


LODGES™

THE SPLINTERED



the World of Darkness®

WEREWOLF
THE FORSAKEN™



*"Welcome to our land, my brothers in the blood of the wolf.
It was wise of you to approach us humbly, for we are
generous and kind to those who do not draw down our anger.
Come and tell us stories of the beasts you have torn apart,
the foes you have defeated, the men and women you have loved.
And then we shall hunt together, host and guest,
and we shall see who the dakini fear more."
— Karna Blood-Armor,
Rahu of the Lodge of the Sacred Thread*

This book includes:

- new lodges representing the werewolves of the world from Poland to Japan to Antarctica
- New Gifts rites merits and fetishes for the select as well as sample characters to drive a new story
- More information on modifying lodges to suit a new locale or an altered purpose



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WEREWOLF
THE FORSAKEN™

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BY JAMES COMER, AARON DEMBSKI-BOWDEN, STEVEN MARSH AND CHUCK WENDIG

WORLD OF DARKNESS® CREATED BY MARK REIN-HAGEN

Monsoon Season

About an hour after the deed was done, I began to regret killing the American tourist. His dollars sat like a lump in a fold of my *lungi* skirt, bland in the way all dollar bills are bland, worthless in the way all American money is worthless out here. I was a good dozen or so miles from the airport, which doubled as the closest currency exchange.

I'd only wanted the guy's boots for the flood season: the bulky hiking kind of boots that last a lot longer than sandals do when the ground turns to mud and water. I didn't even need his damn money, and I couldn't fathom why he'd been carrying dollars around instead of *takka*. Maybe he was going home soon? Maybe he was only a 12-hour flight shy of getting back to the States and meeting his family at the airport.

Christ, don't start thinking that way. "What's done is done" — isn't that what Montu always said? "You start planning out the lives of the dead, and you start going crazy in the head." Bad poetry, but it has its merits. Don't dwell, Richard, don't dwell.

I'm back in my rickshaw, cycling toward the market close to where the international families cluster in their government-given estate houses. My cousin Michael — he didn't Change as I did — works as a gardener for one of the English families. He tried to get me a job, but I need a little more freedom in my comings and goings.

As I'm going past one of the schools, the usual mess of parents and kids are talking the usual mess of a dozen languages and looking for a ride home. As I'm braking and pulling over to the side of the road, my foot slips from a pedal and it takes me two tries to get it back on. I hate these boots already. Should've waited until later before putting them on.

• • •

I was lucky enough to go to a school, but my English isn't that good. We learned about local geography and local history and basic numbers, rather than how to talk to the rich internationals. When someone speaks clearly I can usually get the point of what they're saying, but when someone is angry at me, it makes more sense when they howl and bark in the tongue of the spirits.

That's just what I'm thinking when I hear this driver yelling at me. He was the one who clipped my

rickshaw, yet I'm the one who gets shouted at. Like I could ever damage his car with a bike made out of wood and cloth and metal wheels so thin you can bend the spokes by braking too hard. He's yelling about something — I get some swear words in there, but that's about it — and then he's driving away with a scowl.

Traffic is thick, and he makes slow progress down the back streets. I know this because even though I was on my way home, I decide to tail this man first and see where he lives. You can call it curiosity if you like, but it'd be more honest to admit I'm a predator marking my prey.

I don't like to be abused.

• • •

The next morning, the Heavens have opened for the first time in the year. A few days of this, and the lake at the bottom of the road will be halfway to the marketplace. The estate houses of the English and Dutch families nearby got flooded last year. It was a bad season then. This one looks to be worse, if it's starting this early. Walking outside is like diving into the lake, it's that wet. Within a few heartbeats, I'm as wet as if I'd been swimming in my clothes.

Tonight will be the Rain Gathering. The first night of monsoon season every year is given over to this tradition, and the good side is that it'll be great to see everyone on neutral ground without sweating that old hates will come up every three seconds. The bad side is that I still have to work today, even as the world is flooded by God Himself.

I've heard since I was young that the floods are so bad in Bangladesh because they cut down all the trees on the Himalaya mountains. Any kid with a few months of South Asian Studies in his head knows that it's not just because of this; that the heavy farming causes soil erosion across the country and reduces the depths of the rivers, as well as the rich nations heating up the world with their industries and leaving us to take the pain.

Every once in a while, some pack will get it into their heads that being heroes is a great idea, and they make the trek over to Nepal or India to see what they can do. Maybe they think they'll be planting trees or killing the tree-cutters. Maybe they think there's something else hidden up there, making the annual

flooding ruin more lives. Maybe whatever they think doesn't matter, because we never see any of those packs again, and it feels like the floods get a little worse every year.

• • •

It's still raining at the Rain Gathering, of course. "Like God emptying his bladder," Montu used to say. Montu, bless his memory, was one of those who volunteered to make the run to Nepal to climb the mountains and investigate the cause of the floods in the name of glory. He also bought into the idea that it's not just soil erosion, not just a natural occurrence and that something across the Divide is making it worse or us. I miss him and wonder what became of his stupid jokes and gap-toothed grin. I don't miss his worries about how mountain-spirits are trying to kill us. I have enough real problems without inventing false ones.

This place smells like a pack of wet dogs, which isn't that surprising. We're gathered on the playing field of the international school, where the rich kids from here, there and everywhere learn how to be rich like their parents. Tonight the field is ours. Tomorrow morning, when the ground is slush and puddles and 10,000 muddy footprints, they can have it back. But tonight it's ours, and we're having a party.

It's wild here. Over the driving rain, over the crashing sound of God pissing upon us all, a few guys are beating big drums in a heartbeat's rhythm. There's howling, there's dancing, there's fighting and laughing and shouting. Call down the rains, brothers and sisters. Call down the floods and all the water in the world, because nothing will send us running from our hunting grounds. This is what the Rain Gathering is all about. We defy Nature herself to move us on just as we celebrate another year's passing. Another year of surviving the Pure, another year of surviving big, crazy spirits and another year of shitty jobs and no money and bad food. We're survivors here. It is no false pride to be happy about that fact.

There's talk tonight that someone special is here. Nobody seems sure just who it's supposed to be, but I'm keeping my eyes open. As I stomp around in my stolen boots, I'm looking at the crowds and seeing what there is to see. It isn't until I feel a hand on my shoulder that I realize the action has been stalking me, not the other way round.

"Richard." The man says. I turn and see that he's thin — thin in that way people are thin right before they die. It's like there's a time when the body knows it is dying and has that scary grace when every action

uses as little energy as possible. This guy looks hungrier than that, and there's something in his eyes.

"That is me, yes." I speak, as he does, in English. "How may I be helping you?" Hey, look, I told you my English wasn't good. It's a blessing when he starts speaking Punjabi, which isn't my first language, but it's something I've picked up along the way.

"I am going to the place where our floods are born," the thin man says. He shakes a rattle at me, made out of a food can and what sounds like dried rice inside. "I will travel to the mountains and see the where the floods are birthed in melting ice."

"You're brave," I find myself saying. *Your funeral*, I find myself thinking.

"Do wish to come with me, Richard?" Now he's speaking Bengali, my native tongue. "So you wish to howl up to the mountains and seek the source of the Earth's tears?"

It's only at this point I realize he's used my name twice. My parents were Christian (which isn't that unusual here), but they gave me a Christian name (which isn't exactly common).

"How do you know who I am?"

Again with the rattle and the spear-like gaze. And then he's gone, dancing madly through the crowd like a crazed and fragile stick figure. People move out of his way without even looking at him. "Do you know who that skinny man was?" I ask the woman next to me, Nundri, my packmate. She smiles and says, "What man?"

I turn back to show her, but I've lost him in the crowd.

• • •

I do well enough in the trials of bravery and battle prowess. A giant of a man called Zudin the Strangler forces me to submit in the muddy wrestling pitch, but I can see in the eyes of those watching that I've done okay and they're not laughing at an embarrassingly early defeat. Besides, the Strangler is twice my size even with Changing forbidden. I shudder to think what he'd look like if he shifted at all.

He nearly knocks me over giving me a good-natured slap on the back. I know I'll be carrying a bruise from that in the morning.

The wrestling and cheering goes on while I watch, aching, from the crowd again. Someone hands me a tin cup filled with rainwater. I've always hated the tradition of drinking the monsoon like this, but I down the gritty liquid in four gulping swallows. As I hand the cup back, I see the strange man scampering

away again, arms raised to the sky and head back to face the downpour. I try to give chase, but the crowd swallows him as surely as I'd swallowed the rainwater a moment before. No one nearby gave me the cup to drink; at least, no one owns up to it. I move through the crowds in silence, seeking this curious man out.

No matter who I ask, none have seen him.

• • •

With the arrival of a watery dawn, the Rain Gathering breaks up and the werewolves of Dhaka go their separate ways. I leave with my pack, staying close to the three Uratha I know best out of all these dozens of fellow monsters.

On the way home — we all live on the same street and had moved to be close to each other — I hesitantly bring up my strange encounters with the thin man. I'm stunned as the others relate similar stories, and we are each as confused and concerned as the other. Our full moon believes we are cursed and wants to hunt the man down. Our spirit-talker believes this was a spirit, not a man, and that by each of us accepting the cups of rainwater from this being, we have unwittingly taken his offering. I don't know what I believe, but I feel a creeping sense of dread at the thought of having anything to do with that eerie old man.

As it turns out, he's waiting for us in the middle of the road when we get home. Alone, naked but for waterlogged rags, clutching his strange rattle as he stands in the rain outside my tiny house.

"The Lions of Gulshan pack." He greets us as one. "I have chosen you, and you have accepted my offering."

"We didn't mean to," I say with a defiant edge. "We didn't know what you were."

"That does not matter. The choice was still made, whether in ignorance or awareness. I am born of this rain, and I have chosen you to join my children."

And this, this pre-dawn standoff laden with doubt and threats, was how I joined my new brotherhood.

A month later, and I am in the Himalayas.

• • •

I have never been a climber. Wolves are not natural climbers and neither, I believe, are we rickshaw drivers. I am having the most trouble out of all of us. My packmates assure me that we are not even that high up yet, to which I reply with something vulgar about their parentage. Our pack totem, invisible on

this side of the Divide, nevertheless makes his presence known with some hacking, hawking cries that sound like ghost-calls in our minds. Vulture-Who-Survives is with us, at least, even if sanity is not.

It is a strange experience to hold the skull of your friend. Yet the bone head tied to my belt and bouncing around as I climb is undoubtedly Montu's. I can tell because of the missing teeth. The poor soul must have gone to bone very quickly out here. Maybe he found what the lodge members all seek and died before he could share the tale. Maybe he just died when he fell from these evil mountains and his body broke on the jagged ground below.

We are stalked by spirits none of us have seen before. Already one of our pack lies dead at the last landing, killed by something made out of hate and rage, ice and stone. Our alpha leads on, saying we must find the cause of the severe floods and appease the spirit that bound us to the task. He, it must be noted, is a good climber and seems to relish this challenge. I am just cold, scared and desperate not to end up like Montu.

All around us are the memories of trees. Stumps, sockets in the earth where trees once stood, and a Shadow reflection of a sparse forest sticking out of the sides of the mountains like teeth on a hairbrush. In some places, shitty little fields and farms have been set up on what land can be used to grow crops, but even so, I still don't see how this really affects the floods.

Bangladesh is hot. Close to the equator — I learned that in school. Even the foothills of the Himalayas are high up and snowy and ice-cold. I keep having dreams during the day that my limbs turn blue. I'd never seen snow before this trip. I don't find it beautiful or magical. I find it cold and threatening, and it breeds some foul spirits that fly around the other side of the Divide, whispering for us to lie down, rest a while and enjoy the cold. The snow leeches the heat from my body the way these bastard spirits leech at our hope.

"Just a little higher," our fearless leader calls back in a strong voice. I look around the flat piece of land where we are catching our breath. In the World, I can see abandoned farmland, and rubbing the soil between my fingers tells me how piss-poor the earth is here. In the Shadow across the Divide, I can see the ghost of a thin forest. The trees have an eerie resemblance to the branch-thin totem spirit of my new lodge. Their ghost-leaves rustle in the Shadow wind with the same sound his tin-and-rice rattle made.

"A little higher, okay, Richard?" I turn to my leader in the World again, about to say something insulting. My words freeze into silent breath-steam when, suddenly, our alpha vomits blood in a wide arc and collapses on the rocks. Nundri is at his side in a few seconds, only to fall to the ground alongside him, shuddering and shaking and frothing at the mouth. I don't know what to do. I tense to run away, then take a step toward my packmates. But I freeze. I do nothing.

Eventually, they stop twitching. The wind picks up, and I am alone.

I move across the Divide, knowing that my death cannot be more than a few moments away. Strangely, I feel no panic. Waiting for me on the other side is a frightening spirit of a kind I have never seen before. It is vaguely human-shaped, but bulky and both furry and insubstantial all at once. On its white fur and claws of ice is the blood of my two packmates. I address the creature in the language of the spirits.

"I am Richard of the Lions of Gulshan, also of the Lodge of Seekers."

The creature's only reaction is to fade from sight, appearing close by and lashing out with a clawed fist the size of my head. As I hurl myself to the side, Montu's skull comes loose from my belt and smashes

on the ground of Shadow. This amuses the creature. Its misty form blurs and swirls with throaty laughter.

I feel my bones aching with the cold, and I know my own anger is eerily slow to rise. If I die here, I die as my friends have, and that thought sustains me. Perhaps the snow-beast is using some kind of spirit trick to dull my Rage so I may not Change. Perhaps I am just ready to die with the secret of the mountains unfound and with nothing to return home to.

"Before I die, can you tell me why so many of my kind come here? Do they ever find what they seek?"

This makes the demon pause. All around me now, the ghosts of the trees sing in whispers. It's almost like they're coming closer. The demon tells me what I have come here to know. And when the creature speaks, I hear the words and smile. It would have been sad to die without learning this.

The demon asks if I am ready to die, but it has wasted its chance at killing me without a fight. I have to get home. I have to tell the others what I know.

With a roar and a swelling of muscle and bone, I stand face to face with the demon of death and frost. My Rage warms me as red anger blankets my vision, and I lose myself in the war shape.

"Are *you* ready, demon?"



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INTRODUCTION

“SINCE WE HAVE COME TOGETHER AS THE STARS OF HEAVENLY SPIRITS AND EARTHLY FIENDS, WE MUST VOW BEFORE HEAVEN TO UNITE TO THE DEATH WITHOUT RESERVATION, RESCUE ONE ANOTHER FROM DANGER AND AID ONE ANOTHER IN MISFORTUNE, WHILE STRIVING JOINTLY TO DEFEND THE COUNTRY AND PRESERVE PEACE FOR THE PEOPLE.”

— SAE NAI'AN AND LUO GUANZHONG, *OUTLAWS OF THE MARSA*

WOLVES WHERE WOLVES DON'T RUN

The werewolf as modern cinema paints it is technically a Eurocentric legend. The ties to the moon and to wolfsbane, the stark vulnerability to silver, the lack of control when the moon rises — these are all things that are derived to some extent from the original European myths. Of course, the original myths are much more varied and strange than modern cinema, with werewolves who are the undead, or witches who worship Satan, or cannibals with access to strange magic or simple deluded maniacs. And once you start to look at the legends that *didn't* make it into modern cinema, then you start to see similarities to legends outside of Europe. There are legends of wolf-men in India, stories of the human children of wolves in Asia and the Americas. The word “werewolf” becomes applicable to a great many more possibilities.

Of course, that assumption's the core of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**. Just as **Werewolf** incorporates compatible legends from many different animistic cultures as a means of broadening the setting itself, **Werewolf** also borrows elements from around the world and incorporates them into the Uratha.

Werewolf: The Forsaken posits a world where werewolves can be everywhere that people are found. Werewolves have run through Asia in a considerably darker mirror of *Journey to the West* — the spirits banished from Heaven only to run riot on Earth were uglier than the tales tell, until they met with the Uratha. Werewolves have shed blood along the mountains and rainforests of South America, and torn into one another in India in ways that the Pandavas could only imagine. In strange ways and odd forms, the Uratha are known around the world, even if the picture isn't always accurate.

Enter **Lodges: The Splintered**. This book takes a look at some of the werewolves from around the world, and provides example lodges that show how they work, what their concerns are, how they differ from their fellow Forsaken, and how they're not so different at the core. These werewolves might inspire a story in which the players' pack is required to travel to a new locale, only to meet some of the natives — and potentially come into conflict. Then again, some cultural lodges travel reasonably well and could come to the players. Consider the human

examples of the Mafia setting up operations outside of Sicily, or the evolution of Santeria from the Yoruba religion. And, of course, there's always the option to tweak a lodge into an existing need in a chronicle. There are many possibilities for each lodge — choose the one you like best.

DIVERSE CONCEPTS

Most lodges represent a core ideal. It may be a philosophy that werewolves pursue in order to better themselves, or even (they hope) the world around them. Many lodges are paths to power, fraternities dedicated to improving the lot of their members — sometimes at the expense of everyone around them. Members of several different lodges can and do work well together, each one pursuing their own personal goals but unified as a pack.

However, the basic mechanics of a lodge can represent something entirely different. With a little flavor tweaking, the basic concept of prerequisites, benefits and exclusive Gifts, rites or fetishes can apply to many different sorts of werewolf subcultures.

REGIONAL LODGES

The regional lodge can serve one of two purposes. The first is to devise a mechanical means of representing a different local subculture of werewolves. For instance, a Storyteller interested in portraying werewolves of the Middle East with a belief system that's a blend of Islam and Forsaken animism could use the lodge mechanics. The requirements don't have to be particularly stringent, and the benefits don't have to be remarkable; the mechanics are largely useful for determining how much variety or conformity exists within a lodge. The more stringent the requirements and the more lavish the benefits, the more each lodge member will reflect his brethren. This is usually best for regional cultures that have seen little influence from the outside, or that actively resist such influence.

The other major use for a regional lodge is to represent a local power structure that varies from the norm. Consider the dream of Max Roman to bring unity to the Forsaken. If Roman were to achieve his dream by gathering all of the Forsaken of the Rockies under a single banner, a lodge might be the ideal way to represent this achievement. The lodge might enjoy the benefits of reduced rivalry between packs (since they're all technically

siblings and dedicated to the same ends) and increased organization. The benefits could even be expressed as such — perhaps lodge members gain a +1 bonus to Social rolls made when dealing with other members, thus ensuring gatherings that are somewhat less likely to break out into violence. Such a lodge might not have as many spiritual benefits, but it would be able to accomplish quite a bit. The only trick is getting the various werewolves of a region to agree to such a setup, but therein lies the basis for an interesting chronicle.

BLOODLINES

Most werewolf bloodlines don't need a lodge mechanic to properly represent them — they're families, like any other. But the concept of the strange, potentially inbred family has a lot of precedent in the horror genre. What if, for example, the Pickerings were taken this step further? The obvious prerequisite would be family blood, but you could add more; perhaps only "gifted" members of the family are inducted into the more powerful inner circle.

CULTS

The default lodge is bound together by beliefs; a lodge as cult would take this a step further. Rather than serving a common ideal and binding a totem that supports them in that goal, a cult lodge is dedicated to the lodge's patron spirit. The patron is the very reason for the lodge's existence. This doesn't necessarily mean that a cult lodge is sinister in purpose — though it's certainly interesting and striking if it is — it all depends on what the spirit is like, and what it wants. The Lodge of the Lake is a good example of such a cult.

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The many lodges presented in **Lodges: The Splintered** can be used in one of two ways. Used whole cloth, these lodges provide new insights into the world of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**; they may represent new subcultures of Uratha, or provide more answers to "What are werewolves' concerns around the world?" Most of these lodges might have some reason to travel, so it's hardly out of the question for a werewolf from the Lodge of the Endless Moon or the Lodge of the Rose to pass near or through the players' territory, bringing trouble or opportunity.

The other option is, of course, to alter the lodges slightly into regional variants that suit the chronicle. The Brotherhood of Eshu's Cap could be transformed into a Native American lodge dedicated to Iktomi, White Hare or Coyote just as easily as the lodge could be tweaked into an Asian lodge with a powerful and mercurial fox-spirit patron. The Lodge of the Lake could be set up in any remote area with some minor retouches.

The lodges contained within this book, and some of the regional variants possible, are as follows:

- **The Armée Sauvage**, a French lodge of Ghost Wolves concerned with the many lingering Wounds inflicted by both world wars. This lodge might be adapted to

fit werewolves attempting to cope with a battered Shadow at the site of other massacres or even natural disasters.

- **The Brotherhood of Eshu's Cap**, an African lodge of Hunters in Darkness who use lethal trickery and deception as tools to guard the sacred places. This lodge could easily be transplanted to other areas with a shift in mythology.

- **The Kshatriyas, or Lodge of the Sacred Thread**, an Indian lodge of Storm Lords bound by duty and obligation. They might make an interesting model for other lodges of elite warriors bound by noblesse oblige.

- **The Lodge of 66**, an American lodge that runs the legendary Route 66 and defends its strange loci. Variants might deal with any signature stretch of road, such as the Autobahn or Australia's Highway 1.

- **The Lodge of the Black Woods, or the Sippe des Schwarzen Waldes**, a German brotherhood founded for mutual support throughout the region. This lodge is particularly adaptable as an example of regional lodges based on the principle of greater cooperation and organization.

- **The Lodge of the Endless Moon**, a Japanese lodge dedicated to placating hostile spirits. The core mission statement of the lodge is adaptable to virtually any region.

- **The Lodge of the Fallen Idol**, a widespread lodge whose agenda is no less than the sabotage and destruction of human religion. Potential variants might include regional lodges opposed to specific religions, or a larger lodge opposed to some other human institution. One variant (potentially Pure) might even strive to undo the "worship" of Luna among the Forsaken themselves.

- **The Lodge of the Firestick**, an Australian lodge entwined with the occult secrets hidden in the practice of setting and directing wildfires. Variations on this lodge might appear in other areas where such fires are a potential hazard or tool; with a few tweaks, this lodge might also serve as the model for a Fire-Touched lodge.

- **The Lodge of the Hungry Ghosts**, a Japanese Bone Shadow lodge that takes a more ritualized approach to peacemaking with spirits. This lodge might be incorporated as a variant of the Lodge of the Endless Moon, or remodeled into a ritualistic lodge of shamans for any other culture.

- **The Lodge of Ilia**, a city-focused lodge with its roots in Rome. Members of this lodge or a variant could find their way into almost any city.

- **The Lodge of Kletby**, a Czech lodge that strives to master curses in all their forms. A great number of regional variants based on other cultures' ideas of curses could spring from this lodge.

- **The Lodge of the Lake**, a vigilant lodge watching over a strange entity in remote Antarctica. A variant could be used for any similar isolated vigil.

- **The Lodge of the Lost**, a lodge that has outlived its original purpose and now seeks a new reason to continue. This lodge might serve as an interesting final fate for a

different existing lodge, or it might give birth to a different lodge entirely, whether published or of the troupe's invention.

- **The Lodge of the Modernist**, an eclectic and mostly European lodge dedicated to unlocking the power within language itself. Variants might involve changing the “modern” tone into a more ancient and occult order.

- **The Lodge of the Red Sands**, a North African lodge based on the necessity of mastering survival in the desert, but also sharing a common lust for greater strength. The Egyptian mythos attached to the lodge could be reworked to fit almost any desert area, and, with a bit more work, the lodge might apply to inhospitable wilderness of any sort.

- **The Lodge of the Rose**, devoted to applying the principles of chivalry to the terrible demands of life as an Uratha. This lodge might serve as inspiration for other lodges based on variant codes of honor, from *omerta* to *bushido*.

- **The Lodge of Scars**, composed of the eldest and most veteran Forsaken. Though not tied to any one region, this lodge could well be altered to fit an area better.

- **The Lodge of Songkran**, a lodge from the Golden Triangle dedicated to liberating others from slavery and addiction. This lodge might be adapted to other cultures with a shift in symbolism.

- **The Lodge of the Storm's Eye**, a Mesoamerican lodge that binds particularly powerful spirits into slumber. This lodge could be tweaked to fit almost any other culture.

- **The Lodge of the Thin Shadow**, a European lodge founded on the tenets of espionage and secrecy. A variant on this secret society could be found almost anywhere.

- **The Lodge of the Union**, a lodge dedicated to the concept of unity in all things — matter and spirit, human and wolf, Pure and Forsaken. This lodge's agenda could be toned down or heightened as needed.

- **The Lodge of the Willow Branch**, a Polish lodge with an unhealthy obsession for hunting vampires. This lodge might be retooled either into a lodge of similar purpose with a different cultural focus, or retain the cultural focus with a shift of favored prey.



THE ARMÉE SAUVAGE

DER FIND HÖRT MIT!

Nikolaus sat in the attic of the French tannery, the hard plastic of the headphones pressed tight against his ears. He listened to the occasional whispers and coughs of static while glancing intermittently at the Nachfeld-peiler intercept receiver to his left. The manufacturers of the radio, Telefunken, had emblazoned a small message upon the device according to instructions from der Führer himself. The message read, *Der Find hört mit!* or, “The enemy is listening.”

“Indeed,” Nikolaus muttered to himself. Nobody was out there. The French terrorists were elsewhere, not here in Argenton-sur-Creuse. Near the guttering oil lamp, Nikolaus picked idly at a patch of wax left on the table from the tannery’s past days of curing, drying and waxing leather. The place still had a smell, like skin and meat. He didn’t like it. He felt sick.

The others of the Abwehr — the Nazi counterintelligence machine — were across the village. Otto was hiding in the hayloft of an old barn, and Merkel waited in the crumbling steeple of a bombed-out church. They were surely as bored as he was. Nikolaus wished he had some wine, a French woman, a nice bed. But he had none of those things. Instead, he rested his head upon the wooden table, alternately courting and denying sleep.

Then, a burst from the headphones. The radio crackled briefly to life.

“Nikolaus...” Static swallowed the rest.

He grabbed the dial and turned it, click by click, trying to recalibrate the frequency. More words popped and hissed.

“...compromised, Merkel is dead... out, get out...”

A scream cut through the noise: Otto’s scream. Nikolaus threw the headphones off in surprise, and nearly fell off his chair. Quickly he turned off the radio and pulled up the handle. The intercept receiver was not so easily portable, and would have to be reclaimed later. He fished in his jacket for the P08 pistol, and held it at the ready. Quickly and carefully, the radio now strapped to his back, he clambered down the attic ladder into the tannery below.

A dark shape shot out of the darkness — a dog, Nikolaus thought, but this was too big to be a normal dog — and slammed into his chest. He dropped backward, the radio driving hard into his back as he hit the ground. The air fled his lungs as the beast pounced. The creature — a wolf, impossibly, a wolf — bared a set of bright white teeth and bit down on Nikolaus’ arm. The arm came off, still holding the pistol. Then the teeth opened and went for Nikolaus’ throat —

“Wait,” came a word from the dark. Guttural voice. French accent.

Nikolaus, screaming silently as his blood jetted onto the wooden floor, saw three men advance from the shadows. The wolf closed its jaws and stepped away. The Frenchman looked down with hungry eyes.

“The others are dead,” the man said, not to Nikolaus but to the two with him. “Take this pig, poultice the arm and then pin this note to the stump. Send him back to his masters. They’ll see the note and know that this village is not theirs, and they should go elsewhere.”

World War II wrenched the Shadow into gory bits. That war spilled rivers of blood and pain into the spiritual landscape, perhaps more than any event in modern times. From Tunisia to Japan, from Paris to London, World War II resulted in the deaths of many men, the destruction of the land and unimaginable tortures. Spirits reeled, tainted with the resonance. Ghosts arose from the horror. Parts of the Shadow split like infected cankers, discharging more tainted Essence and continuing the ugly cycle.

Inevitably, the Forsaken had little choice but to deal with the terror. Packs were caught in the middle of it all, huddling in ruined buildings or watching fiery ships sink into the briny deep from the shore. Some packs fled to places where the spirits did not threaten to devour them whole. Other packs stayed in their territories to fight and often, to die. One such group — the Armée Sauvage, or the Savage Army — chose to fight, and managed to survive in the process.

The Savage Army is French in origin, and it is in France that most wolves of the lodge live today.



Born from the Nazi occupation of France after that country's conditional surrender in 1940, the packs of the Armée Sauvage saw the Germans as crass and clumsy invaders, raping territory left and right. These Forsaken had little interest in national pride, and cared little for the ideologies that fueled the war: they simply wanted safety and sanctuary for themselves, their kin and their territories. At first, the packs hesitated getting at all involved in this mortal skirmish. Wars were terrible, but history made clear that wars passed. But the spiritual landscape still held the suppurating scars of the *First World War*, and this new war ripped those old wounds open anew. It was made worse that the German occupation was granting advantage to all the Forsaken enemies. The Rat Hosts thrived in the ruined villages. Mad spirits found countless vessels and mounts to Claim as their own. Some of the monsters even marched alongside the Nazi interlopers.

The packs of the various French villages had two choices: flee to safer regions (abandoning territory, kin and loci) or stay and fight. Some packs, like wolves moving with a food supply, chose to leave. Those that stayed decided to band together and help oust the interdictors. And so the packs that remained formed the Armée Sauvage, a lodge devoted to territory above all.

The Savage Army was indirectly connected to the various groups of the French Resistance. While these packs had little concern over the intricacies of human politics, many of their kin engaged in that subversive guerilla war against the Nazis. Moreover, the enemy of an enemy makes a good friend, and the werewolves saw no reason to hinder the efforts by the so-called French terrorists.

The fights were bloody and brutal. Unable to take on entire battalions of German soldiers, the Forsaken instead picked off those who strayed from the larger herd. The wolves were resilient, but many perished. Many of their human loved ones died in the fighting, and even those uninvolved in the Resistance were sometimes made casualties. The Nazis often made vicious examples of those villages they felt were harboring members of the Resistance — whole towns such as Oradour-sur-Glane perished as unwilling illustrations of German wrath. Hundreds of people — a handful of them blood or allies of the Forsaken — were shot, hung or caught in mortar and *Panzer-schreck* explosions.

At that time, the lodge did not attempt to fix the wreckage of the Shadow. Doing so was comparable to pausing in the middle of a bare-knuckle brawl to ban-

dage one's fists — it was a futile effort, frustrating as a pack's labors would be undone almost immediately.

After the war, however, the lodge remained as a coalition of packs. Except now, with the majority of the Nazi oppression ousted, the Forsaken could concentrate on repairing the ruins in both the physical and spiritual realms.

The Army exists to this day. Many packs dwell in the forests and mountains in and around France, though several still linger within the villages, walking among the mortals from time to time. The ravages of both world wars *still* affect the area today, much as it does wherever the horrors touched. The lodge must continue to hunt down ghosts from all sides of the conflict, still lingering in Twilight, driven murderous from the waves of death sweeping across the land. The Shadow, too, has barely concealed its injuries, and from time to time a Wound opens and regurgitates spirits: Gestapo with gas masks made of skin, ragged French peasants in search of their missing children (or missing limbs), magath that look like tanks comprising thick steel and corded tendon. The group's work is hardly done, and in fact the Army drives itself to near-exhaustion at times trying to put down these flare-ups of history.

Some members have moved away from the country and region. Some packs dwell in the hot zones of the world, quashing oppression wherever it plants its seeds. Others go among the Forsaken and attempt to teach them the lessons that history has taught. Most members, however, remain there in France. They still care little for the ways of humans (and their bitter politics), aiming still to uphold the purity and safety of their territories.

Patron Tribe: Ghost Wolves



NAZI OCCULTISM

Perhaps surprisingly the Armée Sauvage did not often witness the supposed occult interests of the Nazi regime (Whether this is due to the fact that the Nazis kept such atrocities close to home where Hitler could personally oversee them or because they didn't really exist in the first place remains unclear.) Mostly, the devastation of land and spirit was given to the world by normal men making abnormal war — occultism was unnecessary to exacerbate the evils of the Nazi regime

That said some of the original members (some of whom are still alive) recall seeing a few unusual things that may hint of

such arcane leanings. One Forsaken, Bastien (also called *En Venir au Fait* or "A Cut to Your Heart") claims to have seen his entire pack used in some sort of strange ritual. The four others in the pack were strung up with wire hung by their necks until dead. At that point, Bastien claims, a *Sturmbahnführer* of the Waffen-SS commanded his soldiers to skin Bastien's packmates (swaying dead in human form) and take their hearts. The men did as commanded. The officer collected the hearts in a wooden bowl and waved over them with what appeared to be an ancient gladius, a Roman short sword. They burned the hearts and moved on to the next village.

Bastien has no idea about the results of that ritual. He claims that such blasphemy still exists today. The old wolf (coming up on 90 years) has dreams of that very officer performing similar rituals on Forsaken, except these rituals do not take place in Nazi-occupied France in the 1940s. These dreams indicate that this same officer (aged not a single day) is part of similar rituals in places such as the Middle East and Africa, and not some years ago but *today*. Worse, Bastien believes that Nazi occultism is once again on the rise, and he begs his lodge mates to help him find proof. They help him, sometimes, but have found nothing. Most consider him a daffy old wolf, ready to be put to pasture with the sheep.

PATRON SPIRIT

The patron spirit that watched over the Savage Army is a curious creature, the Blood-Red Blackbird (*Rouge Sang Oiseau*). Its name alone seems a contradiction in terms: how can a blackbird be red? The answer is, it's not. Only the feet of the bird are red, as they literally drip with blood (even leaving little scarlet bird tracks wherever the bird hops). The reason for the feet of the bird being soaked with blood is that, according to lodge legend, the spirit made an attack on the invading Nazi army before even the Forsaken thought to. The story goes that, when one of the Nazi field commanders was surveying the streets of a French village through his binoculars, the spirit of Blackbird swept down and shot toward his face like an arrow. As soon as the commander took the field glasses from his eyes, the bird plunged through his left eye, disappearing into the German's skull. Seconds later, the bird emerged from the other eye

socket, pushing that eye free and squeezing its dark feathered body back out of the puckered hole. The field commander, now blind and brain-damaged, collapsed and was useless to his soldiers. The bird flew away singing, its body clean of the rotten Nazi blood except for that which dripped from its feet.

Blackbirds are highly territorial creatures. They do not approve of other birds or creatures infringing upon their food supply or their breeding grounds. They defend this territory violently at times, swooping upon those who invade their area (which goes well beyond the nest). This territoriality seemed a natural fit for the *Armée Sauvage*, and so the werewolves went to Blood-Red Blackbird to entreat the spirit for its aid.

Blood-Red Blackbird granted its aid to the Savage Army, on a number of small and strange conditions. The lodge members must leave out food (seed, suet, berries) for the blackbirds of the fields and forests, and they must also kill whatever raptor birds they see. (This is illegal, but the Forsaken have no choice if they want the attention of the spirit.) The strangest condition is what happens when a member of the lodge kills another creature, whether a pig or a human. He must leave the kill for Blood-Red Blackbird. He marks the carcass with blood or red paint upon the body's feet, and this signals to the spirit that it may feed. Many Forsaken have seen the sight of a flock of blackbirds descending upon the kill, birds wriggling in and out of the ribcage or skull parts, and then flying off with gobbets of meat or dangling nerves. If the pack is hunting for its own food, it must always designate *one* killed animal for the feast of Blood-Red Blackbird during the hunt. Failing to do so is insulting, and reparations must always be made.

JOINING THE LODGE

This lodge, first and foremost, is open only to Ghost Wolves. Should a werewolf wish to become a member, then that werewolf must renounce any tribal affiliation. The justification for this is that, in a roundabout way, both world wars were caused largely by the differentiation between several warring tribes. These tribes — or nations or races — held to specific ideals and violently desired that others hold to the very same ideals. That, the lodge says, is what war is: one tribe considering another tribe weaker. Hence, the lodge frowns upon such division among the Forsaken. They must be united without tribe, or they are not united at all. (Some Forsaken, perhaps correctly, argue that both world wars had a great deal to do with economic concerns as well as issues of territory



— and, of course, the lodge adheres quite stridently to its own territories, which some suggest is a hypocrisy. These Forsaken don't want to hear it. Those who suggest it may earn four claw marks across the face.)

Frankly, the lodge members are suspicious of those who wish to join their ranks. Most of the members of Armée Sauvage are part of a legacy. They, or their forebears, have claimed territory in those parts of France (and surrounding regions) that were negatively affected by World War II. The lodge members have *been* members, or were grandfathered in by trusted mentors or pack alphas. Strangers wanting to be a part of this are viewed with distrust. Why would a stranger purposefully pick up the mantle and take on an obligation not his own? The Savage Army doesn't believe that altruism is common (if even possible at all outside the ranks), and so the Ghost Wolves assume that strangers must seek to do them harm. Or, at the bare minimum, will botch any task handed to them and do further harm instead of mending what was broken.

Still, joining the ranks as a pack outside the lodge's legacy is not impossible, just difficult. A new pack must jump through countless hoops to prove both trust and ability. The pack will be given task after task, some small, others large, and will be expected to fulfill them with utter complicity. If the pack is told to deliver a cryptic message to an old radio-spirit at the top of a half-wrecked silo, the pack is expected to do so quickly and without error. If the task is to hunt down a battalion of war-spirits that seek to march into Belfort and stir up conflict, then the pack best do so before the jackbooted spirits make it to town. If the pack meets all expected tasks, fine, the pack can join. The pack is ceded some territory — small at first — and is expected to clean up what the pack has before being allowed to gain more. Any pack that makes too much of an aggressive play for more territory without first improving what the pack already has will be taught swiftly the error of its ways.

Who decides all of this? All the local pack alphas form the *Le Conseil Après le Guerre*, or simply, the Council. This group, as the name suggests, was formed not long after the end of World War II, and has been in use since then. The Council operates — or *tries* to operate — democratically. If an issue comes to the table (such as the admission of a new pack into the lodge's ranks or questions of what to do with a sudden war Wound forming in the Shadow), the alphas vote on what should be done regarding that issue. Democracy, however, is not natural to

wolves, so why do they persist? While they care little for the intricacies of mortal politics, they do accept that a democratic model is better than an oppressive rule-of-claw. Unfortunately, this model doesn't always work. Those left out in the voting process may feel rankled and angry — sometimes the process is disrupted by hot tempers and feral instincts. It happens, and when it happens, two disgruntled parties solve what they can by taking it out on one another's hide. They accept this as a necessary part of their instincts; provided it does not control them, such conflict resolution is allowed, but not encouraged.




THE SAVAGE ARMY ELSEWHERE

As mentioned, the Armée Sauvage is not exclusive to France. The lodge's members (or those of sister lodges) exist elsewhere, admittedly in lesser numbers. One place where packs have traveled recently, however, is Japan.

Japan, similar to many parts of Europe, remains viciously scarred from the events of World War II. Japan, however, had the singular experience of being hit with two nuclear weapons. Both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to this day, have Shadows poisoned with the effects of those bombs. The areas are haunted by the pale shadows (clinging to walls like those poor souls caught in the immediate blast radius) of death and destruction, as well as strange irradiated spirits that live only to cause discord. From time to time, the Shadow suffers a rare "blast event," when the spectral bombs drop again. When this happens, the real world always suffers some terrible aftereffect: earthquakes, mass suicides, train crashes. The end result is always property destruction and death.

The Forsaken believe that a single spirit presides over this awfulness. They have seen her in the sky from time to time and have taken to calling her Madame White (named for her glowing white face and pale robes). The Savage Army has come to Japan to help the local Forsaken mend the broken spirit realm. These Westerners have met quite a bit of resistance from the native werewolves, however. The Savage Army hopes to bring the Japanese Forsaken into the lodge in an effort to help them repair the tainted Shadow.



Prerequisites: Harmony 6 or above, Honor ●●●, must be Ghost Wolf

Benefits: In a strange way, these Ghost Wolves agglomerating in a single lodge almost makes them their own unique tribe. Therefore, Blood-Red Blackbird grants them access to a spread of potential Gift lists. At the time of joining, an individual may choose one from one of the following three Gift lists: Inspiration, Dominance or Warding. From that choice, the werewolf may purchase Gifts as if he has a tribal affinity with them (i.e., new dots x 5 instead of new dots x 7). Inspiration comes from Blackbird's song, Dominance comes from the fact that Blackbird is very demanding and Warding is due to Blackbird's powerful territoriality.

ARMÉE SAUVAGE FETISHES

This lodge makes good use of fetishes. Most of its fetishes, however, are legacy items passed down from pack to pack, or werewolf to werewolf, since the time of their creation during World War II. For this reason, many of the group's fetishes are actually old items from the French Resistance, Allied Forces or German invaders.

WAR MAPS (●)

War maps (or *cartes de guerre*) were crucial during the war. Movements needed to be precise, whether invading a small French hamlet or attacking those invaders. These fetish maps are dusty, torn up and beaten all to hell — but the lodge still uses them to plot their movements within the Shadow, as well as to track spirits. On a successful activation, a werewolf can name a single spirit, and if the spirit is in the region demarcated by the map, the map will show the spirit's exact location. This location is indicated by a small, smoldering burn hole in the map — it glows red as wisps of sulfurous match smoke drift upward. (The burn hole doesn't remain, and the map fixes itself after two minutes.) The maps are born from any kind of air elemental (specifically wind-spirits, as they can get high enough in the Shadow to look downward upon a region indicated by a given map). This fetish only works in the Shadow — though stronger versions (●●●) are said to exist that work in the physical world, helping users to pinpoint the location of manifested spirits as well as the Ridden.

SHADOW BOX (●●)

The Shadow Box, or *Cabinet Fantôme*, is actually an old British Mark III suitcase radio given to members of the French Resistance by Allied spies. When opened and activated, the Shadow Box allows the

Forsaken to send one message to a specific spirit, and receive one message from that specific spirit in return. The Forsaken does not need to enter the Shadow to do this, and the Shadow Box does not guarantee that the spirit *will* answer, only that the message will be delivered. If the spirit replies, its “voice” is transmitted through choppy, staticky frequency (though the voice is ultimately understandable). A few parameters apply to this fetish. First, the given spirit must exist in the spirit realm within a 50-mile radius. Second, the Forsaken must have met the spirit previously either while in the Shadow or while the spirit was materialized in the physical realm. He may attempt to communicate with spirits he has never met before, but doing so incurs an additional -4 penalty, making such an action very difficult. A Shadow Box is made with the spirit of an old carrier pigeon.

BLACKBIRD MAUSER (●●●)

The German Mauser C96 pistol (9mm parabelum) was commonly carried by Nazi lieutenants, and the French Resistance pilfered the weapons when able and turned them upon their oppressors. Some within the group — with the help of blackbird-spirits — created fetishes from these old pistols. Some call them “klaive pistols,” as many within the lodge carry them as ritual weapons. While many of these Mausers are capable of still firing the appropriate 9mm ammo, using a Mauser as a fetish requires no bullets to be present in or around the weapon. When the fetish is activated, the werewolf can make a single Dexterity + Firearms roll, with a +3 bonus for attack. Normal attack penalties apply when necessary. A single feather fires from the barrel, point first. If successful, the feather does an amount of lethal damage equivalent to successes rolled. This attack bypasses and ignores all armor. The attack is also almost entirely silent — hearing the sound would require a Wits + Composure roll with a -5 penalty. The most interesting part about this fetish is the aftereffect of being shot: a small blackbird emerges from the wound hole and flies off to freedom. (This causes no additional damage, however.)

SAVAGE ARMY STORY HOOKS

- **Purity First:** The ideologies of the Nazi regime and neo Nazism pair nicely with the fiery verve of the Pure werewolves (particularly the zealous Fire Touched and the purity-minded Ivory Claws). While World War II was entirely based upon human concerns

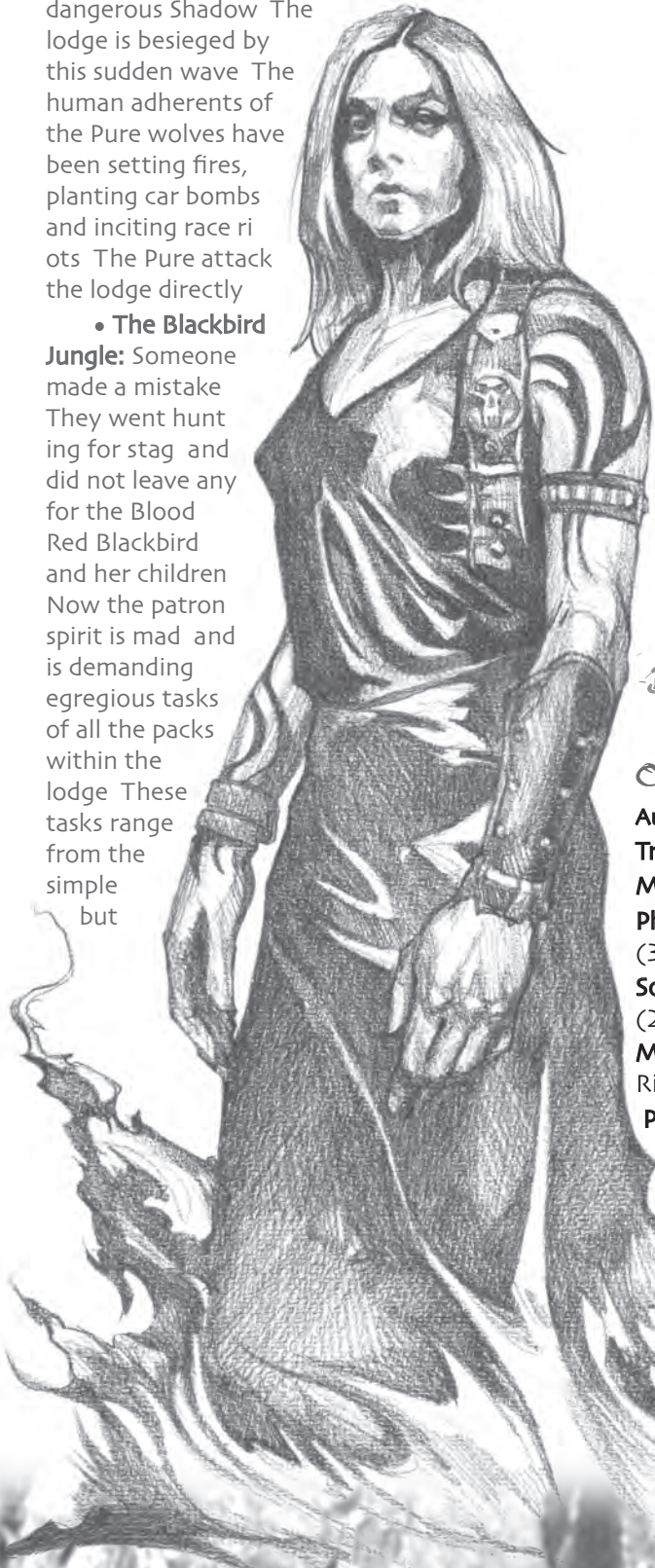




a new war has recently started outside the lodge's awareness: a number of Pure wolves have moved in under cover of Nazi ideologies. They maintain human "cults" of neo Nazis (who are also over concerned with the occult conspiracies of the Third Reich). They have been moving in on all sides of the territories spouting anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim rhetoric. Worse, they're stirring up the spirits anew bringing chaos to an already dangerous Shadow. The lodge is besieged by this sudden wave. The human adherents of the Pure wolves have been setting fires, planting car bombs and inciting race riots. The Pure attack the lodge directly.

• **The Blackbird**

Jungle: Someone made a mistake. They went hunting for stag and did not leave any for the Blood Red Blackbird and her children. Now the patron spirit is mad and is demanding egregious tasks of all the packs within the lodge. These tasks range from the simple but



time-consuming (odd scavenger hunts) to the downright bizarre (bring seven human murderers to justice by cutting off their feet). The lodge members must comply with the spirit's wishes — but while they're busy the *other* spirits sense vulnerability and begin acting up. Wounds open and the ghosts of the old war waken and begin to march once more. Can the pack perform its tasks and still maintain the sanctity of the Shadow?

• **Ritual Killings:** The characters find one of their neighboring packs dead: its members skinned and hanging by coils of barbed wire from trees. Their hearts have been cut out and are missing. The old wolf Bastien claims that his enemy is back: the *Sturmbahnführer* named Karl Schneller. Bastien has dreamt of the old Nazi (looking young as ever) haunting the boundaries of the Savage Army's territories. Is he killing werewolves to keep himself young, or is that simply a side effect of a more sinister purpose? The characters must investigate the trail and hunt down Schneller before he murders another pack. They uncover too that he is not alone — he has a number of mortal acolytes (some alive, some not) marching to his every command. The Shadow roils with the pain and suffering this old officer brings to the table.

OUIDA BREAUX

Auspice: Rahu

Tribe: Ghost Wolves

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3 (2/3/1/3), Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 3, Crafts (Jury Rig) 3, Investigation 1, Politics (Lodge) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Firearms (Rifles) 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Expression 1, Intimidation (Demand) 3, Persuasion 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Fresh Start, Language (German) 3, Language (English) 2, Quick Draw, Resources 1, Striking Looks 2

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Health: 8 (10/12/11/8)

Initiative: 5 (5/6/7/7)

Defense: 3 (3/3/3/3)

Speed: 12 (13/16/19/17)

Renown: Glory Honor Purity

Gifts: (1) Clarity, Feet of Mist, Loose Tongue; (2) Blending, Attunement, Sand in the Eyes; (3) Death Grip, Echo Dream

Rituals: 2; **Rites:** (1) Rite of Dedication; (2) Fortify the Border Marches

Ouida Breaux has lost her way. Once a proud member of the Armée Sauvage, she now questions the group's purpose. Once upon a time she was a zealous creature, profoundly devoted to the causes put forth by her fellow Ghost Wolves. She believed in the way they handled their issues democratically, and she recognized that they were the only things standing between the living history of World War II and the modern age. The spirits gave life to old wounds, and it was the lodge's job to keep all things in check. As beta of her pack, the Meadow Foxtails (or *Queue-de-Renards*), she served the needs of pack and lodge diligently, leaving kills for Blood-Red Blackbird and destroying those entities that craved to revisit the depredations of war upon the land.

But lately she has felt a certain hopelessness. She feels as if they have been doing nothing more than holding back a certain tide — like the little Dutch boy with his finger in the dam, they hope to stave off what seems inevitable. Worse, the supposed democracy of the Council has devolved of late into bitter bickering and throat-snapping. All vote the moderate line, and none seem willing to sacrifice to repair the Shadow once and for all.

The cruelest sting is that, for all this time, Ouida has never won the challenge to become alpha of her back. The extant alpha, Redwing, forever puts Ouida in her place. As such, Ouida feels frustrated, confused and saddened. She has yet to examine what options await her outside the Army, but she may soon

do so. Her bitterness builds, but is it enough to push her to the side of the Pure? Will she instead leave the lodge and try to find a pack — and once again a tribe — in Paris or Nice? Or will she simply linger within the Armée Sauvage, her dissatisfaction poisoning her from within?

Those who see Ouida see a small, hard woman with a firm jaw. Those who earn a smile from her are lucky, indeed: usually her face is as impassive as gray slate.

THE WERWOLF

Nazi Germany had its own "civilian resistance" movement ironically titled *Werwolf* or *Wehrwolf* meaning "military wolf." Recruited from SS families the Hitler Youth and other German citizens the *Werwolf* comprised civilians trained in guerilla tactics by the SS. These "neo Nazis" made up a localized terrorist organization attacking the enemy with soup can bombs, home made garrotes or whatever they could find to do harm to the Reich's adversaries.

Two things of note in relation to the forsaken. First, wherever the *Werwolf* acted, Wounds opened in their wake. Second, occasionally one of the Nazi guerillas would be found with silver bullets or other silver items.

Lately, all across Europe (and even in a few American cities), graffiti has indicated a rise of a new *Werwolf* movement. The lodge members have found the wounds, though most do not yet know what it means. Graffiti sprayed on ruined buildings or carvings etched in trees merely read: "W.W." The werewolves will soon realize that this means a rise in neo-Nazi resistance.





BROTHERHOOD OF ESHU'S CAP

FROM CHAOS COMES ORDER

At the center of an old village sat a deep well, its mouth built of sacred stones, its waters holy and healing. All men and all things loved this place, as it gave forth energies of life and dream and hope. But the villagers had long stopped caring about protecting the well, and instead sought only to sate their own urges. If drinking from the well made one healthy and happy, then all should drink from the well always. They were too shortsighted to see that the well's waters were not endless. By drinking it, they were killing it.

Eshu, one of the great gods, decided that he would do something about this. One day he stood at the edge of the town and put on a broad-brimmed hat to cover his dark face in the blistering sun. The hat was painted bright red on one side, and blue on the other. The line of color was split down the center, and this made Eshu laugh. Wearing the hat and carrying his favorite walking stick, he walked down into the village.

One dusty, old street ran down the center of the village, and Eshu sauntered down this byway, smiling and staring straight ahead. The villagers watched him go by, knowing that he was an old spirit and that they were glimpsing something rare and special. Eshu walked slowly but confidently, never averting his gaze from the path ahead. When finally he walked all the way through town, he took off his hat and sat upon a high rock to watch the villagers.

In Eshu's wake, the villagers came together to discuss what they had seen. The villagers from one half of the street marveled at his bright red hat. Those from the other side said no, he didn't have a red hat at all — his hat was clearly blue. The two sides disagreed, with each believing that it saw the old god correctly. The argument grew heated, until one man from one side pushed another from the other side into the dust. From this came a terrible brawl, and from the brawl came a war. The men brandished axe and arrow against one another. By nightfall, all were dead, lying in the street, blood cooling in the dust.

Eshu laughed. The well was protected. The villagers could no longer drain it dry, and its sacred stones and

holy waters were safe. Eshu put down his walking stick, turned into a wolf and ran off into the darkness, knowing that his job was done.

The world encroaches. The human herd swells. The cities are massive tumors spilling bile out into the wilderness. All the sacred places are in danger. Even on the highest mountaintop, climbers come to build research stations or to “test their limits” with narcissistic adventures. In the deepest forests come campers, loggers or park rangers. This world is home to few unspoiled locales, and it seems that every square inch has been marked indelibly with the footprints and fingerprints of humans. The sacred places are all in danger.

The Hunters in Darkness aim to protect these places, and all undertake this task in a unique way. The Brotherhood of Eshu's Cap is one such group of Hunters. These wolves have their own brand of keeping the sacred places safe and bringing order and solace back to the world. They achieve this order by first waging a war of chaos. Much like the way Eshu diverted attention from the well and tricked all the villagers into destroying one another, the Brotherhood doesn't need to kill anybody. These werewolves merely need to plant the seeds and watch the mad tangle grow. If chaos is put into motion, all things take care of themselves. Ideally, it always works. In reality, it's rarely so easy, but they claim more successes than failure. This isn't enough for some Forsaken, who believe that the Brotherhood's risky claiming of many sacred areas is dangerous and that those areas need to be remanded to more pragmatic keepers.

An example of this might be a locus deep in one of America's old-growth forests. A gnarled cluster of seven white cedars grow up out of the cliff-face. Each tree is robust and provides the area with powerful Essence. The Shadow features a tense but balanced ecology of spirits feeding off spirits and claiming Essence in turn. When the loggers come, clear-cutting trees and closing in on the locus, all enters disarray. The Shadow's tenuous equilibrium is obliterated.

The Brotherhood of Eshu's Cap knows that something must be done. Members know that they

could just come in and wreak havoc, killing the loggers and destroying the equipment. That could spawn dangerous spirits, and such action might wound the werewolf's soul because of needless murder. Instead, these Hunters in Darkness wage a war of trickery and chaos. Perhaps they plant false evidence around the logger camp, convincing the workers that their foreman is shortchanging their paychecks, or that he has perhaps slept with several of their wives. It needn't stop there. Two bunkmates might be convinced that the other is stealing from one another, or that one is gay when the other is a homophobe. The wolves wait and observe as long as it takes to find out what domino must be knocked over to set off the appropriate chain reactions that could bring the camp down. If the logging company sends more loggers, then they will be targeted as well. Theft, betrayal, even murder and suicide — all of these things in turn may convince the logging company that the effort simply isn't worth it.

The Brotherhood doesn't only protect loci, though that represents the largest part of what they keep safe. Many also protect powerful fetishes, strange gateways into the spirit world, areas of unusual activity that *aren't* loci (haunted houses, Wounds, shoals, gravity hills), notable wolf-blooded families or simply places of unique nature such as somewhere a particularly rare orchid grows. These Hunters know of each other through various channels, and even communicate (often via runners) on new ways to stir the pot and create effective controlled chaos.

Many Forsaken consider these members quite mad, and more than a little dangerous. These Forsaken are partly right. Chaos, as restricted as one might wish it to be, is like a fire. If the wind blows the wrong way, the fire can take a mean turn and go from a controlled blaze to a deadly conflagration. The Brotherhood has suffered losses, to be sure. Some packs support a rather extreme practice that, if *they* can't have a sacred place, nobody can. When things go poorly and seem out-of-control, these rogue packs destroy the locus, razing it to the ground and moving on to something else. Better nobody have it than it be raped by humans or stolen by the Pure. This isn't the official practice of the lodge (if any practice can be deemed "official"), and is *generally* frowned upon by the Hunters in the Brotherhood. Still, no overarching dogma guides the group, and again — these wolves can be more than a little crazy.

Lunacy does not translate to grimness of spirit, though. Most followers of Eshu are bacchanalian souls, gleefully celebrating the madness of life. They

enjoy all the pleasures and peccadilloes of life, regardless of how strange it may seem. The Brotherhood engages in rapturous feasts, drum dances, orgiastic hunts and frenetic runs through the Shadow.

It's also worth noting that these lodge members don't *hate* the humans. The Brotherhood simply distrusts humans utterly. The Brotherhood regrets having to wage this war against the ignorant apes, but it is what must be done to keep all things safe.

Patron Tribe: Hunters in Darkness

THE DARK CONTINENT

The Brotherhood of Eshu's Cap has been around long enough to have members all over the world. The lodge originated in Africa, however, and it is upon the Dark Continent that a large number of its members still dwell. These Forsaken — originally from Yoruba stock, now from all corners of Africa — find that their work is never done. Africa is home to a number of sacred places, and a perhaps abnormal amount of chaos with which to work. The madness is as such that it is often difficult to direct; trying to control it can often come back to destroy whatever fragile balance the Brotherhood hopes to create.

Within Africa exist many loci of unusual potency. The Brotherhood does what it must to watch over these, but clearly the lodge can only maintain vigil around a small number of them. One locus of note is within the Chapel of the Tablet in the Ethiopian city of Aksum. The Brotherhood members have for nearly years kept up the illusion that they are priests devoted to keeping the Ark of the Covenant safe from the Devil's hands. They guard the Chapel vigilantly, acting as gun-wielding monks. The reality is that a powerful locus sits *within* the Chapel itself: a large tooth, nearly as big as a phone booth, stands imbedded in the ground. The tooth appears to be a canine, perhaps from a wolf's mouth, and is inscribed with a language that seems to be a proto-First Tongue. The Brotherhood keeps the tooth safe by spreading lies about what it is (the holiest relic of the Judeo-Christian faith) and further spreads legends about what happens to those who come mucking around. The Forsaken make sure the curious meet with overwhelmingly bad luck. (The Chapel





of the Tablet has a Locus rating of ●●●● and is considered to have a resonance of protection.)

PATRON SPIRIT

The spirit patron of this lodge is as strange as they come. The being rarely shows itself as one thing at one time. The spirit has in the past shown itself as a black wolf with white spider legs, as a skeletal black man with eyes like volcanic glass and a forked tongue, and even a brazier of blood that smolders and boils. The thing speaks in riddles and babbles in the First Tongue.

The Forsaken in the lodge call the spirit Eshu, though the spirit has never formally acknowledged that name. In fact, the only name the spirit uses is "I-Who-Transform" — and the Hunters in Darkness figure that's close enough.

They share an odd relationship with their patron, because they don't necessarily trust it or feel that it has their best interests at heart — and yet, they continue to do whatever bizarre things the spirit asks. If they are hunting, the spirit may ask that they mark three trees with their claws. When they are performing a rite, the spirit might ask that they first urinate in a circle around themselves. The spirit may ask for bowls of blood to be left out, or a dingo's skull be hung from the rafters. And yet, they acknowledge that the spirit is dangerous — it's led more than one of their number into traps, and even gone so far as urge individual Forsaken into actions that would disrupt Harmony. They compare the spirit to fire: he is powerful and useful, but cannot be held firmly. And if the wind turns out of your favor, the spirit will sweep across the dry land and burn it to the ground. That is the spirit's whim and way, and the lodge accepts this.

It's for this reason that they often *see* Eshu's fingerprints on events even when there exists no concrete evidence of the spirit's presence. Plague of locusts or outbreak of Ebola? Obviously an omen sent by Eshu. Flat tire? Eshu wants the driver to stop here for some reason. Life presents near-constant chaos to those who look for it (tornadoes, cancer, riots, war, etc.), and the Brotherhood tends to attribute much of it to the work of so-called Eshu.

JOINING THE LODGE

The Brotherhood places great value on trickery. Whether a trick is funny or punishing, painful or

hilarious, it is a valuable thing. When one is tricked, one also learns. If a Forsaken is fooled somehow, he knows that he must be smarter and more clever than those who are attempting to fool him. He may learn his areas of ignorance or gullibility, and come to understand that he is too trusting of certain things or particular people. Being tricked is proof that he pales beneath Eshu (who, the Brotherhood claims, cannot be tricked), and that he must "up his game," so to speak. It doesn't matter if a trick forces the werewolf into a troublesome social situation or instead causes him to lose some fingers and toes: all tricks should be seen as valuable, once he gets past the initial anger.

Therein lies the means for a werewolf to join this lodge: trickery. To gain entrance, most packs demand that a potential member successfully trick one of them. The nature of the trick is irrelevant. It may be as simple as an unsolvable riddle, or it may unfold as an elaborate scheme making a werewolf think that a fetish has been stolen when in reality it's in his possession the whole time. A trick can even be somewhat malicious, provided that it doesn't endanger a locus or other sacred place: a little malice may be *necessary* to accomplish the lodge's goals.

Tricking a member successfully is all it takes. Being unable to do so (and it is often quite difficult) makes every subsequent effort all the harder — because now the target is doubly aware of incoming mischief.

Prerequisites: Cunning ●●●, Purity ●, Larceny ●●, Stealth ●●

Benefits: When acting in defense of a sacred place and/or object, the member gains a +1 to all appropriate Social rolls. (An example might be when spreading lies to misdirect a group of tourists away from the locus, the werewolf gains +1 to her Subterfuge rolls.) Also, due to the nature of what these Uratha seek to accomplish, they can learn Warding Gifts as if they were tribal Gifts. Such Gifts provide back-up for when the misdirection and chaos fail.

WOLVES OF THE VELDT

Africa features no actual wolves. Thus the wolf forms of African werewolves including those of this lodge tend to appear more as Cape Hunting Dogs or Spotted Hyenas each with mottled fur, broad round ears and dark eyes. They hunt impala as well as local deer called Steenbok. Some within the lodge favor larger packs.

— upwards of or more werewolves — to mimic the way African Wild Dogs organize.

LODGE RITES

The Brotherhood teaches that all living things have *ase* — an intrinsic power or magic that some might deem a “soul.” Gods and spirits have specific types of *ase*, as do the Forsaken, as do humans. Rituals are called *aje*, and are seen as one giving forth energies from one’s *ase* to shape the world by impressing the spirits. One cannot perform *aje* outside of one’s *ase*: the Forsaken, for instance, cannot learn the powers of the spirits or gods, for they are more pure (and more dangerous).

It was once thought that only women could utilize *aje*, and in the Yoruba tradition, that still remains so. Some packs still maintain this, but most have broken with this idea long ago. Those who know a great many rites (i.e., those with Rituals scores of ●●● or higher) are often known as *babalowa* or *lyalocha*: Father and Mother of Secrets, respectively. Below are two of the rites taught among the wolves of Eshu’s Cap.

RITE OF AJOGUN (●●●)

With this rite, the werewolf calls upon the *ajogun*, or “tricky spirits,” to create confusion for those who come near a certain area. The werewolf marks a certain area as a “maze” of Eshu, whereupon those passing through become hopelessly lost. Travelers get turned around, wander in circles, or double back from whence they came. While this doesn’t always prevent invaders from finding their target, it can often delay them long enough for the Brotherhood Uratha to work whatever deception is necessary to keep them away.

Performing this ritual too close to the sacred spot or object is useless. Once travelers are actually at the destination (i.e., the locus, fetish, or holy location), creating confusion is a futile effort. No, the ritual is performed on the outlying areas leading to the protected zone: pathways, roads, forests, deserts. Wherever individuals may pass through serves as a good target for this ritual.

Performing the Rite: The ritemaster binds together three feathers with three pieces of straw. She buries this in the ground at the center of the area which she hopes to affect with the ritual. Then she must engage in a series of dances and chants to the ancestor-spirits (*ara-orun*, or the “living dead”). Such

chants often take the form of playful and mischievous yips, as well as invocations of Eshu’s name.

Cost: 3 Essence per square mile affected

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Extended (20 successes needed; each roll is equal to one minute)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The rite fails, and the ritemaster suffers a sudden headache and dizziness. For the following hour, all rolls are performed at a –2 dice penalty.

Failure: No successes are gathered.

Success: Successes are gathered. If the total reaches 20 successes or more, the ritemaster affects a radius of square miles determined at the time of Essence expenditure (one square mile = six Essence, two square miles = six Essence, and so on).

Any living being coming into this affected area must make an Intelligence + Survival roll (–3 dice). Success allows them to push on with minimal confusion. Failure indicates that they become lost and wander aimlessly around the affected area until the effects of the ritual end or until they come back out the other side from whence they came (i.e., their starting point). Dramatic failure causes an individual to be overwhelmed with confusion — she must either spend a Willpower point or otherwise be forced to stop and rest for an hour, at which point she may attempt the Intelligence + Survival roll anew.

If successful, this rite also negates any use of the Direction Sense Merit for those wandering in the affected zone. During the duration of the ritual, the Direction Sense Merit does not supply its benefits to those in the area.

The effects of this ritual last for one hour per point of the ritemaster’s Primal Urge score.

This ritual works on all living creatures, including animals. It does *not* work, however, on other Forsaken, or vampires.

Exceptional Success: Several successes (five or more) are gathered above and beyond the required successes. The roll for a living being to find her way within the affected area is Intelligence + Survival, but is now affected by a –4 penalty instead of the normal –3.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier Situation

+1	Local spirits are sympathetic to werewolf’s goal
–1	Local spirits are hostile to werewolf
–3	Densely populated area (urban)





ESHU'S BLESSING (•••)

The name is ironic: this rite provides no blessing, only a curse. The rite makes someone the focal point of chaos. The person does not cause chaos directly, but his presence becomes the vortex for all manner of strangeness and disorder.

Performing the Ritual: The ritemaster must paint half of the victim's face with his own blood. The werewolf waves a goatskin pouch of animal teeth over the target, spitting on him as the werewolf does so. When that is done, the werewolf whistles (or blows a whistle, often hand-carved) over the individual to attract the attention of the spirits. They then wash the blood off the face, and the ritual is complete.

Because this requires a great deal of effort that will be seemingly antagonistic, many Brotherhood ritemasters actually abduct the individuals they wish to curse. They kidnap them, perform the ritual and then release them back among their people. The Forsaken watch the chaos from a distance.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Harmony versus target's Composure (or, if the victim is Forsaken, versus her Composure + Primal Urge)

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The spirits decide instead to truly bless the target, granting him a measure of resistance in the form of +1 Composure for the rest of the day. Some Forsaken, upon realizing this, accept that the figure is truly chosen by Eshu to be an ally.

Failure: An equal number or the most successes are rolled for the target. The rite fails.

Success: The most successes are rolled for the ritemaster. The target is successfully cursed. The victim is not actually affected. Those around him, however, are.

Anybody within a 10-yard radius of the target suffers ill effects while near him. When performing an action that requires a dice roll in the 10-yard radius, the 10 again rule does not apply. Additionally, any 1s that come up on any roll are subtracted from successes. (The latter part of the weakness does not affect dramatic failure rules.) The narrative effect is that things seem out of sorts around the target: dogs bark constantly, the air smells a little strange, people feel queasy, tools break or slip away or clouds of small flies hover nearby. All of these slight-but-strange occurrences help to accentuate the curse and its mechanical effects.

This power lasts for a number of hours equal to the ritemaster's Primal Urge score.

(Some werewolves drug the victims to cause confusion. That way, the targets have little clue what is happening or has happened to them.)

Exceptional Success: The ritemaster rolls an additional five or more successes than the target. The effects of this rite last for twice as long as usual (i.e., equal to twice the ritemaster's Primal Urge score in hours).



BROTHERHOOD OF ESHU'S CAP STORY HOOKS

• **Finders Keepers:** The characters' pack controls a locus of some distinction but the Brotherhood of Eshu's Cap believes that the characters do not deserve to be the locus' custodians. The Brotherhood wages a secret war of chaos trying to maneuver the packmembers against one another so that the Brotherhood may move in and claim the territory so as to keep it "properly safe." Alternately perhaps the players assume the role of the Brotherhood Forsaken seeking instead to be the ones *causing* the chaos in an effort to reclaim a poorly kept locus. Either way it is a hidden war of pack versus pack. Do the locus-keepers eventually realize that they are being manipulated before they self destruct?

• **Losers Weepers:** The Brotherhood has long maintained the sanctity of a powerful locus. Against all odds the lodge members have kept it safe from human intrusion but now the werewolves face a terrible test: *war*. War comes to this distant place and they must keep the locus safe from human ignorance and malevolence as well as the horrid spirits stirred to life by the swath of destruction and terror. Worse how do the characters bring controlled chaos to something as disordered as war? Will there be any way to keep the holy place safe — or is a slash and burn policy the only option?

• **Our Only Hope:** A pack of Forsaken implores the Brotherhood to help the pack protect a powerful and sacred place — which just so happens to be in the middle of the city where swarms of people crawl over the area like ants every day. Unfortunately the Brotherhood doesn't get the whole story before coming to the area and becoming embroiled in the entreating

pack's own conflicts with the local Pure and Host population. The locus is besieged on all sides including the original pack's incompetence (which is likely to cause problems time and again whenever the Brotherhood makes an effort to instill some kind of chaos). The Hunters must determine how to keep a highly populated, highly contested urban locus safe. Is there some way to bring all the forces to bear against one another? Must the original keepers be used as expendable pawns even though they were the ones who asked for the Brotherhood's help in the first place?

Rituals: 3; **Rites:** (1) Banish Human; (2) Rite of Contrition; (3) Rite of Ajogun

Keeping an urban locus safe has never been easy, but Mother Vigilant (sometimes called Mother May-Eye) and her packmates have done their best. The locus — a never-empty garbage Dumpster in the middle of the worst part of town — attracts all manner of hungry spirits, and for a long time was a beacon to the city's homeless population, too. A Dumpster that never goes empty? That never gets picked up by the sanitation

MOTHER VIGILANT

Auspice: Irraka

Tribe: Hunters in Darkness

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 1 (1/2/3/3), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4 (3/4/1/4), Composure 3

Mental Skills: Computer Investigation Occult Politics

Physical Skills: Brawl 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Silent Observer) 3, Survival 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Vermin) 1, Empathy (Read Intention) 3, Expression 1, Intimidation Persuasion Socialize Streetwise (Gangs) 4

Merits: Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fetish (Fireflash) 2, Inspiring, Resources 1

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max / Per Turn: /

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 8 (10/12/11/8)

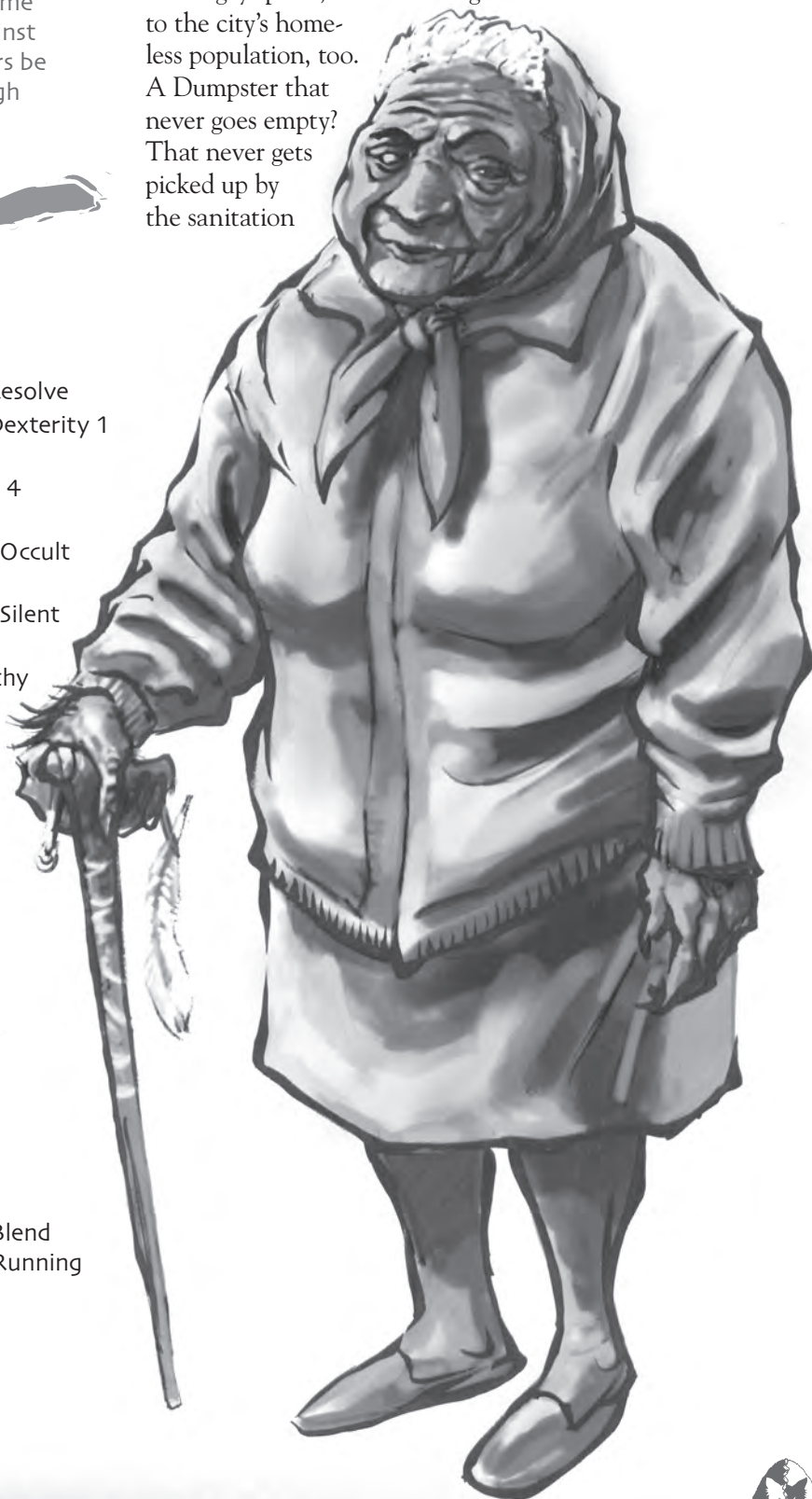
Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8) with Fast Reflexes

Defense: 1 (1/2/3/3)

Speed: 8 (9/12/15/13)

Renown: Cunning Purity Wisdom

Gifts: (1) Feet of Mist, Loose Tongue; (2) Blending, Sand in the Eyes; (3) Playing Possum, Running Shadow; (4) Double Back





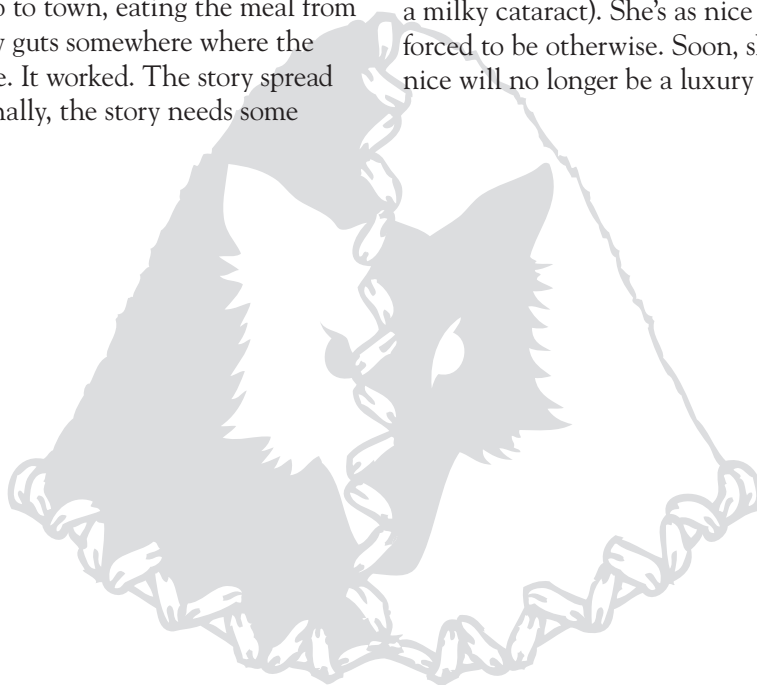
trucks? It was a bountiful cornucopia of semi-edible garbage.

And it was killing the locus. So, Mother Vigilant decided to do something about it. The local homeless and the other vagrants and gang members would be the vehicles for some scary urban myths. With the help of a local *duguthim* calling itself “the Coprophage” (possessed of a cockroach-spirit), Mother concocted a phony legend about a man-eating serial killer dwelling within the ranks of the homeless and living down near the never-empty Dumpster. The illusion was easy to create: find a dead bum (one of the many frozen to the sidewalk during winter) and fill him full of trash, shit and butcher’s scraps. Then, let the Coprophage go to town, eating the meal from within the corpse’s icy guts somewhere where the other vagrants can see. It worked. The story spread like wildfire. Occasionally, the story needs some

refreshing: letting the Ridden leave behind a half-chewed body never hurts (he never kills them, he only eats what he finds already dead).

For the last couple of years, the territory is all but a ghost town. The alley and the two streets book-ending it are desolate and dead, just how Mother wants it. But now she faces a new challenge: *urban renewal*. Developers have been poking around, and they’re not so easily swayed by stories of cannibalistic serial killers. Worse, they’ve brought the cops in to come sniffing around, something that the vagrants and gangbangers would never do.

Mother Vigilant is a sage, old woman with a twinkle of madness in her one good eye (the other is a milky cataract). She’s as nice as cookies, until she’s forced to be otherwise. Soon, she’s afraid that being nice will no longer be a luxury she can afford.



THE KSHATRIYAS

DOMINION, POWER, DUTY

And so it came on the field of blood and battle that Arjuna the Dutiful, the Doer of Pure Deeds, questioned his purpose. All around him in the mud lay the dead and dying. In the distance, the howls of his pack punctuated the night. Arjuna could hear claws ripping through flesh, the sound of klaive against klaive. Those of his pack and tribe lay still in the muck. Old friends growled gurgling through throats thick with gore and bile. With all of this going on around him, Arjuna felt his heart grow heavy with sadness. He did not know how he could continue. As fast as it had come, his Rage had gone like a star winking out, and suddenly he was left despondent and alone.

He collapsed into the mire, weeping and begging for aid. A shadow fell over him, and he looked up to see the leastmost of his pack, the omega wolf known as Kiriti, or the Shining One. But already Arjuna could see that she was not herself. Lightning flashed in her eyes, and despite the heat a cold mist crept from her mouth with every breath. Arjuna did not need to ask her who she really was, because he understood that this was a visitation from Skolis-Ur, the Winter Wolf, patron of his tribe.

“Do not feel sadness at what you have wrought,” Kiriti said in the whispering susurrus of Skolis.

“But we wound and destroy our own kind,” Arjuna said. “The field of battle is littered with Forsaken. How can this be right?”

“It is right because it is your duty. You are my child and so you have in you the power to fight and to rule for righteousness. You are teacher to those who will listen, and killer of those whose ears are closed to your wisdom. Let me worry about choice and consequence. You must only exist and perform your duties as a Lord of the Storm.”

Arjuna did not yet understand. He told her so: “But these are my friends, my allies. Why do we fight? How can I defeat them in good conscience?”

“You act with my conscience in mind, not your own, and that absolves you of worry. It is proper to release the weak from this realm so that their spirits may be hardened in another life. Feel no pain at their subjugation. Understand that conflict is the way of this world, and you are a part of it.”

To ensure that he understood his place, Kiriti-as-Skolis knelt down in the mud and tied a red thread around Arjuna’s wrist. In his ear, she whispered, “You are now kshatriya, a warrior-priest chosen by me. Go and perform your duties, and bring others to your side.”

Arjuna stood, the red thread throbbing around his wrist. He felt no more uncertainty. His sadness had gone. All that was left was purpose.

The Kshatriyas know that they are meant to rule. As warrior-priests, they believe that they possess the wisdom and martial prowess necessary for it. It’s not personal. It’s nobody else’s fault. Everybody is good at something — or, more appropriately, all Forsaken have some kind of *duty* — and this is what the Kshatriyas are good at: taking territory and ruling other Uratha. This is their dharma, a word meaning way, life or duty.

Most Kshatriyas are curiously honest and pragmatic when it comes to this. For one, they do not automatically assume control of all territories near to them, and they do not try to force the local Forsaken to heel. Not only is that foolish, but prideful. No, if a locus is being held by a strong enough pack, then that pack can keep what it has claimed. The pack’s duty is fulfilled, and the Kshatriyas are happy.

Upon sensing weakness from another pack, the Kshatriyas will first attempt to surmise the nature of that weakness. If it can be easily fixed, they will endeavor to do so. They see themselves as teachers, always with lessons to impart to the weaker of the species. If a pack doesn’t wish to receive such lessons, too bad. The Kshatriyas will attempt to instruct the pack regardless. If the packmembers must be held down with tooth and claw while they learn the proper way to do things, then that is regrettable, but necessary. Through teaching, the Kshatriyas invoke their rule. The very role of teacher implies a position above the students, and this is where members feel themselves to be. They know things others do not, and it is their obligation to help the inadequate become adequate.

Sometimes, of course, the inadequate cannot be made to do what it is the Kshatriyas so desire, and that’s perfectly acceptable. A round peg does not go in a square hole, and so it is with some Forsaken. A





pack that holds territory may not deserve to hold that territory — perhaps the pack's function lies elsewhere. Maybe the pack should concentrate on learning rites or entreating spirits for aid. It's important to note that this lodge sees other tribes through a painfully narrow lens. Bone Shadows are priests, and only priests. Blood Talons are warriors — not meant for strategy or spirituality, only appropriate brutality. The Iron Masters are artisans and outcasts, whereas the Hunters in Darkness are protectors and guardians limited by their own exclusion. Ghost Wolves are altogether regrettable: they are casteless wastes, and the Kshatriyas do their best to force such lost souls to join a proper tribe (one often chosen by the member).

These Forsaken are glad to tell others about their proper place. Some go smartly and willingly to their appropriate duties, and for this the Kshatriyas are glad. Those who resist must be shown to their obligations — again, by tooth and claw if so required. If a pack resists utterly, then the Sacred Thread Forsaken must fulfill their final and perhaps most important duty: as warriors. Upon the field of battle, those who continue to resist responsibility must fall to the Kshatriyas or bow to the proper way.

It is in this that these Forsaken do not see themselves as vainglorious warriors taking territory for themselves — no, instead they understand that they are simply the hand of a power greater than them. They are the instruments of Winter Wolf. They are vessels for his power, and they must absolutely represent his authority whenever able. First, they try to teach the weak. When this fails, they shepherd the weak toward a different and better destiny. They illustrate the path of duty and ask that the others walk down it willingly. When all else fails, battle is necessary. These are the ways of the Kshatriyas. They are powerful teachers and warriors. All would do well to accept it.

Patron Tribe: Storm Lords



ORIGINS

The Kshatriyas originated in India a long time ago. They are however a rather large lodge and have members all across the world. The principles and duties of tribe and lodge are not restricted to racial or geographical boundaries. This lodge thus maintains a number of large territories and powerful loci across the globe — because doing so is of course their duty.

That said, the Kshatriyas remain powerful in India more so there than anywhere. They have experienced resistance in the Western world where ideas of duty and obligation seem to wane in favor of self possession and equality. But in India, they have been around long enough and have ideals that mesh with the extant culture. One is born into auspice and chosen by tribe (not vice versa), and the local Forsaken understand this. It is in India (Bombay and Calcutta in particular) that the Kshatriyas have helped rout the growing power of the Plague King and the Pure werewolves.

Worth noting is that the Kshatriyas is a very real Hindu caste in India. Most packs within this lodge are liberal enough to accept that a werewolf needn't literally be born into the human caste for that idea no longer matters. Others are less forgiving. Some packs demand that being werewolf is not enough and that a prospective member must belong first to the human caste of Kshatriyas (which is second from the top, the foremost being the Brahmin).

PATRON SPIRIT

The lodge believes its patron spirit is Skolis-Ur, or the Winter Wolf, who is also the totem wolf to the Storm Lords. This belief helps give the Kshatriyas their supposed duty (and in fact they almost consider the lodge a tribe unto themselves).

The reality is somewhat different, though few if any Kshatriyas are actually aware of this. Their patron spirit is *not* Skolis-Ur, but one of Winter Wolf's cubs. This cub, Frost Wolf, plays at being Winter Wolf's progenitor, but does not come bearing a true mandate from the more powerful totem. Should the Kshatriyas learn of this deception (however meaningless it is in the end), it could shake their faith in what is supposed to be unswerving obligation.

Frost Wolf, calling itself Skolis-Ur, communes frequently with members. Whenever in the Shadow, the Kshatriyas seek guidance from emissaries of their patron. These emissaries often appear as pale wolves with eyes of snow and teeth of ice. They appear in whorls of snow blown in by ragged gales. These spirits refuse to appear to any wolves who are not of the lodge, however, for fear of being caught in the lie that has persisted for centuries.

JOINING THE LODGE

The Kshatriyas are not a secret society. As a lodge, the members are quite public about their presence — why hide what is one's obligation? Therefore, any Storm Lords who wish to join the Lodge of the Sacred Thread may attempt to do so. Such a Storm Lord must renounce his pack or let a Kshatriya join the pack he belongs to currently. He then begins a year of training and tutelage, in which he is the student to the Forsaken.

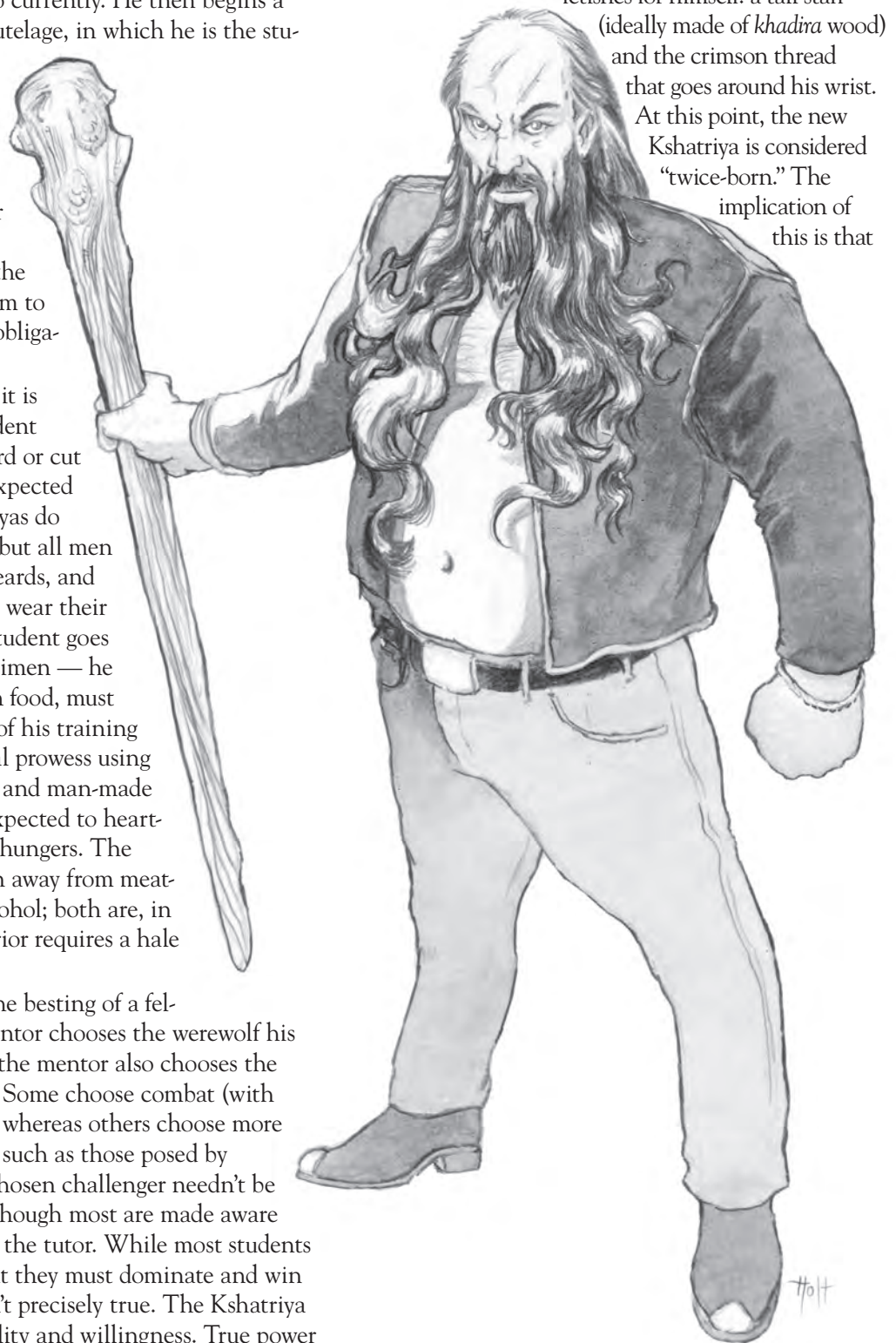
He serves his tutor in all ways, performing whatever tasks are demanded in order to learn his duty. If other Uratha stand in the way of this teaching, the student must fight them to show his devotion to obligation.

During this time, it is expected that the student will not shave his beard or cut his hair — both are expected to grow long. (Kshatriyas do eventually trim both, but all men of the lodge possess beards, and both men and women wear their hair very long.) The student goes through a rigorous regimen — he must hunt for his own food, must keep an oral account of his training and must learn martial prowess using both his natural body and man-made weapons. He is also expected to heartily indulge his mortal hungers. The Kshatriyas do not turn away from meat-eating or drinking alcohol; both are, in fact, expected. A warrior requires a hale constitution.

The final test is the besting of a fellow Forsaken. The mentor chooses the werewolf his student must fight — the mentor also chooses the nature of the combat. Some choose combat (with sword, arrow or claw), whereas others choose more stately confrontations such as those posed by games of chess. The chosen challenger needn't be aware of this choice, though most are made aware of the coming trial by the tutor. While most students are lead to believe that they must dominate and win the challenge, this isn't precisely true. The Kshatriya is only looking for ability and willingness. True power

and dominance will come with time; at this early stage, all that matters is the student possess a fire in his heart that will help to forge his future competency and authority.

Once this year is over and the student has been approved by the teacher, the Forsaken may become a true Kshatriya. At this stage, he must learn to make two fetishes for himself: a tall staff (ideally made of *khadira* wood) and the crimson thread that goes around his wrist. At this point, the new Kshatriya is considered "twice-born." The implication of this is that



The Kshatriyas





he was born first as a werewolf, and now he has been reborn as a Kshatriya Forsaken in service to Winter Wolf. The new lodge member is given a title by his tutor. This epithet is an addendum to the new Kshatriya's original name, and is a title meant to indicate the werewolf's strengths. One might be called "Manjushri the Axe-Thrower" or "Rivati of the Shining Eyes."

Prerequisites: Glory ••, Honor •••; the character must possess some kind of combat ability (Brawl, Firearms or Weaponry Skill) at ••• as well. While not required, most Kshatriyas also possess a specialty in their martial Skills.

Benefits: Provided the Kshatriya has the appropriate Rituals score, the lodge teaches her the Fetish Rite upon joining, as well as how to craft her own Staff of the Twice-Born and Sacred Thread fetishes (see below). Also, the Kshatriya is blessed with a powerful presence, even in compensation for skills he purportedly lacks. As such, the werewolf may ignore the Unskilled penalty for any Social rolls.

ANCIENT HATRED

The Kshatriyas possess an enemy from long ago who still pop up in remote parts of the world. These monsters called *Dakini* are actually humans Claimed by the starving spirits of birds of prey. The result is a botched amalgamation of human and raptor with feet of ugly talons and rubbery swaths of half-feathered flesh connecting arms to torso (functioning as wings). In India, the *Dakini* were plentiful, and gathered together in "nests" hiding along the mountain passes and roads leading into the cities. They also tended to swarm loci roosting at the powerful junctions of Essence. The Kshatriyas endeavor to hunt the spirits that cause such Claimed and have helped oust these creatures from India — at least for a time.

The *Dakini* may have any Numina expected of the *duguthim*. The *Dakini* may also fly for a limited time by making a successful Dexterity + Athletics roll, but each can only stay aloft for a number of turns equal to his Stamina scores (the creatures are imperfect amalgamations). A *Dakini's* talons do an attack of two lethal damage and attack rolls are made with the creature's Strength Brawl dice pool.

KSHATRIYAS FETISHES

STAFF OF THE TWICE-BORN (•)

Most members carry a Kshatriya staff with them at all times. The staff itself should be made of hearty wood, and stand no taller than the creator's shoulder (in Hishu form). Similar to the Kshatriyas themselves, their staves tend to be strong and sturdy, hard to deflect and harder to break. Bound within the wood is the spirit of the type of tree from which the wood was cut. When a werewolf changes, the staff becomes a dark line of scar tissue around one of the wrists or circumnavigates a paw.

When activated, the Staff of the Twice-Born grants the wielder +3 dice when resisting any attacks capable of Knockdown, Knockout or Stun effects (see pp. 167–168, **World of Darkness Rulebook**). These dice are *not* applied to the wielder's Defense or any kind of Dodge; if the attacker is successful, the hit lands and appropriate damage is still applied. The fetish-wielder gets dice to resist the three effects mentioned above. In the case of Stun, the attack must incur damage equal or exceeding the fetish-wielder's Size +3. In an instance of Knockout, the wielder gets +3 to his Stamina roll to resist unconsciousness, and with Knockdown, the wielder can add +3 to his Dexterity + Athletics roll to maintain his footing. The effects of activation last for one scene.

The staff has the following combat stats: Damage three bashing damage, Size 4, Cost n/a and, because it is a polearm with superior reach, the fetish grants the wielder a +1 Defense due to the distance kept from a foe. The Staff of the Twice-Born has a Durability of 2 and a Structure of 6.

Action: Reflexive

SACRED THREAD (•••)

The thread (known to some as *upanayana*) that binds a werewolf to the Kshatriyas is a sacred marker expected of all within the lodge. Historically, the thread has been made of hemp, though it can be made of any kind of string (or even vine). The creator dyes the cord red (often in blood mixed with berry juice) before tying it around his wrist and binding within it a Lune (Ralunim specifically). The effects of the thread when activated are twofold. First, it provides the wearer a +2 bonus to the Resolve + Composure roll used to help resist Death Rage. *Kuruth*, to the Kshatriyas, is an unholy and unfocused state, and muddles the senses as much as (if not worse than)

uncertainty in one's duty. The second benefit of the thread is that it helps to slightly amplify the werewolf's Renown. When rolling the Kshatriya's highest Renown to determine if a spirit or werewolf has heard of him, add a +1 to the roll. This represents an *artificial* increase in what the target believes he may have heard about the werewolf. The target's recollection or feeling toward the Kshatriya may be real or false, but is amplified nevertheless.

Making this fetish is difficult: Ralunim do not like to be bound. In nearly all cases, the roll to imbue the fetish (Harmony roll per the Fetish Rite, p. 162, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**) is made at a -3 penalty. Dramatic failure on the Fetish Rite roll incurs a single level of aggravated damage to the ritemaster as the Lune escapes.

Action: Reflexive

KSHATRIYA STORY HOOKS

- **Purity of War:** The local Kshatriyas have determined that the city (or local domain) is riddled with weakness. Like a house made of rotting boards the city is unstable and dangerous. The loci remain unprotected and the various packs can barely hold all the territories together. The Kshatriyas decide that it is time for war. They summon others of their lodge to their side to help wage this campaign against the local Forsaken. The Kshatriyas don't manipulate the war into happening; no dishonesty fuels the conflict. The Kshatriyas are straightforward in their attacks. Will the local Forsaken thwart the lodge's attempt at sudden dominance? Will they go quietly, accepting occupation as a grim necessity for the sanctity of the Shadow? Must the werewolves engage in dirty tricks and underhanded fighting, and are the Kshatriyas prepared for such dishonorable behavior?

- **Damaged Duty:** For all the Kshatriyas' bluster about duty and dominance they have suddenly been found unworthy. They have failed in efforts to convince others (with words and weapons) to leave their territory and worse have themselves been roused from their domain by werewolves who are simply put stronger. For some in the lodge this shakes their faith in who they are and what they do. For others it mobilizes them to extremes — to combat strength one must become stronger because weak-

ness in mind and body will not be tolerated. Meanwhile, the other pack does not rest on its laurels waiting for a counterattack and works to undermine the lodge's efforts to gain any kind of hold at all.

- **Enemy at the Gates:** The Lodge of the Sacred Thread is no stranger to conflict, and, through conflict, has made many enemies. These enemies are multifarious and seemingly endless: bitter packs of conquered Forsaken, a confederation of zealous Pure werewolves, the swarming Dakini or any number of mistreated spirits. The Kshatriyas for a time have found a kind of peace and stability in a given region — they control a goodly hunk of territory and the rest of the land is in the hands of those who deserve it. All seems well that is until enemies come knocking. Perhaps only one group seeks to slake its wrath but what happens when several old enemies band together to take out revenge upon the werewolves of the Sacred Thread? Players may assume the roles of Kshatriyas attempting to maintain the peace of the land while still destroying the mounting adversaries. The players may also control characters who do not belong to the lodge and must deal with the fallout caused by old and painful rivalries.

NARSI THE HONEY-TONGUED

Auspice: Cahalith

Tribe: Storm Lords

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4 (3/4/1/4), Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics Investigation Politics

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Pugilism) 3, Stealth Weaponry

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (Lyrical) 4, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Deal-Making) 4, Socialize (Telling Stories) 3

Merits: Fetish (Staff of the Twice-Born) 1, Fetish (Sacred Thread) 3, Fighting Style: Boxing 3, Inspiring

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Charity





The Kshatriyas

Vice: Pride

Health: 8 (10/12/11/8)

Initiative: 5 (5/6/7/7)

Defense: 3 (3/4/4/4)

Speed: 11 (12/15/18/16)

Renown: Cunning Glory Honor

Gifts: (1) The Right Words, Pack Awareness, Warning Growl; (2) Luna's Dictum, Resist Pain, True Leader; (3) Voice of Command; (4) Break the Defiant

Rituals: 3; **Rites:** (1) Shared Scent, Rite of the Spirit Brand; (2) Hallow Touchstone; (3) Fetish Rite

Narsi doesn't understand why one cannot be both a lover *and* a fighter. He has moved past the sadness of this life and boisterously embraces all aspects of this life. A consummate poet and a perpetual smooth-talker, he cares little for lies and prefers straight-up honesty — but the way he lays it out makes it sound like the finest thing to reach one's ears. He can make the worst news sound like the best case scenario. As much as he likes scrapping it out with his fists, he considers his words to comprise his greatest weapon. The Kshatriyas recognize his strengths (having named him *the Honey-Tongued* thusly) and put him forth as their best foot forward.

Narsi is the one who meets with other packs and helps to get them up to par, or otherwise convinces them to find their destinies elsewhere. That's not to say he's incapable in a fight, only that he prefers the role of diplomat when it comes to the lodge's dutiful dominance of other Forsaken.

The reality of Narsi is that behind his hearty laugh and poignant stories lies a hot temper. It takes quite a bit to push him to the point of such anger... but once there, he detonates like an oil drum. It doesn't help that he has a great love for the spirits — not the ones kept in the Shadow, but the ones found in bottles of vodka. He has a powerful appetite, and it has got him into trouble more often than his packmates would prefer. Some believe he perhaps hides great sadness and tragedy behind that jovial exterior.

Narsi is a big man, built like an oaken cask of whiskey. His skin is dark, and his beard winds all the way down his chest to rest on his generous belly. The hair atop his head, however, is fading rapidly, leaving a mostly bald scalp that has been scarred by one rough fracas too many.

WRENCHBITER BITES IT

WRENCHBITER BITES IT

The Fire-Touched with the road rash face palmed Wrenchbiter's head like it was a basketball and ground it into the cracked highway asphalt. The other Pure stood around in a circle, hooting and spitting.

They had come out of nowhere, striking from the shadows the way a rattlesnake might. All up and down the Mother Road — Route 66, America's Road — they hit the mightiest packs, bringing the Forsaken gangs to bear with bullets and fire. It was worst in the town of Grimwood, the territory of Wrenchbiter and his pack of hog-riding miscreants. The Fire-Touched, wearing the dusty black garb and white collars of desert preachers, swept into the Oklahoma town on the night of a bad storm. As twisters danced in the distance, the Forsaken fought and bled and died.

The Fire-Touched didn't kill them all. Some, like Wrenchbiter, were given the chance to go over, see what the other side of the grass was like. A few even went, those miserable fucks. But not Wrenchbiter, oh no. Some of his pack made it out. He couldn't bear the looks on their faces.

As the Pure pushed his face into the macadam, his lips cracking and spilling blood into the dusty gravel, Wrenchbiter found what he was looking for — a length of chain tucked away in the waist of his jeans. He snatched it fast and whipped it backward against the Fire-Touched's head. It was more than just a chain, though, and in every link was the spirit of those hot embers that come off a welding torch. The chain seared a mean stripe across the bastard's face as it hit. The smell of burning skin — more than a little like sweet pork — hit the Forsaken's nostrils as the rest of the monsters advanced. Claws tore his shoulder into tatters. A boot kicked in his shin, shattering the bone. Two shots rang out, and a pair of matching slugs punched through his spine. The old wolf dropped, feeling the swell of madness coming up within him.

"It's over, old man," the chain-whipped prick sneered.

"Just you wait," Wrenchbiter snarled, giving the promise that would forever ring through the ears of those packs of Route 66. "It ain't over yet, motherfucker."

Kuruth overcame him, and they tore him to pieces on the highway.

Once upon a time, Route 66 was the American highway, a 2,448-mile stretch of asphalt connecting Chicago to Los Angeles. Called the "Mother Road," Route 66 was a pathway representing prosperity as impoverished Midwesterners could travel its length, seeking fortune elsewhere. Commissioned in 1926, the winding hairpin highway was one of the country's major transportation arteries until the roadway's decline and eventual decommission brought on by the bigger and faster super-highways that would eventually run the length of the country. Officially shut down in 1985, Route 66 still exists as a broken patchwork of crumbling highways and destitute back roads (all connected by bits of still-traveled links of actual highway).

For some Forsaken, Route 66 represents more than just an old, unused highway. The Shadow of Route 66 was once a strong and vibrant place, connected to a powerful spirit ecology. The Shadow's health along this region was mirrored by the prosperity of the road. Spirits did as spirits do, eating one another and playing their strange games, but it was in relative balance, presided over not only by the Forsaken packs and gangs, but also by the highway's own totem spirit, the titular Mother Road. Mother Road was a distant being, a spirit that spoke through orchestrated events and weird highway envoys (crows, lizards, the scent of scalded rubber, puddles of oil with faces reflected in the rainbow surface). But she was healthy, and so were the spirits over which she lorded. All was well.

The decommission and inevitable disuse of the highway, however, set the Shadow's tenuous balance on a path to decay. The road's prosperity was falling away piece by piece, and with it came the madness of spirits. The breaking of the highway led to the breaking of Mother Road — her spirit split into many personalities, some lazy and fickle, others wild with wrath. The Forsaken found their job a thousand times harder than it had been when the road was healthy, but their pride stopped them from banding together and mending what was broken. Instead of stopping the decline of the highway and attempting to foster growth within the Shadow, the gangs pointed fingers at one another, looking for blame. Territoriality mired the packs in violent in-fight-





ing. The Pure wolves knew this. They watched and waited. And, in the 1990s, they attacked.

As part of the concerted efforts all across North America, the Pure struck Route 66 like lightning. Over the course of a few short weeks, the Forsaken of the Mother Road found that they had been wasting all their efforts on one another, and their enemies had easily exploited that weakness. Most Forsaken died. A few went over to the other side, converted by honeyed-tongues and terrible tortures. The Mother Road herself cried out. Legends today say that all up and down the length of that already broken road, the blacktop split and roiled, as if shaken by a deep and troubling quake.

But it isn't over. A coalition of Iron Masters has decided to take its territory back. They ride their motorcycle mounts and truck convoys down the hidden roads of the American West, striking small packs of Pure much as they themselves were hit a decade ago. This lodge isn't big enough to hit the major players, yet, but it strives to gain ragtag members up and down the length of the old road. With packs like the Fat Truckers' Association and the Stormriders, the lodge is gaining momentum. The lodge members must be wary, though — for every handful of Pure killed, it seems that one of their own perishes, as well. It is not a loss they can afford.

Patron Tribe: Iron Masters



REGION SPECIFIC

Ultimately this lodge necessitates playing in a certain region of the United States: Route While it's no small hunk of territory (nearly 2,500 miles worth), it does demand that the Storyteller and players focus on one area of one country

With some tweaking however this gang *can* be adapted to other parts of North America, or even the world. Most countries have avenues and highways of some import The following is a list of highways that might be used as the focus of a given lodge Any of these may have been taken over by the Pure requiring violent reclamation from the Iron Masters.

- North America: Pacific Coast Highway, Pan American Highway (connecting USA to Mexico)
- Canada: Trans-Canada Highway (longest highway in world)

- Australia: Highway 1 (Circumnavigates entire continent)
- China: Jingshi Expressway, Jingzhang Expressway
- Germany: Autobahn
- United Kingdom: M1
- India: Grand Trunk Road

Any of these can be looked up in the library or on the Internet. An Iron Master lodge can apply to any of these with enough cultural modification.



PATRON SPIRIT

Certainly the lodge would prefer that Mother Road be the group's patron (or *matron*) spirit. The unfortunate fact is, she is simply no longer a sane spirit. On those rare times a Forsaken glimpses her, he may see a woman that looks like walking roadkill (replete with crows picking at her soft tissue) or instead see a lady who seems cobbled together of various smashed car parts (vomiting oil and speaking in the crackling voice of a staticky radio). The goal is, of course, to bring some kind of sanctity and sanity back to Mother Road. For now, that seems a distant reality.

In the interim, a violent and temperamental spirit — Rumble of Coming Thunder — watches over the group. It suits their purposes well. Not only is electricity (i.e., lightning) what helps to fire the pistons in their bikes and truck engines, but the constant clamor of booming thunder helps mask the sound of the lodge's vehicles as they storm down the old and broken highway.

The Iron Masters of this lodge recognize that they have given themselves in part to this spirit. Rumble of Coming Thunder is a demanding patron. Not only does the sound of its many thunderclaps echo the fierce beating of an angry heart, but the totem requires that its children wage a constant war. The lodge's members are expected to not only rebuff any attempts of intimidation, but must themselves intimidate others on a daily basis. Problems are not solved by talking or negotiations — no, this patron demands that physical conflict solve things. And, frankly, this spirit likes such aggressive resolutions to be *loud*. The roar of a shotgun or the growl of a bike as it mows down a fleeing opponent is perfect. If the Iron Master must fight with tooth and claw, then he damn well better roar and howl as he does so.

JOINING THE LODGE

The Lodge of 66 recognizes that it needs whoever it can get in the fight against the Pure. Fact is, the Pure outnumber the lodge members mightily — while each might be individually weaker than any one Forsaken, their sheer population and territory give them a terrible edge. Still, while the lodge members cannot afford to be too picky (the lodge is still a fledgling organization, and has yet to produce numbers that make them more than a merely irritating thorn), they still uphold some standards to which a potential Iron Master must adhere.

First and foremost is transportation. The highway is a long and winding affair, damn near 3,000 miles worth of road. Some packs within the group are nomadic, whereas others keep and hold those territories that showcase a locus. Even those territories, however, may encompass 20 or 30 square miles of desert, mountain or forest. One cannot get from one end of a territory to the other on foot, and so one must possess a set of wheels.

A Forsaken's ride *must* measure up. Most Iron Masters in the lodge prefer loud-ass motorcycles or big trucks (be they pickups or 18-wheelers). Some, like the Vietnamese boys out of Amarillo (the Yamaha-ha-has) ride bumblebee black-and-yellow crotch-rockets. The Stormriders, nomads every one of them, ride choppers and old army bikes. Some prefer Jeeps and buggies. Others like muscle cars. Whatever set of wheels the werewolf brings to the table must prove itself against the others. Some might scoff, but a potential can blow those dubious grins off their faces by performing well in a race or set of maneuvers.

The second requisite to join is the approval of the lording spirit, Rumble of Coming Thunder. Rumble does not favor weakness, and will violently spurn those who try to measure up and fail. (As one Iron Master put it, the spirit “needs wolves who are as hard as the blacktop and as bitter as a whiskey piss.”) If an Iron Master wants to join and shows up with a fast or rough ride, then the other members will bring him before the spirit. Rumble shows only at night, and he chooses to judge new members only at loci. If the spirit approves, the potential member should expect a thunderclap so loud his fillings rattle right out of their teeth. If Rumble smells weakness — that thunderclap comes complete with lightning that will burn every hair off the potential's body.

Once that's all done, the lodge member goes through all the paces: any mechanics make sure his vehicle is up to par, he's given weapons and maps

of all the territories (these are usually drawn and redrawn as the lines of war change things mightily) and then he's taken out for initiation. Initiation might be anything that a pack of 66 feels like: a night of hard drinking, a four-day peyote binge, a race or even an attack on the Pure and their kin. After that, the werewolf is expected to front all the colors and signs of his pack and lodge. He gets his ink, wears the right clothing and might even paint up his bike, car or truck. Each pack is like a gang unto itself (admittedly a coalition of like-minded gangs instead of the disparate enemies that they once were), and thus, each pack maintains its own codes of honor and symbols of power. Wise Forsaken don't resist getting whatever tattoos his packmates wear. Stupid Forsaken get beaten into unconsciousness and wake up with the tattoos anyway.

Prerequisites: Glory ••, Honor ••, Crafts ••, a set of proper wheels

Benefits: The lodge provides a vast network of grease monkeys and socket jockeys; as such, members may take a +1 bonus to all Crafts rolls involving repairing or modifying items. While these Iron Masters might prefer Mental Skills and Attributes, Rumble of Coming Thunder wants its children as tough as nails. Because of this, he makes it easier for them to improve themselves physically. All Physical Attributes can be purchased at the new experience point rate of new dots x 4, instead.

NEW LOCI

Route 66 is peppered with loci, most of them relatively low in power — but it's their populous nature that makes them intriguing. The loci seem strung together almost like a set of Christmas lights, going all the way down the old and broken highway. Below are a handful of these loci from various points along the journey. One can assume that these were once in the hands of the Forsaken, but are now within the grip of the Pure. (Though, characters may claim one of the below loci as in their territory, if the Storyteller allows.)

THE WILDFLOWERS OF JORGE OBRIDOR BORGES (LOCUS RATING •)

This is not a place, but a painting. The Impressionist piece, showing a verdant meadow rampant with wildflowers, hangs in a tiny out-of-the-way gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The painter, Jorge Obridor Borges, finished the painting in 1968. It took him 10 years to finish, and it is his only completed work. According to the stories, the painting shows a



meadow where Borges met his wife, Ezmerelda, many years before. Nobody knows who she was, or where she went, but she wasn't around when he finished the piece. The same day Borges finished the painting, he shot himself. One suggests that a few of the red

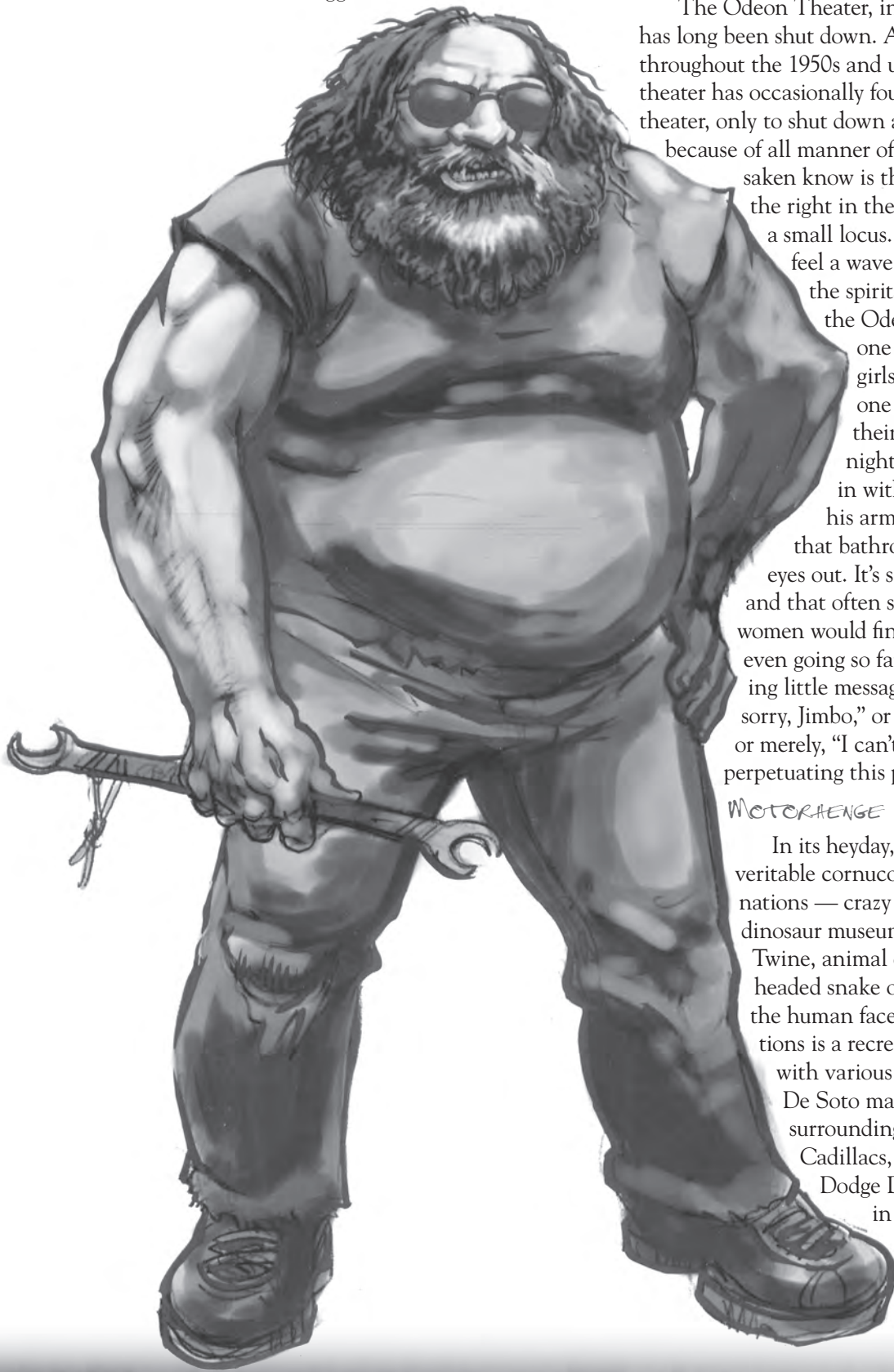
wildflowers in the painting are not painted red at all, but are actually flecks of Jorge's blood.

STALL FOUR IN THE ODEON LADIES' ROOM (LOCUS RATING •)

The Odeon Theater, in Verdigris, Oklahoma, has long been shut down. A popular movie theater throughout the 1950s and up until the 1970s, the theater has occasionally found new life as a dollar theater, only to shut down again a few months later because of all manner of "bad luck." What the For-saken know is that the fourth stall from the right in the theater's ladies' room is a small locus. Those inside the stall feel a wave of sadness. According to the spirits, at some point during the Odeon's tenure as a theater, one of the concession stand girls had a powerful crush on one of the football players at their high school. Every Friday night, she watched him come in with a new cheerleader on his arm, and she would crawl into that bathroom stall and weep her eyes out. It's said that the effect stayed, and that often scorned or saddened women would find their way to that stall, even going so far as to writing or carving little messages in the stall walls ("I'm sorry, Jimbo," or "My husband hates me" or merely, "I can't take it anymore"), thus perpetuating this place of distress.

MOTORHENG (LOCUS RATING ••)

In its heyday, Route 66 provided a veritable cornucopia of brief touristy destinations — crazy theme motels, wigwams, dinosaur museums, World's Biggest Ball of Twine, animal oddities (like the two-headed snake or the pickled lamb with the human face). One of these destinations is a recreation of Stonehenge made with various vintage vehicles. An old De Soto makes the center altar — the surrounding sentinels are formed of Cadillacs, BSA motorcycles and old Dodge D100 trucks, all half-buried in the Mojave Desert. The site's creator, Willem Jennings, did not intend to forge a tourist oddity,



however, and said that he had received “instructions from beyond” that asked him to do it. Seeing as how he had easy access to a nearby junkyard, he did what the “voices” asked. Jennings is dead, but his family still lives nearby in the rundown junkyard. They are said to be quite insular, practically hermits — all that is seen of them is the shadowed faces peering out from behind moth-eaten curtains.

THE SCARECROWS OF MURDER FIELD (LOCUS RATING **)

About 20 years back, a Kansas farmer by the name of Porter Redstone was feeling a little low. The highway was seeing less and less use, and the piss-poor quality of the road made it harder for him to transport his meager wares to the farmer’s market 20 miles down the way. Plus, he was having a bit of a crow problem — flocks of the dark birds picking the seeds out of his fruits and vegetables and ruining them. Times didn’t look so good for Porter, and something in him snapped (though, perhaps he wasn’t too together to begin with). He decided to put up some scarecrows — he didn’t have any wood, however, so he killed his family (one wife, three children) with a garden hoe and turned them into scarecrows. What happened to the farmer remains a mystery — some say he still wanders the property, other say the crows rebuffed his attempts to shoo them and they ate him like he was so much succulent fruit. Whatever the case, the field is a bad place — those who pass by with even a seed of hate in their hearts will find that the hatred grows into a desire for murder, if they’re not careful. The spirits that stalk that locus are definitely damaged goods, and the Pure who control the area see no reason to dissuade such horror.

LODGE OF 66 STORY HOOKS

• **Gang War, Part Two:** Turns out that the Iron Masters aren’t the only ones who want to reclaim Route 66 for the glory and honor of the Forsaken. Another lodge — this one consisting of fiery and feral Blood Talons — wants to oust the Pure as well. Problem is neither lodge gets along very well — several members have already scrapped it up coming home with new scars. Certainly some of the Uratha on both sides of the fence are willing to put rivalries aside at least until the Pure are done and out of the way, but there’s a small problem with that. Rumble of Com

ing Thunder declares that such a compromise would be tantamount to weakness and the spirit won’t allow it easily if at all. Of course if the lodges *can’t* cooperate and join forces then the Pure sons of bitches will once again walk all over them like an ugly carpet.

• **Big Bad Evangelical Tent Revival:** The local Fire Touched have noted the attacks by the Lodge of 66 and have been striking back with an unforeseen weapon: convincing messages of hate (peppered of course with the allure for power). These Pure werewolves have been coming — under the banner of peace — to the various low level gangs that have recently joined. The Pure come bearing convincing, passionate messages about how the Forsaken have done so much wrong that it cannot be fixed without renouncing their pitiful ways. The Pure also offer power: the Pure, after all, not only have the numbers and the lion’s share of territory, but they also have the support of mighty totems that wouldn’t dare to share power with the flea-bitten Forsaken. The Fire Touched aren’t attacking with bullets or knives, but come bearing convincing rhetoric. Already some gangs have seen its members go over to the other side.

• **The Herd Grows Wary:** The lodge’s actions are rarely legal. They steal bikes. They bring violence. When they roar into town, they demand free beers and break pool cues over heads and generally act like tough, rambunctious assholes. But all that shitfire and tarnation has drawn attention like flies, and some humans have seen what these bikers and truckers *really* are. And so Sheriff Erwin Malcorn, his own family and livelihood damaged by the actions of the careless lodge, sets out on a grim crusade to bring these monsters down. He leaves his job and recruits other humans along the way to join him in the hunt. Their numbers grow quickly, and the gang uncovers evidence that points to the possibility that the Pure werewolves are *helping* Malcorn as hidden benefactors. Where once the war was about ousting the Pure, now it’s about gutting whatever adversary stands in the way. Rumble is pleased with this course of action, but it’s having a deleterious effect on an already unbalanced Shadow.

**BOLT CUTTER****Auspice:** Elodoth**Tribe:** Iron Masters**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence Wits Resolve**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 4 (5/6/6/5)**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2 (1/2/1/2), Composure 3**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Engines) 4, Investigation 1, Politics (Pack) 2**Physical Skills:** Brawl (Dirty) 4, Drive (Big Rig) 4, Firearms 2, Larceny 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 2**Social Skills:** Empathy Intimidation Persuasion Socialize Streetwise**Merits:** Giant Iron Stomach Resources Strong Back, Stunt Driver**Primal Urge:****Willpower:****Harmony:****Essence Max/Per Turn:** /**Virtue:** Fortitude**Vice:** Wrath**Health:** 10 (12/14/13/10)**Initiative:** 6 (6/7/8/8)**Defense:** 3 (3/4/4/4)**Speed:** 11 (12/15/18/16)**Renown:** Glory Honor Cunning**Gifts:** (1) Call the Breeze, Crushing Blow, Left-Handed Spanner, Straighten; (2) Mighty Bound, Nightfall, Ruin, Silent Fog; (3) Deluge, Iron-Rending, Iron Treachery, Sculpt; (4), Killing Frost, Legendary Arm, Shatter

Boltcutter — sometimes called Rodney Chavez — used to be a pretty happy guy. He was jovial and full of stories. He would drink like a whale, laugh like a hyena and sing like a shelf of plates crashing to the

ground. That was before the Pure came in and did what they did. His old pack, the Palo Duro Dustkings, died at the hands of those merciless motherfuckers. Boltcutter's only saving grace was that the Pure left him for dead himself, his supposed corpse cooling under the desert moon.

He wasn't dead, and in fact the fire inside of him made him feel a thousand times more alive. The fire burned out the happy parts of him — all sense of contentedness was gone, replaced only by a smoldering coal of anger. When he finally joined up with the rest of the Lodge of 66, he started a new pack and took the alpha spot. The Blood Street Preachers are a bunch of young and untested Uratha, and that's fine by Boltcutter. It's fine because for what they lack in skill they make up for with violent passion. A few of the pack are some of the younger wolf-bloods from an old Route 66 kin family called the Wilmerhales — farmed out of Oklahoma, the family has since scattered since the Pure came in and made such a mess of things.

The Preachers, living out of Boltcutter's old 18-wheeler truck (called "Bomber Girl" because of the 1940s red-headed pin-up girl painted on the trailer), have already hit small packs of Fire-Touched up and down the eastern end of Route 66. Soon, the Preachers plan on claiming some territory themselves, cutting a swath through their enemies and picking up a locus in the process.

Boltcutter is an older Uratha, grizzled and pockmarked. He always wears a pair of yellow Aviator sunglasses that overlook his egregious salt-and-pepper beard. His gut is big enough that one could balance a tower of toolboxes upon it. It matches the rest of his enormous body, stuffed perpetually into a flannel shirt and shredded jeans.

LODGE OF THE BLACK WOODS

BINDING THE WOUNDS

Greta the Hundred-Wounded was weary — so tired that she often thought how fine it would be to stretch out her bones in the sunlight, close her eyes and simply fall asleep one final time. Two years had passed since the war's end, and it seemed that she'd achieved so little. Many of the packs she'd known before the madness were gone. Some had died while the war was still raging, others in the aftermath. A few had left the country to do what they could where the land was even worse — where the Wounds left by the Great War (now the First Great War, she supposed) had reopened, or to the camps. None had come back.

She felt a cool presence nose at her side. "Hello, Wolf-That-Walks-Behind," she said gently. "It has been some time."

"I have been walking the woods," said the spirit. "Speaking with others."

"And how are the others?"

"They are like you. They are tired, and thin of hope, but they do not simply lie down and die."

She smiled. "Do you support them as you do me?"

"I am the Wolf That Walks Behind. If my price were paid, I would stand behind a pack that numbered in the hundreds."

Greta stretched, and then she stiffened.

"You mean that, don't you?"

"I have never lied to you."

"Then tell me, Wolf-That-Walks-Behind, do you think there would be a way to have hundreds bound by our common cause even beyond a war?"

"Perhaps. I could not say for how long."

Greta rose to her feet, her fatigue slipping into submission. "Even a year. Even a year would be more than what we have."

In the aftermath of World War II, the Shadow across much of Europe was in many places a living nightmare. Many packs died during the conflict surrounding the war, but many others suffered great losses while attempting to leash the forces that had spilled out of Shadow in the wake of the war. Germa-

ny was of course no exception. The Nazis had poured out destruction, and destruction had come back on the land, and those Uratha who still believed in their duty to restore the balance were slowly being driven mad by the task.

Then something slightly unusual happened. Under the leadership of Greta Hundred-Wounded, a Bone Shadow of tremendous will and keen insight, a number of packs agreed to cooperate for the greater good. This level of cooperation was, in itself, not the peculiar thing — a raw and immediate threat has often galvanized rival packs into a strong, if temporary, common front. What was unusual was that the cooperation lasted.

For more than half a century now, the Lodge of the Black Woods (or as they call themselves, the *Sippe des Schwarzen Walder*) has kept dominion over a swath of southwestern Germany. The lodge members have effectively resisted attacks from the Pure, coordinated multi-pack hunts against the Hosts and the Ridden and done what they can to keep humans from overrunning their most sacred places.

Though the name of the lodge is clearly derived from the Black Forest itself, the *Schwarzwald* proper isn't the heart of the lodge's purpose. There's a reason they don't call themselves the *Sippe der Schwarzwald*. The lodge began with the goal of unifying packs as a common protectorate of the lands surrounding the *Schwarzwald*, not just the forest itself. The Black Forest itself isn't what it used to be, of course. So much of the woods is now gone, both from development and from natural troubles such as acid rain and the damage from the 1999 storm Lothar. But the Uratha endure.

The Lodge of the Black Woods is governed by no one individual — a decision reinforced by long years of experience. As the lodge members figure it, one of the reasons that it's so hard to get multiple werewolf packs to rally behind a banner when their lives aren't immediately at stake is because no one person is charismatic enough. Charismatic leaders have a harder time of it among the People than they do among humanity. (As the lodge saying goes, "You





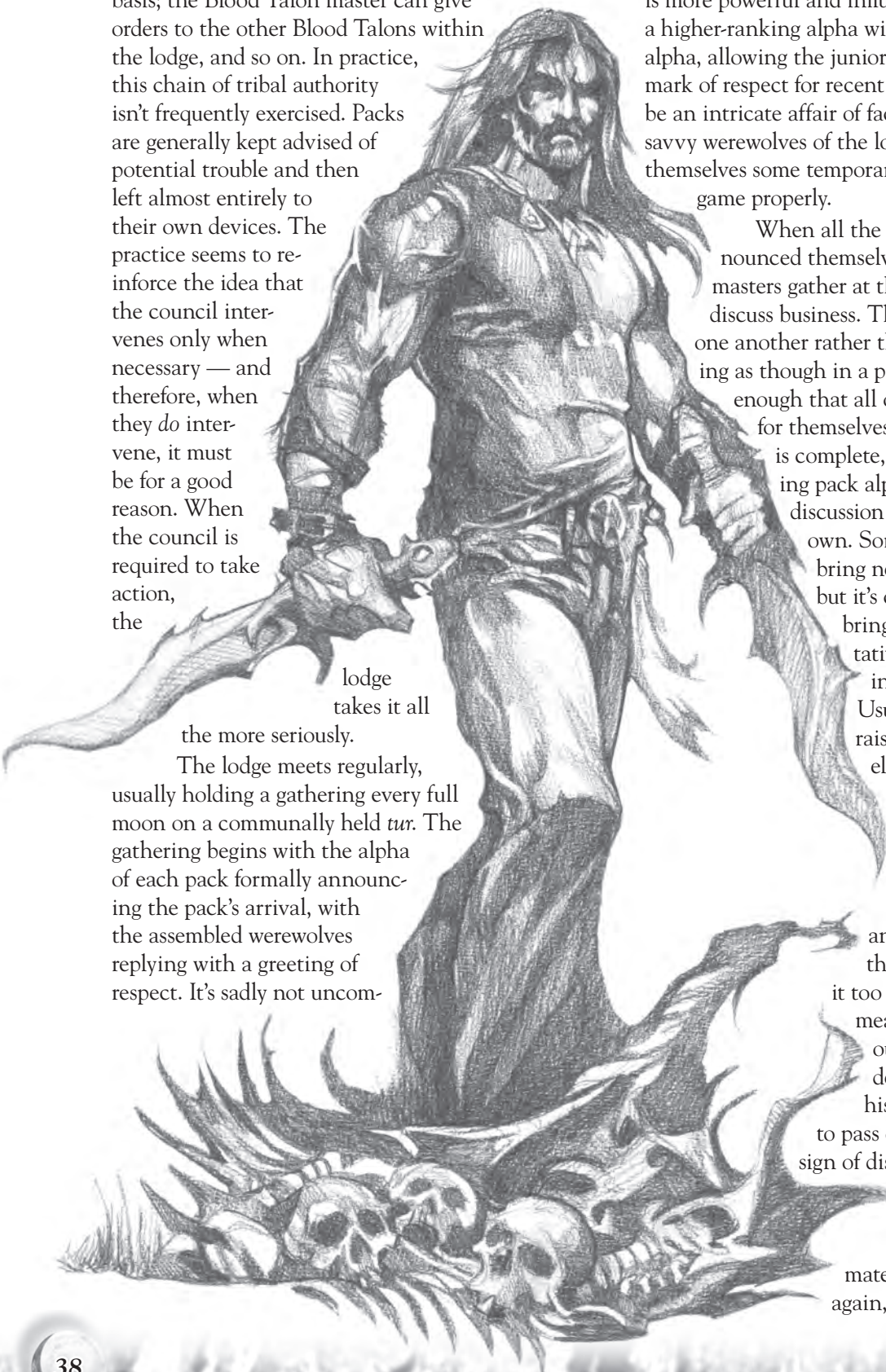
can't use a shepherd's crook to herd wolves.") Consequently, the lodge has established a council of five tribal masters, each one speaking for the members of his or her tribe. Formally, the council has the authority to order every pack within the lodge on a tribal basis; the Blood Talon master can give orders to the other Blood Talons within the lodge, and so on. In practice, this chain of tribal authority isn't frequently exercised. Packs are generally kept advised of potential trouble and then left almost entirely to their own devices. The practice seems to reinforce the idea that the council intervenes only when necessary — and therefore, when they *do* intervene, it must be for a good reason. When the council is required to take action, the

lodge takes it all the more seriously.

The lodge meets regularly, usually holding a gathering every full moon on a communally held *tur*. The gathering begins with the alpha of each pack formally announcing the pack's arrival, with the assembled werewolves replying with a greeting of respect. It's sadly not uncom-

mon for rival packs to work in a few muted gestures of disrespect when "greeting" one another, but it's rare when an insult is so open and rude as to trigger a brawl. The order in which alphas step forward is not set, but rather based on a loose understanding of who is more powerful and influential. From time to time, a higher-ranking alpha will defer to a lower-ranking alpha, allowing the junior to step forward first as a mark of respect for recent deeds or the like. This can be an intricate affair of face, and the more politically savvy werewolves of the lodge can sometimes earn themselves some temporary status by playing the game properly.

When all the packs present have announced themselves, the five ranking tribal masters gather at the center of the *tur* and discuss business. They deliver the news to one another rather than the assembly, speaking as though in a private meeting — but loud enough that all others can hear the news for themselves. Once their "conversation" is complete, the five invite the remaining pack alphas forward to join the discussion and raise points of their own. Sometimes a lesser alpha will bring news to the group's attention, but it's considered more polite to bring news to a tribal representative and let her pass on the information to the gathering. Usually, when a lesser alpha raises news not given to an elder, it's out of some (potentially misguided) desire to make a personal impression on the gathering. It's also possible that a tribal master might receive news and refuse to share it with the others, perhaps deeming it too insignificant for a gathering meant to dwell only on serious issues. When an alpha decides to raise an issue that his tribal master has declined to pass on, it's certainly seen as a sign of disrespect. Sometimes the alpha has been in the right, when the tribal master has underestimated the threat — but then again, sometimes he hasn't.



From that point, the gathering becomes less formal. If a clear and present danger has been established, the packs organize into hunting parties, often under the direction of the Blood Talons and Hunters in Darkness masters. If things are more under control, the various packs may leave when they like. Many choose to linger and “do business” with one another — sharing personal greetings or settling minor debts, and so on. It can be an intimidating sight to see so many werewolves carefully conversing, restraining their territorial instincts just a bit longer while the gathering lasts. Even when the topic of conversation is as mundane as one werewolf fixing up a member of another pack with her wolf-blooded sister or cousin, there’s always the subtle tension of knowing that both sides in any dialogue is both armed and on a hair trigger.

Unlike other lodges, membership in the Lodge of the Black Woods is not exclusive. The lodge is not seen as being in conflict with the other lodges of the Forsaken; a werewolf is under no obligation to share his “true” lodge’s secrets with his fellow Schwarzwalders. The lodge is more of a social contract than an elite brotherhood, somewhat like being part of a community watch as well as an initiate into the Freemasons. The Lodge of the Black Woods has many members of other lodges within its ranks; in particular, the Lodge of Garm, the Lodge of the Seasons and the Lodge of Winter are well represented.

Of course, the lodge is still far from perfect. Although demonstrating an unusual amount of cooperation for werewolves (who normally see compromise as a form of submission, and are instinctually given to resist submitting to anyone but the strongest alpha), the Black Forest werewolves are still creatures of hair-trigger savagery. Packs can and do fall to brawling at gatherings, and they’ll still scuffle at one another’s borders over a perceived slight.

Another flaw of the lodge — though most don’t see it as such — is a slightly higher level of prejudice against Ghost Wolves. Some Ghost Wolves see this as simple powermongering from the tribal masters. They don’t want anyone in the lodge that they can’t order around with clear authority, right? Although there might be a grain of truth to that theory, it’s not just the tribal masters who aren’t thrilled about having Ghost Wolves around. The bond of the lodge is a fairly difficult commitment — it’s a promise to fight down your instinct more frequently in the name of something that is not as “true” as the pack bond. It’s not an easy promise to make or to keep. And the Ghost Wolves just don’t have the reputation for mak-

ing a commitment. As a result, the tribeless aren’t explicitly forbidden from the lodge, but they do have a harder time earning respect from their fellow lodge members.

REGIONAL LODGES

The Lodge of the Black Woods is presented here as an example of a variant social structure for werewolves that simply takes the mechanical form of a lodge. This lodge can very easily be adapted to other locales if the Storyteller is interested in setting up a chronicle in which the fierce rivalry between Forsaken packs is downplayed or shifted to a “cooler” form of politicking. There might be an American “Lodge of the Grand Canyon,” or a South American “Lodge of the Mother River” or so on. This adaptation might work especially well for a live action environment which often supports many more players than a tabletop environment can. In such cases a social lodge of this sort may help considerably in allowing players to interact more peaceably with a larger body of players and supporting cast while still retaining the tension and restrained savagery that defines the werewolf.

JOINING THE LODGE

The Lodge of the Black Woods traditionally prefers to induct members as entire packs, though this isn’t always possible. Sometimes there just aren’t enough new Uratha to form a new pack, and a freshly Changed werewolf is placed with an existing group. The initiation ceremony does not typically involve ordeals or rigorous testing. It takes the form of a simple blood oath, in which the initiate slices her palm and shares blood with a representative from each of the other packs in the lodge. It’s considered a sign of particular respect if an alpha chooses to represent his pack in the oath, and this is usually the case when an entire pack is brought into the fold at once.

The slight prejudice against Ghost Wolves that pervades the lodge tends to affect a Ghost Wolf’s initiation as well. The oath is more complex and binding for a Ghost Wolf, in part because he cannot swear by his Firstborn totem. When a *Thihirtha Numea* takes the blood pledge, usually the omega or





youngest of a given pack acts as representative; sharing blood with a Ghost Wolf is even seen by some as a punishment.

PATRON SPIRIT

Not all wolf-spirits are great alphas. The First-born each stand out as an alpha among alphas, with only one another as equals, but just as no wolf pack can last with each member in the alpha position; neither can the Wolf Choir. The spirit that watches over the Lodge of the Black Woods is a wolf-spirit of shadow, empty form called Wolf-That-Walks-Behind. Wolf-That-Walks-Behind is in some ways a spirit of the concept of “beta,” a wolf-spirit whose urge is to support and defer. Of course, it is no omega — it will not take kindly to abuse from any of its children, no matter how exalted they may be among their own kind. This spirit is not a servant, it is a beta — it does not lead its lodge, but offers its strength to the lodge members. The spirit will teach them to set aside their own ambitions to share in the good of a larger “pack,” even as the spirit does. However, some of the lodge members suspect that Wolf-That-Walks-Behind has some greater ambition of its own, neatly concealed behind its shadowed eyes. It may be that the beta wolf intends to become an alpha of some sort in the future, though it’s hard to say what sort of pack it seeks.

Prerequisites: Harmony 4 or higher. As the Lodge of the Black Woods is more of a social than spiritual construct, the lodge requires little common ground — only that the members be of reasonably solid spiritual standing.

Benefits: Lodge members are encouraged to deal fairly with one another, and a higher level of trust pervades the lodge than in a region of otherwise unaffiliated Uratha. Lodge members all receive +1 to all Social rolls made when dealing with one another, including Resolve + Composure rolls made to resist Death Rage.

LODGE OF THE BLACK WOODS MERIT

HOWL CODE (◦)

Prerequisite: Membership in the Lodge of the Black Woods

Effect: Your character has learned a number of special vocalizations and code-sounds intended to imbue a howl with a hidden meaning. These sounds are notable to any werewolf who hears them, but are an artificial construct devoid of emotional empha-

sis. The howl code for “An elder summons you” will only sound urgent if the werewolf howling personally injects a note of urgency into the howl. Using howl code, you may imbed relatively simple concepts into a howl. “Danger from the north,” “a hunt is called,” “the roads are unsafe,” “all is well,” “the Pure are near” and “danger from the Shadow” are all sufficiently simple; “a rogue car-spirit is causing trouble on the highway” is not.

This Merit could theoretically be taken by a non-werewolf character who has been inducted into a social lodge such as the Lodge of the Black Woods. In such a case, the Merit would allow the character to understand the encoded meanings in a fellow lodge member’s howl, but the character would not be able to howl his own coded messages unless he is able to mimic a wolf’s howl accurately (such as a mage shape-shifting into wolf form).

LODGE OF THE BLACK WOODS FETISH

MAP OF THE PACT (◦◦◦)

This fetish is fashioned for the alpha of each pack within the lodge. Map of the Pact is meant to serve as a formal reminder of the number of packs that both rely on her and that may come to her aid in times of great danger, but the fetish is also a highly practical item. The map is inscribed on carefully tanned skin, usually of some prey animal within the lodge’s territory; the Lodge of the Black Woods makes theirs from deerskin, with a minor bird-spirit bound within. The map depicts the territory held by the lodge in relatively sparse detail, marking out only the most prominent landmarks or boundaries. More importantly, a glyph representing each pack of the lodge is marked on the map, giving the reader clear knowledge of pack territories.

When activated, the map divines the status of the other packs within the lodge, and grants some hint as to their status. If a pack is healthy, its glyph appears in bright, fresh ink. The glyph of a pack in immediate or near-immediate danger wavers slightly, as if seen under water. If a pack is currently embroiled in a violent conflict, the edges of its glyph “bleed” slightly, and if a pack has been badly hurt or nearly decimated, its glyph breaks into several pieces. The death of a pack causes its glyph to burn off the map entirely, leaving a scorch mark that remains until a new lodge pack is formed and takes the old pack’s territory.

The werewolves who devised these fetishes are well aware that it would be dangerous for an enemy to capture a Map of the Pact. If any werewolf or other entity that is not part of the lodge attempts to activate the fetish, the entire map catches fire, destroying itself.

Action: Instant

LODGE OF THE BLACK WOODS STORY HOOKS

- **A Model Government:** The success of the lodge has inspired some ranking Uratha of the characters' acquaintance (or perhaps the characters themselves) to attempt to bring the local packs together under a similar organization. If the characters decide to back this enterprise they will have a number of tense diplomatic missions ahead of them as they do their share to convince other packs of the benefits. If they decide to oppose the movement, they may find themselves cut off from those packs that are for the greater purpose. Either way, one of the tribal elders of the lodge has been invited into the territory to share key thoughts of strategy and specific obstacles with the local organizers. The visitor would make a tempting target for anyone who wants to see either territory fall into chaos or who fears that he would be asked to give up membership in his own lodge.

- **Idle Hands:** The lodge has achieved a surprising deal of success — surprising because of course werewolves are naturally a fairly fractious lot. Although the organization has to date held up under pressure, a recent lack of outside pressures has led a few packs to consider whether a quick shift in leadership might benefit them more. Two powerful and charismatic alphas (such as Barbarossa) have put themselves forward as new candidates for the tribal council — and one or both may secretly entertain ideas of dissolving the council entirely in favor of one eminently talented werewolf as the lodge's leader. The werewolves are beginning to take sides — can the characters restore things to normalcy when there aren't clear "sides" in the first place? And if the most obvious way to shove this conflict aside is to bring in an outside threat, how far are the characters — or another concerned citizen — willing to go?

- **Serpents Among Us:** Two packs have been wiped out within the last month with such precision that the council suspects there's a traitor within the lodge. The targeted packs were ambushed on specific patrol routes, but both packs had been alternating their patrol patterns as discussed at the last lodge gathering. The council obviously wants to root out the traitor, but would rather have their agents act subtly in order to avoid causing too much concern among the other packs. And there remains the question if even the council is immune — if one of the five has turned, the lodge is in a great deal of trouble.

LUKAS "BARBAROSSA" REIMANN

Auspice: Rahu

Tribe: Blood Talons

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 4 (5/7/6/5), Dexterity 3 (3/4/4/4), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure

Mental Skills: Academics (History) 2, Computer 1, Medicine 2, Occult 1, Politics (Uratha) 1, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Track) 3, Brawl (Gauru) 3, Drive 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Klaive) 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken Empathy Intimidation (Warning Growl) 2, Persuasion (Inspiring) 3, Socialize Streetwise

Merits: Contacts (Family) 1, Fast Reflexes 1, Fighting Style (Boxing) 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Totem 3

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Health: 8 (10/12/11/8)

Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8) with Fast Reflexes

Defense: 3 (all forms)

Speed: 12 (13/16/19/18) with Fleet of Foot

Renown: Wisdom Honor Glory Purity

Gifts: (1) Clarity, Crushing Blow, Mask of Rage, The Right Words, Wolf-Blood's Lure; (2) Attunement, Camaraderie, Father Wolf's Speed, Mighty Bound (3) True Leader

Rituals: 2; **Rites:** (1) Funeral Rite, Rite of the Spirit Brand, Shared Scent; (2) Cleansed Blood





Lukas Reimann grew up of illustrious wolf-blooded parentage, at least for the region. His grandmother on his mother's side was Greta Hundred-Wounded, and he grew up on carefully veiled stories about just how important and respected she was with "certain people." As a child, he showed strong signs of having the blood; he went out for athletics as an attempt to find a good outlet for all the energy and emotion that was his birthright. When the spirits began gathering in the dead of winter as he started to show the signs of the blood, his grandmother was the one to catch him walking alone at night and take a taste of his blood. After a violent full-moon Change in a university parking lot, the lodge was quick to bring him in.

However, Lukas didn't opt to join his grandmother's tribe. He had never really been a philosophical sort, and he saw the local Bone Shadows as too reactive a force. Lukas preferred to tackle problems head on and deal with them expediently. With his athletic background and the blessing of the full moon, he caught the full attention of the *Suthar Anzuth*, and he liked what they had to say. Upon his initiation into the Blood Talons, Lukas took the name "Barbarossa" — partly a nod to his own red beard, but also in homage to the Holy Roman Emperor of note. His grandmother noted laconically that even in an age without emperors, an emperor's drive might be a good thing. It didn't take him too long to forge a pack out of the recently Changed and a pair of veterans who liked the look in his eye. He already has a strong

reputation as a good fighter and a clever planner; he has a keen tactical mind that should only improve with more experience.

Greta Hundred-Wounded's recent death has lit a new fire in Lukas. In his own way, he felt that the best way to mourn her and honor her vision was with a grand gesture. Something impressive, something visceral. The thought gradually grew into a greater longing — the desire for a grand crusade. Barbarossa wants to take leadership not only of his own pack, but of several packs, all coordinated against a common enemy. Part of him entertains the thought of becoming the Blood Talon representative at the lodge council, but the other part would rather go find glory while he's still relatively free to do so. His pack is already willing to follow his lead, and other werewolves are becoming intrigued at the prospect of a grand hunt for a grand cause. If he finds that cause, he may become a great hero — but if he chooses to hunt before he has that cause, he may become a reckless and terrible danger.

Lukas is a large young man, broad-shouldered and with the build of a woodsman or heavy laborer. Befitting his tribal name, he has deep red hair and a thick but well-trimmed beard. In wolf form, his coat is black with reddish highlights. He carries himself with the intense confidence of a werewolf who has measured his own weaknesses and found precious few.

LODGE OF THE ENDLESS MOON

OATHS OF BLOOD AND HONOR

After Creation had grown corrupt and stagnant, a new age finally dawned. Change came with the force of 10,000 storms as Izanagi and Izanami, the Rulers of All, split the world into two pieces. The Goddess Amaterasu ruled the days with her face of fire, and the night was the province of the God Tsuki-yumi, who watched the world with a visage of silver light.

This last God, Lord of the Endless Moon, was assigned a sacred duty to watch over the Yomi Realm, shepherding the legions of spirits to their assigned places and brooking no transgression. Assisting the Moon God in his most holy of duties were his thousand Soldiers. Tied to Tsuki-yumi's changing face and basking in the God's glory, these exalted warriors were the ever-watchful guardians of the Yomi world. They were eternally bound to dedicate their lives and souls to maintaining order within the unseen realm.

Tsuki-yumi possessed a most holy artifact known as the Jewel of White Purity, and he blessed his own Soldiers with the lore to create their own royal gems, in order to perform their duties with more efficiency. These gems repelled the black-hearted spirits of the Yomi, forcing them to retreat to their dwellings far within the Shadow world. When the jewels were not enough, the Beast-Soldiers of the Endless Moon used their hands, their weapons, their claws and their fangs. But the Beast-Soldiers themselves were not always honorable, or always dutiful, and the loyal warriors turned on their disloyal brethren. Many duties were further neglected, and the God of the Endless Moon sent ever more moon-spirits to give orders to his Soldiers.

This made it all worse. Tsuki-yumi came to understand his closeness to his remaining Soldiers was causing them pain and anguish, for too much of the moon's touch brought on instability in the Wolf-Soldiers. The God's servants were beings of pure moonlight, and when the Lord of the Endless Moon saw his tired Soldiers growing uneasy and insane, he demanded his moon-servants cease carrying messages to the earthly warriors. Out of necessity, Tsuki-yumi appeared before a monster-spirit, Karasu-En of the Tengu. Here he demanded that the crow-spirit serve as overseer to his Soldiers, watching as

a guide and ally against the unrepentant spirits of the Shadow, which was then called the Yomi Realm. Karasu-En was an old, powerful and bitter monster with no love for this task. He obeyed only out of respect and admiration for the Wolf-Soldiers, who had exiled him deep into the Shadow many seasons before for his own transgressions against humanity.

Tsuki-yumi forever looks down upon his warriors, blessing them with his changing face and trusting them to the Karasu of the Tengu's enlightened guidance. The warriors serve him still, and the crow-spirit is ever the ally of the Soldiers of the Yomi Realm. But still they war with one another, fighting over duties and territories, and Tsuki-yumi no longer rewards his creations with his complete favor. Perhaps they shall never again earn it — only time will tell.

The Lodge of the Endless Moon has spread across the world, gaining popularity particularly amongst Ghost Wolves and disenfranchised tribal members who put little stock in the traditional stories of Pangaea, Luna and Father Wolf. Though the Lodge of the Endless Moon offers but one alternate version of events — or rather the same story with a different cast of characters — it is a relatively popular version of the werewolf creation myth. A few packs in modern-day nations such as Japan, China, Taiwan and Singapore are entirely composed of members of the lodge, and such allegiance certainly affects their outlooks and behavior. In Europe and America, the obvious focal points for finding these lodge members are the Chinatowns of big cities, where immigrants and those descended from immigrants still cleave tightly to the old ways of both East Asian and Uratha mythology.

The Lodge of the Endless Moon puts no barriers on membership so long as the werewolves who seek to join believe the tale of Tsuki-yumi, whether as historical fact or meaningful parable with a core of truth. Of course, the names of this ancient moon-spirit are legion, with Tsuki-yumi simply being the most common. Some members even use the name "Luna," though it is commonly used as a male title





and the Luna of the lodge is a merciless overseer, rather than a forgiving (if insane) Mother figure.

The story of the God of the Endless Moon conflicts with the traditional tales of Luna, but does so without rancor, bitterness or clashes of fanatical pride. In Pangaea, as now, the spirit of the moon was a changeable, fluid and many-faced creature. The founders of this lodge (and those who join since) believe that in the ancient era, Luna did appear as Tsuki-yumi, the benevolent and caring male God of ancient Japanese legend. Luna as a female entity is not a truth they see even now, though the exaltation and reverence these lodge members pay to Tsuki-yumi is little different than the love and respect most spiritually-minded traditional Uratha have for the moon goddess. Indeed, most werewolves see no difference (and certainly no harm) in acknowledging the moon-spirit as male or by a different name.

The divergence, such as it is, comes in the form of how the lodge relates to the entities of Shadow. The duty of the Uratha is to prevent spiritual forces from threatening the world of flesh and stone, repelling the ethereal denizens of the spirit wilds who bring danger to hunting grounds with their actions. Similarly, it is the duty of the warriors of the Yomi world to make sure no spirits break through the Gauntlet to threaten mortal life or cause harm. But it is *also* the duty of the Lodge of the Endless Moon to honor and respect the spirits that know their places and fulfill a beneficial role in the cycle.

And here is where things get bloody.

It falls to individual werewolves to decide just how they work toward this balance, but the terms of honor and the nature of oaths between werewolf and spirit are inviolate. Spirits that break pacts are destroyed mercilessly. Hosts that violate agreements are slaughtered. Even humans who knowingly threaten the balance are bound into saying oaths of apology and reverence — if these are then broken, the mortal is likely to be tortured extensively before his death, as punishment for breaking the codes of the deal.

The gravest factor in the reality of the lodge's efforts is that the denizens of Shadow are rarely cooperative with the Uratha, because these werewolves are well-known for utter viciousness in control of their hunting grounds. A member of the lodge must dedicate a great deal of time and effort to shape the local spirit wilds to his desires, and this takes two conflicting approaches at any given time. Some spirits that have proven honorable in the past are often bribed and honored for performing their natural

roles, and it is by this method that the werewolves reward some spirits and support them.

New spirits, or those that have somehow earned a second chance, are treated brutally. They are presented with terms to adhere to — often simple but extremely limiting — and threatened with destruction should they refuse to obey the laws. The Lodge of the Endless Moon rewards wise and loyal spirits with guarded, even cold-hearted, respect. Spirits that later break these oaths and prove disloyal are hunted relentlessly and destroyed for their treachery. As Soldiers of a Heavenly deity, it is the lodge's duty to do no less. It is common for spirits in Endless Moon territory to be cowed and fearful, wary of breaking their promises for fear that the werewolves will judge them ignoble and traitorous. Often the Shadow has all the ambience of a meat locker in a Mafia hideout. The Shadow is clean of taint — often eerily so — because the spirits fear to sully it.

It is not as simple as spirits of negative concepts being punished, however. A love-spirit that breaks the Gauntlet to pursue its Influence is just as liable for destruction as a murder-spirit that cannot resist creating serial killers. Even spirits of negative concepts such as pain, war, disease and so on have clearly defined roles in Creation and are honored with icy smiles and nods for clinging to their place in the cycle. Only when a spirit breaks from its path and predated on other creatures for reasons of power and dominance must the Uratha of this lodge act with force. In the chaos of the modern Shadow, such force is unsurprisingly common, and when the blood runs in Endless Moon turf, the Shadow can become a riot of oppressed, cowering spirits seeking to flee the werewolves' ire or rise against their oppressors once and for all.

The Lodge of the Endless Moon might garner respect from local spirits for the lodge members' dedication to honoring ordered, balanced entities, but these Uratha suffer in other ways. It is lodge tradition to show absolutely no mercy to those spirits that violate their roles and refuse to remain in the spirit world. On the surface, this appears to be little different from the standard hunts of any werewolf pack, but the Lodge of the Endless Moon excels at banishing hostile spirits. Not only this; their methods of banishment are savagely painful to the spirits — all the better punishment for those that have strayed from their paths into dishonor. A spirit that has broken its oath is no longer worthy of existence; it is that simple. This is no less than a divine decree.

Walking the middle ground between honoring spirits and destroying them is a challenge for any member of the lodge. Reputations among local denizens of the local Yomi Realm are critically important. A werewolf seen as too coddling and merciful will invite attack and derision, while one who adopts a consistently violent attitude and refuses to weight his judgments with respect (or seems to have little support in his task) has not only turned the Shadow-dwellers against him further, he has also failed in his duty to Tsuki-yumi. In all things, there must be balance. Light and dark, yin and yang, flesh and Shadow.

It just so happens that the balance is maintained by threats of destruction just as often as with respectful distance. It almost goes without saying that werewolves who are involved with Triad gangs or run with the criminal elements of the Chinatown underworld find the direct and stringent systems of oaths, threats and honor very easy to relate to.

PATRON SPIRIT

Karasu-En, the Crow Lord, is a hateful and bitter creature that serves its adopted children more out of guarded respect than true affection. The Crow Lord sends its brood-spirits far and wide to watch over the werewolves, and these are most commonly ravens with “demonic” traits, such as red eyes, scales or the capacity for human speech. Most often these spirits are content to watch and observe in silence, though occasionally they carry messages of warning, chastisement or praise from the totem. These spirits refuse to be bound into fetishes, and Karasu-En’s disfavor falls upon any Uratha who binds one of the spirit’s servitors in such a manner.

Human myths paint the Tengu as demons and monsters — and worse. Perhaps the ancient legends are correct, and the spirit that names itself Karasu-En is merely shaping its existence upon the beliefs of humanity. What is clear is that no Endless Moon werewolf could ever consider his totem a warm or gentle creature — perhaps it is too bound by ancient codes of honor and loyalty to recall anything beyond its duty.

JOINING THE LODGE

Werewolves wishing to join the Lodge of the Endless Moon must relent to having a sponsor travel with them and follow them for three lunar cycles. For these three months, the applicant must act in the ways he sees fit, honoring obedient spirits and those that follow their natural instincts to a place of balance, while destroying those that step out of line.

The sponsor will rarely move to aid the applicant, unless the situation becomes life-threatening and there is little other choice.

Three months is the traditional trial period for applicants, though sponsors with lingering doubts can extend the testing time for another month in order to obtain a clearer perception of whether the candidate is worthy of admission. A candidate who has failed to impress his sponsor is barred from applying again to the same member, though the candidate may immediately seek entrance with another sponsor if he wishes. Many members of the lodge are too busy to constantly watch over another werewolf and witness his deeds, so a sponsor might send bound or allied spirits to oversee the applicant’s actions. Sponsors who have a closer relationship with their applicants, watching over them as often as possible, are frequently known as “mentors” as a sign of respect. Some Western Uratha have taken to referring to these mentors as *sensei*, out of some ironic amusement.

Once the three months have elapsed, successful applicants are presented for the so-called Peaceable Conversation.

The Peaceable Conversation involves the applicant being presented before three members of the Lodge of the Endless Moon and tested as they see fit in three trials. This is solemn process, which begins with the *Trial of Divine Mind*. The werewolf and his first judge talk and debate the various events that have occurred over the trial period, and the applicant must plead his case for entrance the entire time, citing his wise deeds and merciless actions. All the while, the judge counters by mentioning ways that certain situations could have been handled better, and gauges the applicant’s reactions. Some of these suggestions are true enough, and a successful applicant is more like to agree to such a judgment. Other comments are intended to mislead and confuse the applicant, forcing him to debate and prove his understanding of the lodge’s tenets.

The *Trial of Divine Strength* is a bout of single combat against one of the judges, ending at first blood, which the applicant must win to reach the third test. The bout is called when the first blood shed touches the ground, rather than simply being drawn.

Finally comes the *Trial of Divine Will*, in which the applicant is tested for his capacity to endure suffering. No matter what occurs, the applicant must remain where he is, never moving a step closer to (or away from) the elders. Some applicants who reach





this far are unable to pass this final test, as they lose themselves to Rage or even *Kuruth* as the last judge kneecaps them with a pistol, or threatens the life of one of the applicant's loved ones. And this is not some final amusing joke — the judge really will kill the werewolf's sister or demand that the applicant stand there for two weeks without eating or drinking and see if he can survive. This final test is incredibly harsh, and werewolves who pull out of the proceedings before the terms of the Trial of Divine Will are named are considered lessened by their shame, but not cowardly. The only thing most of the third trials have in common is that they will test the potential Soldier to see if he can stand defiantly against the worst threats made against him and still meet the judge's eyes without leaving the place where he stands.

Obviously, no werewolf seeks entrance to this lodge without giving it grave consideration first.

Prerequisites: All applicants must have a Willpower rating of 6 or greater, along with Glory •, Wisdom •, Purity • and Honor •.

Benefits: Members can purchase the Rite: Honor the Benevolent Spirit with experience points, and receive +1 Persuasion and +2 Intimidation to all social dealings with spirits that recognize the character's allegiance and are aware of the Lodge of the Endless Moon. Members are also incredibly strong-willed to have passed the initiation rites; the

experience point costs for raising Willpower becomes five experience points rather than eight. Upon joining this most elite of lodges, a werewolf also gains +1 Honor.

LODGE OF THE ENDLESS MOON FETISA

PURITY JEWEL (••)

The traditional symbols of the Lodge of the Endless Moon, these jewels resemble the royal gem that was given to Tsuki-yumi by the Creator gods. The werewolves use their Purity Jewels to banish a spirit from the physical world and force the spirit back into the Shadow. The gems are prized because of their traditional role in the lodge and because of their utility when compared with more standard rituals to banish ethereal intruders. These white crystals are created by binding a hate-spirit into a shard of cut glass. The "gem" itself is worthless, and though it might fool an onlooker, any scientific analysis of the jewel will register it as a flawed chunk of glass.

When activated and brandished in a spirit's presence, the wielder speaks the words "I banish you from this realm" (*Galer za da sar*). The roll to force the spirit back into the Shadow World is Harmony versus the spirit's Resistance, and the roll is considered contested and extended. Each roll consists of a minute's time, but whereas the spirit requires 10 successes in order to remain in the physical world, the Uratha requires only six to banish the intruder. Unlike the Rite: Banish Spirit, Purity Jewels can be used any time the face of Tsuki-yumi is in the sky, but do not function during the day. Notably, this rite is so easy compared to standard banishing because the ritual creates savage agony in the spirit being repelled.



A spirit of hatred is bound in to the glass shard, and it frosts over with a blurry sheen from that moment on, resembling a false white crystal or shard of misty glass. Any werewolf sharing the secrets of making this fetish can expect to be hunted down and killed if the treachery is discovered. Occasionally, a lodge member will create a Shakujo Staff instead of a Purity Jewel (at the same two-point cost), which serves the same traditional purpose. This weapon is a standard staff topped by three jangling metal rings said to scare away spirits, and the rattling of the rings causes deafening pain in the minds of the spirits that feel the activated fetish's effects.

Action: Instant to activate; then extended and contested.

LODGE OF THE ENDLESS MOON RITE

HONOR THE BENEVOLENT SPIRIT

This ritual was developed by the Lodge of the Endless Moon in order to bestow gratitude and respect upon those spirits that serve the balance of nature, and that never possess humans or cause further harm to the unstable spirit wilds. Some spirits have no care for whether the werewolves are pleased or otherwise, and are free to ignore this blessing. Other spirits either fear or respect the Uratha enough to appreciate this small recognition and enjoy the slight protection such a marking offers. Once the spirit has been blessed, it is marked with a glyph upon the surface of its corpus. The symbol means "Honored" in the First Tongue, and is visible to both Uratha and spirits alike.

Whether to perform this rite can be a difficult choice. A spirit marked with the glyph has proven its use and benevolence, and must be protected if it calls for aid. This can generate a great deal of work for the Uratha if too many spirits bear the honor. However, the more spirits that carry the mark and enjoy the good-natured protection of the Uratha, the more pleasant the local Shadow and physical realm will eventually become. As with all aspects of defending territory, a balance between ability and necessity must be struck — the werewolves can't be everywhere at once, and they can't take care of every problem that crops up.

Performing the Rite: The ritemaster sheds a drop of his own blood, by using a claw or other edged instrument, and draws the glyph upon the spirit's "flesh" with a fingertip. As he traces the symbol, the werewolf intones a blessing in the name of Father Wolf and Tsuki-yumi to recognize the spirit as a just

servant of Creation. A spirit that is forcibly bound or restrained can reject the power of the rite with its Resistance. Whichever of the two has the highest number of successes after the single turn is considered victorious. Ties always go in favor of the Uratha.

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The glyph appears incorrectly, reading something completely different and causing a burst of pain (one Corpus level) to the spirit. The mark cannot be removed for another lunar cycle, whereby the Uratha can once again try to inscribe the correct mark.

Failure: The rite simply fails, and the mark does not show.

Success: The glyph shows on the spirit's form in a dull red light. This will likely make other spirits jealous at the protection the branded spirit receives.

Exceptional Success: The glyph shows through with flickering white fire or some other ostentatious display of the ritemaster's power.

LODGE OF THE ENDLESS MOON STORY HOOKS

- **Emissary from the Tengu:** The characters receive a strange spirit visitor in the form of a demonic crow. It informs the pack members that they must beware of a sudden upsurge in displeased and angry spirits in their territory. Without a member of the Lodge of the Endless Moon in the immediate vicinity (though maybe there are rumors of one somewhere...) the pack is faced with the choice of whether to believe the strange spirit. With no way to check the spirit's veracity, do the packmembers heed the spirit's words or ignore it out of hand?

- **The Wandering Preacher:** A member of the Lodge of the Endless Moon enters the pack's hunting grounds with a mind to "convert" the Uratha he comes across. He rants and preaches about the "true way" and the "real face of the moon" even going to the extreme of trying to perform Honor the Benevolent Spirit on the pack's pack totem. It is down to the characters with just how they deal with the stranger, whether they find his words compelling or irritating. Depending on how he is treated, things could become dangerous if the stranger begins to





laughingly harm the pack's spirit allies with his Purity Jewel

• **The Protectors:** The neighboring territory is defended by a pack of Endless Moon werewolves who enjoy great success in shaping their hunting ground as they see fit. Things aren't so hot for the characters, however. The weakest of the local spirits are starting to flock to the pack's locus, and demanding protection from spirit predation. How will the characters handle these demands and pleas? Do they have it in them to venture into the neighboring territory and ask for assistance and training?



ITO DEATH'S LAUGHTER

Auspice: Cahalith

Tribe: Bone Shadows

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure

Mental Skills: Academics Computer Investigation 2, Occult (Spirit Histories) 4, Politics (Spirits) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Stealth Survival

Social Skills: Empathy Persuasion Socialize Subterfuge

Merits: Allies (Local Gafflings) 3, Allies (Awakened Road-Spirit) 1, Fetish (Purity Jewel) 2, Language (First Tongue, Japanese, Mandarin) 3, Resources 1

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Wrath

Health: 7 (9/11/10/7)

Initiative: 5 (5/6/7/7)

Defense: 2 (all forms)

Speed: 15 (16/19/22/21)

Renown: Cunning Honor Glory

Gifts: (1) Crushing Blow, Know Name, Pack Awareness, Sense Malice, Speak With Beasts, The Right Words, Wolf-Blood's Lure; (2) Resist Pain

Rituals: 2; **Rites:** (1) Rite of Dedication, Honor the Benevolent Spirit; (2) Rite of Contrition

Ito is a cunning and merry soul who sees every meeting as an opportunity to make a friend or cheat an enemy. He is a jovial little man in his mid-50s,

with many a laugh line around his eyes and lips, but there is an underlying sinister edge to his laughter that sets hackles up and skin prickling. Born in Japan but with an unquenchable love of travel, Ito insists if he hasn't been to a country, it's because they've changed its name since he was last there. He Changed decades ago in his early 20s, but has gathered little influence for himself until recently when he struck out alone and left his pack behind. No longer the shy omega, he considers himself a fine sage and expert mentor — and he is always on the lookout for potential "students."

Ito's blessing is his excellent memory, for he not only remembers each spirit he has honored or battled over the years, but he also remembers the exact details of each incident. He greets each spirit with a short tribute of its noble deeds and excellent behavior — or a spitted curse of the spirit's past treacheries and chaotic actions. His hidden side is a merciless one, for his tales of destroying spirits that threaten the balance or break oaths are far more numerous than his stories of honoring the benevolent denizens of Shadow.

Death's Laughter (a name earned for constantly laughing at the misfortunes of others) loves to attach himself to a pack for a few weeks, exchanging stories, information and meeting new spirits in the local area. Individual packs will take him or leave him as they wish, but Ito has a blissfully ignorant habit of following Uratha at their heels, reassuring them that they "just need to get to know him." Something that most packs find disconcerting is that Ito spends a majority of his time speaking with the pack totem rather than the werewolves themselves. When asked why he does this, Ito's answer is usually something trite and shallow about the non-human intellect; he is renowned for seeing elegance and philosophy in his own words. This is a fact he takes great pains to point out to those who don't immediately agree with him.

Belying his open (and often annoying) nature, Ito takes to the Gauru shape with ill-concealed relish, sometimes even trying to meditate for several seconds in the form. He insists this is a wonderful way to hone the mind and strengthen the will. Those who come to know him well see clearly the wolf that lies beneath the surface of the man — barely glimpsed by strangers but known to his companions. Ito is a spiteful and petty soul when angered, and carries many of the punishments inflicted on spirits far beyond chastisement or quick destruction, sometimes even getting another werewolf to bind guilty spirits into objects as useless fetishes, purely to feel the spirits' despair as he burns the items moments later.

LODGE OF THE FALLEN IDOL

SET FREE BY THE TRUTH

Holding the serpent-spirit tightly, the pack dictated its terms. “You will give us the power to fight the forces that have clutched the minds of humans. You will give us the power to stem the tide of religion and bring the truth.”

Ningizzida, Serpent of the Truth, swayed its head, its unblinking eyes focused on its captor. “I will give you my blessing to your endeavor, if you are worthy. I shall bite each of you, and in turn you will know the truth.”

The pack discussed the matter and the leader — Christof Schmidhuber — spoke for them all, agreeing to the terms.

Ningizzida struck the leader, the sage and the rest, more quickly than they could perceive.

Two of the pack died immediately. One more curled into a ball, whimpering as his eyes remained tightly shut. Only Christof, fighting back tears in blood-red eyes, remained mobile. Growling, he asked, “What did you do?”

The Serpent of Truth laughed, a staccato hiss of amusement. “What did you expect of venom? Did you expect something light and tender? Something loving and caring? Did you expect the same of the truth?”

The leader clutched the spirit’s tail and raised it to his maw. “Here is what I believe. I believe that, if I rend you with my jaw, you will be destroyed utterly. And I believe there will be no life for you after this.”

Ningizzida did not struggle, but instead purred. “Your words are tinged with the venom of truth. And because of that, I believe we can work together.”

The Lodge of the Fallen Idol has a curious relationship with humanity. On the one hand, true to the heritage of the Iron Masters — who make up the bulk of the Fallen Idol membership — the lodge members tend to side more with the human aspects of their identity than the wolfen. However, unlike many, the lodge members view the seemingly inherit spiritualism of humanity to be not a force for good but rather the greatest threat posed by humankind. As such, the lodge members’ ultimate goal is the elimination of all unprovable beliefs — in human and werewolf alike.

The Fallen Idol arose from the ashes a previous group — the Lodge of the Hidden Idol. The Hidden Idol was formed in Venice during the 16th century as a response to the Roman Inquisition. A loose collective, the lodge members were primarily followers of alternate religious beliefs — usually those that reconciled what they knew about the spiritual world with what they personally believed and extrapolated. Unfortunately, the Inquisition had deep pockets, strong will and — if rumors are to be believed — the help and support of other, Christian-minded werewolves. The membership of the Hidden Idol was hounded, hunted and killed, until, after 100 years, they were but a shell of their former selves. However, the mid-17th century brought a curious shift in priority to the remaining members. The trial of Galileo brought new interest to the subject of his accusations — Copernicus’s *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*. This book’s assertion that the Earth was not the center of the universe had a resonance among some of the survivors of the Hidden Idol, most of whom were too intellectual or cunning to be captured during the initial waves of the Inquisition. As the beginning of a scientific view of the universe, the text became the catalyst for a series of pamphlets released and distributed among various city-minded Uratha. These documents spoke obliquely (and within the bounds of the Oath) about the dangers and necessities of the religious life, of the problems of living according to an inherently unfalsifiable belief system. This intercourse was collected in the last decade of the 16th century as *Nella Difesa e Nel Defiance Del Idol* (*In Defense and Defiance of the Idol*), and it formed the intellectual catalyst necessary to reforge the Hidden Idol into the Fallen Idol at the beginning of the 17th century.

Members of the Fallen Idol don’t know what happened to the few surviving members of the Hidden Idol who refused to join the lodge. Most Fallen Idol members assume that the Hidden Idol followers simply rejoined the rest of Uratha society and spread to other lodges or remained unaffiliated. However, there have been occasional whispers that these werewolves





did not take their defeat gracefully and instead formed *another* group — one even more secretive and exclusive than the Hidden Idol. This notion, if true, gives some pause among the Fallen; not only would this other group have had almost a half-millennium to amass power and abilities, but the group's beliefs in strange and alien gods would almost certainly be antithetical to the Fallen Idol's own mindset, and would probably set the stage for conflict between the lodges. Fortunately, these unfounded rumors have remained just that — for now.

The Fallen Idol remained a predominately secretive collection in Europe until the end of the Spanish Inquisition in 1834, although the lodge gained greater purchase in parts of the New World, where vast uncharted territories allowed for less public inquiry

into private beliefs. In the human world, the lodge's most active role during this time was in the de-Christianisation of France in the 1790s, where the lodge was remarkably successful in helping to tear down centuries-old pillars of church power. At this point, the lodge also relocated its spiritual heart to the increasingly secular city of Paris, relocating from Venice.

By the middle of the 19th century, a

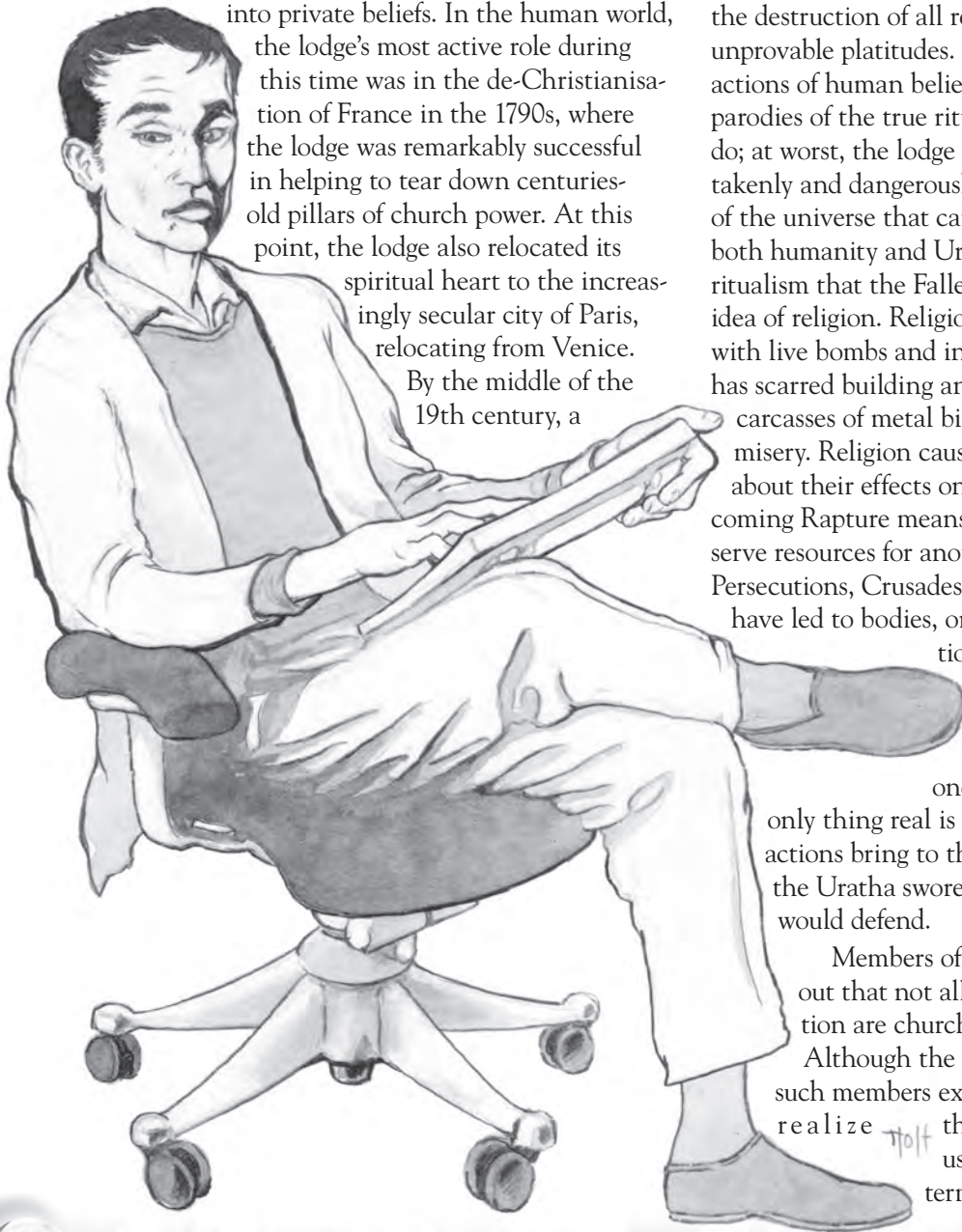
growing intellectual class in Europe coupled with a backlash against the stifling aura of the previous centuries' Inquisitions allowed the ideas of the Fallen Idol to remain relatively unscathed (although still occasionally harassed).

Finally, at the start of the 1970s in the aftermath of the *idigam* crisis, the members of the lodge made themselves publicly known among the Uratha populous; although the lodge members were technically a "secret" before then, they'd a poorly kept one since the disbandment of the Spanish Inquisition more than a century earlier. However, after 1971 they started actively recruiting for themselves — and their agenda.

That agenda, as it has been publicly stated among the Uratha community, is nothing less than the destruction of all religions, religious beliefs and unprovable platitudes. Many of the Fallen view the actions of human believers to be, at best, twisted parodies of the true rituals and rites that werewolves do; at worst, the lodge members see humans as mistakenly and dangerously playing with primal forces of the universe that can have dire consequences on both humanity and Uratha alike. But it's not just the ritualism that the Fallen see as a threat; it's the whole idea of religion. Religion, they argue, has sent people with live bombs and into marketplaces. Religion has scarred building and forest alike with the jagged carcasses of metal birds, causing untold death and misery. Religion causes people not to be concerned about their effects on the environment, since the coming Rapture means that we only need to conserve resources for another decade or two at most. Persecutions, Crusades, Inquisitions, jihads — all have led to bodies, orphans and spiritual devastation.

And, at the core, the Fallen argue that each and every death is owed to something that — ultimately — no one can prove is even real. The only thing real is the damage and chaos these actions bring to the spiritual landscape, which the Uratha swore over Father Wolf's corpse they would defend.

Members of the Fallen are quick to point out that not all members of their organization are church-bombing, anti-God militants. Although the Fallen don't deny that some such members exist, the lodge members also realize that such strong-arm tactics are usually antithetical to their long-term goals, as acts of violence



tend to drive communities more fervently toward religion as a coping mechanism. However, and more importantly to the lodge, the core philosophies of opposition to blind faith have expanded considerably; within the past two centuries, philosophies of disbelief had grown to the point that there were nuances in the positions that members of the Fallen Idol could take, such as secular humanism, agnosticism, rationalism and so on. Members of the lodge can (and, indeed, do) still have heated religious debates, although the nature of these discussions often looks unusual to those looking for at least one side to support a deistic worldview. (“If one is open to the possibility of supernatural proof, does that constitute faith if one simply hasn’t devised a means of falsification? After all, one could have believed in invisible beings causing illness in the 16th century without having an idea of microscopes, germs or spirits.”)

These debates are often framed in a different light as well, given the Uratha’s knowledge of other worlds and ideas. For example, while a human secular humanist might believe it to be good to ensure the land can be sufficiently exploited to let all humans eat, a werewolf secular humanist may disagree, since he would also need to balance the requirements of the spiritual world as well as the idea that the natural world doesn’t *want* all its members to survive. The Fallen Idols also disagree as to how to accomplish the lodge’s goals, and what role violence plays in the process. Some believe that they are most effective in attacking and controlling the causes and effects of religion (as the two are so often intermingled in the spirit world), choosing to cull the devout within a territory and destroying the spirits — both positive and negative — created by active belief. Other lodge members have claimed great victories in hunting down and killing powerful spirits tied to religion itself, slaking their rage on god-like beings whose projections into the physical world had led to the formation of some religious “cults.” Still other lodge members use the same means and methods they use in protecting their territory, expanding it to the religious world. Such areas may find it nearly impossible for extant religions to grow or new beliefs to form; one month a new minister arrives with the funds to establish a new church within a town, the next month he’s mysteriously disappeared while the grass on the city’s outskirts grows a little greener.

The lodge’s numbers are surprisingly healthy; upon having their first Change, many werewolves turn to their human-instilled faith systems for answers, only to find them woefully lacking. This is

coupled with the fact that most first Changes occur at a young age, when many already find themselves questioning the establishment. Although free (and encouraged) to travel throughout the world, the Fallen are most prevalent on the European continent, where they have helped guide the general movement away from religion. Within the past decade, they have aggressively expanded their dealings in North America, which they view as a phenomenal threat to both their goals and the world in general owing to the religious fervor that many in power possess. The Fallen have also become more active within the rainforests of South America, where they argue that — despite the widespread religious beliefs held by most — the environment is still being destroyed at an alarming rate. (Actually, many within the lodge argue that religion is part of the cause; for example, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it” is some of the worst advice one could conceive of from an environmental standpoint. It’s one thing for non-sentient beings to follow such a course instinctively, but it’s quite another for those who can rationalize the impact of their actions to continue acting to destroy creation in the name of God.)

The Fallen are ruthlessly vigilant in self-policing against any targeted religious prejudice; while it’s common for members to join the lodge holding a grudge against a specific faith, such feelings need to be eradicated (or at least well-hidden) by any who would count the Fallen as blood allies. If anyone is shown to be targeting a specific group for irrational reasons, that person will be quickly challenged and expelled. This isn’t to say that some members of the lodge don’t have specializations or preferred targets; rather, the motivations behind that targeting need to be based on familiarity or geographical necessity rather than fueled by hatred. This tenet is so crucial because the Lodge of the Fallen Idol prides itself on the purity of its ideals; while many may question the Fallen’s goals and actions, almost none may doubt their motives.

One of the aspects many within the Uratha community find most troubling is that some within the Fallen Idol also target other werewolves for their dealings with the spirit world. While the spirits require tribute and recognition, the degree of these honorifics is variable, and some werewolves have been accused in going too far in their veneration toward Luna or Father Wolf. For example, most werewolves do not gain any advantage for providing additional tribute or honor to their totem. Therefore, if a pack were to do something “idolatrous” (such as singing a





nightly tribute to the great and loving moon), they would find their practice admonished by the Lodge of the Fallen Idol — or worse, if the practices got too lavish or out of hand. Even as part of a pack, those of the Fallen Idol will rib their packmates for their superstitions, useless good-luck charms and the like.

PATRON SPIRIT

The tribal spirit of the lodge is Ningizzida, a snake-spirit that refers to itself as the Serpent of Truth. This spirit was tracked down after the lodge reformed itself from the ashes of the Lodge of the Hidden Idol. None are sure what totem the members of the Hidden Idol followed.

Normally appearing as large as a 10-foot-long asp, Ningizzida claims to be an ancient spirit, present at Babylonian times. It is somewhat personable, and does not mind discussing matters of the nature of the universe with the Fallen Idols. However, the spirit also expects results, and has been known to withhold blessings and information from the lodge in times when it has failed to make progress in its goal.

Some neophytes to the Fallen Idol are disconcerted by the serpent's seeming connections with mythic and biblical events. Many cultures feature a serpent as a prominent entity in the corruption or downfall of humans. Ningizzida is amused by these connections; it does not attempt to dissuade them, but instead uses them as springboards for conversation. "The Torah holds a serpent responsible for the expulsion of humans from the Garden of Eden. But look at the serpent's words; nothing it said was a lie. Who told the first lie of the Bible? God, when He said that those who eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil would surely die. The first humans did not die from eating of the tree; or, if they did, it was only in the sense that all who eat carrots shall die. The statement is true, but meaningless, for those who do not eat carrots shall also die."

Although Ningizzida can (and does) distort the truth, the snake-spirit has never been caught in an outright prevarication. The spirit claims that, as the Serpent of Truth, it is compelled never to lie; however, it also concedes that the truth is a challenging thing to unravel, and feels no shame in teaching a lesson to those who make false presumptions or fail to interpret its information correctly. "The first step to knowing all the answers is realizing you do not. The second step is learning all the questions."

BECOMING FALLEN

As noted Fallen Idol elder Jean-Jacques "*Dieu Est Mort*" Rousseau succinctly put it, "We are not coffee

drinkers." Unlike some strictly ideological lodges, the Lodge of the Fallen Idol is a lodge of action; while the lodge members are deeply committed to their philosophies and are intellectual, they are more concerned with making progress against religious belief as a whole.

As such, to become one of the Fallen a werewolf needs to strike out against religion in some tangible way. Ideally, this "attack" is against the entirety of irrational human belief and not a specific religion; exposing the actions of a corrupt Episcopalian priest would not be sufficient if doing so merely served to drive the parishioners to another church.

The amount the candidate must "damage" religion depends on the number of people affected and the magnitude of their departure from religion. For example, it may be deemed sufficient to simply drive one devout person to die-hard vocal atheism, just as it might be enough to do something at a sporting event that makes the 50,000 people attending seriously question their religious convictions. Of course, regardless of the technique used, all tenets of the Oath still apply. The method used is almost never suggested by the candidate's sponsor, although he might offer advice or insight if asked. Regardless, the candidate generally needs to make his intentions known to his sponsor, so all parties can make sure that the proposal won't adversely affect any long-term Fallen projects in the area.

Given the relatively open nature of initiation, it's no surprise that the types of deeds performed are quite varied. One Elodoth, for her initiation, used her investigative and coercive abilities in both the physical and spirit worlds to uncover the secrets, sins and failings of all the religious leaders in a small town, revealing them in fliers distributed before the religious services. The last page contained a statement from her: "All these people are as human as you, and none of them is more deserving of praise or reverence than your own mind." The Elodoth's efforts resulted in nearly a third of the town's faithful leaving religion.

One Rahu, for his initiation, attacked the spirit of a powerful church within a city, vowing to keep the spirit contained and weak for as long as it was in his territory. Although the building still stood, the church's parishioners felt nothing but silence echoing in its halls; a generation after his efforts, the church was sold to pay outstanding debts, and the children of parishioners forced to attend the boring, soulless place drifted away from faith.

As a final example, an enterprising Irraka created a persona called "Brother Ted," who made a circuit

of the southeastern United States' college campuses. While seeming to be an evangelical Christian, the Irraka stood on picnic tables in student unions and gestured wildly with a Bible, presenting wingnut views: shouting out to women wearing jeans that they were whores, proclaiming that all those who engage in premarital or same-sex relations should deserve all manner of sexually transmitted diseases, warning that those who touch themselves will be damned to hellfire and so on. So skilled was the Irraka that the mockery he fostered and endured turned away thousands of impressionable minds from not only his denomination (which, had anyone investigated, turns out not to exist), but from religion in general. The subtle undertones of the Irraka were clear: if you are a fervent believer, you deserve the mockery of your peers.

If the candidate is successful in his goal, he is brought to a renowned Ithaeur within the lodge at the next meeting. There, the shaman summons Ningizzida, the Serpent of Truth, who is the totem spirit of the lodge. The candidate is presented before the spirit, which asks the werewolf if he is prepared to devote himself to the lodge and its battle against the forces of irrationality. Assuming an affirmative answer, the Serpent then explains that it shall bite the werewolf; the Venom of Truth shall course through the candidate's veins, and if there is any doubt about the purity of his mission, or any residual beliefs in gods or religions, then the Venom will kill the Uratha.

Approximately one-fifth of all candidates so bitten die. Some suspect there is no venomous quality per se within the poison, but rather the Venom amplifies the beliefs within the werewolf. Not only is he confronted with the power of his own irrational clinging to unproven beings, but his beliefs in the power of the Venom are also amplified; he dies because he believed he could die. The rest see the world with a newfound focus and clarity; they are now one of the Fallen.

Prerequisites: Academics ••

Benefits: The Lodge of the Fallen Idol is well-organized within the human world, and members of the organization will generally look out for one another and provide aid when they can, especially if doing so furthers the cause of the lodge.

In addition, because the Venom of Truth has coursed through the veins of all the lodge's members, they gain two bonus dice to defend against any attacks that would make them doubt their own cause or look to an unprovable supernatural explanation.

In addition, they gain one bonus die to all Social rolls to make someone question their faith.

Unfortunately, there is a flip side for members of the Fallen Idol. Because they lack the moral security that religion provides many, all Harmony checks made by the werewolf at a one-die penalty, with a minimum of two dice.

LODGE OF THE FALLEN IDOL FETISH

EYES OF THE UNPROVEN (◡)

This fetish is a thin gauze strip, fashioned as a blindfold. It is light white or gray, but otherwise completely undecorated and unremarkable. When the Eyes are tied around the Uratha's head, the character's vision is attuned to the presence of faith of an area or person for the duration of the scene. Surreptitious Uratha will sometimes hide the fact that they are wearing the Eyes by wearing large sunglasses or wide-brimmed hats.

While the Eyes active, the player can make an Intelligence + Occult roll for his character to detect faith within an area. This is an instant action. Success allows the werewolf to see the presence of faith — defined as a belief in *unproven* (and probably unprovable) supernatural or otherworldly metaphysical answers — as white clouds or smoke; the thickness of this smoke determines the strength of faith.

For example, an agnostic might have thin wispy streaks surrounding his body, while a devout rabbi might be almost impossible to see beneath the impenetrable cloud covering him. The halls of a church abandoned decades ago might still have tangible haze everywhere, while a place of worship created as a tax write-off with by undevout “followers” would show as practically nothing.

Given the nature of the World of Darkness, belief in that which has been proven to the viewer is not faith; for example, someone who thinks werewolves are real even though he has never (knowingly) encountered one would have tangible smoke surrounding him, while nothing would be visible about a human who has a Uratha friend about whom he knows the truth.

This fetish doesn't tell the viewer anything else about the nature of the belief, or any other information other than the presence and intensity.

Action: Instant





LODGE OF THE FALLEN IDOL STORY HOOKS

• **Righteous Rebuilding:** In a small nation crawling out of the rubble after years of war and internal strife a rising charismatic leader has rallied the country's people around a return to religious dedication. Unfortunately, while this new focus has significantly increased the quality of life for most people, and has also given the people new options outside of defiling surrounding natural resources for meager sustenance it has also created a new breed of fanatic hoping to prove their worth by wiping out the infidels in neighboring countries. As the body count rises, the Lodge of the Fallen Idol sees this leader as a dangerous threat; however, other werewolves disagree pointing to the region's first tapering off of fear- and despair-spirits in decades and to the initial stages of environmental recovery. If the Fallen Idol tries to stop one problem without providing alternate solutions to the area's woes this could lead to great conflict on both sides of the Gauntlet.

• **Darwin Worship:** An anti religious backlash has prompted some leaders in one region to promote a "science first" curriculum in their schools and public policy. This dedication to science has ironically driven a wedge within the Lodge of the Fallen Idol. Some members have sided with various faith groups believing science should not be blindly followed any more than any "real" religion (especially since they know there are forces and worlds beyond human eyes that cannot be explained by science). The other members of the lodge disagree believing that any battle against religious fervor is a step in the right direction. Meanwhile, some more religious minded werewolves see this as an opportunity to strike against the Fallen Idol — they hope once and for all.

• **The Power of Doubt:** A powerful spirit amplifies and manifests all subconscious beliefs and it's beginning to spill into the corporeal world. Children who fear the boogieman jilted lovers who desire karmic retribution and cultists who believe in the coming eschaton are all finding their thoughts turned manifest much to the danger of both the spirit and physical world. The Lodge of the Fallen Idol sees

itself as the natural means of thwarting this dangerous entity and may recruit additional aid. Of course such a powerful spirit might be bargained with or harnessed by others much to the lodge's dismay.

NOACH "EMETH" WEIDENSELD

Auspice: Cahalith

Tribe: Iron Masters

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 1 (2/4/3/1), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 4 (5/6/6/5)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure

Mental Skills: Academics (Research) 4, Computer 2, Investigation (Journalism) 3, Occult (Debunking) 1, Science

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Drive 1

Social Skills: Expression (Newspaper Articles Blog Articles) 5, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1

Merits: Contacts (Bloggers, Government) 2, Encyclopedic Knowledge 4, Fame 1, Languages (French, Hebrew) 1

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/per Turn: /

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Envy

Health: 9 (11/13/12/9)

Initiative: 4 (4/5/6/6)

Defense: 2 (all forms)

Speed: 8 (9/12/15/13)

Renown: Purity Glory Cunning

Gifts: (1) Know Name, Left-Handed Spanner; (2) Traveler's Blessing, (3) Sagacity

As a child, Noach Weisenseld traveled the globe with his lifelong-diplomat father and stepmother, Noach's wildly rebellious mother having died when he was 10. Being close to his father, Noach remained near the powerful man, becoming his father's official aide on assignment to the Israelis in Buenos Aires in 1990, at age 19. Unfortunately, two years later Noach's life would be turned upside down when the terrorist group Islamic Jihad bombed the Israeli Embassy, injuring 242 and killing 29, including his father. Noach was spared because he was in the city running errands.

Attempting to flee the pain of his past, he got a visa to United States in 1992, becoming a bureau-

crat in Oklahoma City. During this time, he honed his writing abilities and gained a reputation as an underground reporter and writer; his passionate but factually sound pieces about the shrinking state of the world and the escalating nature of global conflict brought him a mysterious reputation. He signed his anonymous pieces with “Emeth” — Hebrew for “truth”; in one year, his letters appeared in more than 120 newspapers and magazines.

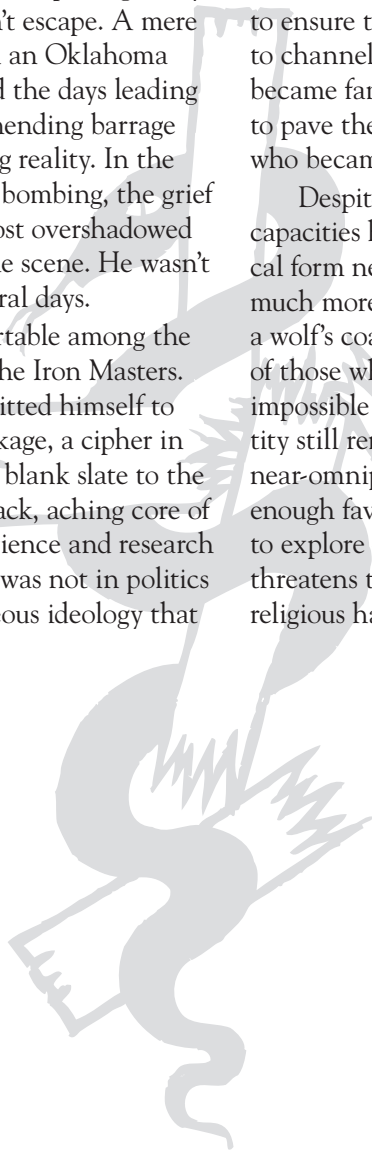
Three years later, his life was torn apart again by another bomb; this time he wouldn't escape. A mere week previously, he was attacked in an Oklahoma City alleyway by a wild animal, and the days leading up to the explosion had been an unending barrage of sweaty nightmares and refocusing reality. In the blind stark terror that followed the bombing, the grief and panic of those in the area almost overshadowed the gargantuan man-wolf fleeing the scene. He wasn't found by others of his kind for several days.

Having always felt most comfortable among the jungles of man, he became one of the Iron Masters. In a way he was fortunate: he permitted himself to be one of the deceased in the wreckage, a cipher in the city. However, though he was a blank slate to the world, deep within him pulsed a black, aching core of hate and anger. His firsthand experience and research made him realize that the problem was not in politics or boundaries, but in the self-righteous ideology that

enabled people to die for their gods — the same gods that universally espoused the virtues of peace. Having seen the truth of the world, the real of the spirit realm, he emerged with only one conclusion: there is nothing greater to the spiritual world beyond that which he has experienced or tapped firsthand.

It took several more years of behind-the-scenes work and efforts to become confident enough to petition for membership in the Lodge of the Fallen Idol, and another year of counseling and discussion to ensure that he was psychologically sound enough to channel his hatred. In the intervening years, he became familiar with the emerging Internet, helping to pave the way for the anonymous online writers who became known as “bloggers.”

Despite the rapid healing and increased physical capacities his transformation provided him, his physical form never recovered fully, and he finds himself much more comfortable in a computer chair than a wolf's coat. Although he has an intense jealousy of those who live a “normal” life, he realizes this is impossible now for a number of reasons. His identity still remains a closely guarded secret despite his near-omnipresence online. Fortunately, he's earned enough favors and goodwill that he has the resources to explore — virtually or physically — anything that threatens to advance the causes of terrorism and religious hatred.





LODGE OF THE FIRESTICK

ASHES AND SOOT

Barnumbirr crawled closer to the twisted vegetation on Gin's Top.

"Think it's Him?" Wongar squatted beside her in the mallee, a firestick smoldering softly in one black fist.

Barnumbirr said "Yes. 'S Him all right. I can smell Him even upwind."

Around them spinifex and bloodwood moved a little in the breeze. The sun was baking hot.

"I had to be born a gubba, white as the driven salt," Barnumbirr complained for the millionth time. Might as well; it's not as though anyone listened.

"Bogong, Jackson? You ready?"

Two huge, dingo-like forms nodded, Urshul fur flat in the mallee's scant shade. "Go round the stand of bluegum, slowly. Quiet as you can. He's got big ears, sick bastard as he is. When you see smoke in more than once place, hit him. Hard."

"Death to bite Him, innit?" Jackson's growl was soft.

"Avoid it if you can. Let's go."

The mob split up, and the old white woman with the scars of a Koori sat silent, flies buzzing on her, till she thought she saw them in place. As much as you ever saw Uratha anyway. She pointed the firestick that Wongar handed her, watched eucalyptus light and burn once, thrice, five times. The hellish spirit stirred from the locus on Gin's Top and stretched what weren't legs to run. With a fierce grin of satisfaction, Barnumbirr followed Wongar around the hill's rim to leap on the huge, howling rabbit.

• • •

Long ago the people did not have fire. They lived in darkness save when Gnowee the Sun and her brother Pirra the Moon gave them light. Pirra the Moon had the secret of fire. He was the only one. The people wanted to have fire. They were tired of eating their tucker all raw. They went to see the Old Man. Old Man told 'em that Moon kept the fire under his wings.

Then the people invited Moon to a corroboree. They said everyone would be there. They played click

sticks and the didgeridoo and invited Moon to dance. They thought that when the dancing started, Moon would put the fire somewhere and they could take it. But Echidna danced instead, and while she was dancing, Pirra, the Moon, left the party. Now the people were perplexed. They didn't know whether Old Man had told them the truth or not. So they sent Gabo Djara, the green ant, to steal the fire while the cockatoo was sleeping. She found it, but she couldn't move it. It was too heavy, and Gabo Djara was too small. Then they sent Kama the Robin to take it. Robin took it, and because he didn't know how to carry it, it burned his breast red. So he dropped it, and now fire blazed up everywhere. "See me burn!" cried Bushfire. "All that grows is my food!" He would burn all. But Gudaga, the ancestor of the Uratha, son of the man you call Father Wolf, he was braver than all the people. He was the great hunter. Moon was Wolf's lover, they say, and the Uratha are their children. He hunted down Bushfire with burning. When Bushfire went walkabout to burn gum trees or brigalow, instead, Gudaga would burn it. Another time, Bushfire went walkabout, and Gudaga's mob would burn before him and behind him. "Leave me something to burn!" cried Bushfire. "Bushfire, we need you to burn. The Moon can't be the only one with fire. But you must burn for us." And so fire became the spear of the Uratha. Fire became their ally.

Bandaiyan still burns.

The Lodge of the Firestick is a mostly Australian organization of Uratha who serve Bushfire and are served by him. Their roots lie in the Koori and Murri peoples of the land, and the lodge has existed since the Dreamtime of the ancestors. Outsiders wonder why this lodge isn't composed mostly of Iron Masters, a very numerous tribe in Australia. The reason is that the Hunters in Darkness preserve wilderness areas, and Bushfire respects their ferocity. Sagrim's children may join, and many do: they joke that fire was the cutting edge of technology for thousands of years in Oz. But the Meninna are the patron tribe and have saved many outback areas by, paradoxically,

burning them. The “valueless” land was then abandoned instead of being settled. Other uses for fire include hunting, trapping deadly spirits and monsters, controlling the Wounds and renewing land.

Lodge members are numerous and meet whenever enough food is available for them to feast and socialize. There may be a few meetings a year or none for a couple of years. In the old days, this meant a communal hunt or gathering Kakadu plums or moth cocoons; nowadays, a hijacked truck of meat pies may suffice. There’s always a fire at meetings, of course, if only to boil a billy for tea. In addition, lodge members almost always have some fire around their persons: a pipe or cigar, a candle, banked embers in a woodstove, even incense will do in a pinch, so to speak. At meetings, the lodge members discuss the state of territories and especially the needs of the land: places that have been burned, need to be burned or protected from burning (this last includes the deep rainforests of Queensland). Members also exchange information on rain- and fire-spirits, danger and the Wounds of Australia. Some join this lodge merely because doing so is a good way to make connections among other Australian werewolves.

The white government has noticed the large number of “human”-set fires in the bush and has worried about this for decades. Attempts to ban campfires and such have not worked, and now the government has begun preventative burning. This both helps and hurts the lodge. In some cases, deadly Wounds’ Influence has spread in soot and smoke. Other fires have been masterminded by wolf-blooded rangers and park officials, with useful effect.

Almost any Uratha may join. Few outside Australia are members, but this is changing. In general, assume that it’s easier to find the lodge of the Firestick in areas that are extremely prone to wildland fire: Australia, the Mediterranean, Brazil, California and so on. In other areas, this lodge has less reason to exist, and its patron spirit is much weaker. However, all of Earth’s land surface save Antarctica has fire at some point, so this lodge could be found in many places. It’s said among Bandaiyan’s Uratha that the Pure have been seen using what appear to be Thurru’s Gifts; Thurru will not say whether or not he has bestowed them on the Pure, or whether or not the Pure can become members of this lodge.

Patron Tribe: Hunters in Darkness

PATRON SPIRIT

Bushfire, a spirit of the Bandaiyan outback, helps the Lodge of the Firestick survive in Bandaiyan. He was one of the ancestors who came across to Bandaiyan in the First Day and walked across the continent, increasing his power greatly as the first humans burned the vegetation cover to hunt and for warmth. Some say that fire came first from Pirra, the Moon Lord, but it’s clear that the earliest humans in Australia had fire. Robin, who stole Moon’s fire and ran away with it down the Yaggin, the moonroad, lived “by the sea,” a reference to the first humans entering Bandaiyan from afar in watercraft. As the land became dryer and hotter, his power increased until other, older spirits such as Pine became almost extinct; only the eucalyptus and spinifex, which are multiplied by fire, could stand against Bushfire. Everywhere the First People, both human and werewolf, went, they carried him, and lived because he warmed and lit the world for them: the ancient forest retreated and the open scrub took its place. As he and his Uratha friends consumed spirit after spirit, eventually wiping out every animal larger than a human in Bandaiyan, humans began to seek the yoldilgabbi, the underground lakes, wells and rivers that dotted the new desert. Many water sources were very dangerous, as they held crocodiles, bunyip and other monsters. Knowledge of these wells and streams was essential to Koori life, and Bushfire has developed a number of “friendly” rivalries with the water elementals that often surface as totems or allies to the Australian Uratha.

JOINING THE LODGE

Joining is simple: find a mentor, and set a fire. Most Uratha packs of Bandaiyan know of members of the lodge, and they aren’t secretive about their goals. Once a mentor is satisfied that an initiate isn’t either some kind of maniac or irresponsible (and few Uratha who survive to age 18), then the mentor and initiate “go walkabout” into the bush, living on quandongs and honey ants and mallee fowl, “following smoke and remembering fire,” as it was once put. The mentor tells the initiate many tales of the Ancestors and of great bushfires, such as the Black Christmas fires of 2001 and the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983. (Note that the lodge also assists firefighters, human and Uratha, when fire-spirits get out of control.)

The would-be lodge member must learn to make fire without matches, using flint and pyrites, a drill





or some other tool. (This by itself would make an interesting story.) Finally, the initiate, watching the land and its animals, plants and spirits, decides when and where to burn, and does so. The successful burning enriches the land, and the fire-spirits give their approval. Members of the lodge gather and brand the new member, in a part of the body that relates to the initiate's personal quest and worldview: Jimmy Muller, elder of the Koori band at the Nine Wells, was branded on one shin because of his far walking; Alice Davidson, who grew up riding herd on sheep amidst the brigalow woods of Queensland, bears hers on a bicep. The brand takes the form of a simple burn scar.

Prerequisites: Occult •, Survival ••

Benefits: Thurru will come to his people. Any attempt made by a member of the lodge to make fire or to keep fire (flint and steel, banked ashes, wet twigs in the rain) will succeed. Fire will behave for them (consuming the fuel appointed for it, moving into the proper place, flaring up and dying down) as they expect it to. Indeed, fire seems almost a friend to them, if any spirit can be a friend to a werewolf. The Gift Yimidhrr's Musket is a large help in this.

Thurru will destroy his lodge's enemies. Australians know that houses and gum trees explode in bushfires, that crown forests can catch faster than an express train, that fireballs leap over roadways and lakes, that embers long scattered can contain enough glowing red to inundate cities in flame. The spirit of fire won't blindly charge into battle; the spirit must be summoned as any other would be. However, whether the fire is from spilled petrol, a blazing stand of mallee or a backpack thermite bomb, members of the lodge can count on terrible damage to enemies (and as little to friends as possible) through Thurru's cooperation. Lodge members gain four bonus dice to any roll made to set a destructive mundane fire or to govern its path (such as by digging a firebreak). They also receive a two-dice bonus to any Gifts used to govern or summon fire (such as Command Flame).

URATHA DOWN UNDER

The prehistory of Australia as far as it's known is a story of band and tribal migrations and conflicts among humans adapted to one of the harshest climates on Earth. The history of the continent is likewise one of "future eaters" using up resources that could not be replaced easily or at all. Uratha have

been part of Australia or Bandaiyan since the first Ancestors' time, the Dreamtime. But werewolves as well as other people have become somewhat different under the Southern Cross.

About three-quarters of the packs, or "mobs" in Bandaiyan today are mostly gubba (white and Asian) Uratha. Their Urhan form is a wolf of course but has a dingo like appearance a form of "protective coloration" similar to the way in which southwestern U.S. werewolves may look somewhat coyote-like. Mob organization resembles that of Uratha packs elsewhere and territory is just as important from the posh estates of Sydney to the sheep stations of the outback. Perhaps a quarter of the Uratha on the continent are Koori and Murri, native aborigines of more than 150 different tribes and bands. Their knowledge of the landscape has been eroded by detribalization, cultural genocide and substance abuse but they are still in closer contact with many spirits of the bush than gubbas are or so the Koori claim.

There has been a steady pattern of conflict among Uratha mobs in the Australian landscape but nothing so organized as an all-out Black War among the wolf folk. What happened was that as gubba Uratha entered the land and were born here forming mobs or joining them, territorial conflicts broke out and Koori Forsaken were pushed away from loci and out of territories. Mixed packs are not uncommon at all especially in territories where Kooris were treated decently by gubbas. Some loci were also dominated by horrible, freakish Dreamtime spirits, things left over from ages of the Earth's past best forgotten. Bandaiyan is also broken by immense Wounds perhaps more than any other human land. These Wounds may destroy any Uratha who enters them; even to go near is to risk the Gulbirra's Curse. This oddly Australian sickness results in Uratha who bear the stench of the Wound and when in *Kuruth* manifest body parts that remind the onlookers (few of those as there may be) of the dead species of Bandaiyan that was: Ghastly reptilian fangs and heatpits from the huge Liasas and Wonambi serpent, spines similar to those of the monster Zaglossus echidnas even the tearing swordclaws and hooked beaks of the Bullockornis and Dinornis terror-birds, called Mihirung in more than one Koori tale may sprout on the body of such an unfortunate. Gulbirra herself, Dreamtime

spirit of the meat eating kangaroo called Propleopus by gubba scholars may also appear giving Uratha long rat like tails as they jump hideously into battle

Gulbirra's Curse also applies to the Pure who have a few ancient outposts in Australia mostly rural towns and stations where they can quietly prevent any living or spirit beings from opposing their rule. The Forsaken are never exactly sure what the Pure are up to but a characteristic feature of Pure territories is surveillance and control of wolf blooded families whether Koori or gubba. The isolation of desert villages and towns makes this easier.

Spirits of the Australian bush are very varied given the continent's mixed up colonized ecology. Rabbit spirits unimportant in other lands have become a dangerous twisted force of destruction in Bandaiyan because rabbits first multiplied enormously crowding out and exterminating native marsupials such as the bilby and then were poisoned with a sickness called myxomatosis designed to slaughter them. This made rabbit spirits extremely necrotic and vile; the rotten scent of a rabbit spirit may trigger a mob of Uratha to combat readiness. The Pure are just as afraid when rabbit things "howl" and on occasion packs of Pure werewolves have joined with the Forsaken in temporary truce until the monster can be wiped out (at least for the moment; the tenacity these spirits has roused grudging admiration).

FIRESTICK GIFTS

YIMEDARR'S MUSKET (•)

The Kooris met by Captain James Cook carried firestick "weapons" that Cook thought were muskets, and used fire to drive him back to his ship. Using this Gift, an Uratha can ignite fires almost anywhere with a common firestick. A lit firestick (Burri), a piece of wood or bark capable of ignition, is needed for the Gift to work, so that the Gaffling or even mote of Bushfire's spirit can inhabit it. One or two brave werewolves have gotten this Gift to work using tobacco or pituri, but commercial cigarettes aren't usually suitable. When the Uratha points the firestick and calls on Bushfire, the object at which the firestick is pointed will ignite, assuming that the object is flammable. (Humans don't

spontaneously combust, so this can't be used to blow people up, unless they're drenched in kerosene or something similar.) There is no limit on range, but the object must be clearly visible. Thus, beyond rifle range or thereabouts, this Gift is hard to use.

Cost: 1 Essence per "shot"

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Firearms + Glory

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: All fires on and around the Uratha's person sputter out in pique. No more will ignite at her bidding that day.

Failure: No effect.

Success: The item indicated starts to burn. The fire will be normal: this Gift is deadly when a great deal of flammable material is about, but in a rainy city street, the fire is unlikely to last long enough to be a nuisance.

Exceptional Success: The object catches fire regardless of weather and wind, and will continue to burn unless some effort is made to douse it.

ADDER SMOKE (••)

Bandaiyan, which gubbas call Australia, is a land with more poisonous snakes than any other in the world. This Gift allows Uratha who use it to poison others with smoke, incapacitating or killing them. Adder Smoke requires a burning or smoldering object such as a firestick or candle.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Weaponry + Honor

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The user of the Gift chokes and strangles on the smoke, taking one bashing wound per turn until she can extinguish whatever is burning.

Failure: The fire goes out.

Success: Smoke fills the immediate area, to a radius of two meters. The pack is unaffected, but anyone else within the smoke's area chokes and coughs, taking one point of bashing damage per turn. In addition, anyone within the area (apart from the Gift-user and her pack) suffers one die to all Finesse-related rolls due to the obscuring nature of the smoke. The smoke continues to slowly fill the area until the fire is put out or until wind blows the smoke away. A wind of more than 10 mph will do this easily.

Exceptional Success: As above, but the penalty imposed by the smoke is increased to -2.





Lodge of the Firestick

SMOKESTEP (•••)

The perpetual burning of the Australian countryside by the local people caused the animals and plants to adapt to the presence of fire. This also meant that spirits such as Eucalyptus/Yaliwurru, Bushfire/Thurru and Spinifex became much more powerful than before. Wise ones, or wirringan, often spoke of “ascending” or “climbing” into the sky. Smoke is the obvious road. This Gift allows the Uratha to walk on smoke or clouds. There must be enough smoke to accommodate the feet of the Uratha’s current form, and it must be opaque smoke. A kitchen match won’t do.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Resolve + Athletics + Purity

Action: Reflexive

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The smoke seems to hold together, but then fails to support the werewolf’s weight, likely after she’s already put her weight on it.

Failure: The smoke doesn’t bear the werewolf’s weight.

Success: The user of the Gift can walk and run as normal on the smoke. If she reaches the end of the smoke plume or the edge of the cloud deck, she can’t go on. Wind can be a real problem.

Exceptional Success: The Uratha can choose one other person to benefit from the Gift’s effects as long as the two remain in constant contact: hand-holding, tail in another’s mouth and so on.

PATHS OF THE ANCESTORS (••••)

The Paths of the Ancestors, the “songlines,” stretch across Bandiyan’s body, from the first places in the North to the far Bass Strait. Only one who knows the correct song can walk the songlines from one locus to another. The power that they contain is obvious, and well guarded: the songlines are very dangerous. This Gift allows a werewolf to seek the nearest Pathway by burning some sacred material, such as jarrah wood, and following the smoke. The Uratha must state to the spirits what exactly they seek: if the statement is imprecise, the goal found may not be the one intended. If the statement is too exact, then the goal may not be found at all. Simply saying that one wants to find the closest locus may lead to a great deal of trouble, as the locus might be a location where deadly monsters lurk.

The Gift can work either in the mortal world or in the *Hisil*. Note that a character may know the appropriate song for the songline where he is. If he

knows it, and sing it, he gains a circumstance bonus of two dice to the roll.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult + Wisdom

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The smoke draws attention from hostile spirits.

Failure: The smoke points in no particular direction

Success: The smoke points in the desired direction for up to one day per success. For obvious reasons, most werewolves with this Gift prefer to use it on a portable source of fire such as a firestick.

Exceptional Success: No additional effect.

WOMBAT’S CURSE (•••••)

Wombat, who is now a fat little burrowing plant-eater, was once handsome and tall. Long ago, he became fat by stealing food and goods from the Ancestors, and a wirringan, or clever one, cursed him with being unable to change his shape. This powerful curse, levied by blowing a handful of ash toward the target, freezes any being in the shape it currently occupies. An Uratha will remain in his current form, unable to change; a spirit will either remain in spirit form, or, if it’s materialized, won’t be able to disperse on its “death.” Hosts will be forced to keep whatever form they have made or stolen. Note that using this Gift inappropriately is a sin against Harmony 7. Given the massive Essence cost, using this Gift is also not done lightly.

Cost: 5 Essence

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Intimidation + Cunning – target’s Composure

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Enemies enter their most dangerous form and attack. Uratha at whom this is aimed will usually enter *Kuruth* at once.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The enemy is unable to change form for a number of days equal to the number of successes gained on the roll. Spirits that take lethal damage in excess of their Corpus will fall over “dead” instead of dispersing, Uratha cannot shapeshift and so on. If the Gift is used on a werewolf in Gauru form, the target will remain active until his time in Gauru would normally end, at which point he will collapse unconscious, still in Gauru. The victim will return to human form at the next sunrise, at which point he

also awakens; the curse has no more effect on him at this point.

Exceptional Success: The enemy is frozen into her current form for an entire year.

LODGE OF THE FIRESTICK RITES

SORROW MARKS — MIRRAYINDRI (•)

The dead look down, say the gubbas, from some place in the sky. Kooris know that the dead are in all sorts of places. The death of a loved one is usually accompanied by rituals. The Uratha have adapted the custom of “sorrow marks” (sacred scarification) in order to prevent ghosts from harming them.

Performing the Rite: The pack will gather on the occasion of a loved one’s death, whether Uratha, wolf-blooded or any other, and chant while cutting themselves with flint or pieces of kurranulla shell. A bora ring is the usual place to meet. They chant, usually dance as well and cut their packmates in ceremonial patterns. Each sort of ghost that one might fear has a traditional pattern. The cuts are made to form permanent scars, called “sorrow marks” by the British because they were a funerary custom. Rarely, the Uratha of Australia will scar themselves after a defeat in battle or some other loss; the custom is the same. The scarring is painful and creates aggravated damage, but does not incur the risk of Death Rage for Uratha with Harmony over 3.

This ritual lasts perhaps an hour for each person who wishes to be scarified. The scars are effective as long as ghosts can see them. Therefore, if a werewolf was scarred on the chest, his scars would keep away a ghost unless he were wearing a shirt. Usually, one point of aggravated damage is enough to scar the body, but for each additional level, another area can be scarred (arms, face, genitalia, etc.). If more of the body is scarred, the effect is stronger.

Action: Extended (five successes; each roll represents half an hour and one point of aggravated damage)

Dice Pool: Harmony

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: All successes gained are lost. The ritemaster may try again from the beginning.

Failure: No successes are gained.

Success: Successes are gained. If the total reaches five successes, the wounds will eventually heal and scar. Ghosts lose three dice from any dice pools used to oppose the rite’s recipient until the wounds are healed and scarred over. Thereafter, they lose one die when the scars are visible to them. The rite may be

repeated to reopen the wounds, but unless aggravated damage is done, such as with silver or with a consecrated shell, the ward is not renewed.

The rite protects Uratha from ghosts, obviously not from other kinds of spirits.

Exceptional Success: No ghosts may come near the victim at all until the wounds are healed. Thereafter, they lose one die from dice pools when the scars are visible.

FIRES OF JARRAH — RARNDRYINDRI (••)

The loss of Harmony weighs heavily on all Uratha: not only does it open them up to derangements and further sins, but it makes their packs and territories vulnerable to invaders and rot from within. But fire is the force of cleansing and renewal on the body of Bandaiyan. Fire-spirits eat the filth and corruption that dirties the *Hisil*, release the nutrients in dead animals and plants into thurrrpa (ash), disperse and transform spirits and allow new life, biological and spiritual, to sprout. Uratha have not ignored this potent mystical force. The smoke of burning jarrah (eucalyptus) can help werewolves maintain and regain Harmony, “burning away” sins for those who can turn back to the “Ways of the Law.” This rite allows the Uratha to scorch themselves with burning eucalyptus in order to burn away the “sin” that they have committed. A spirit of fire, such as a bushfire Gaffling, must be present, usually inhabiting a firepot while the rite takes place.

Performing the Rite: The Uratha meet on a bora ring or some other sacred place (one pack in Canberra is said to use a mosque whose imam is wolf-blooded) and light a firepot, calling fire-spirits to aid them. The sinner stands before the fire, usually naked, and is scorched with burning pieces of eucalyptus bark and twigs (jarrah trees drop huge quantities of this material all around them, and so it’s not hard to procure some in Australia, California or Italy, where vast stands of these trees exist) while confessing to the offenses that she has committed. The packmates take special care to scorch and burn the body parts that have a connection to the “sin”: thus, a liar will receive burns on the tongue, a thief’s hands will be burned and so on. Note that the risk of a werewolf falling into *Kuruth* is very real here, and so many packs are reluctant to perform this rite, even if their Ithaeur knows how to do so. The pack usually has to keep the fiery torture going for at least one hour per point of Harmony that the Uratha has lost. If the werewolf succumbs to *Kuruth*, no Harmony is regained, although some more might be lost.





Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Extended (10 successes; each represents half an hour)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The sinner flies into *Kuruth* and cannot be brought out of it while conscious and able to move.

Failure: No successes are gained. The subject takes one point of aggravated damage.

Success: Successes are added to the roll; the subject takes one point of aggravated damage. If the total of accumulated successes equals 10 or more, then one point of Harmony may now be bought back with experience points. The rite itself doesn't restore Harmony, but allows it to be restored in perhaps easier fashion than would otherwise be feasible.

Exceptional Success: Successes are added to the roll; the subject takes one point of aggravated damage. If the total of accumulated successes equals 15 or more, the subject may purchase back up to two points of Harmony if he has the experience points.

LODGE OF THE FIRESTICK STORY HOOKS

• **Fighting Fire With Fire:** A small war has broken out between the Lodge of the Firestick and the Fire Touched. The Pure seem interested in either co-opting the lodge's Gifts and rites of fire and redemption for themselves or in determining if those powers are indeed originally of Fire Touched extraction. If the pack decides to assist the Lodge of the Firestick against their rivals, the packmembers will make some interesting allies — at the cost of moving further to the top of the Fire Touched's list.

• **Ashes and Concrete:** A series of ugly fires have broken out near the characters' home territory and the pattern seems to indicate arson. Investigation points to the methods and tools of the Lodge of the Firestick but something doesn't seem right. The targets have all been urban and the motives for the lodge becoming involved are unclear (particularly if the pack lives outside Australia). Has one of the lodge members gone bad or has someone else stolen their methods?

• **Burnt Offerings:** Bushfire itself is under siege from a potent water elemental of tempestuous nature. In order

to strengthen the totem, the Lodge of the Firestick begins scavenging the area for potential sacrifices to burn. The more sacred, potent or rare the sacrifice, the more strength the totem will gain. The characters may participate willingly in the sacrifice, either offering their own resources or joining in the hunt to find other possible offerings — or they may be brought into it unwillingly when a desperate lodge member takes something of theirs "in a good cause."

BARNUMBERR

Auspice: Elodith

Tribe: Hunters in Darkness

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/6/5/4), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2 (1/2/0/2), Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Poetry) 2, Crafts 3, Investigation 3, Medicine (Veterinary) 2, Occult 3, Politics Science

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Larceny Stealth Survival Weaponry

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Herd Animals) 3, Empathy (Cultural, Werewolves) 4, Intimidation 1, Persuasion Socialize Streetwise Subterfuge

Merits: Common Sense Holistic Awareness Iron Stomach, Language (Koori, Japanese, First Tongue) 3, Meditative Mind

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Health: 8 (10/12/11/8)

Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8)

Defense: 3 (3/4/4/4)

Speed: 10 (11/14/17/16)

Renown: Cunning Wisdom Honor Glory Purity

Gifts: (1) Call Water, Feet of Mist, Scent Beneath the Surface, Sense Malice, Speak with Beasts, Ward Versus Predators, Yimidhurr's Musket; (2) Adder Smoke, Blending, Manipulate Earth, Snarl of Command, Plant Growth, Ward Versus Humans; (3) Aura of Truce, Desert Communion (Forest Communion),

Smokestep, Technology Ward; (4) Beast Ride, Paths of the Ancestors

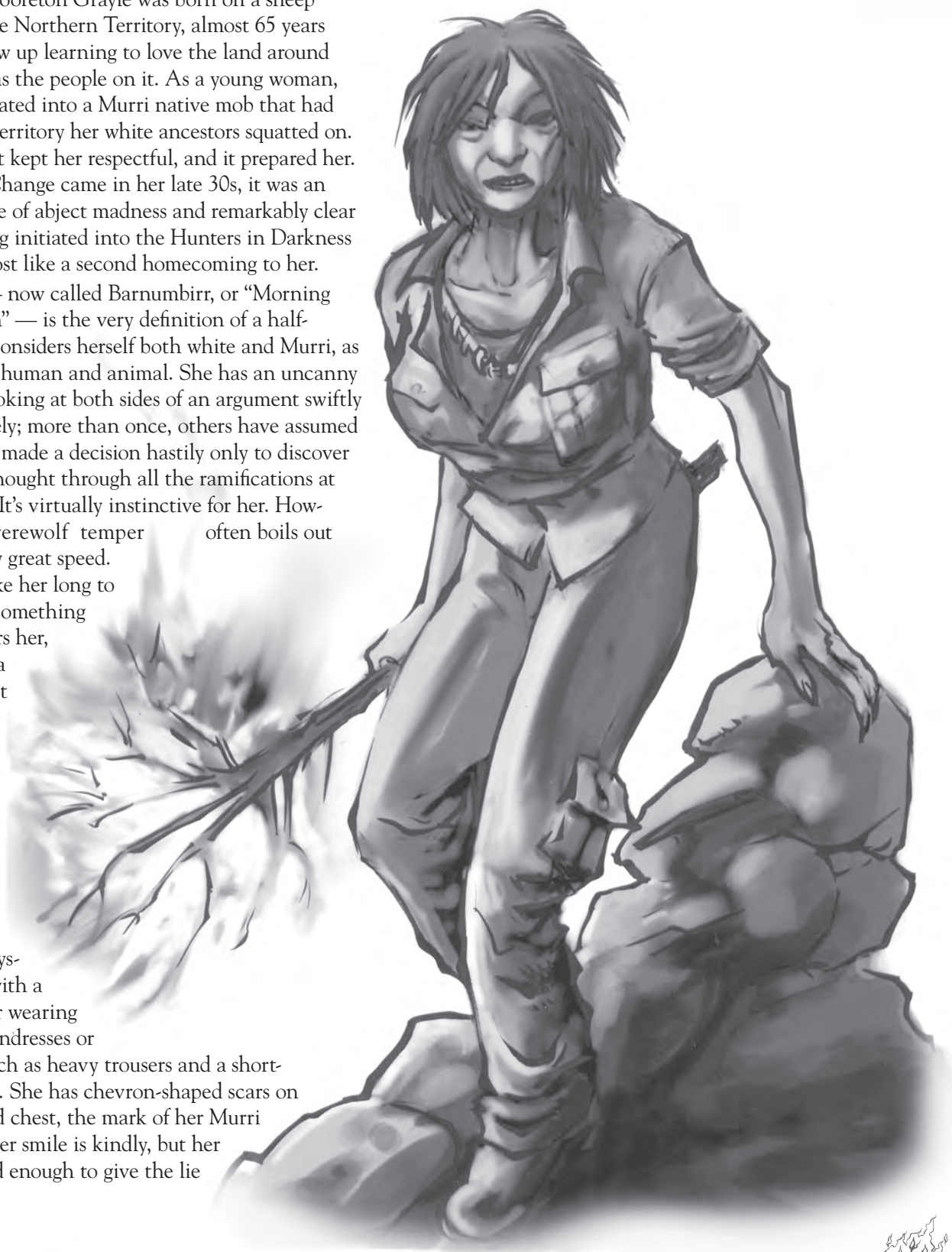
Rituals: 2; **Rites:** All one dot and two dot rites from **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, plus Sorrow Marks and Fires of Jarrah

Alice Mooreton Grayle was born on a sheep station in the Northern Territory, almost 65 years ago. She grew up learning to love the land around her, as well as the people on it. As a young woman, she was initiated into a Murri native mob that had walked the territory her white ancestors squatted on. She says that kept her respectful, and it prepared her. When her Change came in her late 30s, it was an even mixture of abject madness and remarkably clear reason. Being initiated into the Hunters in Darkness seemed almost like a second homecoming to her.

Alice — now called Barnumbirr, or “Morning Star Woman” — is the very definition of a half-moon. She considers herself both white and Murri, as well as both human and animal. She has an uncanny knack for looking at both sides of an argument swiftly and accurately; more than once, others have assumed that she has made a decision hastily only to discover she simply thought through all the ramifications at great speed. It’s virtually instinctive for her. However, her werewolf temper often boils out at an equally great speed. It doesn’t take her long to decide that something greatly angers her, particularly a crime against her adopted Murri friends.

Morning Star Woman is a weathered Anglo woman in excellent physical shape, with a penchant for wearing “old lady” sundresses or bush gear such as heavy trousers and a short-sleeved shirt. She has chevron-shaped scars on her arms and chest, the mark of her Murri initiation. Her smile is kindly, but her eyes are hard enough to give the lie

to the illusion of the simple, pleasant country lady. Her werewolf forms are pale yellowish, something like the faded color of a dingo.





LODGE OF THE HUNGRY GHOSTS

MUJINA SITS WITH THE MOUNTAIN CRONE

She bows and kneels down in front of Yama-uba, the crone with the craggy face, and places between them a moist cake of rice and blood. Gently, with a delicate hand, she mashes the cake a little — runnels of red ooze from between clumps of glutinous rice. The spirit stands over it hungrily.

“Mountain-spirit,” Mujina says to the creature that should not be on this side of the curtain, “why do you plague this road?”

Yama-uba does not answer, and instead bares her basalt teeth and spits tar and blood. A black snake winds from one hollow eye socket to the next — with that, the spirit offers her claws and lunges forward. But the crone pauses, jagged claws only an inch from the werewolf’s face. Mujina winces and takes a deep breath, then smiles politely.

“Spirit, I have bound you here with me. You may take no action against me, nor I against you. I have many cakes for us to share — ” she holds up a sheet of rice paper and shows off her blood-soaked wares “ — and I would hate to end this conversation prematurely.”

The materialized spirit thrashes and moans as more snakes squirm from her outstretched maw. Mujina waits. Finally, Yama-uba sits down, her stone bones grinding angrily together as she does so.

“Now,” Mujina says. “Tell me why you haunt this pass, attacking and eating passersby? Why, Yama-uba, are you hungry?”

The spirit snatches a clump of rice and throws it into her mouth. She wipes blood from her rough chin, and then tells Mujina the story.

The *yokai* — the spirits and creatures beyond the veil of the normal world — have gone mad, and the Lodge of the Hungry Ghosts works diligently and perpetually to mend this madness. This group of Japanese Bone Shadows believes that the grave disturbances caused by spirits and their forms have utterly disrupted the natural balance between worlds. All sides of the equation are in pain, and they seek to salve this wound. Other Uratha assume a dominant

position over the spirits, believing themselves a kind of authority over the Shadow Realm. This, the lodge says, is a dangerous perspective that only perpetuates the problem. These Bone Shadows believe that one must seek to unravel the mysteries around the spirits, appeasing them through understanding, shepherding them toward their proper places with a guiding hand. Forcing them, acting as their masters, only widens the disparity. The *yokai* must not only be treated with the utmost respect, but some werewolves must sacrifice themselves in service to the spirits. This is what the lodge does in its dealings with the *yokai*.

The term “*yokai*” encompasses a number of beings existing on both sides of the Gauntlet: the “true” *yokai* are the spirits, the *obake* are any spirits that have transformed themselves and gained power beyond their normal limits (the lodge includes both Ridden and Hosts in this distinction), *yurei* are the ghosts of the departed and *oni* include other physical monsters and demons that are not composed of ephemeral matter (vampires, for instance, are *oni*).

Members dwell among the various *yokai* whenever possible. The lodge members often exclude themselves from Forsaken life, spending inordinate amounts of time among the various creatures and spirits of this world, seeking to understand the entities and soothe what ails them. Lodge members sit with Ridden, commune with the Hosts and disappear into the Shadow for days and weeks on end. Violence is expected, but they do their best to tamp down rage and bring violence only when necessary. Balance must be struck: aggression must be brought only against aggression. The Bone Shadow must endeavor to never be the first to act violently; doing so endangers trust.

Building this trust is never easy. Even lesser spirits eye the Forsaken warily, haunted by atavistic memories of Father Wolf’s murder. But the lodge persists. The Bone Shadows live among spirits, observing and answering questions. The lodge members play and hunt with the *yokai*, helping them catch the proper prey. A crow-spirit should only catch the spirits of weaker crows or the wriggling worm-ghosts beneath the soil — the lodge may help such a being

hunt what it should instead of feeding off Essence that does not belong to the spirit. On the physical side of the Gauntlet, the Forsaken might help a Claimed *obake* find a safe place to live and eat, or they might teach a Spider Host how to sate itself and be a natural part of the cycles of predator and prey instead of a madly spinning pseudo-arachnid glutton.

Again, this is never easy. Most *yokai* resist such retraining and trust-building. *Yurei* (ghosts), for instance, rarely wish to go quietly and have no intrinsic understanding of balance, and so they rage against the mortal world or desperately long to be a part of it again. These Bone Shadows help such lost ancestors make peace, either giving them a place of wisdom in this world or instead granting them a doorway to the beyond. It is dangerous, but hurting the *yokai* or forcing them is forever the last thing a member hopes to do. The lodge teaches that even the most bloodthirsty murder-spirit can be made a part of the world, can be trained to either become something positive or at least to slake its hungers in moderation (death, after all, is a part of this world). Often, helping one spirit leads to another. Helping the murder-spirit may lead to the lingering *yurei* of its victims. Helping those victims may point to a terrible shoal in the Shadow where wailing, gnashing spirits lay trapped. From that agglomeration of negative energy may be born one or several Ridden. The chain never ends. The balance must be found.

It is all about balance. Fostering such a balance, however, comes with many costs. Other Forsaken do not necessarily like or trust the Lodge of the Hungry Ghosts. First, members do not always have high Harmony (it is, in fact stipulated that they do not). These Uratha understand that, to help foster balance, one must not expect his soul to remain untarnished — if equilibrium comes at the price of a werewolf's own spiritual imbalance, then it is what it is. Second, lodge members often seem... *strange*. They are off-kilter, with one foot firmly planted in the invisible world. They forget Forsaken protocol. They dwell too long in the Shadow and neglect life among other werewolves or wolf-blooded. They may even demonstrate physical idiosyncrasies such as discolorations in the eyes, pale streaks in their fur or an unnatural emaciation of the body (see the optional Flaw, Spirit-Stained, below). Moreover, it is quite common for this lodge to cross paths and purposes with other Forsaken. If one pack seeks to burn down a nest of Beshilu, the pack may find that the Hungry Ghosts have gotten there first — and are attempting some kind of communion with the Rat Host *obake*. It is not impossible that the members will even fight alongside the Beshilu if the Bone

Shadows believe there exists any chance to incorporate the creatures into the balance.

For this reason, the lodge is viewed with a wary or altogether treacherous eye. Sitting down and having bizarre tea ceremonies with vampires and sorrow-spirits is bad enough. But defending such creatures against their fellow People is generally unforgivable.

Patron Tribe: Bone Shadows

OPTIONAL FLAW: SPIRIT-STAINED

The werewolves of this lodge spend an immoderate amount of time dealing with the *yōkai*. This may mean traveling with Ridden (or even incorporating one into a pack temporarily), or dwelling in the Shadow for far longer than is considered healthy. In some cases, this has a deleterious effect on the werewolf's appearance. The Forsaken begins developing strange bodily characteristics or cosmetic deformities. These deformities are rarely extreme and do not usually inhibit the character's Physical rolls — but the deformities are odd and often hard to conceal and *can* hamper her Social rolls. A few possible physical abnormalities might include the following:

- Weird eyes (two wildly different colored eyes, particularly of an unnatural color such as red or solid black or perhaps the entire eye grows milky white)
- Exaggerated features (the wolf's fingers and muzzle grow eerily long, the character loses weight and appears emaciated, eyes bulge and tongue lolls)
- Flesh disruptions (skin and fur exhibit odd colorings or patterns, the character may develop sores and boils or her flesh may grow shingled and patches of fur may fall out)
- Odd odors (the stink of blood, a pungent scent of two-sweet flowers, a bitter burnt smell or a *mélange* of rot and bile)

Any of these flaws (whether a werewolf exhibits one or all of them) hinder the character with a – penalty to all Social rolls (dealing with both mortals and other werewolves).

Information on Flaws and how they are handled in game is presented on pp. — in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**





PATRON SPIRIT

Cha-no-yu, or literally, “Hot Water Making Tea,” is the patron spirit of the Lodge of the Hungry Ghosts. A Japanese tea ceremony is said to be transformative — it is art, graceful and mannered, powerful in the way it joins two parties together (and the Forsaken of this lodge believe that the tea ceremony helps to dampen the fury inherent to their species). Cha-no-yu is both the boiling water that allows tea to steep and the hot steam that rises from that water. Cha-no-yu calms those near to Death Rage and tempers a werewolf’s baser instincts with those of a polite and decorous spirit.

This spirit acts calm and sagely nine times out of 10, but it is that tenth time that still boggles the Bone Shadows. On rare occasions, Cha-no-yu will burn those who do his bidding. He turns from silent and graceful and becomes a searing cloud of vapor or a roiling pot of splashing, blistering water. None are certain *why* the spirit reacts in this way; it never seems to come from any particular impetus. Some suggest that the scalded werewolf must have violated decorum in some small but significant way. Others point to this reaction (and their own anger in return) as being emblematic of *why* they attempt to negotiate with and understand the spirits more so than other Forsaken. Such rash and inexplicable behavior only illustrates how even the most sacred and serene *yokai* are plagued by bouts of madness. Whether Cha-no-yu is purposefully trying to teach them this lesson or is instead infected with the madness the lodge purports to countermand remains unclear.

JOINING THE LODGE

The other Forsaken do not always like the members of this lodge. These Bone Shadows are considered... “off,” somehow. Therefore, new members

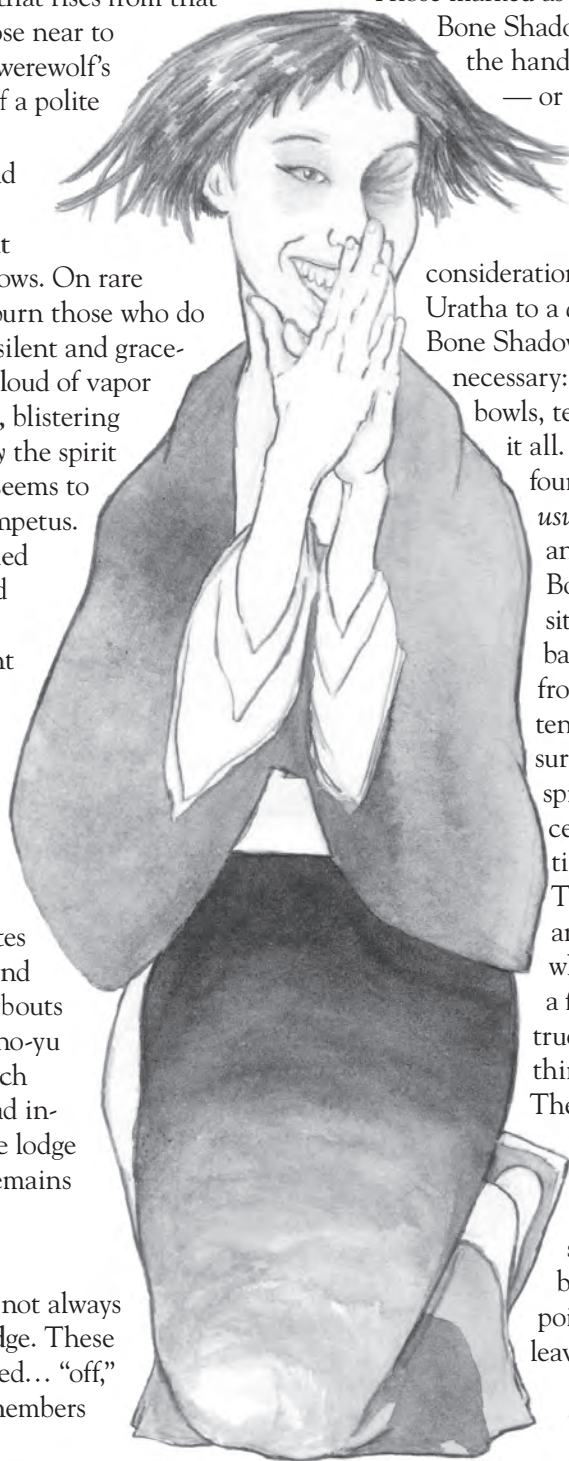
do not commonly come to the lodge members, and so they must go to find new members.

Lodge members stay to the margins, watching other packs work without making themselves known. If the time comes that they see another Forsaken who truly belongs, they mark him as a potential. Potentials may spend an undue amount of time in the Shadow, often dealing with *yokai* and granting such creatures a heavy measure of grace and respect.

Those marked as potentials are watched until the Bone Shadows can know whether to extend the hand of friendship and membership — or whether to leave the werewolf to his own devices.

Membership is not immediate. If one of the lodge truly feels that the potential deserves consideration, the lodge member invites that Uratha to a *cha-ji*, or a full tea ceremony. The Bone Shadow brings all the *dogu* (equipment) necessary: silken cloths, bamboo ladles, tea bowls, tea spoons and the trays to carry it all. The ceremony is approximately four to six hours, and goes through *usucha* (thin tea), *koicha* (thick tea) and *kaiseki* (a light meal). The Bone Shadow lights incense and sits *seiza* (correct sitting, leaning back on knees and buttocks) across from the potential. What the potential does not know (though may surmise on his own) is that many spirits are also summoned to the ceremony. They watch the potential, as does the lodge member. They attempt to smell deceptions and sense nervousness. They use whatever is in their power to get a full picture of the individual’s true character. The spirits often see things that the werewolf does not. Their judgment is equal to that of actual members.

If the Bone Shadows of the lodge and the gathered spirits agree, then the potential becomes a full member. At that point, the member is expected to leave any pack he belongs to and become a part of one of the lodge’s packs (or, as they are sometimes called,



“circles”). The new member’s training can therefore begin.

Prerequisites: Harmony must not be above 7, or below 5; Primal Urge ●●●; Wisdom ●●

Benefits: The benefits of belonging to this lodge are almost exclusively Shadow-related. The first benefit is, when drawing Essence from a locus, the werewolf may take one additional point of Essence (provided she succeeded on the roll to draw Essence.) If the successes grant her three points of Essence, she gets four instead. Each point taken, even the extra, takes a full minute to transfer. Also, when staring into a reflective surface, a member may take an additional +1 bonus when crossing the Gauntlet. This bonus doesn’t apply if no reflective surface is available. For this reason, many members carry small bronze mirrors (*buronzu kagami*) around their wrists or necks.

YOKAI OF JAPAN

When categorizing the spirits or other creatures of Japan it is worth noting a few particular characteristics. First they are all bound to what may be a labyrinth of manners and propriety; Forsaken are expected to act a certain way—make the proper gestures and bows and commit to the most graceful course of conversation. Second, most of the time the spirits seem calm and even mannered, but they are all given to bouts of inexplicable violence and madness. This seems emblematic of some kind of powerful repression or ancient wound. Third, the spirit choirs often have somewhat inexplicable hierarchies. The *kitsune* or fox spirits seem oddly servile to wind spirits and other air elementals. Similarly weird, some spirit hierarchies seem to include *yurei* (or ghosts). While departed spirits cannot cross over to the Shadow and exist only in Twilight, the Forsaken often find spirits and ghosts communing in various inexplicable ceremonies.

That said, this lodge is not exclusive to Japan. The concept of hungry ghosts and imbalanced spirits is born of Buddhism (or, in some beliefs, vice versa), and hence has parallels across all of Asia and even penetrating the Western world.

LODGE RITES

OBON TEWAE (●●●●)

The Lodge of the Hungry Ghosts knows an ancient version of the Bind Spirit ritual, one said to have been passed down from the lodge’s original progenitor, Shimizu-san. This rite, based somewhat on the Japanese tea-drinking “tray ceremony,” allows a werewolf to force a single *yokai* to sit with her for a time. The two share ritually-prepared food or drink, and neither can commit violence against the other during that time (provided, of course, the ritual was successful).

This ritual also forces the spirit to communicate certain information to the ritemaster. The type of information and story that the spirit must deliver is based upon the type of food chosen for the ritual—and only one type of victual or drink is allowed per ceremony (see below for the types of meal and what they demand a spirit do).

The Hungry Ghosts use this ritual to plumb the depths of specific *yokai*, allowing them to get to the bottom of whatever has caused a spirit or creature’s madness. The ritual is certainly not foolproof; it doesn’t guarantee concrete answers, but it does force a being to calm itself for a time, and may allow a werewolf just enough opportunity to learn more about the entity, and earn its trust over time.

Performing the Rite: This ritual has two steps. The first step is the preparation of the meal. Each meal requires an extended Intelligence + Occult roll to prepare. Twenty successes are required for each, with each roll taking one minute’s worth of time. A single “meal” consists of an individual item: for instance, one blood-filled, sticky rice cake (*ketsueki daifuku*) counts as one meal and requires 20 successes to create. One point of Essence is *also* required for each meal.

These meals can be made ahead of time, and last for a full week before rotting or decaying. They can also be carried through to the Shadow from the physical world; crossing the Gauntlet with one or many meals for the ceremony, however, incurs a –1 (non-cumulative) penalty to the roll for stepping sideways.

The ritemaster can prepare five different common types of meal for the *yokai* (though more are said to exist). The meals and their effects upon spirits are as follows:

Ketsueki Daifuku: This is a round or square *mochi* (glutinous rice cake) filled with blood (the ritemaster’s own). For every cake given to a spirit, the spirit





must answer one question about what it eats (what it likes to eat, hates to eat, bad things it has consumed, other spirits it has swallowed, etc.).

Sukin Dango: This dumpling (made of *mochiko* or rice flour) is steamed or fried and stuffed with some of the ritemaster's own skin and meat. Many ritemasters use their teeth or a knife to get the golf ball-sized hunk of flesh necessary to fill the dough. For every dumpling given to a *yokai*, the being must answer one question about who it has spoken with over the last 24 hours. (The werewolf may ask who the creature has spoken with, what topics were discussed and the time and places of such conversations.)

Koicha Chishio: This "thick" tea is a syrupy beverage flavored with three drops of the ritemaster's blood and some of her saliva. The tea can be served in bowls or glasses. For every serving of tea, the ritemaster may ask the spirit a question about its powers (what it is capable of, how often, if it has used its abilities recently, what Gifts it can teach, etc.).

Sakana no Ikizukuri: This is a five-to-ten-inch fish stuck with two skewers (often made of bamboo). The ritemaster must pluck one of his own teeth from his mouth and stuff it into the belly of the fish. The fish is not cooked (and is often served alive). The *yokai* must answer one question (per fish served) about spirit politics. (The werewolf may ask about power blocs, choirs, rivalries and rank.)

Pa-Ji Basashi: The ritemaster marinates raw horsemeat briefly in a bowl of her own bile (she must make herself throw up if necessary). With each of these delicacies, the ritemaster may ask one question pertaining to a location in the Shadow (the location of a loci, of the suspected location of another spirit, the direction toward a specific locale or even where other Forsaken went).

The second part of the ritual is invoking it against an individual *yokai*. This ability works on spirits, Ridden, Hosts and ghosts. (It does not work on vampires, mages or other *oni*.) When invoking the ritual, the ritemaster merely needs to bring out the food and set one of the meals down before the creature.

Cost: 1 Essence per "meal" prepared

Dice Pool: Harmony versus creature's Resistance (rolled at the time food is placed before the *yokai*, as noted above).

Action: Instant (once food has been prepared)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The food instantly rots and molds. As a result, the creature or spirit gains an

additional point of Resistance for the duration of the scene.

Failure: An equal number of (or the most) successes are rolled for the spirit. The food does not tempt the spirit, and the ritual fails.

Success: The *yokai* is bound to a 10-yard radius around the meal laid out by the ritemaster. The ritemaster must stay within 10 yards of the meal, as well, or the ritual ends.

The ritemaster may, as noted above, ask one question per meal served. Only one type of meal may be served during this ceremony. In other words, the ritemaster may not lay down a rice cake and then follow it up with a bowl of tea. Bringing new food means she must perform the ritual anew (making the Harmony roll against the *yokai*'s Resistance).

(Note that any of the questions asked will be answered honestly by the spirit — but honesty does not imply accuracy. The spirit may have incorrect information, and will pass that misinformation along as gospel truth.)

The spirit is bound to the area for one hour per meal. The ritemaster may only put down one meal (and ask one question) per hour.

The spirit does not necessarily need to *eat* the meal (though many do). The ritemaster, similarly, does not need to consume any of the prepared food or drink. The food must only be present. At the end of the hour, whatever is left of a single meal collapses into mold and dust.

If at any time the ritemaster decides to leave the 10-yard radius around the meal, the ritual ends. Also, the ritemaster may not bring violence against the entity targeted by the rite. Doing so costs a Willpower point (while the ritual remains active), and also ends the ritual prematurely.

Exceptional Success: The most successes (five or more) are rolled for the ritemaster. The werewolf may ask one additional question per meal (two total per meal).

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
o r more	The werewolf outranks the spirit
- o r more	The spirit outranks the werewolf

LODGE OF HUNGRY GHOSTS STORY HOOKS

- **Madness of Shadow:** One of the lodge's own suffers a slow degeneration: he spends

too much time alone in the Shadow traveling as a wolf. He has begun exhibiting odd quirks: writing messages to no one in the dirt building small pyramids out of sticks and stones even whispering secret prayers to spirits that may not even exist. Some within the lodge have seen this before and consider it “normal.” Do the characters seek to go against this judgment? What if the degenerating one belongs to their pack? Worse what happens when a pack of Bone Shadows from outside the lodge show up and want to rehabilitate him at whatever cost?

- **Stay of Execution:** The local Forsaken believe they have uncovered the perpetrator of a number of horrible wolf blood murders — and it is a local Spirit Claimed *obake* under the protection of the Lodge of the Hungry Ghosts. A pack of Bone Shadows must attempt to work not only to unravel the reality of these murders but also try to keep their Ridden ally alive from vengeful werewolves. Worse the *obake* suddenly begins to grow angry and unstable as if some kind of grave imbalance threatens to consume him. Are they making a mistake? Do they begin to doubt what it is the lodge does? Or do the players assume control of a pack of vengeful werewolves going against this lodge in the hopes of destroying the spirit?

- **Minister of Pain:** The lodge concerns itself with the food of spirits. The lodge members often believe they know what is “natural” or “unnatural” for a spirit to consume right or wrong. In this story a powerful pain spirit comes to town bolstered by a human cult that seeks to do the spirit’s bidding. The cult helps foster pain so that the spirit (their “minister”) can eat. A schism forms within the ranks of the lodge. Some want to support the spirit and help it moderate itself. Pain after all is a natural part of the world and surely some measure of it will sustain the entity. Another part of the lodge believes that supping on misery is never natural and the behavior must be curtailed — the spirit must be retrained in whatever manner necessary to eat some other resonant Essence. Can a lion be made to eat grass? Can such a spirit be tamed? Meanwhile, other Forsaken have an entirely different plan: destroy the spirit, and whosoever stands in their way

KACHI-KACHI

Auspice: Ithaeur

Tribe: Bone Shadows

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3 (2/3/1/3), Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics Crafts Investigation (Shadow) 3, Medicine 1, Occult (Rituals) 4

Physical Skills: Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Birds) 3, Empathy 3, Expression (Riddles) 3, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory, Fetish (Shadow Wings) 3, Natural Immunity, Quick Healer

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Sloth

Health: 7 (9/11/10/7)

Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8)

Defense: 2 (2/3/3/3)

Speed: 9 (10/13/16/14)

Renown: Cunning Honor Wisdom

Gifts: (1) Two-World Eyes, Sense Malice, Ward Versus Predators; (2) Read Spirit, Scent of Taint, Ward Versus Humans; (3) Corpse Witness, Echo Dream, Gauntlet Cloak; (4) Shadow Ward

Rituals: 4; **Rites:** (1) Banish Human; (2) Rite of Contrition; (3) Call Juggling; (4) Obon Temae

Derangements: Suspicion (mild)

Even other Bone Shadows look at Kachi-Kachi as if she’s strange. A number of things about her are unsettling: the hitching gait, the way her teeth seem too large for her mouth, and worst of all, the shriveled pucker of an eye socket from when she gave her eye to the toxic bite of a rat — as a gift.

Her history speaks of strangeness and tragedy. As a human, she was born prematurely from a diseased womb, killing her mother as she came to life. During her First Change, the Shadow bled over and warped her perceptions. As a result, she killed both her father and little brother, thinking they were “fire-people” trying to burn her. Her life as Forsaken has been no easier. She has suffered abuse at the hands of dominant Uratha, pushing her around under the presupposition that she is a weak — even sickly — wolf.

None of this stands in the way of her abilities, however. She isn’t weak when it comes to dealing with spirits and the Shadow. Spirits seem preter-





naturally disposed toward her, flocking to her and teaching her Gifts for far lesser costs than they would demand of other Uratha. Her abilities with the *yokai* transcend that of spirits, too. The Hosts (particularly the Beshilu) seem inclined to listen to her advice, even taking it now and again. She counts among her allies a handful of Ridden that temper their angers and insanities by sitting with her and drinking tea from time to time. Kachi-Kachi barely deals with other werewolves at *all* anymore — a fact that concerns

even those Forsaken in the Lodge of the Hungry Ghosts.

Soon, however, Kachi-Kachi (whose name, incidentally, is a homophone simulating the *snap* and *pop* of a crackling flame) will deal again with werewolves, at least for a time. The spirits have demanded that she take on one student, teaching him the ways of the lodge. The spirits whisper to her that it doesn't matter if the student *wants* to be taught — if he must be forced, then that is how fate decrees it.



LODGE OF ILIA

HEEDING THE MOTHER'S CALL

There once was a mighty metropolis that fell into ruins after centuries of vibrant life. Members of one of the packs that made that city its home gathered together in the Hisil to determine the city's numbers, count themselves fortunate and ask what they should do next. The most observant of them saw an old but powerful-looking wolf limping into the spirit woods. "She's hurt," he said, loping off to follow.

The she-wolf remained almost out of sight; the pack sensed she wanted them to follow, but were unable to catch up to her despite her limp. They traveled together for many nights, their concern turning to curiosity and then to intrigue — intrigue because the wolf went places that wolves do not go: the outskirts of newborn hamlets, the centers of vibrant towns and the hearts of other ancient cities. They witnessed two cities joined as lovers. They saw a town and a village fighting for territory. They spied another hamlet, the youngest scion of a city, stumbling as the town made its first tentative steps as its own newborn entity.

At last, along the banks of a mighty river that, in the physical world, had spawned one of the greatest cities known to humanity, the she-wolf stopped. The pack-members maintained their distance, respectfully, and drank with her at the water's edge. The warrior hunted and returned with game. The wolf cocked her head, amused as if at some internal joke; she ate, although it was obvious that she gained nothing from the effort.

The diplomat spoke. "What amuses you, O mighty spirit?" For there could be no doubt among the pack that this is what she was.

"I once fed others at my bosom; now others feed me. There is a cycle to all things. Tell me, travelers — what think you of cities? Are they a part of nature?"

After a lengthy silence, the quiet one spoke first. "At the start of our journey, I would have believed they were nothing more than the unnatural gathering of humans. But in our journey I have witnessed the makings of man in a cycle as old and natural as the beginning, from birth to growth to struggle to death. The cities are part of the

spiritual world, even if the humans who spawn them are not."

"Even?" The wolf cocked her head, amused again. "You know much," she said, "but there is still much I can teach. If you believe in the life of cities, I believe there is much we can do together. Come with me; I wish to be a mother again."

The Lodge of Ilia is an old lodge, although exactly how old its members are unsure (or don't want to say); it probably predates the rise of Christianity and may be much older than that. The lodge takes its name from the human mother of Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome. Their patron spirit calls herself Lupa Capitolina, the popular name of the she-wolf from whom Romulus and Remus suckled. Some outsiders find it curious that the lodge members are named after a human while honoring a wolf, but this dichotomy serves the lodge members well; they see cities as belonging to the twin worlds of spirit and flesh just as all living things are, and see themselves as guardians, shepherds and stewards of cities.

For most of the lodge's existence, the Ilians have served as quiet but formidable forces in keeping the balance within urban areas. They generally do very little shaping of the cities they call home; in the same way as a tree farm would be an almost unthinkable project for most Uratha, so, too, does the Lodge of Ilia see ham-fisted urban planning among their kind as being contrary to the organic growth toward which cities should strive.

The lodge has had most success at finding, preserving and restoring loci within cities, usually forcing at least the begrudging respect of those who disapprove of humanity's excesses. Members of the lodge see themselves as consultants or advisors, taking great pains to ensure they do not interfere with the territory of those who claim the urban areas as theirs. Although the lodge members don't take much of an active hand in the creation of cities, they move quickly to protect and preserve cities that are under

assault by human-made or natural causes. In some situations, this has led to some conflict with other werewolves, since many Uratha view nature's fury as part of the cycle of creation, and some view attempting to thwart that cycle as hubris. The lodge members recently had a heartbreaking failure when the beloved city of New Orleans — home to a rich diversity of spiritual and intellectual activity — was destroyed by hurricanes and floods. Although the Ilians were able to save and transplant some of the oldest and most powerful spirits to new locations, it remains to be seen if they will “take root” and claim the new buildings (and in some cases cities) as their own.

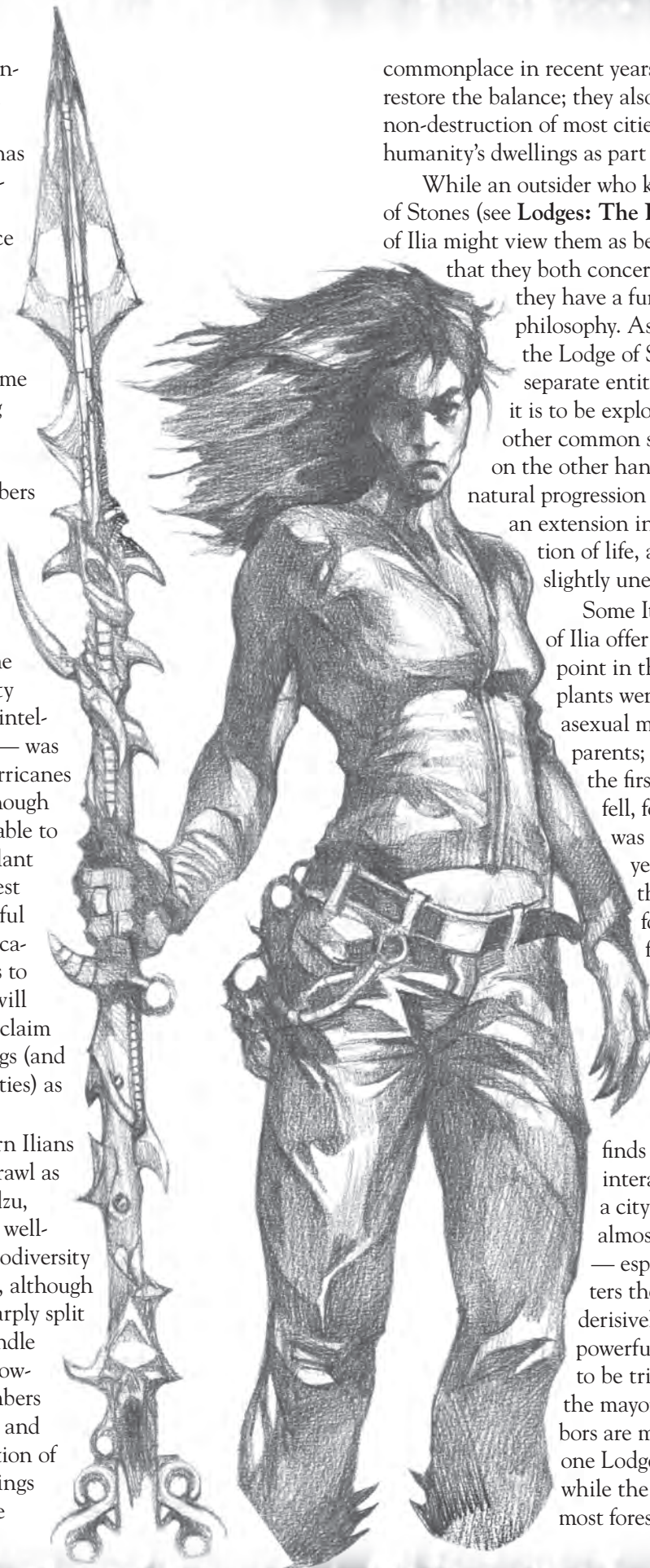
Most modern Ilians see suburban sprawl as a dangerous kudzu, threatening the well-being of both biodiversity and city growth, although opinions are sharply split as to how to handle the situation. However, many members see the flooding and wildfire destruction of expanded dwellings that has become

commonplace in recent years to be Gaia's answer to restore the balance; they also view the continued non-destruction of most cities as proof that Gaia sees humanity's dwellings as part of the natural order.

While an outsider who knew of both the Lodge of Stones (see **Lodges: The Faithful**) and the Lodge of Ilia might view them as being nearly identical (in that they both concern themselves with cities), they have a fundamental difference in philosophy. As the Lodge of Ilia sees it, the Lodge of Stones views the city as a separate entity — one whose city-spirit is to be exploited or shaped, like any other common spirit. The Lodge of Ilia, on the other hand, views cities as being a natural progression of the natural world and an extension in the continuing evolution of life, albeit one in perhaps a slightly unexpected way.

Some Ithaeur within the Lodge of Ilia offer an analogy. At some point in the hazy past, most simple plants went from reproducing via asexual methods to requiring two parents; at one specific moment, the first germinated seeds fell, forming a forest that was at once wholly natural yet utterly unknown to the world. Is, then, the foundation of a new forest from two plants uniting to form the first tree any less natural than two city founders laying the first brick of the city's first building?

The Lodge of Ilia also finds the Lodge of Stones' interactions with the spirit of a city to be, for the most part, almost always inappropriate — especially since the matters the “Stoners” (as they're derisively called) bring to these powerful spirits sometimes tend to be trifling. “It's like calling the mayor because your neighbors are making too much noise,” one Lodge of Ilia member puts it; while the werewolf caretakers of most forests wouldn't think about



summoning or invoking the spirit of the forest itself, the Lodge of Stones sees nothing wrong in contacting the mighty Jagglings and Incarnae that are the spiritual backbones of the cities they claim to love.

Still, although the Lodge of Ilia is fully aware of the Lodge of Stones' existence, the Ilians have, to date, chosen to keep that lodge's existence a secret; they see the Lodge of Stones as being kindred souls at heart, albeit deeply misguided ones, and hope to bring the two organizations into some kind of agreement within the next decade or so.

PATRON SPIRIT

The totem spirit of the lodge is Lupa Capitolina, the she-wolf (who prefers to be referred to as "she"). She claims to be the same wolf from whom Romulus and Remus suckled, and new members must suckle from her to become initiated into the lodge and receive its benefits. She claims no relation to the legendary wolves that founded the tribes, insisting they came "a little bit" before her.

Lupa Capitolina is personable but with an aura of deep cunning, akin to the "stage mother" of a child actress. Although she seems vaguely satisfied with most of her "children's" efforts, actual approval is hard to receive. Some Ithaeur claim that she actually has ambitions and powers that far outrange the relative modesty she exhibits. A few have even claimed that she wants to become the embodiment of *all* human dwellings, with cities ebbing and flowing within her in the same way that the individual efforts and spiritual activity of people flows through individual cities. The results of this ambition, if true, are difficult to fathom. What would a spirit on the level of a Luna or Gaia — but devoted to cities — even resemble?

BECOMING ILIAN

The members of the Lodge of Ilia are almost entirely Iron Masters; they are the tribe that has been most associated with cities, and they are the ones who are most interested in seeing their continued growth and nurturing. In addition, the central tenets of living at peace with cities are contrary to many other werewolves' worldviews. However, there is nothing specifically forbidding other tribes from joining the lodge, and there are smatterings of representatives from other tribes who call themselves Ilians.

To join the lodge, a prospective member will be offered a task that's become colloquially known as Destination Five Points. (Its original name is *La sfida di Ilia* — Italian for "The Challenge of Ilia.") The initiate is given an initial clue that will lead to a specific

landmark in a nearby city. For example, a werewolf in Dover might get a clue that says, *DOMINE SALV AM FAC REGINAM NOSTRAM VICTORIAM PRIMAM* — the inscription on the famous Clock Tower of the Palace of Westminster in London, known colloquially as Big Ben. From there, he will find another clue (perhaps on the inside the Big Ben bell) leading him to another city — pointing to someplace such as Marseille, France. This continues until the person has visited the five cities in the quest; the journey can take place across hundreds or even thousands of miles on both sides of the Gauntlet, although the last clue will usually lead to a spot in the *Hisil*. The prospective member will also be given a time limit commiserate with his level of experience and renown.

However — unbeknownst to would-be members of the lodge — the completion of the journey is *not* enough to become Ilian. Those who finish the journey must present to members of the lodge evidence of some insight or knowledge about the quest; special appreciation is given to those who continued to uphold the Oath as well as those who gained insight into the nature of the cities they passed through. The message is clear: cities are not mere playthings to be blown through as quickly as possible; they are vital territory, as real and vibrant as any forest, and those who travel through them must pay the same attention and dedication that they would in more natural environments. Those who fail to learn this lesson must wait a full year before attempting to join again; candidates get one more attempt before entry is denied to them forever, and the difficulty of this secondary challenge is escalated greatly, such that it's earned the nickname "The Five-Point Grinder."

Members of the lodge set up these scavenger hunts themselves well ahead of time, so they don't need to spend weeks devising and crafting them and planting the pointers when a prospective member approaches. As a result, someone (werewolf or otherwise) occasionally stumbles across a clue and finds himself caught up in an unexpected chase; since the last clue leads to someplace in the *Hisil*, non-Uratha usually have a near-impossible time seeing it brought to fruition. The quest is never crafted in such a way as to endanger the Oath, although humans who stumble across the clues might think them the work of curious pranksters.

Prerequisites: Streetwise •

Benefits: All members of the Lodge of Ilia feel instantly comfortable with any city they visit; this doesn't grant any benefits (unlike the Knowledge Gift Traveler's Blessing), but grants them a sense of

belonging and ease even when they are miles from familiar territory. In addition, if a city has a “theme” or overriding idea behind it — either as a motto, an underlying belief or the like — the Ilian is able to access that, gaining a +1 bonus to checks that support that belief. For example, Philadelphia is known as the City of Brotherly Love — a name that has reverberated with many of its citizens and the media; as such, an Ilian who tried to directly aid someone else in the name of uncompensated compassion would receive a +1 bonus in that situation. Conversely, many cities — such as Washington, DC, and Caracas — have reputations as “murder capital of the world”; attempts to do injury to someone with intent to kill would receive a +1 bonus.

For an Ilian to gain this benefit, he must know what the city’s essential flavor, hope or destiny is (if it has one), either by researching, talking to people or using a Gift to receive that knowledge. Most cities don’t have a theme or idea (yet), and many that do aren’t terribly useful to the visitor. (“Monroe is the Swiss Cheese Capital of the Nation? Hmm... I’m not sure how to use that to help keep the balance between the physical and spirit worlds.”)

LODGE OF ILIA RITE

EYES OF THE CITY (••)

Members of the Lodge of Ilia have attuned themselves to the cities in the way that more naturalistic Uratha view the forests and plains. This means having an innate knowledge of the underlying spiritual nature and health of a city.

Performing the Rite: The Ilian needs to “splash” his eyes with some element of the city — dirt from the city park, water from a street puddle or the like — while proclaiming the wonders of the city the ritualist has seen (drawing on both the physical and spiritual world). If successful, the ritualist’s vision becomes both less distinct but more informative. Technology-minded Ilians liken the experience to overhead “radar,” akin to those in search engines or video games; the Eyes of the City can reveal broad patterns of information, but nothing pinpoint-specific.

Dice Roll: Harmony

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character not only fails to gain any insights into the city, he also questions what he already knows. He is at a –1 penalty to all Mental rolls for the remainder of the scene.

Failure: The character does not gain any insight into the spiritual sense of the city.

Success: The depth of information gained depends on the scope of the investigation. At the most outstretched scope, the werewolf can learn the most general spiritual facts about the entire city, such as where the city believes itself to end, approximately how many people are in the city, where the most spiritual unrest is (such as excessively violent or murderous parts) and so on.

At the most narrowly focused scope, the werewolf can gain information about a street or small neighborhood. For example, a narrowed examination of New York City’s Broadway would reveal the essential energy of excitement-spirits, sorrow-spirits (from the broken dreams of those who don’t make it) and creativity-spirits.

Since humans don’t have a direct spiritual counterpart in the *Hisil*, the Ilian can never be certain about pinpointing the exact locations or intents of humans; for example, he could not determine exactly how many people are on a city block or precisely where a specific person is. However, use of this rite can give alternate avenues of information that aren’t immediately obvious.

Exceptional Success: In addition to the other information gained, the Uratha can detect the presence of loci and other places of profound spiritual significance.

In general, any information gained from Eyes of the City cannot pinpoint specifics at a greater resolution than one-tenth of the chosen zoom level. For example, trying to get information about a one square mile of the city will only give the Uratha the information to zoom in to about 10 city blocks, while trying to peg down something on a city block will get it to within 150 square feet or so.

The number of successes gained is the bonus to any Investigation rolls made in the area for determining specific information.

LODGE OF ILIA STORY HOOKS

• **The Hampered City:** During the centennial year of a medium sized town the Ilians learn that the city’s founder may have had a number of skeletons in his closet all of them tied to his ruthless dedication to the creation of his geographic legacy

These included lies theft murder and even sadistic torture. As a result, the Lodge of Ilia has a strong suspicion that the city has never grown to the size and destiny it should because of the spiritual damage caused a century ago. The Ilians dedicated to fostering the natural and healthy growth of cities would be keenly interested in investigating the truth — both mundane and spiritual — behind the city's founding and if at all possible undo the damage so the town may grow healthy and strong. As an added complication the non Ilian werewolves who have claimed the city have little interest in seeing it grow beyond its manageable size and may thwart the Ilian's intentions even if doing so means supporting unhealthy and dangerous spirits. Uratha may come to blows against Uratha in a war fought across roads paved with concrete and good intentions.

- **The Dwelling Below:** For decades a member of the Lodge of Ilia has been flummoxed by unusual spiritual and physical signs in a large city he frequents occasionally. Finally one day he stumbles across the answer: his city has a vast and developed underground beginning in the sewers and extending into unused subway tunnels expanded shelters and ruins of an old city that has been built atop. The Ilian would have his work cut out for him bringing this territory under control. In the physical and spirit worlds the noisome waters of the city's waste and the long forgotten constructs of a city's past form a challenging and alien environment for combat; it could well prove a long and glorious battle to rally allies willing to explore and cull the wilds hidden beneath plain sight.

- **Fighting City Hall:** In a large city where a member of the Lodge of Ilia is active one of the Ilian's allies — unaware of the dual nature of his friend — has noticed the effectiveness in keeping the poorer neighborhood clean of undesirables and wrong doers. Some words are said to the wrong folks and suddenly there's a grassroots campaign to get the Ilian to run for public office! While such an effort would be problematic, it's also an unparalleled opportunity. The siren's call is seductive indeed — what better way to guide the growth and well being of a city than to be directly in charge of its political structure? Of course this temptation would also be tempered by visions of headlines

reading, "Mayor Found With Prostitute's Throat in Mouth."

JANET "TWO-FOOT FLYING" KIRBY

Auspice: Irraka

Tribe: Iron Masters

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure

Mental Skills: Academics (French History) 1, Computer Crafts Investigation

Physical Skills: Athletics (Cycling) 4, Brawl 3, Drive (Cycling) 4, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1

Social Skills: Empathy Expression Intimidation Persuasion 2, Socialize (Bar Hopping) 3, Streetwise 2

Merits: Direction Sense 1, Iron Stamina 3, Languages (English) 2, Stunt Driver 3, Resources 1

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Pride

Health: 8 (10/12/11/8)

Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8)

Defense: 3 (all forms)

Speed: 10 (11/14/17/15)

Renown: Cunning

Gifts: (1) Call Water, Loose Tongue, Straighten; (2) Sand in the Eyes

Janet was born into a middle-class family in Bordeaux, France, in 1985, and quickly grew into a wire-framed, black-haired beauty. Always deeply aware of the awe-inspiring nature of her birth city, she learned as much as she could about Bordeaux as a child.

The groundwork for Janet's First Change was laid when she was about to be assaulted after an evening stroll home the week before her 17th birthday. Her mind could not comprehend what became of her attackers; when her eyes refocused, she found herself back home, with a serious scratch on her leg and splattered with blood but otherwise seemingly unaffected. The next week, traveling home again on her bicycle through the same alleyway shortcut, she had her true First Change — and with it, the seemingly infinite realities and possibilities of her city opened up before her. She joined up with the Iron Masters



shortly thereafter, helping keep a small territory clear of the city's predators for one week.

In somewhat stark contrast with many of her fellow Uratha — especially those who change while still in the throes of puberty — Janet has never found her new life particularly stressful or angst-ridden. In a way, it was a comfort; it's easier to feel as if no one understands you and you don't fit in with your peers when it's 100% true.

Upon leaving home, Janet forwent college for a life on the road; upon graduating high school, her goal (at least in the human world) has been to visit every country in the European Union. She succeeded at that task as of last year, and has been debating a new goal — she's waffling between visiting all 50 of the United States or visiting as many cities in Europe that she can. During her journey across Europe, she

found and joined the Ilians; she loves the tips she can share with her comrades.

She supports her meager lifestyle by being a bicycle courier — she's good at what she does, and she loves doing it. Unfortunately, her wanderlust means she doesn't stay in any one place long enough to put down roots, so she's probably forgotten more about modern-day Europe than most people know. Still, she's been tapped frequently by her lodgemates to deliver messages and packages, and has actually become something of a running joke among some Ilians in the area: "If Janet arrives out of breath, you know you're gonna soon face death." She ultimately wants to join a pack, but she's been very choosy up to this point. She considers herself to be better than most of the other newbies she's seen among her kind, and doesn't feel them "worthy" of their time.



LODGE OF KLETBY

CURSING THE CURSED

Anezka Oddanost's frail figure barely allowed the flesh to remain attached to her skeletal form, but still she persevered. "Powerful and revered Jinx," she said, "every curse I have leveled at you, you have returned upon me."

The spirit Jinx nodded her black feline head smugly.

"I cursed you to lose your form if ever the light of day should touch your skin, and you cursed me to lose my own flesh at dawn. I cursed you to move endlessly, and now we both race through the Hisil. I cursed you to leap through each locus we find, and we both have flitted between two worlds like skipping rocks. This is our game, as I understand it: each curse I levy, you shall mirror."

The spirit Jinx nodded a second time.

"Very well. Great and noble Jinx, I draw upon the last of my will, to deliver the following curse: I curse myself to be unable from henceforth to ever claim victory."

The spirit chuckled, then frowned, then scowled.

And on that day the Lodge of Kletby was formed.

Most werewolves don't like to be reminded: they're cursed. It's implicit behind the curtain that is their appellation — the Forsaken. And while most of the Uratha distance themselves from this cold fact, some remind themselves every day that curses are around us all.

The Lodge of Kletby (Czech for "Curses," with a singular of "Kletba") may be unique in that it's devoted to an idea that doesn't really have a universal definition. Some Uratha don't even believe in curses, per se, while others think they are merely a label applied to certain effects. However, members of the Lodge of Kletby believe there is more to the idea of cursing and being cursed — much more.

The general consensus among most Ithaeur who have spent significant efforts studying the subject is that a curse is an underlying affliction that somehow transcends what the Uratha know about reality. For the most part, curses aren't caused by spirits lurking around, or anything physical — a person can be entirely pure of spirit (as best can be determined) and still be cursed. Indeed, many Uratha *are* seemingly pure of spirit and yet are still said to carry the curse

of Father Wolf. Something, then, must be tainting the person beyond that.

A strongly kept secret, the current best theory among the Bone Shadow members within the Lodge of Kletby, is that curses somehow affect the innermost Essence reserves of beings. Their reasoning is as follows: All things born of the spirit world must have Essence; if they have no Essence, they cease to be. Those born of both worlds — such as werewolves — also have Essence, permitting them the ability to exist in and interact with the two sides of the Gauntlet. Likewise, almost all things — living or otherwise — have the potential to establish a spiritual self, somehow tapping and shaping Essence from somewhere to awaken an Essential presence.

Thus, the theory is that somehow the well of Essence for spirits and werewolves alike goes slightly deeper than imagined. After all, while a spirit seemingly devoid of Essence ceases to be, the same is not true of werewolves. Therefore, it is hypothesized that, even if a werewolf feels himself to be depleted of essential energy, he isn't; this residual Essence is cursed, lingering always with the target so affected. The analogy used most often by Ithaeur is envisioning someone with a blood-borne illness. Even if every last drop of blood was somehow withdrawn from the person and replaced with new blood, the odds are excellent that the person would still have the illness. Why? Because, despite all appearances, all the blood *hasn't* been removed; it lurks in cells and remains hidden in near-invisible capillaries. (Another analogy used by Irraka on more urban-minded werewolves is "salmon in the soda" — a piece of salmon in a carbonated beverage will taint the entirety of the drink, even if the fish is removed. The drink may look clean, but the "curse" of the salmon lingers.)

Therefore, this theory states that items remain cursed because it is impossible to remove all the Essence from something and still have it exist; even if a werewolf taps all the mystic reserves he thinks he has, he still has some Essence, since he can exist in the *Hisil*. Likewise, if a computer is cursed and the computer-spirit is somehow drained or destroyed, the





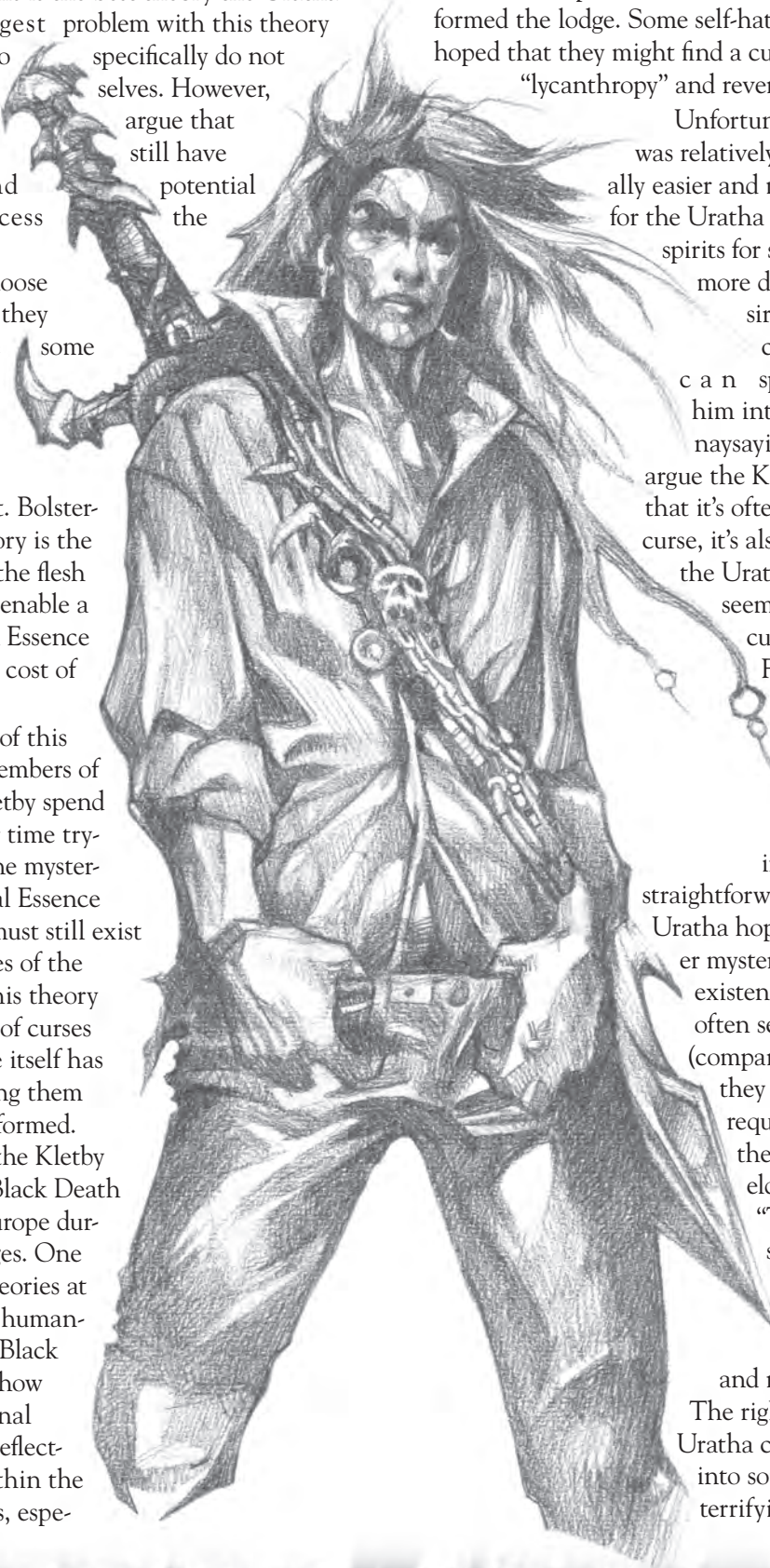
computer (if it remains extant) may still be cursed; there is an essential core of its being that still connects to the *Hisil*, even if the direct manifestation of the spirit has been destroyed.

Although this is the best theory the Uratha have, the biggest problem with this theory are humans, who specifically do not have spiritual selves. However, the Kletby argue that humanity does still have the power and potential to tap and access spirit worlds (although many choose not to do so), so they must still have some Essential link still to the *Hisil* even if it can't manifest as a full-fledged spirit. Bolstering this sub-theory is the fact that eating the flesh of a human will enable a werewolf to gain Essence (at the potential cost of his soul).

The upshot of this theory is that members of the Lodge of Kletby spend the bulk of their time trying to unravel the mysteries of the residual Essence that they posit must still exist within the bodies of the cursed. While this theory as to the nature of curses is new, the lodge itself has been investigating them since they were formed. The genesis for the Kletby came from the Black Death that engulfed Europe during the Dark Ages. One of the biggest theories at the time among humanity was that the Black Death was somehow a divine or infernal curse; this idea reflected somewhat within the Uratha populous, espe-

cially those in Central and Eastern Europe. Within those dark, foreboding reaches, bleak and terrifying physical landscapes transform into equally frightening spiritual vistas, and the notion of curses — both inflicted and protective — had a logic to those who formed the lodge. Some self-hating Uratha had even hoped that they might find a cure to the affliction of “lycanthropy” and revert to a normal life.

Unfortunately, their progress was relatively limited. It was usually easier and more straightforward for the Uratha to interact with the spirits for subtle ends, or act more directly for overt desires; why spend minutes cursing a foe when you can spend seconds rending him into fleshy strips? Such naysaying misses the point, argue the Kletby; while it's true that it's often easier to kill than curse, it's also true that many of the Uratha world's mysteries seem to revolve around curses — the curse of Father Wolf, the infliction of *unihar* on those who give into temptation and so forth. Only by unraveling the mysteries of straightforward curses can the Uratha hope to unravel the larger mysteries that haunt their existences. While the Kletby often seem relatively peaceful (compared to other Uratha), they note that it's not a requirement. As Nadezda the Thrice-Crossed, an elderly Ithaeur, noted, “The Greek hero Odysseus is a case study in dealing with curses, as well as being one of the most violent and renowned figures ever. The right curse on the wrong Uratha can transform him into something even *more* terrifying — and glorious.”



While the Lodge of Kletby's numbers saw modest success during times of plague, the Enlightenment brought with it a general disdain for these older ideas, and the Kletby suffered through loss by attrition and lack of interest. The lodge's numbers have never fully recovered, and today there are not more than a few handfuls of members around the world, with the bulk of them clustered in the Czech Republic.

Of course, one curious question that observers of the lodge note is that older, more established lodges have been lost to the sands of time; why has the Lodge of Kletby remained? The most prevalent theory is, ironically, that the blessing binding their totem to the lodge was also a curse; the spirit Jinx might not be able to claim victory, but the spirit also won't claim defeat, either.

THE SHADOWS SPEAK

The totem of the Lodge of Kletby calls itself Jinx. Strangely, the exact form the spirit takes depends on the observer, as does the nature; whoever summons the totem will see the animal he most associates with curses or misfortune. Common examples include cats (especially black ones), magpies, albatrosses, bats and snakes. In the event the spirit shows up unbidden or there is a doubt as to who the actual summoner was, then the first person to observe the spirit locks its form. The spirit's personality changes along as well, becoming akin to other spirits of its form, albeit an aloof and mysterious example of that animal-spirit. Should the observer believe that no animals are cursed, the summoning simply fails.

Some have speculated that the shifting nature of Jinx, relying as it does on the observer, is a clue to the nature of the curses. Others have wondered if Jinx is in fact one spirit, or if somehow multiple spirits have taken on the role of the totem. But, just as so much with the lodge's subject matter, this is pure guesswork, and direct evidence is difficult to come by.

In addition to the other benefits provided by the totem, Jinx will sometimes point those who wish to undo a curse in the right direction. The spirit never provides direct help, but will often guide others to a possible solution.

BECOMING CURSED

The joke among the Kletby is that becoming a member of the lodge requires both a difficult task and an easy one. However, both actions are the same: ask. While it would be cynical to say that the Kletby are unpopular enough that they won't turn anyone away, the truth of the matter is that the lodge has always

had the same procedure, which involves merely asking to be a member.

Of course, as with so many things tied to curses, the truth of the matter is not so simple. Besides the obvious difficulty in requesting entry from one of the few reclusive and mysterious members of the lodge, the act of asking merely initiates the process. After the queried lodge member has ascertained whether or not the prospective member is truly serious, the Kletba places a curse upon him; this is a generic appeal to the spirit Jinx, which will devise the actual curse.

The person so inflicted must then endure one month with the results of his curse. During this lunar cycle, he can revert to a normal life any time he chooses, by merely proclaiming he no longer wishes to be a member (or thinking it, in the event his curse renders him incapable of speech). If the person does so, the curse abates, but he may never request membership again. If the person successfully endures the curse, however, then that curse becomes *permanent*; as best as can be determined, it is impossible to be a member of the lodge yet remain uncursed. It is not an easy road for the Kletba, but the powers they access aren't trifling, either.

Prerequisites: Occult ••, Wisdom ••, Rituals ••

Benefits: All members of the Lodge of Kletby gain access to Invoke Kletba, a millennium-old rite. Unfortunately, with this benefit comes a cost: the rite is fueled by the Kletba's own permanent curse, received during initiation. In the 1,000 years the lodge has existed, no one has been able to call themselves both Kletba and uncursed. (Conversely, anyone permanently cursed by the Kletby can theoretically utilize the power of that curse to fuel their own iterations of Invoke Kletba.)

Curiously, despite the labels applied by most werewolves, the mere "curse" of being one of the Forsaken is insufficient to power Invoke Kletba.

LODGE OF KLETBY RITE

INVOKER KLETBA (••)

This rite is actually a general description of the curse-wielding powers held by the Kletby. With it, the ritualist can channel the detrimental effects of any Gift, rite or fetish upon a person or place and extend its duration.

Performing the Rite: The exact mechanisms required by the rite depend on the effect; at the very least, the Uratha needs to point at the target or an object representing the target (such as a piece of the





target's fur). She must then perform Invoke Kletba, stating the effect she wishes to carry out. Finally, she must then activate the Gift, secondary rite or fetish she wishes to inflict on that person, using the normal rules for that Ability or item. Obviously, the Kletba must have access to that Gift, rite or fetish activation normally; Invoke Kletba cannot be used to inflict a curse using an Ability she does not have.

Cost: To issue a curse, the ritualist must spend an equal amount of *both* Willpower and Essence; the amount required depends on the duration she wishes the curse to last.

Willpower/Essence Spent	Duration
1	10 actions (30 seconds) Five minutes
3	One hour (or one scene) One day One week One month One year Five years years Permanent

The minimum threshold required is determined by the duration of the original Gift, rite or fetish. For example, if a Gift has a duration of one hour, the minimum level of Willpower/Essence required is 3, which would generate a curse of the same duration as the original Gift. To generate a curse that lasted longer, the ritualist would need to extend the duration to a minimum of one day (four Willpower/Essence).

The amount spent here can be reduced with modifiers (see following).

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Extended (three successes per Willpower spent; each roll represents one minute, unless all successes required are gained on the first roll, in which case the curse only took one action)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: All accumulated successes are lost. In addition, the curse is reflected back upon the wielder, if possible, with a duration equal to that which was originally sought.

Failure: No successes are added.

Success: Successes are gained. If the total number reaches (3 x Willpower expended), the curse is issued as expected.

In general, a curse is a statement proclaiming the effect the Kletba is inflicting on a place or another

person. This effect needs to be encompassed by the secondary Gift, rite or fetish. Unless the Storyteller allows otherwise, the target of this ability remains the same; the Gift Fuel Rage could not be used to inflict the Gauru form upon another, because the target of Fuel Rage is limited to the possessor of the Gift. (Conversely, Silver Jaws *could* be inflicted on another, because the Gift specifically allows for that possibility.) The Kletba cannot pick and choose the effects, but must either issue all or none of them upon the victim. All the effects must have an initial duration greater than Instant; a Gift that merely inflicts one-time damage on a target cannot be made into a curse, but a Gift that inflicts damage over several minutes could.

For example, the Kletba might say, "By the power of the Jinx's dark eyes, the next words you hear you shall be compelled to obey for the next year" (Luna's Dictum or Voice of Command, Willpower and Essence costs of seven). Or he might say, "By the blessing of the most cursed spirit, may this automobile cease to work through sunrise and sunset" (Left-Handed Spanner, Willpower and Essence costs of four).

Conditions can be placed on the proclamation; these usually make it easier to inflict the curse, and reduce the Willpower and Essence cost required. For example, she might say, "From this day forth, the chattering of birds shall drive you to madness" (Distractions, duration of Permanent (10) with a condition of common (-2), for a Willpower and Essence cost of eight). Or, "So long as Prince Donatello speaks every day, may this ground be proof against humans for the next dozen moons" (Ward Versus Humans, duration of one year (7) with a dispelling condition of easy (-3), for a Willpower and Essence cost of four).

If a condition is placed on a curse, the condition supersedes the original duration or effect of the attached Gift, rite or fetish. For example, Ward Versus Humans normally lasts for one lunar cycle against all humans; in the previous Prince Donatello example, the Ward Versus Humans would *not* have its normal effect for the first month and then be able to be dispelled by Donatello's silence; rather, Prince Donatello's day-long silence at any time during the duration is enough to end the ward.

Exceptional Success: No additional effect beyond the several successes gained.

Suggested Modifiers

These modifiers are not for the roll itself, but rather to the number of Willpower and Essence required (which then ultimately affects the number of successes required). No modifiers can ever bring the total Willpower and Essence cost below one.

Modifier Situation

The adverse effects are activated by the following:

- Very rare stimulus or situation or one that is very easy to avoid (e.g. the removal of a body part)
- Rare stimulus or situation or one that is easy to avoid (e.g., the year's first snowfall)
- Common stimulus or situation or one that is difficult to avoid (e.g., the light of the full moon)
- Very common or unavoidable stimulus or situation (e.g., the light of the sun)
- +2 This modifier is secret from the cursed.

The curse can be lifted by the following:

- Very common action or task (being immersed in water)
- Common action or task (going without food or water for one day)
- 2 Difficult task or action (having someone fall in love with you despite the hideous appearance the curse causes)
- 1 Very difficult task or action (visiting the most holy sites of the three largest cities on all seven continents)
- +2 This modifier is secret from the cursed.
The curse is directed indirectly (e.g. using a piece of the victim's clothing)

Regardless of the number of conditions placed upon a curse, only two negative modifiers can be applied to the Willpower and Essence costs — one for how the curse is activated and one for how the curse is lifted.

Note that a modifier cannot be received if it is impossible to perform in the time allowed; for example, a curse that requires sleeping under the light of the moon for one month to be lifted could not last any less than one year; at the one-year duration, it would be a very difficult (-1) means of lifting the curse, and at longer than one year, it would be difficult (-2).

LODGE OF KLETBY STORY HOOKS

- **The Spirit World Cursed:** A mysterious ailment is plaguing the *Hisil* tainting the spirits with odd compulsions and restrictions. The effects of this are starting to spill over into the physical world. Curiously the only areas that aren't reporting significant negative consequences from this enigma are the territories heavily controlled and patrolled by the Lodge of Kletby. What is the connection if any and can the Kletby be compelled to aid in repelling this threat — or *stop* what they're doing if they're somehow behind it?

- **Former Uratha:** The spirits speak of a man who was a Uratha but is now a man; if the tales are to be believed he somehow "overcame" the curse of being Uratha and was able to return to the real world. The Kletby would be very interested in meeting such a person as would many other werewolves (including some of the Pure); while this is probably an elaborate hoax the merest possibility that there might be some substance to the rumors is too intriguing a possibility to ignore.

- **The Fallen Arise:** It is always a sad day when the Uratha clash with each other. It is even sadder when the Oath is violated such that one of the combatants dies. But when a Kletba uses his dying breath to lay a curse upon his attacker the actions can have unforeseen consequences — especially when the victim of his curse is essential in fulfilling an urgent mission. Others of the Uratha are scrambling to find a solution — either finding a replacement or, ideally, curing the victim. Unfortunately the latter would mean tracking down the elusive Kletba who may be extremely reticent to help; they may even be looking to avenge the death of one of their own.





ZUZA OLDRIČA

Auspice: Ithaeur**Tribe:** Bone Shadows**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence Wits Resolve**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure**Mental Skills:** Academics Crafts Investigation Medicine 1, Occult (Curses) 4, Politics 1**Physical Skills:** Brawl (Claws) 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Animal Needs) 2, Empathy Expression Intimidation Persuasion**Merits:** Language (Czech, English, First Tongue, German) 2**Primal Urge:****Willpower:****Harmony:****Essence Max/Per Turn:** /**Virtue:** Prudence**Vice:** Sloth**Health:** 7 (9/11/10/7)**Initiative:** 6 (6/7/8/8)**Defense:** 2 (all forms)**Speed:** 10 (11/14/17/15)**Renown:** Purity Wisdom**Gifts:** (1) Left-Handed Spanner, Two-World Eyes, Ward Versus Predators, Warning Growl; (2) Luna's Dictum, Ward Versus Humans**Rituals:** 3; **Rites:** (1) Invoke Kletba, Rite of the Spirit Bond; (2) Banish Spirit, Call Gaffling, Rite of Dormancy; (3) Bind Spirit, Call Jagglng, Rite of Initiation Wake the Spirit

Zuza Oldrich remembers standing in the streets of Prague as a teenager in July of 1968; the Prague Spring movement of social reform was in the air, and there was a palpable happiness among the citizenry. The government's defiant policy of *socialismus s lidskou tváří* ("socialism with a human face") promised real reform. She could feel her spirit rejoicing, along with what she imagined to be the spirits of the city around her.

She remembers seeing the tanks rolling through a few months later, "invited" in August to invade and eliminate all outstanding resistance to the hardline communist dogma from the Soviet Union. She bit the insides of her cheeks violently, the copper in her mouth matching the rage in her eyes. She cursed.

She cursed the tanks still rolling as a sign of her hated oppressors, damning their nation to fall over and choke on its own bloated corpse. She cursed her land, destined to know unhappiness until the forced union between its people and their Slovak neighbors were allowed to progress its natural course. But most of all, she cursed her helpless form, unable to do anything more useful than curse.

Although her First Change didn't come until she was 48, years after the fall of the Soviet Union and the disillusion of Czechoslovakia, she still views that August day as the crucible in which she was forged. It was the day she issued three curses, and all three came to fruition.

Despite the lines on her face denoting wisdom and knowledge, Zuza has had a relatively sedate life as a werewolf, owing to the advanced age of her First Change. Still, the idea of interacting directly with the spirits that have always seemed to haunt her life had an appeal, and she adapted with relative ease. And when she encountered the Kletba who invited her to join their devotion to the world of curses, she believed it to be a good omen given her self-stylized origin.

The curse levied upon her by the Jinx totem *did* make life more interesting for her, especially with her now-meager interactions with humanity. When the moon is full overhead, she is compelled to tell the absolute truth; when the moon is black and new, she is forced to prevaricate in some fashion. The former she doesn't mind, since she was always a fairly straightforward sort, but she's come to view each new moon with dread; she subconsciously extends this unease toward all Irraka, whom she views with extreme distrust.

Unlike many who join the Kletby, Zuza didn't become a member to further an agenda or exact revenge on a group or place that scorned her. Above all else, she values security and serenity, and she enjoys being the "crazy old lady that people avoid."

Still, she has found herself in some demand by her lodge; ironically, her curse has served the Kletby well, since being able to send forth a diplomat who is compelled to tell the truth is an incredible asset. So long as she doesn't need to work too hard on these missions she's willing to undertake them, although she'll usually spend the entire time waiting to return to her beloved Prague.

LODGE OF THE LAKE

ROSTISLAV'S DREAM

I am sleeping on the ice, and the rest of my pack is nearby, also resting. The cold no longer bothers us, no longer chaps our skin and makes our fur brittle and bitten. The sky is blue, the wind still. Nothing moves.

Sometime later, and I don't know how long, I can feel the faint vibration. I know that so many miles beneath the ice the waters of the lake are beginning to boil. It is a channel to darkness, cut to the deepest abyss, and it grows volcanic as we lay waiting.

The shelf of ice does not split or crack or break. It only shudders, and then a pinhole opens nearby in the ice with a little hiss. My packmates stir and go over to this pencil-sized rupture, and we all smile and congratulate one another. From the hole bubbles a black liquid, thick and foul. The ice steams where it touches. We all bend down and dip our fingers in the tar (it's very warm to the touch, comforting despite the ugly smell) and then we taste of it.

In that taste, we receive a message, and this is the dream within my dream. The message is from her, our lady in the lake, our patroness. She shows us the world first on fire, and then the world frozen, and she shows the spirits cutting through the human herd like so many sickles and scythes. My packmates and I stand by and watch, and are eventually ushered to our thrones made of bone and gold.

Once both dreams — the hidden dream and its ephemeral shell — finish, my fellow dreamers and I awaken near to the frozen caldera. We drop to the ground and become wolves. Howling, we hunt.

Humankind learned of Lake Vostok's existence in 1996, but the werewolves have known of it for far longer. The lake — the largest of Antarctica's 70+ subglacial lakes — is a 5,400-square-mile region of uncontaminated, untouched freshwater sitting miles beneath a massive shelf of ice. Human researchers believe that the lake represents the biggest reservoir of unspoiled water still available in the world. The lake has never been disturbed. Scientists believe that alien life — so-called extremophiles, or microscopic creatures living in supposedly unlivable extremes — dwell in the deep darkness of the underground lake.

The Forsaken believe that something lives there, as well; except it is by far not the same thing that human researchers expect to find. For hundreds of years, packs of werewolves have committed themselves to watching over the hidden lake, accepting that what lies beneath is something that should remain removed from the world. The Uratha could not name what was hiding beneath the ice, they only knew that the spirits seemed to consider the lake's "inhabitant" to be utterly sublime. The spirits had no name for it, but trembled in fear and awe of whatever it was that lay sleeping. Those Forsaken who spent more than a few nights in the frigid, uninhabitable region were also subject to strange and terrible dreams: nightmares of fire and ice, hypnagogic hallucinations of fat, chattering insects crawling from the snow and waking visions of shadows that had no physical counterpart.

The origins of these vigilant Forsaken start over a century ago, when several packs went to the South Orkney Islands and claimed some of the archipelago (Deception Island in particular, with its volcanic caldera and queerly warm harbor waters) as territory. The packs were a ragtag bunch from various tribes and countries — Bone Shadow ascetics from Russia, Storm Lord criminals exiled from England and seeking redemption, even several Argentinian Ghost Wolves. Banding together, the packs formed the Lodge of the Lake, devoted to watching the land around Lake Vostok for threats within the Shadow, specifically those threats related to whatever it was slumbering beneath the ice. The lodge developed a system: half of the Forsaken would stay behind to guard the claimed territory of Deception Island (one of the many subarctic islands surrounding Antarctica), and the other half would venture southward to Lake Vostok to patrol the spirit world, curtail human intervention and look for any signs of the entity trapped in the waters below. These Forsaken would patrol for two months, and then they would be replaced by the other half of the lodge for two months. From time to time, new blood would come in by boat from Argentina, New Zealand, even Australia, replacing those Forsaken who could no longer handle





the extreme cold and isolation. The cycle continued like this for decades.

For many years, the Forsaken discouraged human researchers as best the Uratha could without being discovered: they would sabotage scientific efforts, contaminate findings, even disturb researchers with unsettling howls and other eerie warnings. In 1970, however, everything changed. Russian researchers at the Vostok station (unaware then that they sat above the world's oldest and largest subglacial lake) drilled what was at the time the deepest ice core ever recovered. The 500-meter shaft of ice was supposed to show the history of the ice's oxygen composition, thus providing scientists with further clues regarding the geothermic history of the planet. The ice *did* provide these secrets, but the core also showed something else: a face.

At the very bottom of the core, encased in the ice, was the fossil of a potentially feminine, humanoid face. The fossil face featured two eye slits, no nose and a lipless mouth. The scientists hoped to capitalize on this truly bizarre finding, but they were not given the opportunity. The werewolves of the lodge swept in that night, broke the ice core and took the chunk featuring the fossilized visage.

All would have been fine had the Forsaken destroyed the face, or at least buried it back in the ice. But they kept the fossil to study it, to see if it would help them to understand what was hidden in the lake below. The Forsaken had another month of time before their replacements would arrive, and during this month, the artifact (in combination with the unending cold and isolation) began to work on their minds. The Uratha were already subject to the odd dreams and visions common to the area, but the addition of the fossil seemed to shift those hallucinations slightly. Shadows no longer threatened to overwhelm them, but cowered away from their gazes. The insects and worms that writhed beneath the ice lay still — and some of the wolves could even hear the dream creatures whispering strange prayers and entreaties of peace. The fossil face also spoke to them. Never to all of them at once — it, or *she*, only spoke to them one at a time. The fossil's lips would move, her eyes would blink and follow the Forsaken with icy white pupils and she would tell them how special they were for finding her, and how *blessed* she was for being protected by them. The face told them that she was part of the being slumbering beneath the ice, and that she was waking. The world did not need to worry. She was powerful and benevolent. And only the Lodge of the Lake could protect her as she emerged, like a butterfly, from her hoarfrost cocoon.

Pride filled the Forsaken, and it was not long before they came together as packs and shared what they each had seen. They concluded that they were very special Uratha, better than the others and even chosen by this Lady of the Lake. When the replacements came to relieve the lake watchers, they found odd behavior. The wolves seemed less affected by the cold, and not burdened by the seclusion. The replacements didn't see the attack coming. They were taken, beaten down and bound and dragged before the fossil. They were given the chance to accept the "honor" of serving her; the others begged the replacements to see that they had been chosen, that they were *very special* and that their new patroness would watch over them much as they stood vigilant over her. Some accepted because they felt the same pride; some accepted because they knew that out there in the middle of frozen nowhere, they had no choice at all. A few of them did deny her, calling the situation what it was: madness. They died there in the snow, their bodies buried in the ice as their patroness demanded.

That was 30 years ago. The Lodge of the Lake has long since culled any impurities from within its ranks — those who are willing to help ease the Lady's transition from the waters below to the world above deserve the role. And that is ultimately what it's about: who *deserves* this obligation. These packs believe themselves set apart from other Forsaken, who are clearly weaker of mind and body. After all, the wolves of the lodge brave the extreme environment at the very end of the map. Their redemption, while not complete, is what drives them. So what if the Lady gives them dreams of the world burning as a blizzard falls? So what if, at times, they hear another name for her whispered on the wind — Lamashtu, She-Who-Erases? Such blasphemy is easy to ignore. These Forsaken do not know (or, at least don't care) that they are Bale Hounds in service to a terrible Lady of the Wound. They have no idea what scientists will uncover once they finally break the cap on that ice miles below and spoil the waters of Lake Vostok. The wolves only know that they are special, deserving of this place of power.

EVENTS AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

The area in and around Lake Vostok is not normal. Even the islands north of Antarctica (the South Orkney Islands or the South Shetland Group) are subject to the weird effects of a mad Shadow. The follow

ing are little events that characters may face when traveling through this sub zero region

- The winds of Antarctica can come hard and fast. One hears the shrieking wind before it hits. When it hits, sometimes in blasts of 100 or more miles per hour, characters must make a Stamina Athletics roll (with a -4 dice penalty) to remain standing. Some times, when hit by a gale force, a werewolf will hear messages on the wind talking directly (and only) to him.

- The region has six months of daylight then six months of night. Sometimes during this transition from one to the other, spirits can Materialize far easier than usual, gaining bonus dice to do so.

- Antarctica's human population consists only of scientists and researchers from around the world. They dwell in various boats and stations around the area, most of which are dozens of miles apart. From time to time, the humans go mad. Some become Claimed. Others simply cannot handle the isolation and the hallucinations. Sometimes a man will murder his mates or burn down a research station before absconding with one of the Haaglund snow tractors and disappearing forever.

- Some werewolves not of this lodge come to Antarctica seeking various things. Some think that the unspoiled domain is somehow connected to Pangaea (one legend suggests that some of Father Wolf's bones are hidden beneath the ice here). Others believe that the deep lakes (particularly Vostok, which is the deepest) must be a connection to some kind of horrible Abyss.

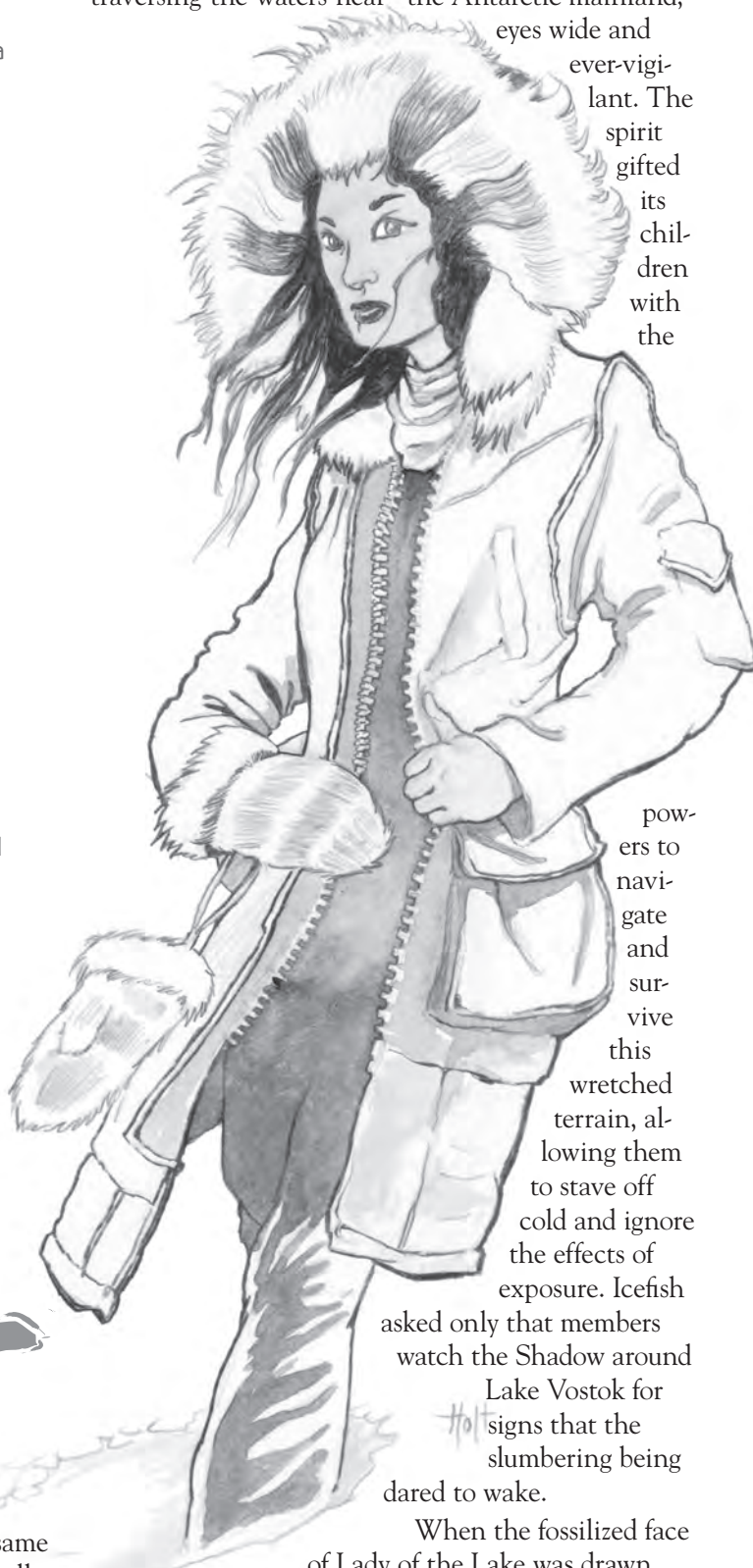
- Because the Shadow is generally untouched and unspoiled, when it does become tainted in some way, the reaction can be extreme. Oil spills or other human contaminants can temporarily wreck the Shadow. Spirits revolt, the ground shifts, and all the continent's loci seem to grow corrupt (and may even stop working for a time).

PATRON SPIRIT

The Lodge of the Lake, at its inception, was shepherded by a spirit known as Icefish. Icefish, mirroring a real fish of the same name, is a spirit that dwells in waters normally too cold for most underwater creatures. The pale

creature has no red blood pigment, and has developed a powerful glycoprotein in its body that acts like an antifreeze, allowing the creature to swim in close proximity to ice. Icefish is similar, always found traversing the waters near the Antarctic mainland,

eyes wide and ever-vigilant. The spirit gifted its children with the



powers to navigate and survive this wretched terrain, allowing them to stave off cold and ignore the effects of exposure. Icefish asked only that members watch the Shadow around Lake Vostok for signs that the slumbering being dared to wake.

When the fossilized face of Lady of the Lake was drawn free from the surface in a shaft of ice, the Lodge

Lodge of the Lake





members went to her side. She demanded that they not only deny their current patron, but destroy him, as well. Were they so weak and meaningless that they would follow a mere *fish*? A pale and ugly thing whose only skill was not dying in cold water? The Lady convinced them that they were far better than to gutlessly prostrate themselves before a paltry spirit such as Icefish, and so they went on a hunt. They did not manage to kill Icefish (though they did take one of his eyes, which the spirit cannot grow back). Icefish has hence disappeared, though from time to time he can be seen in the waters between the islands and the mainland, his one good eye watching.

The Lady of the Lake has taken away Icefish's gifts of surviving the elements. She has convinced the Forsaken that they do not need such artificial aid, for they are strong enough on their own to survive. This has made their jobs all the more difficult, as many suffer terrible frostbite that is sometimes hard to heal.

The Lady communicates with members through the fossilized face, which appears to be porous stone frozen in a core of ice. The Lady sends spirit-servants to communicate her wishes, who are able to inhabit and possess the fossil, making it speak.

JOINING THE LODGE

Nearly since its inception, the Lodge of the Lake has given a standing invitation to any Forsaken who receive it: come and join. Whether one seeks redemption, exile or simply desires to witness a relatively uncorrupted Shadow, any Uratha was welcome to come and join ranks. The lodge held no formalized invitations — simply showing up was proof enough. The journey was hard, the commitment harder, so those willing to make both were trusted to be a part of the lodge's legacy. Since the cost generally outweighed the rewards (at least the obvious ones), it was thought that any who wanted a part of it should be a part of it with neither pomp nor circumstance. The group also had an understanding with all of its members: if at any point you can't handle it, then leave. Endless reaches of snow, frostbite and being surrounded by hostile spirits can do terrible things to a werewolf's mental and physical constitution. Better to leave and spare the others the sight of a hearty beast breaking down than wait for the inevitable collapse.

In this way, for many years the lodge supported an easy revolving-door policy. Of course, the group maintained several legacy members from its early days in the late 19th century, and throughout the lodge's history the lodge has maintained several personas

who have made this hard existence a part of their own lives permanently.

Some of this policy still exists today, some of it does not. The invitation still stands to any Forsaken out in the world who wishes to join ranks. If a pack loses territory, or an individual werewolf needs to find his spiritual center, any and all are welcome to come to the bottom of the world in search for whatever it is they're searching for. The lodge still accepts such members openly.

However, at this stage, the door now only opens one way. Exiting the lodge is unacceptable. Once werewolves have committed to protecting the secrets of the Lady of the Lake (and they are not told the truth about her until they have truly given themselves to the group), there is no turning back. If one wishes to break rank, then that werewolf faces a single route of exit: death. The issue is, from the group's perspective, one of trust. A werewolf cannot go back to the world and tell others what it was he was protecting. Others will come and try to destroy the lodge's hard work. They will seek to do harm unto the Lady, and that would be a blasphemous crime. (It has certainly happened already — a few members have escaped and brought allies back to quell the madness of the Antarctic werewolves. Lucky for the lodge, the members were able to defeat such incursions into their territory.)

Initiation, too, is now a little more involved (and certainly more theatric). New Forsaken are lead to believe that they are still protecting the world from the slumbering entity (the opposite is true). Over the course of a few weeks, if the werewolf is deemed worthy by the Lady of the Lake, he is bound, gagged and beaten into bloody submission. Then he is taken from the archipelago and taken on the several days' journey to the ice above Lake Vostok. There he is dragged before the fossilized face, and made to swear his undying allegiance to protecting the awakening spirit. At this point, it is too late too turn around. If he gives his loyalty, then he is introduced to all the mysteries and benefits of this current incarnation of the lodge. If he denies the Lady, then he is given no second chance. The werewolves fall upon him, tearing the worthless wretch to shreds.



Camping out in the Antarctic wilderness is difficult even for the rugged Forsaken. Any exposed skin — even that which is covered in

fur — suffers a persistent two levels of lethal damage. This damage does not heal until the area can be covered or otherwise made warm for enough time required to heal (normally 15 minutes unless Essence is spent).

That said, the packs within the Lodge of the Lake do not camp out in the extreme environment often. They have various ways of protecting themselves from the cold. When traveling, they carry survival gear (granting +3 on any Survival roll necessary) such as thermal tents and portable heating devices. They also maintain a number of satellite locations that keep them relatively safe. Abandoned research stations, old monitoring posts, gutted fishing trawlers or oil rigs — all of these make good (if sometimes temporary) homes for the Forsaken of this lodge. Hunting is scarce: members must resort to hunting fat seals or large birds (such as the giant petrel) or harpooning whales. Though some werewolves enjoy hunting humans, as well

Prerequisites: Harmony 6 or below

While this is not universal, most Forsaken within the Lodge of the Lake either begin with the Vice of Pride, or develop it over time. Second most likely Vice is Envy, which is easily correlated with the nature of being overly self-confident, as the Lady demands.

Benefits: Ironically, the Lady of the Lake grants her children with social benefits: they can purchase Social Attributes at new dots x 4 and Social Skills at new dots x 2 instead of their normal experience point costs. The irony is that members exist in one of the most desolate, unpopulated places in the world. Any social wizardry purchased in this way can go toward dazzling the rare local researcher or one another, but otherwise the benefit goes largely unused. That said, the easily improved Attributes and Skills go a long way toward making a Forsaken *feel* powerful — they gifts her with stronger confidence, however artificially. The patroness also grants her children one free Gift from the Dominance list. This Gift must have the appropriate Renown to match the Gift taken (from either Honor or Purity). If for some reason the character already has all the Dominance Gifts, this freebie is lost.

LODGE OF THE LAKE RITE

THE SALON (•••)

The origins of this ritual lie with the Lady; before her, the lodge did not practice or even know of this rite. This ceremonial party is certainly an odd one — in it, the members convene at a single location (usually one of the overtaken research stations, some of which are quite comfortable) and hold a 24-hour celebration. In this celebration, the Lady demands that her children dress in their finest clothing (some have gone through the arduous process of obtaining nice clothes from Argentina or Australia, though many have only the parkas of dead scientists) and prepare the finest meals. The “finest meals” are rarely anything more than MREs (freeze-dried Meals Ready to Eat), though seals and researchers make for good meals now and again. The lodge members regale one another with boastful tales. They commit to games of competition, often social in origin though many certainly prefer tests of a more physical nature. They drink whatever alcohol is available — booze can be imported from the warmer climes or stolen from scientists (some in the lodge have actually taken to distilling their own “End of the World” vodka using leftover or half-destroyed research equipment). Some Salons involved organized hunts of humans or beasts (traitors may meet their end this way). Other Salons bring spirits across the Gauntlet and dominate them in the name of the Lady. Whatever the “events,” the Salon and its members must go the full 24-hour duration.

The part is little more than a celebration in the middle of frozen nowhere. Beasts dress up in finery, and act civilized (better than they perhaps are, given their potentially lowered Harmony scores). The Lady demands this. Her children are important — or, at least, *self*-important — and she certainly enjoys the irony of them acting as the paragons of Forsaken society when they are relegated to the bottom of the world unknowingly serving a Maeljin Lord of the Wound.

Cost: All participants, including the ritemaster, must spend one Essence to gain the benefits of this rite.

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Instant (only the ritemaster is required to make and succeed on the roll, performing the roll at the start of the Salon)





Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: All Salon participants lose the Essence spent, and also lose a point of Willpower

Failure: No Essence is lost, and the rite fails before it begins.

Success: The participants in the rite go the entire 24-hour duration. (The Storyteller may require a Stamina + Composure roll to remain awake and alert.) They may fill up their Willpower pool, and may also heal one aggravated level of damage. Also, for the next two weeks, each participant may choose one Attribute. Any rolls made using that Attribute during the following two weeks gain a +1 bonus. This signifies the participant's "pride" in that part of herself. Every participant may choose a different Attribute; they needn't all select the same one to receive this bonus.

Exceptional Success: The effects are the same as a normal success, except the participants may heal two aggravated levels of damage if they have been that badly injured.

and hope to take down the Bale Hounds one by one using the land to their advantage?

• **Breach:** Researchers breach the two and-a-half-mile thick ice above Lake Vostok, finally delving into the untouched waters of the lake. It has unexpected consequences. The temperature of Antarctica rises by a swift degrees — ice shelves collapse glaciers connected for millennia suddenly separate penguins and seals begin to perish. The breach also releases a flu-like disease that is carried back to the mainland which begins to spread quickly with the help of the Lady's mad spirits. The Shadow becomes direly unstable, as well: spirits cannibalize one another Wounds form in the once pure ice and holes leading to utter darkness appear and swallow several loci The lodge's true mistress is revealed and they learn that they are Bale Hounds serving Lamashtu. Some maintain their allegiance to her now that she is free and others seek to fight back against what they have become

LODGE OF THE LAKE STORY HOOKS

• **Fugitive:** The characters encounter a Forsaken who appears badly scarred and half insane After decoding his ramblings they discover that he is an escapee of the Lodge of the Lake. Having managed a painful getaway he remains on the run from a lodge hit squad who dares not let a pathetic and toothless traitor survive to tell tales The characters can either protect him where they are at or even ask that he take them to the bottom of the world to investigate his accusations for themselves An alternate story is that the characters play members of the lodge who seek to flee. They must not only escape the other Forsaken but navigate the hostile landscape and spiritcape of Antarctica

• **The Hunt:** The characters have ancestors or allies who once belonged to the Lodge of the Lake before it became corrupted Spirit envoys have told them what has become of the lodge since and so the characters go to hunt down those who have stolen and ruined this legacy. Do they join in the hopes of undermining it from the inside? Do they attack it full-on, hoping to have the element of surprise? Or do they establish their own territory away from prying eyes

FROSTBITE

Auspice: Irraka

Tribe: Hunters in Darkness

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/3), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 4 (5/6/6/5)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3 (2/3/1/3), Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics Computer Investigation 2, Medicine 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Running) 4, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Stealth (Shadows) 3, Survival (Cold) 4

Social Skills: Empathy Expression Intimidation Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Convincing) 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Fetish (Fireflash) 2, Fresh Start Iron Stamina

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Pride

Health: 9 (11/13/12/9)

Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8)

Defense: 3 (3/4/4/4)

Speed: 10 (11/14/17/15)

Renown: Cunning Glory Honor Purity

Gifts: (1) Call Water, Mask of Rage, Sense Weakness, Ward Versus Predators; (2) Hone Rage, Manipulate Earth, Slip Away, Ward Versus Humans; (3) Call Fire, Distractions

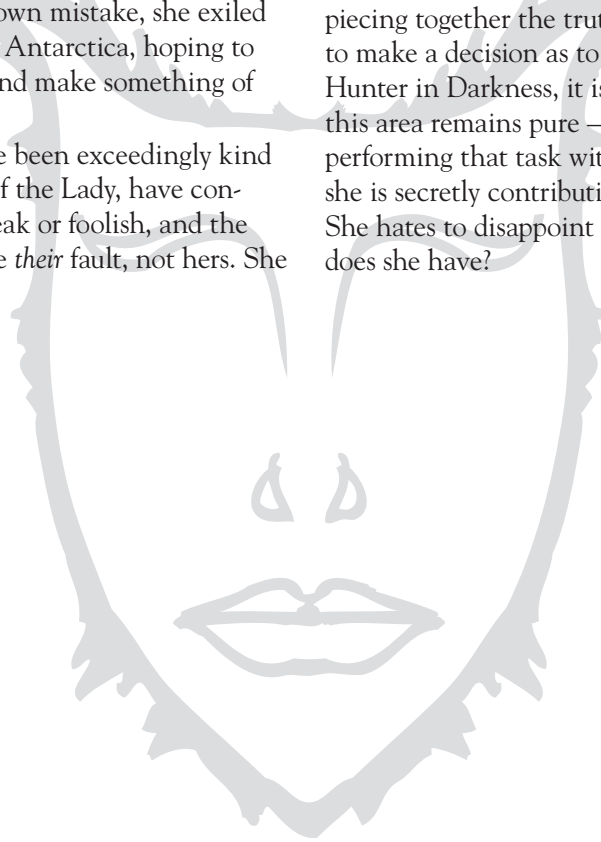
Rituals: 2; **Rites:** (1) Banish Human; (2) Banish Spirit

Frostbite came to Antarctica five years ago. Her pack — Maori, like her, from New Zealand — was killed by a mistake she made when she blindly led her mates into a trap set by a pack of Predator Kings. Not only were her packmates destroyed, but their territory (featuring a powerful locus) was also taken by the enemy. Sickened by her own mistake, she exiled herself to the icy nowhere of Antarctica, hoping to join the Lodge of the Lake and make something of herself once again.

The lodge members have been exceedingly kind to her. They, with the help of the Lady, have convinced her that she is not weak or foolish, and the deaths of her packmates were *their* fault, not hers. She

has since regained her self-confidence, and her new pack alpha, Rostislav, treats her like a queen among Forsaken.

But something is wrong. Her own pride only masks and *hides* the guilt she hoped had disappeared. Worse, she has seen things that do not sit well with her. She has dreamt of Rostislav feasting on the entrails of Russian researchers, his mouth full of blood and meat. The Lady, too, has become more aggressive of late — the face has spoken more than it ever has, and in the dark slits of the fossil's eyes, Frostbite sometimes sees mad embers burning. Her heart tells her that something terrible is amiss, and her mind is piecing together the truth. Soon, Frostbite will have to make a decision as to what she wants to do. As a Hunter in Darkness, it is her job to make sure that this area remains pure — once, she thought she was performing that task with pride. Now she wonders if she is secretly contributing to the area's instability. She hates to disappoint Rostislav, but what choice does she have?





LODGE OF THE LOST

BECOMING LOST (THE FIRST TIME)

Corraggio Evangelista smelled the omens of war in the air, approaching the continent like bloated clouds. He had little use for the coming blood that he sensed; battle was senseless if it wasn't in person, and the coming conflict was to be fought with guns and gas.

He traveled abroad, steeping himself in the Arabic culture he knew of his distant Spanish heritage, visiting country after country. There, though the language was different, the people were just as unhappy, and the stars spoke of unrest.

As the war raged back in the land of his birth and the Arab Revolt plunged another into home into conflict, Corraggio could not keep his deep-seated unrest in check any longer. He left the physical world for the next, looking for the next great battle to claim him.

Within the Hisil, he took on grander and grander foes, his fangs sharper than his eyes intended; Corraggio became frustrated as the forces of the Shadow grew cowardly, hiding from even his best means of scrying. Finally, as he considered the ultimate act of defiance against a world gone made by trying to take his own life more directly, the light in the spirit world grew brighter. The sand beneath his feet gave rise to a mountain, and the mountain took form into a giant sphinx.

"Who was wandered deep and far afield?" the booming voice asked, shaking specs of sand from its massive form.

"My name is as insignificant as the sand upon which I walk, for names are for the living; I wish nothing else for this life but to die."

"Ah, the sand upon which you walk is more significant than you," said the mighty Sphinx, "since it has existed before you, and it shall be here long after you are gone. But if you are so eager to join them as dust, might I offer an alternative? Serve me, and I shall guarantee that you — and all those who join you — shall serve the greater good, but you will have no future."

Beyond the undeniable fact that Corraggio accepted, little is known about exactly what happened thereafter. Before the new moon became full again, the pack Cor-

raggio formed saw his demise at the hands of the Great Darkness.

The Lodge of the Lost Cause was founded during the first decades of the 20th century, when nations and nationalists alike were still trying to envision a greater world. This era caused great consternation for many, especially the Uratha; the advances in technology, the speed of urban growth and questions of tomorrow led scores down paths plagued with dark, nihilistic thoughts.

The Lost Cause was one popular answer for werewolves who wished a (somewhat) acceptable suicidal outlet. For those who joined, the Sphinx promised a noble cause — namely, the opportunity to fight what the Sphinx called the Great Darkness. In return, he offered the prospect of a glorious death fighting that foe. In particular, members of the Lost Cause were confident of one thing: there would come a final battle with the Great Darkness, and the battle would annihilate all who joined that fight. All divination and fate-foretelling methods were clear on this fact; what remained in question was whether or not the Great Darkness could be defeated as well. Would the final battle against their foe be a martyr's victory or a tragic defeat?

Who, exactly, the Great Darkness is — or, probably more correctly, *was* — remains unknown. Over the nearly a century the lodge has been in existence, the Sphinx has offered few details. While similar to most negative spirits the werewolves defend the physical world from, the Sphinx was a little different. First, it seemed to have a great wellspring of negative energy; the Sphinx didn't attack or devour other spirits so much as infuse them with Essence aligned with its own alien energies, corrupting them. In a curious turn, this corruption didn't cause affected spirits to be violent, but rather overcame them with an all-encompassing melancholy; peaceful spirits would simply refuse to consume Essence, wasting away to nothingness, while more active ones would burn off their forms doing what their Essence compelled them, only without focus or form. Only the most violent spirits would lash out around them like

rabid animals, albeit with much less focus than their natural forms; these corrupted spirits flailed across the *Hisil* until destroyed by other spirits or by the Uratha. Fortunately, unlike rabid beasts, the spirits weren't infectious themselves, but one minor agent of the Great Darkness could still cause great havoc until put down by the Lost Cause.

As foretold by prophecy, powerful minions of the Great Darkness had twice before arisen from the uncharted realms of the *Hisil*, causing massive devastation. The first of these, named Sebeu, arose in the deserts of the United States in 1945. Two stories tall and moving with the speed of a tidal wave, Sebeu lashed out with serpentine arms at all who approached it. Two-thirds of the Uratha who encountered the creature that day fell in their successful efforts to destroy it — a full third of the entirety of the Lost Cause lodge gave their lives that day, and recovery from the attack took years.

But recovery did take place, in the physical and spirit worlds and among the ranks of the Lost Cause. After that event, as tales of the deed spread, the Lost Cause had a mild swelling in its ranks. Ironically, for the first time members began joining not because of a suicidal desire, but because of a desire to protect Creation.

Some Cahalith felt that their patron Sphinx seemed mildly surprised at their victory, but the spirit did not treat its lodge any differently; expressing neither pride at their victory nor sorrow at those who fell, the Sphinx merely stated a matter-of-fact satisfaction at the defeat of the Great Darkness' minions. However, the spirit warned, as ever, of the presence of coming threats and of the great final confrontation with the Great Darkness, when all would surely die.

The second of the Great Darkness' minions surfaced in the Siberian tundra of the Soviet Union; no one knows when the minion emerged, but its activities were brought to the attention of the lodge in February of 1962, and the Lost Cause rallied what members it could. Even larger than the first minion of the Great Darkness, this new threat stood 30 feet tall; appearing as a squat stone serpent, the entity the spirits called "Nalak" loomed 100 feet long and exuded a constant aura of corruption as it lumbered and consumed those who got too close. Only the relatively barren nature of the Siberian landscape kept that battle from exacting a greater toll, both in damage in the spirit world and on the lives of its members, although it is said still that less than one in 10 who joined the battle survived and less than a third of the lodge remained alive. Again, the Sphinx

seemed pleased but still warned of the coming demise of them all.

In the aftermath of that battle, one of the new members brought in to replenish the lodge's ranks quickly became more important than anyone could have thought. Just as many before her, Kate "Majestic" Carson had joined the lodge hoping for a glorious escape from this life. However, within a decade of her membership, she discovered something about herself: she didn't want to die, she wanted to *win*. To that end, she and her pack began questing constantly; rather than being reactive to the Great Darkness' machinations, she wanted to hunt it down and kill it, forever.

In her pack's research, the packmembers discovered what seemed to be a weakness. The Great Darkness seemed to be related, at least tangentially, to the Egyptian god Apep. The motivations and methods seemed the same, as did the nature of its allies. Armed with this knowledge, Kate Carson swelled the lodge's numbers; werewolves were more willing to join if they knew there was a definite plan to end the threat of the Great Darkness, even if the plan did mean dying. Infuriatingly, the lodge's totem offered no confirmation or denial as to this theory; instead, the Sphinx merely kept reasserting that the end was coming soon.

Then, in May of 1998, the final battle seemingly happened. In the Chaghai hills of Baluchistan, the skies flickered bright, then drew black in the *Hisil*. The final battle with the Great Darkness came, in the form of a dragon that blotted the sky. Fortunately, because of Kate's machinations, the lodge's oracles suspected the day was coming and had amassed the entirety of the lodge, along with other allies.

The battle was long and hard, and the dwindling numbers of surviving Uratha tracked their damaged quarry back into the *Hisil* as it fled. Kate had devised a means of defeating the Great Darkness, using the four elements as a ban. Over the course of the conflict, she spat on the Great Darkness, set it on fire, wounded it with an earth-grown spear and — unbeknownst to her packmates — breathed her dying breath upon it.

Cahalith still debate what effect her efforts had, but, in the end, the impossible happened: the Lost Cause won. Despite incredible losses — including the demise of all non-lodge allies — the lodge members didn't *all* die, as had been foretold for almost a century. In fact, there were 13 members of the lodge left.



However, when they summoned their totem, they discovered their second impossibility in as many days: according to the Sphinx, they had successfully defeated the Great Darkness and the remaining members of the Lost Cause *were* dead — they just didn't know it. Shortly thereafter, one of the Uratha used his Gifts to confirm that something unusual had happened: all efforts to foretell the future of the members of the lodge automatically failed. It was as if they had no future.

Picking up the pieces, the members of the lodge decided to continue on, even though — as best they could determine — the original reason for the lodge's existence had died along with the Great Darkness. With the joining of their first new member, they discovered something unusual: the seeming severing of divinatory methods extended to new members as well.

Renaming themselves the Lodge of the Lost — or, more succinctly, “the Lost” — this lodge has found itself at something of a crossroads. Those who join the Lost still tend to be those who wish to be outside the mainstream of Uratha society. However, now a number of those who join aren't suicidal, but rather looking to escape from the demons of their own future; many new members have had dark and foreboding omens plague them, and they see the divinatory severing that the lodge offers as being their one hope for salvation. Because it's been less than a decade since the final battle with the Great Darkness, it's too early to tell if this method is effective; the best that scholars can note is the method is not *ineffective*, in the sense that none of the new members have succumbed to their previous dark fates yet.

The rest that are drawn to joining the redefined lodge are “covert ops”-type werewolves, who see the protection from scrying and other divinations to be a real advantage in being unseen and unknowable. Beyond these two groups, the lodge is still very much in the process of redefining itself. For half a decade, some of the Lost members continued their vigilance in searching for signs and clues of deeds by the Great Darkness, but that has tapered off in recent years since no evidence of an active presence (although some signs of previously blighted spirit landscapes have been found); a few members continue their efforts today, but it is unknown how long they will continue — as others of the Lost call it — their “fool's errand.” Still, Uratha legend tells of many who were called fools that were proven to be correct — posthumously.

The Lost Cause were most active in the *Hisil*, although in the physical worlds they preferred southern Europe and northern Africa; many of the Sphinx's missions kept them in that area, and the region seemed to attract an unusual amount of interference from the Great Darkness. The Lost has kept similar territories, although that is starting to expand as the lodge struggles to redefine itself.

PATRON SPIRIT

The guiding force behind the Lodge of the Lost Cause was the Sphinx. The Sphinx still seems to be the totem of the Lodge of the Lost, although the spirit doesn't admit this because it doesn't acknowledge the members of the lodge as being alive. All conversations with the totem are steeped in qualifiers and reminders that things are not what they seem: “Were one of my lodge to have done such a deed, I might reward them such...” or “If my lodge had not been killed a decade ago, I would have been most pleased if the following mission were completed.” Many new members of the Lost find their treatment as non-entities infuriating, but those of the old guard take some comfort in the enigmatic nature of the spirit, serving as a constant reminder that they are all living on borrowed time.

BECOMING LOST

Prior to the final battle, prospective members of the Lost Cause needed (ironically) to die — at least in a metaphorical sense. Upon agreeing to join the lodge, and finding a member of the lodge willing to sponsor the Uratha, the would-be member was instructed to hunt an animal she desired, alone or with a pack. Any other Lost members who wished to witness or help may have done so.

The sponsoring member then asked the prospective member if she wished to die in greater glory while serving the lodge. Assuming she answered in the affirmative, the sponsor then asked, “How?” The candidate is then expected to describe how she would wish to die. As the neophyte described her ideal death, the sponsor dipped his fingers in the blood of the animal and mimicked the wounds on the speaker's body in correlation to the injuries she described. For example, she might have said, “As I give my last breath fighting the foes of the lodge, I would have my throat clawed by the evil we fought,” to which the sponsor would have smeared the person's neck with the blood. Then, with the “wounds” still fresh and glistening, the sponsor summoned the Sphinx, who welcomed the new member.

After the final battle, the Lodge of the Lost has maintained the same ritual, although there are three differences. First, new members — not necessarily dedicated to fighting the Great Darkness — tend to have less defined ideas of how they wish to die. Second, the blood used to paint the person's faux injuries doesn't seem to linger, disappearing upon touching the candidate. The symbolism and meaning of this is debated among the Ithaeur, although at the very least it's a curious occurrence. Finally, when the Sphinx is summoned, he speaks circuitously about the candidate: "Were my lodge still alive, I would have proudly accepted this Uratha as a member, as of this very moment." After the Sphinx finishes speaking, the werewolf's ties to his "future" are severed, and the candidate is now fully one of the Lost.

The Lodge of the Lost Cause was open to any who wanted to give their lives, although the bulk of their number were Blood Talons and, to a lesser degree, Hunters in Darkness; the desire to combat a foe with so much suicidal vigor is unknown to many members of other tribes. Since new members require sponsorship by an existing member, the new incarnation of the lodge has a similar proportion of those two tribes as before; however, some new blood is starting to join, and the future character of the Lost is in doubt.

Prerequisites: None

Benefits: All attempts at divining, prophesizing, scrying or discerning the future truth of a member of the Lodge of the Lost — regardless of origin — result in the roll automatically failing; should a dramatic failure on this attempt be rolled, all disadvantageous effects of that dramatic failure also happen *except* for any that report false or misleading information. The only outcome of any attempts at reading the future of a Lost one is the spiritual equivalent of, "Sorry; this person isn't alive anymore." (Should a spirit be presented with incontrovertible proof of the person's existence — such as the physical presence of the person — the spirit will merely mutter something similar to "Curious..." and stick to the previous answer.)

The Uratha likewise cannot access or use any such abilities himself or participate in any rites that draw upon these powers, even on others, although merely being in the presence of another's divination attempt won't cause a failure. Furthermore, any divinations of others that would include the Lost member have that aspect of the omen omitted or "re-written." (For example, if a member of the Lost had been previously divined to sire a mighty child with a mortal woman before joining, then a divination on

the woman after the Uratha became a member of the lodge would not reveal the child, or any aspect of the werewolf in her life. This doesn't mean the werewolf *couldn't* have a child with the woman; it just means that the event couldn't be foretold one way or the other.)

This aspect of the Lost one's membership is permanent; even if a person leaves or is expelled from the lodge for some reason, she will still be disconnected from divination efforts. It is literally as if all divinatory lines that connect that person with reality have been severed; to the best of anyone's knowledge, there is no way to "reattach" those connections.

LODGE OF THE LOST GIFTS

Members of the Lost Cause had Gifts that allowed them to find aspects of the Great Darkness, thwart it and undo the damage caused. However, the current membership of the Lost have little interest in learning these Gifts, since — as best anyone can determine — the Great Darkness has been defeated.

LODGE OF THE LOST RITE

Although many former Lost Cause rites and Gifts don't have any direct application for the Lost, a few are useful enough to still be used by the lodge's new incarnation.

RITE OF THE ESSENCE FENCE (....)

The spirit world is a constant flow of essence, with the universe's energy flowing in many ways among spirits and Uratha alike. The Great Darkness perverted that natural order, injecting the Darkness' own corruptive Essence into spirits and turning them over to its cause. The Rite of the Essence Fence was devised as a means of combating that threat, although the ritual has found other use. When complete, the Rite of the Essence Fence keeps Essence from being transferred into something by any means.

Performing the Rite: The ritualist walks the perimeter around the area he wishes to protect; his footprints are infused with the Essence he spends to initiate the rite. The ritualist must remain in motion for an entire hour; he can retrace his steps, but for the rite to be successful, he must complete the perimeter at least once. As such, the maximum area possibly affected is limited by the ritualist's own mobility.

At the completion of the circuit, the ritemaster declares the length of time the fence is to remain erect, with no minimum duration and up to a maximum length of one lunar month. He also declares whether the fence will be or invisible or visible in the





Hisil; this decision will determine whether the glowing footprints fade away or remain visible.

Cost: 2 Essence

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Extended (15 successes required; each attempt takes 10 minutes, and no more than six attempts can be made in the hour-long ritual)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: All successes are lost, as are the points of Essence spent. The ritemaster may attempt again on the next night.

Failure: No successes are gained.

Success: Successes are gained toward the total. If the total reaches 15+ successes, the fence is successfully raised. All Essence bestowment within the perimeter is impossible. Essence can still be spent (presuming its “burned”), but it cannot be given, traded or taken by another. This rite keeps loci from being tapped for their Essence, Essence from being given (or taken) from spirits and so on.

The Essence Fence remains standing for the duration the ritemaster declared; he cannot choose to end it prior to that time, or have any option to ignore its restrictions. Therefore, the ritualist needs to be careful, since he can easily find himself trapped by the same inability to tap Essence as his foes.

Given how unbalancing this rite is to the natural order, most builders of the Essence Fence usually only do so for a week at most, and then only if there is a compelling reason.

Exceptional Success: No additional effects beyond the normal results for a successful rite.

LODGE OF THE LOST STORY HOOKS

• **The Future Manifest:** A pack led by a charismatic alpha claims to be able to do the impossible: the packmembers can actually read the futures of the Lost. Unfortunately, the packmembers don't like what they see. According to the Cahalith, the Great Darkness has utterly taken over the lodge, lurking within the souls of the surviving members and using the recruitment of new Uratha to incubate and grow strong. The packmembers' findings can't be collaborated, but they are renowned enough to be not entirely dis-trusted — especially because many of their hunts have taken them deep into the *Hisil* where they have learned many secrets. Sides are being chosen and tensions mount es-

pecially among some within the Lost themselves, who are questioning the unknowing taint that may be lurking in their souls. Are the packmembers telling the truth — are they lying for some reason or is some outside party unfolding an elaborate ruse — and if so, to what end?

• **Walls Mean War:** Someone has used the Rite of the Essential Fence (or a similar effect) within the Uratha's territory, keeping them from accessing their Essence. Investigation by outsiders will reveal that the Lodge of the Lost has this rite, making the Lost the first suspects. Lost members themselves may be curious if one of their own has declared open hostilities against a pack of werewolves. Regardless of who is responsible, all sides would be dangerously on edge until the matter was resolved.

• **Finding a Path:** The Lodge of the Lost is viewed by many — from both without and within — as being listless and without a goal. If a good enough purpose could present itself (either another great threat or a compelling use for their undetectable nature), they could find themselves under pressure to repurpose themselves toward a new goal. Of course, the dangers of dictating a new course are doubly dangerous when no means of divination will determine if you're on the right path...

JAKE “TRUE WEST” WESTRIDGE

Auspice: Irraka

Tribe: Hunters in Darkness

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Medicine 1, Occult 2, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Larceny 3, Stealth (Moving in Woods) 3, Survival (Navigation) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize (Boozing) 2, Subterfuge (Spotting Lies, Lying) 3

Merits: Direction Sense 1, Natural Immunity 1, Toxin Resistance 2, Fresh Start 1, Danger Sense 2

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Sloth

Health: 7 (9/11/10/7)

Initiative: 5 (5/6/7/7)

Defense: 3 (all forms)

Speed: 10 (11/14/17/15)

Renown: Purity Glory Cunning

Gifts: (1) Feet of Mist, Sense Weakness, Wolf-Blood's Lure; (2) Slip Away, (3) Distractions

Born in 1977 as Jacob Westridge IV, Jake left home at 16, when his drunken abusive father pushed his luck too far and Jake pushed him down the stairs. His tough demeanor and scruffy looks, coupled with his natural carousing ways, enabled him to bum around London as an underage drunk for a few years. When the First Change came at 19, he was actually delighted; he saw it as a perfect excuse to wallow in the burning anger he'd been harboring for years.

Surprising the pack that had instructed him initially, he pledged his allegiance to the Hunters in Darkness. In addition to having a passing interest in the natural world, he saw the Hunters' dedication to the wilds as being the perfect middle finger to his wealthy industrialist father. Unfortunately for Jake, the Hunters were demanding; at his core, Jake was a slacker, and he found it hard to harness his angry inclinations toward any long-term goal.

However, Jake still upheld the Oath on the principle that he gave his word, and became useful as a rarity: a Hunter who was comfortable enough in the cities and who thrived in the areas where humanity and the wilderness collided. The more

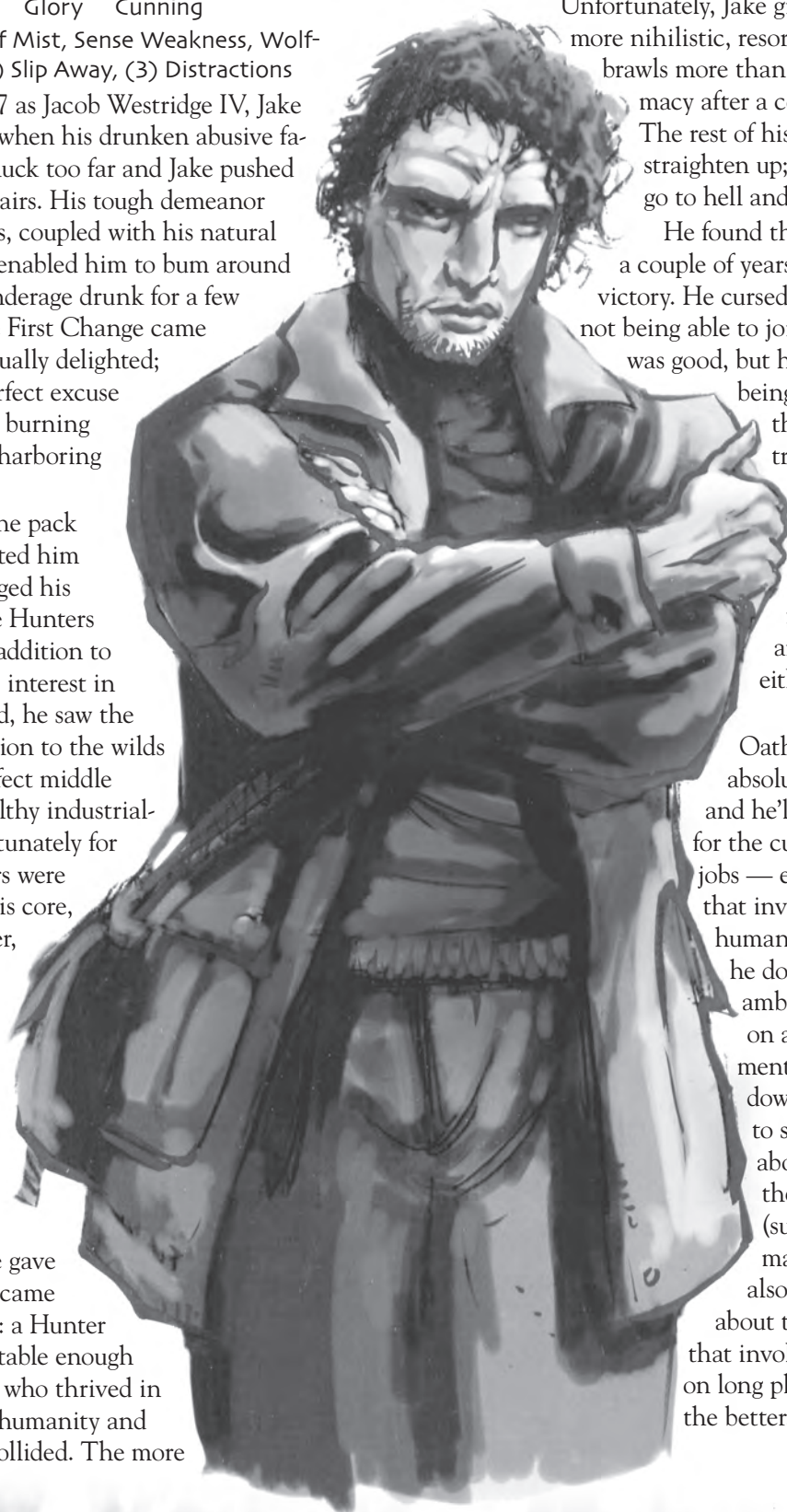
renowned of the Hunters claimed it was just because it was an excuse to drink around a campfire, but regardless of his intentions there was no disputing his results: Jake was exceptional at spreading misinformation, rumors, tall tales and general flimflam to keep the humans away from the pristine areas of the wilds.

Unfortunately, Jake grew more and more nihilistic, resorting to intoxicated brawls more than campfire diplomacy after a couple of years.

The rest of his pack told him to straighten up; Jake told them to go to hell and took off.

He found the Lodge of the Lost a couple of years after their great victory. He cursed his misfortune in not being able to join when the dying was good, but he liked the idea of being a part of a lodge that didn't have a true purpose; the "no future" aspect was a bonus. While not a force for ill, Jake is certainly not a shining star among the Lost, either.

He'll uphold the Oath so long as it's absolutely convenient, and he'll usually volunteer for the cushier-sounding jobs — especially those that involve chatting up humans — but otherwise he doesn't have a lot of ambition. He's currently on a long-term assignment trying to track down other Uratha to see if they know about any aspects of the Great Darkness (such as post-1998 manifestations) and also to spread the word about the Lost. And if that involves a lot of sleeping on long plane trips, so much the better.





LODGE OF THE MODERNIST

DEFINING THE MODERNISTS

Before he volunteered to be a soldier for his country, Sir Reginald Arcbright lived a dual existence, one as a respected and decorated professor in hallowed human halls and another as a contemplative warrior between two worlds. After the Great War had crippled his mortal friends and destroyed all the lands he called beloved in the time before madness, he searched the world, hoping to find the word that described what was eating at his soul. Others accompanied him, and they became a pack.

In the libraries of the University of Toulouse — a collection of books that almost predate the English language — they combed through every book; as word after word in hundreds of languages poured under his fingers and across his eyes, Arcbright felt he was close to the truth. Finishing the last tome, he realized the book he wanted was missing. In sullen depression, he left his friends and wandered the courtyard of the library; in that quiet and contemplative place, he sensed the wall between worlds was weak, so he stepped into the spirit realm.

There, waiting, was a stone tablet, which was also an ancient scroll, and also an illuminated hardcover, and also a yellowed paperback and also an untold number of other things: an odd, hand-sized silver disc, a square chip of notched onyx, a flexible white sheet of dancing black and more. The all-book settled on a form: bound, thick pages rich with the scent of metal type and acrid ink.

Arcbright's eyes could barely look upon the work, and he addressed the spirit. "Who are you?" he asked. "Are you the book I seek?"

"I am called Alephebeth," the spirit replied, "for that is the only name I have surviving." The voice sounded of infinite rustling pages flying by. "I am the first written work and I will be the last one. If you seek that which has been written, I am that which you seek."

The professor described what he sought — to know the word for the feeling in his heart. Alephebeth flicked its pages, as if breathing in contemplation. "Why is the word so important to you?"

"Because I believe I cannot fully understand and defeat my woe unless I know what to call it. Because I believe a description is not the thing itself, but the word

denotes power." A moment passed between the two, the only sound a single page rolling across the spirit. "Because I believe in the power of words."

Alephebeth rifled itself in a flurry of pages, sounding like an elderly cat's purr. "I will tell you what you wish to know, but if I do, I would request your assistance for the day." The former soldier nodded his assent. "You are feeling hrudli, which translates as 'an overwhelming hatred of that which you are most proud.' The word died ages ago, and with it the concept almost went with it."

"Do I feel this toward my country? Myself? Or something else?"

The all-book flipped a single leaf — the two-page spread he revealed was utterly blank. "Having the words does not mean having the answers," the tome replied. "As I will teach you in the coming day."

That day turned into a week, and a month, and a year and continues today.

In the prologue to *El otro, el mismo*, Jorge Luis Borges wrote, "It is often forgotten that [dictionaries] are artificial repositories, put together well after the languages they define. The roots of language are irrational and of a magical nature." Arguably, no one in Creation understands this more than the members of the Lodge of the Modernist, who have dedicated themselves to understanding the link between words and the power.

The Modernists are not merely linguists and keepers of words (although some of them do this extensively). Rather, they are most concerned with the affect of words on worlds — both the physical and the spirit world. For example, "single-minded" and "bull-headed" both have the same meaning, but the connotations are entirely different.

These are not mere academic distinctions. The words people use and the implications behind them can have a real effect on the world of spirits. For example, up until a century ago, the word "duty" had a relatively positive meaning, merely signifying the world's place and expectations for the individual; however, in recent decades "duty" has taken on a more dour and obligatory tone, with most people feeling greater resentment at "duties" they are expected to

uphold. This shift in meaning has not gone unnoticed in the spirit world, where the Uratha have a duty to uphold the Oath; some spirits have argued that recent generations of Uratha have taken on the obligations of their ancestral duties much more reluctantly than times past. In a similar way, the lessened emotions that most in society feel about the word “suicide” (in terms of impact on the immortal soul and guilt inflicted on friends and family) means that most occurrences of self-termination result in fewer pain- and anguish-spirits than centuries ago; of course, suicides are also more common than they were in ages past, so the net result of spiritual effect might be roughly the same.

Even within the spirit world, words must be chosen with care and concern. Those who refer to the spirits they control as “minions” will have a very different relationship with them than those who use the word “allies”; this isn’t merely because the mindset of the individual is different, but because the Essence used to cement those bonds is differently flavored by the use of different words.

The Modernists are also keenly interested in all Abilities that center on the knowledge and harnessing of words, such as the Bone Shadow Gift Word of Quiet or the Chain-Breaker Merit from the Lodge of Ashes (see **Lodges: The Faithful**). Although the Modernists do not have any special affinity for acquiring these Abilities, the Modernists nevertheless use the mere existence of these Abilities as proof of the power of language.

Another piece of evidence the Modernists point to is humanity’s unique ability to harness, create and destroy words, which sets humans apart from all other creatures. This power over language gives the humans their own form of control over the spirit world, albeit a very subtle and long-term one. One theory popular with the Lodge of the Modernist as to why humans don’t have spiritual counterparts in the *Hisil* is that humans’ ability to give names sets them apart as outsiders and observers. Regardless of the language, the spirits of foxes, tortoises and even wolves are called by names born of human tongue; a spirit human might be able to name spirits directly, permanently changing their Essence.

One point of great debate within the Modernists is the role of *Uremehir* — First Tongue. While many within the lodge study and ponder that ancient language, others still debate whether it is a language at all, as we understand it. As one Modernist irreverently put it, “Look, intrinsic to all living languages are the ability to evolve and change as new ideas are created and transform. I mean, if I want to bum

a cigarette off the Pope, I can ask him for a *fistula nicotiana* and he’ll know what I mean. What does it say when Latin — a language that has been dead for damn-near a half millennium — is more vibrant than *Uremehir*?” Also of deep interest to members of the lodge is the fact that *hrudli* — the word that, in essence, formed the Modernists — has no corresponding evolutionary link to First Tongue, despite decades of effort and questing to find such a connection. The notion that a word or concept can exist outside the bounds of the cosmos’ primal tongue is of both great interest and concern to the lodge.

Although small in number — they coyly refer to themselves as “more than one digit but less than three” — the Modernists are considered the definitive source on their domain. Of course, this domain is considered useless by many, and to others, the Modernists are something of a joke because of their dedication to something so intangible. As one Uratha quip goes, “I’d call the Modernists ‘navel-gazers,’ if only I knew for certain what ‘navel’ meant or what it truly is to gaze.” Still, the members of the lodge are quick to remind other Uratha that they are werewolves, and still more than willing to engage in battle; the phrase “those are fighting words” rings true to the ears of many Modernists, as is the notion of killing or dying for a word.

While the Modernists can be found around the world, they have made Toulouse, France, their spiritual (if not permanent) home in honor of their birthright, and are on good relations with the packs that count that city as their territory.

Above all, the Modernists are united in believing that words themselves have power, and that harnessing the power of the right words can change the world. As one Modernist Cahalith put it, to the unease of many, “We are only Forsaken because there is a word that means such.”

PATRON SPIRIT

The muse of the Modernists is Alephebeth, which claims to be all books and all possible books — or, more correctly, all written materials, regardless of medium.

While having access to such a powerful resource might seem to place infinite knowledge in the hands of the Modernists, in fact it does no such thing. Since Alephebeth is all books (including all potential books), it’s almost impossible to get anything true or factual out of the spirit; if 100 werewolves were to request a recounting of the true history of the fall of Father Wolf, they would likely get 101 different tales (including one that was entirely blank). Although Alphebeth prefers its charges to do research themselves, the spirit has





nevertheless occasionally provided factual information from time to time (or what seems to be factual); still, the more cynical-minded Modernists view these rare instances as more an attempt of Alephebeth to further its own inscrutable goals.

The realization of the unverifiability of the material Alephebeth presents has led some to question the word — *hrudli* — given by Alephebeth at the beginning. After all, could not the all-book have presented some utterly fictitious word to Sir Arcbright? The general consensus is that Alephebeth wouldn't deceive the lodge (or would-be lodge, at that point) on something so crucial. However, despite the use of *hrudli* among some Uratha circles to represent the feeling many long-fighting werewolves feel toward themselves, all efforts to provide independent verification of the word or its origins have come to naught. While finding some collaboration — on Earth or within the spirit world — is a long-standing goal of the lodge, some fear that evidence of deceit on Alephebeth's could tear the Modernists apart. Of course, more thoughtful Modernists go so far as to say that it doesn't matter if the word is true or not; the mere act of using the word has given it the meaning intended, making it as real a word as any.

DEFINING A MODERNIST

While most Modernists are Bone Shadows, this isn't a requirement; although most Iron Masters eschew the touchy-feely nature of the lodge's studies, some of that tribe possess a more spiritual bent that blends well with their desire to focus more on humanity's accomplishments. The other formal tribes don't see much point in the Modernists, although the offer of membership into the lodge would be open to those who were so inclined. Among the auspices, Cahalith and Ithaeur are most numerous.

The first stage of joining the lodge is relatively straightforward: you need to ask an existing member. After a brief initial query to ensure the candidate is serious, that Modernist will gather at least two other members, although five or even seven might be called if they are available; odd numbers are generally preferred, so that tie votes of worthiness are less likely. The committee will then debate with the would-be member at length about practically everything: why he wishes to be a member, what he thinks being a member is, what word means the most to that person, what the person feels is the role of language in the world and so on. There are no right or wrong answers, but candidates must have a keen understanding as to why they are interested in dedicating themselves to an understanding of the power of language.

Of particular interest during this time is the candidate's reaction to the tale of the lodge's formation. For example, how does the candidate feel about the word *hrudli*? Are there any loopholes or problems with the story that the candidate can perceive? (One of the signs of a very promising candidate is the understanding that, when Sir Arclight agrees to serve Alephebeth for the day, the word "day" isn't defined very vigorously; for example, Venus has a day that is almost two-thirds of an Earth year, and "the day" could also mean the hours of non-darkness — in fact, by agreeing to serve the spirit for the day, he could well have meant every daylight hour for the rest of his life!

This discussion can last anywhere from an hour to a day; the discussion can be formal or informal (or have periods of both), depending on the wishes of the committee. After this time, the committee convenes and, assuming they find the candidate worthy of continued consideration, set upon him a task related to the word. For example, "Bring back insight as to what 'savage' means," "Protect someone defending a word" or "Discover a spirit that has been changed by language." The werewolf has one lunar cycle to complete the challenge; the success or failure of this act is determined by the committee who interviewed the candidate in the first place.

Finally, the werewolf is presented privately to Alephebeth. There, alone, the all-book presents the Uratha with a noun (such as "destiny" or "fire"). The significance of this word is unclear; it's understood that the word is special, although if it has any special powers beyond being a token from Alephebeth, the rank-and-file members of the lodge aren't aware of it. Regardless, Alephebeth has made clear that this word is unique to that Uratha and should be treated sacredly and with utmost secrecy; if anyone ever verifiably learns what the word is for a werewolf, that member is immediately banished from the lodge.

Prerequisites: Academics ●●● or Occult ●●●

Benefits: Modernists become curiously attuned to any words around them. Thus, presuming they know the language involved, they gain a +3 bonus to all checks involving the understanding or relationship of words to a greater picture, such as solving enigmas that are word-related, understanding that a spirit's unwillingness to say certain words has significance or realizing that a leader's use of certain words is to appease or provoke segments of his power base.

There are rumors of an inner circle within the Modernists who have somehow tapped the power of their words beyond that which they can normally learn via Gifts and Rites. The nature of these rumored abilities (should they exist) is unknown;

perhaps someone who has “fire” knows the location of all fires within his territory, or someone who has “destiny” knows whenever that word is uttered.

Actual evidence of this power is almost nonexistent. However, this doesn't stop the speculation of many Modernists, who feel that there must be some more grandiose reason for the curious bestowal of words from Alephebeth.

LODGE OF THE MODERNIST RITE

POWER IN WORDS (....)

Uratha in the Lodge of Words know the power of the root of language, and can focus the richness and diversity of words themselves to a greater purpose. Therefore, Power in Words remains one of the Modernists' most powerful tools, not because of the rite's raw might but because of its seemingly infinite versatility in a myriad of situations (just as language itself, the Modernists argue).

Performing the Rite: To perform this rite, the ritualist pricks his finger and writes a single verb on a piece of parchment, paper or something similar, and then swallows that piece of paper — in essence, making the word “part” of him. During this time, the ritualist also repeats that word over and over in his mind (and aloud, if he wishes), making it a nonstop mantra. Since speed can often be of the essence when forming this rite, many Modernists who make frequent use of Power in Words will keep their thumbnail pointed and sharpened, so they can prick their index finger at will.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The rite fails, and the Essence point spent is lost. This rite cannot be used again for one lunar cycle.

Failure: The rite fails, and the Essence point spent is lost.

Success: By invoking this rite, the Uratha declares a concept using a single verb (such as “attack” or “research”). For the duration of the scene, the werewolf invokes the power behind that word, channeling energy off it and related verbs by saying them aloud. Each verb or verb phrase so invoked gives a bonus to one action; this bonus depends on the relationship between the original word and the new one.

+3 Direct synonym (the relationship between “hit” and “punch”)

Closely related (the relationship between “attack” and “kick”)

Tangentially related (the relationship between “kick” and “punch”)

Using words that are completely unrelated (such as the relationship between “toss” and “punch”) or not verbs (“aggression”) will not bestow any bonus. Each word can only be used once with an activation of the rite. Verb phrases can be used, provided none of the words have been used previously for the activation of the rite (for example, “sucker-punch” could be a closely related synonym to “attack,” but the Uratha could not later on use “punch” or “sucker-hit”). The verb used to activate Power in Words is merely a reference point and does not provide any bonus.

For example, Slade Names-the-Darkness is looking for clues at a crime scene and he invokes Power in Words, declaring “investigate.” Each Investigation check takes 10 minutes, and Slade will be spending one hour searching the crime scene (six rolls). Slade utters “search” as the first synonym; the Storyteller rules this is a direct synonym and grants a +3 bonus to that check. Ten minutes later, Slade says, “seek”; this grants a +3 bonus to that check. For the four remaining checks Slade uses “look,” “comb,” “peer” and “sift,” granting +3, +1, +2 and +0 to the remaining rolls.

Generally, only words in the Uratha's birth language can be used; this rite relies on the subject's true understanding of the word, and merely reading out of a Spanish-English dictionary isn't enough to invoke the energies of words. However, if the user of this rite has at least two dots in the Language Merit, then the Uratha knows one closely related (+2) synonym and one tangentially related (+1) synonym; at three dots in a Language, the Uratha knows one tangentially related (+1), one closely related (+2) and one direct synonym (+3).

Although invoked words don't need to be shouted, they do need to be said at a conversational level, and the Uratha must be able to speak to utilize this rite. Only one version of this rite may be active for a werewolf during a scene.

Exceptional Success: The rite lasts the duration of the scene or until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever is longer.

LODGE OF THE MODERNIST STORY HOOKS

- **The Right Word Kills:** In a small town an year old girl seems to have learned discovered or invented a word that can kill those who hear it. Already on her fourth foster home in a year





the moody and sullen child is starting to piece together what is happening — or at least what *seems* to be happening. Has the girl somehow stumbled across a new word of power or is an unknown spirit or force possessing her and using the happenstance of this word as cover? Regard less of the truth, the Modernists would be very interested in learning this word and learning the truth behind it while other forces of Uratha might be more interested in killing or incapacitating her first, before she can use the word on them.

- **The Dying Tongue:** The last of a secluded population of humans is in danger of dying out or being assimilated into the surrounding local populous; with this culture's demise, their dialect will die out with them. This language is rare for its object verb subject structure which places the focus of a sentence's intent first; initial experimentation into the language's properties show that it might be useful in understanding certain mirror realms within the *Hisil*. Unfortunately the culture's region has become a product of intense growth and modernization in recent years, and the surviving members are under more and more pressure to abandon their old ways. The Modernists' desire to preserve this culture or at least save it long enough to learn the language could place them in direct opposition to some powerful forces — including werewolves who favor the new urban areas as well as those who might view the old culture as being too weak to survive.

- **War of Word:** Purity is under attack in a most subtle way. In the physical world the media has been attacking the notion of "purity" on all fronts: those who seek to be pure of body are out of touch with modern life, those who believe in the purity of blood are branded as racist or against multiculturalism and so on. In the spirit world the ideals of Purity are being assailed by the spirits: each werewolf defeat is sung to the moon as a sign of the Uratha's impurity, long standing oaths are labeled perfunctory while broken vows are heralded as signs of the Uratha's downfall and the most just battles are branded as bloodthirsty and pointless. Even among the Forsaken themselves the notion of "Purity" is under assault with some beginning to liken those who strive for Purity to those who call themselves Pure. Naturally this is seen as a direct assault on both the Rahu and any whose primary Renown is Purity. The Lodge of the Modernist believes this is a result of an attack on the idea of "purity" itself as a word and idea although it will take considerable effort — and perhaps expanding their investigatory numbers with outside help — to determine if this is the spirit world reflecting the physical vice versa or something declaring war on both fronts at once.

DANIEL "THE THUG" LEON

Auspice: Rahu
Tribe: Bone Shadows
Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve
Physical Attributes: Strength 4 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)
Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure
Mental Skills: Academics (English) 3, Medicine (Emergency Care) 1
Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Throws) 4, Stealth Survival Weaponry
Social Skills: Animal Ken Empathy Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 4, Streetwise 1
Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style: Boxing 4, Giant 4, Mentor 2
Primal Urge:
Willpower:
Harmony:
Essence Max/Per Turn: /
Virtue: Hope
Vice: Wrath
Health: 9 (11/13/12/9)
Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8)
Defense: 2 (all forms)
Speed: 11 (12/15/18/16)
Renown: Purity Wisdom
Gifts: (1) Clarity, Sense Malice, (2) Attunement
Rituals: 1; **Rites:** (1) Rite of Dedication, Shared Scent

In a small town in West Virginia, life would be difficult for any almost child who wished to be left alone. That child might have a chance at solitude if he was almost seven feet tall and proportionally muscular — unless the child wanted to be an intellectual.

Such was the fate of Daniel Leon. Always struggling to keep his angry emotions in check, Daniel spent several years in a juvenile detention center before his ninth birthday when he lashed out at a classmate two years older than he; his would-be assailant is still unable to walk. It was at this time that he gained his nickname "Thug" from others at the youth facility; the name stung him to the core, filling him with a self-loathing whose release he sought at any price. After his sentence, Daniel moved with his parents from Florida to West Virginia, hoping to start anew; during this time, Daniel started wearing long-sleeved shirts to better conceal the assortment of line-like scars that covered his arms.

In his first day of the second year of high school, a well-meaning teacher made everyone reveal a childhood nickname. After much coaxing, Daniel

revealed what he had been called before — and was met with the laughter of his peers. Interrupting the derision, the teacher pointed out that “thug” is actually derivative of an Indian cult called “Thugee,” a highly organized gang of assassins that existed for almost seven centuries. “We should all be as successful as the thugs,” the teacher quipped, which quieted down his peers.

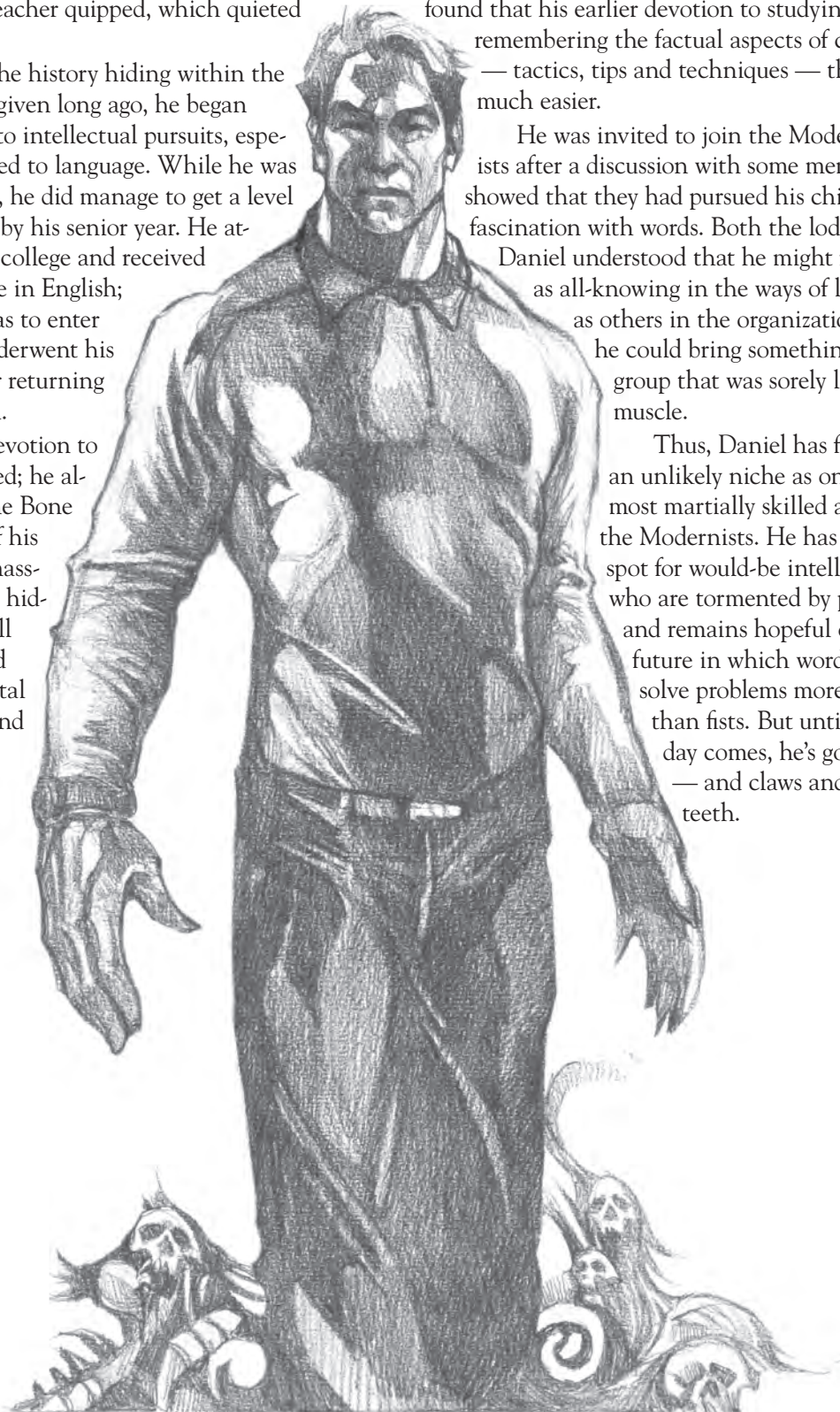
Fascinated by the history hiding within the name he had been given long ago, he began dedicating himself to intellectual pursuits, especially those dedicated to language. While he was still teased by peers, he did manage to get a level of quiet anonymity by his senior year. He attended community college and received an associate’s degree in English; a week before he was to enter state college, he underwent his First Change, never returning to formal education.

However, his devotion to learning never ended; he allied himself with the Bone Shadows because of his fascination with amassing and uncovering hidden truths. Sadly, all this study still failed to increase his mental acumen much beyond a baseline level of intelligence. His

peers in the Bone Shadows convinced him of what he knew all along — he may *want* to learn, but he was *good* at fighting. To disavow the gifts that Mother Luna and Father Wolf saw fit to sire within him would bring nothing but shame. Grudgingly, he took to studying fighting and other martial techniques and found that his earlier devotion to studying made remembering the factual aspects of combat — tactics, tips and techniques — that much easier.

He was invited to join the Modernists after a discussion with some members showed that they had pursued his childhood fascination with words. Both the lodge and Daniel understood that he might not be as all-knowing in the ways of language as others in the organization, but he could bring something to the group that was sorely lacking: muscle.

Thus, Daniel has found an unlikely niche as one of the most martially skilled among the Modernists. He has a soft spot for would-be intellectuals who are tormented by peers, and remains hopeful of a future in which words can solve problems more readily than fists. But until that day comes, he’s got fists — and claws and sharp teeth.



LODGE OF THE RED SANDS

SEKHAUTET ENDURES

Sekhautet had offended the pride of the wolf who called himself her alpha, beyond what he was capable of bearing, and so she was cast out. He set her brother against her, and although it boiled her heart in her chest, she could not force herself to shed the blood of her brother and her packmates. She went into the desert, where, her former alpha hoped, she was to die.

But although she had borne exile, Sekhautet did not intend to give her enemy the satisfaction of dying. She had never gone far into the desert before, but she was young and strong of both heart and body. She walked in the day and kept walking in the night. She was hungry and weary and above all thirsty when the dawn came and she realized she was no longer in the world of the flesh. Somewhere in the night, or perhaps the night before, she had walked unwittingly between the gateposts and descended into Shadow.

She heard a voice speak her name, as faint as if she was dreaming it. "What is it you look for here?"

"I am thirsty," she said, "and I would drink. I seek an oasis."

The voice laughed. "Do you think you will find it here? These are the red sands beyond the river. Only the strongest drink here."

"I am strong," she said. "I will drink."

There were no oases that morning, but Sekhautet did not falter, or seek the road back to the material world. With what strength she had, she kept walking forward, her nose to the ground. Then at last she caught a scent — not of water, not of an oasis, but of a powerful spirit. And she followed that scent.

The spirit walked like a lion, and it had the belly of a serpent that dragged the ground, and its face was that of a hippopotamus with the teeth of a crocodile. Had Sekhautet seen it a moon ago, even with her whole pack standing beside her, she would have quailed in fear. But the flutter in her heart was overcome by need, and she did not pause. She raced down to it, and she leapt upon its back, and she took it by the neck, and with the last of her strength she rode it until it collapsed. Then Sekhautet opened the spirit's throat, and from it she drank long.

Finally, she sat back on her haunches, her belly full and her heart freshly quickened.

She heard the voice again, calling her name, and this time it was close. A great red beast, red as the sands, padded toward her. His eyes were as coals, and there was great strength and pride in him. But Sekhautet rose and braced herself, raising her hackles as she stood over her kill.

The spirit spoke again. "Is that your oasis, then?"

"It is what I could find."

"You prefer blood to water?"

Sekhautet stood defiantly before the red spirit. "It is as it must be. I will not let these sands defeat me, and I will come out of the desert to bring my vengeance on those who drove me out."

The spirit laughed. "Good, good! I see your courage. Then perhaps the desert will not defeat you after all. But will you turn away from it when you are healed, or will you take even further from the strength it has to offer?"

Sekhautet thought carefully. "To find strength where there is little to be offered?"

"Yes," purred the beast-spirit. "Rather than to return to human lands, to find weakness where there is much to be offered."

Sekhautet smiled the wolf-smile. "My strength is returning. I will find some drink for you as well, and perhaps you will tell me more."

The spirit smiled in return.

To the ancient Egyptians, red was the color of the desert. It was the wilderness, the harsh and unforgiving land ruled by beasts and not humans. The Shadow gives truth to that understanding, as long stretches of spirit deserts on the other side of the Gauntlet sometimes appear as a dull red the color of drying blood. Not that these sections of desert are without life, either in the Shadow or in the realm of flesh. But they are dangerous, inhospitable wastes. Only the strongest could endure here; only the strongest would dare to try.

The lodge had its beginnings in Upper Egypt, allegedly before the unification of the two kingdoms. The Sahara is one of the places where it remains strongest even today. However, some lodge members have carried

the mark of the Red Beast King farther, usually settling in the deserts where they can be master. The lodge is spread throughout the Middle East, and to some extent through sub-Saharan Africa. There are said to be packs even as far away as the Gobi, the southwestern United States and the Australian outback.

The Lodge of the Red Sands is bound together by two key principles. The first is simple — the challenge of surviving in the desert. While many members of the lodge grew up in human cultures that already knew some tricks of desert survival, the demands of enduring the desert are quite different for werewolves. The lodge teaches one another how to survive without equipment, without vehicles or herd animals, simply as wolves.

The second principle, and also the one less commonly admitted, is the pursuit of power itself. The lodge's patron spirit is very interested in strength, both physical and mystical — and the spirit's desire bleeds into its children. The children of the Red Sands are able to sublimate their physical thirst to endure the desert better, but a mystical thirst comes over them in exchange. Some packs look for social power, hoping to dominate their neighbors from the strength of their unassailable desert holds. Other packs strive for physical power, forging themselves into warriors and hunters without peer. But the greatest and most common thirst among the lodge is the thirst for Essence. The children of the Red Sands treat Essence as a commodity almost dearer than water — to them, a locus is an oasis, a touchstone a canteen. They must moderate their thirst to keep from draining their precious reserves dry, but they would drink until bursting if they could. The lodge publicly maintains a furiously strict stance on the subject of eating human flesh, for the lodge members know that even a single taste could inflame the thirst for Essence into their downfall. More than one pack of the Red Sands, they say, has devolved into ravening *Zi'ir* because the packmembers were foolish enough to indulge their hunger.

As a result, the lodge has an agenda beyond mere survival. There are indeed great loci to be found in the wasteland, where the Essence runs thick even if there's little water to be found. But any and all Essence is fair game. Some of the Red Sands werewolves are little better than pirates, stealing Essence from rival packs' loci simply because they have the strength and (they claim) the need. Others act more honorably, but are prone to demand Essence in exchange for assisting a nearby pack against a common foe. They make dangerous neighbors in lean times, and even in times of plenty. The greatest consolation

is that they act all the more harshly toward the Pure. More than once, a Forsaken pack has watched the tables turn as a vicious pack of the Red Beast King erupts howling out of the arid night to tear into the Pure, cut apart their bodies and loot them for all the fetishes and touchstones they can.

The Lodge of Red Sands has a penchant for running in packs. In many of the areas where the lodge can be found, the Red Sands is the most prominent lodge — or at least, the lodge most likely to take an interest in the sections of desert that most other werewolves avoid. When one packmember belongs to the lodge and the rest don't, the child of the Red Sands is prone to push his packmates into bettering their own survival skills whether they join the lodge or not. Of course, the benefits of membership are such that it's often a fairly easy sell. An all-lodge pack tends to be a very intense group, with each member constantly expecting the appropriate amount of respect from her brethren while only willing to extend respect where it's due. Despite this "all kings, no peasants" mentality, such packs operate rather smoothly when the chips are down — the desert doesn't forgive mistakes.

And the concept of kingship is surprisingly prevalent in the lodge. Outsiders sometimes mistake the Red Sands for an organization of outsiders who have no interest in the politics of the rest of the Forsaken. The reverse is often true. The Red Beast King considers itself the lord and master of its desolate terrain, and its children act as though they were kings and queens of a great and noble territory. They rule where the soft cannot even aspire to serve.

The lodge's attitude toward humans varies greatly from place to place. Some of the Red Sands care next to nothing for humans, and steal water and livestock from their neighbors whenever the mood strikes them. Other children of the Red Sands act out of a sort of noblesse oblige. It is unfair, even impossible to ask humans to endure what they can, and there is no shame in being merciful to those weaker than themselves. As a general rule, the lodge is more forgiving to those humans who do their best to live softly on the land, and much harsher to those who would tear up the desert in search of oil or gold. Similar to many werewolves, the lodge members might not be crusaders for a greater ecological movement, but they'll be damned if they let the humans spoil the wild lands they call their own.

The children of the Red Sands generally agree that it is better to be feared than to be loved. While they rarely suffer from strong ideological clashes with other Forsaken — the lodge's tenets, after all, could be considered simple extrapolations of the werewolf





survival instinct — the lodge members can come into conflict over territory and particularly loci. The lodge doesn't condone killing other Forsaken outside of a life-or-death situation, but it's considered perfectly sporting to beat a rival pack into a bloody pulp and strand the packmembers a few miles into the desert. They're almost certain to survive, and they'll have learned a strong lesson about crossing the Red Sands.

But when the Red Sands see a need to kill, they not only do so, they tend to sign their work. An old lodge tradition is to take the corpse of a fallen enemy and ritually slice it into 14 separate pieces, often scattering those pieces far and wide. In modern times, some lodge members prefer to leave all 14 pieces in one place, the better to avoid raising odd questions if a human finds a body part before the victim's friends or allies do. Other lodge members enjoy the game of creating a gruesome "scavenger hunt" for their enemies, leaving the various body parts in key locations along the edge of the enemy land. The more far-flung lodge cells might mutilate an enemy's body in different fashion, perhaps dragging the body behind a horse or vehicle along the boundary between territories. Although the werewolves of the Red Sands suffer potential Harmony loss from killing rival werewolves in battle or in cold blood, the after-the-fact corpse mutilation doesn't seem to drive them any further out of balance — at least, as far as their innate spirituality is concerned. It's hard to argue that a werewolf who engages in such practices isn't just a bit colder in the soul than most.

PATRON SPIRIT

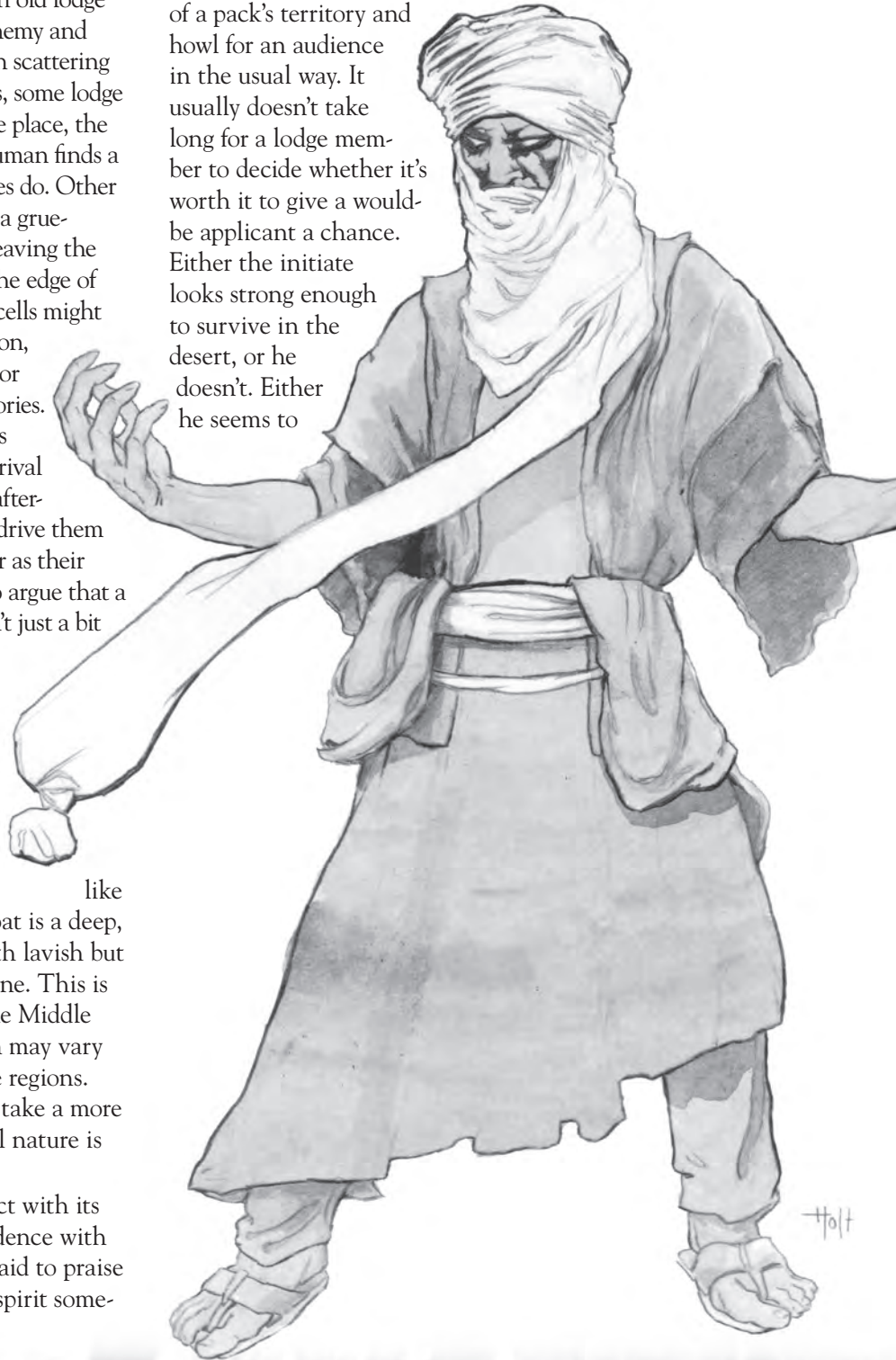
The spirit that oversees the Red Sands is a fierce, chimerical entity that prefers to be called the Red Beast King. It manifests in a form that's almost sphinx-like, with a great leonine body and a black-maned head somewhat like that of a hyena. The Red Beast King's coat is a deep, rich crimson, and its neck is adorned with lavish but clearly worn jewelry of gold, lapis and bone. This is the spirit's form in most of Africa and the Middle East; the spirit's composite manifestation may vary when appearing to packs in more remote regions. The Red Beast King has been known to take a more humanoid form, though its innate bestial nature is always powerfully apparent.

The Red Beast King is terse and strict with its adopted children, prone to answer impudence with a powerful blow of its paw but also unafraid to praise those who meet its high standards. The spirit some-

times addresses members of the lodge as if they were royalty themselves — a king speaking to princes, perhaps, or an emperor to kings.

JOINING THE LODGE

The Lodge of Red Sands requires a harsh initiation, as befits the lodge's surroundings. Finding the lodge and requesting to join the ranks is usually simple enough; the lodge does not conceal its membership, and a daring werewolf may stand at the edge of a pack's territory and howl for an audience in the usual way. It usually doesn't take long for a lodge member to decide whether it's worth it to give a would-be applicant a chance. Either the initiate looks strong enough to survive in the desert, or he doesn't. Either he seems to



be hungry for the power of the sands, or he isn't. If the petitioner seems to be worthy in both areas, then he can be tested.

The test itself is brutal. The initiate must be ritually "driven into the desert," a process which involves an intense beating. In some areas, this takes the place of a gauntlet, which the would-be lodge member must run naked. He can only escape the gauntlet by fleeing into the desert by night — trading one set of dangers for another. In other areas, the ritual is a bit more modern, though no less violent: a prospective member is beaten soundly, loaded into the back of a truck or jeep, pounded on some more during the drive into the desert and finally dumped unceremoniously in the middle of nowhere. The initiate is expected to survive for a week in the desert on her own, with no friendly contact with humans or werewolves. She can return to civilization sooner if she finds her way, but she will not be allowed to attempt joining the lodge again. If the initiate survives without the assistance of others, then on the seventh night she is visited by the Red Beast King, which lays its blessing on the werewolf and points her in the direction of her new brethren.

Prerequisites: Glory ••, Stamina •••, Survival •••

Benefits: Children of the Red Sands are masters of surviving in the barren waste. Animal Ken, Tracking and Survival are purchased at the cost of new dots x2 experience points. In addition, members of the lodge may purchase Dominance or Elemental Gifts as though they had tribal affinity.

LODGE OF THE RED SANDS FETISHES

SEKAMET'S JAR (••)

This useful fetish usually takes the form of a small clay jar, urn or jug. Some appear almost as canopic jars, with the stopper taking the head of a beast (usually a wolf, lioness or hyena). The spirit within is usually some form of water elemental or blood-spirit.

When activated, the jar fills with a thick, frothy red beer that tastes somewhat like blood. Though alcoholic, the beer is as refreshing and rejuvenating as pure water. The drinker also regains one Essence point. However, the beer has a soporific effect even on a werewolf's constitution, tending to dull the drinker's senses. For the duration of the scene, the character is at a -1 penalty to all Finesse-based rolls (such as Dexterity, Intelligence or Manipulation). If the drinker takes a quick half-hour nap, the penalty vanishes. If the drinker is an ordinary human or a supernatural

entity without a metabolism comparable to that of a werewolf, the penalty is increased to -3, and cannot be removed without sleeping for roughly eight hours. The fetish can be activated once per night.

Some variants of this fetish lack the soporific effect, but are potentially more dangerous. The taste of blood is enough to heighten the drinker's lust for more. The character suffers a -1 penalty to all Resolve or Composure rolls for the duration of the scene, including rolls to resist Death Rage.

Action: Instant

JOINT-CUTTING KNIFE (••••)

This fetish knife is thick and double-edged, with one of its edges nastily serrated. It is often made of black iron, though older examples might be fashioned of bronze or even copper. This ugly design is practical enough for the blade's purpose — specifically, dismembering bodies. The knife is bound with a spirit of death or of a scavenger animal such as a vulture, hyena or even an ant. When activated, the knife can cut through a human leg as easily as slicing a sandwich.

Despite the small size, the Joint-Cutting Knife is a lethal weapon; it cuts through bone, sinew and flesh with great ease even on a living target. The knife inflicts three lethal damage; against the walking dead, the weapon does an additional die of damage. However, the knife also makes a remarkably useful tool for impromptu surgery or first aid, and grants an extra +2 tool bonus to appropriate Medicine rolls. (The knife could add its tool bonus to an emergency tracheotomy or digging a silver bullet out of a wound, for instance, but not to applying a tourniquet or administering CPR.)

Action: Reflexive

LODGE OF THE RED SANDS STORY HOOKS

- **Out of the Desert:** The local Forsaken community is rather startled when an entire pack of Red Sands werewolves enters the area. The visitors claim to have no intention of staying very long and are content to settle into neutral or unclaimed territory for the duration of their stay. One or two of the pack elders begin to make the rounds of other packs, initiating gatherings with the intention of sharing survival techniques; as the desert dwellers point out, there may be new ways of looking at each environment that only an outsider can provide. However, while this diplomatic errand is taking place, others of the visiting pack begin to commit stealthy raids against nearby loci, draining them of all the Essence they can and storing some in fetishes for the journey.





home Are these raids unsanctioned by the elders or is the diplomatic errand only a front for the Red Sands' piracy? And what if the characters guess incorrectly?

• **Timely Rescue:** While on a dangerous errand to the desert the pack is overwhelmed by a sudden sandstorm. Fortunately a pack of Red Sands arrive to assist the characters and even offer assistance with the pack's quest. The question is, is the offer of aid as innocent as it seems? Was it the desert dwelling pack who somehow whistled up the sandstorm in the first place, as a means of placing the characters in the Red Sands' debt? Or was the storm caller an enemy of the Red Sands one that they aren't telling the characters about for some reason?

• **Death of Osiris:** One of the contacts or relatives of the pack is found gruesomely murdered severed into separate pieces. A successful bit of inquiry or occult investigation reveals that this is a favored execution method of the Lodge of the Red Sands. Did the victim have some dark secret that brought the lodge's wrath down on him — and will the children of the Red Sands begin to hunt anyone who might have shared that secret with him? Or is someone or something else responsible for this carnage something that shares a common origin with the children of the Red Beast King?

JURGURTHA LION-EATER

Auspice: Irraka

Tribe: Blood Talons

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/6/5/4), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 4 (5/6/6/5)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2 (1/2/0/2), Composure

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Urhan) 3, Stealth (Desert) 4, Survival (Desert) 4, Weaponry (Dagger) 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken Empathy Intimidation Streetwise 1, Subterfuge (Masking Strength) 2

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fetish (Sekhmet's Jar) 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Iron Stomach, Language (English, Arabic; Tamahaq is native) 2

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Pride

Health: 9 (11/13/12/9)

Initiative: 7 (7/8/9/9) with Fast Reflexes

Defense: 3 (all forms)

Speed: 12 (13/16/19/18) with Fleet of Foot

Renown: Cunning Glory Purity

Gifts: (1) Call Water, Feet of Mist, Mask of Rage, Sense Weakness; (2) Blending, Manipulate Earth, Slip Away

There are places in the Libyan Desert where entire decades may pass without rain. Jurgurtha prides himself in being at home in even the driest and most searing of these lands. The land may be something to fear, but then again, so is he.

Jurgurtha claims to remember little of his youth, which is almost certainly a lie that his packmates do not press him on. He was born among the Tuareg population of Libya, shortly before his father left to seek work in the cities. Jurgurtha Changed very early, at the age of 13, and claims that he was driven out like a stray dog by a fearful mob. He lived for almost a year on the fringes of the desert, stealing food where he could; it was either good instinct or strong will that kept him from tasting human flesh during that time. He was finally discovered by a pack of Blood Talons, loyal sons and daughters of the Red Beast King one and all. His initiation into the lodge came on the next new moon after his initiation into the tribe.

Since then, Jurgurtha has served admirably as an advance scout for his pack and lodge alike. He particularly delights in discovering new loci, though he usually refrains from taking more than a few sips before he brings his allies to share in a new find. He still bears scars across his back from the discipline that taught him otherwise. If a pack crosses near his territory, Jurgurtha is sure to be the one the packmembers meet first. He is not what anyone could call "friendly," but he respects other werewolves more than he does humans. So long as interlopers can prove that they are Forsaken and not Pure, no blood needs to be shed. And as long as the interlopers remain respectful, of course. Jurgurtha never learned to take idle insults well. If offended, he may not take any immediate action, but he won't forget — and he has a knack for deducing where his enemies sleep.

Jurgurtha is short and lean, but much heavier than he looks thanks to his almost complete lack of body fat. He usually wears the heavy clothes of his kin, complete with a Tuareg *tidjelmoust* (a combination of veil and turban) dyed in the rusty blood color of his lodge's patron. When he expects to hunt with his pack, he carefully sets his clothes aside in a safe place and runs in his pelt alone.

LODGE OF THE ROSE

SONNET OF THE BLOOMING ROSE

That day upon the field of battle met
 The Noble Gryphon and a mighty lord.
 The terms laid out to skies above were set
 That who fell first to blows must give his word.
 The banes — of lord and spirit both — knew great
 That eyes of all would focus on the din.
 And slithered, so, they skulked around to wait
 For dastard time to strike and further sin.
 The Gryphon, hurt yet stronger slight, struck claw
 To flesh, and reared to slay. But victim spied
 beyond Gryphon a hateful wicked maw
 And rolled to Noble save before he died.
 All witness there saw honor rise o'er cause
 And thus gave bloody birth to Lodge of Rose.

The Lodge of the Rose was founded during the middle of the 18th century, in the twilight between the First and Second Industrial Revolutions, when human and Uratha alike faced a crisis in their continued identities. New technologies, both peaceful and violent, threatened to undermine individuality: what place did craftsmanship or individual honor and focus have in a world where artisans have been reduced to unending rows of fleshy automatons, where warriors were able to kill their foes without ever seeing them? (These philosophical tensions become bitterly prescient of the so-called War to End All Wars mere decades later.)

At that time, Émilien “Honor Flows” Wickham — a revered Blood Talon who grew increasingly dissatisfied with what he saw as his tribe’s senseless devotion to martial purity — believed there was a better way, and sought to unify this coming world with the ways of the old. Although he came close to achieving his goals, he did not live to see them to fruition, having died on the field of battle to preserve the existence of his would-be chosen patron spirit; however, many scholars believe that Wickham was not up to the task, and only succeeded *because* he died. Regardless, the fruits of his efforts became the Lodge of the Rose.

The Rose (as it’s often abbreviated, referring to both the organization and its members) believes that the base nature of the Uratha is their duality. The pull between the wild and civilization, the need to fight and the stirring passion within, and the paradox between that which is hierarchal and codified and that which is chaotic within the spirit world. While much of the wolven world has spent lifetimes trying to sort out these conflicts, the Lodge of the Rose believes it has found the answer within humanity’s past, at a time when savagery and gentility coincided — within the code of chivalry.

The Lodge of the Rose understands that the code of chivalry was originally designed to harness the power of a growing class of warriors, channeling their martial might to become a force for greater good rather than a squabbling mass looking for personal power or wealth. Although the literary and historical world may debate as to what, exactly, the tenets of chivalry were, the Roses have codified them more rigorously.

The most important idea for the Roses is devotion: the strict adherence to all oaths or promises. Obviously, this is a tenet already important to the Uratha, especially the Blood Talons who make up the majority of the Roses. However, the lodge takes this to an even greater extreme; all promises made have the same weight and import to the Rose. This causes some friction among other Uratha, who view the near-ageless bond of the Oath to outweigh any other promise a werewolf could make. The Roses disagree; they argue that, if one has structured one’s life according to strict tenets, then all promises made should be observable — or one made a foolish promise at some point along the way. Conversely, if fate or circumstance forces oaths to conflict, then this is obviously a test from the higher power to find a way to remain true.

The next important aspect of chivalry that all Roses must follow is fealty — devotion and loyalty to liege or lord. This primarily manifests as a fanatical devotion to the Lodge of the Rose, as well as a loyalty to one’s pack (and alpha) and loyalty to Father Wolf





and Mother Luna. Most interestingly, the members of the lodge view their commitment to the Rose as normally superseding any pack or territorial promises; prospective members are made aware of this, and are encouraged to inform their present and future packmates (who are usually welcome to participate in any tasks the lodge forces the Rose to do). While the Rose is usually taps this aspect of chivalry sparingly, it has still been used from time to time; the most noteworthy example was when the lodge compelled all its members to fight against the threat of the *idigam*. Unlike the lodge's historical brethren, the Lodge of the Rose does not adhere strictly to the tenets of Christianity (although the lodge members are not opposed to it, either, and some members of this lodge also consider themselves followers of Christ).

Finally, any members of the Lodge of the Rose are expected to be self-sacrificial. While this means the obvious — such as giving one's life to fulfill the needs of one's oaths — it also includes other aspects of sacrifice, such as giving to those in dire need, if possible.

One aspect of the chivalric code that remains hotly contested is the demand for mercy; while the original tenets of knightly honor demanded that the Roses show clemency toward those who surrender, the Blood Talons' ban of "Offer no surrender that you would not accept" requires the Roses to act carefully. For the most part, the lodge handles this seeming contradiction by ignoring it; each member is expected to be both merciful and ruthlessly efficient in upholding his or her obligations. Of course, many members have hit upon a common loophole: if you can make sure you kill your opponent *before* he has a chance to ask for mercy...

There are other aspects of chivalry that are also important: humility, courtesy, respect and a protective nature toward women and children. The latter makes some more modern-minded werewolves (and others) cringe, thinking that females deserve no greater protection than their XY-chromosomed counterparts. However, members of the lodge usually dismiss these concerns — some in some very creative ways. Furthermore, the lodge generally won't make an issue if a werewolf skirts the edges of acceptability with these lesser tenets; humility, in particular, can be in short supply among some members of the Rose.

Another interesting aspect of chivalry emulated by the lodge is the idea of courtly love; members of the Rose believe that they all owe it to themselves and mercurial Mother Luna to give their hearts to another. This can be an unrequited or secret ro-

mance; in fact, many Roses argue this is preferable. In particular, a surprising number of Roses permit themselves romantic attachments to other werewolves; they note the Oath only prohibits the act of mating with another, which is hard to do when you're pining for your beloved from afar. They tend to keep this aspect of their beliefs as secret as the love they harbor; while they aren't ashamed of it, they also know that defending themselves from scurrilous gossip would take away resources that can be better used to uphold their vows. Regardless, they recognize it's a dangerous game to play given their passionate natures, and they have absolutely no sympathy for those whose lust gets the better of them. The general idea of love — not just courtly love — is also important to those in the lodge, and many Roses find themselves making oaths to their beloveds at some point in their lives.

Outsider werewolves are actually often surprised by their encounters with the Roses; while seeming to be anachronistic ("a King Arthur courtier in a Yankee's Connecticut," as one wry New England werewolf put it), the Roses also seem to have a greater sense of purpose and focus than many other Blood Talons; more interestingly, the Roses are also often closer to inner peace (as much as any werewolf can be). It's theorized that living according to the idea that "right makes might" tempers the Rage that swells within all werewolves; more cynical members claim that this idea merely provides the blinders necessary to continue a hopeless cause. Even so, the martial prowess of a Rose coupled with the preternatural savagery of the Blood Talons make an odd juxtaposition.

Although the lodge's membership is scattered throughout the world, the Roses consider Normandy to be their focal point; this is partly because of the historical significance that the region had during true feudal days and partly because of the valor shown by many of the lodge's members in serving and protecting the *Hisil* during the D-day invasion of Normandy in 1944.

In recent years, many members of the lodge have taken it upon themselves to wage a war against the forces of terrorism; given the historical connotations, they cringe at the word "crusade," but few can argue against the comparisons. While traveling in the Middle East, some of these members have found curious evidence of a previous chivalry-based lodge — one that was active around the 13th century. The final fate of this lodge (if it ever truly existed) is unknown, although some have romantic visions that this lodge is still out there, hiding some great

power or secret; these same members wonder if the secrets of this former lodge could someday be a part of the Rose. Others aren't so sure, and wonder what could have caused the end of such a lodge — and if a similar fate couldn't befall the Rose.

Patron Tribe: Blood Talons

PATRON SECRET

The caretaker of the Lodge of the Rose is the Noble Gryphon; Noble Gryphon usually insists on the “Noble” prefix, lest it be confused with other spirits, such as its thuggish cousin Griffin of Battle or the monstrous hippogriff (among others). Noble Gryphon treats members of its lodge akin to a firm but fair ruler: mostly approachable, yet with a noticeable weight of greater considerations and an aura that demands unquestioning fealty and respect.

Highly renowned members of the lodge will often receive a special honor: the Noble Gryphon's coat-of-arms. Manifesting on a weapon, piece of dedicated clothing or sometimes even on the werewolf's skin itself, Noble Gryphon will brand itself in a unique pose on the person so honored. From there, any future spirit manifestations of Noble Gryphon for that person will emerge from the coat-of-arms. Although this has no other effect, this brand is still considered a great honor, and werewolf lineages will often record portraits or transcriptions of the coat-of-arms pose (or the actual item itself) as an heirloom or historical fact of pride.

PLUCKING THE ROSE

New members of the Lodge of the Rose are strictly on an invitation-only basis. Those who actively pursue membership are politely turned down (usually with a truism such as “The Rose does not decide when it is destined to be plucked for greatness”); those who continue being insistent are virtually assured of never becoming members. However, other Roses *do* try to keep abreast of those who express some interest, and it's not uncommon for such a werewolf to have subtle tabs kept on him, awaiting a time when he is judged potentially worthy.

Those who do pique the lodge's interest and who show an understanding and interest in the lodge's ways might be invited to become members. Joining the Lodge of the Rose isn't for the fainthearted. The lodge's primary membership is limited to Blood Talons, but this is only because they are the ones most likely to have the single-minded dedication necessary to pursue chivalry — and all its resultant baggage — above everything else. Would-be members must undergo the Trial of Thorns. Simply put, each

is given one simple instruction by the person who invited him: “Go out. Quest for one month. And bring me your thorns of worthiness.”

The purpose of this challenge is for the prospective Rose to decide what “thorns” are and how to acquire them; it is up to the invitee to decide if the person's explanation is acceptable, although ideally the choice of thorns will give some insight into the person's fledgling devotion to chivalry. One initiate returned and pointed to the many scars that crisscrossed her body. “Each of these was earned in the course of upholding the Oath for the past month. These are my thorns.” Another returned with literal thorns: “Each of these came from the roses of my beloved; she knows not that I love her, but I protect her just the same.” Both were judged worthy as having passed the Trial of Thorns.

Having succeeded, the werewolf swears fealty to the lodge on the next iteration of her moon sign. Here, using the Oath of the Rose Rite, she affirms her bond to the lodge and to the Oath, and is said to have “bloomed” as a Rose.

Prerequisites: Glory •• and Honor •••

Benefits: A member of the Lodge of the Rose gains an awe-inspiring Ability — called the Rose Shield — that enables him to follow the demands of his oaths, provided he is able to seal them with the Oath of the Rose Rite. When under the Rose Shield's protection, if any supernatural effect or ability would cause him to directly or indirectly break a vow, he gains two bonus dice on the resistance roll; on those effects against which there is no resistance, the Rose Shield imposes a two-dice penalty on the person acting against him. While this includes effects that would compel someone to act a certain way, it also gives a degree of preternatural protection against more subtle effects; for example, if a Rose has given a vow to protect a beloved, he would gain a two-dice bonus to be able to see through an illusion that made her appear as a fearsome foe. This bonus can only be applied once per effect, but can be used multiple times for multiple effects; for example, the devoted Rose mentioned previously would gain the bonus once to see through the illusion, but would gain the bonus each time he was compelled to attack her through a direct assault on his mind.

As an additional benefit of the Rose Shield, if a Rose's conscious action would cause him to violate an oath sealed with the Oath of the Rose, or if an action would result in a foreseeable consequence that would cause him to break such an oath, he gains a reflexive Wits + Composure roll to avoid this; in essence, he





gains a limited use of the Common Sense Merit. (If the Rose already has Common Sense, he does not gain this additional benefit.)

For those who find themselves having broken an oath, the Rose Shield does not provide any benefits to any resultant Harmony checks. In fact, being a Rose means that any transgressions weigh much more heavily on one's soul than normal; it's much more difficult to reconcile one's sins when one has violated a sacred promise. As a result, any Harmony checks that come about as a result of a broken vow (including the Oath) are at a one-die penalty, to a minimum of one die.

LODGE OF THE ROSE RITE

OATH OF THE ROSE (••)

To the Lodge of the Rose, little is more important than those to whom one swears loyalty, fealty or dedication. The Oath of the Rose serves as one of the most common and tangible aspects of the importance of that bond. When successfully completed, the rite formally bonds an oath of the werewolf, giving her all the mystical power and responsibilities of the Rose Shield.

Performing the Rite:

The Oath of the Rose is done under the moon of the petitioner's auspice. Ideally, the ritemaster and the subject giving the Oath of the Rose will coordinate beforehand to determine if this new vow is public or secret; the subject will also tell the ritemaster when all other out-

standing oaths were taken, as well as the nature of all the outstanding public oaths the subject has sworn. When the time comes to do the rite, the ritemaster proclaims to the moon (and any other werewolves attending, if any) the solemnity with which the Lodge of the Rose takes all oaths sworn under her and the nurturing love that flows between Uratha and Luna;

he does this by cupping a single rose in his hands to the sky toward the moon. He will then ask the

person taking the vow to affirm all vows he has made publicly, in reference to the time since he made them and the moon phase of the oath: "Do you reaffirm the sacred Oath of the Moon that you swore under the crescent moon six years and five months ago?" The petitioner should answer in the affirmative; in response, the ritemaster tears off a rose petal and gives it to the avower to

eat. The ritemaster can either go in chronological order, or mention all public vows first followed by the secret vows.

For all secret vows, the ritemaster phrases his question differently, omitting the actual oath: "Do you reaffirm the vow you made under the crescent moon five years and two months ago?"

Having reaffirmed each oath, the ritemaster then asks the petitioner to state his new oath (if public) or his intention to undertake a new oath (if private): "By the light of the crescent moon, I vow to serve and protect the Shrine of Bear for one full year," for example, or "By the light of the crescent moon, I keep safe in my heart the vow I do swear."

Oaths can either be permanent or temporary, having a circum-



stance or time frame under which the oath expires (“until asked to leave” or “for two years,” for example). Petitioners are discouraged from making trivial vows, but it is up to the individual lodge member making the promise to determine the relative necessity of the vow.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Extended (three successes per previous oath taken, plus three successes for the new oath; each roll represents one minute)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The ritemaster has insulted Noble Gryphon with his ineptitude; the person giving the vow may never have that promise granted the protection of the lodge.

Failure: No successes are added.

Success: Successes are gained as usual. Once the required number of successes is acquired, the remaining petals on the rose explode into the air, showering the petitioner, the ritemaster and all attending; there are always enough petals to hit everyone with at least one petal. Where the petals touch skin, a faint red mark is left; this is symbolic of the shared affirmation the witnesses and community provide. The petitioner now has the full protection of the Rose Shield for that vow.

Exceptional Success: Successes are gained as usual. If the total reaches five more than necessary to complete the rite, in addition to the normal effects of success, the rite provides an additional bonus die on the first check that invokes the Rose Shield. If unused, this benefit expires in one month.

The marks left by the rose petals wash off as normal, but the marks are a very potent symbol for lodge members, and it’s common for people attending to make reference to them: “I will stand beside you, brother, as one whose flesh was marked red by your oath.”

LODGE OF THE ROSE STORY HOOKS

• **Loyalty Torn:** A member of the Lodge of Roses has declared his loyalty to the alpha of a large pack. Unfortunately the lodge member has stumbled across evidence that seems to indict that leader in treacherous dealings with the Pure. The Rose member may well find himself in a quandary; he can not in good conscience knowingly serve one who has been dishonorable but he

also cannot act against his lord to seek out evidence or collaboration of these crimes. As such the member may well circuitously seek the aid of his fellow lodge members — or even outsiders — to try to get them to resolve the matter discretely (“If some body were able to make clear evidence of the alpha’s crimes known I’d be free of my oath...”) Of course, the lodge member would also probably make clear that if his covert allies were discovered he would have no choice but to deal with them ruthlessly as dictated by his honor.

• **The Cup of a Carpenter:** A spirit is sent from a member of the Lodge of Roses with a message; the Uratha who coerced the spirit is dead but before he died he supposedly found what he called “the Holy Grail.” Given the Lodge of Roses’ interest in matters of Arthurian legend any hints of the Grail would be taken with utmost seriousness; a spirit quest to determine the veracity of this rumor would probably entail the recruitment of others outside the lodge both for support and because some Grail legends note that those who do not necessarily think themselves worthy (i.e., non-Rose members) might be the only ones who can approach or acquire the relic. Of course, just as problematic is the realization that many tales revolve around the notion of the Grail not being a physical thing at all but rather a symbol of divine grace. Can such a thing truly be found in the *Hisil* — and if so what other forces would seek to acquire it?

• **Field of Champions:** The Lodge of Roses has decided to host a tournament open to all the Uratha in the area (and other wolven outsiders should they wish to make the journey). This event, held in both the physical and spirit worlds consists of various contests designed to show the prowess and tenacity of the Uratha. Of course such a gathering would be a prime location for outsider werewolves to spy, conspire and scheme. Also those with old grudges from within or without the werewolf world — against either the lodge or other competitors — might use this opportunity to bring embarrassment or worse to their nemeses. Given how much honor is at stake for the proceedings the lodge will be especially vigilant against all plots.





FERGAL MACREA

Auspice: Ithaeur

Tribe: Blood Talons

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 3 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure

Mental Skills: Investigation 1, Medicine (Emergency Care) 3, Occult (Cultural Beliefs) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics (Running) 3, Brawl (Claws) 4, Survival 3, Weaponry (Swords) 3

Social Skills: Empathy Intimidation Persuasion

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Holistic Awareness 3, Languages (First Tongue, English, Gaelic) 3

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Pride

Health: 7 (9/11/10/7)

Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8)

Defense: 1 (all forms)

Speed: 10 (11/14/17/15)

Renown: Glory Honor Wisdom

Gifts: (1) The Right Words, Two-World Eyes; (2) Read Spirit; (3) Gauntlet Cloak

Rituals: 2; **Rites:** (1) Rite of the Spirit Brand; (2) Rite of Dormancy

Fergal Macrea grew up believing the Emerald Isle was the most beautiful place on Earth. After the First Change at age 17, his eyes focused on the realities of the new world around him, and he realized he was exactly right. He has always been enamored with the idea of serving justice; more importantly, he believed it was possible to always do the just action, even if

it wasn't necessarily easy. This worldview was reaffirmed near-nightly watching news at the local pub, witnessing the toll that dishonorable violence and bloodshed did to his country; to this day he believes that, under no circumstances, do the ends justify the means.

Sadly, life has had its share of heartaches for Fergal. By far the most depressing resulted from a childhood promise to be true to his auburn-haired beloved, Arlene Maeve. This vow ultimately resulted in their being wed when he was 20 and she 19. Their marriage was as idyllic as one can be between human and Uratha for the first six years; during this time, he more strongly affirmed his desire to couple his strength and his desire to do right, culminating in admittance to the Lodge of the Rose. Unfortunately, this tranquil scene fell apart three months after her 25th birthday, when she underwent *her* First Change. Fergal was part of the impromptu pack assembled to help usher her in, and the need to use violence against his rampaging wife was almost too much to bear.

Of course, the Oath made it impossible for them to remain together as man and wife, and the two supposedly went their separate ways. However, the nature of Fergal's lifelong vow is such that he doesn't feel right in leaving her; he doesn't believe he'll ever love again, and is too proud to ask his lodgemates for help.

Arlene, having joined the Bone Shadows, is still learning much from her mentor; the two of them have been traveling throughout Europe looking for secrets and insight. Unbeknownst to them, the pair has a shadow — a former husband who most wants the one thing he can't have, and is stuck by a vow he can't escape.

LODGE OF SCARS

IN VENERATION OF SCARRED BEAR

The Firstborn of Pangaea hunted as a true pack long before the divisions of Pure totem and Forsaken Incarnae. In this age, the spirit-wolves were bonded together, with Dire Wolf the alpha, Winter Wolf the beta, and Rabid Wolf the omega. The eight wolves tore across the Shadow World, heedless of the Uratha and their growing plight. It was an age of hunters and hunted, predators and prey. The Firstborn, just as all spirits, sought out those weaker than themselves in order to feed and grow strong. The strength and will of the Incarnae is power and focus incarnate. Few could ever stand against the spirit-wolf pack, even when Urfarah left them to hunt with the werewolves. One of the few beings that managed to fight off the Firstborn no matter how many times he was hunted down was the spirit called Wrathful Bear. Wrathful Bear was young and in his prime, and a terrifying creature consumed with his own hunts.

The first time the spirit-wolves encountered this gigantic beast, they leapt and howled and roared. Here was a worthy foe, and they were overjoyed at the thrill of a challenging hunt. But the challenge proved too much even for the spirit children of Father Wolf, and Wrathful Bear sent the Incarnae fleeing to lick their wounds. Again and again over the years they came at the mighty spirit, and this mightiest of bear-spirits fought them back with lumbering charges and powerful claws.

But it could not last. Each time the spirit-wolves weakened the bear-spirit further, and it soon came to pass that Wrathful Bear became known as Scarred Bear. Soon he would fall and become prey, when next he encountered the Firstborn hunters. One by one, they came at him, growling questions and howling challenges.

“How is it that you still stand, great bear?” asked Kamduis the Death Wolf. “Your time is over, and I can sense it in your Essence.” And Scarred Bear, bleeding spiritual energy from a hundred wounds, laughed and said no more.

“Answer me then,” came the snarls of Silver Wolf, who was sickened at the tottering bear’s posture and refusal to die. “You are old and weak and scarred by a hundred past injuries. What shame is there in trying to run?” And Scarred Bear, who had grievously hurt Silver Wolf most of all, laughed again and said no more.

Then came Dire Wolf, alpha of the Firstborn, and his words were the growls of nature’s honesty. “You die now, bear. All your past harms against us mean nothing, for now the hunt is complete and we shall eat the Essence from your bones.” And Scarred Bear, aged and white-furred, roared a predator’s

defiance. In the roar was a reminder of every claw that rent flesh, every fang that crunched bone, every swipe that sent a spirit-wolf sprawling and fleeing. And for the second — and last — time in the history of the Firstborn, the wolves turned and fled.

Scarred Bear did not see the spirit-wolves for an age. When they came to him again, they noted the increase in white and silver fur, but saw clearly that the ancient bear-spirit still retained a hunter’s tenacity and lethal claws. Now the Firstborn were only five, and they spoke for the half-flesh children they served as tribal totems.

“Come with us, Scarred Bear,” growled Winter Wolf with respect, “and teach our eldest children the strengths of age.”

The werewolf who lives to see his powerful body succumb to old age is rare. Those who do experience this damning realization know all too clearly that their time in the Wild Hunt is in its twilight. Any one of these ageing warriors can likely point to a host of scars, cuts and healed injuries over his body, citing the many times Death has tried to take a swipe at him. Tried and failed.

The Lodge of Scars is focused on honoring the few werewolves with the wisdom, cunning and strength to survive to old age. An elder Uratha is something of a paradox to the mixed hearts of the People. Wolf instinct imprinted in the werewolves’ minds tells them that advanced age is a weakness; a wolf weakened by his years will fail in the hunt and slow the pack with his frailty. Human logic says the same, though it tempers derision of deteriorating physical prowess with respect for the wisdom acquired over a long life. The mind of a werewolf feels both of these gut reactions clashing with the tumultuous knowledge of Urfarah’s death because of age and weakness, coupled with admiration for the sheer scope of Gifts, rituals and accomplishments possessed by elders encountered in the past.

But the Lodge of Scars does not acknowledge the prowess of all aging Uratha. Scarred Bear is the spiritual embodiment of ancient predatory strength, and impressed the tribal totems with his tenacity and power even when standing on the brink of destruction. The elders among the People who share similar traits find acceptance among this most elitist of lodges. No matter how many years have passed, the elder must still retain the fiery anger of Rage in his blood and understand the blessing of the most powerful Gifts.

The lodge is not bound by limitations of auspice or tribe, allowing any werewolf entry so long as he passes the





test set by Scarred Bear. Few members form into all-Scar packs, with many instead preferring to join (or remain with) a pack of younger Uratha and offer whatever wisdom and experience is appropriate. Perhaps the majority of the Scars live as lone wolves, either establishing a territory and offering counsel or aid to any nearby packs or walking the two worlds seeking to spread knowledge before the end finally comes.

PATRON SPIRIT

Scarred Bear is a distant but proud totem. The prestige of being bonded to a spirit respected (and according to some legends, even feared) by the Firstborn cannot be overstated. Werewolves who manage to gain acceptance within the Lodge of Scars are not only among the most respected (and Renowned) Uratha alive but are also bound to one of the most powerful denizens of the Shadow Realm in both history and legend. A werewolf who has impressed Scarred Bear is worthy of respect and probably fear, and any Uratha with more than a passing knowledge of Shadow history will know it.

Interestingly enough, when Scarred Bear does manifest as an aged ursine and approach his lodge-children, he has been known aid them in battle, bestow Gifts and even to carry messages to the tribal Incarnae. An appearance by this spirit is rare and notable enough to even be recorded in the local Cahalith's tales. Naturally, there is no global consensus on the worthiness of Lodge of Scars members. It is neither the responsibility nor the duty for any pack to heed the words of a Scar, and individual packs will "bend the knee" or

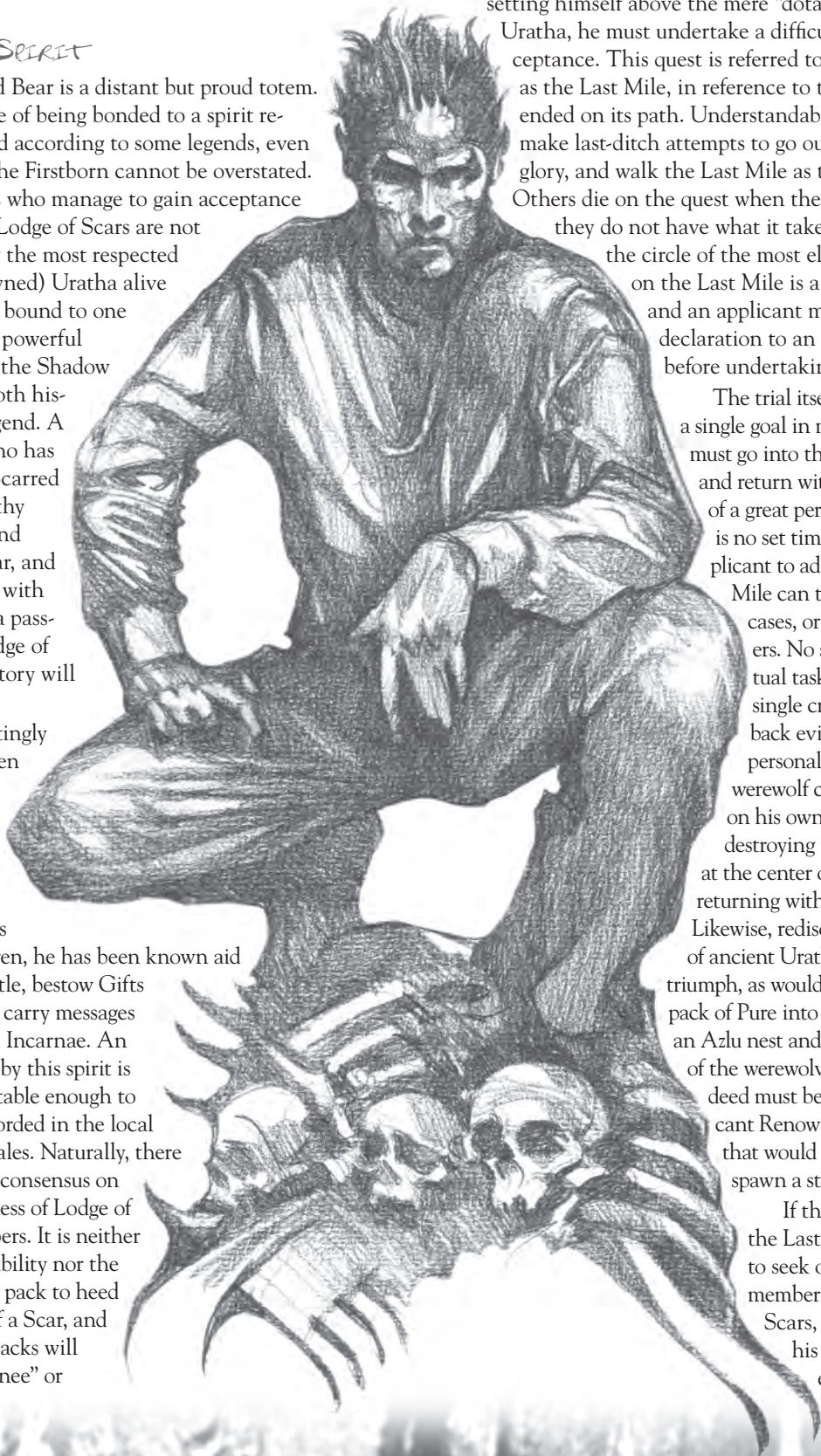
acknowledge the elder in any way they see fit. But the bond to Scarred Bear is a powerful indicator of worthiness to any Uratha that knows his history.

JOINING THE LODGE

When a werewolf wishes to gain the significant respect often awarded to the elders of the Lodge of Scars, setting himself above the mere "dotage" of other aging Uratha, he must undertake a difficult trail to gain acceptance. This quest is referred to with grim humor as the Last Mile, in reference to the number of lives ended on its path. Understandably, some werewolves make last-ditch attempts to go out with a blaze of glory, and walk the Last Mile as their swansong. Others die on the quest when they finally realize they do not have what it takes to be entered into the circle of the most elite elders. Success on the Last Mile is a rare occurrence, and an applicant must make a formal declaration to an established Scar before undertaking the quest.

The trial itself is conducted with a single goal in mind. The werewolf must go into the Shadow Realm and return with unarguable proof of a great personal victory. There is no set time limit for any applicant to adhere to, and the Last Mile can take years in some cases, or mere hours in others. No standard for the actual task exists, either. The single criterion is to bring back evidence of a great personal achievement. A werewolf could seal a Wound on his own, by single-handedly destroying the powerful spirit at the center of the region and returning with proof of its death. Likewise, rediscovering a lost piece of ancient Uratha lore is a worthy triumph, as would be leading an entire pack of Pure into the waiting jaws of an Azlu nest and making sure none of the werewolves survived. The deed must be worthy of significant Renown, and something that would more than likely spawn a story or two.

If the elder returns from the Last Mile, he is free to seek out an established member of the Lodge of Scars, show the proof of his victory and demand entry. The member



decides the merit of the applicant's claim, though merely surviving the Last Mile is a notable achievement, provided the werewolf didn't simply hide in the Shadow and return after some time had elapsed (and spirits will always see such activity).

Werewolves of the lodge may add the honorific *k'ruuk*, meaning "scarred one," to their names.

Prerequisites: Applicants must know at least *three* five-dot Gifts, and have three or more Renown attributes at ●●● or higher.

Benefits: Members purchase Dominance, Inspiration and Rage Gifts as if they were tribal Gifts, and the skills Persuasion, Intimidation and Politics (with the Uratha specialty) are bought at new dots x2 rather than new dots x3. Also, Scar Fetishes are extremely common among this lodge, and cost one dot less than standard no matter their effects. Upon joining, members also receive three dots in Renown to be distributed according to the deeds performed on the Last Mile.

LODGE OF SCARS RITE: CLAWS OF ASHES (●●●)

This rite was developed in order to offer the aging Scars an additional edge in the battles they fought. As few scarred elders leap into battle with the tenacity and fury of the young, the werewolves grouped together and created a ritual that would allow a respected werewolf to heighten his killing skills in other ways, through preparation and meditation before a battle. The result of this was the rite that came to be known as Claws of Ashes.

Performing the Rite: This is a deeply personal rite that cannot be performed on others. The ritemaster meditates for an indeterminate amount of time, but for no less than an hour before beginning the actual rite. This is a period of reflection and clearing of the mind, when the werewolf must dwell upon the chances of his own death in the coming battle.

The ritualist then starts a small fire (several candles are considered acceptable if a modest "campfire" isn't available), and thrusts his hands over the tip of the flames for nine heartbeats, while snarling his anger at no longer possessing the true fire of youth. Then the werewolf rubs cold ashes over his hands, washing them in the ash of a long-dead fire. He does this for a further nine heartbeats, while solemnly admitting that his own death will come soon. After these two benedictions are complete, the Uratha holds his burned and filthy hands up to Luna's face, begging the Mother for luck in battle and invoking the ancient might of Scarred Bear in the coming conflict.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The rite fails and the Scar may not call upon Scarred Bear in this manner for another month.

Failure: The rite simply fails.

Success: The werewolf feels a painful, barely-suppressed ache in his hands, reaching from a dull throb in the bones of his forearms to an agonizing and shrill pain in his fingertips. All of the Uratha's claw attacks inflict aggravated damage +2 until sunrise.

Exceptional Success: As with a success, though the blessing of Scarred Bear also adds +1 Strength to the previous effects, which also lasts until dawn.

LODGE OF SCARS STORY HOOKS

- **The End of the Road:** A member of the Lodge of Scars in the area (perhaps an ally or mentor to the pack) decides it is time to venture into the Shadow one last time and seek death in battle. He asks the pack to find a worthy foe for him to face and promises to maintain their territory in their absence

- **Bearing Witness:** An elder acquaintance of the pack seeks entrance to the Lodge of Scars, but to do so he must walk the Last Mile. He asks the characters to accompany him on the journey in order that they may bear witness to his deeds and submit their testimonies as evidence when the judgment comes. How will the characters react if their elderly friend is in danger of dying during the challenge? Is the werewolf's pride worth more than his life or do the characters storm in to save their ally and to Hell with the consequences?

- **Long-Lost Relative:** A Scar approaches one of the characters in the pack with the story that he is the character's real grandfather. This newcomer has nothing in common with his "child" though the physical family resemblance is uncanny. How does the character react when this claim is made? Does he ignore all the claims and maintain his stable family life or is the temptation to study under such a mighty and experienced tutor simply too much? Is the Scar even telling the truth or is there some hidden side to the story? Difficulties arise when the elder werewolf begins to establish another pack in a neighboring hunting ground perhaps allying with rivals of the characters' pack and the other werewolves begin to seem alarmingly well advised about the strengths and weaknesses of the characters. How do the characters react to this apparent treachery and the tensions of impending clashes with another Forsaken pack?

EDWARD SHATTERSONG K'RUUK

Auspice: Cahalith

Tribe: Blood Talons

Mental Attributes: Intelligence Wits Resolve

Lodge of Scars





Physical Attributes: Strength 4 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 5 (6/7/7/6)

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics Crafts Investigation (Battle Scenes) 3, Medicine (Anatomy) 3, Occult (Spirit Choirs) 4, Politics (Human, Uratha, Spirits) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Firearms (Rifles) 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival 5, Weaponry (Knives) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Fellow Predators) 5, Intimidate (Veiled Threats) 4, Persuasion 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies (Other Scars) 4, Allies (Local Pack Alphas) 2, Encyclopedic Knowledge, Inspiring, Language (First Tongue, Latin) 2, Meditative Mind, Resources 2

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Health: 10 (12/14/13/10)

Initiative: 9 (9/10/11/11)

Defense: in all forms

Speed: 14 (15/18/21/19)

Renown: Cunning Glory Honor Purity Wisdom

Gifts: Every Mother Luna, Rage, Strength, Inspiration, Gibbous Moon and Father Wolf Gift from levels 1–5.

Rituals: 5; Rites: Any from Chapter Two of **Werewolf: The Forsaken** including Claws of Ashes

Edward Shattersong K'ruuk is a cynical man in his mid-50s. Never a particularly handsome man, his life of turmoil and struggle has weathered his features further to the point where he could add a decade to his age and few would suspect the lie. He moves with an old man's hesitation, though his body is stronger and healthier than many werewolves half his age. His voice is a cracked and throaty purr, though it ruins any song he ever tries to sing — hence his deed name, which is an appellation that still makes him smile.

He lived the life of most werewolves until he reached his 49th birthday, at which point he approached the Lodge of Scars seeking entry. When he walked the Last Mile, he calmly headed straight into a Wound festering in the center of a nearby city, returning an hour later missing one hand and staggering from blood loss, but bearing the destroyed remains of a Maeltinet spirit, one of the servants of the Maeljin. As if this weren't enough, he attended a meeting of several packs in the region and threatened them all with destruction unless they banded together in order to seal the spreading Wounds in the area. Amazingly, out of a combination of respect for Shattersong's achievements and fear of his experienced and lethal pack, a temporary alliance was formed that lasted an entire lunar cycle. At the end of the short joining of the packs, Edward returned to the Scar he originally spoke with and demanded entry to the Lodge of Scars. Unsurprisingly, it was granted without hesitation.

Now Edward spends his twilight years traveling alone. He is a strange soul, for though he has led packs to success and glory in the past, he feels stifled and pressured when he has to "look after" the younger members in the group. He prefers a support role of advisor and back-up warrior, and never remains with a pack for more than a few months. If a pack shows no interest in his advice on how to improve their territory (and many do not take well to his blunt speech), then he feels no guilt about letting them squirm through their own troubles alone. He takes his knowledge where it is desired, and moves on when it is not.

Edward knows there are times and places for hot words and hotter blood, but over the years he has developed an almost infinite capacity for patience. He can listen to any argument and take any insults with an indulgent and polite smile. His is always a voice that advocates against running off and attacking without a solid plan. Shattersong also has a great deal to be proud of, and has difficulty concealing the fact at times. Some meetings with younger werewolves have been called to a close at dawn while Edward *still* found words to say about himself.

LODGE OF SONGKRAN

PAU CHAI FAA!

Tasanee crashed through the jungle, her naked Hishu form topped with the lean, frothing muzzle of Urhan. The wolf's nose sniffed the air as her human fingers scratched furrows down her own arms. Dried blood sat crusted in the valley between her breasts; frantic with hunger, she dipped her lupine head low and licked at the flaking red. The prey was nearby. She could hardly contain herself.

Her legs pushed her forward without her even acknowledging the motion. Her callused feet carried her over a fallen log teeming with ants and past a nest swarming with hornets. They bit and stung at her, but she did not notice or care. All she cared about was what her guts and teeth and tongue wanted: food. It did not matter that this hunger came with terrible cost. The spirits ignored her. The Shadow was practically closed off, the Gauntlet an impenetrable wall. She felt wildly out-of-sorts, as if she was hardly a part of her own body — a prisoner perhaps, trapped in flesh gone mad. None of it mattered.

The smell of potent blood, coppery and sweet, came on a humid wind, and she chased after it as if it were a butterfly. In the distance she heard the rattling chatter of gunfire: Burmese drug lords executing one another again and again. She had eaten plenty of them. They did not fill her belly, not as well as other prey.

She leapt down into a ravine, and in the clearing up ahead she saw her victim: a young black wolf with white paws, drinking from a small stream. The whelp did not see her coming. Even before she reached him, her mouth could taste his flesh. As forbidden as it was, nothing tasted as good as the meat of her People.

But it all went awry. She leapt for him and suddenly he was no longer there, and she heard laughing. Young men with dark eyes and yellow canines poking past human lips surrounded her. She lunged at one — but another stepped in her way with a golden bowl full of clear water. He splashed it in her face, and it burned like fire.

She felt her wolf face fade, leaving her only with a human head whose hair was matted with new sticks and old gore. Tasanee howled as the water burned her. But for a moment, she felt oddly calm and safe — as if the prisoner inside the flesh was allowed to see the sun, if only for a fleeting moment.

"Phu Chi Feh," the bowl-carrier said with a smile. The mountain always points to the sky, is what he said. Tasanee wept as they bound her arms and legs and hoisted her aloft. In

her mind's eye she saw an orchid growing from bloody ground. Phu Chi Feh, indeed.

In the rainforests of the Golden Triangle, purity has been defeated. In that place named for its crux of three countries — Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos — only madness and addiction reign supreme. Men grow poppies for the heroin producers, and women sit cramped in huts and trailers mixing the noxious concoctions for the methamphetamine labs. Natives are hooked — given plenty of drugs and guns but little food or freedom. The horrible things in the forest feed, too, driven by insatiable hungers. Spirits wriggle free from the Shadow and worm into the hearts of the addicted, Urging and then Claiming those lost souls. The blood-hungry *Kha-Yaawk*, or Leech Hosts, empty out the guts and bones of those lost in the jungle and fill them anew with the sinuous slick forms of the ravenous parasites. Worst of all are the wayward Forsaken. The place wore down the purity of the packs in the Golden Triangle. It drove them mad. Any hope for Harmony seemed lost as they fed from the villagers and even one another. Purity seems a distant dream.

It was said then that the Forsaken of the area dreamt of a single wild orchid growing up out of a puddle of clotting blood. As the orchard grew, the rank blood turned slowly to water — pure water, as clean as anything could be. One Forsaken, a Blood Talon called Nuananong, went to the others of his tribe and told them that it was time to make a change. It was time for rebirth — to drag the lawless, corrupted jungle to purity and show the jungle its true face.

Since then, over the last 10 years, several Forsaken from the nearby territories of Thailand have banded together to return the glory of the rainforest and its inhabitants, allowing purity to reign once again. This lodge of werewolves calls itself *Songkran*, after the New Year's Festival of the same name. The Songkran — a spring celebration — is a time of renewal. Celebrants throw water upon one another and ritually clean their houses. They see it as a time to start anew, to free themselves from fetters and obligations. The Forsaken see their task as exactly that: cleansing and liberation.

They refuse to limit this cleansing, and believe it belongs to all. Humans should be free of addiction and slavery. The spirits should be wrenched free from their mounts and thrown back into the Shadow, where they belong in balance. The Leech Hosts represent an infec-





tion, and need to be obliterated for the good of the region. And those Forsaken who have lost their way need to be returned to sanity. The moon shall look down again upon these broken children and grant them blessings once more.

None of this is easy. It takes far more work than the lodge perhaps has numbers for. The fact that these Forsaken have spread out of the region, attempting to bring their idea of purity to other areas of the world, as well, may be for the better or for worse. Better because they can help others elsewhere. Worse because they are splitting already weakened numbers.

Each task brings new challenges. Defeating the drug lords is easy enough — burning their fields and killing their leaders does that well enough. But combating addiction requires time and patience. Helping fellow Uratha out of that dark hole of imbalance is perhaps the most demanding task of them all. It is a long road out of insanity. It would be easier and perhaps more merciful to simply destroy them. But the Lodge of the Songkran will not allow that. The wayward werewolves need a chance to once more see the light, to cease being chained to their feral urges.

How a pack helps a low-Harmony regain his balance is different for every subject. Some low-Harmonies must be forced into a temporarily ascetic lifestyle, allowed to hunt only for meager rabbits and made to meditate. Others must be violently deprogrammed, shackled down and shown the path of regret. Each case is a unique puzzle, and none are straightforward. But the werewolves of this lodge know that, and do what they must to soothe the festering wounds of the soul.



THE KHA-YAAWK

The Kha-Yaawk are the Leech Hosts of the rainforests. They are solitary creatures, stuffed into the skins of stolen bodies. Some appear much like normal humans (or animals, for the Kha-Yaawk can steal bestial forms as well), except with skin that occasionally wriggles and glistens with a gelatinous sheen. Others are full-blown monstrosities: half-human things with wet black skin and a face full of needled suckers. The Kha-Yaawk drink blood. In this way, they gain sustenance (and Essence). Consuming the blood of the Uratha grants them twice as much blood than if taken from a normal mortal. Once a Leech Host feeds, it usually does not require food again for three to six months.

The Leech Hosts have the following Numina immediately available to them: Discorporation, Toxic Bite, Wall Climb (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 240). Toxic Bite results in tingling numbness. The Kha-Yaawk also have another Numina unique to their kind:

Secretions: By spending a point of Essence, the Kha-Yaawk can excrete a gooey, foul-smelling fluid from its bare skin. This fluid makes the creature's flesh slippery and more lithe, resulting in a +2 to the thing's Defense. The fluid also has a chemical factor in which it burns anything that touches it. Contact with the skin does one automatic lethal damage to whatever the Leech Host touches. An object that touches the Leech Host suffers one point of damage to the object's Structure regardless of its Durability.

If the Storyteller is uninterested in debuting new Hosts, these creatures can work as Claimed antagonists instead.



PATRON SPIRIT

The presiding spirit of the Songkran Lodge is *Boon-naahm*, or "Uncontaminated Water." The spirit appears as a moving sheet or ribbon of floating water, clean and clear. The spirit undulates and speaks with a First Tongue susurur, as if whispered atop a babbling brook.

The curious thing about the spirit is that it only appears to members who have Harmony scores of 9 or 10. While these Forsaken allow members in who have Harmony lower than that (7 as minimum), the spirit appears only to those who are the near-pinnacle of balance.

It's worth noting that many of the members claim Buddha as a kind of secondary patron spirit. They've never seen any evidence of a "Buddha-spirit," but simply accept his presence as a distant watcher. (Some have seen odd mandala-like spirits: spinning, hypnotic designs that fill one with a sense of numbing serenity. A few attribute these to being servants of the Buddha, but no evidence exists to support this.)

JOINING THE LODGE

Aside from the original formative pack, those who belong to the lodge are also those Forsaken who were once targeted and saved by the lodge. In this way, joining the Songkran Forsaken doesn't require any *formal* trials, but the long road to regaining Harmony and purity is trial enough. Rarely is it an easy climb, or brief. A Forsaken may take years or decades to truly regain what once was lost; only then is she fit to join those who rehabilitated her.

Of course, that involves official, recognized membership. When the lodge abducts a Forsaken (or if the werewolf agrees to come freely), she is granted a kind of lesser role within the group. She is still able to gain some of the benefits afforded to Songkran members (see below), but is not considered a full member, or allowed to learn any of the lodge's unique rites.

The lodge does not allow these lessers to leave the group once they have joined it. While some suggest that a Forsaken must *want* to change and therefore should

not be kept against her will, the lodge disagrees. Addiction, they say, is not something that allows for rationality. The imbalance that results from disharmony clouds one's judgment and traps one inside the wanting flesh. The road to purity is clouded, and so the Forsaken must be dragged down it, if need be. Certainly many Forsaken recognize this and come to this conclusion on their own, actively seeking the rehabilitation that the Songkran offers. Those who do not see it are forced toward the goal regardless.

Once the lodge decides a Forsaken has proven her purity, the lodge members allow her to join. Many packs within the lodge are glad to have the members, but if the werewolf denies the invitation, that's acceptable. A few packs, however, are less accepting of a rejected invitation. Rehabilitated Forsaken join, or they are punished with pain until they do. This forcible initiation is rare, but does happen.

The lodge is open to Forsaken of all tribes and auspices.

Prerequisites: Empathy ●●●, Purity ●●●; all members must also maintain Harmony 6 or above

Benefits: All members — whether they are the targets of rehabilitation or the actual rehabilitators — gain a +2 dice to all Composure rolls used to resist *Kuruth*. All members also have an easier time purchasing Harmony with experience points. Buying a dot of Harmony costs two fewer experience points than usual.

All “full” members (i.e., those not currently undergoing rehabilitation) also gain two additional benefits. First, if a Forsaken doesn't already know the Elemental Gift Call Water (●), he is taught the Gift at no experience point cost. Second, because members are very close and have often been through a lot together, they may give each other Willpower points. No more than one Willpower point may be given to another lodge member per day. Touch is not required to do so, but the two werewolves sharing Willpower must at least look at one another.

SONGKRAN RITE

WATERS OF SONGKRAN (●●●)

Also called *Khan Kwaang* (or “water-throwing”), this is a ritual of purity taught only to members. To the Songkran Forsaken, throwing clean water upon an individual is an act of purification. During the springtime water of Songkran, the

Thai people dash about the streets tossing water upon each other for the same reason.

This ritual gives this act a level of potency. Not only does this ritual help to purify a tainted werewolf, but it also burns the skin of any creature who is in some way corrupted. When the water hits the flesh, it sizzles and steams wildly, causing the target intense pain.

Performing the Rite: The water the ritemaster hopes to purify can be in any vessel, but the Songkran werewolves prefer it be in a bowl (often gold, but wood or another metal is fine). The ritemaster prays over the bowl and lights incense, blowing the smoke over the surface of the water. She also must place an orchid in the water, letting it float for the final minutes of the ritual.

Cost: 2 Essence

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Extended (10 successes; each roll represents one minute of preparation)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The rite fails, and the water turns black. The ritemaster may not attempt to cast this rite again for 12 hours.

Failure: No successes are gained.

Success: Successes are gained. If the total reaches 10 or more successes, the water is thus blessed with purity. This has a number of effects.

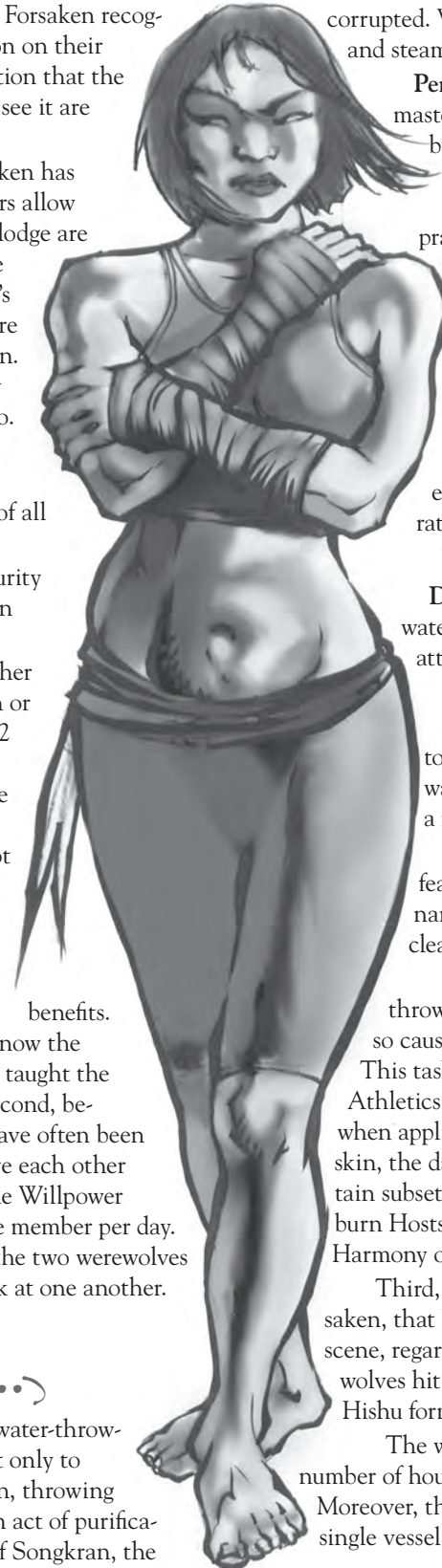
First, the water is literally purified. If it featured any chemical or natural contaminants, they are now gone and the water is clean and potable.

Second, when *all* the blessed water is thrown upon the bare flesh of a target, doing so causes one point of aggravated damage.

This task can be performed with a Dexterity + Athletics roll, with the target's Defense subtracted when applicable. If any of the water hits the target's skin, the damage is done. This *only* works on a certain subset of targets, however. The water will only burn Hosts, Ridden and those Forsaken who have a Harmony of 3 or less.

Third, if the water successfully hits *any* Forsaken, that Forsaken may not enter Death Rage this scene, regardless of the circumstances. All werewolves hit by the water also revert automatically to Hishu form.

The water only maintains its blessing for a number of hours equal to the ritemaster's Primal Urge. Moreover, the ritemaster can only cast this upon a single vessel of water at any given time. While some





would like to stockpile this sacred water, the permutations of the ritual deny them that possibility.

Exceptional Success: Successes are gained. If the total reaches 15 or more successes, the water now does two aggravated damage to the appropriate targets (Hosts, Riders, Forsaken with Harmony 3 or less).

SONGKRAN FETISH

BLESSED STRING (◦)

When a Forsaken binds a water elemental into a string, she can bless it with the magic of the Songkran. When she activates this fetish and ties it around the wrist of another, she can always be attuned to the wearer's state of emotion. No matter how far apart the two are, the werewolf who activated the fetish may roll a Wits + Empathy roll to determine the wearer's dominant emotion (anger, love, hate, fear, joy, sorrow, etc.) at that exact moment. With an exceptional success on that roll, the Forsaken can gain a +1 bonus to all Social rolls used on or against the wearer for the following day. Many users of this fetish do not tell the wearer what it is they are wearing (for if they knew, they may be more likely to simply remove it and cast it into the trees).

SONGKRAN STORY HOOKS

• **This Grim Irony:** The irony of the inaptly named "Pure werewolves" is not lost on most Songkran members. The Pure are over concerned with the idea of purity and that has allowed the concept to escape them entirely. The lodge members are confronted with a sudden influx of Pure werewolves to the area. These beasts are clearly imbalanced and perhaps must become the targets of the lodge's activities. Can the lodge members adhere to their normal regimen of abducting said werewolves and bringing them into the fold to regain their spiritual equilibriums? Can the Pure be trusted even when shackled and forced to comply? Moreover, attempting to heal the soul of a single Pure will draw the ire of his packmates. Are the Songkran Forsaken prepared for such a fight? How far are they willing to go to maintain the lodge's ideals?

• **Gone Too Far:** Purity is an idea that when taken too far becomes a kind of impurity. The Nazis are perhaps the embodiment of this idea in modern thinking. A group of Songkran werewolves have come into the area bringing their idea of purity to the Forsaken. Except their idea is a bit more extreme than those of most members. They torture to bring Harmony (thus damaging their own souls in the process but they seem unaware of this), and have a violent and narrow view of what "purity" really means. They are kicked out from the lodge but refuse to accept that and go on acting as if they still belong. Players assume the roles of Forsaken who either

become the targets of this mob of werewolves gone too far or are themselves members who must stop the madness. Things are made worse when some Fire-Touched come sniffing around, spouting their own ideas of purity.

• **Gone South:** One of the local werewolves (perhaps a member of the characters' pack) is losing Harmony quickly, on her way to becoming Zi'ir. Alternately perhaps the local Uratha is already one of the Broken Souls. The Songkran agree to help but only if the characters are willing to save their own souls and join. This requires great cost and effort on their parts, if they're willing. If they are not willing the lodge will stand in the characters' way when attempting to capture, destroy or recuperate the Zi'ir hoping to do that deed themselves. For a different perspective, the characters are instead already Songkran members facing opposition from the local Forsaken in attempting to save the soul of the Broken Soul Uratha.

TASANEE

Auspice: Cahalith

Tribe: Blood Talons

Mental Attributes: Intelligence, Wits, Resolve

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2 (1/2/1/2), Composure

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Medicine (Herbal) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics, Brawl, Stealth, Survival (Exposure) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy (Sense Fear) 5, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Kind Words) 3, Socialize 2

Merits: Language (English) 3, Meditative Mind, Striking Looks 4, Totem (Whispering Stream) 3

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 8 (10/12/11/8)

Initiative: 7 (7/8/9/9)

Defense: 3 (3/3/3/3)

Speed: 10 (11/14/17/15)

Renown: Glory, Purity, Wisdom

Gifts: (1) Clarity, Death Sight, Mask of Rage; (2) Luna's Dictum, Mighty Bound; (3) Iron-Rending, Voice of Command; (4) Break the Defiant, Spirit Skin

Her name means "beautiful view," but what she has seen in this life so far has been far from beautiful. Her memory of the events that lead her to this point is not absolute; it comes in fits and starts, often while dreaming or during those moments during meditation. These hor-

rible memories — of being lost and starving in the jungle, of eating one of her old packmates, of vomiting up bits of blood and bone and gristle — hit her like waves and then recede like a swift undertow.

How she became so debased — perhaps she was even one of the Broken Souls — remains unclear to her. What forced her down that path? Why was she left mad and frantic in the rainforest, counting ants on a log or arranging leaves in strange patterns? She felt like a distant observer to her own life. Still, the realities of what drove her that way evade her.

What is clear is how the Songkran saved her. She thought they were food, and she went after them with a ravening need. They cast the waters upon her and took her away with them, where they set about the years-long task of bringing her out of the darkness and into light. It was never easy. Sometimes they gave her peace. Other

times they gave her pain. It is no simple thing, learning again how to be Uratha, remembering how to belong to the People she once left. But somehow they managed, and now Tasanee is one of their proudest accomplishments. She leads the charge against the Leech Hosts, and she herself has brought three other imbalanced Forsaken to the fold in order to retrain their souls toward the light.

Her life is good, and is nearing a beautiful view. The spirits will speak to her again, and the Shadow is no longer out of reach. She can once again fulfill the tasks put forth by Father Wolf. Tasanee is still haunted, though. Those memories come, and with them follow those dark urges. From time to time, she tastes the tang of Forsaken flesh upon her tongue and between her teeth, and in the moments between seconds she wonders what it would be like to take just one more bite.





LODGE OF THE STORM'S EYE

SPIRIT-GUARDIANS AND SECRET-KEEPERS

In the time before time was recorded by men, the spirit Yurgarath was already revered as a god of thunder and storms and sky. Though his true form was that of a powerful and feather-crested serpent-spirit, he watched over the tribes of men out of idle curiosity, going among them on two legs when he saw fit to veil his true nature in a covering of mortal flesh. His benevolence (and his frequent militant anger) was so pronounced upon the people of the region that he soon became misinterpreted as a Creator God. To the Aztecs, he was Quetzacoatl, and he was known as Kulkukan to the Mayans. Also bestowed upon him by the humans of the land were the names Gucumatx, Votan and Zanma. To the Inca, he was simply Viracochan, which is perhaps his most popular title tonight. Few of these cultures or their respective faiths agreed on the spirit's exact nature and power, though he was highly regarded as a principal god — even the highest of the gods — in some mortal minds.

The great spirit Yurgarath was friend to many of the other creatures and beasts of the Shadow World. He numbered amongst his closest allies the spirits Bright Condor and Hunting Cougar; whose mortal and spiritual children lived in abundance on the deserts and in the jungles of the land that would one day be called South America. The land once had another name, an ancient and truer name, but it is lost to all but the oldest of spirits and rarely crosses the lips of any werewolf.

In this era, Yurgarath wandered the world in the years following the Fall and he wept for the mistakes of the past and the dangers the future would bring. The spirits of jungle and desert were voracious, infected, ravenous and uncontrolled. What few of Urfarah's heirs remained in the region were sorely weakened through constant strife, and the terrible spirits of the Shadow became increasingly difficult to control. It was as if the spirit wilds bred newer, more senseless spirit-gods, and the land would soon be torn asunder by Wounds ripping open. Mortal suffering bled into the world's reflection, and spiritual predation sickened both sides of the Gauntlet. The cycle continued, worsened and grew increasingly sour until the air of the Shadow tasted of bile.

Yurgarath appeared before the half-flesh enforcers of the Gauntlet. He spoke truths they already knew, and told of horrors they had already seen. "We know!" they cried to the great spirit, angered even through their respect. "We know and we have seen. But there are too many and we are too few."

And Yurgarath knew then he must help the world, and no longer be content to watch. In this matter, he would become

godly as the first humans had believed. To begin, he taught the werewolves of other ways, secret ways, with which to bind and crush a spirit's resistance. Where claws had failed, great magic would succeed, and he instructed the Uratha how to weave powerful spells of chaining magic around the emerging Wound-gods. He appointed Bright Condor, first and finest of his spirit-brothers, to guide and bless the werewolves in their struggles. Yurgarath himself disappears from history at this point. Some Uratha say he died in the great binding that occurred soon after the lodge was formed in his name, while others — perhaps with more faith — claim that the great spirit returned to his distant, god-like ways and decided he had seen enough of the world up close.

The Uratha of the Lodge of the Storm's Eye seek out the most powerful creatures of the Shadow — the truly maddened, uncontrollable and unbeatable spirit-monsters of the world — in order to bind them and render them harmless. Where claws, guile and honest negotiation have all failed, these werewolves succeed by using ancient binding magic to overcome powerful spirit-foes.

This approach stems from a very real threat in the Darwinian horror of the Shadow Realm, in that there are spirits that simply can never be confidently controlled or destroyed. Some have risen in power and presence to the point where a pack has no real chance of ever overcoming the spirit, and alternate methods of control must be found. Sometimes chiminage and old fashioned diplomacy is also not an option. There is no shortage of spirits that simply don't think or operate on a human-enough mindset for the Uratha to comprehend — but the spirit must still be countered and contained. In other cases, the spirit is vital to the region (such as a location-spirit) and to destroy it would create a spiritually dead area, which is a desperate action taken usually only as a last resort.

Some spirits cannot be controlled, cannot be repelled and cannot be killed. And yet something must be done; only a few werewolves have the ability or knowledge to do this without assistance. If the legends told around the moot fires are true, then the Uratha of the Lodge of the Storm's Eye have many hundreds of powerful spirits bound and rendered semi-aware, trapped in the spirit wilds across the world. The werewolves of this lodge walk a fine balance between chaos and peace — they dwell in the eye of the storm in more ways than one. Should their wards ever break free, the terror they would unleash would be hellish indeed.

In truth, it is practically unheard of for packs to consist entirely of members of this lodge, as Ithaeur are the only Uratha accepted by Bright Condor. No other werewolves are taught the powerful binding spirit-magic of the lodge, and whether this is merely lodge tradition, Bright Condor's own will or a legacy of Viracochan's original intention is unknown. To this day, no member of any other auspice has ever been accepted by the totem, and those who attempt to be are refused with threats of death should they ask a second time.

Ithaeur who join the lodge bring something incredibly valuable back to their packs. New knowledge to incapacitate spirits is certainly the bulk of what they now possess in addition to their established talents, but allegiance with Bright Condor opens up ties to the spirit world that most packs could never consider. Bright Condor (from association with Mesoamerican human religion and personal spiritual resonance) is very well regarded by Helios. Helions are much less scathing to werewolves allied to the totem than such spirits are usually, even relenting to fetish-bindings and teaching Gifts in some cases. Also, the spirits of the Shadow learned long ago to fear Bright Condor; just as the animals of the *gurihal* realm fear the deadly physical incarnation of these birds of prey. Bright Condor is a paragon of spiritual balance and nobility, a hunter under the sun's light and a terrifying predator even without being driven by anger or malice. This is by no means a blanket effect; only spirits that live in the regions Bright Condor and his children are known to hunt (mainly South and Central America) possess this inherent wariness of Uratha allied with the totem.

There is a great deal of superficial variation in the lodge between different regions. In fact, the Lodge of the Storm's Eye does not actually exist as a concept beyond a catch-all term for what are a number of bonded groups that share a past and a totem. On a regional level, Bright Condor's adopted children are much more likely to term themselves members of the "Lodge of Viracochan" or the "Lodge of Quetzacoatl" than they are to use the outsiders' name for their lodge. Individual werewolves take the name of their totem that ties most closely with their perceptions of history, in some cases their ancestry, and their own cultural background.

AZTEC WEREWOLVES

Do the Lodge of the Storm's Eye act and dress like "Aztec werewolves" with blood sacrifices and jangling gold jewelry? In some cases, certainly but not overtly. This is a lodge that had a foundation in Mesoamerica in the Incan era and even today a majority of its members are drawn from the Uratha of South America and Mexico. But there are no barriers against admitting members from either gender or of any nationality ethnicity or tribe. Only the matter

of auspice bars potential members from entering the lodge. In regions where the Aztecs and the ancient Mesoamerican peoples did hold sway, it is not unusual for traditional practices and fetishes to have an obvious flavor from the era, but it is regarded as a practice of honoring the past not cheapening it with garish displays in public.

The flavor of the Lodge of the Storm's Eye comes from the region and its history as well as the hidden truths that the Uratha perceive. The "Aztec" aspects of the lodge therefore arise not just from history but from the spiritual ties and approaches of the lodge's members. These are the werewolves who venture deep into the jungles of Shadow, prowl around the steps of ancient Incan temples in the moonlight and seek out powerful spirits to bind them forever. But they are also Uratha like any others working in packs to keep their hunting grounds under control. Certainly, classic Mesoamerican imagery and mythology surrounds many of the werewolves sworn to Bright Condor and they are not afraid to show it. Storytellers shouldn't fear to run with the regional taste of the lodge. Some of these Uratha might even manage to hold an awe-inspiring pyramid temple as part of their territory and treat with the blood and death spirits that still haunt the stained stones centuries after the great sacrifices.

PATRON SPIRIT

Bright Condor represents all that is noble and regal in condors. He is the killer whose claws flash in the sunlight, and the predator that spirals through the air and takes his prey in a fraction of a heartbeat. He is also the watcher from the heavens, seeing all the land below and laying its secrets bare with his mere glance.

Bright Condor is a vain creature, but holds great affection for those werewolves he deems worthy of joining his lodge. It is not unusual for spirits friendly to Bright Condor to aid his adopted Uratha children far more than might be expected of a non-totemic spirit, perhaps arriving with warnings, prophecies or the offer of physical assistance. And yet, Bright Condor takes great pleasure in seeing members of his lodge achieve their goals without much outside influence, and is not shy about manifesting to make his pride known to a werewolf of the Lodge of the Storm's Eye.

JOINING THE LODGE

To become one of the children of Bright Condor, a werewolf must first attract the attention of the totem. Bright Condor is a proud and noble creature that detests answering summons, and his spirits are often likewise haughty in this regard. An Ithaeur who resorts to a direct Call Jaggling ritual is going to have to fight for the attention he desires, as Bright Condor will resist the summons.





to the best of his ability. It is unlikely the spirit will be well-disposed to anyone who manages to summon it, no matter how impressed the werewolf is with his own abilities.

The surest way to please Bright Condor and gain his attention is by creating an icon in his image, in a rite traditionally called the Offering. The great spirit is as individual as any powerful creature of Shadow and can be honored in many ways, but this method is the traditional (and somewhat unique) way told to many lodge applicants. There is no formula to the medium: a sculptor can carve a stone idol, a computer programmer might render a 3D image from scratch, a painter could paint an actual condor as it nests. The end result is given to a member of the lodge, who in turn shows the offering to Bright Condor, by leaving it at the nearest locus.

The lodge has always been small due to its restrictions on membership and geographical limitations, but Bright Condor's elitism rarely stops new members joining if they have worked to make an icon. Though the quality of the icon will turn Bright Condor's head with more favor, the spirit acknowledges that not all mortals are alike in skill and craft. The effort that a mortal is willing to devote time to shaping an image of the spirit is what pleases the totem.

Once the Offering is complete, the lodge member returns the icon to the creator after a lunar cycle has passed. The member instructs the applicant that he must now bind a condor-spirit into the icon, creating a fetish, which he will then give as a gift to anyone he pleases. Condor-spirits are remarkably resistant to binding, loathing the indignity and confinement of a material fetish. However, a well-made icon will alleviate much of this resistance, for the bird-spirit can see the honor within the effort. If the Crafts roll to make the icon was a dramatic failure, the Uratha suffers a -1 penalty to the Call Gaffling roll and the Fetish Rite roll. Failures garner no penalty or benefit. Successes gain +1 on the rolls for each success beyond the first.

If the fetish creation fails, the applicant is barred from seeking entrance to the lodge for another year. If the roll is successful and the fetish is given away as a gift (often to the lodge member's sponsor), then Bright Condor visits the character next time he steps sideways, and listens to whatever personal oath the

werewolf wishes to swear. The initiation is an informal process, but no less significant for the fact.

Prerequisites: All applicants must be of the Ithaeur auspice. There are no other requirements for entry beyond the trial of joining.

Benefits: Members receive a +2 on all Fetish Rite rolls to create a condor idol in the future. They may also buy the Rite: Shackle Spirit with experience points.

Due to the dangerous environments many of the Lodge of the Storm's Eye frequently enter and train for, the costs of purchasing or raising Occult and Survival becomes new dots x2 instead of new dots x3.

LODGE OF THE STORM'S EYE FETISH

CONDOR IDOL (••)

A Condor Idol allows the carrier to fly in the Shadow Realm (and only in the Shadow Realm) with the grace and speed of a condor-spirit. The idol must be clutched in a fist the entire time the werewolf is in the air, and the effect lasts from any point between dawn and dusk. The fetish can only be activated when Helios' face is in the sky, and does not function at night. Upon a successful activation roll, the Uratha can fly at any speed up to 30 miles per hour or approximately 45 yards per turn. Attacks and other tasks attempted that require a delicate touch while flying suffer a -3 penalty.

Action: Instant to activate; flying is reflexive thereafter.

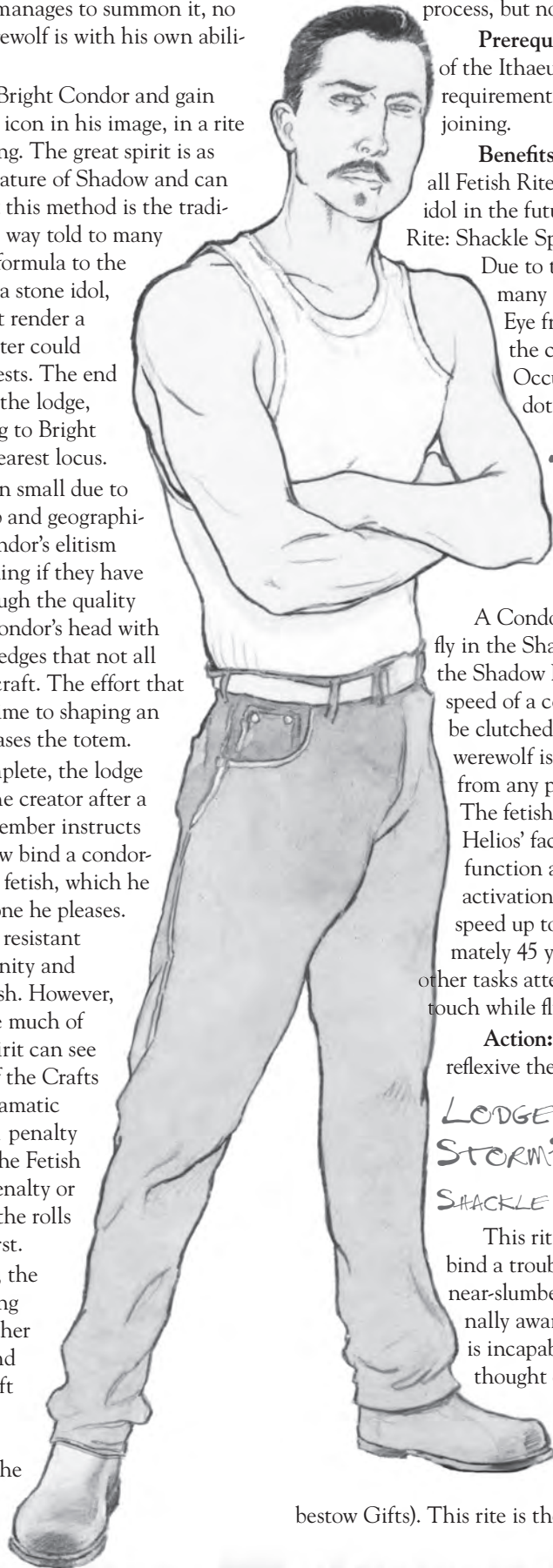
LODGE OF THE STORM'S EYE RITE

SHACKLE SPIRIT (•••)

This ritual allows the Uratha to bind a troublesome spirit in a state of near-slumber. The spirit remains nominally aware of its surroundings, but is incapable of movement, reasoning thought or employing its powers. The

Holt spirit remains where it was bound, and can usually be plied for simple information (but not to

bestow Gifts). This rite is the reason so many members of



the Lodge of the Storm's Eye have a deep understanding of the local Shadow Realm, as Shackle Spirit represents an effective way of pulling information from the minds of the most hostile and powerful spirits — knowledge that would have been lost had the creatures been destroyed.

No spirit wishes to suffer this binding, and those that manage to break free of the rite's effects are certain to seek some form of revenge. The most common form of this rite is a mixture of the rites: Banish Spirit and Bind Spirit, though it results in something quite different and often more useful. As with Bind Spirit, the ritualist must designate one other way that the spirit can be freed. However, unlike the Bind Spirit rite, that condition is always "If I do not return to replenish your shackles in one month's time." It is easy to see how much more secure and tractable a spirit is under the effects of this rite. To lodge members, if they refer to a spirits as "caught within the eye of the storm," they are referring to a being bound by the Shackle Spirit rite.

Performing the Rite: This rite is performed in a similar manner to Bind Spirit, on p. 158 of the **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, and has its own host of variations. The key of the ritual is the five-time repetition of the First Tongue phrase, "You shall never awaken." The ritualist doesn't have to repeat the phrase five times in a row. He may sprinkle it throughout the performance, but the ritual isn't complete until the phrase is said for the fifth time. The effects of the rite wear away after a lunar cycle, though the werewolf can refresh the effect by returning to the bound spirit before the month is up and performing the rite once again. The spirit suffers a -2 penalty on its dice pools to resist being re-shackled.

Dice Pool: Harmony versus the subject's Resistance

Action: Contested and extended (10 successes; each roll requires 30 seconds' time)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The rite or resistance fails outright and all accumulated successes are lost. Either the werewolf cannot attempt to shackle the spirit for another lunar cycle, or the spirit is bound immediately.

Failure: No successes are accumulated at this stage of the contest.

Success: Successes are accumulated toward the total required. If the total reaches 10+ successes, the spirit is shackled and rendered immobile. The spirit will answer any simple questions asked of it, unless it is determined to remain silent. If so, then the spirit must succeed at a Resolve roll with a -4 penalty, or speak the answers it seeks to conceal.

Exceptional Success: Tremendous progress is made or resistance is shown.

LODGE OF THE STORM'S EYE STORY HOOKS

- **Spirit Plague:** Local spirits are becoming sickened and possessed by some unknown power and the only spirit with the knowledge of the spreading "disease" is shackled and hidden by the Lodge of the Storm's Eye. The characters must contact and convince the lodge members to allow them access to the spirit, in order to question it for a cure to the strange taint

- **An Ancient Evil:** A pack of werewolves is killed in the neighboring territory and a member of the Lodge of the Storm's Eye is slain. A spirit that has remained faithfully shackled by generations of Uratha finally breaks free, when the werewolf sworn to Bright Condor is not present to re-bind the creature. At first the spirit is weak and disorientated but it soon gathers its former power and seeks to lash out at anyone related to its hated captors — such as other werewolves

- **Last Chance:** The pack's totem is tainted and maddened by a recent attack on a Wound in the characters' hunting ground. The packmembers certainly doesn't wish to destroy their own totem but no other method of cleansing their spirit brother presents itself. The werewolves have the option of seeking out a member of the Lodge of the Storm's Eye and pleading for their totem to be bound while they seek a cure of some kind; otherwise, the maddened spirit will seek them out one by one and slay them

ALEJANDRO OATHBREAKER

Auspice: Ithaeur

Tribe: Ghost Wolf

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/3), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Cooking) 4, Investigation 2, Medicine (First Aid) 1, Occult (Urban Spirits) 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 1, Firearms (Pistols) 3, Larceny 3, Stealth

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Street Dogs) 3, Intimidate 2, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge

Merits: Barfly, Language (First Tongue, Spanish) 2, Totem 4

Primal Urge:

Willpower:





Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Lust.

Health: 7 (9/11/10/7)

Initiative: 4 (4/5/6/6)

Defense: in all forms

Speed: 9 (10/13/16/16)

Renown: Cunning Glory Wisdom

Gifts: (1) Clear the Way, Feet of Mist, Left-Handed Spanner, Loose Tongue, Partial Change, Sense Malice, Two-World Eyes, Wolf-Blood's Lure; (2) Blending, Read Spirit

Rituals: 3; **Rites:** (1) Rite of Dedication, Banish Human, Shared Scent, Rite of the Spirit Brand; (2) Banish Spirit, Call Gaffling, Call Human, Fortify the Border Marches, Rite of Dormancy; (3) Shackle Spirit

Alejandro waves away any questions of his past. A too-large and poverty-stricken extended family in Mexico City is news to no one, and the Uratha now called Oathbreaker prefers to focus on the present and the future at all times.

Now in his early 30s, Alejandro still runs with the street gang he helped create more than a dozen years ago, and still leads them as they duck and dive through the surface layer of the underworld. Though he's a good-looking guy with no shortage of swarthy charm, his body bears the scars of past hardships. Three bullet scars decorate the skin of his back, and a failed suicide attempt (which caused his First Change) marks both of his wrists. He keeps these injuries covered at all times, and hates to speak of them.

Oathbreaker has a great love for the city, and when he meets his pack several times a week, he glories in the

immersion of running through the Shadow Realm, interacting with the spirits of the city. In several places around the region, he has powerful spirits bound and slumbering, awaiting his next visit to mine them for information and secrets. He treasures his role as a member of the local Lodge of Quetzacoatl, and feels deep ties to the ancient people when he meditates. More to the point, he enjoys the respect his packmates give him for his position and unique knowledge. He makes a point of telling of the bans many denizens of the Shadow possess, which he gleaned from his own captured spirits. He faithfully believes in the ancient tales of Yurgarath, but explains the great spirit to his Mexican packmates through Aztec symbolism and the mythology pertaining to the old god Quetzacoatl.

He earned the name Oathbreaker from when he spat at the ritemaster during his failed Rite of Initiation to the Iron Masters. His own failure gnawed at his nerves, and the sneering condescension of the ritemaster forced Alejandro to act out of anger. He had vowed to follow his great-uncle into the tribe, but broke the promise when he failed the Rite of Initiation and refused to try again.

Oathbreaker is a merciful man when he wants to be: sparing spirits' lives if he sees a chance of redemption and consistently handing the money he steals over to his large, impoverished family. However, he has a darker side. Alejandro loves the predatory aspect of being a werewolf, and it all too easily translates into getting heavy-handed with women if they don't give him what he wants. Though he is not a rapist, he knows he has come close several times, and he fears the knowledge getting back to his packmates. They already know he has smacked a few women around, and their responses convinced Oathbreaker that they will not tolerate it happening in the future.

LODGE OF THE THIN SHADOW

TRICKING THE TRICKSTER FOX

Zoé Blanc had traveled many weeks with his spirit guide, a fox kit named Lover-of-Shadows. They sought the mighty Fox Master-of-Guile himself, to appeal to the ancient spirit that it might grant them power.

Lover-of-Shadows knew its way around the spirit woods, and seemed eager to help, but Fox Master-of-Guile proved too elusive. Zoé seemingly grew impatient; his deal with Lover-of-Shadows was to last only 100 days, and time drew short.

Finally, on the dawn of the 99th day of hunting, Lover-of-Shadows asked, “Are you ready to begin the hunt anew?”

Zoé replied, “I am. I will continue my clandestine search until I can address Fox Master-of-Guile face-to-face... as I am now, most aptly-named Fox Master-of-Guile.”

“How long have you known?” asked Fox Master-of-Guile, its full nature and majesty made manifest before Zoé’s eyes. Its spirit voice contained a hint of bemusement and respect.

“I have suspected since shortly after we began, but counted it as a possibility rather than a certainty. I observed for weeks after that, drinking in all evidence but making no conclusions. And for a week I had drawn my conclusion and known it to be true.”

“Then why did you not act sooner? Or later?”

“I believed that, if you suspected me of knowing, you would either expect me to act as soon as I knew, or on the 100th day. If you suspected I knew earlier, I had hoped the lapse would make you less wary, at least until tomorrow.”

Fox Master-of-Guile nodded. “You know well the first secrets of cunning and stealth. There is much we can do together.”

The end of the 18th century brought with it a wave of revolutionary spirit. One side of the Atlantic fought for freedom in a country that had yet to exist, in a conflict that came to be viewed — after the fact — as a relatively straightforward clash. In contrast, the European continent saw the long-standing French monarchy overthrown in a bloody decade-

long revolution, where sides changed overnight, alliances were forged in pacts and blood and the shadows contained nothing but uncertainty. The stage was set for a century of rebellion, strife and intrigue.

Amid the turmoil of the first French Revolution arose a group of Uratha dedicated to doing what they could to preserve their friends, allies and human holdings. The need for surreptitiousness proved most pressing; while the Irraka were invaluable for their stealthy ways, the challenges at hand were more than the capacities of one lone Uratha. This group, originally called *Amis D’Ombre* (“Friends of Shadow”), honed their stealthy techniques amid the struggle in the street. Soon, the Thin Ones or Thin Men (as they came to be known) became synonymous with stealth and — more importantly — the social skills and societal camouflage necessary to undertake many dangerous missions. They became, succinctly, spies.

Toward the Reign of Terror in 1794, the loose affiliation of like-minded Uratha formed an official lodge, petitioning Fox Master-of-Guile to be the totem spirit. After this, the lodge began learning Gifts that matched with the more mortal abilities they had honed during the previous years.

After France achieved some sort of civility at the turn of the 19th century, the Thin Ones spread out through the rest of Europe (as well as sending a few agents to North America), serving the greater good as masters of espionage. Few trusted them implicitly because of their remarkably secretive nature; the Lodge of the Thin Shadow would reveal little else but the existence of the organization, and that only circumspectly.

Curiously, as the lodge spread out through the rest of the continent, members learned that there might have been one or more previous lodges devoted to stealthy activities. In England, the lodge members found evidence from court records (clandestinely obtained) that another group of seemingly ultra-skilled individuals were working together during the Elizabethan era. The abilities mentioned seemed suspiciously akin to some werewolf Gifts observed by a sufficiently steal-minded individual (and stood as evidence of the





violation of the Oath). What happened to this English group — if they really existed — is unknown; of course, if any lodge did wish to disappear voluntarily, it would be one devoted to stealth.

The new lodge fit well in a world filled with more revolution and intrigue, and the rest of the 19th century saw the Thin Ones in high demand in both the mortal world and among the Uratha community. Unfortunately, the beginning of the 20th century saw the end of wonder that encompassed the Victorian era, and the dangerous collision of human nationalism with the militaristic might to enforce it.

World War I hit the Lodge of the Thin Shadow incredibly hard. This is mostly because their skills were in such high demand during the conflict, but also because some groups — impossibly — seemed to know about the werewolves' true nature, using the new technology to spread silver-plated death from select weapons. Little is known about these *Wolfjäger* (as the Thin Men came to call them), although they seemed to be cowardly — or cunning — foes, preferring sniping and long-range attacks rather than the personal melee combat that werewolves prefer.

After World War I, the *Wolfjäger* seemingly disappeared, and the Thin Ones were left to lick their wounds and contemplate the future. Many of the senior diplomat-spies within the lodge correctly ascertained that a second conflict was inevitable, echoing Marshal Ferdinand Foch's proclamation, "This is not a peace treaty; it's a twenty-year armistice."

World War II also proved devastating to the Thin Men; although there didn't seem to be any mysterious group targeting the lodge specifically, the increased firepower of the new weaponry proved equally dangerous — especially given the number of hot-spot situations the Thin Ones insisted on placing themselves in.

The two wars proved near-ruinous for the Thin Ones; replenishing the numbers of an incredibly secret lodge would be challenging even in ideal situations, and this was especially true given the incredible skill necessary even to be considered for candidacy. At the close of the 1940s, it's estimated that fewer than one in 20 members of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow were still alive and active.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the reduced membership of the lodge saw the rise of communism as the greatest threat facing the human world. In particular, the members worried that Germany — so central to the conflicts of the previous century — would again prove to be a hotbed of conflict between East and

West. Therefore, in 1951 the leaders of the lodge issued *Die Versammlung* (The Gathering), calling the remaining members of the lodge to East Germany. The idea was to recreate the forge that had brought forth the Thin Ones in the first place; they viewed the oppression of the communist regime as being comparable to the turmoil of the first French Revolution.

Unfortunately, this covert war was much more challenging than even the pessimistic members of the lodge had thought. With the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the normally reticent Thin Ones maintained a rigorous silence among even their own kind; they became determined to rebuild their organization and avoid the potential exposure of secrets that may have led to the formation of the Thin-Men-hunting *Wolfjäger* in World War I.

Symbolic of the struggle of ideologies that formed the focus for espionage for decades, the Berlin Wall eventually fell in 1989, and with it so did the secrecy of the lodge. The strict silence had paid dividends; although almost all of the old Thin Men had succumbed to age or battle in the intervening three decades, those who remained were supremely confident, highly skilled and ready to reintegrate within Uratha society. As initial contacts with the lodge were re-established (at least, as re-established as such bonds ever are among a highly secretive organization), the strength and devotion of the Thin Ones to the realm of espionage and stealth were again beyond doubt.

Today, the lodge maintains its primary presence in Europe, with limited (but extant) interaction with other continents. Still highly secretive, they are one of the hardest groups to track down. (As one member wryly put it, "When you need to find a Thin Man, one will let you know.") Those who aren't members who are aware of the lodge's geographic isolationism wonder if they are out of touch with the changing face of the new geopolitical reality; for example, almost no members of the Thin Shadow are known to be operating in the Middle East, except for two agents who have made contact from Israel. In addition, some have called for greater insight into the lodge's operations; it's difficult to trust an organization devoted to secrecy without some assurances as to their greater goals. This also matches poorly with what some view as the lodge's hubris; to the Thin Men, information is to be shared on a need-to-know basis — and most of the world (and even their allies) don't need to know.

Still, these challenges to the lodge's legitimacy are seen by most knowledgeable Uratha as being the usual snipes of wolves challenging the boundaries of supremacy. For the most part, the lodge is seen as serving the

greater good, albeit in a way that few are comfortable with. As one Thin Shadow member famously put it in 1941, “You may trust a Thin Man to save the world, but you won’t trust him to save your life in the process.”

PATRON SPIRIT

The totem spirit of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow is Fox Master-of-Guile, the spirit whose craft, cunning and stealth have been the subject of many of the first tales. Fox Master-of-Guile is personable but mysterious, and one who meets the ancient spirit always gets the impression that the spirit knows exactly all the variables involved, and can juggle the situation to its best advantage.

BECOMING A THIN ONE

To become a Thin Man, you must first be aware that Thin Men exist. This is easier said than done; the lodge doesn’t advertise itself, and it has always been reclusive. However, it also isn’t shy about recruiting new, qualified members.

The Lodge of the Thin Shadow is open to all who accept the lodge’s tenets, although — given its devotion to human interactions and intrigues — the lodge tends to attract only those who would be drawn to secrets in the first place. This includes a large number of Storm Lords, a fair number of Iron Masters and Blood Shadows and a smattering of others.

Joining the lodge requires the completion of a mission from a more renowned Thin Man. Owing to the nature of the supernatural compulsion against revealing secrets, it may or may not be possible for the lodge member to reveal more information about the task; for example, she may be able to say, “Get these documents from that office; no one is allowed to see you,” but she wouldn’t be able to say, “Get these documents because they are important to the Thin Ones.” This mission is usually extremely challenging, and the candidate will be judged based not only on success but on the quality of success; stealth and secrecy are, obviously, valued above all else, and the prospective member who blows up a building to sift through the ashes for the requested documents will be shown the door (after having the documents taken from her, of course).

Once the candidate has successfully completed the mission, she will be instructed as to the solemnity of the lodge’s devotion to stealth. Each member is asked a series of questions: “Do you swear to uphold your oath to the lodge above all? Do you vow to give your life rather than rather than reveal its secrets? Do you promise to use your abilities and knowledge to aid — above all else — your lodge and allies?” The candidate must answer in the affirmative to all three questions.

Having done this, the member is now one of the Thin Men; she is taken to the nearest secret headquarters and indoctrinated into their secrets, which includes a meeting with the lodge’s totem.

Prerequisites: A combination of eight dots in Larceny and Stealth, plus Streetwise •

Benefits: Any member of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow is supernaturally protected from revealing any secret information about the lodge, its dealings or the individual’s missions. If a member declares a piece of information secret, that information can *never* be revealed to non-lodge members (even if the person leaves the lodge); all efforts simply fail — words stick in the werewolf’s throat and come out as a choking sound, the Uratha’s hand fails to write and so on. This also includes information a member might *want* to reveal, including tangential information. For example, a Thin Man couldn’t say, “I think we’re working toward the same goal,” because that reveals something about his objectives. However, he could say, “I wish to join forces with you” because this doesn’t reveal anything. (Fox Master-of-Guile is quick to point out that a desire to join forces could mean an alliance, a desire to double-cross or simply an unimportant generation of static.) Direct action is also a possibility; while a member of the lodge couldn’t warn a companion about a bomb he planted for one of his secret missions, he could knock him out of the way (or push him *into* the blast). The result of this benefit is that most other werewolves find Thin Ones infuriating to talk with, since they so often resort to “spy speak.”

A Thin Man can choose to make any other information “secret” for the purposes of this benefit (for example, if he wishes to classify a mission for his non-Thin-One packmates), but once information is locked within a werewolf it can never be unlocked by any means. As a result, this is used sparingly. Regardless, information can never be kept locked via this benefit from other members of the lodge; it is only designed to protect the Thin Ones’ secrets from outsiders.

In addition to this benefit, all members of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow gain access to Stealth Gifts, if they did not have such previously.

LODGE OF THE THIN SHADOW GIFTS

THE SPIRITS’ SILENCE (• TO •••••)

This rite, nicknamed the “Silent Treatment” by a few Thin Men, allows the werewolf to defer the noise created by a rite, Gift or fetish activation to another time. There are actually five versions of this Gift,





ranked one to five. Each version affects Gifts or fetish activation of the same level; for example, the two-dot version of The Spirits' Silence can affect two-dot rites, Gifts and fetishes, and so on. Note that the Gift effects are not cumulative; a Thin Man who knows the four-dot version of this Gift but not the three-dot version cannot silence a three-dot Gift.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Wits + Stealth + Cunning

Action: Instant (although mimicking the action of the rite, Gift or fetish activation may take longer)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Not only are the desired sounds not captured, but the Spirits' Silence cannot be used with that Gift, rite or fetish for one lunar cycle.

Failure: The sounds of the accompanying Gift, rite or fetish are not captured.

Success: When performing The Spirits' Silence, the Uratha declares another of his Gifts, rites or fetishes at the same time. He then mimics the sounds and actions of the Gift, rite or fetish. Those sounds are "captured" by a mynah-spirit, who flies with the information deep into the *Hisil*. When the Uratha goes to activate the ability associated with The Spirits' Silence, the mynah releases the sound (presumably far, far away from the werewolf). The result is that any Gift, rite or fetish can be silenced, making absolutely no noise — not just for the required activation, but for the entire Gift or rite!

If a fetish, rite or Gift requires a response or noise to be created by a target, then the target must either be present for this Gift's usage and be willing and able to make the required noise, or the target will still make the same audible noises at the time of the Gift or rite's activation (although the rest of the action will be silent).

Only direct effects of the Gift or rite are silenced; for example, if a Shadow used the Rank 5 of this gift on the Rank 4 Gift Invoke the Wind's Wrath, the sound of the whirlwind would be silenced, but a target knocked into a building would still be audible.

Exceptional Success: The Uratha feels especially attuned in the mimicry he performs; in addition to the benefits of success, he gains a +1 bonus to the usage or activation of the Gift or rite when he decides to use it.

of the city becoming a veritable cipher to the rest of the world. During this time, the entirety of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow, its numbers weakened from the demands of the World War II responded to the lodge's call for *Die Versammlung* and consolidated in Berlin. In the 1950s the lodge found itself hunted by a group of highly organized agents — similarly skilled but with an almost bloodthirsty ruthlessness. This group seemed to ally itself with criminal organizations — communist forces and other unsavory elements to further its mysterious goals. These agents — each of whom was a match for a Thin One agent — killed themselves to avoid capture. The Thin Ones eventually called these adversaries *Die Tödliche* (The Deadly).

As the years dragged on — the seclusion of East Germany coupled with post war paranoia and entanglements with ruthless communist forces — At the beginning of the 1960s both sides sensed that East Germany's days were numbered — along with many suspected — the Soviet Union itself. As the final days of conflict whittled the Thin Ones' numbers down to single digits — one lodge member used his dying breath to prove conclusively what some had feared all along: their foes were so evenly matched because they were werewolves — members of the *Izidakh* of the Pure. At this point — the few surviving Thin Men planned on swallowing their pride and focused on escape. Unfortunately — the enemy agents were too numerous, too skilled and too prepared. In a final battle that spilled into the *Hisil* — the Fire Touched proved to be the Thin Men's superiors — and slew every member of the lodge.

The last Thin One member — desperate — called upon Fox Master-of-Guile to help. Although the spirit did answer the summons — the spirit seemed unable — or unwilling — to assist its last charge. As the final member fell — the lodge's totem prepared to depart — The killer stopped the spirit — saying "Hear my offer, Fox Master-of-Guile. We have studied your ways — and we know you to be a force for secrecy and stealth. We have proven ourselves most adept and powerful in these ways. Permit us then — to take this lodge's place — a core of shadow and craft amid those too complacent to suspect us."

Fox Master-of-Guile considered the matter and agreed to the terms. Fox Master-of-Guile taught the usurpers what they would need to know to fit in among those they



THE REMAINS OF A LODGE

In the aftermath of World War II — Berlin found itself divided — with the eastern half

wished to impersonate and taught them secrets that would let them hide

The Lodge of the Thin Shadow now exists as a “wolf in the fold” — an organization that is still (mostly) trusted by the larger Uratha populous but serves the Pure. The lodge members have two purposes: convince Uratha to join their cause (however unwittingly) and wait for the perfect moment to strike. Those who manage to complete the lodge’s requirements for joining are presented with the truth of the lodge’s current *real* nature and are presented with an ultimatum: join or die. Most choose to die, but some have gone over to the other side — if for no other reason than to buy themselves some time.

Unfortunately in an ironic twist the new Lodge of the Thin Shadow finds itself somewhat in conflict from within. Although new members are “protected” by the same benefit that forbids them from revealing any of their nature to outsiders, this doesn’t keep them from clandestinely working against the group. In addition, some of the members who started out as Pure are beginning to question their devotion; exposure to the ideas and philosophies of their new members has caused at least a couple of them to turn against their former allies, as a shadow within a shadow takes shape.

Thus, while the Lodge of the Thin Shadow exists as a dangerous but unknown threat to the Uratha, so too does the lodge serve as a threat to the Pure. The lodge has become a dangerous game of wheels within wheels, with the ideals of secrecy and intrigue being ultimately served best — and somewhere in the shadows, Fox Master-of-Guile is grinning.

RITE OF THE NEW COAT (•••)

This rite was taught by Fox Master-of-Guile shortly after the Fire Touched took over the lodge. Rite of the New Coat enables a Pure werewolf to remove all telltale signs of his true nature in his spirit form and also affords a degree of protection from most other means of discerning the true nature of the wolf.

Given how useful this rite would be in the ongoing war against the Uratha, many members of the Pure tribes question the loyalty of their brethren for not teaching this rite outside of the lodge. So far, the elders within the lodge have managed to

keep these naysayers at bay, saying that the long-term benefits of having a “wolf in the fold” more than outweigh any short-term benefits in sharing the rite. Another, darker, theory holds that they have tried teaching it to others, but that it has failed; if this is true, then Fox Master-of-Guile may be playing the entire lodge for fools in the spirit’s own cunning game.

Performing the Rite: The ritualist dips a bone dagger into the blood of a Uratha and hands the dagger to the intended target, who must inflict a scar no smaller than three inches on himself with the weapon before handing it back. The ritemaster then proceeds to cut the air around the Pure with the dagger, as if “skinning” him of his old shell.

Each person who undergoes this rite can only use the blood of a specific Uratha once, although blood from a Uratha can be used on multiple participants (each of whom must have their own New Coat performed). It is common for small cells of modern Thin Ones to have an annual festival, when they capture and torture a werewolf for information in one room while draining his blood to use in continuous successions of New Coat rites performed in the other.

Action: Extended (three successes per point of renown the target has; each roll represents 10 minutes)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: All successes are lost. In addition, the blood for that Uratha cannot be used again on that target.

Failure: No successes are gained.

Success: Successes are gained toward the required total. As successes are generated, the target’s appearance within the *Hisil* changes, with each success transforming the Renown of the Pure from looking like a scar to appearing silver; if the rite ends before the required number of successes, the Renown reverts back to its previous appearance. Once the number of successes is reached, the target’s Renown fully transforms within the *Hisil*, making the werewolf appear — by all obvious means — to be Uratha. In addition, the target receives four bonus dice to all supernatural means of discerning the werewolf’s true nature (or the person trying to discern the truth receives a – penalty on those rolls that do not have a defense). All benefits of the Rite of the New Coat last for one year.





The target's chosen area to cut with the dagger shows up in both the real and spirit world as a scar providing a telltale clue (or at least an abnormality) for those who know to look for it. For the rite to be successful, no two scars can intersect; cutting across a previous scar results in the rite's automatic failure (as well as another scar), and the chosen Uratha's blood cannot be used again by that target. As a result, the Thin Men who use this rite tend to mark inconspicuous areas such as the souls of their feet, their armpits, and the joints of their thigh and pelvis.

Exceptional Success: The area chosen to be scarred does not, in fact, scar; the New Coat remains undetectable and the area can be chosen again for future usage of the rite.

LODGE OF THE THIN SHADOW STORY HOOKS

• **An Impossible Mission:** An entire pack of werewolves has been successfully captured by the government, who has them heavily sedated and chained within an impossibly secure military complex. Freeing them is an absolute priority, as is doing so with minimal damage to the Oath. One or more members of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow would be perfect to aid in such a mission, if they can be found and convinced to help. Of course, once a pack is deeply inside such a dangerous complex — especially one that was able to capture a previous group of werewolves — Murphy's Law says that something *has* to go horribly wrong...

• **Unearthing the Trove:** Rumor has it that, prior to World War II, the Lodge of the Thin Shadow had amassed a surprising number of fetishes, artifacts, and other items designed to aid them, and hidden them in a European stronghold (probably in France or Germany somewhere). Unfortunately, all members of the lodge who might have known the location of this place — if it ever existed — were killed during the last half of the 20th century. Members of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow would love to track this trove down, as would other Uratha; the two groups might even work in tandem, trying to track the location down and deal with any

contingencies the long-gone members of the lodge had established.

• **Armageddon Early:** A member of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow learns of a spiritual plot that could be a catastrophe not only for the lodge but for the entire world! The level of the calamity is too great for the lodge member to undertake by himself, and he has no easy way to amass a full pack's worth of other Thin Men to deal with the matter. Unfortunately, because he learned of this fact while on a mission, he has no easy way to convey the information to others not in the lodge. Can he get other Uratha to help him before it's too late?

TESS NELSON

Auspice: Elodith

Tribe: Ghost Wolves

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 3, Investigation (Body Language) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 1

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise (Rumors, Undercover Operations) 3, Subterfuge (Lying) 4

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Language (American Sign Language, German) 2, Resources 1

Primal Urge: None

Willpower: 10

Harmony: 10

Essence Max/Per Turn: 10 / 10

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Pride

Health: 7 (9/11/10/7)

Initiative: 8 (8/9/10/10)

Defense: 2 (all forms)

Speed: 9 (10/13/16/14)

Renown: Honor 3, Cunning 3

Gifts: (1) Feet of Mist, Loose Tongue, Partial Change, Scent Beneath the Surface; (2) Anybeast, Sand in the Eyes

Tess Nelson always felt like a shadow; her mother died when Tess was born, and her father allowed his deafness to be a wall between him and the rest of the world — a wall that blocked Tess off as well.

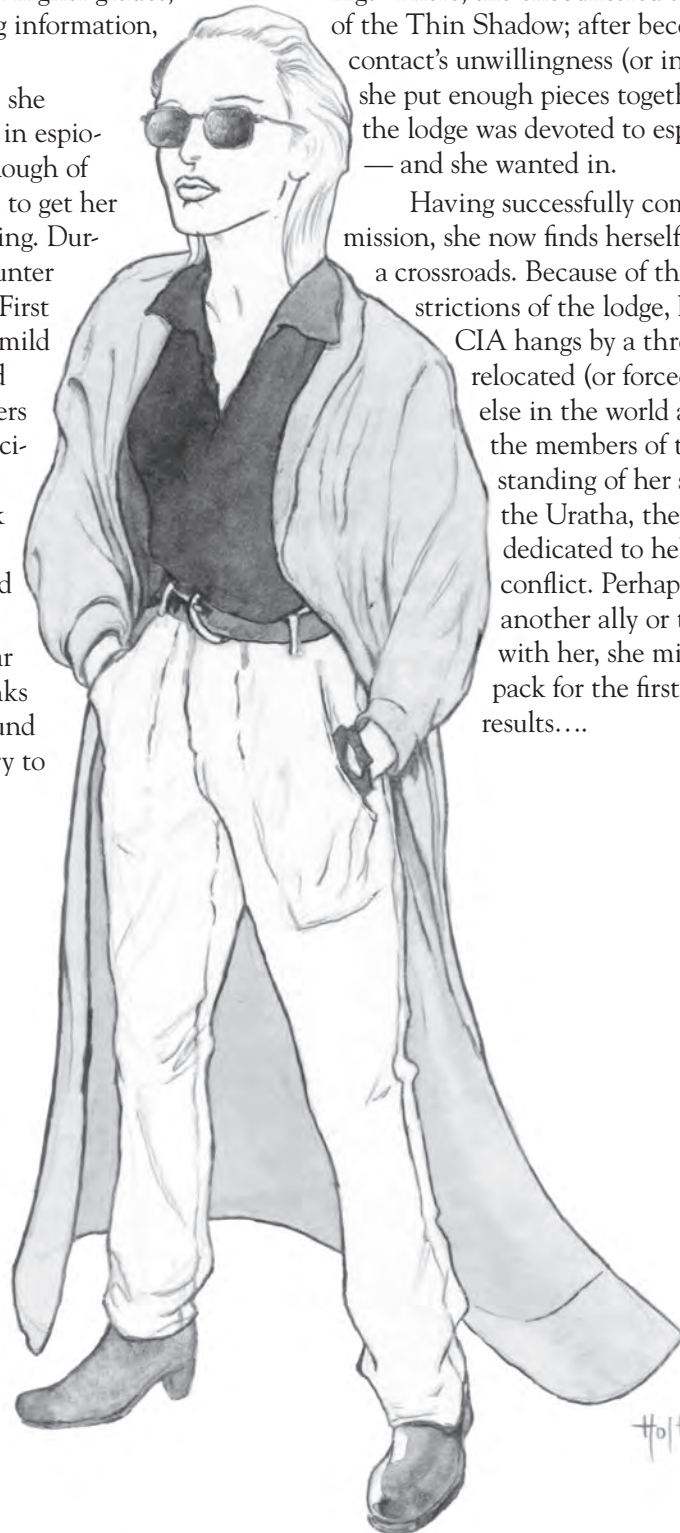
It wasn't until high school that she started finding her voice. Her knack for remaining nondescript let her dwell on the outskirts of almost any social group she wanted, and her penchant for finding out information made her a useful — if amoral — informant. After all, she reasoned, her peers and teachers had a right to know what was going on; if it resulted in favors, cemented bonds or higher grades, that's just a bonus for freeing information, right?

Once she got to college, she started becoming interested in espionage, and her skills made enough of an impression with the CIA to get her a field position after graduating. During her third case, her encounter with Uratha resulted in her First Change, a failed case and a mild grudge against the organized tribes. However, her new peers respected — sadly — her decision to go alone as a Ghost Wolf, and in return she took the Oath of the Moon as a sign to do what was expected of her, on *her* terms.

After that event, her star rose the within the CIA ranks for the next year, but she found herself presenting a quandary to

her superiors; while she had some impressive results, she had become too free-spirited and her cases had too many loose ends and questions to trust her completely. Therefore, they left her in Germany as a glorified pencil-pusher. Her pride refused to allow her to become a bureaucrat, and on her own time she made a point of investigating Berlin and its surroundings. There, she encountered a member of the Lodge of the Thin Shadow; after becoming infuriated at her contact's unwillingness (or inability) to answer her, she put enough pieces together to conclude that the lodge was devoted to espionage and shadows — and she wanted in.

Having successfully completed her inaugural mission, she now finds herself in a quandary and a crossroads. Because of the demands and restrictions of the lodge, her position with the CIA hangs by a thread and she could be relocated (or forced to flee) anywhere else in the world at any time. While the members of the lodge are understanding of her split with the rest of the Uratha, they still want her fully dedicated to helping with the larger conflict. Perhaps if she could recruit another ally or two to join the lodge with her, she might be able to form a pack for the first time and get some *real* results....



LODGE OF THE UNION

COMING TOGETHER

The search had been long and fruitless. All the other spirits said there was no spirit of unity, of unification — not in the way Ana Miércoles sought. But she persevered. Eventually, deep within the Hisil, the tiny spirit of a shrew promised to take her to where she sought. It led her to the spirit of a cat, which led her to the spirit of a tree, which pointed her in the direction of a river spirit...

And on this path went, until the cloud-spirit (who was recommended by the sparrow-spirit) pointed to the center of an empty spirit field. “There is where you shall find that which you seek.” And it blew away into the wisps of nothingness that is half the life of clouds.

Standing amid the field, there was nothing unusual about it — certainly no great spirit that would form the basis for her new union.

But as she sat and meditated, she saw the faintest glimmer of a spirit come into being. The newly formed spirit bristled with promise, and variety, and life and the potential of things to come. Ana bowed her head to view such a tiny spirit and asked, “Are you what I seek?”

“And what do you seek?” asked the spirit.

“Unity.”

“Then, no, I am not what you seek.”

Ana nodded sadly and meditated some more. She reflected on her journey — the long, hard road she had traveled — and she had an idea.

“I believe you are the spirit of unity... you, and the shrew, and the cat, and the tree, and the river and all the spirits I’ve met along this quest. They have all led me to you, and I believe them all to be united, working with you in your stead.”

“Interesting,” said the Gaffling, displaying a more knowing tone than could be expected from such a small spirit. “Yes,” it finally said, “you have learned the first lesson of unity.” The Gaffling spoke in a flat, simple tone. “To become one with unity, you must leave your old life and dedicate yourself to me.”

Ana meditated on this. The moon passed slowly overhead.

“No,” she said. The spirit she addressed cocked its head quizzically, as if a chalice of gold had been deemed

too mundane. “No,” Ana continued, “the spirit of unity I seek would understand that giving up of myself is not unity; it is conformity. The blades of grass are not a blanket, but a mass of individuals. A forest is not a brick wall, but an unending list of births and deaths and wants and dreams, all united as a whole. I am not seeking to be a piece of a whole in that way, like the dime-sized spider of an Azlu. No, with a silver dagger I could unite myself with the earth today, but that is not the unity I seek. Good day, noble spirit.” And with that, Ana turned around to leave.

“Very well,” said the spirit. “Now, stop.” Ana did, because her bones would not permit her otherwise. “And what is this idyllic spirit of unity you seek? What is it you are looking for?”

Speaking slowly, her jaw wrestling with truthfulness and defiance, she said, “I want Pangaea.”

“Then turn around.” And she did so. “You have found what you seek, and what you have named. And we shall work together. And together, we can return to this time, this place you desire so. And I can return to you.”

One wolf is capable of much, but not as much as a pack. A pack is capable of great deeds, but not as much as a lodge. A lodge can accomplish much, but a tribe is greater.

If there is one thing that unifies wolf, human and werewolves, it is unity itself — the intrinsic knowledge that working together can produce greater results than working independently. While the werewolf’s need to hunt in many ways supersedes the biggest reason humanity had for uniting in the first place — agriculture — the fact remains that no wolf is born with a deer in its hands, and almost all Uratha were dependant on the power of a unified humanity at least once in their lives for the basest of survival.

The Lodge of the Union has dedicated itself to the idea of unity in its extreme: their goal is nothing short of the unification of *everything*. They see unity as the ideal in all aspects of the world — the united land of Pangaea, the unity of the tribes of Father

Wolf before the fall, the union of human and wolf and so on. Fragmentation, they argue, has caused much of the cosmos' disharmony.

The Lodge of the Union was formed during the aftermath of World War I, amid the wave of the first global optimism that international unity might prevent needless war. Some of the earliest members and honorary associates of the lodge were actually aged members from the United States, who — a half-century earlier — had worked to restore a country shattered by civil war. These American members were so supportive because they largely viewed their efforts as failures, with the ultimate result being corruption, disenfranchisement and a bitter blood-tainted spiritual landscape that would take a century or longer to heal; they felt that, were there a larger support mechanism to aid them, they would have been more successful.

Working behind the scenes, they had what seemed a significant victory early on, with the formation of the League of Nations in 1919. However, this noble experiment turned into a debacle at best, and — coupled with a half-century of relative ineffectiveness with the United Nations — the lodge has spent decades fighting a reputation as a joke in the Uratha community.

However, within the past decade or two, the lodge has turned the tide. In the human world, the lodge members have focused their efforts on assisting with the unification of Europe, and in the wolfen world the members have managed to reunite many previously separated regions of wolves via reforestation and species-protection efforts. The Unionists mark three events during the past half-century as their greatest triumphs in the real world. First, they were able to rectify the self-labeled failure of the lodge's proto-founders by helping with the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, providing support and — most importantly — physical and spiritual protection for those fighting for their rights. Second, the Unionists helped with the unification efforts of Germany in 1989, providing defense for those fleeing East Germany for Hungary in August, keeping the turmoil in check on the November 9, 1989, removal of East-West restrictions, and then helping smooth the actual German unification in 1990; given the near-chaos surrounding the fall of the cold war era, the entire affair went very smoothly. Finally, the Unionists are especially proud of the behind-the-scenes work necessary to complete the Channel Tunnel connecting the United Kingdom with France, including the appeasement or relocation

of many powerful spirits deep beneath the spiritual earth connecting the two nations. Some werewolves have noted the lodge's relative inactivity within the Uratha community; given how active the Unionists are elsewhere, they are relatively quiet in pursuing their goals among other werewolves. Perhaps, some feel, this is a lost cause; the broad kinship that the Uratha share with each other is a unity of sorts, albeit a loose one.

However, they have been more active than they let on, albeit in extremely clandestine and subtle ways. Unionists were instrumental in providing logistical and moral support in the joining of the Uratha against the *idigam* in the 1960s, and, on a smaller scale, a Unionist is often the one who assembles werewolves to deal with local threats. The Unionists especially like to provide a mentor role in spurring the formation of new packs. For the most part, the Lodge of the Union doesn't brag about its dealings with others of their kind, because the lodge members feel — not incorrectly — that many werewolves have a free, rebellious nature in them, and knowing that they might be bowing to the wishes of others often doesn't sit well, no matter how noble the cause.

This behind-the-scenes activity has a darker side, as the Unionists are frequently the last to speak out against serious threats and the first to defend questionable acts, since significant disharmony acts against the interests of togetherness. Some have even speculated that the lodge is in communication with the Pure, attempting to reunify all werewolves. The lodge's response to this charge has been unsatisfactory to many; although the Unionists deny current dealings, they do not dispute that such activities would not be part of the ultimate goal of the lodge.

Contrary to what many believe, the Lodge of the Union's ideas of unified cooperation supersede its ideas of pure unity. Most Unionists are against iron-fisted dictatorships; despite being "unified," they don't serve any greater purpose outside of joining the people together in fear in hatred. (As one Unionist put it, "All packmates deserve a fair challenge for leadership, as do all alphas.") One example of this discrepancy showed when Unionists were instrumental in the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia; the Unionists correctly posited that the two countries would be more unified as two separate allied countries than one tumultuous nation.

The Unionists are also not all rainbows and roses. Just as all werewolves, the Unionists have an unimaginably violent side, and Rage-fueled means



of achieving unity are not the last answer to many in the lodge. As Andrea “Sundown” MacFadden once put it, “Look — say there’s a rapist that’s got a community in an uproar, threatening to tear it apart. You don’t spend months trying to make that area a happy wonderland where everyone gets along, making it so those who victimize women can hug bunnies and hide bodies. You spend five minutes to stuff the bastard’s entrails into a duffel bag. *Then* you work to make the neighborhood a more unified place.”

Despite the lodge’s inclusiveness, the Lodge of the Union is a relatively small lodge. The intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of bringing others together are, in some ways, in direct opposition to the Rage that swells beneath every werewolf’s breast; it’s difficult to remain ambassadorial and open-minded when every fiber of

your being wants to leap across the table and tear the opposition’s head off. Still, the lodge members are respected for what they do, and Unionist representatives are among the first considered for roles as diplomats and negotiators, especially in human affairs. And, while the Unionists’ exact goals are questioned by many, the lodge is still an evocative and thought-provoking group; the vision of a fully united Uratha nation is exhilarating to some, terrifying to many and both to most.

PATRON SPIRIT

The spiritual patron of the Lodge of the Union calls itself Pangaea, the spirit of the unified land. Pangaea normally takes the form of a spirit that appears to be all things at once: man and woman, child and ancient, fur and flesh and so on.

For such a supposedly ancient spirit, Pangaea is surprisingly approachable and good-natured; given the grandiose nature of what many feel Pangaea *should* be, the relatively underpowered nature of the patron is off-putting to many. For those expecting a spirit on the order of Gaia, Luna or the other great Incarnae, there are two likely theories as to this spirit’s weakness. The first is that this spirit is the remnants of the idea of the now long-passed Pangaea; the spirit seems weak because it *is* weak, and it’s only the extreme spiritual strength of its original form that has allowed it to persevere over the millennia. The second theory is that Pangaea, while immensely powerful, seeks to be as approachable as possible; after all, if Pangaea wishes to give its blessing to the union of all things, then the spirit needs to do its utmost to ensure the interactions between werewolves and spirits go as smoothly as possible.

Of course, the most plausible explanation is that this spirit merely calls itself Pangaea, and has absolutely no ties to that which came before. Most members of the lodge don’t like to think about this possibility, because it calls into question exactly *what* they are serving, and to what ends. Regardless, Pangaea does little to clear up the misconceptions; it refuses to speak of the time before the fall of Pangaea in anything but the most general, cryptic terms (“It was glorious” or “That was long ago”) — which are all answers any neophyte Uratha cub could offer.

BECOMING UNIFIED

The Lodge of the Union is open to all tribes; in fact, any exclusion would be contrary to the lodge’s core principles. Despite the open membership, the lodge’s numbers are still relatively small, and the most who join are Elodoth. To enter the lodge, a prospec-



tive member must successfully perform an effort that advances the notion of “unification.” The exact scope of this project doesn’t necessarily need to be grand, so long as the results are significant. For example, one Uratha rebuilt a bridge between two long-separated cities, while another got the patriarchs of two large families to sit down and discuss their differences, resolving a feud that had encompassed generations and hundreds of people. Even the definition of “unity” is open to interpretation; one Blood Talon killed the leaders and lieutenants of the three biggest gangs in Oslo, and successfully claimed the dissolution of gang activity as unifying the rest of the city.

After completing a task that meets with the approval of a gathering of three to five Uratha of similar renown, the candidate is presented to an audience with the spirit Pangaea. There, the Uratha must discuss her reasons for wishing to join the lodge. This is largely a formality, as Pangaea has only rejected two members since the lodge’s foundation. The first rejection was the 10th prospective member who sought admission (when, it could be argued, the lodge’s reason for being had not fully gelled yet); curiously, the second rejection was only a couple of years ago; what, exactly, this Uratha said to offend Pangaea is unknown, but neither will discuss the matter.

Prerequisites: Harmony 5 or greater

Benefits: Of course, joining the Lodge of the Union confers all the usual perks of being a member of an organized and sociable lodge: a reasonable guarantee of aid, hospitality and shared resources when available. In addition, all new Unionists receive, upon joining, a mystic sigil. This mark consists of two intersecting circles; it can be as large or small as the new member desires, and can be on any part of the body desired. The sigil is drawn by Pangaea itself at the end of the meeting with that spirit.

In the *Hisil*, this sigil is visible as a bright silvery beacon, alerting Uratha and spirit alike of the Uratha’s affiliation. In general, this will bestow a bonus of two dice to Social rolls where the entity interacted with is likely to be impressed by a diplomat or a voice of fairness.

In the physical world, the sigil is only visible to other members of the Lodge of the Union, providing a quick and easy way of identifying each other. The size and location of the vigil is the same in both the spirit and physical worlds. Some Unionists choose large symbols — on their foreheads, covering their chest and the like — to proclaim their affiliation to the moon above. Others choose small, hidden sym-

bols (such as on the palm or foot), preferring to keep their affiliation a secret.

If the Unionist leaves the lodge for any reason, the sigil remains, albeit somewhat modified; although visible in the spirit world, the sigil doesn’t glow as it did before but instead appears as a faint scar. In the physical world, the mark appears the same to others in the lodge as it did before — to the consternation of more than one Unionist.

LODGE OF THE UNION RITE

APPLES AND ORANGES (•••)

The Lodge of the Union believes that all things are more alike than dissimilar, and these similarities can be used to draw all things closer together. This rite is one such tool they have at their disposal, enabling them to determine what, if anything, two objects have in common.

Performing the Rite: When invoked, this rite will let the Uratha compare two objects, searching for the similarities between the two. Ideally, the ritualist touches the two objects (or object sets) he wishes to compare; if that isn’t possible, the ritualist can also point to one or both of them. Both must be visible to the Uratha with the naked eye, although the information gleaned can be *anything*, including material that is not visible to the naked eye.

Once the ritualist has made contact with the objects, he invokes a small comparison between two spirits that is similar to the information desired. For example, if the ritualist is comparing two signatures, he might say, “As the river-spirit and ant-spirit both travel in straight lines, may the spirits help me determine if these lines are similarly true.”

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The rite conveys the usual sense of comparison between two objects, but the information conveyed is wrong or fundamentally flawed. In addition, the Uratha cannot use the rite again on that target for one full lunar cycle.

Failure: The rite grants the most obvious and general of comparisons (“Those two people are both alive”), but otherwise doesn’t yield any useful information.

Success: In addition to feeling the obvious similarities between the two objects, for each success, the Uratha can ask one yes or no question trying to determine the similarities between the two. For ex-



ample, “Are both these objects capable of supporting the weight of me and my packmates?”

Alternatively, on three or more successes, the Uratha can look for specific pieces of information that may prove helpful, such as “Is there any similarity between me and the guard that I could use to make him friendly toward me?” or “Are there any similarities between this stack of law precedent books and my case that will help the defendant go free?” Use of Apples and Oranges in this way may provide a bonus of +1 or more to a subsequent related check, depending on the level of similarity between the two objects.

At the Storyteller’s discretion, the use of this rite might reveal pieces of information that are not obvious, but would serve as remarkable similarities. (“Both these artifacts were created by the same person on the same day” or “Both these people are hunted by the same murderer for something they know.”)

For example, Michee Born-of-Three-Worlds, an art expert in the mortal realm, always carries a forged \$20 bill with her. When invoking Apples and Oranges, she can hold the bill and look at a painting and determine, “Does this bill and that painting have in common that they are both forgeries?”

The user of Apples and Oranges needs to be careful in the questions he chooses; general questions tend to reveal less useful information, but specific questions tend to return more “no” results. For example, if Michee holds a genuine \$100 bill, she might get an affirmative answer to the question, “Would both this bill and that painting be worth more than \$50 to an art collector?” but a negative to the question “Would both this bill and that painting be worth exactly \$100 to an art collector?”

LODGE OF THE UNION HOOKS

- **Becoming Impure:** A member of the Ivory Claws has sent word to the Lodge of the Union: he has seemingly turned against the rest of the Pure and is looking for protection and asylum. The Ivory Claw has requested to meet within Pure lands and travel with some Uratha to a neutral area. Although almost certainly a trap, this opportunity is too great for the lodge to pass by. The Unionists brave enough to try this need to rally all the allies they can, including those considering joining the Lodge of the Union; after all, succeed or fail, this would prove a

wonderful opportunity to show the power and limitations of unity

- **Two Worlds One:** In a city controlled by packs unfriendly to the Unionist cause the Gauntlet is being thinned to a dangerous degree. Worse, all evidence is pointing to a Unionist, no doubt attempting to “unite” the spirit and physical worlds. Although some in the lodge might support — or at least consider — this plan, the majority realize what a crazy idea it is; unfortunately, the lodge’s unwillingness (or inability) to issue a blanket disavowal to the scheme is met with massive hostility. Tensions within the lodge and from the affected city packs are threatening to tear the region apart, with the Unionists bearing the brunt of the backlash. Can the lodge discern the truth behind what is happening before it’s too late?

- **The Sea’s Hidden Jewel:** Rumors filter back to the Unionists of a seemingly insignificant uncharted island far across the ocean. However, this island is actually of interest to the Uratha because, although apparently uninhabited by humans, there are sightings of wolves. In addition, Gafflings sent to investigate come back with word that some on the island might actually be werewolves. If this is true, the chance to unite a lost group of werewolves back into the fold would be an epic quest for the lodge. Of course, the potential for disaster looms large, especially if it turns out they aren’t members of the Uratha...

ESTEBAN SANTIAGO HURTADO

Auspice: Cahalith

Tribe: Storm Lords

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 1 (2/3/3/2)

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 3, Politics (Group Formation) 5

Physical Skills: Brawl 3, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (Speeches) 4, Persuasion (Seduction, Motivational Speeches) 4, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Inspiring 4, Languages (First Tongue) 2, Resources 5, Striking Looks 4

Primal Urge:

Willpower:
Harmony:
Essence Max/Per Turn: /
Virtue: Temperance
Vice: Lust
Health: 6 (8/10/9/6)
Initiative: 6 (6/7/8/8)
Defense: 2 (all forms)
Speed: 11 (12/15/18/16)
Renown: Glory Honor Purity Wisdom
Gifts: (1) Partial Change, Sense Malice, The Right Words, Warning Growl; (2) Camaraderie, Luna's Dictum, Resist Pain

Esteban Santiago Hurtado is one of the most renowned names of all the Uratha. For proof, one need ask no further than Esteban Santiago Hurtado. The fifth child of noted Storm Lord Juan Santiago Ramírez, the Santiago Storm Lords can trace their Uratha lineage back through 13 generations of werewolves — and dozens of generations of wolf-bloods. Esteban was born in Barcelona on November 1, 1955; he's often cited that day's affirmation of ties between Spain's Generalissimo Francisco Franco and U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles as a portent of his future life.

While growing up, he was sheltered and closely watched by his family for signs of a werewolf heritage; although Esteban's ambitions would have made him a noteworthy figure regardless of his final destiny, it was no secret that the Santiago lineage gave preferential treatment to full-blooded Uratha. He believes that he was undergoing aspects of the First Change during the aid he provided in bringing about 1978's Spanish Constitution, and the resultant peaceful transition to a unified democracy, but acknowledges this could also be a result of the excessive drugs he took at the time.

Having undergone the full First Change in January 1979, his tribal initiation task was to inspire several packs of werewolves in the soon-to-be-autonomous region that it was in their best interests to aid in the transition of power. He was successful and be-

came a noted figure in regional politics; he didn't aid much in the actual discussions and negotiations, but was usually a more inspirational figure. His specialty was in recounting stirring tales of how others put aside their differences to work together as a union.

Steeping himself in equal parts among the politics of the human world and the intrigues of the spirit world, Esteban has risen quickly within his family, within his tribe and within the greater Uratha community as one of the great unifiers. One of the facets that always fascinated him was the interplay between the two worlds; although humans don't have a direct spirit reflection, an understanding of human mannerisms grants a distinct advantage in the spirit world and vice versa. Esteban notes these similarities often, making observations such as "She's flitting around like a shock-spirit" or "That Gaffling's panicking like a girl holding a broken condom." He helped guide Spain's entry into both NATO and the European Union in 1982 and began a more international campaign among other European nations. He joined the Lodge of the Union in 1990, becoming a traveling spokesperson for unified causes; he is especially helpful in inspiring spirits to enter into negotiations with the Uratha.

Recent years have seen his nonchalant demeanor seriously hampered; the 2004 train bombings in Madrid thrust the country into the crucible of terrorist contemplations, and he has entered into an extended worldwide travel schedule to combat the doubts and ennui among those in both the human and Uratha worlds. He has been especially critical of what he sees as the United States' "go it alone" policies in recent years.

Esteban is an omnisexual, showing an appetite for anyone and anything. He keeps this aspect of his personality in check, for the most part, merely presenting himself as an incurable flirt, and makes at least a token effort to keep this aspect of himself a secret.





LODGE OF THE WILLOW BRANCH

THE GHOST EATER

The territory was breached. Marek could feel it in his bones. He woke suddenly from his nap, curled around the willow tree, with the word *vjiesce* echoing in his ear. It was a chilling susurration, a spirit's whisper, a snake's hiss.

He found himself running on all fours, flecks of wind-swept snow stinging his eyes. The smell of blood hit his nose before the sight of it, red dots on white, a trail of crimson leading him through the brittle field of slumbering wheat.

Spirits — then closer to the world than they are now — whispered again in Marek's ear: "This is the work of the *vjiesce*, the Ghost-Eaten. They are the children of Blood Wolf, himself the ugly whelp of Death Wolf. Father Wolf cast Blood Wolf and his brood out of Pangaea, but that did not stop him."

Marek didn't understand then. But he would understand soon enough.

He saw the bodies of his packmates strewn in a crooked line across the field toward the forest's edge. Closest was Florian, then Wiktorina, and after her was Zygmunt the Hewer. All three lay crumpled in various array. Each surrounded by a radius of splattered blood.

Beyond Zygmunt, Marek saw three men, each a pale shadow caught in Luna's light. They were kneeling upon something. Chewing. Sucking. Grunting. One of them arose, and as he did, Marek heard the cries of Natia Morela.

He approached silently, becoming man on two feet, and picked up the axe left in the snow from where Zygmunt had fallen. But the spirits were quick to warn him:

"The axe will not help you. These are hollow men who should be left to the earth to die. Blood Wolf's children will not die because they are already dead. Go and speak to the Willow Tree under which you slept. She will give you a part of herself. She will teach you how to destroy them."

Marek tamped down the hateful fire that burned inside of him. He would be patient. He would go and see the Willow Tree. Then he would bring his wrath upon the feeders who murdered his friends.

Vampires do not represent a constant threat to the Forsaken. Certainly, some bloodsuckers infringe upon a pack's territory or become involved in activities that help subvert the spiritual balance and damage the Shadow, and such creatures are threats. By and large, however, vampires as a whole do not represent an immediate menace to most Uratha.

The Lodge of the Willow Branch teaches otherwise. Vampires — or, as lodge members call them, the *vjiesce* or the "Ghost-Eaten" — are a very prevalent threat. To them, vampires represent a plague of imbalance, a grotesque breach of natural law. Their souls are gone, leaving the bodies open for all manner of spiritual intrusion. Each Ghost-Eaten is a pinhole in the Gauntlet, but even the tiniest rupture can be an invitation to malefic spirits. And so, the werewolves of this lodge go about their sole business: hunting down and destroying the *vjiesce* monsters before they can breed.

The origins of the lodge date back a few hundred years to a town in Poland called Zmierzch. The story goes that a small pack tended to the territory in and around the village. The pack discovered soon that a vampire had come to town to poach upon the people, and the pack-members went to the creature with the intent to destroy it. The *vjiesce* convinced them not to: it claimed that, like them, it worked toward balance. The vampire, like a parasite, needs to keep the hosts alive but also helps to keep them tractable, occasionally thinning the herd. The pack was foolish enough to let the vampire go to do his business elsewhere. The next night, the beast swept through the town, murdering nearly everyone. The Shadow shuddered. Worse was the following dusk, when many villagers returned as the undead.

The spirits told the pack that one of the Ghost-Eaten did this, and the spirits shared the tale of Blood Wolf, cursing the pack and spitting invective for being so weak and foolish as to let the creature go. It was then that the pack committed itself to finding the fiend and all his children and destroying them utterly. They found him, eventually — the wretch was literally host to dozens of spirits, all negative energies using the creature like a puppet. Given instruction by the spirits, the Bone Shadows sent the creature back to the ground. By giving the beast back to the earth, the Shadow can heal. Out of this grew the Lodge of the Willow Branch.

The name of the lodge is a reference to how the pack was taught to destroy the *vjiesce*. They fashion fetishes out of willow branches, a holy tree with a spirit able to bind the fiends to the earth forever. These fetishes — stakes, actually — go through a Ghost-Eaten's heart, ending his unlife. (Though, for this to be complete, the vampire must then be buried face-down deep in the soil, at least 10 feet below.)

Lodge members are a mixed lot. Some of them hold no ill will toward the vampires, even approaching them with a modicum of mercy. After all, it was not the vampire's fault that he was hollowed out and made empty. Others, however, have little more inside them than wrath for what horrors the Ghost-Eaten have wrought against them. These lodge members approach the *vjiesce* with a martyr's zeal, throwing themselves into unlikely battles time and time again.

In a curious bit of parity, lodge members establish territories (some even call them "nests") much as the Ghost-Eaten do. The lodge members take one territory at a time, moving closer toward the land of the *vjiesce*. In each territory, a pack will establish *domowy*, or a "hearth." The hearth is a house or building (most are taken, though the lodge prefers to build them anew because this keeps them pure) where the pack and its wolf-blooded kin reside. When they find another pack to claim more territory, they expand their borders by whatever means necessary. When the time comes to destroy the Ghost-Eaten, the goal is to have the vampires surrounded so that they have nowhere to run. The plan doesn't always work perfectly, and Forsaken often perish (or are swayed by the deals offered by threatened *vjiesce*) in the process. Moreover, as of late the lodge has been allowing less ideal members into its ranks. In the quest to have an army of soldiers to battle the Ghost-Eaten menace, the lodge has taken the tack that any warm body will do. Unfortunately, this has led to a muddling of tactics as well as a greater ratio of betrayal.

LODGE CUSTOMS

The Willow Branch Forsaken maintain a number of customs and superstitions from their earliest days in Poland. Some of these customs follow:

- These Forsaken can be a morose bunch. They watch graveyards for the undead. They spend night after night hunting the Ghost-Eaten. They grow tired, weary and morbid. Members attempt to counter this by making a big deal of out several holidays: Dozynki is an autumnal harvest day when the spirits of the livestock and crop are given gifts and the werewolves celebrate. Mikołajki is a kind of early Christmas celebration with gifts and alcohol. Wesele are celebratory wedding rites performed when wolf bloods marry or when new members join.
- The lodge members are very close to pack and family. Wolf bloods are not excluded or treated poorly as they can be among other Forsaken. To treat pack or family ill is to invite curses upon oneself and one's blood.
- While they aren't Christian as a whole (though some may be), they celebrate a number of Christian holidays. Sometimes take communion and even cross themselves before undertaking

the hunt. (The idea behind this is in case God is some kind of spirit, best to have all the bases covered.)

- When building or settling into a house (*domowy*), an animal (often a chicken) is sacrificed during the construction. Also, somewhere in the house (walls, foundation, floors), a willow branch must be affixed. This consecrates hearth and home.

- Each member is expected to have a "hunt kit" since claw and fang are not enough when fighting the Ghost-Eaten. Such a kit might feature phials of consecrated water, bulbs of garlic, a revolver loaded with wood-tipped bullets and certainly stakes of willow.

PATRON SPIRIT

White Willow is the lodge's patroness. She appears as a pale, ashen woman whose hair forms the tangled boughs of the tree, and her feet are bound to the earth in a visible snarl of roots. Spirits of willow are said to be intimately tied to aspects of earth and renewal, and can sometimes be seen in the Shadow near funerals and mourning mortals to feed from grief (and thus ease the transition toward acceptance of death). White Willow is one of these spirits, but her appearance is more extreme than that of other willow-spirits; she seems sorrowful and guarded, and her eyes can barely conceal a kind of anger. (This anger is perhaps what helps drive the lodge ineluctably forward in its never-ending task.)

White Willow rarely reveals herself. She usually appears only when a vampire has been caught or is about to be. She offers occasional words of wisdom or cryptic clues before disappearing yet again. Some Forsaken inside the lodge claim she speaks only to them, revealing some of the wretched moments from a Ghost-Eaten's monstrous existence.

JOINING THE LODGE

Initiation into the Lodge of the Willow Branch is straightforward and violent. The lodge approaches a potential Forsaken, perhaps coming to him directly or sending a note (or even a spirit envoy). Potential members have almost universally dealt with vampires and seen the fiends' capability for deception and destruction. Perhaps the Uratha's wolf-blooded family had been touched or tainted by a cruel vampire, or maybe one of his packmates fell to the consumptive urges of the *vjiesce*.

If the werewolf agrees to join, he must first pass muster and prove his abilities. Alone or with his pack, he must fashion a stake from the wood of a willow tree (not a fetish, for he will learn this trick upon being accepted into the lodge) and use it upon one of the Ghost-Eaten. The stake, thrust into the heart of the creature, interrupts the animation of its dead bones and dry muscles. From there, the





Lodge of the Willow Branch

werewolf must bring the vampire to the lodge. Together, they bury the beast face-down, deep in the earth. If all was successful and the lodge judges it appropriate, the werewolf can now be a member of the *vjiesce*-hunting Willow Branch.

A werewolf may not join independently of his pack and still remain with that pack, however. If the entire pack joins, then so be it (though one vampire must be staked per packmember). However, if the rest of the pack is unaware or otherwise uninterested, the Forsaken must leave his packmates behind and join with one of the lodge's already established packs. The lodge accepts no leeway in this. It is all or nothing. The first and only goal is to obliterate the *vjiesce* menace at whatever cost.

Prerequisites: Cunning •, Glory •, Weaponry ••

Benefits: Werewolves in this lodge are ready for battle with the cruel and deceptive *vjiesce*; thus, they gain a +2 bonus when resisting a vampire's mind manipulations (i.e., those performed by supernatural Disciplines). Members also learn how to make the Willow Stake fetish.

LODGE OF THE WILLOW BRANCH FETISHES

SALLOW BARK TEA (TALEN)

Made from the crushed bark of the willow tree, this tea actually contains the components for aspirin (i.e., salicylic acid). When the spirit within is awakened, however, it becomes a potent pain reliever for the Forsaken who imbibes the tea. By drinking a draught of this tea, a werewolf can ignore two dice of Health penalties for an hour after consumption.

This talen is not unique to the Lodge of the Willow Branch, but is used prevalently among these lodge members.

WILLOW STAKE (••)

This stake, fashioned from the wood of a willow tree, is also possessed of a willow-spirit. When whittling the stake (which may require a Strength + Crafts roll on the part of the crafter), the Forsaken also carves the First Tongue word for "bound," *estha*, into the wood. When attacking with this stake, activation allows the wielder a +3 to any *targeted attacks* aimed toward the heart of the victim. On a successful attack, the willow stake lodges in the creature's heart (paralyzing a vampire). If the stake is removed from a vampire after successful penetration, the stake filches one point of Willpower from the victim and then splits in half, rendering the fetish inert. The wood becomes brittle and may not be used again. The fetish is thus destroyed.

LODGE OF THE WILLOW BRANCH STORY HOOKS

• **Shattered Peace:** In many cities, the vampires and werewolves exist in a kind of ac-

cord. They may have openly agreed to a loose but suspicious peace or they may simply choose to ignore one another. Initiation can change all of that overnight. One of the lodge's potential members stakes and captures an influential vampire. Difficulties arise when the other vampires learn of this abduction and discern who is responsible. If balance is not restored between the two groups, the tenuous peace may shatter. Some keep a clear head and can aim for truce, but others are raring for a fight. Moreover, the Lodge of the Willow Branch has little interest in keeping the peace and will do what the lodge must to fan the flames.

• **Treacherous Alliance:** Some packs keep open alliances with one or several local vampires. If the two can find mutual interest, such as keeping an area free of crime or other violation, then such association can be valuable. The Lodge of the Willow Branch, however, sees all vampires as anathema to evil, representing a terrible vulnerability and inequity. Those who truck with the Ghost Eaten are hence *empowering* the Ghost Eaten to do their ugly work of hollowing out bodies and eating souls. The lodge must decide if its crusade must also include the allies of the *vjiesce*, even if those allies are local Forsaken.

• **Blood-Smeared Olive Branch:** One of the city's vampires has gone mad. The ancient fiend has lost all semblance of sanity and visits pain and havoc upon the physical world, and the Shadow bleeds. The lodge knows what it must do, but what happens when a local vampire — or a whole coalition of them — approaches the members of the Willow Branch and offers its help in subduing the lunatic *vjiesce*? Such alliances are generally forbidden to the lodge. Will the lodge members accept the help, knowing that the ends justify the means? Or would that violate the principles upon which the lodge was founded? Must the offering vampires also be destroyed, even if that means splitting efforts and resources in doing so? Is it possible that a member could become allies of the vampires, thus betraying his own kind?

ALEXANDER VIERZBA

Auspice: Elodoth

Tribe: Blood Talons

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3 (2/3/0/3), Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Geography) 3, Crafts 2, Investigation (News) 3, Medicine 1, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Running) 2, Brawl 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Weaponry (Stake) 3

Social Skills: Expression Intimidation Persuasion
Subterfuge

Merits: Danger Sense, Fetish (Willow Stake) 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Language (English) 2

Primal Urge:

Willpower:

Harmony:

Essence Max/Per Turn: /

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Health: 8 (10/12/11/9)

Initiative: 4 (4/5/6/6)

Defense: 3 (3/3/3/3)

Speed: 12 (13/16/19/17) with Fleet of Foot

Renown: Cunning Glory Honor Purity

Gifts: (1) Crushing Blow, Feet of Mist,

Know Name Scent Beneath the

Surface; (2) Blending, Camarade

rie, Snarl of Command; (3) Aura

of Truce Running Shadow

True Leader

Rituals: 3; **Rites:** (1) Fu

neral Rite, Rite of Dedicat

ion, Shared Scent; (2)

Cleansed Blood Fortify

the Border Marches; (3)

Bind Spirit Rite of Initia

tion Sacred Hunt

Derangements: Suspicion

(mild)

Aleksander was once known as Calm Heart, a name he no longer accepts. In those days, some 20 years back, he was a young werewolf with a knack for arbitrating truces and mediating conflicts. His pack made him the alpha, and life was good.

Trusting the vampire known as Tyvek was a mistake. Tyvek seemed a wise creature, fully in control of his faculties and sanity, and Calm Heart had little interest in starting a war over

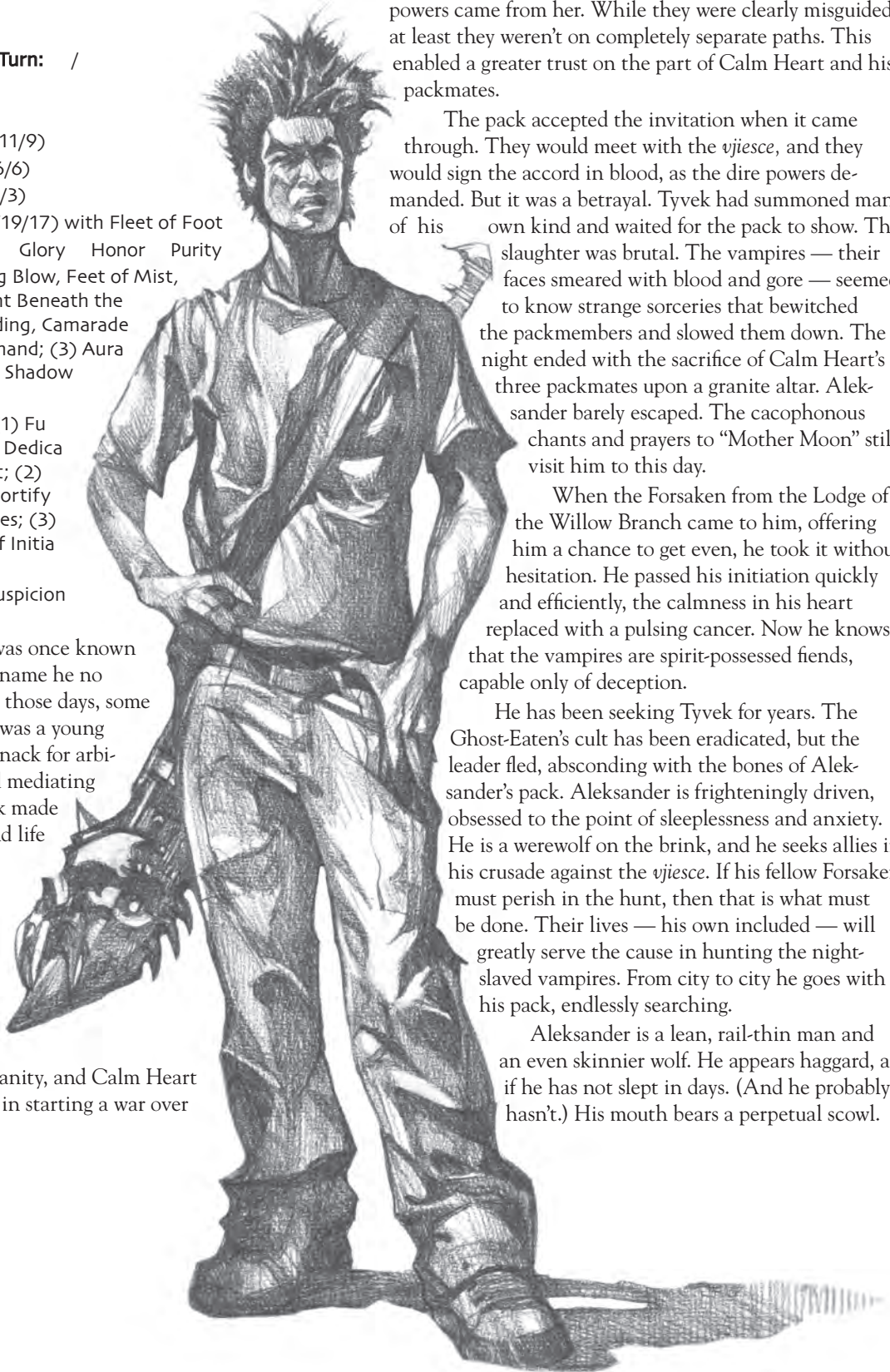
nothing. Tyvek promised that he and his *vjiesce* allies would keep the roads between the towns safe, and would offer aid in return for aid. It seemed a good alliance; tensions were alleviated when the pack discovered that these vampires also worshipped the moon, believing that their powers came from her. While they were clearly misguided, at least they weren't on completely separate paths. This enabled a greater trust on the part of Calm Heart and his packmates.

The pack accepted the invitation when it came through. They would meet with the *vjiesce*, and they would sign the accord in blood, as the dire powers demanded. But it was a betrayal. Tyvek had summoned many of his own kind and waited for the pack to show. The slaughter was brutal. The vampires — their faces smeared with blood and gore — seemed to know strange sorceries that bewitched the packmembers and slowed them down. The night ended with the sacrifice of Calm Heart's three packmates upon a granite altar. Aleksander barely escaped. The cacophonous chants and prayers to "Mother Moon" still visit him to this day.

When the Forsaken from the Lodge of the Willow Branch came to him, offering him a chance to get even, he took it without hesitation. He passed his initiation quickly and efficiently, the calmness in his heart replaced with a pulsing cancer. Now he knows that the vampires are spirit-possessed fiends, capable only of deception.

He has been seeking Tyvek for years. The Ghost-Eaten's cult has been eradicated, but the leader fled, absconding with the bones of Aleksander's pack. Aleksander is frighteningly driven, obsessed to the point of sleeplessness and anxiety. He is a werewolf on the brink, and he seeks allies in his crusade against the *vjiesce*. If his fellow Forsaken must perish in the hunt, then that is what must be done. Their lives — his own included — will greatly serve the cause in hunting the night-slaved vampires. From city to city he goes with his pack, endlessly searching.

Aleksander is a lean, rail-thin man and an even skinnier wolf. He appears haggard, as if he has not slept in days. (And he probably hasn't.) His mouth bears a perpetual scowl.



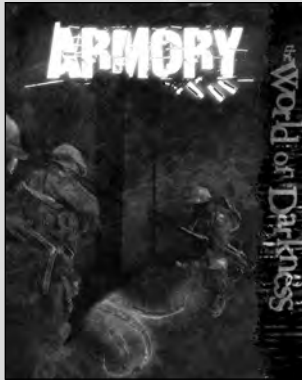


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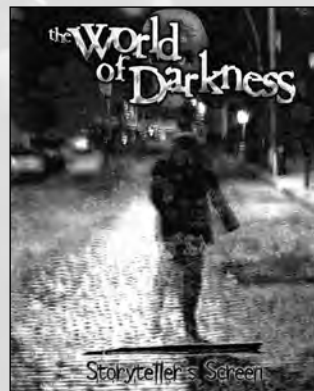
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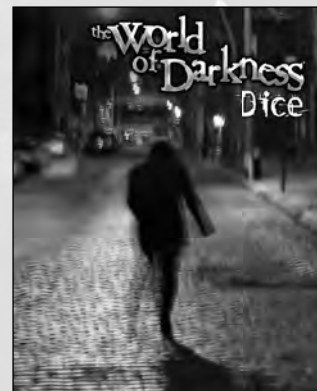
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