the Umbra. Sickness often appears as dark splotches on the spirit. The passage of a dire spirit might last in the Umbra long after the scent is lost on Earth.

Countryside

The countryside and small human towns appear washed out in the spirit world. Even the sun and wind seem less refreshing to a werewolf. Wisps of spidery webs stretch between rows of carefully planted wheat. The spirits of wood and stone that humans have worked into buildings often show signs of weakness. The Red Talons believe that the humans are killing the spirit world through their constant transformation of the environment, although the Warders explain that spirits need time to adapt to their new forms. In some cases, an artificial structure gains spiritual importance as it glows with meaning for the people who live around it. Sites dedicated to religions have a potent blue-white glow to them. Christian areas of True Faith shine brightly, hurting the eyes and stinging the paws of wolves in the Umbra.

Cities

Unlike the wilds, a Garou can tell immediately when she arrives in the spirit world in a medieval city. The air seems stale, and everything looks gray and pale. A werewolf might find herself shivering from the sudden drop in temperature. Cathedrals and castles loom menacingly. Spirits in cities often jeer at Garou,

threatening them with all manner of harm unless they flee the domain with their tails tucked between their legs. A harsh white radiance streams from places of True Faith, blinding werewolves foolish enough to stare at them. Every instinct in the Garou screams out that they are not welcome in this strange environment. Sometimes the buildings and streets even seem to be trying to trap the werewolf or to send him quickly on his way.

The Warders and Bone Gnawers experience cities a bit differently in the Umbra than most tribes. The city spirits recognize them as belonging and accept their presence. Warders even find the Penumbra in a city to be comforting. Urban spirits even go out of their way to care for the children of Rat, lest he bring plagues to their denizens.

Realms

Moon paths wander out from the Penumbra, snaking through the shadowy mists to find the strange realms. Galliards sing of these places, and many Umbral wanderers bring back similar tales. No one is certain what these places are, or why they are there, but the Garou Nation has no shortage of Umbral travelers who would love to find out.



Abyss

The Abyss calls to the lost, a constant ebb tide tugging at the forgotten and unknown, sweeping spiritual debris into an endless night. The Abyss has many names, such as the Maw of the Wyrn, the Chasm or the Gulf of Night. This realm appears to most as a gray sandy plain, occasionally littered with lost items, opening to a great crack that drops away to oblivion. Bridges cross the Abyss in places, and most Garou say that the lands beyond the chasm are home to ghosts and lost spirits. Some believe that before Gaia, spirits alien to the Theurges lived in the Chaos before time, and that a few of these unknowable entities still dwell in this realm. Paths lead down the sides of the Abyss into the calling darkness, and bold visitors tell tales of caves and fantastic wealth lining the ledges.

Aetheria

In the upper reaches of the Umbra, the realm of Aetheria stretches from the tops of the clouds. Here a werewolf can look down upon the world and ponder the celestial nature of the heavens. A strange race of Garou maintains a spirit-orrery where they observe events across the sky. Many tribes believe that the stars and planets show the will of Gaia and that a Garou's destiny lies written in the stars. Spirits of the air dwell in this realm as well as Incarnae of the moon and sun.

Arcadia Gateway

The road to Arcadia leads to a vast and strange fey wood. On either end stand citadels of the Seelie and Unseelie, which the unenlightened assume are the good and evil faeries. Of course, concepts such as good and evil hardly seem to apply to the immortal fae. The realm is a magical place, and a favorite destination for the Fianna. The denizens of the realm welcome them most happily of all the tribes. All others should be aware, though. Fae are mercurial and dangerous, and they don't much care how much harm their tricks do.

The Fianna claim that a circle of mystical toadstools deep within the wood leads to the realm of dreams. Others believe that a gate to Arcadia lies hidden within the Seelie castle, and the dark forces of the Unseelie constantly seek to capture it. The truth probably changes with the whims of the fey. Still, the realm provides opportunities for the Garou to make powerful allies.

The City

If masons, carpenters and scholars could build their fantasies, then the City would exist in the

physical world. This realm has a dreamlike quality, as though it belongs to an age not yet seen. Renaissance-style architecture mixes seamlessly with Gothic buttresses and ancient Roman and Greek designs. For humans, this is the perfect city, a place of wide stone streets and flowing waterways that quickly purge the sludge and manure of city life. Parks and green squares abound through the City. Palaces and cathedrals lie beyond every block, adorned with tapestries and works of art that would make a guild-master cry. The Warders have many strongholds in this realm, although a few have begun to worry about the number of Weaver spirits that move through the shadows and exactly what the future holds for this greatest of cities.

Desert of Decay

This realm, also known as the Wasteland, scorches visitors with its blistering heat. Corpses lie strewn across the sands as if they were thrown about randomly by a giant. The scents of decaying flesh and rotting meat choke the air. Visitors hear a soft but constant buzz from flies and other insects. The only birds are carrion feeders, marking the dead with circles in the air. Most of the bodies are those of animals, wild and domestic. A few humans lie baking in the sun as well. Most of the dead appear to be recent kills. Some Garou have returned to this realm after years have passed, only to recognize the same bodies still rotting.

This is doubtless a place of the Wyrn. Banes and occasionally Black Spiral Dancers wander through this dread landscape, eating at the bodies. A few tribes think that the desert is only the beginning of the realm. Some think that spirits of the dead dwell across a set of mountains far from the realm's entrance. Others say that the paths to the home of the Wyrn run through the Desert of Decay.

Dragonhome

Here there be dragons... a saying found on most maps, but in this realm, travelers should take it quite seriously. Dragonhome carries the primeval memory of Gaia. Spirits of long dead creatures, such as dinosaurs and Ice Age mammals, dwell here. Most werewolves think of the dinosaurs as dragons, but a true dragon lives among them as well. Some believe that this mighty spirit is the last uncorrupted remnant of the Wyrn. Others believe that it is a monster that must be slain. Many Fenrir hunt the dragon in hopes of gaining glory. Young packs come to Dragonhome and pay homage to the ancient spirits, as well as hunting the mighty beasts of past eons. Some Garou

believe that the spirits of dead Fera now live in this land Dragonhome is a savage and beautiful realm, showcasing all the wonders of the natural world across the eons. Mighty mountains, infernal deserts, vast glaciers and raging oceans are all present in Dragonhome.

Erebus

Somewhere between religion and myth lies Erebus, a Tartarus-like purgatory for Gaia's own. Werewolves consumed with guilt for failures or crimes often find their way to Erebus. These individuals usually suffer from their own sense of guilt, and Erebus turns their emotional or mental anguish into physical torture. The Silver Lady of Erebus makes certain that the Garou that come to her endure agonies sufficient to convince them that they have atoned for their crime. Although Erebus is a place of pain, the pain of this realm is often the only thing that can allow for true healing.

This realm appears as an underworld cavern with rivers of molten silver flowing from a vast underground lake. Rising from the center of the lake, the Citadel of Charyss echoes with the tortured agonies of suffering Garou. Charyss, the Silver Lady, rules over Erebus, and werewolves seek her out for Gifts or aid against the Wyrms. They also petition for the release of a suffering Garou, although Theurges say that Charyss demands suffering to ease suffering.

Land of Dark Reflections

A grim and chill realm, most Garou confuse the Land of Dark Reflections with the Penumbra because of its resemblance to the physical world. The Land of Dark Reflections is a terrifying place, however, one lit as if by a flickering candle that reflects a werewolf's worst fears about the world. Most werewolves confront personal challenges here as spirits from their own lives test their courage. Some Garou believe that they must face their true selves in the Land of Dark Reflections. Others think that the realm is a trick, a deception created by the Wyrms. Some say that the realm is a blessing from Gaia, a place where a visitor can see himself as others see him. The Silver Fangs see it as a place where they can confront their darker sides and overcome them. The Red Talons believe that it is a place where they can test the worst parts of their human sides. They hold the Shadow Wood, as they call it, in great reverence and fear. A few stories exist of monsters lurking in the realm and of

packmates encountering shadowy versions of other members of their pack. The realm changes visitors, either inspiring them to greatness or driving them to the depths of Harano.

Legendary Realm

Great deeds are never lost. Just as human storytellers once spoke of heroes in the stars, the Umbra keeps records of great achievements. Legends replay themselves in this realm. Great victories as well as horrific tragedies constantly play out among the spirits of the realm. Many Garou hotly debate the nature of the Legendary Realm. Some say that the realm does not exist. They claim that all great deeds and past lives have their own places in the Umbra as part of Gaia's memory. Others believe that the legends viewed and experienced by those who enter the Legendary Realm aren't real; they are just stories acted out by spirits. Some say that the spirits of their ancestors do dwell in the Legendary Realm and relive their great moments in life. These werewolves even speculate that they must do great deeds to join Gaia after their deaths.

The Light

The place referred to as the Light has many other names as well. Some werewolves refer to it as Everchange, others as Wyldhome, but they all agree that it is one of the strangest places in the entire Umbra. The energies of the Wyld cascade over werewolves who enter this realm. They fill to bursting with spiritual energy and lose control of their shapeshifting powers. After the initial shock wears off, most Garou reach a state of pleasure and harmony where they become fluid beings at one with the Wyld. Time loses its meaning, and some believe that it is possible to travel into the past or the future in this realm. Wyld spirits dwell here and they invite werewolves deeper into this mysterious place. Not all those who accept their invitations return.

Plain of War

Endless battle greets visitors to the Plain of War. Every conflict imaginable between humans seems to be happening simultaneously. The Red Talons say that struggles between wolf packs recur here as well. It is a realm of continuous violence, though it seems to be as easy to avoid the battles as it is to join them. Once a werewolf has joined the wars, though, it becomes difficult to pull back from the battlefield. Indeed, some say that only by dying in battle can a werewolf escape the Plain of War.

Summer Country

Somewhere in their hearts, all Garou hope that Gaia has a place waiting for them. Summer Country is a place of contentment and wish fulfillment. Werewolves who visit experience unconditional love from the world around them. Blessings abound in Summer Country, and it is a place of story and inspiration. A few dour Garou claim that such a place cannot exist and that tales of Summer Country must come from the deluded rapture of spiritually damaged souls lost in the Umbra. While it is true that only Garou who suffer discover Summer Country, most werewolves prefer to believe that such a paradise is real. The only werewolves who suspect differently are the Fianna, most of whom believe that Summer Country is a vision from the lands of dream. Most Fianna, however, feel that if they get to experience such a dream, then they might as well enjoy it.

Wolfhome

The great forests of Wolfhome stretch on endlessly. When a Garou enters Wolfhome, he immediately shifts into Lupus form and finds himself unable to shift into other forms. The air of the realm fills him with wildness and savagery. Packs of werewolves sometimes find themselves at each other's throats upon entering the realm in the instinctive struggle for dominance. Humans in Wolfhome hunt wolves mercilessly, chasing them down with packs of hounds and huge hunting parties. Escape from Wolfhome is difficult, but the Red Talons state that it involves making peace with the Incarna of Wolf.

Other Places in the Umbra

Each tribe has its own home realm in the Umbra. The tribes fiercely protect their realms, and guardian spirits treat Garou of foreign tribes as enemies. The tribal lands reflect the beliefs of their tribe in the Dark Medieval, and they change as the tribal beliefs change.

Many spirits have their own homes and domains in the Umbra. Every strange and wicked place from faerie tales, myth and dark legends exists somewhere out in the spirit world. Even celestial and infernal powers have domains, though many Garou debate whether they are real or just spirits acting as the humans wish them to behave.

Caerns

The caern is the heart of Garou society. It is a place where Gaia gives of herself to strengthen her

children, where her spiritual energy breaks the boundaries imposed by the Weaver's Gauntlet and flows into the physical world like a fresh, bubbling stream. Spirits gather there to take nourishment and to bask in the glow of their Mother's love, wearing paths through the Umbra on their way like forest creatures in search of a drink. The Garou gather there as well, using the caern as the focus of powerful rites, placating the spirit population and driving off all who would defile Gaia's holy place.

Even though the Garou are the first and greatest of Gaia's children, Her gifts are not given to them alone. A caern will yield up its bounty of spirit energy to human willworkers, to the intemperate and otherworldly fae, to other skinchangers and even to the fallen Black Spiral Dancers who corrupt the font as quickly as they drink from it. All the more reason, then, for Gaia's warriors to keep her treasures safely in Garou hands.

Most caerns are located in the wilderness, some in wilds so deep that the sound of a human footfall has never broken the stillness. Whether on exposed mountaintop or moss-draped forest glade, these places shape sanctity out of wildness. Others are found significantly closer to human populations — too close, for many Garou, but a caern cannot be simply picked up and plopped back down elsewhere at will. To their credit, humans are not completely blind to Gaia's kindness. Nearby people often worship at unprotected or dormant sites in their own ways, following pagan religious beliefs or simple traditions of veneration. More open-minded Garou tribes even encourage these traditions to continue — at a nearby, supervised, safe location. Not even the Warders of Men are willing to allow any but Garou and their closest kin to tread the sacred heart of a caern.

Types of Caerns and Caern Totems

Every caern has a spiritual nature, a focus that is the reason for the caern's existence. That focus influences the energies the caern provides, the physical nature of the caern and even the psyches of the Garou who live there. A caern of Healing that knits wounds and cures disease is likely to be found in a fresh green glade with a bubbling brook, and the Garou who live there will be generous and patient (for werewolves). A caern of Rage that stokes the fury in the heart of every Garou, might spring up in a clearing seared to ragged stumps by a lightning strike, and its attendant Garou will snap viciously at every imagined slight.

In addition, every caern has a totem spirit that channels the numinous energy into a form that is accessible to the Garou. The caern spirit is often chosen from the brood of the totem spirit of the dominant tribe — one of Falcon's brood for the Silver Fangs, for example. Some unusual totemic manifestations can occur from the combination of a tribal totem with a caern of an unexpected type. A spirit from the brood of Fenris tied to a caern of Healing might appear to the Garou as a fierce mother wolf suckling her pups, while a unicorn spirit guarding a caern of Rage might appear with a horn dripping with gore. Appeasing the totem of a caern, through insights gleaned from its alliances and the caern's focus or won through hard experience, is of the utmost importance to the Garou. Even visitors must tread carefully and speak with gentle tongues in the presence of the totem, for it controls access to the caern's moon bridges as well as to its powers. How much more important, then, for the Garou who live there.

The relatively recent introduction of a new type of caern, the city caern, is troubling to many Garou. With the rise of cities, human settlements began to grow into areas that held minor caerns. The Garou, who had laid aside the bloody tool that was the Impergium, were left with sour choices. They could remain, and attempt to hide their wild natures among encroaching civilization, or they could close their caerns and leave to find new sacred places far from the expanding masses of humanity.

Most chose the second option, with the encouragement and assistance of the Warders and the Bone Gnawers. Both tribes promised to guard the still sacred sites even if walls were thrown up around them — and they have, for the most part. They have also bought up surrounding land, built camouflaging structures and raised the walls themselves in some cases. With these protections in place, the Warders and some few Bone Gnawers began re-opening the dormant caerns, channeling Gaia's energy through the city streets and over the rooftops — under the very noses of mortal man and woman. The first reaction from the other tribes was pure anger. They had been betrayed, they insisted, their caerns stolen, and now the thieves risked exposing these holy places to the humans. On closer investigation, cooler heads noted that many of these minor caerns were now more powerful with a city nature than they had been in previous incarnations. This has been taken as provisional evidence that some of these places are meant to be, and the Warders and Bone Gnawers may keep up their experiment as long as they keep things quiet.

Caern Layout

Every leaf on a tree is different, as is every rose on a brier. Every pebble in a brook looks individual, even though they all tend to be smooth and round. So it is with caerns. As fond as Garou are of the Wyld, they also love order and tradition. As dramatically different as one caern might be from another in its natural state, the Garou impose a structure on it, rounding and smoothing it like a river on stone, until it suits.

Bawn

The outermost region of the caern is called the bawn. The bawn almost always encircles the rest of the caern, but in areas with dramatic geographical features it might not. A peninsula jutting into the ocean, or a mountaintop with a sheer, impassable approach might have a bawn on only one side. Caerns with less striking topography still fit themselves to the lay of the land, so the bawn might follow the gently sloped lines of a valley or meander alongside a lazy river.

Most werewolves prefer to take the fight to the enemy, but if the fight must take place on their own, sacred ground, the bawn is where the last defense of the caern begins. Its borders with the outside world are watched, either in desultory fashion by Garou who are arrogant enough to discount attack, or with timed precision by those practical enough to have set up a water clock for such purposes. The watchers include Garou, spirits or even Kinfolk.

Although there is no visible, physical boundary line where the bawn begins, any humans living nearby likely know what areas to avoid. From tales passed by firelight of woodcutters who went among the foreboding trees and never returned, or the terrible savage sounds that emanate from the "cursed" area, people know how deeply into the woods they can go. Sensitive individuals feel the furthest tendrils of the caern's power, much to their confusion. The legends tell of curses and death, but the power might feel so clean and alluring even in its wild strangeness. These touched few might one day cross that line and never return. Even if they find a new life inside (as the Garou might wish to strengthen the blood of their kin with such spiritual boldness), the tales of dreadful disappearances are bolstered as effectively as if the wayward villager had found death at werewolf claws.

The boundary is much clearer to the Garou. It is not visible, but it can be smelled (perhaps like clean green herbs at a caern of Healing, or like freshly spilled blood at a caern of Rage) or felt (like a constant

buffeting wind at a caern of Strength, or a warm, radiating glow from a caern of Gnosis). There is no excuse, then, for a traveling werewolf with good intentions to wander about the bawn without voicing the Howl of Introduction. An uninvited Garou who is caught within the bawn might be killed outright. The best she can hope for is to be dragged into the caern like a hunting prize.

Assembly Area

The assembly area is the easiest space to recognize within the caern. The space must be big enough to allow all of the Garou and possibly their kin to gather. It must have a focal point for speakers and clear sight lines to that point. And, of course, the area will show the marks of many feet, man to wolf and in-between.

This is where moots are held and where challenges are decided in accordance with ancient tradition. Dancing and music are common, as are stories told by wizened tale-spinners or acted out by eager young cubs. When the caern's guardians must leap to its defense, this is where they gather to hear their orders.

Some tribes build grand structures for their assemblages, feasting halls or lord's courts, with great timbers or pillars of stone and roofs that keep out the wind and snow. This is uncommon, however. A roof overhead blocks out the

night sky, after all, and most Garou prefer to gather under Luna's light.

Heart of the Caern

The heart of the caern is the place where the physical world and the spirit world touch, a reminder of what was lost when the worlds were sundered. As painful as that reminder might be, the Garou welcome the gift. The heart of the caern is where rites to summon and appease spirits take place and where the totem of the caern is honored. A werewolf need exercise no effort to reach into the Umbra from the heart of the caern — he simply wills it, and he is there. When the moon is full and chanting and smoke fills the air, it might even be necessary for him to consciously keep his feet in the physical realm. Kin who wander too near the caern's heart at such times might stray into the Umbra and be lost.

The type of caern and the caern's totem exert their strongest influence over this area. Those at the center of a caern of Visions might experience walking dreams, while even the most impetuous Ragabash considers his words carefully at a Wisdom caern's heart. Any structures in this place must suit the totem or risk its displeasure. Often there is little more complex than an altar or cleared ring of earth in which to place offerings, while decorations the totem finds pleasing festoon poles or nearby trees.

Other Areas

Other structures or places within a caern might be present, depending on the local Garou.

The Graves of the Hallowed Heroes take the form of stone cairns or earthen mounds raised to the fallen, or even simple glyphs carved in rocks for those who have passed. Other caerns might not maintain graves at all, preferring to enshrine their fallen heroes only in song.

Shrines to spirits other than the caern's totem can be found in some caerns, usually built by packs to honor their totem. Some Garou who feel a particular closeness to their tribal totem or another spirit altogether might set up shrines as well. These areas are usually small, but they are more accessible



than the caern's heart, and they are ideal for meditation, quiet ritual and instruction.

Living areas are common, whether in villages of Kinfolk spread around the bawn or closer to the heart of the caern. Accommodations for visitors are also usually provided, though they vary greatly in quality. Visitors to a caern held by the Warders might find themselves in a cozy inn tended by Kinfolk, while those staying with the Red Talons get a lean-to or a rock overhang (at best).

Moon Bridges

The silvery Umbral paths called moon bridges are not always available. Before a bridge can be opened by a simple rite or Gift, the hearts of the two caerns must be connected by powerful rituals conducted with mutual agreement (see the Rite of the Opened Bridge, p. 147). The anchor for this ritual is a pathstone, a small round gem marked with a wolf's paw, formed from crystallized moonlight and found only in the Umbra. Acquiring a pathstone is a quest commonly assigned to young werewolves who wish to prove their worth to their elders. Cubs are always admonished that stealing a pathstone from another caern brings great dishonor upon the thief, but it still happens occasionally.

Finding a pathstone in the vastness of the Umbra is often easier than reaching an agreement between the Garou of two caerns. Practically no one will establish a moon bridge with the Fenrir but their own tribemates. The stories of Fenris's Get marching into the midst of an unprepared caern over a moon bridge established in friendship — true or not — have been repeated too many times. The Silver Fangs have a similarly acquisitive reputation, but it is more difficult to turn away the diplomatic phrasing of a Silver Fang request. Most caerns have at least one moon bridge to a staunch ally, perhaps the caern that sponsored the building of the new one, or a link to another caern dominated by the same tribe. The few caerns populated by several tribes of Garou are likely to have several pathstones active at their heart, since it is very likely that a bridge to each group's tribe was negotiated before the caern was ever built. All of the long travel and careful words are worthwhile in the end, though. A caern that is adrift without even a single moon bridge might simply disappear one night, and the Garou who lived there with it, with no one to howl songs of remembrance.

The most sacred home of each tribe faces an additional dilemma — each moon bridge is a risk.

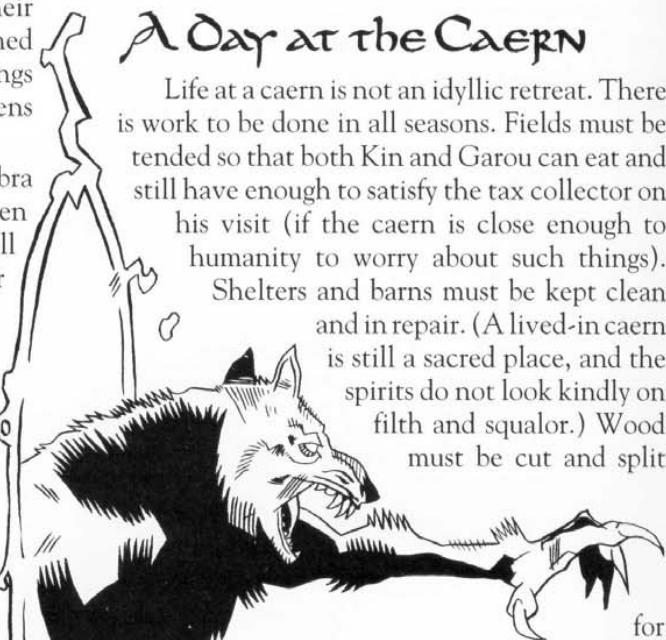
Every Fianna caern hungers after the honor of a link to Silver Tara, but if the caern is weak and it falls to the enemy, the heart of Tara is endangered. For safety's sake, some powerful caerns accept no moon bridges, establishing the links instead to a smaller nearby caern. They gain in safety, but they lose in speed — all news travels only as quickly as wolf paws can run. Others require tests and challenges of worthiness before agreeing to establish a moon bridge, while some simply require that the pathstone at each linked caern be guarded by a spirit whose sole duty is to destroy the gem before it can be used by an invader.

A caern known to maintain moon bridges will very likely have a large number of traveling packs petitioning to use the bridges to shorten their journeys. It is typically required that a chiminage gift be made in honor of the caern and its totem before such a service is rendered. A well-placed caern with a number of meticulously maintained bridges might become quite well off, in Garou terms, by allowing others to make use of their resources.

A Day at the Caern

Life at a caern is not an idyllic retreat. There is work to be done in all seasons. Fields must be tended so that both Kin and Garou can eat and still have enough to satisfy the tax collector on his visit (if the caern is close enough to humanity to worry about such things).

Shelters and barns must be kept clean and in repair. (A lived-in caern is still a sacred place, and the spirits do not look kindly on filth and squalor.) Wood must be cut and split



for
cooking

and for winter warmth. And in addition to all of these daily rituals of survival, the Garou must also be prepared to defend their caerns against fell Wyrn creatures and sometimes even their own kind.

The spiritual health of the caern also requires constant tending. Good relations with the spirits in the local Umbra are vital to the caern's survival. Those spirits might be called upon to defend the caern in the case of a direct assault, but more importantly, spirits who are

friendly to the caern report the building of enemy forces or a subtle corruption of their own accord. The werewolves must also stay on the good side of the spirit world if they wish to advance in Garou society. It is the denizens of the Umbra who acknowledge and validate a Garou's renown and who teach the Gifts appropriate to a werewolf's rank and station.

The heart of a caern is often a busy place in both worlds. Novices practicing their meditation will be sorely tested as spirits flicker and soar along currents of energy on one side of the thin curtain of the Gauntlet, while cubs run to fetch ritual implements and ritemasters dance and chant on the other. A werewolf must prove her talent and skill to the elder Theurges before she will be allowed to conduct rites at the caern's heart. The risks involved — to the caern and to the inept leader of the rite — are too great.

Most importantly, the Garou at a caern must contribute their own spiritual energy to maintain the bonds between themselves and the totem, and those between the totem and the caern. This donation is commonly made during the revel that follows the monthly moot, when an Engling is hunted with great ceremony and sacrificed for its gift of Gnosis. A werewolf may give of himself whenever he feels moved to give, however,

channeling his energies to the caern through song, drumming or some other artistic endeavor.

What are the rewards for this constant toil? The least of the rewards is the honor that comes to a Garou who tends a caern. Garou without a caern to call home, *anruth*, are looked on with suspicion unless the caerns they once hailed from, or those they lately visited, speak well of them. The greatest reward is the power of the caern itself — pure Gaian energy transformed by the nature of the caern and channeled through the totem. This power is accessed using the Rite of the Opened Caern (see p. 146). As great as the Mother's bounty is, there are limits to the power that can be drawn through a caern. The caern can be opened once between one moonrise and the next without risk; pulling more energy through the caern each night risks damage to its spiritual structure. The risks are greater for small caerns than for large, powerful ones, but even so, caerns are not tapped repeatedly except in times of great danger — especially not in the darkness of a moonless night. In the cautionary tales related from mentor to young Theurge, the best result is that the caern simply closes itself and must regain its energy. The worst result is a caern that is permanently lessened after a night of wild battles — or worse, because of the ineptitude of a Master of the Rite.

CAERN TYPES

Type	Power**	Spirits Encountered***
All	Open Moon Bridge†	
City	Crafts	Horse, Dog, Cockroach
Enigmas	Enigmas	Illusion, Shadow, Chimerling
Gnosis	Gnosis points	Engling, Ghost
Healing	health levels	Peace, Calm, Water elemental
Leadership	Leadership, Intimidation	War, Raptor
Rage	Rage	War, Pain
Stamina	soak dice	Protection, Guardian, Turtle
Strength	Strength	War, Bull
Visions	oracular visions	Bird, Snake
Will	Willpower	Ancestor, earth elemental
Wisdom	Rituals, Expression	Owl, Ancestor
Wyld	anything	Wyldling

**Success at the Rite of the Opened Caern (p. 146) allows the ritualist to distribute the caern's level in points/ levels/ dice among the rite's participants.

***These are types of spirits that are drawn to caerns of that type. They might not always be present, nor will they be the only types of spirits nearby. The denizens of the spirit world come and go at the Storyteller's discretion.

†Only if the two caerns in question have completed a Rite of the Opened Bridge successfully (see p. 147).

Caern Mechanics

Caerns have ratings from 1 to 5. This rating measures the potency of the powers and effects that can be invoked there, and it indicates how highly regarded the site is by spirits. Therefore, a Level-One caern of Healing might refresh the weary and heal minor wounds, while a Level Five caern could cure leprosy and heal the most grievous injuries (possibly even coaxing the soul back into a recently slain body). The more powerful the caern is, the lower the Gauntlet is at its heart.

Caern Level Gauntlet Moon Bridge Distances*

1	4	1,000 miles
2	4	2,000 miles
3	3	3,000 miles
4	3	4,000 miles
5	2	5,000 miles

*The distance that a moon bridge can traverse depends on the rating of the caern where the bridge is opened (not the rating of the destination). If the moon bridge is not opened at a caern (for example, a bridge created by a Lune or other spirit), its maximum distance is 1,000 miles.

A caern can be opened once a day (from one moonrise to the next) without risking any interruption in the flow of energy. If the caern is opened a second time during the same day, the Storyteller should roll the caern's rating in dice (difficulty 6). One success is sufficient. If the roll fails, the energy of the caern falters, disrupting the rite and rendering the caern unable to be opened until the next moonrise. Each successive opening of the caern during the same day raises the difficulty on the roll by one. If the roll is a botch, the Storyteller should immediately roll the caern's rating against a variable difficulty set by the phase of the moon (full 3, gibbous 4, half 5, crescent 6, no moon 7). The ritemaster can spend her own Gnosis points to add dice to this roll on a one-for-one basis. If this roll fails, the caern loses a rating point. Also, should a Master of the Rite botch on a Rituals roll while attempting to access a caern that has already been tapped that night, the caern must immediately test for a loss of rating, and the Master of the Rite may not contribute his Gnosis to the test.

The Sept

The Garou who gather around a caern form a community called a sept. Like each caern, every sept is different. A long-standing sept has traditions all its own and great legends of those werewolves who lived

and died in the defense of the caern. A newly formed sept takes pride in forging its own traditions, and it sends questing those who would be heroes to another generation of Garou.

Most septs are composed primarily of Garou from a single tribe, with a small representation of werewolves from other tribes who are allowed to stay on as long as they don't make political waves. These old-fashioned septs are the rule at caerns near tribal homelands. The Black Furies would not dream of allowing a significant number of any other tribe (or any male Garou) to join a sept in Greece, nor will the Shadow Lords allow themselves to become a minority in a Carpathian caern. Newer septs are more likely to combine the resources of two or three tribes in the great endeavor of caern building. It is expected then that those tribes will share duties in the sept that grows around the new caern. These multi-tribal septs are still considered experimental by the elders of venerable caerns. After several more generations of Garou have lived and died together in these places, perhaps then they will leaven their disapproval — if those motley caerns are still standing. The Sun's Glory sept is considered an exception to the rule by all but the most stubborn traditionalists, but this unusual forbearance can be attributed to the exceptional charisma of the sept's leader.

Sept Positions

Every sept has a few positions that must be filled for the good of the caern, whether the positions are filled by appointment or by a Garou simply stepping up to see that the necessary work is done.

The sept leader delegates tasks to the sept's packs and looks after the caern's physical resources. He is responsible for knowing what transpires in the protectorate (the land that the sept claims as its territory), and for deciding the terms of interaction with human societies and other septs.

The caern Marshall has the final word in the defense of the caern. She arranges the patrols of the bawn by individuals and packs appointed as guardians, and she is responsible for maintaining the caern's physical defenses. The guardians are werewolves charged with protecting the caern from invaders. They patrol the areas around the caern, referred to as the bawn. Other members of the sept join them from time to time in their patrols. They warn the sept of any visitors.

The caern's spiritual defenses are the province of the Master of the Rite. All rituals that take place at the caern's heart require his approval, and any ritual that goes awry anywhere in the caern will earn his wrath.

These three leaders all consult with a council of elders. Even if the council is not appointed or recognized, the Garou are inclined to defer to their elders, who are seldom quiet with their advice in return. A wise sept makes comfortable accommodations available for these Garou who have seen many seasons, and it grows strong from their participation in the life of the caern.

The Gatekeeper is under the authority of all three leaders and often under the eye of the elders as well. This position is responsible for negotiating and collecting appropriate chiminage from visitors and those who wish to use the caern's moon bridges — a busy job at a well-traveled caern. The Gatekeeper is the first Garou visitors arriving by moon bridge will likely encounter, making her perception and judgment vital to the caern's security. As if all that were not enough, the Gatekeeper is also tasked with maintaining the caern's moon bridges, and often even with finding the pathstones vital to opening new moon bridges — a job most Gatekeepers quickly delegate to eager, young Garou.

The Wurm Foe is a the sept's fiercest warrior — not necessarily the most skilled, but certainly the most eager. She leads the sept in the revels that follow moots, which are vitally important to the spiritual renewal of the caern. She also acts as the sept leader's second-in-command in matters requiring aggressive action against the Wurm's minions.

The sept's Talesinger is charged with maintaining the reputation of the caern by creating and performing tales or songs of the great deeds done by the hands of the sept's heroes. He is also responsible for passing the history of the Garou to the young, both joyous epics of victory and bloody, cautionary tragedies of defeat.

A Master of the Challenge is necessary at larger or particularly fractious septs. She is responsible for maintaining the assembly area where challenges take place, and for serving as a judge for those challenges that require one. Combatants who refuse to accept an honorable surrender can expect to face her wrath.

Spirits

The Umbra is filled with creatures made not of flesh and blood but raw ephemera, the stuff of souls. Normally, these spirits are closely related to beings in the physical realm, but such is not always the case. Plants, places and ideas all have spiritual forms, and there are some unique spirits whose descriptions are

difficult due to the limitations of language and the rational mind.

Although all spirits have some form of sentience, they lack a certain amount of free will in any real sense. Their actions are governed by their essential natures, making certain actions incredibly difficult or totally foreign. Without strong coercion from a third party, a fox-spirit would never charge a group of mounted hunters, nor would a fire elemental resist the urge to spread across a dry field.

The spirit world has a clear hierarchy, similar to the systems of power in medieval Europe. The greatest spirits create or control lesser spirits, which control still lesser spirits in turn. Greater spirits are considered patrons of the lesser, just as feudal lords serve as protectors to their serfs and vassals. Though most spirits appear to have patrons, the Garou suspect that certain rogue spirits exist beyond this rigid power structure.

In werewolf theology, Gaia exists above all other spirits. Below her is the Triat: the Wyld, the Weaver and the Wurm. Below the Triat are the Celestines, who are akin to gods. Below the Celestines are the Incarnae: the lords and kings of the spirit world. Their servants, the Jagglings and Gafflings, are much like knights and vassals, subject to the whims of greater powers.

Gaia

The Litany teaches that all things are of Gaia. Sitting atop the hierarchy of spirits, she encompasses the Earth and all living things in the Realm and the Umbra (though some refute the idea that evil beings are truly a part of her). She loves all of her creations, regardless of their choices in life or their good or evil actions. Gaia's love is unconditional and limitless.

The cycle of life is central to Gaia, as life and death are simply different states of existence in the cosmological cycle. Anything that disturbs the balance of nature weakens and degrades her. The conflict between the Weaver and the Wurm inflicts much violence upon Gaia, and the werewolves, as her champions, fight against these disruptive forces in an attempt to restore balance.

The Triat

While Gaia views everything within Creation with an all-encompassing love, the mysterious forces of the Triat have more focused agendas. The Wyld, the Weaver and the Wurm shape and define the world through constant interaction and struggle. Unlike Gaia, these forces of nature have no compassion and

few recognizable feelings. Instead, they are raw power given form, each pushing and pulling against the other two, struggling to assert their will throughout the universe.

The Wyld

Put simply, the Wyld is creation in its most raw and uncontrolled form. The embodiment of pure change, it is not so much total chaos as it is the constant and dynamic transformation of matter and energy. Every living thing, at some level, has a spark of this infinite mutability, this potential for growth, evolution and change. No Theurge or shaman has been able to capture or define that spark, but Gaia could not exist without it.

Though the Wyld is powerful, it needs the Weaver to give its creations permanence. Left alone, each of the Wyld's myriad forms would fold back upon itself, only to reemerge as something new and different. Having all forms at all times is to have no form at all, and having no bounds is to have no definition. As such, the Wyld is the least personified of the Triat, and the most unfathomable. The Wyrms are also essential to the Wyld, destroying select parts of the Weaver's pattern and returning that matter to the Wyld.

The Wyld is strong during these times, but new threats loom large on the horizon. The expansion of cities and the rise of the Church have brought order to the people, serving to curtail Wyld energy in many places of Europe. Aside from the Red Talons, the Garou choose not to see this trend, focusing more on the destruction and decay of the Wyrms than the encroachment of the Weaver. For the time being, the Wyld is still marginally the strongest member of the Triat.

The Weaver

Out of the chaos of the Wyld, the Weaver brought ordered growth. She chose certain sections from the swirling maelstrom of creation and gave them definition and form. Randomness gave way to order as the Weaver spun the first strands of what would become the Pattern Web, upon which all growth and progress rests.

The Weaver gave meaning to the creations of the Wyld, establishing order and structure, permanence and stability. In the Pattern Web, every creation had its place, and each new creation built upon that which came before. The Weaver took the potential and possibility of the Wyld and turned them into progress and growth. The Wyrms then pruned this web and kept it in check, breaking down the order to return matter and energy to the Wyld. According to the Garou, this balance of creation, growth and

destruction is the true cosmological cycle, which was shattered when the Weaver gained consciousness.

No one can be sure exactly what happened to destroy the balance, save perhaps the members of the Triat themselves. Some say that the Weaver tried to pattern all of the Wyld into structured existence, causing an explosion of creation that drove the Weaver mad. Looking upon her Pattern Web, she saw only chaos and disorder, which caused her to redouble her efforts to bring permanence to all things. The Wyrms, unable to keep up with this unchecked growth, became ensnared in the web of creation. Theorists say it resides there still, destroying creation from the inside in its attempt to regain its freedom.

Others find darker intentions in the Weaver, attributing to her a desire for power and a need to control the Triat. These Garou say that the Weaver wanted to make reason and progress the foundation of the world, to use the Wyld and the Wyrms as tools for her own agenda. The Wyrms did not fit in her ordered view of the world, as it destroyed according to its own rules and whims, so the Weaver ensnared the Wyrms, forcing its destruction to abide by the rules of the Pattern Web. Even though the Weaver exacts a certain measure of control on the Wyrms, it is too powerful for her, still managing to destroy blindly according to a pattern other than hers. This limits the Weaver's power, which helps to restore cosmological balance, but this eternal conflict only serves to injure Gaia further.

Still other Garou, particularly the Warders of Men, claim that the Wyrms are the source of the trouble, manipulating the Weaver to fit its own schemes. The Wyrms attempted to destroy the Wyld altogether, to extinguish the spark of creation. With nothing more being created, the Wyrms would emerge victorious, having destroyed all things. The Wyrms tried to use the Weaver to ensnare and weaken the Wyld, so as to more easily destroy it. But the Weaver could not bind all of infinity. Instead, she spun herself into madness, ensnaring the Wyrms in the process. The Warders insist that the Weaver was simply defending herself and that she alone holds the key to stopping the Wyrms.

Most theorists agree that the Weaver was the first of the Triat to gain intelligence. Whether it was the cause or the product of her madness is unknown.

The Wyrms

The Wyrms are the final member of the Triat. Its purpose was once to restore balance, to ensure that neither the Weaver nor the Wyld became the dominant force in the Universe, consuming all that was

not in harmony between chaos and order, and maintaining the balance of the cosmological cycle. In essence, it was the force of destruction that ultimately led to rebirth.

When the Wyrms were snared in the Pattern Web, it became bound by the limits of the Weaver's structured reality. No longer consuming *from* the world to keep balance, it began to consume the very world to sate its own unquenchable need for destruction. This shift in purpose fractured the Wyrms into three separate aspects, causing it to lose its focus and the ability to coordinate its actions. As a result, the Wyrms could no longer maintain harmony. The Garou name these three aspects Beast-of-War, Eater-of-Souls and the Defiler Wyrms. This madness prevents the Wyrms from being trapped by the Weaver completely, but the lack of coordination and unified purpose destroys the balance that is so crucial to the cosmological cycle.

This fracturing of the Wyrms' psyche gives even its base desires enough power to take on forms of their own, birthing the Urge Wyrms of Hate, Lust, Fear and other corrupting forces. This makes the Wyrms more hydra than serpent, with each head seeking to find and corrupt weak souls, winning their allegiance through lies and deceit. The Church, in an effort to reconcile these corrupting forces of the world to their own dogmatic view, has recognized these evils and labeled them. The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are the most notable attempts, but the Church lacks the knowledge to understand the true nature of the Wyrms.

The werewolves seek out manifestations of the Wyrms, destroying them whenever possible to protect Gaia. Beast-of-War and Eater-of-Souls are the more obvious aspects, and they have drawn the most attention from the



Garou. Meanwhile, the Defiler Wyrms use that distraction to gain a firm footing in the cities and hearts of man. The subtlety of a single lord or king falling to the Defiler Wyrms often goes unnoticed when a hellish minion of Beast-of-War stalks the nearby forests. While the werewolves protect the wild places against destruction, the Defiler Wyrms slowly insinuate themselves into the cities, planting seeds of corruption that will not blossom until the Industrial Revolution.

Celestines

Celestines are just beneath the Triat in the hierarchy of spirits. The most notable Celestines are Luna, the spirit of the moon, and Helios, the spirit of the sun. Other Celestines include gods worshipped by early civilizations and avatars of the Triat. Most Garou know little of the Celestines, other than the fact that they are highly intelligent and powerful. In their home realms, these beings are nigh infinite in power and awareness.

A Celestine's true form is beyond the limits of the mortal mind. When one chooses to appear, it uses an avatar that is easy to comprehend and interact with. To create this avatar, the Celestine wills itself to appear in a more limited, tangible form. For example, the Celestine of the ocean might appear to a Garou as a dolphin or whale. Because of its nigh-infinite power, a Celestine can appear in countless forms at once, all over the world.

Luna and Helios are particularly important during the Dark Medieval. Insanity, or "lunacy," is often attributed to the moon's influence, and the movement of the tides is of great importance to coastal populations. Superstitions abound concerning full moons, new moons, blood moons and other lunar phenomena. Also, lunar and solar eclipses are seen as portents of doom, causing anxiety, fear and, in some cases, hysteria. Science has not yet quantified the sun and moon, and their influence is still strongly felt in many areas.

Incarnae

The Celestines act as patrons to the Incarnae spirits one level further down the spiritual hierarchy. These powerful spirits have their own goals and abilities separate from the Celestines, though they often serve as consorts and warriors for their patrons. Some have Domains of their own, but most dwell in the realms of the Celestines, having particular areas of influence within a more powerful spirit's Domain. Incarnae often aspire to become Celestines in their

own right, and they are independent enough to survive if their patrons are destroyed or devoured.

Totem spirits are Incarnae with close ties to the Garou, and most are powerful servants of Gaia. They guide tribes and septs of werewolves, and they send avatars to serve as pack totems. Incarnae avatars are roughly equivalent to Jagglings in form and power.

Incarnae are considerably less powerful than Celestines, but they are still incredibly vast (often directing many avatars at once). Werewolves communicate with them through avatars only, though Theurges tell of legendary seers who gained almost cosmic understanding after encountering an Incarna in its true form deep in the Umbra.

Jagglings

Beneath the Incarnae in the hierarchy, Jagglings are the most powerful spirits that werewolves encounter with any frequency, and the most dangerous spirits the Garou encounter in the Umbra. While most Jagglings serve an Incarna, there are those that obey Celestines directly. In either case, Jagglings are exceedingly loyal, as they are formed out of the spiritual essence of their patron. Some are able to create Gafflings in much the same way their patrons created them, and a few even develop a level of free will. Many Jagglings teach Gifts to the Garou, and others, such as Englings (the Jagglings of Gaia), provide entire septs with Gnosis.

Gafflings

At the bottom of the hierarchy, Gafflings are the most common spirits that the Garou encounter. These spirits are semi-sentient servants of Jagglings and completely loyal to their masters, remaining in constant communication. Often they are used to carry messages through the Umbra, and their patrons sometimes assume total control over them, much like greater spirits use avatars. Lesser spirits welcome this dominance, since many of them do not feel truly complete without direct control by their masters. Fully intelligent Gafflings are rare and dangerous, serving more powerful and mysterious patrons, such as Celestines. Gafflings can teach Gifts to Garou, and they are commonly used to empower fetishes.

Spirit Traits

As non-physical beings, spirits do not have traits such as Strength, Stamina or Dexterity, nor do they have Abilities. Instead, they have three traits —

Rage, Gnosis and Willpower — that take the place of Attributes and Abilities. These traits function for spirits in the same ways they do for demons (see **Dark Ages: Vampire**, pp. 292-293).

The fourth spiritual trait, Essence, is normally the sum of the spirit's other three traits, although the Storyteller can adjust this trait to simulate more or less powerful spirits at her discretion. Aside from being used to power Charms, spirits also lose Essence as they take damage. When a spirit loses all of its Essence, it fades slowly into the Umbra and slips into a state of slumber. It then recharges itself there before emerging elsewhere in the Umbra. Werewolves can bind spirits that have been stripped of their Essence into fetishes or harvest Gnosis from them. In the case of the latter, these spirits are brought to a permanent end. Spirits bound into fetishes, however, can be released at a later time — many times only when a fetish is destroyed.

Charms

Spirits have special powers called Charms that function much like Gifts. Charms generally last for one scene and require the expenditure of Essence if used in the physical world, though combat-oriented Charms last only one turn per use. These costs are listed along with each Charm. In the Umbra, these powers rarely require a spirit to spend Essence, drawing upon the ambient energy of the spirit world instead. Garou believe that every Charm has a corresponding Gift, which werewolves can learn. Spirits often enter into agreements with Garou, exchanging magical knowledge for favors or service. More Charms can be found in **Dark Ages: Vampire**, p. 293.

Common Charms

These are Charms that all spirits possess, unless they have been weakened or punished by their patrons.

- **Airt Sense:** Most spirits have a natural sense of direction in the spirit world and are able to travel about the airts (or trails) of the Umbra without any difficulty (though even spirits have some margin for error). The Storyteller rolls Gnosis for a spirit to locate a particular place or individual in the Umbra. A botch could lead the spirit — and any who trusts its guidance — into a harsh and unforgiving realm. **Essence Cost:** None (only possible in the Umbra)

- **Materialize:** This Charm allows a spirit to take physical form on Earth. The spirit must have a Gnosis score equal to or greater than the local Gauntlet rating to cross over from the Umbra, and it appears

just as it does in the spirit realm. Beyond that, this Charm functions as described on page 292 of **Dark Ages: Vampire**. **Essence Cost:** 1

- **Realm Sense:** Many spirits are tied to one type of earthly Domain, such as a forest, stream or mountain. This Charm allows them to monitor all that takes place within their sacred lands both in the Umbra and on Earth, though it still requires a Gnosis roll for specific perceptions. Nature spirits mostly possess this Charm, but any spirit tied to a particular Domain will possess this ability. **Essence Cost:** 1

- **Re-form:** Spirits can dissolve their forms and reassemble themselves far away in their home Domains. It takes a spirit a full turn to try to re-form, but it can transport itself great distances, escaping danger if need be. The Storyteller must roll a spirit's Gnosis successfully for this Charm to succeed. **Essence Cost:** 1

Specialty Charms

Many spirits have special Charms that are less commonly known. These abilities sometimes stem from their underlying nature, such as wolf- or lion-spirits possessing Tracking. Other special Charms are taught to lesser spirits by their patrons, as Lunes have been taught Open Moon Bridge by their patron Celestine, Luna. These Charms work only in the Umbra unless the spirit has materialized, unless otherwise stated.

Some Charms are listed as being associated with various members of the Triad. This means that typically only spirit servants of that Celestine have access to those Charms. Such spirits are discussed in Chapter Six, and several examples are given in the Appendix.

- **Armor:** Some spirits are more resilient than others, and this Charm grants them an extra measure of protection. By spending two points of Essence, a spirit gains an additional soak pool equal to its Gnosis for the remainder of the scene. **Essence Cost:** 2

- **Blast:** This Charm directs the full force of a spirit's Rage at a specified target from a distance, dealing damage equal to the spirit's Rage score in aggravated damage (no roll to hit is required). Depending on the spirit, this Charm takes many forms. For example, a woodland spirit might send a burst of pine needles, while an arctic spirit might use shards of ice. This Charm is very taxing on the spirit. **Essence Cost:** Umbra 2, Realm 4 (only when materialized)

- **Blighted Touch:** By simply touching a target, the Bane changes the very nature of victim's personality. The spirit makes a normal attack roll to see if it is successful in touching the victim. On a successful roll, the target's player must immediately roll Will-

power (difficulty 7). If this roll fails, all the character's negative characteristics assume control over him for the duration of a few hours. A lusty character, for example, can think of nothing but slaking his lust, and he must spend a point of Willpower to focus on anything else. A botch on the Willpower roll makes the personality blight permanent. (This is a Wyrms Charm.) **Essence Cost:** 2

- **Break Reality:** With a successful Gnosis roll, the spirit has the power to disrupt the reality of a substance and modify its Umbral appearance thus. There is no set difficulty to this Charm — the Storyteller sets the number after considering the creativity and usefulness involved in the change. The number of successes on the roll determines to what effect the change was successful. A failure on the Gnosis roll causes the loss of an additional Essence point, while a botch dissipates the spirit, destroying it if it does not possess the Re-form Charm. (This is a Wyld Charm.) **Essence Cost:** 5

- **Calcify:** The spirit binds a target into the Pattern Web. The Storyteller rolls the spirit's Willpower against the target's Rage. Each success on the roll subtracts one dot from all the target's Physical Attributes (or Essence, if the target is a spirit). Once the Essence or all of the Attributes reach zero, the target is trapped in the Pattern Web until it is freed by someone else. (This is a Weaver Charm.) **Essence Cost:** 2/use

- **Cleanse the Blight:** This Charm is similar to the Garou Rite of Cleansing, as it purges spiritual corruption in the spirit's vicinity. The Storyteller rolls the spirit's Gnosis at a difficulty determined by the strength of the Blight. Most spirits have limits to this Charm — forest spirits only being able to cleanse wooded areas, for example. **Essence Cost:** 3

- **Closed Passage:** This Charm raises the Gauntlet in a given area by one. If several spirits cooperate, they can raise the Gauntlet by as much as three. The rating can never surpass 10, though. In order for the Charm to be effective the spirit must remain in the area and concentrate on using the Charm (which lowers all of its other dice pools by two). (This is a Weaver Charm.) **Essence Cost:** 3

- **Corruption:** Page 293 of *Dark Ages: Vampire* details this Charm. Despite its description, however, spirits use this Charm even across the Gauntlet. (This is a Wyrms Charm.) **Essence Cost:** 1

- **Create Fires:** A spirit with this Charm can create fires on a successful Gnosis roll, at varying levels of difficulty (3 for small fires to 9 for a conflagration). These flames require fuel to burn for longer than a single turn. **Essence Cost:** 2

- **Create Wind:** The spirit is able to create gusts of wind. The Storyteller rolls the spirit's Gnosis, with the difficulty ranging from 2 for a breeze to 9 for a tornado. **Essence Cost:** 2

- **Disorient:** This Charm allows a spirit to completely alter landmarks and directions with a successful Gnosis roll (difficulty 6 or the Gauntlet rating, whichever is higher). (This is a Wyld Charm.) **Essence Cost:** 1

- **Drain Gnosis:** By stretching out its senses into the target's soul through mystical means, the spirit is able to steal Gnosis. The spirit makes a resisted Rage roll where the difficulty is the target's Gnosis rating. Each net success gives the spirit one point of Essence from the loser. Should the victim lack Gnosis, he suffers aggravated damage equal to the winning successes. (This is a Weaver or Wyrms Charm.) **Essence Cost:** 1

- **Healing:** Spirits can use this Charm to heal physical beings, such as werewolves. A spirit can heal up to its Gnosis in health levels of damage. So, a spirit with six Gnosis can restore six health levels. The Storyteller rolls the spirit's Gnosis against a difficulty of 6 for regular damage and 8 for aggravated damage. This Charm can be used only once per scene per target. **Essence Cost:** 2

- **Open Moon Bridge:** This Charm creates a moon bridge to a desired location, regardless of whether a caern is present. A moon bridge can extend to a maximum of 1,000 miles. This transportation is especially important in the Dark Medieval, as transcontinental journeys can take months otherwise. **Essence Cost:** 3

- **Shapeshift:** A spirit using this Charm can take the form of anything it desires. This is limited to form and shape only, for the spirit does not gain any of the powers or abilities of its new body. If the chosen form is that of a specific individual, the Storyteller must roll the spirit's Willpower to determine the success of this transformation. **Essence Cost:** 2

- **Solidify Reality:** Weaver-spirits require this Charm to spin the Pattern Web and enforce the Weaver's rules and laws upon aspects of the Umbra. Each success on a Willpower roll makes objects and spirits more solid. The affected targets raise their Essence or effective health levels by one per success. This effect lasts for a full day, during which the Charm cannot be used again on the same target. (This is a Weaver Charm.) **Essence Cost:** 4

- **Swift Flight:** A spirit with this Charm can outdistance pursuers with hardly any effort, moving at triple its normal speed. Its maximum speed becomes $[60 + (\text{Willpower} \times 3)]$ yards per turn. **Essence Cost:** 1

• **Tracking:** A spirit using this Charm can track its target unerringly. Unless the spirit materializes or uses the Realm Sense Charm, it cannot track targets outside the Umbra. **Essence Cost:** 1

• **Uplift:** The spirit can lift a human-sized creature into the air with a successful Willpower roll. **Essence Cost:** 2

• **Umbraquake:** The spirit can cause the Umbra to forcefully shake and knock anyone standing to the ground. Everyone within a 10-foot radius suffers bashing damage from the spiritual impact equal to half the spirit's Rage roll, rounded up. **Essence Cost:** 2

Slumber

When a spirit's Essence is low, it begins to shimmer and fade, looking as though it is not fully there. To replenish their Essence, spirits enter a sort of hibernation called Slumber. Seeking out a secure spot in the Umbra, a spirit enters a deep sleep, recovering one point of Essence for every hour of inactivity.

This sleep renders the spirit completely defenseless, unable to react to attack or any outside stimuli. Spirits that are bound into fetishes enter a state of Slumber and do not fully awaken until they are released. Those already in this hibernation state can be easily bound into fetishes, regardless of their willingness. A newly created fetish cannot be activated until its bound spirit has regained its Essence (which can take a long time for powerful spirits).

Movement

Spirits fly or float through the Umbra, traveling a maximum distance of (20 + Willpower) yards per turn in normal conditions. Umbral Storms or other difficulties reduce this speed at the Storyteller's discretion. Spatial relationships in the Umbra differ from those of the physical world, however, and distances can become distorted at times. Of course, the Storyteller is free to manipulate speeds and distances when running stories in the Umbra, though the Penumbral zone directly surrounding physical reality does maintain distances analogous to those in the real world, where spatial relationships are more stable.

Communication

Spirits communicate not through words or language, but instead through a sharing of thoughts and feelings, of their deeper intent. Worthy Garou are taught this form of communication, in the form of the Gift: Spirit Speech. Some speculate that this ancient

tongue formed at the beginning of creation, before the Weaver spun words into the Pattern Web.

Spirits allied to the Garou, such as a tribal totem's Jagglings or Gafflings, are also able to speak the Garou tongue. Many spirits learn human languages through close contact with civilization or specific cultures. For example, Stag has no problem speaking Gaelic or Welsh, and Pegasus is fluent in Greek. Similarly, Cockroach and Rat are proficient in a wide range of languages, having servants throughout the cities of Europe. Some spirits, however, refuse to speak the languages of physical creatures, finding them crude and imprecise.

Unless a spirit chooses to speak in a language used by physical creatures, Garou must have the proper Gift in order to communicate. Gifts that allow control over or interaction with spirits do not require the user to understand spirit speech or the spirit to understand the user.

Fetishes

Fetishes are sacred items of power that are created by binding a spirit into an appropriately prepared vessel. The owner of a fetish can invoke the power of its bound spirit to perform a specific task, but this task depends greatly on the nature of the spirit within. For example, a spirit of healing would never willingly enter a weapon, nor would a spirit of war inhabit a pair of sandals. The great variety of spirits in the Umbra, however, allows for fetishes of almost any type.

Werewolves treat fetishes with the utmost respect and protect these items against destruction and corruption. Such are the terms of the Pact, which binds a spirit to serve the Garou only so long as the Garou honors the spirit in return. Many are the tales of legendary warriors rescuing fetishes that fell into the clutches of the Wyrms, and mournful indeed are the songs lamenting the loss of these treasures to the darkness.

To create a fetish, a Garou must first find a spirit willing to be bound into an item, then perform the Rite of the Fetish (p. 150). Many types of vessels are used as fetishes, from jewelry to armor to clothing. Weapons are also commonly used from simple swords and spears to more elaborate silver klaives. Those who bind unwilling spirits often find their fetishes difficult to use as the spirit rebels against its confinement. These items are considered cursed by the Garou.

Before a fetish can be used, a character must first become attuned to the item by making a Gnosis roll. This attunement spiritually binds the

fetish to the Garou, allowing the wielder to carry the item into the Umbra and giving an instinctual understanding of the fetish's powers. The difficulty of this roll is the fetish's Gnosis rating, and it requires only a single success. If the player rolls no successes, the character cannot use the fetish until an accord has been made with the resident spirit. This act of contrition can be simple or elaborate at the Storyteller's discretion. Attunement effectively "dedicates" the fetish to a character, as though the Rite of Talisman Dedication had been performed upon it. Since they have their own Gnosis, however, attuned fetishes do not count against the maximum number of objects a werewolf can have dedicated at any one time.

Each time a character wishes to use a fetish's power, the player must make a Gnosis roll (difficulty of the fetish's Gnosis rating) to "activate" the power.

Alternatively, a Gnosis point can be spent to activate the fetish automatically.

Talens

Talens are simple fetishes. While they still contain spirits and require Gnosis to activate (but not to attune), they can be used only once before their bound spirits are released back into the Umbra. Talens are created with the Rite of Binding (see p. 149), and any being with Gnosis can use them.

A talen receives Gnosis equal to the bound spirit's Gnosis. For each success on a Rite of Binding roll, an additional talen of the same type can be created. Gafflings are most commonly bound into these simple fetishes, but greater spirits can make the creation of multiple talens easier. Use of a greater spirit adds an automatic two extra talens to the total number. Once created, a talen lasts until it is used.





Ara glanced back at the men flanking her.

She had never been good at talking her way out of trouble, especially where men were concerned. She probably should have skipped the village altogether, wandered in the nearby fields in wolf form and caught her dinner that way, but she hadn't been among humans in months. The last time she'd had a conversation in any human tongue had been in the Holy Empire, and it had turned out much the same way that this one seemed likely to.

As the men closed in, Ara began to recall *why* she had avoided people. They feared her, especially men, and she didn't have any desire to kill them all.

"Why are you wearing a sword?" The question came from behind her, and she unconsciously pulled at her cloak to cover it.

"I am a warrior," she answered. It brought a laugh, and Ara tried to ignore the Rage in her heart.

"A warrior? You look like a Moor." Ara scoffed quietly. She seriously doubted these men would know a Moor if one stood among them. "Do the Moors make their women fight for them?"

"They do not. And I am not a Moor." *Answer all questions honestly, except if doing so would break the Litany.*

One of men drew close. His breath smelled of garlic. "I'd like to hold your sword," he said into her ear. "I'm a warrior, too, you see."

"Sir, you may not," Ara replied evenly. "It is a part of me as much as my hand, my heart or my womanhood." The men laughed, but nervously. They sensed the beast inside her, which was rapidly rising to the surface. The whisper in her ear grew louder as the man leaned in.

"And suppose we took your womanhood as well? You are a long way from home, little wolf."



Ara nearly gasped, but kept her composure somehow. She delicately sniffed the air and was oddly gratified to learn how deeply entrenched the Wyrms were in this village. She reached for her sword, but the man whispered again. "Don't. I could gut you where you..." The whisper trailed off into a wet gurgle.

Ara Vengeance-by-Night calmly removed her sword from the man's stomach. "I am a warrior," she said, as he fell to his knees. Tiny, bloodied tendrils slithered from the wound in his stomach. Ara raised the sword over her head and called on the spirit bound to it. The blade glimmered with moonlight and she swung downward, cleanly severing the fomor's head. She turned to the townsmen. She sniffed again, but could detect no abatement of the taint in the town. The men backed away, all eyes on the bloodstained sword. "How did you let yourselves come to this? You're so far from the cities. You have your church, your fields, your festivals. How did *he* come to be?" She kicked the fomor's body.

The townsfolk trembled. It was clear they didn't know the answers to those questions.

Ara threw back her head and called upon her Rage, changing to the war form. She howled in fury and sprang toward the biggest knot of men.

She often avoided villages. How many like this had she missed?



CHAPTER SIX: THE ENEMY


“From him sprang all bad breeds, trolls and elves and monsters — likewise the giants who for a time strove with God.”

—*Beowulf*, trans. E. Talbot Donaldson

The noble Garou have many enemies. A good amount of their time and energy is spent fighting other werewolves over matters of territory and honor, but the other supernatural denizens of the Dark Medieval often run afoul of Gaia's defenders. This chapter discusses how these beings serve best as antagonists in *Dark Ages: Werewolf* chronicles, and details some of the other unclean beasts that skulk the land.

Vampires

Cainites and Garou oppose each other on so many levels that any real degree of common ground is impossible. While vampires seek to build human populations, werewolves often work to contain the cities. Vampires are undying parasites, while werewolves are very much alive. Both races see themselves as divine, but while vampires must take their



divinity (or lack thereof) on faith, the Garou *know* that they are blessed.

Therefore, the two races obviously fall into physical confrontation. This most often occurs with younger vampires, and such altercations are usually quick, bloody and deadly. After all, neonates tend to be the most direct of the vampires, whereas the elders' usual *modus operandi* is to work from the shadows. Yet, by virtue of their age and distance, the elders present the true challenge. Confrontations with elders are rarely physical, and Garou are often hard-pressed to deal with these cunning, often unreachable, adversaries.

The werewolves have few reasons to allow a Leech to exist, should they come across one. Furthermore, a Garou who is known to have had dealings with one of the despised vampires and *not* destroyed it is likely to be banished or killed for consorting with the enemy.

What the Garou Know

From the stories told around the moot fires, werewolves know that vampires are nearly immortal and possessed of powers of the mind that make them dangerous adversaries. They might describe a vampire as a pasty-faced, maggot-ridden nobleman who drives men to die for him with a glance, but never as a Ventrue skilled in Dominate. They know nothing of clans, Disciplines or generation. As far as their understanding goes, some vampires are stronger in body and others in mind, making them more difficult to defeat. If asked, the Garou might speculate that vampiric powers increase with age, training or devotion to the Wyrms. Few werewolves ask these questions, though. Most of their focus is on killing the vampires, not understanding them.

While the Garou are mostly ignorant about the Cainites' politics and history, they are familiar with the vampires' major weaknesses. The average cub knows that a vampire can be killed with claws, fire or sunlight. The average Theurge knows that the spirit world, with the possible exception of Banes and Wyrms spirits, is decidedly unfriendly to vampires. Some werewolves believe that running water, religious artifacts or silver are deadly to vampires, but of course, these are but legends. Regardless, the chances of a werewolf trying any of these methods are not very high, with the exception of silver. A few self-styled vampire-hunting packs insist that the use of silver weapons kills a vampire more surely than bare claws, but nothing supports this claim.

One question that does concern the Garou is how a mortal becomes a vampire. The Church has its own theories — one is that a person buried improperly will rise as a vampire. These theories vary by region and by the traditions of the land. A clever werewolf can use mortal belief to track down or learn about a vampire.

One near-universal supposition on the creation of new vampires is that the bite of a Leech in itself is enough to induce the change. This is not seen as a problem for Garou, whose blessings from Gaia protect them from such dangers, but it is a major issue in the case of Kinfolk. Many werewolves will slay Kinfolk who have been bitten by a vampire because they believe that the victim will become one of the walking dead as a result of the bite. One might imagine what they do to the vampire responsible in the name of vengeance.

Mages

Werewolves have infrequent dealings with mages, and what little they do know causes them to keep their distance. Most Galliards know a tale or two about mages, but none of them seem to fit together. The Fenrir tell tales of men and women cavorting around fires with runes carved into their flesh; the Shadow Lords speak of travelers who call to the heavens in strange tongues, bringing down the elements. It all adds up to a mystifying picture, and since the mages haven't shown themselves to be friends or enemies, they leave each other alone.

On the rare occasions that the two groups do interact, it is with extreme caution on both sides. The average mage is not tainted by the Weaver or Wyrms (with the exception of infernalists, who smell strongly of Wyrms-taint to sensitive Garou), so the werewolves have no reason to exterminate them. The average Garou does not interfere with mage business, so the mages have no reason to argue, either. They know next to nothing about each other, however, and this lack of knowledge breeds mistrust. The Garou see mages as unpredictable. The mages see Garou as ferocious. As a result, it is difficult for them to find a common ground.

Unfortunately, the one thing they do have in common is the one thing they tend to fight over. Mages, like the Garou, draw their power from the secret places of the earth. Like the Garou, they consider these places to be sacred and will protect them with their lives. Both the mages and the werewolves think that these places should be theirs and theirs alone, and they are more than willing to

fight for control of them. Sharing is not an option. Likewise, some mages can enter the Umbra. The Garou can only assume that they are there to plunder the spirit worlds of their energies and riches, and the werewolves will be damned before they allow that to happen. A mage who encounters a pack of werewolves in the Umbra had best come up with a very good explanation or an exceedingly quick escape route.

The Circle of Red

This sect of Wyrn-tainted mages requires special attention. Most of the membership of the Circle is made up of merchants and assassins. Very few can actually use magic. Those that can, however, are extremely dangerous.

The Theurges that have encountered the Circle of Red report that their sorcerers don't seem to have sold themselves to any recognizable face of the Wyrn. That they are tainted is beyond question, but the Circle itself doesn't know much about the spirit world. They know enough about the Garou to be dangerous, but their magic has a much more Christian bent — they seem to believe that they have sold their souls to the Christian Devil. Most werewolves scoff at the notion of the Adversary, of course, assuming that the Circle of Red is in fact in service to a powerful Umbrood who only resembles, or perhaps masquerades as, Satan.

Whatever the truth, the magic of the Circle of Red is nothing to laugh at. Red Mages can often summon up fire from nowhere, and many can warp natural animals into hideous beasts. Some can summon minor demons (or perhaps Banes), and most can conceal themselves from onlookers. The Gift: Sense Wyrn usually reveals them, though.

If you have access to **Dark Ages: Mage**, the magical style of the Circle of Red resembles a hybrid of the Order of Hermes and the Messianic Voices. It often involves dead matter and blood as foci, although fire is another common tool. If you do not have **Dark Ages: Mage**, assume that the Circle of Red makes use of powers similar to the Lure of Flames Thaumaturgy path as well as the Vicissitude and Obfuscate Disciplines.

The Inquisition

The Church is the most powerful mortal institution at this time. It has influence stretching beyond that of the greatest kings. The Church is solidly built on money and power, and few have the courage to disagree with any of its teachings in private, much less

in public. Members of the Church belong to a variety of orders, from pious and peaceful monks to the more militaristic orders from the Crusades. One of the newest offices is that of the Inquisition, a secretive group formed to seek out the heretics and monsters living among the faithful.

The Church's official stance on werewolves is that they human witches who have sold their souls for the gift of shapeshifting. (Needless to say, the Garou don't take kindly to that assessment.) Supernatural creatures of all kinds are targets, and if they are found, they are tortured and more than likely put to death as a means of "purification." In some cases, the Garou can use this practice to their advantage, because many city-dwelling vampires — who are otherwise inaccessible to werewolves — can sometimes meet defeat (or at least exposure) by the Inquisition.

Since the average inquisitor is mortal, one would think that the werewolves would not feel particularly threatened by them, but the Inquisition is much more dangerous than that. For one thing, the Inquisition is organized. Its high-ranking officials expect a report on every success and every failure. If an inquisitor turns out to be dead or harmed, they do not take this as a sign of defeat. Instead, they take it as a sign that they need to send a larger, more powerful cell of inquisitors next time. Also, inquisitors are usually braver and more mentally resilient than most humans. After all, they believe that they are the chosen of God, and if He protects them, what do they have to fear?

Not all inquisitors wield the power of God as a weapon, but even those without True Faith can be powerful adversaries, if they are shielded by holy relics and armed with prayers strong enough to tear an adversary apart at the seams. Generally, an inquisitor's powers reflect his upbringing. More militaristic inquisitors tend toward powers of courage and valor, whereas more studious inquisitors might gain wisdom or insight. A well-rounded cell of inquisitors would be more than a match for even an experienced pack of Garou.

Black Spiral Dancers

The Tribe of the Fallen has learned, and perhaps even excelled at, the subtle art of adaptation since its unholy conception so many years ago. Necessity is, after all, the mother of invention.

While their numbers continue to grow throughout Europe's continental mainland, the Black Spiral Dancers still suffer from a significant disadvantage of

numbers. The Wyrms is, however, a subtle force. While the Fianna beat their chests in the highlands of northern Scotland, howling cries of premature victory over the scattered remnants of what were once the White Howlers and the all but total decimation of their kin, the Dancers have simply relocated. Most of the progress that the Dancers have made throughout the Dark Medieval has been accomplished directly beneath Fianna and Fenrir snouts, far beneath the surface of the land the invader tribes stole... the land rightfully owned by the Wyrms and its legions. A series of termite-like tunnels, established through the ingenuity of the Black Spiral Dancers, the engineering of servitor Banes and the blessings of the Wyrms, connects Scotland to mainland Europe and Scandinavia. Exit points exist in the outer fjords of Norway and within some of the more isolated islands possessed by the Kingdom of Denmark. As effective as any moon bridge for the purpose of long-distance locomotion (if somewhat slower), these subterranean routes have been sealed behind the Dancers on their exodus. Throughout the duration of its journey across the North Sea, the Tribe of the Fallen has established a number of grotto hives and forged many an infernal alliance with forgotten and unknown creatures that have never felt the sun on their cold, pale flesh.

By 1230, the Dancers have established clawholds throughout much of central and Eastern Europe, thriving, in fact, on the war-torn, Euro-Ottoman line of demarcation where the effects of the ongoing Crusades have hit Europe the hardest. While the tribe has been largely unsuccessful in establishing any semblance of a metropolitan hive in any of the major city-states or fiefdoms that serve as the economic and social circulatory system of Medieval Europe, its spies and lackeys within the fortified walls of Paris, London, Genoa, Venice, Rome, Prague, Barcelona, Buda, Constantinople and Athens keep the Black Spiral Dancers informed of all happenings within human politics while spreading the vile corruption and stain of the Wyrms in their travels.

The Leper Kings

Believed to have infested Europe by way of India and China, leprosy is a chronic, mildly contagious disease characterized by ulcers of the skin, bone and viscera. As it advances, it leads to loss of sensation, paralysis, gangrene and horrific deformity. The grotesque, inhuman faces of lepers — victims who die slowly and numbly to the rotting away of their own flesh and bone as a result of their unfortunate contraction of the disease — are feared and despised by every class of



medieval society. In France alone, over 2,000 leper colonies dot the countryside. While some compassionate Christian clergy have reached out to the misbegotten and displaced "walking dead" — or "Lazarites" — the majority of the "unclean" huddle together in camps where they eke out an existence as best they can until the disease that inhabits their bodies and ravages their God-forsaken souls takes from its vessels the final tax of their lives. In the dispossessed Lazarites of Europe, the Black Spiral Dancers have found not only kindred spirits, but also a legion of potential Kinfolk. Driven from their homelands, despised by their own kind, hated for what they are as well as what they represent, and shunned under pain of death, thousands of lepers have raised lidless eyes and nose-less faces to the seeming benevolence of the men and women who have wandered fearlessly and without prejudice into their colonies and sanitariums across the European countryside. Able-bodied warriors, trappers and craftsmen, the Dancers' packs offer respite and a semblance of the human societies left behind by the Lazarites. The Black Spiral packs that have infiltrated leper colonies across the continent have found ready-made hives waiting for blasphemous dedication in the name of the Wyrms. Despair, the defilement of the human condition and a people all but completely devoid of hope fortify the spirituality of the obscene Incarna worshipped by the fallen tribe and give opportunities for the proliferation of the Wyrms' desires like none that has existed before.

Since their association with the Black Spiral Dancers, many Lazarites have become hosts for both Filth and Breeder Banes. The process of procreation between the Tribe of the Fallen and an unfortunate leper is unpleasant for both parties involved, but it is possible, nonetheless. The subsequent fruit of the union normally ends the life of the leper mother, but through Gifts taught by various Banes to the Dancers, the majority of offspring are born disease free and (physically) healthy. Breeder Banes are grafted to the souls of some Lazarites in the earliest stages of their terminal condition, creating a disposable fomor for the purposes of bolstering the overall numbers of the tribe. As unthinkable as this crime against the most unfortunate of humans might seem, not even the Warders fathom the extent of the human desecration being committed by the Black Spiral Dancers against and toward the multitudes of the hopeless that inhabit the European continent.

The Hive of the Unshriven Zealot

Founded between AD 400-432, when Scotland was still referred to as Alba (or "Pictland") by the Roman

Empire, Fearn Abbey rests solidly on the banks of Loch Flyn and serves the Black Spiral Dancers as perhaps the most powerful hive retained by the tribe throughout mainland Scotland. Once considered one of the holiest places in Scotland, Fearn Abbey was, in fact, the first permanent Christian mission erected north of Hadrian's Wall. Ignorant of the gods and goddesses who dwelled and thrived throughout the pre-history before the coming of Christ, early Christian missionaries and clerical orders built their churches atop burial mounds, fairy forts and alongside monoliths erected by civilizations and religions forgotten long before Rome was a republic. They did so in an effort to encourage the superstitious locals to worship the "one, true God" hand-in-hand with their superstitions. Fearn Abbey is one such construct.

While the abbey still stands against the wind and sleet of the northeastern coast of Scotland, the clergy and parishioners have long since abandoned the place in favor of more hospitable climes and less malevolent spiritual presences. Built solidly above a dedicated hive, the Christians who erected the church did little more than fortify the sinister malignancy that had pulsed beneath the abbey's foundation. No human consecration could cleanse the disease that infected the land, and many of the priests of Fearn Abbey died in early attempts at failed exorcism of the Scottish church's sour grounds.

In recent years, and because of the unholy reputation that the abbey has earned since its inception and construction, Fearn Abbey has become a leper hospice for the lowlands of Scotland and northern England. The Black Spiral Dancers who inhabit the hive beneath Fearn could not possibly be happier about this development. Humans and Gaian Garou alike keep their distance from the abbey (as well as the bawn of the hive beneath it) and the Tribe of the Fallen has been afforded the opportunity to reclaim a hive of significant power beneath the peat of their hereditary homeland.

Spirituality

The Black Spiral Dancers' beliefs are muddled, which is not surprising, considering that every single member of the tribe is mad. The Dancers hold the Wyrms as their god and father, and they work toward the destruction of Gaia and the decimation of the spiritual hierarchy. The degree of contemplation of this goal varies from Dancer to Dancer. The more stable ones hold elaborate debates as to whether the world will remake itself to the Wyrms' desires or simply cease to exist, but at the end, the Dancers wish to see the current state of the world come crashing

down. To that end, they work to push everything that they can affect to the breaking point.

The Dancers are quite happy to recruit from other tribes. This isn't easy, since most Gaian Garou would sooner die than join their loathed enemies, but a werewolf consumed by Rage, hatred, jealousy, lust or bitterness has the potential of being lured to the Black Spiral. Little is known of the recruitment process, save that once a werewolf begins the long walk down the Umbral Labyrinth to the Wyrms' heart, there is no turning back. Few werewolves progress beyond the first coil of the Spiral, but that is enough to drive them mad and into the Wyrms' service forever (although legends persist that the Umbral Realm of Erebus can cleanse even the most devoted Dancer — see p. 163).

The Black Spiral Dancers have abandoned Gaia and the Incarnae, but they have not abandoned their spiritual lives. They conduct rites in their foul hives dedicated to honoring the unclean spirits of the Wyrms. These Maeljin Incarna serve in much the same capacity as similar spirits do for Gaian Garou. Their avatars act as pack totems and patron spirits to the hives where the Dancers fester. Their less-powerful spirits teach Gifts to the fallen tribe. Over the years, these Maeljin have also corrupted otherwise Gaian spirits into the service of the Wyrms. Whippoorwill, for example, now serves as the tribal totem for the Black Spiral Dancers. Bat, once a totem of choice for clever, agile packs has begun a slow decline toward the Corrupter. Some Bane Totems aren't even so recognizable; names such as Dark Fungus and Kirijama sometimes filter through layers of story and rumor to the ears of the Garou. The Shadow Lords of Eastern Europe also hear the name "Kupala" with some degree of regularity.

In game terms, Bane totems function much the same way that Gaian totems do. They grant their charges (usually referred to as "bastards") with given, pack or story traits appropriate to the totem in question. Bat, for example, grants his bastards extra Dexterity, while Dark Fungus grants knowledge of plants and poisons. Likewise, Bane totems enforce bans. Green Dragon, for instance, does not allow his bastards to retreat from battle, regardless of the odds.

Gifts

The Gifts of the Black Spiral Dancers are, in many ways, little more than corrupted reflections of those afforded to the Garou by Gaia. While it is easy to dismiss the Tribe of the Fallen as mockeries of Gaia's grace, it is — at its core — every bit as much the werewolf as any other. The Dancers' abilities to com-

mand the forces of nature, the spirit world and the world of men are just as formidable as that of the Gaian Garou.

- **Bane Protector (Level One)** — In times of need, or when a Black Spiral Dancer cannot carry out a task on her own, Banes can be summoned for myriad purposes to assist her. While the Banes summoned through the use of this Gift might choose to fight on behalf of or with the summoner, they will not allow themselves to be bound into fetishes or destroyed. Normally, the Banes who respond to the call of this Gift will charge a price of the Dancer for services rendered.

System: Spend one point of Gnosis and roll Manipulation + Leadership (difficulty 7). Each success summons a single Bane. The Dancer cannot summon more Banes in one scene than his permanent Gnosis score.

- **Sense Wyrms (Level One)** — As the metis Gift.

- **Shroud (Level One)** — The Dancer creates a field of black, impenetrable darkness, through which only it can see. An octopus-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Spend one point of Gnosis and roll Gnosis (difficulty varies: 3 for twilight, 6 for indoors, and 9 for broad daylight). Each success scores blacks out a 10' by 10' by 10' space. The player can choose any area within his character's line of sight. The Dancer can see in this darkness normally, but others cannot do so without the use of special powers (the Gift: Eyes of the Cat or the Protean power Witness of Darkness, for example).

- **Howl of the Banshee (Level Two)** — As the Fianna Gift.

- **Ears of the Bat (Level Two)** — This Gift allows the Dancer to use sound in the same manner as a bat in order to navigate and, in fact, locate foes in absolute darkness. Once the Gift is learned, its effects are permanent. A bat-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The Dancer can navigate and act in complete darkness without impairment, but he cannot actually see. Loud noises counteract this Gift.

- **Patagia (Level Three)** — The Black Spiral Dancer is able to glide through the air at a speed not to exceed 25 mph, much like a flying squirrel. This Gift is taught by a corrupted squirrel-spirit or a bat-spirit.

System: Once this Gift is learned, its effects are permanent and, in fact, present in all forms that the Dancer assumes as dry, leathery flaps of nearly translucent and spider-veined flesh.

- **Foaming Fury (Level Three)** — The Black Spiral Dancer secretes toxic, green foam from its saliva glands that completely covers the surfaces of its

teeth, jaws, mouth or snout. A bane of contagion teaches this Gift.

System: Spend one Gnosis point to activate the foam. The effects last for one scene. Players of anyone bitten by the Dancer must roll Stamina (difficulty 8), lest their characters fly into a demented frenzy.

• **Crawling Poison (Level Four)** — Similar in some respects to the Gift: Foaming Fury, this Gift allows a Black Spiral Dancer to secrete a venom that inhibits the regenerative ability of a werewolf if bitten or clawed by the Dancer. A Bane of toxins teaches this Gift.

System: This Gift is permanent once learned. When the Dancer executes a successful bite or claw attack, roll the Dancer's Gnosis (difficulty of the target's Stamina + 4, maximum 10). The target is unable to regenerate damage for one hour per success. This Gnosis roll does not fall under the usual rules against rolling Gnosis in the same turn as rolling or spending Rage.

• **Doppelganger (Level Four)** — As the Warder Gift.

• **Balefire (Level Five)** — Through sheer force of will, the Black Spiral Dancer can summon and hurl spheres of sickly, green fire toward a target. A Balefire elemental teaches this Gift.

System: Roll Dexterity + Athletics to hit (difficulty 7, modified for range). The victim must roll Stamina (difficulty 8) to resist, and his successes must equal or exceed the Dancer's successes. If not, the Balefire begins to warp her very flesh. Any successes not counteracted on the Stamina roll translate to unsoakable aggravated damage. Other effects are also common — the target loses hair, grows useless vestigial eyes, loses all skin color, et cetera. Additionally, until the target undergoes a Rite of Cleansing, she registers strongly to the Gift: Sense Wyrms.

Fomori

In a time and a place so completely saturated by the overwhelming (and more often than not, overbearing) grace of God, it is most certainly no surprise that demons walk among (and, in fact, within) the men and women of the Dark Medieval. Yet not all of these demons are fallen angels. Some are spirits of the Wyrms who have taken up residence in unwilling victims. These are the fomori.

Fomori are the wretched fruit of the union of a human or animal body and the mind of a Bane. While the Black Spiral Dancers are symbolic of how far even a trusted and loved warrior of Gaia can fall within the slithering coils of the

Wyrms, fomori stand as an invisible testament to the absolute power of corruption and spiritual decay. Clergy, nobleman and peasant all are fodder for the Wyrms. Station and birth have little or nothing to do with the potential for service that a human being can offer a Bane in service to the Wyrms.

While humans are the host of choice for Banes in the Dark Medieval, animals present different advantages. They are stronger, faster and more loyal than human fomori.

Aughisky, the Devil's Mounts

Aughisky are fomori forged from the bonding of a Bane with a horse. Many stories tell of dark, demonic horses that haunt marshes and bogs or walk slowly and solitarily along the crossroads of central and southern Europe. Aughisky look, at first glance, like black, muscular horses that have perhaps wandered from their stables or thrown their riders. Closer inspection, however, reveals the carnivorous, fang-like maw of a wolf; fiery orange eyes that glow with the malice of hellfire; and hooves that are unnaturally sharp and pointed. Aughisky serve as war stallions for Black Spiral Dancers packs on rare occasions, but for the most part, they tend to haunt orchards or isolated and dark roads, far beyond the safety of cities or hamlets, where they can feast on the bones of travelers.

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Animal Ken 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Occult 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Attack: Hoof Strike (Strength + 1), Bite (Strength + 1). Both attacks cause aggravated damage.

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers: Armored Hide, Foot Pads, Immune to the Delirium, Regeneration

Lazarites

Lepers are profoundly effective hosts for Banes. Possessed by Breeder Banes, Lazarites are created for a singular purpose: procreation. When the possession is complete and the diseased human being becomes a fomori, she experiences a lessening of the symptoms of her disease for the entirety of her pregnancy (or, in the case of men, during the actual act of procreation). Fed by twisted and dark energies from the blackest pits of the Umbra, the unborn child is kept disease free. Depending on the age of a female Lazarite, the possession might last years, allowing her to bear several offspring as a product of the union between the fomori

and a Black Spiral Dancer. Eventually, the body can no longer support the Bane possessing it, or the rigors of childbirth prove too much. Either way, the fomori dies and the Bane is free to possess another host.

Lazarite fomori rarely — if ever — possess any powers other than Poison Tumors. In some, isolated cases, stronger male lepers are possessed by Banes to serve as guardians over expectant mothers, so they possess some more martial powers... but never anything that might threaten the Dancers themselves.

Attributes: As a human.

Abilities: As a human.

Powers: Immune to the Delirium, Poison Tumors

Fomor Powers

The following is a basic and brief glimpse at some of the possible powers possessed by both human and animal fomori in the Dark Medieval. Naturally, the Storyteller should feel free to create more to make fomori as individual — and horrifying — as possible.

- **Armored Hide** — This power grants a fomor increased resilience against physical assaults as well as environmental rigors. The skin of the fomor might appear reptilian and scaly or slimy and shimmering. Add three dice to the fomor's soak pool.

- **Berserker** — This power infuses the fomor with Rage — exactly like a werewolf's — with all of the inherent advantages and disadvantages that come with it. Fomori rarely have a Rage rating over 3.

- **Blending** — The fomor has the ability to camouflage itself through manipulation of the pigmentation of its flesh. While the colors of the fomor's flesh change, this power does not grant the ability to mimic intricate patterns or sophisticated textures. Add two to the difficulty to spot the fomor if it stays still; one if it moves.

- **Darksight** — The fomor is capable of seeing as well in complete darkness as it might in daylight.

- **Enhanced Attribute** — The fomor's natural capabilities are bolstered to supernatural levels. While useful where Physical Attributes are concerned, this power is also available to Social and Mental Attributes as well.

- **Foot Pads** — The fomor's feet are padded like an animal's, granting extra measures of stealth. Subtract one from the difficulties of all Stealth rolls.

- **Horror** — The fomor's presence is so disturbing that it elicits the same effect in human beings as the Delirium.

- **Immunity to Delirium** — The fomor is not subject to any of the Delirium's effects in the event

that the host body of the fomor's Bane is human. Almost all fomori have this power.

- **Poison Tumors** — The fomor's body is covered with pus-filled tumors or open lesions that splatter when punctured or struck, inflicting three health levels of aggravated damage on an attacker (four health levels if the attack bites the fomor).

- **Regeneration** — The fomor regenerates bashing and lethal damage almost immediately, in the same manner as a werewolf.

Monsters

In the Dark Medieval, monsters are quite real. This is no surprise to a werewolf, who understands and deals with the reality and threat of vampires, unclean spirits, and the possessed on a fairly regular basis. Some of the things that wander through the forests and bogs of medieval Europe, however, give even the Garou pause.

The following examples represent but a handful of the monsters that a werewolf might find stalking in the darkness. Some are belched forth directly from the putrid void of the Wyrms' maw, while others exist completely independent from the Laws of Gaia acknowledged by the Garou. Where monsters are concerned, the Storyteller's imagination should be the only limit to how dark and how frightening the night can be even for werewolves in the Dark Medieval.

Skull Pigs

Skull Pigs are nothing short of the maddened remnants of the shapeshifting race once called the Grondr — Gaia's stewards of cleanliness and disposal who once kept the whole of Gaia free of rot and decay. Before the War of Rage, the Grondr were a powerful and noble people who's kin were predominantly selected from the ranks of the enormous, and somewhat vicious, European wild boar. During the War of Rage, however, the Garou all but obliterated the Grondr. While the Grondr were truly mighty in their opposition of the werewolves, they were no match for the unbridled fury of the Garou. In the end, the vast majority of the Grondr fell under werewolf claws and fangs. Those few that survived, at least as far as the Garou believe, became the Skull Pigs.

Skull Pigs travel in packs that are normally no larger than six or seven rooting through cemeteries for freshly packed grave dirt. Many incidents of grave robbery are, in fact, the work of Skull Pigs, who dine



on the dead flesh of human beings brought to the grave through disease as somewhat of a delicacy.

Some Skull Pigs retain a shred of their former intelligence. These creatures act as leaders of their packs and can sometimes use Black Spiral Dancer Gifts.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 8, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 2-4, Intelligence 0-4, Wits 3-4

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 3, Stealth 2, Survival 4

Powers: Poison Flesh (see below), Regeneration (as Garou)

Rage 5, Gnosis 2-4, Willpower 3-6

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attacks: Tusks (Strength + 1)

Image: Skull Pigs are enormous, muscular, boar-like creatures that are easily a match for a single Garou where physical mass and power are concerned. The

deathly pale flesh covering their skulls is so thin, and the bone structure is so distinctive, that it is very easy to get the impression that Skull Pigs have no flesh covering their heads at all.

Skull Pigs regain their Gnosis by consuming the flesh and bones of dead creatures. The more concentrated the Wurm-taint within the consumed corpse's flesh is, the more Gnosis can be drawn forth from it. This being the case, Skull Pigs covet the flesh of the dead who have met their end through disease or through mindless violence. As a byproduct of their peculiar dietary habits, the flesh and blood of a Skull Pig is concentrated poison. Any creature that bites into the flesh of a Skull Pig must succeed on a Stamina roll (difficulty 6) or take an aggravated health level of damage. Resist Toxin defends against this effect.

Fir Bolgs

Fianna legends state that the Fir Bolgs were once allies of the Garou, and that in ages past, their alliance with the Fianna and the Tuatha de Danaan spelled the doom of the Fomorians at the Plain of Towers.

The lust for power and dominion is not a trait held exclusively by the Garou, however, and eventually, the Fir Bolgs — a violent and brutal race composed almost entirely of warriors and hunters — allied themselves with tribes who wielded iron weaponry against the Tuatha de Danaan in an effort to claim Eire for themselves. The Fianna and what remained of the Tuatha de Danaan struck first, recognizing the danger that the Fir Bolgs presented. The Fir Bolgs that survived the assault were banished from Ireland, cursed never to return again. Remnants of the race live on in England and Scotland, however, waiting for an opportunity to strike back at the Fianna and the Tuatha.

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Archery 3, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Hearth Wisdom (Ireland) 5, Intimidation 5, Melee 3, Occult 3, Survival 4

Powers: Armor (four extra soak dice), Regeneration (as Garou), Immunity to Delirium

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5, incapacitated

Willpower 5-9

Image: Fir Bolgs are often mistaken for the Gurahl (or werebears) by those werewolves who know of the werebears' existence. Massively muscular and stalwart, a Fir Bolg appears as a swarthy, dark-skinned human that stands no less than two heads higher than a Garou in Crinos. Despite their size and musculature, Fir Bolgs are easily as fast and graceful in combat as a werewolf without the added advantage of Rage.

The Fera

The Changing Breeds are more myth than reality to the werewolves of the Dark Medieval, as they were seemingly wiped out during the War of Rage. Legends tell of a time when these creatures freely roamed the wilds alongside the Garou, but now that age lives only in stories told around moot fires. The forests have been cleansed. No one even mentions the Fera other than a handful of the most learned Galliards, and the other shapechangers' place in the world has been forgotten. The Garou are the sole protectors of Gaia in the world.

Or so they like to tell themselves. In truth, this belief is a gross assumption on the part of the werewolves, which the Fera try hard not to shatter. Though some Changing Breeds suffered total extinction, most survived the War of Rage in one fashion or

another and have survived the intervening years by keeping a low profile.

The Dark Medieval is a difficult time for these shapeshifters, as they constantly struggle to keep the illusion of extinction intact. There are very few safe havens, with Garou stalking the wild places and vampires infesting the cities. Even so, many of the Changing Breeds have found ways to survive, and even thrive, lurking along the fringes of human and werewolf society alike.

Ananasi

Though they were possibly the most hated and feared of the Fera during the War of Rage, the werespiders' unique shapeshifting abilities helped them evade destruction more easily than other Changing Breeds. The Ananasi have forms similar to the werewolves' Homid, Crinos and Hispo forms, the last manifesting as a giant "pit spider" larger than a man. Their Crawlerling form sets them apart, however, allowing them to shift into a horde of small spiders, all under the control of a single mind. This allowed the werespiders to hide in small, dark places, and survive even if all but one of their tiny spider bodies was killed.

In the times following the War of Rage, the Ananasi watched patiently as the Garou gave them up for dead. They listened to the wisdom of their Queen, Ananasa, and carried out her subtle commands, secure in the knowledge that they were only small strands in a far greater web.

Lands Under the Web

Most European Ananasi were forced from their territories to seek the safety of their ancestral homelands in Africa, but they soon found that their Kinfolk in those areas were hit the hardest by the Garou. Even so, the bulk of the existing werespiders in the Dark Medieval lives on the African continent, with a sparse few filtering across the Mediterranean Sea to the north. Though most still reside in the areas known as Outremer, those who crossed the sea settled primarily in coastal areas, islands and the larger landmasses of Iberia, Sicily and Greece.

Ananasi prefer to live outside of cities, nestled in caves or other remote locations. While this practice works to their advantage in Outremer, where a lone Silent Strider poses little threat, it borders on suicidal in Europe, where savage packs of werewolves prowl even the most unassuming places, jealously guarding their lands. As a result, the werespiders have looked to the cities and larger towns of the Dark Medieval for

refuge, finding far fewer werewolves and an abundance of human prey.

Predators of the Night

This shift to more populated areas has brought the Ananasi into close contact with vampires, specifically the Lasombra and Assamites who dominate the Mediterranean coastal cities. Since werespiders feed on the blood of humans as well, it is not uncommon for Ananasi to impersonate vampires, veiling their actions even further from werewolf eyes.

While this does much to shield the werespiders from the Garou, it adds the risk of discovery by vampires. This lifestyle can only be maintained for a short time, 10 to 15 years at most, before the effects of aging would start to betray the Ananasi's mortal nature. Yet in that time, many werespiders form strong networks of influence over human and vampire society alike, spinning fine webs of intrigue to further the goals of their Great Mother.

The werespiders see themselves as part of Ananasa's greater plan and consider the small plots of the vampires simple by comparison. Even a plot spanning several centuries appears shortsighted to the children of Ananasa, who have been part of her com-

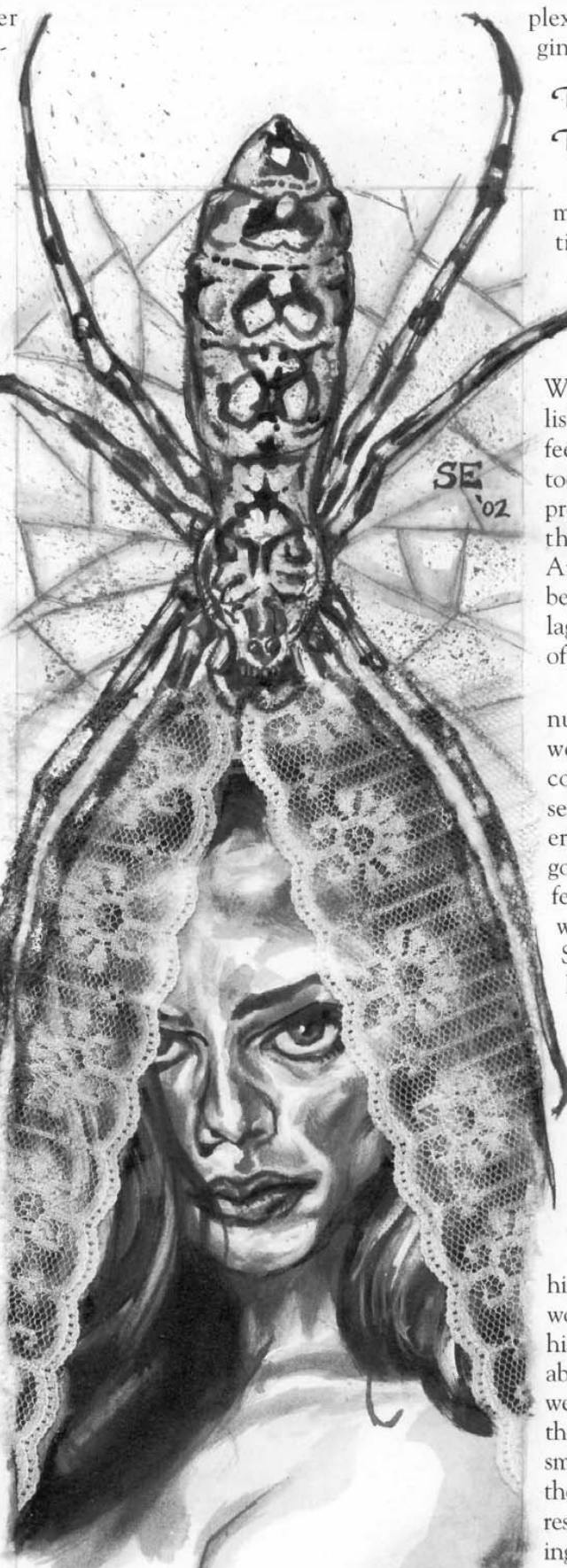
plex schemes since the beginning of time.

The Cult of Tarntel

The Ananasi gain much from their association with vampires, most notably learning how to gain power and respect among their human prey. While the vampires established herds of humans to feed upon, the werespiders took a slightly different approach. At the very end of the 12th century, an Ananasi named Tarntel began a cult in a small village on the northern coast of Sicily.

Along with a small number of Kinfolk, this werespider established a community of followers, setting himself up as a powerful avatar of a great spider god (which he was, in effect). The village began to worship the great "Mother Spider," becoming a safe haven as well as a consistent source of blood. Assuming the role of a feudal lord, Tarntel did his best to protect the villagers from harm, all while trying to keep beneath the werewolves' notice.

Festivals were held in his honor, and young women would wildly dance to curry his favor and affection. Unable to truly feel love, the werespider would "reward" these displays by drinking a small amount of blood from the dancer, who would then resume her frenzied dancing. After years of rebuked



advances, the dance became synonymous with unrequited love, for even Tarntel's favorites felt the cold, alien distance in his eyes.

From the dawn of the 12th century until the early 15th century, other Ananasi duplicate this practice in parts of Sicily, Iberia and Greece, but the dance and the cult retain Tarntel's name. Fearing retribution from the Church, these festivals were confined to the small communities in which they began, with no mention made to outsiders of the darker spiritual origins. Wayward travelers sometimes hear vague tales of the dance curing poisonous spider bites, but those who inquire too closely disappear mysteriously in the night, the villagers luring them into dark, web-filled cellars to feed their beloved patrons.

Bastet

The Bastet were created as Gaia's eyes and ears and as keepers of her secrets. They have five forms, similar to the Garou, but they lack the pack mentality of the werewolves. During the War of Rage, this solitary warrior nature led them to violent deaths at the claws of the more numerous Garou. The Garou purged Europe of many of the tribes of Bastet, destroying the European werelynxes utterly and forcing the werecats deep into their homelands in Africa and Asia. Aside from a rare werelion wanderer and a few wereleopards holding fast to territories in Northern Africa, the only Bastet that remain in the medieval world are the Bubasti and Ceilican.

Stalking the Shadows

The Bubasti struggle every day to survive, their bloodlines growing thinner with each passing generation. The slaughter and devastation of the War of Rage focused mainly on the European continent, largely overlooking the reclusive and secretive Bubasti. Though many died during the conflict, their power base remained strong in the ancient civilizations of Egypt.

The Bubasti's fall from grace came much later than that of the other Bastet. In a war with the servants of a powerful vampire named Sutekh, or Set, the Bubasti suffered terrible losses, even resorting to an alliance with the Silent Striders before ultimately being defeated. The kyphur cats with which they bred were hunted down by the Setites and destroyed (or worse, enslaved). The Bubasti's power in Egypt was broken, leaving the cats lurking in the shadows.

Their insatiable hunger for knowledge and the decline of the Egyptian ruling class have led

the Bubasti down some very dark paths in an attempt to overthrow Set. Most notably, the tribe has made a concerted effort to retrieve tomes and scrolls that were lost when the Library of Alexandria was destroyed. This has brought them into close contact with a group of Assamite historians residing in the city who are intent on recovering the same information.

Tribal rumors speak of sacred scrolls that prophesize the ultimate downfall of Set, and it is hoped that some ancient secret or magic can be found among them to restore the Bubasti to power in Egypt. Local Setites have made many failed attempts to stop the Assamites' research, only feeding the werecats' belief that some crucial piece of information can be found among the ashes.

Faerie Dreams

Hailing from the British Isles and Scandinavia, the Ceilican werecats have much in common with their Fianna neighbors, as they are given to passionate revelry and close contact with the faerie courts. During the War of Rage, their fae ties gave them an added advantage when eluding their Garou pursuers, allowing them to travel magical faerie paths unknown to the werewolves. Favors owed them by the fae nobility provided some nasty surprises for Garou hunting parties and contributed to a sense of "untouchable" arrogance in the Ceilican.

Though many of the fae cats were killed during the War of Rage, those that died often met their fate more through this haughtiness than through the efforts of the Garou. They would toy with their pursuers with faerie magic and strange powers, only to let their guard down as one of their playthings entered a homicidal frenzy. This insolent behavior only served to enrage the Garou, causing them to redouble their efforts, driving the maneless lions that were the Ceilican Kinfolk into extinction. The fae cats harbor an abiding hatred of the werewolves for this, and they deeply resent the fact that they are reduced to mating with wild cats.

The Dark Medieval is a dangerous time for the Ceilican, as their former allies have betrayed them. They dare not reveal themselves to any of the fae, lest they be bound with magical chains and enslaved, leaving them far more vulnerable to the Garou. Having turned their back on their Bastet cousins during the War of Rage, sometimes even laughing at their plight, the Ceilican have nowhere to turn. The 13th century finds them mostly in hiding, holding their midnight revels in the deepest, most secluded forests.

Cat and Mouse

The Ceilican are still remarkably arrogant despite their plight, and they have grown adept at hiding in plain sight and making hasty departures. The fae cats exude flamboyance and charm, seemingly more than meets the eye. They take positions as jesters and magicians to lords and kings, run with travelers and tinkers across northern Europe and join acting troupes to entertain the masses. Most have close ties with pagans and excommunicates, often associating with hedge witches and herbalists on the outskirts of towns.

Although they are not as powerful as their larger cousins, such as the werelions or weretigers, the fae cats are absolutely vicious when cornered, and they possess strange magic unlike anything the Garou have seen. Legends tell of lone Garou warriors who have tracked Ceilican into the deep woods, only to be found cross-legged in a circle of mushrooms, babbling incoherently and swaying slowly back and forth. The fae cats are capricious and vindictive, and they do not assume the role of prey willingly.

Corax

The Corax are unique among the Changing Breeds in that they have relatively peaceful relations with the Garou. They have three forms, roughly equivalent to the werewolves' Homid, Crinos and Lupus forms, and they lead solitary lives, much like the Bastet. During the War of Rage, any opposition to the marauding werewolves meant certain death, and the Corax took this into account when determining what role they'd play in the conflict. Openly siding with the Garou and aiding them as scouts, the wereravens secretly helped threatened Fera and their Kinfolk get to hidden places in the Umbra, saving them from the werewolves' wrath. Never truly betraying the other shapechangers to the Garou, they made a show of cooperation without actually providing the werewolves with much useful information. Any truly damaging reconnaissance was offset by warnings to the other Changing Breeds that the Garou were set to attack. Through this smoke-and-mirrors show, the Corax managed to keep the wolves at bay and their own skins intact.

This, of course, did nothing for their relations with the other Fera, who viewed them as collaborators and spies, having doomed them to violent and painful deaths.

A Little Knowledge...

Wereravens obsess over secrets of any kind, intent on shedding the light of Helios into the darkest reaches of the world. As such, the Corax have shown a keen interest in the Prophecies of Shadow, seeking to put all the vague and sometimes confusing pieces together to form a unified whole. Every last wereraven has committed each prophecy to memory and is searching for some way to interpret the meaning behind the words.

While the wereravens have friendly relations with some tribes of werewolves, interactions with others are strained at best, making the gathering of information difficult. Striking up conversation with a Fianna or Fenrir isn't usually difficult, but Red Talons have never been exactly forthcoming with information. Most would rather snap their teeth at a passing wereraven than pause for conversation, which is particularly frustrating considering the source of the prophecies. Similarly, the Silver Fangs are not too comfortable with the wereravens' inquiries into the prophecies, as the dark tidings cast some doubt on their leadership of the Garou.

Regardless, the Corax make sure to keep a close eye on each of the tribes, paying attention to any unusual events or behaviors that might lead to a better understanding of the prophecies. It is of the utmost importance to have a witness present when these prophecies unfold and to relay that information through the Corax communications network as quickly as possible. Some Garou have begun to see the presence of a raven in the distance as a portent of doom, a constant reminder of the prophecies looming over their heads.

...Is a Dangerous Thing

While the Garou make valiant attempts to understand the prophecies, they are limited by distance and the difficulties of communication. The Bone Gnawers, for example, are spread through the cities of Europe, and a Theurge in Córdoba will have no way of knowing the actions of a Galliard in Constantinople. Therefore, some tribes have made an effort to exchange information and theory with the Corax in exchange for a better grasp of the "bigger picture." The wereravens do not enter into these bargains lightly, as even the most gracious of werewolves still has the potential to fly into a killing frenzy.

Along these lines, some Garou do not want to bargain or deal for information, feeling it should

be given freely and without hesitation. Most notably, the Silver Fangs refuse to barter with the Corax, seeing such exchanges as beneath them and demeaning. Some have gone so far as to capture wereravens with the intent of taking what they want by force, harking back to the days of the War of Rage.

This has sent a ripple of anxiety through the wereraven community, which has been fueled by the disappearances of a few particularly curious Corax. Rumors have surfaced that a young wereraven was tortured for weeks in Kiev before finally being allowed to die, and those rumors were supported when a large pack of Silver Fangs disrupted a wereraven gathering several days later. While the Fangs are probably at the heart of this practice, suspicions have been raised about other tribes as well, most notably the Warders of Men.

Gurahl

In the early days, the werebears were renowned as great healers and warriors, protecting the sacred places of the world before the existence of the Garou. Beloved of Gaia, they were given Gifts that granted them power over death itself, and they used these extraordinary abilities to return life to those who had sacrificed themselves to protect others.

The Garou coveted these powerful Gifts, but the Gurahl felt that the werewolves were too immature and impetuous to use them responsibly. Among the most arrogant of the Garou, the Silver Fangs demanded these secrets from the werebears and took their refusal as a grave insult. Wild accusations were brought against the Gurahl, which served to enrage the other Garou. Surely the werebears were in league with the Wyrms and no longer served Gaia. Why else would they refuse to give their knowledge to their cousins, the werewolves? They hide, weak and alone in the wilderness, undoubtedly concealing the dark secrets of their corruption!

This conflict escalated over time and eventually led to war. The more rash and impulsive Garou struck first at those they thought would aid the Gurahl, taking the rest of the Changing Breeds entirely by surprise. By the time the War of Rage began in earnest, few remained to stand against the werewolves. The werebears were staunch warriors, but they could not prevail, beset by packs of howling Garou.

Safety in Slumber

The Gurahl retreated from the field, leaving Europe to the werewolves. Some receded into the barren wastes of Siberia, while others chose the most inhospitable reaches of Scandinavia. Many sought refuge in the highest mountain ranges, finding their homes in the dark caves of the Alps and Himalayas. They found places the werewolves were least likely to travel and there entered a deep hibernation, hoping to awake in a time when cooler heads prevailed and the Garou had learned humility and respect.

That time has not yet come. At any given moment, no more than three or four Gurahl are awake in the whole of the Dark Medieval. These serve as Great Grandfathers or Grandmothers, traveling Europe protecting their bear kin and seeking to keep the healing traditions of their totem alive. When a Great Grandfather grows weak, poisoned by the corruption of the world, he wakes another Gurahl to serve in his place and enters a deep slumber to cleanse his spirit.

The werebears have five forms, similar to the Garou. It is unlikely that a werewolf would ever encounter a Gurahl in the Dark Medieval, but should such meeting occur, it would most likely turn violent. The werewolves still harbor a deep mistrust and resentment of the Gurahl, and horror stories abound about depraved rites to dark powers. If a werebear were discovered by a pack of Garou, there would be little chance of avoiding conflict.

Mother and Cubs

As the Gurahl shun relations with the Garou for the most part, so too has their totem. Angry over the fate of her children, Bear has withdrawn deep into the spirit world, severing ties with the werewolves. Lingering hatred toward the Silver Fangs and the arrogance of the Garou as a whole has made the Incarna bitter, and she has refused to act as totem for any werewolf packs. Even Jagglings and Gafflings of Bear shun the Garou, and individual werewolves find it difficult to communicate with these wise and powerful spirits. Those seeking to learn a Gift from a bear-spirit must prove themselves honorable and in control of their Rage, often through acts of humility and great patience. Bear has not yet forgiven the Garou their transgressions, nor will she for generations to come.

Ratkin

Gaia created the wererats to keep the human population in check, eating excess food stores and culling their numbers through plague and disease. During the Impergium, the Garou appointed themselves as the masters of the human race and chafed at the wererats constant intercessions, labeling their use of disease as a sign of their allegiance to the Wym.

During the War of Rage, the Ratkin were hit especially hard, decimated as wave after wave of their warriors fell before the Garou. Their bards assembled to compose an epic tale of the crimes the werewolves had committed against the Changing Breeds, but they were attacked and massacred, falling to the last rat against the onslaught of the Garou. Before they died, the bards spat venomous curses at the wolves, promising plagues that would destroy their children and their children's children, telling of a day when the Ratkin would take their revenge.

The wererats have never forgiven the Garou for taking their bards, and none of the Fera harbor a deeper or more abiding hatred of the werewolves. The survivors fled into the Umbra to regroup, lick their wounds and breed. Breeding, ever breeding, the rats still fight the War of Rage in their hearts, awaiting the day when they will have the numbers to overwhelm the Garou and take their revenge.

Guepilla War

The Ratkin took refuge in small niches of the Umbra, establishing nests and burrows across the vastness of the spirit realm. This strategy kept them safe from the werewolves, but the Wyld energies of the Umbra soon began to affect their minds in unpredictable ways. Some of those who fled into the deeper parts of the Umbra lost their physical forms completely, becoming spirits in their own right, while others went insane through extended contact with the Wyld. This prolonged exposure to Wyld energies caused the Ratkin to lose their focus and give up their original role as keepers of humanity, focusing instead on revenge and the breakdown of social order.

The Ratkin have now begun to reemerge into the Realm. Establishing nests in cities and dark alleyways, they have created a network of hiding places across the continent. These nests and hideouts are linked by tunnels through the ground and the Umbra, allowing wererats to pass from one to the next undetected. Small strike forces have been assembled to scout out Garou activity, providing reconnaissance for covert strikes and ambushes.

Strange Umbral phenomena called Rat Alleys have started to form in the twisted alleyways of some of Europe's largest cities, reflecting flickering torches and moonlight in dark puddles on alley floors and allowing shapechangers to step sideways more easily. These areas have such a thin Gauntlet that humans and even other supernatural creatures can be lured into the Umbra by cunning wererats, into deadly traps. These ambushes are often chaotic and devastating, as their victims are taken totally unaware.

Strength in Numbers

The Ratkin have only three forms, roughly equivalent to the Garou Homid, Crinos and Lupus forms, though their war form is significantly less massive. Unlike the other Changing Breeds, however, the Ratkin have Kinfolk in abundance throughout Europe and the world, finding it easy to disappear when the need arises. Black rats infest every city on the continent and can be found in forests, swamps, deserts and any number of other habitats. This gives the wererats a distinct advantage, allowing them to hide from their pursuers almost anywhere in the world. Whereas the werebears and werecats are easy to track and hunt down in their animal forms, the Ratkin can easily flee into the teeming populations of rats in the rapidly expanding medieval cities.

Sharing both their city homes and the Rat totem with the Bone Gnawer tribe, the wererats have some limited interaction with these Garou and mostly exempt them from their campaign against the werewolves. The Gnawers took no part in the slaughter of the Ratkin during the War of Rage, having respect for the children of their tribal totem. The tribe keeps this relationship secretive, not wanting to draw attention from those Garou who would see such interaction as consorting with the Wym. Members of the tribe in difficult situations might receive unexpected help from mysterious sources or, more rarely, find unlikely aid from a Ratkin war band, turning the tide of a seeming massacre. Despite their tentative relations, the Bone Gnawers are entirely unaware of the Ratkin plans to outnumber and destroy the Garou, and they might feel differently about the wererats if that information were to become known.

Rokea

The weresharks have had very little contact with the Garou, and they did not have a role in the War of Rage. While the werewolves campaigned against the other Changing Breeds on the land, the Rokea with-

drew to deeper waters where they could not be touched. The sharks have little if anything to do with the ways of the land-dwelling shapechangers, and they mostly keep to themselves. The most important mandate to the Rokea is survival, and interaction with the Garou does not strike them as a healthy proposition.

Legends of the Sea

The werewolves know practically nothing about the Rokea, and they owe their scant information to legends passed down from earlier generations. Fenrir warriors among the Vikings had some experience with weresharks during their frequent raiding voyages, and the Black Furies had rare encounters when Athenian ships sailed the Mediterranean. Galliards relate legends of monstrous sharks that could swallow Viking long

boats whole, and sharks that would attack the hulls of ships to get at the men inside. Many elder Galliards use these stories to frighten young cubs and show that there are predators in the world even greater than werewolves.

In more recent memory, coastal villagers tell tales of intelligent sharks that target individual fishermen who had somehow angered the spirits of the sea, consistently destroying one man's nets and traps again and again. Also, Bone Gnawers and Warders have observed instances of unusual shark activity while traveling on merchant ships or other seafaring vessels, sometimes recalling vague stories from around the moot fire concerning the Rokea. None are foolish enough to make any attempts at contact, as the only consistent thread among all the legends is the weresharks' efficiency as killers.





"Ragnarok! The Apocalypse! The End Times! The End Times!"

No one was listening. The slim wolf broke off her howling and sneezed. Several sets of ears perked up and pointed her way.

"How many times do we have to hear the same stories? How many times must we be warned?" The Galliard walked around the circle, nipping at the younger wolves and bowing her head to the elders. "We've heard the Prophecies of Shadow. We've heard what is to become of our tribe. We do not hear Unicorn's voice. Our people die, skin falling from their bodies, and we do not hear." She sat down heavily in the center of the circle. The Garou of the Sept of the Olive Glade looked on, some with interest, some with disdain. Many of them had heard her theories and warnings before.

"I have something new to tell you, brothers and sisters, fellow Children of Gaia. I have seen something horrible on the horizon, and although I know you will hear me now but forget my words as soon as the revel begins, still I must be heard.

"Let me tell you a story."

Howls-of-the-End-Times changed slowly into Crinos form, the better to use the High Tongue for her tale. "When I ventured west with my pack to discover the fate of our brother and Theurge, we found a cave marked all around by the scent of a bear. I knew this because of what I saw and smelled on my Rite of Passage, but none of my packmates knew the scent. I followed the scent into the cave, but I stopped. I felt sadness — such sadness that I stopped and felt..." She stopped. The High Tongue had the words to convey her feelings, but as a lupus, she had trouble remembering them. Wolves do not grieve. "I felt like weeping, like crawling away and dying. I felt the Rage leave me. And I heard a voice in my mind. It said that the great Mother Bear was gone from the Umbra, following her children to another land, where they could be free and start afresh."

The other Garou of the sept sat up and took notice. The Myrrhae — the Olive Glade spirit that acted as totem to their caern — had occasionally spoken of her friend Bear, and the Children of Gaia were distressed that the mighty spirit had never visited. Some Galliards blamed the War of Rage, but the leaders insisted that this war was just and that Bear understood that. "But don't think that Bear is happy! Her voice in my head was so bitter it pushed me close to Harano." This did not impress the assemblage; most of them thought that she was close to Harano anyway. "The voice said that we — not our tribe, but the Garou as a whole — would find this new land, and that the lives of the bears *and* their newfound allies would be forfeit." The werewolves glanced at each other, and then back to the slender Crinos towering above them. None knew quite how to respond.

"Do you see? We again have warning! Can't we listen, once? Must the End Times come upon us only because we were too eager to hunt, and did not heed?"

Her howls trailed off. The assembled Garou shifted restlessly. Her own pack looked at their brethren apologetically. Finally, the Wyrms Foe leapt into the clearing and gave an sharp howl, stopping once to sneeze in an elaborate jab at Howls-of-the-End-Times. The Garou howled as one, and charged off into the forest on their revel. Only Howls-of-the-End-Times and Eva Gentle-Darkness, a young Ragabash, remained.

"The humans have a saying, Howls-rhya," Eva said quietly. "They say, 'A prophet is never welcome in his own country.'"

The Galliard could only look to the darkening sky and howl.

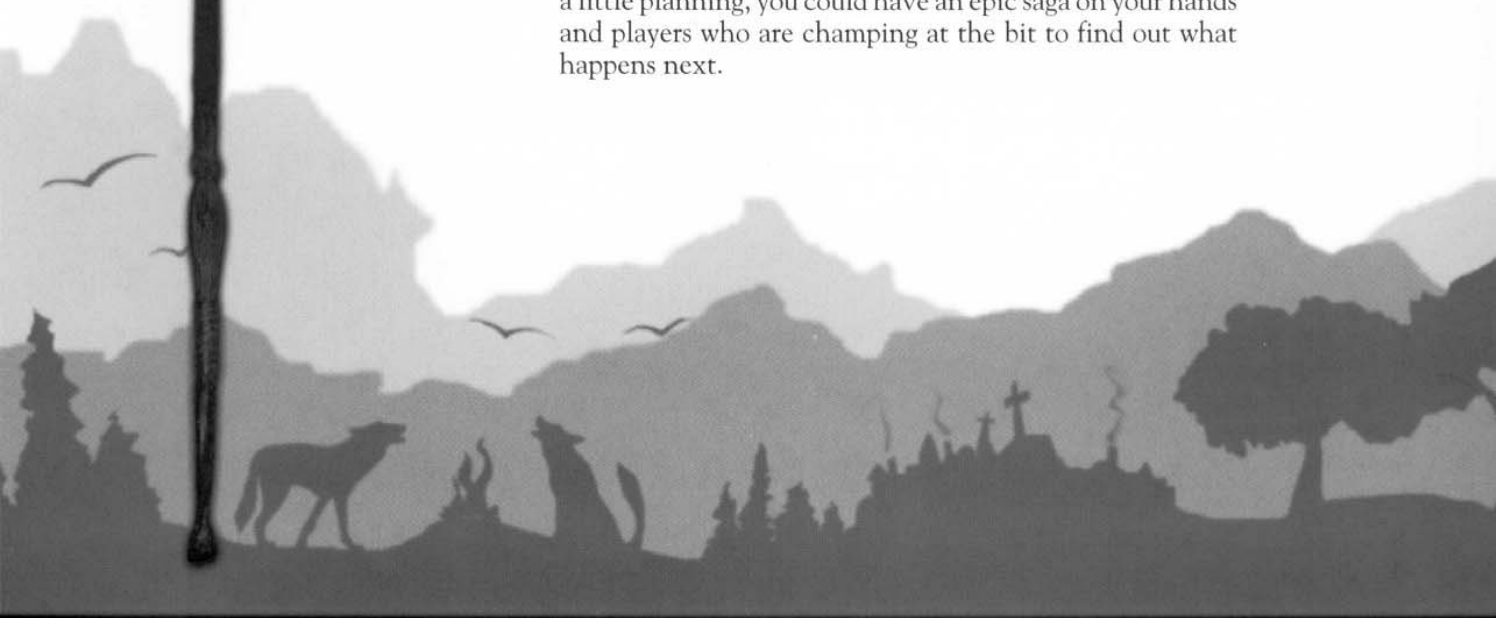



CHAPTER SEVEN: STORYTELLING

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?

—William Butler Yeats, “The Second Coming”

Novice or veteran, your storytelling goals are likely the same. You want to tell a tale that your players will delight in now and tell stories about for years to come. As a Storyteller, it is a tremendous compliment to hear your players reminisce about a surprising plot twist, a touching scene or an enemy whose name or theme music always makes them shiver. This chapter provides some tips on crafting **Dark Ages: Werewolf** chronicles. The Dark Medieval can be difficult to get your mind around. With a lot of thought and a little planning, you could have an epic saga on your hands and players who are champing at the bit to find out what happens next.



Mood

The mood could be described as the underlying emotions of the game. Is the story ultimately melodramatic? Is it triumphant? Spooky? Wild? Restrained? Desperate? Each of these emotions can create a strong backbone for a story, giving you much-needed direction when you're trying to develop a plot that the players can really sink their teeth into. One mistake that novice Storytellers often make is not considering the player's characters when deciding on the mood of the story, if the characters have already been developed. Will the happy-go-lucky Ragabash Bone Gnawer do well in a somber story? Will the Galliard Warder get her fair share of game time if the entire story is based around the concept of wildness and is set in the deep woods? This is not to say that you should avoid pushing the characters' limits, because those differences can result in some of the best conflicts. The important question is how far those limits can be stretched before they're broken.

If the characters have not been developed, it is important to give the players guidance during character creation. This is not to say that you should give away your most interesting plot twists, but cluing them in on the mood of the story can help to ensure that you don't end up with a group of players (or characters) laughing or crying at inappropriate moments in the game.

In short, it's best to develop a mood that suits the characters and build the story upon that rather than developing a delightfully complex story and then trying to figure out how the characters might fit into it. Here are a few examples of mood that are suitable for **Dark Ages: Werewolf**. Additional suggestions are available in **Dark Ages: Vampire**, but select with caution. What is appropriate for the creatures of the night is not always appropriate for the creatures of the wild.

Sadness and Despair

One common misconception about the Dark Medieval is that it's all fun and games for the Garou. After all, the Wyrms are relatively weak, the Black Spiral Dancers have retreated into their caverns, and the wilderness is thriving. Unfortunately, things aren't going as well as they seem. Most people in the Dark Medieval are relatively isolated, and isolation breeds distrust. This distrust breeds fear, fear breeds anger, and anger breeds violence. Battles claim numerous lives, and illness and poor hygienic conditions claim still more. Everyone knows the feeling of loss, and some succumb to it.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Storytelling is a daunting task. Here are a few tips for experienced as well as new Storytellers.

Moderation is Key

Players can lose interest if they're bogged down by too much description or too many combats. The opposite is also true; don't be too sparse with information or action. Give them enough to whet their appetite, then move on to something else. Always leave them ready for more.

Descriptions Should Add to the Story

When setting the scene, it's easy to go overboard. Do the players really need to know the scenes portrayed on every one of the 15 ornate tapestries hung on the castle walls? Probably not. Avoid the urge to dwell on the scenery by picking a few key features that contribute to the mood or provide important information. Your players can imagine the rest.

Develop Signature Characteristics for Storyteller Characters

Major characters and adversaries are much easier to keep straight when they have one or two striking characteristics. Select a theme song, use a prop or speak with an accent when playing the character, and your players will instantly recognize the person you're trying to portray. If you're good, they might even favor you with a shiver when you pull out the white gloves worn by the sadistic Lord Wellesly.

Set the Scene

It's nigh impossible to play a tear-jerking dramatic scene with happy, bouncy music in the background. Clue your players in to the mood you're looking for by adjusting the lights, using music or using some other appropriate detail.

Let Them Talk

As a player, nothing is quite as frustrating as a Storyteller who won't let you get a word in edgewise. This is not to suggest that you should let your players jabber on about out-of-game topics; in-character dialogue is the goal. Whenever possible, allow your Storyteller characters to do the talking for you and keep everyone in character. Nothing flows quite like a scene where all of the players are fully into their character's mindsets.

A plot built around the concept of sadness and despair is difficult to run, because without some hope on the horizon, your characters will probably fall into Harano. The question is, how can the characters retain their will to fight under such circumstances, and what victories can they possibly win?

Wild and Untamed

The wilderness is thriving. The Wyrms are relatively weak. The Garou hold the power of the sacred places. There is no need for them to check themselves, to hide or to retreat. In this sort of chronicle, the Garou take a more aggressive, active role in policing their lands and rooting out evil (or at least outsiders).

It is important to note that Garou in the Dark Medieval are generally very feral. By nature, they are aggressive. After all, few enemies have the strength to resist them, and they know it. Chronicles built on this concept can explore unchecked aggression toward the werewolves' enemies, but also toward other werewolves. After all, if the Garou are confident in their ability to keep the Wyrms at bay, there is nothing to prevent them from indulging in squabbles with each other. It takes a strong threat indeed to make them work together.

Desperation and Need

It's rare that the Garou have their backs up against the wall, but it has been known to happen. When they are faced with a problem that they cannot fix, will their pride prevent them from seeking help? This dilemma might become more complicated if the assistance is available only from an enemy tribe or, even worse, from a non-Garou. These campaigns explore what happens when the characters are forced to realize their limitations.

Of course, nothing comes for free. A request for assistance might easily lead to a situation in which the pack must prove itself to the Silver Fang sept leader by locating a lost Talisman or dance on the head of a pin to amuse a Shadow Lord hermit before he gives up a vital piece of information. The required tasks might range from simple yet humiliating chores to full-fledged quests.

Theme

The theme of the chronicle ties all of the story-lines together to create the big picture. One of the easiest ways to develop a theme is to look at the mood and the characters (if they have already been created) and determine the best way to create your desired mood. For example, if your desired mood is desperation, a theme of survival would work better with that concept than faith.

The theme can help draw your many plot points into a cohesive story. Without a theme, your chronicle will be more like a bunch of short stories about the same group of people. This is not to imply that every session and every plot device must fit into your chosen theme. You don't want to hit your players over the head with your theme. Instead, at the end of the chronicle, you want them to feel like they've participated in a story about something, a story with meaning.

But what meaning do you choose? The following lists a few sample themes for a **Dark Ages: Werewolf** chronicle. Of course, you may develop your own to suit your style and your players.

Conflict

At the risk of pointing out the obvious, werewolf society is based on conflict. Garou regularly engage in physical battles as well as battles of wits or of intelligence. Peace is a rare thing among the Garou. Chronicles built around the theme of conflict tend to be very action-oriented. They can be particularly interesting for groups of Ahroun or for packs with no Ahroun. How do they deal with these conflicts? And, perhaps more importantly, how do they deal with losing?

When basing a campaign on the theme of conflict, it can be very effective to include mental as well as physical challenges. It is very easy to concentrate on combat to such an extent that the characters are all but forgotten. The aftermath of a battle can often be as exciting or even more exciting to play than the combat itself.

Power

In order to truly protect Gaia, the werewolves need power. But what is power? Most Garou would argue that power lies in the land, in protecting and maintaining it, but some of the homids (Warders and Children of Gaia especially) argue that land is not enough. They believe that the mortals are more powerful by virtue of numbers than the Garou would care to admit. They realize that the cities will not simply collapse one day. As a result, they consider wealth and influence to be just as important as lands.

One thing to consider is how the characters can affect the power struggle. What power can they wield? This is particularly important when the characters are caught in a struggle between two forces that are both more powerful than they are.

Faith

Most people contend with illness, hunger and despair on a daily basis. What keeps them going? For

many, it is faith, a belief in something greater. The werewolves also believe in a greater good, but the Church does not see it that way. It considers werewolves to be tainted, an evil to be sought out and destroyed in the name of God.

This creates an interesting struggle. Is the Church ultimately a positive force or a negative one? The Church provides the backbone for the Inquisition and the Crusades. It works to seek out and destroy the protectors of the wild places. But is its message ultimately harmful? How do the Garou deal with the influence of the Church and its faith on their Kinfolk or in their protectorates? How do they deal with the churchgoers and the priests?

Progress

The Dark Medieval is a time of exploration and progress. New lands to the north and east have recently been discovered, and the explorers have brought back new innovations in mathematics, philosophy and medicine. Cities are growing faster than ever before and beginning to encroach on the wilderness.

Some Garou see these advancements as positive. If the humans are increasingly self-sufficient, they should require less policing and protection. Furthermore, some werewolves are eager to see new lands, to visit their spirits and seek out new caerns. But in general, the overriding attitude among the werewolves is not a positive one. They do not approve of innovations that threaten their lands or their way of life. Also, most Garou see themselves as superior to the humans. Any progress on the part of their inferiors only serves to threaten their position. The question asked in these chronicles is: What will the werewolves do about it?

Survival

Life in the Dark Medieval is difficult at best. Illness and poverty are very common, and while the werewolves live better than many nobles, life can still be a struggle. The Garou compete among themselves for resources such as food, caerns and Kinfolk. Only the strongest survive.

Chronicles built around the theme of survival often force the characters to make difficult choices about what is important to them. The situation can become even more complicated when they are forced to work with their competitors to defeat a greater threat such as a Wyrn creature or a Cainite. Can the characters work with a pack that has gained greater prestige (and with it, possibly rights to breed with certain Kinfolk or to the use of prime hunting grounds), or will working with rivals be too much for them to bear?

Plot

The plot is the framework for your story. It answers the question, "What happens next?" Before running a **Dark Ages: Werewolf** chronicle, you'll need to have some general ideas about the major plot points you'd like to explore. What scenes absolutely need to take place to make the story work? What additional conflicts can you add that will challenge your characters and expand on your theme and mood? What do you need to do to make those scenes run smoothly?


This is not to imply that you should write the entire story from start to end. The fact is, no matter how much planning you do, the players will undoubtedly do something unexpected. (One Storyteller who outlined the options to every game found that the players almost always chose Option D: "Something I Didn't Plan On.") One method that many Storytellers use is to list the plot points that have to happen to get from the beginning of the story to the end. For example, the characters might need to arrive at the village in time to save the carpenter's daughter Elana because she must live to fulfill a prophecy. The Storyteller then lists a few ways to make that happen, realizing that the players might employ a different tactic entirely. Regardless of how they choose to do it, the goal is to get the characters to the village to save Elana so that the plot can move forward.

Once you set out the essential plot elements, you'll need to develop the Storyteller characters and settings that will be involved in making them happen. Pre-game preparation allows you to focus fully on the players and their characters' actions during the game, and it can be very handy in getting yourself out of an unexpected situation. The focus here is on flexibility. If you tried to create every character that might appear as well as plan every possible combat, you'd be planning for months. The idea is to flesh out the essential scenes in detail then develop a few additional resources to point the characters in the right direction if they decide to go off in the wrong one. Some of the resources that can be helpful include statistics for Storyteller characters and adversaries, character histories for major Storyteller characters or adversaries, flowcharts or outlines of the plot elements, and descriptions or maps of settings (particularly useful for large combats).

All very well, but how exactly does a Storyteller develop a plot? The following suggestions are provided to get you started.

Developing a Plot

One of the easiest ways to select a plot is to develop a mood and theme first. The plot elements then work to



expand the mood and theme into a story. For example, if the desired mood is desperation and the theme is mistrust, the major plot elements might focus on a stranger who creates mistrust among the characters. Perhaps this stranger is a supernatural creature that has never been seen in the area before, such as a mage. The local werewolves don't know how to make him go away, and he is threatening the safety of the caern and the local Kinfolk. The sept leader has ordered the pack to get rid of the stranger... or else. To add a twist to the story, perhaps one of the characters knew this stranger before her First Change. The stranger was a neighbor or, worse, a relative of the pack's Galliard. This adds conflict within the pack, as the Garou try to decide whose side the Galliard is on. Additional plot elements could increase the tension within the pack. The question is, will the pack be able to work together to get rid of the mage, or will their mutual distrust tear them apart?

One possible method for developing a plot for a **Dark Ages: Werewolf** chronicle is to look at three different elements: the personal, the story and the world. By developing each of these types of plots, the Storyteller can weave them together to lighten things up at some times or to draw out the suspense in others.

The Personal Element

The personal elements of the plot can be built using the characters' histories, Backgrounds, Merits or Flaws. These subplots can often help develop the main story. For example, a Theurge character in our preceding story about the stranger might owe a favor to the Master of the Challenge. If the Master of the Challenge calls in the favor and asks the pack to seek out a specific Kinfolk in a distant village, the Theurge will be forced to choose between her duties to the pack or paying off her debt.

Other personal elements might not relate to the main plot at all but offer the players the opportunity to develop their characters. After all, a Garou's life is not based entirely on Garou business. Perhaps the character has a family, a love interest or a friend in need. Perhaps she has a grudge or a dark secret lurking in her past. By exploring these story lines at the right time, the Storyteller can draw the player's attention away from the main plot. What will the characters do when the Ahroun's mate needs assistance with a difficult labor right before their planned assault on the mage?

The Story Elements

This is what people are generally referring to when they use the word "plot." What has to happen to get the story from the beginning to end? In our example, the plot elements would be the arrival of the stranger, the sept leader's order to find the stranger and remove him from the area, the hunt and the

eventual confrontation. In general, the plot elements are essential to make the story work, while the personal and world elements help to flesh the story out and provide more varied roleplaying opportunities.

The World Elements

Stories don't happen in a vacuum. The world elements draw our attention to the Dark Medieval and its effects on the chronicle. What is the situation within the sept and the surrounding lands? What is happening politically and socially that might throw a wrench into the works? How will the outside world be affected by what's happening in the plot, and how will the plot affect what's happening in the outside world?

In our example, perhaps the mage is a scout for a group of mages who live just outside of the protectorate. In the past, they've kept their heads down because they wanted to avoid detection by the Inquisition. But now the caern and the magical power it holds have drawn their attention. How does the scout respond to the unfriendly welcome that the Garou give him? Perhaps he starts spreading rumors about the demonic creatures in the woods and brings the Inquisition down on the sept. Or perhaps this particular caern holds some special significance to him, so he betrays his own people and starts a battle between the mages and the werewolves over the control of the caern. These elements can also explore the Garou Nation and its relationship to the story. What will the neighboring septs think if they are asked for help in tracking down this mage? How will it affect the power and reputation of the characters' sept?

Plot Suggestions

The development of personal, story and world elements is just one method of creating a plot that will engage and delight both the players and the Storyteller. But this type of plot takes a lot of planning and forethought to develop. Unfortunately, we don't always have that kind of time, and sometimes your players will decide at the last minute that they'd rather play **Dark Ages: Werewolf** than go to the movies. (Who wouldn't?) The following are a few plot ideas to get you through those last-minute games.

A Temporary Alliance

A powerful Wyrms creature or group of creatures is in the area, and the sept can't handle it alone. The threat is simply too great, so the sept sends the pack to a nearby sept to propose a temporary alliance. There's just one problem: The two septs haven't exactly been friendly in the past. This could be due to a personal vendetta between the sept elders, a past ill never forgiven or forgotten, or the influence of two tribes that just don't get along. It should

take all the persuasive powers that the characters possess to avoid a sound beating, let alone enlist the aid of their neighbors. If they succeed, it just brings up yet another problem. How well will the two septs work together? And what happens after the threat is defeated?

Mystic Visions

The Master of the Rite (or a local Theurge, if the pack does not live in a sept) has been having dreams that foretell a great upheaval in the not-so-distant future for the local Garou. The dreams could be about a battle or war, a growing Wyrn presence in the area, or they could possibly relate to one of the tribe's prophecies. The dreams are so consistent that she contacts the caern's totem for assistance, but the totem can offer no assistance. It suggests seeking out other spirits who might be able to shed light on the mystery. Possible suggestions for the spirit would be any of the totems of wisdom. To make the quest a little more difficult, try Luna herself. (Reaching the Incarna of Luna would require a long — and potentially epic — Umbral quest.)

Enduring Loyalty

A young man undergoes his First Change, which is ordinarily cause for celebration. The young man in question, though, has declared his intention to join the priesthood. His comparatively calm nature (perhaps he is a Child of Gaia, or simply has a very low Rage rating) has kept his secret safe for the moment, but there's no telling when the Church will become interested in his more "unusual" characteristics. Unfortunately, he refuses to choose another vocation, having gotten the idea somewhere that he would reform the Church from the inside. (Finding out who put this idea into his head might be the sub-

ject of yet another adventure.) Can the characters convince the young man to leave the church before the Inquisition — or, worse, the Cainite Heresy — begins to take some interest in him? Will they have to resort to force to ensure his safety? If so, how will he react to that?

Blood of My Blood

Late one night, a Kinfolk disappears from her nearby village, leaving only a few traces of blood on her bed as evidence. The pack soon arrives to track down the woman and bring her back. To the characters' horror, they discover (through the use of Gifts or discussion with the spirits) that the abductor was a vampire who used his powers of the mind to enchant the girl and whisk her away. Their task is to track down the fiend and discover how he managed to enter the village without any of the local Garou finding out. Any of the clans might make for an interesting culprit, but for extra fun, consider a Lasombra (possible allies within the Church), a Setite (obvious servant of the Wyrn) or a Gangrel (who might know the nearby woods as well as the characters).

Until Death Do Us Part

On the eve of her wedding to a local blacksmith, a teenage girl undergoes her First Change and rampages through the village, destroying homes and killing a few head of cattle. Her new husband finds her hiding in a barn later that night and, instead of protecting her from the angry townsfolk, he turns her in. The local priest quickly condemns her to death, and the combined influence of the clergy and the man she loves manages to convince her that she is possessed by the Devil.



A spirit scout (or a pack totem, if it is more appropriate) notifies the local Garou, and they quickly set off to save the girl. Unfortunately, news of the situation has also reached a small hive of Black Spiral Dancers in the area. They see this as an opportunity to recruit another member. Who will reach her first, and how will the Garou react when they find out about the Wyrn-tainted Garou living in their backyard?

Into New Lands

Each new year brings stories of the wealth and promise of newly discovered land. These stories stir the blood of even the most settled Garou, but few dare to leave their caerns behind. Finally, the characters agree to travel into the new lands to explore, perhaps under duress or with visions of glory and honor in their minds. They travel on foot, perhaps in the direction of Turkey. It doesn't take long before they discover what looks to be an unclaimed caern. The pack joyfully moves right in and begins the arduous procedure of dedicating the caern, cleansing the bawn and establishing a protectorate. But the Theurge (or possibly the pack totem, if the pack is without a Theurge) notices something odd about the caern and the energy it holds.

What the characters don't realize is that the caern is used by some local mages for rituals on the nights of the full moon. Needless to say, they'll be quite dismayed to find out that the werewolves have set up shop in their sacred circle. But the werewolves aren't about to go back to their sept empty-handed. A physical — and mystical — confrontation is almost guaranteed.

Never Trust a Stranger

City life is difficult for the Garou, but the characters survive through wits and persistence. They've managed to avoid the notice of the Church and generally blend in with the mortal populace. This tentative peace is broken when a pack of lupus Garou arrives on the scene. It's the lupus Garou's first time entering mortal territory, and they don't quite understand why their reception isn't a positive one. The sight of wolves in the area is disturbing enough, but when one of the lupus changes into Homid form and walks the streets unclothed and obviously abnormal, the populace begins calling for a witch-hunt.

The characters will have their hands full educating the lupus on how to interact with mortals and calming said mortals before the Church (and the Inquisition) gets wind. If this isn't problem enough, the ruckus has attracted the attention of a vampire elder in town who rather resents the growing populace of werewolves in his normally peaceful feeding grounds.

A Bitter Homecoming

In a village not far from the sept's territory, a young man returns from a crusade, to the delight and joy of his parents and his childhood sweetheart. A celebration is planned in his honor, and the villagers invite their neighbors to share in their joy. A few Kinfolk from within the protectorate happily agree to attend the festivities. Unfortunately, the young crusader is not as happy as he seems. As a result of the atrocities he performed on crusade, he has been possessed by a powerful bloodlust-Bane and become a fomor. At the height of the celebration, the Bane takes control, and the crusader slaughters the villagers and all of their guests.

It takes little time for the sept to hear that a handful of Kinfolk are missing, and the elders immediately send a pack of Garou to investigate. In the meantime, the Bane has been busy gathering allies and settling in. It likes this new vessel it's found, and it doesn't intend to leave.

The Hunting Party

A local sept has recently been favored with prosperity and good fortune, and it is time for a celebration. After some consultation, the council of elders decrees that there be a hunt to begin the celebration. The characters are chosen to lead the hunt for a powerful Wyrn creature in the area such as a Jaggling, Black Spiral Dancer or even a demon. Why are they chosen? Perhaps this is an opportunity to prove themselves, an honor bestowed upon them as a reward for past valor, or an opportunity to redeem themselves if their reputation is less than sterling. Regardless, the whole sept is watching them. How well will they work under pressure?

Combat

It is a given that any **Dark Ages: Werewolf** chronicle will involve combat at some point. Because werewolves tend to engage in combat fairly frequently, it's easy to fall into a rut. A nasty creature appears. The Ragabash, Theurge and Philodox engage the less powerful assailants and triumph using a combination of wits, Gifts and skill. The Ahroun and Galliard rip their enemies to shreds. Howls of triumph. Lather, rinse, repeat.

It can become monotonous to engage in battle after battle. Here are a few ideas on making combat more interesting... and more deadly.

Difficulty is Everything

While it's obvious, it's still important to point out. If the enemies are too easy to kill, combat



becomes boring awfully quickly. If it's impossible to win, it becomes downright frustrating. Does that mean that you should never give the characters cannon fodder or a challenge that their characters can't possibly win? Not at all. But those should be the exceptions and not the rules. In general, you want to develop opponents and situations that challenge your players and force them to think before they strike but don't completely overwhelm them.

All of that is easy enough to say, but it's more difficult to put into practice than you might think. Some Storytellers reserve the right to fudge rolls when running combats to help to even the score. That may be appropriate for some situations. Another possibility is to have help in your back pocket. Are there any Storyteller characters who can occasionally show up to help the characters when it looks like all hope is lost? What about spirits? Or, if the pack is decimating the Banes that you worked so hard to create, you might have a group of Skull Pigs flank them from the trees.

These techniques can save a combat scene that simply isn't going the way it needs to, but it's important not to use them too often. They only work if the players are surprised, and they won't be surprised when Spits Scales, the Fenrir Ahroun, shows up for the umpteenth time to pull their bacon out of the fire. Besides, why is the pack around if you're going to have the Storyteller characters accomplish all of the important tasks? (This is good to keep in mind in all situations, not just combat.)

Work in Details Where Appropriate

In battles, werewolves tend to rely on their teeth and claws. Without the flash of swordplay and the rush of arrows whizzing by the combatants' head, combat can seem repetitive. Often, you'll have turns and turns of combat where nothing changes. The character claws at the frenzied Black Spiral Dancer. The Black Spiral Dancer claws back. They repeat this process until someone spends more Rage or botches. Really, how much fun is that? To break out of that rut, you can add in details to make each fight unique. The combat could take place on an incline, forcing both of the opponents to make Athletics rolls each round to stay on their feet. It could take place on gravel or on a sandy beach, and kudos to the character that uses a Rage action to throw sand in her opponent's eyes before attacking. By developing unique circumstances for each combat, you're working to make them interesting parts of the story rather than opportunities to roll a bunch of dice.

You can also allow your players to describe their shots after they take them. Intelligent Garou will rarely use special moves; after all, why body slam the fomor when claws do more damage? Those moves usually only come into use when the werewolves need to defeat their opponent but can't kill him for some reason. But that doesn't mean that all claws and bites are the same. After all, there is a difference between "Alexei Fights-for-Peace claws at the fomor," and, "Alexei Fights-for-Peace glances off to his left to see the door to the cottage open. Desperate to draw the fomor's attention away from the escaping villagers, he lets out a blood-curdling howl as he swipes wildly at the thing's exposed neck." The second description provides a little extra flavor and gives the Storyteller some additional information to ponder when deciding exactly what the fomor will do next.

One unique thing about combat in **Dark Ages: Werewolf** is of course the different forms that a Garou can take. In terms of description, this can be a very important distinction. A werewolf in Homid form treads carefully and deliberately through the forest, trying not to make any noise while sneaking up behind the Black Spiral camp. Her packmate, wearing the Lupus form, pads beside her in effortless silence. Suddenly, an enraged Crinos crashes through the trees, letting out a roar that wakes up the entire camp. See the difference?

Make it Visual

Without adequate information, it's almost guaranteed that your players are going to get frustrated. They all want to attack the fomori, but they chose not to spend Rage for this turn of combat because they incorrectly assumed that their opponents were within reach. They're frustrated because they would have done things differently if they had understood the lay of the land, and you're frustrated because you already described the scenery twice and they just don't seem to get it. But the simple fact is that you don't have a flip-top head (at least we assume that you don't), so your players can't see the setting as you visualize it. When it comes to combat scenes with multiple assailants or innocent bystanders, it's a good idea to supplement your setting descriptions with a map or diagram. Note the use of the word "supplement." Maps and diagrams are flat and two-dimensional. They're handy in plotting character locations, but they don't add anything to the mood that you're trying to develop. Without the added description, you might as well play a miniature game.

It sounds as if there might be a lot of work in developing maps or diagrams for the purpose of combat, but it can be very easy to do so. In a pinch, you can set down a book to represent the setting and use dice to represent the location of the characters. One

option is to color code the dice. For example, you might use black dice to represent the fomori and colored dice for the characters. Colored beads also work well for this purpose.

If you want to provide some additional detail, building blocks can be used to represent the buildings or other important elements in the scene. Some Storytellers use miniatures or figurines to represent the location of characters. (Some Storytellers use action figures, but that may add a little more humor than is appropriate for your group.) And, of course, it's always a possibility to create full-fledged maps for the climactic combats in your game. If you're artistic, you can develop them by hand. If you're computer savvy, you might try an architectural program. Many programs are available for non-architects that allow you to design rooms and gardens (and the garden features could easily be used to design a clearing in the woods if need be).

Make it Worth Something

On occasion, it can be fun to run combats that aren't directly linked to your story-line. It gives your players the opportunity to try out some new tricks and generally have fun with their characters. But most of the time, your combat should mean something. Remember that the characters have a purpose, and the purpose is not to travel around, fight random fights and advance in levels. In general, your games and the combats within those games should show some progress toward fulfilling that purpose. One suggestion is to think of the game like a movie. At the beginning of the movie, the protagonists fight the low-level opponents. They gradually work up to some of the more powerful lieutenants, all the while increasing in strength and power. Finally, they are powerful enough to challenge the supreme villain. They might defeat him, or he might make a daring escape at the end. The point is that all of their previous fights have been preparing them, both physically and mentally, for this final moment where the story climaxes. They've gotten this far, and they've bested their own demons to do so. Ultimately, even if the villain escapes, perhaps the lessons they've learned are enough to classify the encounter as a success.

Make the Most of the Pack

Beyond using the pack maneuvers listed in the combat section, how does the pack function in combat? Players often direct their characters to the opponent best

sued to their character's abilities. The Ahroun heads directly for the slathering, many-headed beast in the center of the clearing, whereas the Ragabash targets the smaller fellow slinking about in the shadows. Is this the best approach, or would the pack be more effective when working together in groups of two or three to bring down a single opponent?

Sun's Glory - A Chronicle Setting

Far to the east, in the land of the Bulgars, in an old, war-broken convent cellar, the monsters speak. One is bound, on the floor, burning. She is still conscious. Old symbols, tributes to forgotten gods, stain her white, dead skin. She weeps. Tears of blood fall. The others watch.

"I will not ask again. Your kind can see their holy places. I want them all mapped." The speaker is an ancient, bearded thing. He has long forgotten how to pretend to be a man. He speaks the rough German of old. He speaks slowly, barely able to make himself understood. Behind him, his followers, standing like priests, arms crossed, silent.

"I want to go home," the monster on the cellar floor says, her voice small and tremulous. "If I do this, will you let me leave?"

The oldest one pauses, strokes his beard. He was a man once. His face is craggy, lined and impassive.

"Yes," he says at last. "Do this for me, and I shall let you live."

He motions to his followers. They are weary, it has been a long night, and the work of hurting the thing on the floor has been strenuous. They loosen her chains and help her up.

The creature stands unsteadily. Vitae reforms her body, binding, untwisting, mending her dead flesh. She does not speak, or cry out.

"I will make this map. I will need certain tools. But I will make it in return for my freedom," she says, at last.

The ancient smiles, turns away. His acolytes follow him, in silence. They leave the cellar, chaining the heavy iron door behind them. The sky above the ruined convent is gray with the distant dawn.

"When the sun sets, we will find her these tools. We shall have this map." The eldest pauses, thinking. "And when she is done, Michael, you may take her to Ceoris and claim whatever reward your kind offers. I would have her keep her unlife, and perhaps the Tremere will do likewise. It doesn't matter. We have stories about her kind. The Lhiannan are not to be trusted."

"Done," the one named Michael says. "What then?"

"There is a valley to the west, in the lands of the Germans, following a river, flowing south to the sea. It is

a poor place. The kine there owe tribute to the German emperor, but they are ignored. In that valley, none of our kind can dwell in safety. The Lupines rule there. They have a holy place in that valley. We have never been able to find it. If I were to break that holy place and slay the wolf-things, then the rewards would be great. The Lhiannan will make that map, and she will tell us where the Lupines' shrine is, and we will deliver that valley to whomever wants it."

"The sun is rising," Michael says. "It is time to sleep."

Far to the west, the old Theurge stirs the last embers of the fire, and looks into the starry sky. The Leeches are coming, she knows. Sun's Glory must be told.

INTRODUCTION


This section details the Sept of Sun's Glory and some of the personalities therein, and it sets up the coming storm as the vampire warlord Arnulf prepares to lure the Garou out of their sept and use them to wreak havoc on humanity. The Storyteller should feel free to use the sept as a base for a chronicle, a possible destination or simply inspiration for creating her own settings.

History of the Sept

Guillaume Sun's Glory was renowned for his wisdom among the Garou. He saw the evils of the Leeches twisting, influencing and shaping the course of human history. He watched the Wyrms and Weaver gain power in the world through their vampiric minions. He taught other werewolves many secrets about how to defeat the Leeches.

Guillaume's life was changed on the night his pack died. They had been defeated after a savage battle with an ancient and powerful Leech. This vile corpse slew each member of Guillaume's pack, leaving only him alive. The vampire decided to let his minions have a bit of sport, so he let Guillaume flee, only to send out his lesser vampires to hunt him down like a wild dog.

Guillaume fled into the mountains. Though the ground was covered in snow and ice, he scaled the mighty mountains to escape from the Leech's minions. Finally, after an arduous and painful climb, he crested a peak. A Leech followed close behind him, but Guillaume had no strength left in his body. He could only feel emptiness in his heart. His pack was gone. He knew that he would die on the mountaintop in the snow. He prayed to Gaia for a bit of strength, so that he could at least fight to the end. The Leech reached Guillaume as he prayed. It grabbed him and flung him over the peak, causally breaking the Silver Fang's bones. Guillaume lay still and waited for the end.



Instead, the Leech screamed and burned. The vampire was so intent on the chase, that he had lost track of time. Now, the sun rose over the mountains. Guillaume watched as the first rays of morning turned the Leech to char. The vampire tried to flee, but summoning the last vestiges of his endurance, Guillaume grabbed the Leech and held it in the light. Soon, the Silver Fang held only ashes.

Afterwards, as Guillaume lay in the snow, giving thanks to Gaia, a vision came to him of the First Times. He saw the members of the First Pack, ancestors of the different tribes. They saluted him as they had saluted the first Silver Fang. Then, Gaia herself appeared in his vision and spoke to him. She told him that only the return of the First Pack could destroy the Leeches forever. Finally, the spirits of the mountains offered to give his pack a home. When Guillaume woke, his wounds had healed. He took the name Sun's Glory in remembrance of his victory over the vampire.

Guillaume spent many days and nights pondering his vision. He went off into the countryside and gathered members of all the other tribes. Word spread among the Garou about this Silver Fang gathering as many werewolves as he could. Most elders scoffed, and some accused Guillaume of attempting to lord over other tribes just like a typical Silver Fang. Guillaume brought his fellow werewolves back to the mountains, where they founded the Sept of the Great Mountains on the very peak where he had his vision.

Unlike other septs, Guillaume Sun's Glory sent the packs of the Sept of the Great Mountains far across the lands to fight the Leeches. Each pack had members of different tribes. As they crossed a territory, the pack member of the same tribe as the nearby sept would speak for the pack. The sept had many victories against the Leeches, and it grew in renown. More members came to join and learn from the wisdom of Guillaume Sun's Glory. The sept started accepting moon bridges from all other septs. Although they fought off a few attempts to wrest control of the caern, the moon bridges increased the prestige of the Sept of the Great Mountains.

Guillaume's renown grew, as did the sept's. Each year he sent trophies of leech skulls to the other princes of the House of Burgundy. The Sept of the Great Mountains became the Sept of Sun's Glory. After many decades of tending to the sept and destroying Leeches, Guillaume began obsessing about the death of his pack. Despite all efforts, the packs he sent out into the land could not find the one vampire which Guillaume Sun's Glory wanted destroyed above all others.

In 1215, war came to this caern. Horrible creatures — some say dark faeries — boiled out of the

mountains and swept down on the Burgundian peoples. No one knows why this happened, but some claim that the invasion was a campaign against some other foe, and it was just bad luck that brought them into conflict with the Garou. The invasion began in the autumn, when early snows blocked the valleys. All through the winter, the Garou were hunted down and destroyed. Humans offered children as sacrifice to these new dark gods. No aid was forthcoming. The Black Furies of Italy could not traverse the mountains; nor could the Fianna of Gaul come south. The Fenrir of the Black Forest were equally besieged. Moon bridges failed, and those few messengers who opened them found that the enemy patrolled the ways between worlds.

But Guillaume — now truly old, with 78 summers on his brow — stood firm. He counseled patience. The old wolf even attempted to parlay with the invaders. He was rebuffed, but not before his warriors were able to gain much insight into the disposition and numbers of the enemy. Wait until spring, he said. These are things of winter. He gathered every pack in his realm into the safety of the caern's bawn and waited. He sent messages to all of the neighboring septs. "When the snow melts," he told them, "then we shall utter such a howl that our enemies will tremble in fear." The snows melted in March, and the invaders found themselves beset by the fierce Garou. The werewolves offered no quarter, and the enemy was vanquished. In the aftermath, the sept's influence grew even further. Other tribes sent their young to learn under the great war-leader Sun's Glory. The peace that had been held by the Silver Fangs by threat of violence was now held by respect.

But now, Guillaume Sun's Glory lies dying, and like carrion crows, the princes of the Garou have come to lay claim to Guillaume's legacy and his sept.

The Sept of Sun's Glory

The Kingdom of Burgundy, is a poor, French-speaking area of the Holy Roman Empire. Nestled in the Saône Valley, the kingdom is isolated from the affairs of the French kingdoms of the west, and the Holy Roman Empire (of which it is a nominal part). Human authority is tenuous here, and the region's better days are long behind it.

This is a good place for the werewolves. With few cities, heavy forestation and barren, mountainous vales of little use to farmers, the Weaver ignores this place.

The southern reaches of the Germanic lands remain untamed. Here, the Fenrir of the German nations hold one of their mightiest caerns. Here also lies the Sept of Sun's Glory, a caern claimed by the Silver Fangs but neutral and open to all.

The Silver Fang House of Burgundy quietly keeps a peace among the fractious human populations of the region, settling disputes and making sure that the forces of the Wyrms were kept largely at bay. Burgundy's isolated position played no small part in this security. The Leeches had better things to be doing, a cynical Ragabash once commented. But when the Wyrms's servants attempt to creep into the protectorate, retribution is swift and final. The Kingdom of Burgundy may seem unimportant, but Garou and foeman alike respect the power of the House of Burgundy.

Caern: The Hidden Lake, above Montbelliard, in the province of Burgundy in the Holy Roman Empire.

Level: 4

Gauntlet: 3

Type: Honor

The caern, centered on the perpetually frozen lake, was founded as the Caern of the Great Mountains. By 1230, it has become known as the Caern of Sun's Glory.

Tribal Structure: Multi-tribal. This is the most important multi-tribal sept in Europe. The few others that exist comprise only two (or at most three tribes), and even those tend to degenerate quickly. This one has not. Although the Silver


Fangs and Fenrir dominate the sept, other tribes are well represented, and travelers from other lands are always welcome. The one exception is the Shadow Lords. Guillaume does not trust them, and while he does not object to an occasional visitor, he does not allow members of the tribe to stay in his sept. Once the sept leadership changes, of course, this policy might also change.

Totems: Officially, there is but one totem — that of Helios. Some Theurges speak of a strange lingering echo of another power, though — an ancient faerie creature that loved the sun too much, whose death from despair froze the lake forever. Such stories are usually written off as romantic nonsense, but it is certain that some power keeps the valley hidden from mortal eyes.

Geography

The valley is located high in the Alps, east of the town of Montbelliard. The glacial valley appears on no mortal map. A long, shallow lake that is forever frozen, even on the hottest days of summer, cuts through the valley. The temperature is always a little chill. In the summer, when the humid heat of the lowlands and hills rises, the valley is a place of cool peace and repose. More importantly, however, the only way to enter the





valley is through a narrow pass on the west side of the gash. The way is narrow — barely a half dozen hand-spans wide and only one man- or wolf-sized creature can enter at a time. Therefore, the valley is easily defensible, even by a small number of Garou. Such defense has rarely been needed, though. The last time an enemy even came close was in the battle of 1215.

The lake is fed from a small stream, bubbling up from a spring deep inside the heart of the mountains. This small rivulet of chill, glacial water pours endlessly into the lake, freezing as it touches the lake surface.

As a traveler enters the valley by the small, winding goat's path, she will first descend a rough-hewn staircase, worn by generations of travelers. The path leads down into the shadow of an ancient deciduous forest. The forest is not large, but it expresses a terrible sense of foreboding; a traveler who strays from the path might well be lost. A few hundred yards later, the forest gives way to the lake. The path continues, hard pressed against the sheer southern shoulder of the valley walls, curving for another mile, rising to a 30-foot drop onto the ice below.

At the western end of the valley lies a small mountain glade that is barely covered by thin alpine grass. A few huts stand where the permanent residents of the caern make their homes. Beyond lies the opening of the small cave complex where Guillaume holds court.

The Bawn

Technically the valley itself is the bawn of this caern. In reality, though, the mountains and passes for miles around are under constant watch by the werewolves. Guillaume believes that if an enemy is already advancing on the entrance to the valley, then it is probably already too late. Guillaume, like many an experienced warrior, believes in defense in depth. The Garou patrol a large area, beginning their defense leagues from the caern. If an enemy were to penetrate the defenses, he would be engaged many times by Garou patrols and ambushes long before he even reached a position to threaten the caern. Forewarned is forearmed, and knowledge of an intruder's movement beforehand ensures that Guillaume's troops can make the enemy pay dearly for every trespass.

The Center

The true center of this caern is somewhere within the frozen lake itself. There, the Gnosis bubbles forth and takes the form of warm spring water that melts a little of the ice at the east far end of the valley.

Graves of the Hallowed Heroes

Somewhere in the forest of the valley, a traveler might find a place littered with the bones of dead wolves mingled with those of men. This is the final resting place of any Garou who dies at the Sept of Sun's Glory. Only Guillaume, the Master of the Rite and any werewolf who is about to perform the Rite of the Winter Wolf knows the exact location. The area is protected by a number of warding rites, including the Rite of the Shrouded Glen. When a new Master of the Rite is chosen, she is shown the way to this area. Gatherings for the Departed are performed in the assembly area, and the Master of the Rite has the duty of taking the deceased's remains to the graves. The bodies are left there to decay, as the frozen ground does not allow for burial.

Recent Events

For three seasons, the Garou have whispered that the sept leader, Guillaume Sun's Glory, is dying. The great warrior denies such rumors. He stands as tall as ever, and his hard, lined face betrays no weakness. But sometimes, when he thinks no one is looking, Guillaume succumbs to harsh, racking coughs. He spits the blood away and returns to his duty, but those who watch him — such as political rivals and the many Garou and kin who love him — have noted that the coughing spasms have increased and that the great lord looks increasingly frail.

The Sept of Sun's Glory knows, though it dare not admit it, that one day, and soon, the old wolf will walk away, either to take his own life amongst the mountains, or to seek one final battle.

Word of this has reached far and wide. Diplomatic visitations from other caerns, tribes and septs have become more frequent. Many have genuine, important business, but it is obvious that the timing is precipitous. They come and say their pieces, but then they watch, and they leave with both the diplomatic responses and news of Guillaume's condition.

Guillaume waits. He is watching the young Garou of the sept and quietly finding out about younger visitors to the caern. Guillaume is looking for an heir, someone worthy of his position.

Guillaume has had two bitter failures in his life, however. The first came on the night of his Rite of Passage, as his neophyte pack attempted to root out a vampiric infestation in the hills of Savoy. The rest of the pack was lured, ambushed, trapped and annihilated, but Guillaume survived. At the time, he believed that he was fortunate. He fled back to the Silver Fangs protectorate, expecting sympathy and healing, but he found rejection and scorn instead. As a true Fang, he

was expected to share his pack's fate. He left the sept, and set about hunting vampires. He slew six, and most assumed that they were the same Leeches that killed his pack. In fact, those Gangrel were long gone. He did manage to slay several Cappadocians as they slept in their monastery. Though he was held as a hero for his deeds, the secret shame pushed him toward greater things and bigger risks.

He came to lead another pack, enforcing the will of the House of Burgundy throughout the region, and as an experienced pack leader, he decided to hunt down an ancient vampire. The vampire's influence was growing, and the thing had slaughtered several champions of the Fenrir and Fianna who had tried to hunt it. They were fools, lesser Garou, Guillaume had decided, and went hunting. Yet, the vampire broke Guillaume's new pack, disabling each and feeding them to its children. Guillaume's closest friend in the pack, the Ragabash Sarah of Lyon, sacrificed herself to allow Guillaume's escape. The vampire's children hunted Guillaume through the night, until one of them found Guillaume in the mountains. That night changed Guillaume forever.

His second shame changed him, made him a colder, uncaring man, but also gave him vision, forced him to think on a grander scale than that of a Garou warrior, leading a pack of only five fellows. Guillaume became a great leader of the Garou and the master of the Sept of the Great Mountains. Eventually, the Garou drove the ancient vampire from the region and into torpor.

But now, the War of Princes flares among the vampires of Europe. The Garou of Guillaume's sept — now named for him — strike at any Leeches they can find, regardless of which vampiric overlord they serve (not that the werewolves would know the difference, or care in any event). One of the Leeches has decided to do something about it. The warlord Arnulf has asked for quarter from all sides in the War of Princes, and asked that all recognize this other threat. The vampires have refused, but most factions have agreed to recognize the neutrality of those who are hunting werewolves.

The Garou of the Sun's Glory sept are sitting on the crossroads of three vampiric empires; the Fiefs of the Black Cross, the Courts of Love and the Sea of Shadows. The Gangrel warlord, Arnulf, has not declared allegiance to any of the factions in the War of the Princes. Indeed, he believes that his brood should remain aloof from these quarrels, except in return for reward. He knows that the two major factions — the Black Cross and the Courts of Love — would pay handsomely to see the Lupines cleared out of the Alps.

Arnulf remains a neutral mercenary, but the question remains: Where does his true loyalty lie? Some suspect that due to his contacts in the East, he

has ties to the *voivodate* and the eastern Tzimisce. Others note that his messengers travel even further east at times, and they wonder what he knows about the lands beyond.


Arnulf seeks to stir the Garou from the Rhône and Saône Valleys, as well as the surrounding hills and mountains. His hope is that they will attack their vampiric enemies in the cities, and, in the process, destroy the human civilization. His experience with the Garou has led him to believe that they are wild beasts, like himself, who are too often constrained by human law. Arnulf himself is a Feral, and he wishes to see civilization tumble. Vampires are too dependent on humanity and its works to be of any help. Therefore, he intends to use the Garou as his siege machine against mankind.

His childe, Wulfrick, has not been told the ultimate goal of Arnulf's campaign, and he dimly plans to deliver this land to the Gangrel as a domain of their own, neutral from the struggles of the High Clans. Such a plan will necessitate great slaughter of the werewolves, but if it could be done, Arnulf would be considered a great leader among the Gangrel. The Low Clan Gangrel could then demand more respect from the High Clans as well.

Arnulf, however, has little faith in his childe. Wulfrick was Embraced to slay Lupines, not to indulge in politics. He has little interest in a Gangrel "territory" — to him, all the wilds belong to the Ferals. He does not wish to see the Gangrel named among the hypocritical and ineffectual High Clans. He does wish to see Burgundy cleared of werewolves, though, and he does wish to deliver the province to whichever of the factions of the War of the Princes offers him the greatest reward, since he expects the war to destroy whatever it touches anyway. To this end, he has made an alliance with the young and ambitious Tremere sorcerer, Michael. Michael and Arnulf have come to respect each other, but Michael has plans of his own.

Two Tremere Covenant Houses lie in the province — a small coven in Marseilles, far to the south, and another operating from an old Hermetic chantry in the Alps north of Lyon. Michael knows that if the region were to be cleared of the Lupines, the Tremere covens of the western reaches of the Holy Roman Empire would have the breathing space to become powerful and secure bases of operation. His star in the clan would then rise considerably as a result. Perhaps the Tremere could become a powerful, feudal clan, capable of standing shoulder to shoulder with the Ventrue or Toreador.

Arnulf remembers Guillaume from that cold night on the mountains, and he recognized even then the



fire in the werewolf's heart. Arnulf is not stupid — he has no intention of challenging Guillaume directly, even with the Garou in his weakened state. Arnulf has hunted werewolves before, and he knows enough about them to fear their powers, especially on their “holy ground.” Nor does he wish to send any of his favorites against what is a dangerous, but ultimately irrelevant foe. He has assembled a small coterie of vampires to do his work for him. This coterie is there to work as spies and enforcers, and to tell him when the time is right to spring his trap.

Storyteller Characters

Many of the characters described here are not given game statistics for two reasons. The first is simply a space consideration on our part. But more important, it allows you as Storyteller to give them any traits you see fit, which personalizes them to your chronicles. The characters that are given statistics are the ones that are most likely to interact with the pack on a level that requires knowing this information (i.e., combat), but you may of course feel free to add or subtract from those numbers to suit the needs of your chronicle.

The Werewolves

Guillaume's pack still dominates the sept's politics. The pack, Helios's Fury, consists of Guillaume, Montgomery, Adalmund, Childeric and the German, Albrecht. They still command a great deal of respect. The Furies, as they are known, are all old men (with the exception of Childeric) — grizzled wolves with many winters on their brow, and many a kill to their names.

Montgomery, the Ritemaster

Montgomery is a Silver Fang Philodox who was a monk before his First Change. Now Montgomery is a historian, and he has traveled widely across Europe, recording the histories and legends of the Garou. He took an empty bound book from the corpse of a Tremere magician, and although the book is cursed and sick with Leech magic, Montgomery uses it to record the secrets of the Garou. Montgomery transcribed the Prophecies of Shadow, and other visions of the future, but he remains obsessed with history. Montgomery is the voice of reason and restraint in the sept, and he makes a good foil to Guillaume's warlike instincts. He holds the position of Master of the Rite.

Adalmund, the Trusted Squire

Adalmund is a Bone Gnawer Theurge, born of a minor Aquitainian merchant family. The spirits claimed him early, and his studies into the forbidden

arts ruined his family's meager wealth. The Bone Gnawers took him in, taught him the secrets of the Garou and watched over his First Change. Adalmund is clean, for one of his tribe, hearty and seemingly ageless. He is an adept politician, and he has been given the right to choose an heir for Guillaume if Guillaume dies before doing so. Guillaume has informed him of his choice of heir — Silver Howl — but Adalmund secretly doubts that the young Philodox is up to the task. Despite being a member of Guillaume's pack, Adalmund holds no official position at the sept.

Childeric, the New Addition

Childeric is a Silver Fang Galliard, and he is the youngest member of the Helios' Fury pack. When the previous Galliard died in the 1215 war, Childeric was but a young warrior, newly made fostern. He impressed Guillaume by jumping into the fray with a war-song on his lips, and the Sept Leader allowed him to fill the vacancy in his own pack. Childeric is older and more experienced than many of his sept-mates, but still feels awed by his pack. He holds the position of Talesinger.

Albrecht, the Aging Confidant

Finally, Albrecht is a Fenrir Ragabash, who is roughly the same age as Guillaume. He came to sept shortly after Guillaume claimed leadership, stating that he had followed a falcon there, and he has never elaborated. In his youth, Albrecht often played Devil's Advocate, taking up a contrary position to Guillaume, but as the years have worn on, Albrecht simply doesn't have the energy anymore. Albrecht held the position of Truthcatcher until recently, but he has abdicated this post.

Two other members of the Sept of Sun's Glory are also noteworthy.

Silver Howl, the Reluctant Heiress

Silver Howl, the character featured in the Legend of the Garou that opens this book, is a Philodox recently made adren. Guillaume's words to her — that she would be the sept leader — have terrified her, and she has not revealed them anyone. (Neither has Guillaume, as it happens.) Silver Howl is a capable warrior and a superb tracker, but her potential as a leader has not yet been tried.

Position: None

Breed: Lupus

Auspice: Philodox

Tribe: Silver Fangs

Physical: Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/5)

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/0/0)

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 4, Etiquette 3, Leadership 2, Melee 1, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Knowledges: Hearth Wisdom 2, Investigation 1, Linguistics 1, Politics 2, Rituals 4

Backgrounds: Ancestors 3, Pure Breed 5

Gifts: (1) Eye of the Falcon, Hare's Leap, Heightened Senses, Scent of the True Form, Truth of Gaia, Sense Wyrn; (2) Sense the Unnatural, Strength of Purpose; (3) Wrath of Gaia

Rank: 3 (Adren)

Rage 5, Gnosis 6, Willpower 7

Rites: (Accord) Cleansing; (Caern) Opened Caern; (Mystic) Totem; (Punishment) Ostracism, The Hunt

Fetishes: None.

Image: In her natural Lupus form, Silver Howl is a beautiful white-furred wolf. In strong sunlight, her pelt appears to glimmer as though surrounded by a halo. In Homid form, she is an attractive, if pensive, woman in her early 20s. She has pale skin and blond hair, and she dresses in loose furs.

Roleplaying Notes: Your twin revelations the night before the eclipse — that Guillaume has chosen you to lead the sept and that you are not ready to take up that role — have shaken you to the core. You want

nothing more than to serve Gaia, but you don't know if leading the sept is the best way to do it. You're sure on some level that you can be a leader, but you aren't certain if you have the will to be the kind of leader that Guillaume would want to leave behind.

History: Silver Howl is a relation of Guillaume Sun's Glory through his sister, a Silver Fang who later mated with a Kinfolk wolf. She experienced her First Change, her Rite of Passage and both of her rank challenges within the bawn of the Sun's Glory, and she has never known any leader other than Guillaume. Her biggest handicap toward her ascension to leadership of the sept is that, as a lupus, she does not think of herself as an alpha. She must somehow learn that a true leader is not always the strongest or the fastest, but simply the best suited to lead. This rather nebulous concept will doubtless prove difficult for her to accept, but she must if she is to assume the mantle of sept leader.

Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrn, Potential Traitor

The young Fenrir who challenged Guillaume for sept leadership and lost, Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrn, broods in frustration. He feels that he won the challenge, but that Guillaume arranged the "victory" and even the attack that distracted him ahead of time. He also believes (not necessarily incorrectly) that he could best Guillaume in physical combat. He knows full well, however, that another challenge wouldn't be recognized and that to simply attack Guillaume would be suicide. Though the young Ragabash does not wish to actually lead the sept, he desperately wants to see Sun's Glory removed from power.

Others

The following are all outsiders, present for political purposes.

Antonio is a Silver Fang Ahroun, sent by the failing House of the Conquering Claw in the Italian city-states, to attempt to negotiate an alliance between the House of Burgundy (and Guillaume's heir) and his lords. Antonio is a merchant by profession, but he is also a keen warrior. He is middle aged now, and most of his battles are political. He is an experienced politician, but his rage might get the better of him.

Helen of Genoa is a Black Fury Galliard, an attractive woman in her 30s, who was summoned from her convent school to the ways of Gaia. An intensely intelligent and aggressive woman, she seeks to increase the Furies' influence on the Sept of Sun's Glory. Capable of defending herself, composing lyrics and driving a



ruthless bargain, she is a complex and challenging figure who has a bright future ahead of her.

Harold of Burgundy is a Silver Fang Ragabash who seeks to solidify the House of Burgundy's control of the Sept of Sun's Glory, enforce Silver Fang dominance and eventually drive other tribe members out. His days as a trickster are over, so he puts his Ragabash skills to more political use instead. A thin, endlessly grinning man of middle years, he puts one in mind of a favorite uncle.

Baldar, Son of Thunderhowl, is a young Ahroun prince of the Fenrir, the son of the great Fenrir leader Lorkush Thunderhowl, and grandnephew of Guillaume's blood brother Albrecht. Baldar sees the caern as belonging to the Fenrir by right and to him by heritage. Only he can match the deeds of the great Sun's Glory and reclaim the caern to its true owners. He is arrogant and blunt. He has little interest in diplomacy. Yet Baldar is a quick learner, and he proves adept at playing the intrigues of the elders. He is brave and utterly honorable, however, and he will not take the caern by trickery.

The Vampires

These Cainites form a small coterie assembled by Arnulf for the purpose of rousing the Lupines to action. As such, he considers them all expendable, including his own childe. The Tremere he has recruited have their own reasons for following him and are ultimately loyal to their own masters, but Arnulf would be quick to slay them if he thought they were betraying him in any way.

Rachael, the Sorceress

Rachael is a pale, beautiful and cold young woman. A former mortal sorceress, she is an academic and problem solver. She would rather flee than fight, espe-



cially in the face of such fierce foes as werewolves. Her mission is to observe the enemy's strength. She has no qualms about sacrificing a few of her "friends" for the mission. She dresses in a severe nun-like habit. Under the habit, she has a trim physique and blond, boyishly short hair that frames with a hard Germanic face.

Clan: Tremere

Sire: Melchett

Generation: 9th

Embrace: 1190

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 3, Melee 1, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Academics 3, Investigation 4, Linguistics 4, Medicine 3, Occult 4, Politics 3

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Dominate 2, Thaumaturgy 3 (Rego Vitae 3, Creo Ignem 1)

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 4, Courage 3

Road: Humanity 7

Willpower: 6

Wulfrick, the Warlord's Childe

Wulfrick a devious creature of much low cunning. Hardly "intellectual," he knows enough to do



his master's bidding. He has ambitions, though. Wulfrick is an ugly creature of indistinct years and many bestial features. His hair was once blonde, but now it is a yellow and gray mess. A big, ratty beard and heavy eyebrows dominate his face. His fangs are long, protruding out of his mouth, often cutting his lip. He

has killed werewolves before, and he believes he is ready for them.

Sire: Arnulf

Clan: Gangrel

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1178

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3

Skills: Animal Ken 5, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Knowledges: Medicine 3, Area Knowledge 3

Disciplines: Animalism 4, Fortitude 4, Protean 5

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 1, Courage 5

Road: Beast 5

Willpower: 7

Other Vampires

Michael is Rachael's superior in the Tremere. A former priest turned magus and then vampire, Michael still wears priestly garb, and his hair is shaved as a penitent. He speaks softly, usually in Latin. His mission is to find out every aspect of the werewolves' defenses before committing his master's plan into action. He is not a combatant, but he has enough power to hold off even a determined assault from a Garou. Although Wulfrick is Arnulf's childe, Michael is the one Arnulf trusts to get the job done.

Dietlar is a Ventrue knight of the Fiefs of the Black Cross who has been dispatched to Montbelliard to observe Arnulf's mission and to ensure that the mercenaries do not threaten the interests of the Black Cross. Dietlar, despite his Germanic name, is of Frankish stock, and he was born in Cluny. His masters consider him a local expert, but Dietlar has no real wish to become an expert in any of the goings-on in the Saône Valley. He will fight bravely — he has a duty after all — but he attempts to flee if an opportunity presents itself.

Introducing the Characters

The Sept of Sun's Glory accepts cubs of any tribe, and many packs of great renown have made their Rites of Passage under the guidance of the sept. At any given time, up to a dozen cubs of all tribes and from all across Europe, can be found at the caern in preparation for their Rites of Passage. This would make an obvious hook to guide the characters into the story,

and it offers new players an opportunity to experience the existence of the werewolves from the beginning.

Alternatively, many young cliath Garou frequently travel to Burgundy to study the lore of the knowledgeable elders or to learn Gifts or rites. On occasion, Errants have strayed into the sept's bawn and been brought to the caern for help finding their way again. More than once, such Errants have joined packs of their fellows and rejoined the Garou Nation.

As Guillaume ails, Garou from other septs have come supporting diplomatic initiatives or perhaps to challenge Guillaume's heirs when Sun's Glory dies. Such characters need not be politicians — they could be messengers, spies or soldiers. Old friends of the sept might even have dispatched them in order to ensure that no "undesirable" heir dares to claim the name of Sun's Glory and his sept. Others might simply wish to ensure that the politics do not undermine the sept's true goal — taking the battle to the Wyrms.

Story Ideas

The following are story seeds involving the Sept of Sun's Glory. Feel free to fold, spindle and mutilate them as necessary to better suit your troupe and what they want to get out of **Dark Ages: Werewolf**.

The Passing of Sun's Glory

The most obvious story to use with this setting is that of Guillaume Sun's Glory's death and the ascension of a new sept leader. This is an important story, one that could form the basis of an entire chronicle. Some things for the Storyteller to consider:

- How did Guillaume die? If he dies suddenly in his sleep or in battle, Adalmond and Silver Howl are the only two Garou who know of his wishes for the sept. If he is murdered, the chronicle can become a kind of whodunit as the characters (who, perhaps, are outside parties or are deemed capable and worthy of investigating the matter) search for who had a motive for killing him and was able to do so. An obvious suspect would be Laughs-in-the-Face-of-the-Wyrm. Depending on what kind of story you wish to tell, he could make a good culprit or an excellent red herring.

If, however, Guillaume left the sept to perform the Rite of the Winter Wolf, he almost certainly makes his wishes known before leaving. The characters must then contend with the multitudes of challenges aimed at Silver Howl. Perhaps she nominates the characters as special guardians or peacekeepers and secretly asks their advice on how to run the sept.

• Who else is present? A number of other tribes — the Fenrir and the Shadow Lords in particular — would love to take over the sept. Perhaps the characters are even representatives of these interests and could attempt to wrest control of the area from Silver Howl. If not, they might be able to ferret out such attempts and report or simply thwart them.

• What are the vampires doing? Arnulf and his minions don't understand the nuances of Garou politics and society any more than werewolves could name the major players in the War of Princes, but when the great howl of sorrow erupts from the mountains upon the death of Guillaume Sun's Glory, even the Leeches know that something is going on. Arnulf — or the more canny Michael — might take that opportunity to strike against the sept in some way.

• How do the spirits react? Helios granted special favor to Guillaume, but he is a proud and fickle spirit, and he might not respond well to any turmoil surrounding the passing of the torch. He might demand a quest to slay the vampire that killed Guillaume's pack (Arnulf's sire, Pard, as it happens), or the sept might send a pack to venture to Aetheria to visit with Helios and gain his blessing for the new leadership. If Helios withdraws his favor, the caern itself could fall.

Emissaries

The sept is loosely allied to three “nearby” caerns — the Sept of the Blood Fist in the Black Forest, Diana's Mirror in Italy and the Great Caern of the Lake east of the mountains. Relations are strained, however. Frequent political “issues” crop up, upsetting relations and leading to bloodshed. While the septs can communicate by magical means or open moon bridges, it is still considered better manners not to waste Gnosis or upset the sept's totems by using such methods. Sun's Glory has always relied on messengers traveling by land. This allows the sept to both impress their fellows and gather intelligence along the way.

The characters, someone decides, would make perfect emissaries. They can deliver messages — traveling across hostile country and then having to negotiate on behalf of the sept. In times of trouble, characters could be called upon to journey even further afield. Such stories would make interesting changes from the routine of the chronicle, as well as offering opportunities to encounter different challenges and engage in long-distance politics.

War Histories

Though they might deny it, the war in 1215 worries the Garou of the Sept of Sun's Glory. Asking one of the sept elders will result in a shrug and “They bled well enough” in response. But they do worry. They are especially worried that the enemy might return. During that strange winter, the enemy swept across the mountains, heading westward. Fianna Theurges claim that these warriors were of the fae — dark knights of the Unseelie Court. Montgomery especially would well reward any pack of youngsters who learn the nature of the foe.

Learning such a thing would require investigation and dealing with undesirables — from the faerie folk themselves, to such creatures as Feral vampires and mortal sorcerers.

But, as an added complication, those faerie knights did not entirely retreat to their homelands. They left spies behind to watch for potential foes, and a troop of those knights would be more than a match for any young werewolf pack.

Assassinations

A major enemy of the sept — be it a Shadow Lord emissary from Hungary, a vampire prince or a priest of the Circle of Red — is traveling in the region, and the elders want her dead. The characters are given the thankless job of plotting her murder.

This story could have many twists and turns. The enemy might know that she is marked for death and take appropriate steps. Or conversely, the enemy might be fleeing some other enemy, and the pack finds itself facing a three-way battle uncomfortably close to the sept bawn or amongst the humans of the surrounding towns.

The pack could murder the enemy in her bed and return to the sept with her head, only to be given no renown. After all, they just committed a cowardly murder. If the enemy's friends come looking, they will be looking for the pack, and perhaps the pack will be out of favor with the sept. The elders do not wish to be seen stooping to such tactics. The character might make excellent patsies.

Or the enemy (if she is a Garou) might have come to make her peace with the Sept of Sun's Glory. Maybe she arrives at the sept, and peace will be made, and a celebration will be held. But maybe the pack finds her first.

Frozen Hearts

The spirit that chills the lake is not dead but sleeping. During a long, hot summer, the spirit stirs in its

sleep, and she calls to her faerie kin to take her home. The characters notice the strange phenomena — maddening music just beyond hearing, the lake ice melting or perhaps dream of a terrible sadness and loss.

Maybe only the pack hears it, by dint of their pack totem (whatever it happens to be). The elders might acknowledge the characters' concerns but not devote much energy toward it. (After all, *they* can't hear the music.) Depending on the pack's standing, the elders might ignore their warnings entirely.

But as they wait, old and powerful faeries are gathering and moving closer, and they might be powerful enough to reclaim the hidden valley for themselves.

A Man of God

A poor monk has settled in one of the mountain vales close by. A decent and incorruptible man, he ministers to the shepherds and country folk of the region. He even performs small miracles for people. The man's faith is staggeringly powerful. Even in the sept's bawn, the monk's faith seems to dampen rituals and summonings. Moon bridges flicker and die, and spirits do not answer. As time passes, it becomes clear that the man's presence is the cause. The pack could be assigned to "solve" the problem.

The monk will not defend himself if the Garou come near, but God will not let them harm him without cost to them. Bursts of shining, painful light blind them; their blood burns, their Gifts fail. If he is to be killed, he must be killed with claws or bare hands.

If the characters take a different approach and speak to the monk, they find themselves in the presence of a truly pious Christian. Worse, the man is likeable, funny, charismatic and has a host of stories to tell. Perhaps he even knows the Garou for what they are. He wants to learn more about them. He will feed them, trade stories about the world outside and even help them out on occasion. If the monk is properly respected, he could be a valuable ally.

But that doesn't change the fact that his faith is disrupting life among the Garou. The monk could perhaps be persuaded to move further away

from the sept, but that will make life even harder for him and his flock. If the characters take too long to reach a solution, the elders of the caern might take action themselves.

Rumors of War

A human magus, who claims to belong to the Order of Hermes, finds his way into the sept's heart and demands an audience with Guillaume (or whoever is the new leader). If threatened, his magics are powerful enough to hold a determined attack off, but he will do his best to deliver his message. Guillaume Sun's Glory apparently owed the magus a boon.

The mage is an upstart. He is disrespectful and snide, and many of the Garou favor killing him as soon as he has said his piece. But his news is useful. The Order of Hermes wishes to strike at the vampire magi of the mountains. He offers the sept a deal — help him destroy the nearby Tremere stronghold, and in return, he will ensure that they do not come back. The elders appreciate this, knowing that if the fortress were to be destroyed, there would be good hunting among the fleeing Leeches.

Maybe the characters are assigned the thankless task of escorting the irritating, arrogant and condescending magus while he is in the mountains, or helping him prepare for a strike on the vampire chantry. The mage will use his power to intimidate the characters into co-operation. He also makes it very clear that there are other mages waiting for word from him — if anything were to befall him, they know exactly where he went. Perhaps the characters are asked to spy on him as he prepares. If the mage and his allies notice, they will respond violently. Or perhaps the mage has another agenda — to steal the power of the caern. The mage has allies based in Geneva, which is known to be host to a powerful sect of human mages. The elders have always suspected that this sect will become aware of the valley, sooner or later, and that they might make moves to steal it from the Garou.

Even if things go according to plan, expect many double-crosses. Neither side wishes to have dealings with the other, neither side trusts the other, and the sept elders would be very pleased to see the holder of an unpaid favor either satisfied or disposed of.



Thomas Skyfire Looked to the heavens

and asked the spirits which way was home. When they answered, the young Galliard assumed Lupus form and began to trot east toward the city of Acre.

The evening had been disappointing. He had hoped to find the mysterious old wolf-spirit again and perhaps learn a new Gift (or at least be teased with some riddle or prophecy), but he had waited in the Umbral desert and seen nothing but rats, snakes and the occasional Gaffling. Perhaps there was a way to summon the spirit, but Thomas was no seer. In fact, his home sept didn't know quite what to make of him. Born under the gibbous moon, Thomas had entered his First Change on the same night as a fiery star had streaked across the heavens. That star had earned him his name, but even the wisest Theurges had no idea what it might portend. A sound of panting stopped Thomas in his tracks, and he looked over to see a red wolf padding across the sand toward him. His heart leapt — it was the wolf-spirit! Perhaps he could still learn something tonight.

He was expecting the wolf-spirit to pad up and sniff at him, as it often did, then settle down and converse with him. He was not at all expecting it to assume a man's form. The man looked old — not merely aged, but haggard, as the years had treated him roughly. He had a short beard and graying hair, and he stood naked on the dune. Thomas assumed his Homid form as well, but he could not think of a greeting.

"Thomas," the man said, "I have little time to explain or to stay. I have come to give you a prophecy." Thomas could only nod. "Are you ready then? Good." The man took a deep breath and cast his eyes downward at the sand while he spoke.

"I saw new lands, and old lands made new. I saw the Weaver ascendant and the Wyrn not far behind. I saw a great king crushed beneath the heel of a mighty warrior. I saw a great beast with an ever-changing face walk alongside a pack of wolves and then leave. I saw so many things that I could not possibly remember them all, and then finally, I saw a great bird rise, carrying another Garou on her wings, and I knew that this Garou would see the end, not I. And I wept then, and asked Gaia, 'Have I not sworn to carry your words?' And she answered, 'Songs of Shadows, you have, but your poor heart would burst if you saw the end. I have but one more sight to show you.' And she showed me the sun blackened and the humans running confused, and the rest of the Garou arguing and remembering the prophecies I had brought them before. I saw that they remembered my words, but I did not see if they heeded them. I only knew that the great darkening of the sky was a beginning."

The man slumped to the ground, exhausted. Thomas knelt next to him. "Is that all, Songs of Shadows-rhya?"

"Isn't that enough, Thomas Skyfire? Now, take that to your people and let them do as they may with it. I must return home, where I intend to die near my friends and mate. I have sung enough songs, I think."

Thomas rose and the elder Garou began to fade. As he disappeared, Thomas looked through his transparent form and saw something he could not understand — a place of great spires and uncountable humans — all marching in time to the Weaver's song.

And Thomas Skyfire knew that someday, it would all end. But somehow, after the last prophecy had come to pass, there would be something else.



APPENDIX

"Wealth is lent us, friends are lent us, man is lent, kin is lent, all this earth's frame shall stand empty."

—"The Wanderer," author unknown

In this chapter, players and Storytellers will find sample fetishes, talens and spirits, along with the totems that the Garou follow and what responsibilities those totems place upon their children.

Sample Fetishes

Fetishes are often difficult to come by, as most sept leaders would rather keep these powerful items hidden than allow them to fall into unworthy hands. Legends tell of immensely powerful fetishes that are used in bygone days, but most of these are either lost to the mists of time or hidden within the most secretive caerns. Beyond this, the Church looks upon many fetishes as pagan symbols and satanic tools and destroys them when possible. Sometimes, though, fetishes are assumed to be holy relics and are taken into Church custody, which is almost as bad.

Nevertheless, fetishes are still popular as symbols of prestige and as powerful weapons against the Wyrms. The following is a list of sample fetishes available for use in a **Dark Ages: Werewolf** chronicle. They are ranked from 1 to 5, corresponding to the Fetish Background. Characters with this Background begin the game with one or more fetishes, up to their level in the Background, and Storytellers are encouraged to create fetishes beyond this small sampling.

While most fetishes are not designed for combat, every tribe occasionally fashions such items. Different regions often develop different variations on a similar theme. For example, a klaive made by the Fianna might have spiral or knotwork designs on a fairly wide, straight blade, while a klaive forged by a Silent Strider might be narrow, curved and engraved with Arabic writing. Each tribe also has certain weapons it favors, such as the warhammers and mauls of the Fenrir or the double-headed axes of the Black Furies. The varied tribes use swords, bows, spears and other simple weapons, each respecting the ancestral weapons of their culture.

The Gnosis rating indicated is the difficulty on a Gnosis roll to successfully activate the fetish in question. Once activated, a fetish remains active for an entire scene. Remember that a character cannot use Rage and Gnosis in the same turn, meaning that Garou usually activate their fetish weapons before charging into battle, if possible.

Anklet of False Trails

Level One, Gnosis 5

When activated, this fetish anklet will disguise the trail of its wearer as that of another animal. An Anklet of False Trails is made from the braided fur or skin of the animal whose trail will be mimicked. For example, a braided deerskin anklet will leave the tracks of a deer, while a rabbit-fur anklet will simulate the trail of a rabbit. This fetish contains a mockingbird- or chameleon-spirit.

Eye of the Leech

Level One, Gnosis 6

The dried, preserved eye of a vampire, this fetish is normally kept in a small leather pouch tied around the neck. When activated, this fetish "cries" blood through its surface if its user is being actively watched by a vampire. Garou who spend time in

cities greatly value these items. A leech-spirit is used to create this fetish.

Owl Feather

Level Two, Gnosis 6

A single owl feather taken from a living bird, is braided into the Garou's hair or fur. When activated, this fetish subtracts one from any difficulties involving stealth or quiet and allows its wearer to move with total silence while in the Umbra. An owl-spirit must be bound into this fetish.

Owner's Bridle

Level Two, Gnosis 6

This simple leather bridle allows a werewolf to mask its predatory nature from a riding animal for a time. When activated and placed on a mount, the animal will respond to the user of the fetish as if she were its owner. The mount will become friendly or skittish, depending on its relationship to its owner, but it will not have the instinctual fear of being approached by a predator. The effect lasts one hour per success on the activation roll. A trickster- or chameleon-spirit is bound into this fetish.

Dionysian Horn

Level Three, Gnosis 7

This drinking horn is usually decorated with engravings of satyrs and revelers dancing and feasting. When activated, any liquid poured into the Dionysian Horn becomes a potent wine. This wine restores health levels up to the number of successes on its activation roll (including aggravated damage), but it also increases all difficulties involving Perception or Dexterity by one for the remainder of the scene. A grain-spirit is bound into this fetish.

Shield of Arrows

Level Three, Gnosis 7

A peasant with a crossbow can be just as dangerous as a trained knight with a sword, and a line of trained archers has been known to turn the tide of a pitched battle. While larger shields provide some cover, their weight and size detract from their usefulness in close combat. This small shield provides protection from missile attacks while retaining maneuverability.

When activated, the Shield of Arrows adds two to the difficulty of all ranged attacks made against its user. Most arrows, bolts and other projectiles

that would ordinarily inflict damage impact against this small shield instead and fall to the ground. For melee purposes (or when the shield is not activated), it acts as a small shield. A turtle-spirit or earth elemental is bound into this fetish.

Amulet of Tongues

Level Four, Gnosis 8

This small wooden talisman is hung around the neck on a leather cord. When activated, its wearer can understand all language and forms of communication, including spirit speech. This fetish does not grant its wearer the ability to speak these languages, nor does it give insight into the written word. It instead acts as a sort of spiritual translator, uncovering meaning in otherwise foreign speech patterns. A cuckoo- or cockroach-spirit is bound into this fetish.

Klaive

Level Four, Gnosis 6

Klaives are honored and respected among the Garou, serving as symbols of prestige and used in ritualistic duels. Made of pure silver, these ceremonial daggers are deadly for Garou to forge or wield. A werewolf who carries a klaive loses one point from her effective Gnosis rating (see p. 92). These fetishes usually contain bound war-spirits, allowing them to inflict aggravated damage upon non-Garou enemies. Klaives without spirits exist, but they do not inflict aggravated damage to non-werewolves. A Garou does not need to attune a klaive that has no spirit within, however.

Drawing a klaive on another Garou is a serious matter, as such duels are usually to the death. These duels are rare, resulting from gross insult to a Garou's honor.

The difficulty to attack with a klaive is 6, and it inflicts Strength + 2 damage. Because it is a silver weapon, werewolves can not soak this damage except in breed form (for homid and lupus Garou; metis can not soak this damage at all).

Grand Klaive

Level Five, Gnosis 7

Tales of heroes wielding these legendary weapons can be heard at moot fires across Europe. As large as swords, these fetishes are made of silver like their smaller counterparts. A Garou who carries a grand klaive loses two points from her effective

Gnosis rating (see p. 92). Like the smaller klaives, these fetishes usually contain bound war-spirits, allowing them to inflict aggravated damage upon non-Garou enemies. Grand klaives without spirits do not inflict aggravated damage to non-werewolves and need not be attuned.

Exceedingly rare, these extraordinary weapons are often handed down through werewolf families, especially among the Silver Fangs, Fianna and Shadow Lords. Often, a second spirit is bound into the fetish, sharing in the honor and legendry of the sacred weapon. These secondary spirits are varied in nature, but Gnosis-spirits such as Englings are common. In some unique grand klaives, these spirits provide the fetish with some additional power or ability beyond its standard use as a weapon.

The difficulty to attack with a grand klaive is 7, and it inflicts Strength + 3 damage. Because it is a silver weapon, werewolves can not soak this damage except in breed form (for homid and lupus Garou; metis can not soak this damage at all).

Unicorn's Ire

Level Five, Gnosis 8

This powerful fetish lance looks to be made of smooth ivory, with a handle resembling a unicorn's horn. When activated, the lance inflicts Strength + 5 aggravated damage to creatures serving the Wyrms or tainted by its influence. It will do no

SCAR FETISHES

As a reward for glorious deeds or sign of great accomplishment, many Garou are gifted with ritual scars. These scars are then bound with spirits in elaborate ceremonies, and they subsequently become fetishes. The spirit involved usually has some relation to the deed accomplished, and war-spirits are particularly common for Battle Scars. The Storyteller should feel free to come up with unique powers for these fetishes or simply copy the powers of one of the fetishes listed here.

The Garou gains renown for having such a scar, and it serves as a token of respect among his tribe and other werewolves. The Fianna, Fenrir and Red Talons often use scar fetishes, but these markings are rarely seen among the other tribes. Warders and Bone Gnawers, however, sometimes use fine tattoos that are not so painful to acquire and stand out less in human society.

damage to creatures or items free of taint, however. Instead, it passes through harmlessly without leaving so much as a mark. A Jagglings of Unicorn is bound into this fetish.

Sample Talens

Armor Beetles

Gnosis 7

These spirit beetles are found in the deep Umbra, but they can be convinced to serve as talens in the physical world. A Rite of Binding is performed when this agreement is made, and the Armor Beetle turns to onyx. When activated, these talens return to life and can be swallowed, hardening the skin of the user and granting extra protection from attack. Soak dice are added equal to the number of successes on the activation roll. The effects last for the remainder of the scene.

Bane Arrows

Gnosis 4

These obsidian-headed arrows seek out Banes whether they are visible or not, automatically dealing three dice of aggravated damage (in addition to any successes rolled). This attack is so agonizing to Banes that they cannot help but scream out in pain. Some minions of the Wyrms can sense these talens and might attack before the archer has a chance to fire. Spirits of war, air or pain must be bound into these talens.

Candle Talens

Candle talens have a variety of uses. These candles must be used indoors, and they alter the mood of a single room or hallway when activated. For example, a candle lit in a chapel will affect the chapel itself, though not an attached confessional or rectory. Candle talens can be simple or ornate, but they last only three hours before the bound spirit is released. If the candle is snuffed sooner, it can be activated and lit again at a later time, functioning for the remainder of its three-hour duration.

Harmony Candle

Gnosis 6

Any spirit of tranquility or peace can be bound into this talen. While the candle burns, frenzy difficulties increase by three.

Purity Candle

Gnosis 5

Any spirit that opposes the Wyrms can be bound into this talen. While the candle burns, Wyrmtainted creatures in the room must make Willpower checks to keep from coughing violently.

Sanctuary Candle

Gnosis 8

Any non-aggressive spirit can be bound into this talen. While the candle burns, no creature within the room can intentionally do harm to any other.

Pegasus Tears

Gnosis 5

These talens look like smooth, clear pebbles, almost like beads of the purest crystal. In fact, these small stones are dewdrops given solid form by the water spirits within, bound during the first rays of a spring morning. When activated, a single Pegasus Tear can be swallowed to counter the effects of poison or any other ailment that comes as the result of food or drink. This talen works similarly to the Gift: Resist Toxin, but also negates supernatural effects, such as faerie magic.

Seeds of Rebirth

Gnosis 7

When activated and dropped on the ground, these seeds quickly burrow into the soil and begin growing. Within minutes, a tangle of dense brush will grow from that spot, blocking roadways or obscuring forest paths. For each success on the activation roll, five square feet of brush is created. Variations on this talen create different types of foliage, depending on the type of spirit contained within. For example, a hedgehog-spirit could be bound to create thorn bushes, or a woodpecker-spirit for a thicket of trees.

Sample Spirits

The examples given here are in no way meant to be all-inclusive. Everything in the world has a spirit; use these as guidelines when creating such beings for your chronicles.

Animal Spirits

Garou have a great deal of interaction with animal spirits. When a Garou kills an animal for food, it is customary to seek out a spirit of that

animal type to appease and thank it. Failure to do so can bring the anger of their patron spirits, resulting in fewer of those animals being born into the world. For example, offending a deer-spirit could result in a population decrease that causes many wolves to starve.

The following are some sample animal Gafflings:

Bear

Willpower 8, Rage 7, Gnosis 7, Essence 22

Charms: Armor, Healing

Deer

Willpower 4, Rage 4, Gnosis 6, Essence 14

Charms: No special Charms

Falcon

Willpower 10, Rage 6, Gnosis 5, Essence 21

Charms: Swift Flight

Elementals

These four spirits are the manifestations of the basic elements of nature, the building blocks of life. They can range in power anywhere from Gafflings to Incarnae, sometimes having their own elemental domains. The following are examples of minor elementals that Garou Theurges can contact.

Air Elemental

Willpower 3, Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Essence 18

Charms: Create Wind, Updraft

Earth Elemental

Willpower 10, Rage 4, Gnosis 5, Essence 19

Charms: Armor, Umbraquake

Fire Elemental

Willpower 5, Rage 10, Gnosis 5, Essence 20

Charms: Blast Flame, Create Fires

Water Elemental

Willpower 6, Rage 4, Gnosis 10, Essence 20

Charms: Cleanse the Blight, Healing

Englings

These Jagglings of Gaia are spirits of Gnosis that the Garou hunt during moots. After a successful hunt, the participants thank the Engling for giving itself to strengthen the Garou. If the ceremony is performed properly, the participants regain all their Gnosis, and the Engling reappears elsewhere in the Umbra.

Willpower 5, Rage 1, Gnosis 10, Essence 16

Charms: No special Charms

Lunes

Jagglings of Luna, these spirits appear as shimmering ribbons of light surrounded by blue and gold auras. Their demeanors are tied closely to the phases of the moon, and they suffer madness during the full moon. Lunes have the ability to open any moon bridge at will, which they sometimes perform for Garou who successfully petition them (a daunting task, to be sure). Moon Bridges opened by Lunes that are suffering from lunar madness lead somewhere entirely different from where a Garou requested to go.

Willpower 8, Rage 4 (8 during the full moon), Gnosis 7, Essence 19-23

Charms: Open Moon Bridge

Stormcrows

Stormcrows act as the eyes and ears of Grandfather Thunder, the totem of the Shadow Lords. They are in constant communication with him and often serve as pack totem avatars for the Children of Thunder.

Willpower 9, Rage 7, Gnosis 6, Essence 22

Charms: Create Wind, Tracking

The Wild Hunt

The Wild Hunt is a spiritual manifestation of fury and vengeance, serving Stag, the tribal totem of the Fianna. Called in times of dire need, the Wild Hunt is an unstoppable force of Rage that is directed against only the staunchest minions of the Wyrms. It is not called lightly, as those Garou who join the Hunt can just as easily be consumed by it.

The Huntsman and his pack of Hounds are not individual entities so much as they are wild spiritual energy. If it is "killed," the Hunt will disappear into the Umbra, only to reappear when called again.

The Huntsman: A powerful Jagglings servant of Stag, the Huntsman appears as a tall, stag-antlered man following his hounds.

Willpower 10, Rage 10, Gnosis 5, Essence 25

Charms: Armor, Tracking

The Hounds: These Gaffling servants of the Huntsman usually appear as a group of nine Hounds, though Theurges tell of Hunts with three times that number. These black-coated beasts have eyes of glowing green fire, and they can easily pace a Garou in Lupus form. They relentlessly pursue their quarry, utterly tireless for the duration of the Hunt.

Willpower 6, Rage 7, Gnosis 2, Essence 15

Charms: Tracking

Triatic Spirits

The Garou have as many enemies among spirits as allies. In fact, many spirits oppose the very ideals by which werewolves live. While Banes act as antagonists most easily, remember that Weaver and Wyld spirits also make good opponents.

Weaver Spirits

Although the Weaver's myriad children are most common in the Umbral realms, many of them traverse the Gauntlet to ensure the continuing growth of the Pattern Web. To aid them in their work, the Weaver grants all her spirits the Charm: Solidify Reality.

Pattern Spider

As the Pattern Web continuously grows, so does the number of Pattern Spiders in the Weaver's service. These arachnids are the most common Weaver-spirits the Garou encounter. They are creatures with bodies of stained glass and worked metal, with alembics to disgorge their web-fluid, and faceted lenses for eyes. While primarily working to build and strengthen the Pattern Web, they do not hesitate to defend it against threats by calcifying victims onto it.

Willpower 4, Rage 4, Gnosis 5, Essence 13

Charms: Calcify, Solidify Reality

Weaver-Shields

Weaver-Shields are recent and rare additions to Grandmother Spider's children. In fact, as far as anyone knows, the Garou had their first encounter with them shortly after Constantinople fell. The city's disastrous fate made the Weaver strengthen her grip around any of her domains that need protection against intrusion. Consequently, these spirits, created to guard and protect, often enter the Realm in growing cities where science and development have a strong presence.

Weaver-Shields assume the form of geomids (incredibly precise geometric shapes) whose size varies depending on what they protect. Despite being able to materialize, however, they seldom do. As a result of their presence, everyone within the protected area becomes more focused and orderly. They even affect intangible things such as smells and sounds by reducing them in strength and volume. Meanwhile, the

Gauntlet grows thicker and bars the Garou from the spirit worlds.

Minor Weaver-spirits, such as Pattern Spiders, accompany Weaver-Shields and act as a first line of defense in case of attack.

Willpower 8, Rage 8, Gnosis 10, Essence 26

Charms: Airt Sense, Calcify, Blast (stone shards), Drain Gnosis, Impose Order, Materialize, Umbraquake, Realm Sense, Solidify Reality

• **Impose Order:** This Charm allows the spirit to impose changes to both the surroundings and sentient beings within the area it protects. Everyone within the protected parameter automatically becomes more orderly in the modes of thinking and acting. Meanwhile, rolls involving the Crafts Ability are at -2 difficulty. Acting against law and order is difficult, although feasible with a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 6, or 8 for normal humans). Should the roll succeed, the individual is free to act, but he remains uneasy about proceeding with the deed. Detecting smells and sounds are at +2 difficulty, as is the difficulty for entering frenzy. In addition to these changes, the Gauntlet is automatically raised to 8. **Essence Cost:** 3

Webs

Of the numerous Weaver-children, many consider the Webs as the most beautiful to behold. Witnesses describe them as circular shaped spiderwebs that soars through the skies, appearing in light-blue and white while glimmering like the purest snowflake. These warriors are constantly on the watch, attacking as soon as they spot an intruder in their domain. Once they do, they gather in groups of five and move in a rapid speed to surround their enemy before using their bolts of ice. The Weaver created them with a single purpose from which they never deviate — to protect her minions and domains.

Willpower 6, Rage 7, Gnosis 6, Essence 23

Charms: Airt Sense, Blast (ice), Materialize, Solidify Reality

Wyld Spirits

Every Garou learns from birth that she should stay away from the powerful and unpredictable Wyldlings. Spawned by the Triatic entity of chaos and pure energy, the spirits wage a constant war against both Weaver and Wyrms, who desire to diminish the Wyld's might and glory. Just like their

master, the Wyldlings are able to bend reality itself through the use of the Charm: Break Reality.

Chaos Matter

Chaos Matters are prime examples of what life is without the Weaver to grant solid shape. Records kept in attempts to identify the spirits are in vain, as they always appear as entities of swirling matter and energy.

Just as their appearances warp, so does reality wherever they pass. Their chaotic energy negates any Weaver-granted forms, leaving only blurred shadows of what things originally looked like. Meanwhile, creatures that are capable of feeling emotions are immediately filled with a spark of primordial energy that drives them into berserk frenzy even if they are not normally capable of such ferocity. Their presence also reduces the Gauntlet to non-existence in its vicinity.

Wherever Chaos Matters dwell, chaos and instinct reign supreme. The werewolves revere and fear them, since these Wyldlings are able to reduce even the most intelligent of them into nothing but simple beasts.

Willpower 8, Rage 10, Gnosis 10, Essence 28

Charms: Airt Sense, Berserk Frenzy, Disorient, Disrupt Reality, Materialize, Shapeshift

- **Disrupt Reality:** While this Charm bestows the same powers as Break Reality, it differs in that it always has one extra aspect that is always in effect. Wherever the spirit goes, everything within 150 meters loses its solid shape. For example, trees, animals, humans and werewolves lose their forms and color, appearing as dark and blurred shadows of what they once were. Garou may attempt to resist this effect by succeeding on a Willpower roll (difficulty 7). Should the roll fail, the werewolf loses its physical form until it can escape the spirit or defeat it. While under the Charm's effect, the character attacks and soaks with his permanent Gnosis rating. Werewolves who survive Disrupt Reality suffer a Battle Scar automatically. **Essence Cost:** None

- **Berserk Frenzy:** Attempting to avoid entering the state of berserk frenzy, when one is within 500 meters from the spirit, requires a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 9). **Essence Cost:** None

Storm Clouds

Storm Clouds are small tornadoes that vibrate with blasts of lightning. They are extremely unpredictable spirits that act as the Wyld's shock troops.

As the embodiment of primordial energies, their attacks *always* inflict aggravated damage.

Willpower 6, Rage 7, Gnosis 7, Essence 22

Charms: Airt Sense, Materialize, Blast (lightning), Create Wind, Swift Flight, Break Reality

WYRM SPIRITS

Garou call Wyrmspirits Banes for a good reason. They embody destruction, deception and corruption. Areas where these emotions and impulses are strong attract Banes in large quantities. Consequently, they are more common in expanding cities than in less populous settlements.

Banes view Earth as a landscape filled with pain and misery, yielding prosperous harvests of grief, agony and destruction. While they are creatures of darkness, however, many mistake them for being the cause of everything evil. This is not true. They are able to create impulses that are commonly considered to be evil, but Banes would rather nurture pre-existing evil than seed it.

Banes are nearly as varied in power as Gaian spirits. The weakest Bane Gafflings are scarcely a match for even a young werewolf (though they do tend to attack in swarms). More powerful Wyrmspirits have correspondingly higher traits and deadlier Charms.

Garmlings

Garmlings appear as gigantic wolves with rotting flesh and open wounds full of crawling maggots. Dry blood mixed with mud tarnishes their fur, while their large, sharp claws burrow deep into the ground as they prowl. Driven by a stirring hunger to kill, these warrior-spirits fight for their creator, Beast-of-War.

Willpower 7, Rage 8, Gnosis 3, Essence 18

Charms: Airt Sense, Blighted Touch, Materialize, Tracking

Pestifers

Although found anywhere — from the smallest hamlet to the largest city — these Banes are most common in the rural areas of Europe. Despite their secretive nature, the arrival of Pestifers is easy to detect for those who know what to look for. Rats gather at the edge of the city, while swarms of bats blot out the moon. Some witnesses even describe hearing the faint ringing of cowbells in the distance just before a black cloud emerges

from the ground and materializes as a man-sized creature concealed by a dark hooded cloak.

These Banes walk through the town, spreading disease and death among the populace. Some peasants even sacrifice their daughters to please them. While they gladly accept the gift, Pestifers show no mercy to anyone. Fear and terror nourishes them as nothing else can, and to their victims, a swift death is a gift from the Lord.

Should the hood of their cloaks ever fall back, these creatures appear in all their horrifying glory. A scabby rat's face, crawling with insects, provokes the effects of the Delirium. Their eyes burn with intense red and yellow flames that put many onlookers in mind of the fires of Hell. Beneath the cloak, the Banes conceal razor-sharp claws, and a pair of hairy tentacles.

Willpower 10, Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Essence 27

Charms: Airt Sense, Blighted Touch, Infection, Materialize, Song of the Night

- **Infection:** Upon penetrating a victim's skin, the spirit infects him with a lethal disease. To do so requires a successful attack roll (difficulty 7). Humans lack the stamina required to resist it, and they die within days from fever



and convulsions. Supernatural beings may attempt a Stamina roll (difficulty 5; 9 for Kinfolk), to avoid its effects. A failed roll causes immediate illness, reducing all physical Attributes to 1 until cured. Meanwhile, a botch indicates the same lethal infection that humans suffer. Unless aided by magical healing within a week, the victim dies. Each day, the character suffers one level of aggravated damage.

Pack Totems

Werewolf packs form close bonds with spirits called totems. The choice of a totem is of extreme importance to a pack, for this spirit will protect them in times of need and serve as a guiding light for the Garou to follow. This choice functions as a petition to the totem spirit, who then decides whether to adopt the pack members as his "children."

Totems are Incarnae.

They are most often animal spirits, but some packs choose elemental spirits or mythical beings to be their totems. These spirits rarely take an active hand in tending their packs, instead sending Jaggling representatives to serve as "avatars" for their children. Totems and avatars gain power from the devotion of their packs and offer boons in return, providing their children with some of their own powers to help the Garou survive and wage their wars.

The traits that totems provide fall into one of three categories. *Given* traits are permanent additions to the characters; each member of the pack receives the trait and only loses it if the totem withdraws its favor. *Pack* traits are shared between the Garou; only one member can use the trait per turn (unless additional points are spent to increase the totem's power; see p. 85). *Pack* traits are usually Abilities, and use of these traits may take a given pack member's rating over 5 temporarily. *Story* traits form a pool from which any pack member may draw, but once the pool is empty, it is not refreshed until the end of the story.

Totems of Respect

These spirits represent virtue and honor and are looked to for guidance in matters of leadership and diplomacy. Some of the greatest Garou leaders have chosen these ancient spirits as totems, gaining great loyalty and admiration from their followers.

Falcon

Background Cost: 5

Falcon is a strong and noble spirit, much like the Silver Fang tribe he serves. He has great insight into the hearts of the Garou, holding honor and dignity paramount. Falcon guides his chosen tribe with strength and confidence, commanding the utmost respect from spirits and werewolves alike. With the popularity of falconry among the wealthy elite, Falcon keeps a close eye on the human nobility, helping the Silver Fangs insert themselves more easily into this privileged community.

Traits: Two points of temporary Honor (given); Leadership 3 (pack); four points of Willpower (story). Silver Fangs often look on Children of Falcon as lesser nobility and afford them greater respect.

Ban: "Death before dishonor" is absolute to Falcon's children. If they lose a permanent point of Honor Renown, they must try to somehow right the wrong. If that proves impossible, a Rite of Contrition must be performed before plunging into suicidal combat with a powerful minion of the Wyrms, effectively cleansing their actions with their own blood.

Grandfather Thunder

Background Cost: 7

Thunder teaches his children patient vengeance, how to slowly gather great strength before striking with devastating force. More feared than respected, his is the way of seduction, manipulation and the will to power. He rarely takes an active hand with packs, preferring to have his Stormcrows tend them. Many Garou have difficulty trusting Children of Thunder, for political intrigue in the Dark Medieval often includes sudden death by poison or drowning. Ambition is most often met with suspicion during these uneasy times.

Traits: One point of temporary Honor (given); Etiquette 3, Intimidation 1 (pack); five points of Willpower (story). Shadow Lords take a close interest in pack activities.

Ban: Thunder's children have no respect for the weak. If an individual they consider somehow inferior attains a station equal or superior to them, they must actively work to undermine that success and "put the cur in his place."

Horse

Background Cost: 6

Horse is responsible for most of mankind's success leading into the Dark Medieval, serving as a symbol of progress and strength. Nobles, merchants and even some peasants rely upon Horse for prestige, commerce, travel, farming and their advantages in combat. Warders sometimes favor this totem for its connection with travel and cities, but most werewolves look down on Horse for its close connection with humans.

Traits: One dot of Stamina, no penalties when riding horses (given); Animal Ken 3, Ride 2 (pack); three Willpower points (story).

Ban: Most Garou have little respect for packs associated with Horse, it being a domesticated animal. All Social rolls involving werewolves (other than Warders) add two to their difficulty.

Also, Horse asks that his children never harm domesticated animals if it can be avoided. This means that the pack must find wild prey, rather than domesticated cattle or livestock, unless it has reached the point of starvation and has no other option. This only applies to live animals, as it is impossible to harm an animal that is beyond feeling. For example, eating a roast prepared for a banquet is acceptable, but ordering a cow slaughtered for the feast is not. If a pack does make a meal of an already slaughtered domesticated animal, Horse asks that the Prayer for the Prey be performed for it.

Pegasus

Background Cost: 4

Pegasus is the protector of sacred places, and with many churches being built on pagan holy sites during this period, the totem is often at odds with the unchecked growth of Christianity. Because of the longstanding feud between the Fenrir and the Black Furies, packs with even one Fenrir member are not accepted. Pegasus teaches Gifts associated with travel and air.

Traits: Two points of temporary Honor (given); Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2 (pack); 3 points of Willpower (story). Black Furies are well disposed toward Children of Pegasus.

Ban: The Children of Pegasus must always aid females of all species, young females in particular (of course, this excludes any females tainted by the Wyrms, although Pegasus admonishes her children to cleanse, not kill, when possible).

Stag

Background Cost: 6

An ancient spirit, many Fianna Galliards claim that Stag was revered by the fae long before being claimed as their tribal totem. The totem has a dual nature, known both as a creature of peace and compassion, but also as a force of unchecked fury. In his lighter aspect, Stag is a spirit of quiet nobility, teaching responsibility toward humans and nature, and leading lost Garou to safety or aid. Conversely, Stag's darker aspect as master of the Wild Hunt strikes fear into even the vilest of the Wyrms' minions, summoning the raw, unbridled power of nature. The Fianna tribe embraces this duality, singing and dancing during times of peace, but showing no mercy on the battlefield.

Traits: One point of Stamina (for long-distance running only), three points of temporary Honor (given); Survival 3 (pack); three points of Willpower (story). Stag's children are well received among the Fianna and honored among the fae.

Ban: Stag requires that respect be shown toward all prey, including the performance of a Prayer for the Prey after a successful hunt. Also, his children must always aid the fae and their kin.

Totems of War

These spirits are generally fierce predators and legendary warriors. They are most often associated with Rage and Glory, sending their packs into battle against the Wyrms and striking fear into the hearts of their enemies. These spirits are not as revered as the Totems of Respect, but their accomplishments on the battlefield are undeniable. Warriors and scouts tend to choose these totems, stalking the forests of the Dark Medieval and fighting the dual threats of the Wyrms and human encroachment.

Great Fenris

Background Cost: 5

Savage and bloodthirsty, Great Fenris is the destroyer of the weak and patron of the powerful Fenrir. His limitless rage drives the tribe in their unending battle against the Wyrms, giving no quarter and expecting none in return. Fenris often favors Garou crusaders, recalling the great conquests of the Viking Age.

Traits: One dot in any Physical Attribute of the player's choice, two points of temporary Glory (given). Fenrir respect Children of Fenris more than other "outsiders," but they will continually test their mettle, inviting them on frenzied hunts and pitched battles against powerful enemies.

Ban: Children of Fenris must never pass up an opportunity to fight.

Griffin

Background Cost: 4

Griffin is a cold, vicious hunter who kills with blinding speed. He mourns all creatures lost to extinction and blames humankind for each of these crimes. His Red Talon children are strong and proud, still enforcing the Impergium in many places, and Griffin is enraged by the slow encroachment of man into wild territory.

Traits: Two points of temporary Glory, can communicate with birds of prey without a Gift (given); Alertness 3 (pack).

Ban: Griffin forbids his children from associating with humans, and any who foolishly stray into his domains are hunted and killed. Griffin never accepts packs with even one homid Garou.

Rat

Background Cost: 5

Relying on stealth and cunning, Rat is a spirit of guerilla warfare, survival, and subterfuge. Preferring to rely on numbers and crippling attacks, she can turn vicious when cornered and is a dangerous adversary if pressed. Rat can speak to her children through any rodent, and she has spies everywhere — especially in the expanding cities of the Dark Medieval. Some Garou avoid packs associated with Rat, knowing that where rats run unchecked, plague often follows.

Traits: -1 difficulty to bite attacks and rolls relating to stealth or quiet (given); five points of Willpower (story). Bone Gnawers are likely to aid the Children of Rat whenever possible (as long as their own lives are not at stake), but other tribes will often be wary.

Ban: Rat asks that his children never kill vermin.

Totems of Wisdom

These spirits seek the mysteries of the unknown and find knowledge in dark and forgotten places. Although they are respected by Theurges and those who search for hidden truths, more straightforward Garou distrust these spirits, for they often speak in riddles and layered meanings.

Cockroach

Background Cost: 6

Cockroach sees great potential for growth in the wake of human achievement. Technological spirits are scarce at best, but they are gradually emerging within the expanding cities of Europe. Cockroach sees the opportunities created by the Weaver's expansion, but in humanity's often-insular society, it struggles to even access these emergent forms of communication and technology. In the meantime, the totem continues to adapt and prosper, hiding among the filth of mankind and patiently observing from the shadows.

Traits: -2 to all difficulties dealing with technology or human affairs (commerce, alchemy, the Church, etc.), including any interactions with spirits closely tied with humanity's technological advancement, such as Weaver-Shields (given). Timely communication is often the key to survival, and the totem has given his packs the ability to communicate over great distances. Any of his children may give a short message (two or three sentences) to any cockroach along with the names of a specific city and another follower of the totem. Cockroach will relay this message through a cockroach Gaffling the next time the named Garou enters the specified city. This communication takes at least one day, and the message is forgotten if the target is not found within two weeks. This is a pack trait.

Ban: Pack members must take pains to avoid killing cockroaches.

Owl

Background Cost: 7

Silent and enigmatic, Owl watches over the dark places in the world, gathering secrets long forgotten. Owl holds hidden wisdom and is often associated with the mysteries of death and the Dark Umbra. At this time, many Garou view Children of Owl (and often the Silent Strider tribe as a whole) as harbingers of death, so they seek to avoid them. In regions where plague is rampant, such packs might be blamed and driven away.

Traits: Owl's children gain wings in the Umbra, allowing them to fly at the same speed they can run in Hispo form, as well as two points of temporary Wisdom, -2 to difficulties involving stealth or silence (given); three dice to any Gift involving air, travel or darkness (pack). Owl's children are often gifted with premonitions of danger and the locations of mystic places long forgotten. Silent Striders might appear mysteriously to aid the pack, but Ratkin and Children of Rat do not get along with Owl's children, due to Owl's predatory nature.

Ban: Owl asks that bound or helpless rodents be left in the woods for him and his kind.

Raven

Background Cost: 5

An ancient companion of wolves, Raven is a clever and cunning totem. While he lacks the

strength to bring down prey alone, Raven often leads wolf packs to their quarry, picking over the carcass after the kill. This often leads the totem to have close ties with lupus Garou, though the refuse created by human cities has served to feed his unending hunger and bring him into closer contact with homid werewolves. Just as he never lacks food, his packs never lack the wealth or resources they need, never suffering from want of bread or coin. Raven is a seeker of knowledge and hidden things, and his followers are incredibly interested in the fulfillment of the prophecies. Children of Raven pursue even the wildest claims about the revelations, if only to find the tiniest grain of truth or piece to the puzzle.

Traits: One point of temporary Wisdom (given); Enigmas 1, Resources 1, Subterfuge 1, Survival 3 (pack). Those who follow Raven have favorable relations with his true children, the Corax.

Ban: Raven asks that his Children carry no wealth, instead trusting him to provide for them.

Unicorn

Background Cost: 7

Unicorn is a totem of peace, purity, healing and harmony. She is the embodiment of the all-encompassing love of Gaia, and she extends this bliss to her children. Some packs dedicate themselves to bringing Unicorn's purity and strength to even the darkest corners of the medieval world, becoming hunters of vampires and other creatures of the Wym.

Traits: Double movement speed in Umbra, three points of temporary Wisdom (given); -2 to all difficulties involving healing and empathy, three dice for Gifts of healing, strength or protection (pack). Children of Gaia will always aid and usually side with the pack in disputes.

Ban: Unicorn's children must aid and protect the weak and exploited, provided that doing so does not aid the Wym. They suffer a +2 difficulty to harm any Garou not of the Wym.



Dark Ages WEREWOLF

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Breed:

Auspice:

Tribe:

Pack Name:

Pack Totem:

Concept:

ATTRIBUTES

Physical
Strength _____ ●○○○○
Dexterity _____ ●○○○○
Stamina _____ ●○○○○

Social
Charisma _____ ●○○○○
Manipulation _____ ●○○○○
Appearance _____ ●○○○○

Mental
Perception _____ ●○○○○
Intelligence _____ ●○○○○
Wits _____ ●○○○○

ABILITIES

Talents
Alertness _____ ○○○○○
Athletics _____ ○○○○○
Brawl _____ ○○○○○
Dodge _____ ○○○○○
Empathy _____ ○○○○○
Expression _____ ○○○○○
Intimidation _____ ○○○○○
Leadership _____ ○○○○○
Primal Urge _____ ○○○○○
Subterfuge _____ ○○○○○

Skills
Animal Ken _____ ○○○○○
Archery _____ ○○○○○
Crafts _____ ○○○○○
Etiquette _____ ○○○○○
Leadership _____ ○○○○○
Melee _____ ○○○○○
Performance _____ ○○○○○
Ride _____ ○○○○○
Stealth _____ ○○○○○
Survival _____ ○○○○○

Knowledges
Academics _____ ○○○○○
Enigmas _____ ○○○○○
Hearth Wisdom _____ ○○○○○
Investigation _____ ○○○○○
Law _____ ○○○○○
Linguistics _____ ○○○○○
Medicine _____ ○○○○○
Occult _____ ○○○○○
Politics _____ ○○○○○
Rituals _____ ○○○○○

ADVANTAGES

Backgrounds

_____ ○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○

Gifts

Gifts

Blessings

Curses

Rage

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Gnosis

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Health

Bruised _____ □
Hurt -1 _____ □
Injured -1 _____ □
Wounded -2 _____ □
Mauled -2 _____ □
Crippled -5 _____ □
Incapacitated _____ □

Experience

The Prophecies Have Come

The Ten Tribes of Garou once raged across the Dark Medieval, confident that none could challenge their power. They defended their sacred places without fear of man, Cainite or beast. But now that Constantinople has fallen and the first of a string of dire prophecies has come to pass, the werewolves know fear. Will the other visions come true as well? Can the Garou prevent them? Even if they can, how much blood must be spilled to do so?

By the Light of the Blood Moon

Dark Ages: Werewolf is a complete, hardcover resource for playing the werewolves of the Dark Medieval, in the tradition of Dark Ages: Vampire and Dark Ages: Mage. It contains comprehensive information on werewolf society, special rites, Gifts from the spirits and descriptions of their enemies, as well as a look at the Dark Medieval from the perspective of these savage shapeshifters. This book requires the use of Dark Ages: Vampire.

WWW.WHITE-WOLF.COM

ISBN 1-58846-284-6
WW20005 \$29.95 U.S.



9 781588 462848

