

Mind's Eye Theatre

# BOOK

OF THE  
WYRM™



A SOURCEBOOK FOR MIND'S EYE THEATRE

**WEREWOLF**  
THE APOCALYPSE

Mind's Eye Theatre

# BOOK

# WYRM

*We Have Met the Enemy...*

The werewolves know that they are fighting an enemy that is mighty and implacable. The Wyrms reach out everywhere, from corporate America where Pentex and its subsidiaries are ensconced to the werewolves' lost kin, the Black Spiral Dancers to the terrible spirits called Banes. The Garou fight desperately with every weapon they can, and they must not lose. They have stared into the Abyss, and it is staring back hungrily.

*And We Are His*

Here is the material to bring the Apocalypse sharply into focus for your chronicle. From the corrupted fomori to the Hives of the mad Black Spiral Dancers to the many arms of the Pentex corporation to the very halls of Malfeas, here is laid out what the Garou fight against. On what may be the eve of Apocalypse, it will take more than courage to survive what's coming...

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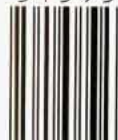


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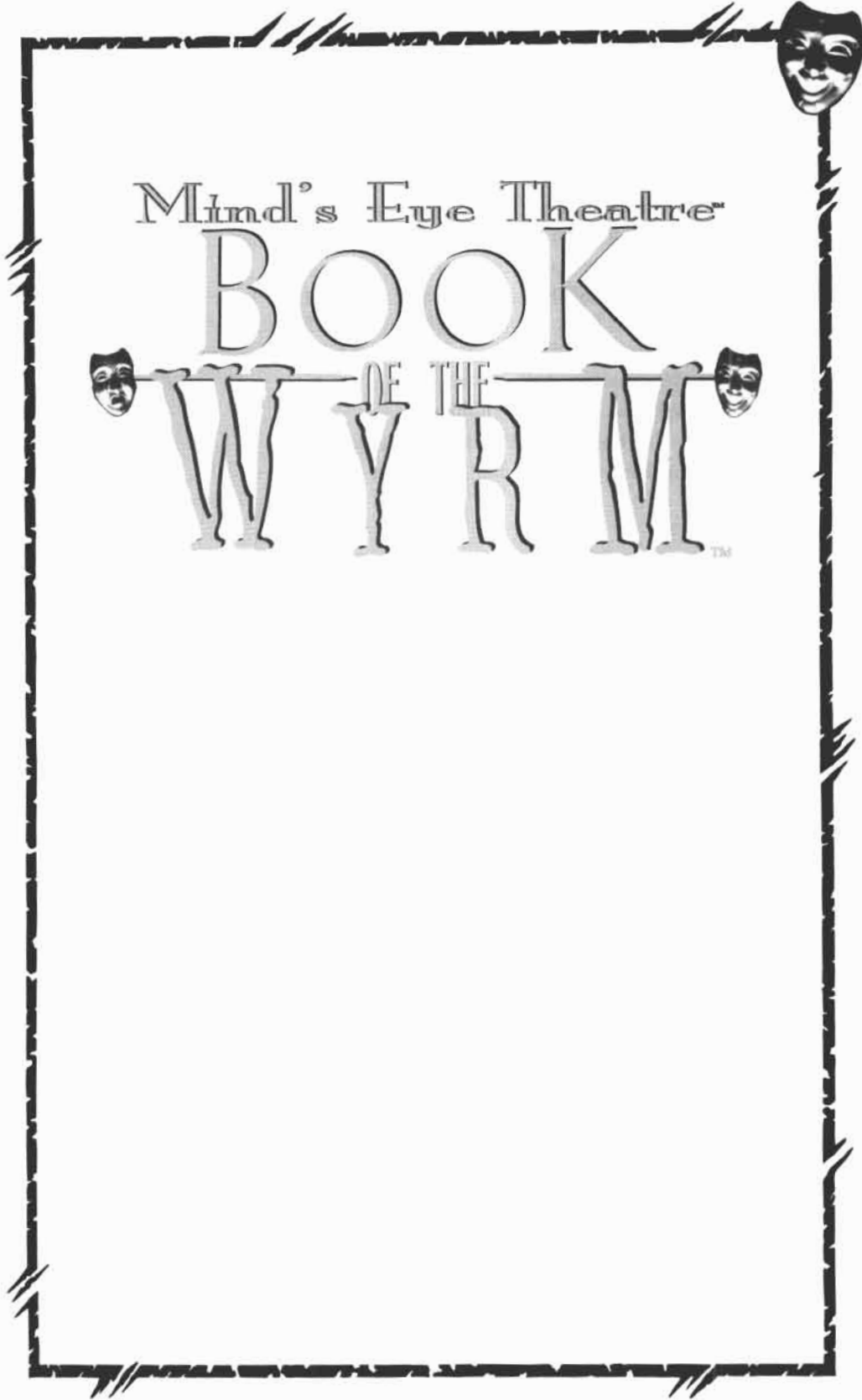


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# The Lesson: A Cautionary Tale

*For Carla*

"How much further do we have to go?" Serenity asked, heaving her backpack onto her shoulder and following her guide deeper into the cave.

"Not very far." Ellery's voice echoed as the tall, lanky man pushed onward, throwing his words over his shoulder at his dogged companion. Serenity sighed and inhaled deeply, gritting her teeth against the tiredness in her shins and the ache in her upper thighs from the day-long trek through the wilderness to this place.

*Is it worth it to know what he's promised to teach you?* The young woman asked herself that question for the 50th time since leaving home this morning to follow Ellery's promise of a "vision quest" that would answer all of her questions about how the world worked.

Serenity smiled secretly. Ellery couldn't know that she already had a good idea of the ways in which much of the world worked — and that it wasn't like the world that most people knew. She was Qualmi, a fortunate child of many forms, whose desire for secret knowledge and the will to understand the riddles of the world stretched before her as a road that must be traveled.

Her search for answers to many "whys" had led her to Ellery just a few short weeks ago. Mysterious, seductive yet engagingly friendly, Ellery had met Serenity in the Downtown Bookstore, in the Occult section, midway between Crowley and ESP. After a brief conversation about books in general, occult knowledge in particular and Serenity's favorite kind of coffee, she found herself sitting across from Ellery over cups of mocha latte in a nearby coffee shop. That evening, Serenity discovered that Ellery knew a lot about things such as vampires and ghosts and other creatures that she knew existed but had only begun to study.



For every question she asked, Ellery had an answer, giving her access to worlds she had only dreamed of. Her Kuasha, her mentor, had been so maddeningly stingy with knowledge, telling her constantly that she must grow into her mind and wait until the proper moment to learn the proper rituals and secrets.

Ellery displayed none of the exclusiveness she associated with her mentor. Although he topped the Heathcliff scale for brooding and sinister good looks, he had a ready smile for her and an even readier tongue. He broadened her mind to accept the fact that there were more sides to an issue than just the right one and the wrong one.

"Even evil has its place in the scheme of things," he'd told her one night just before she left his second-story walk-up to go home to the small house she shared with two college roommates (both of whom remained blissfully clueless to all her secrets).

Today — tonight, actually — she would meet Ellery's own mentor, his own private fount of knowledge. "If you think I know a lot, my sweet child," he'd told her when they'd made this date for a weekend trek to the Mastodon Caves, "you need to meet Anshaya."

"That's a cool name," she had replied. "What's it mean?"

Ellery smiled and kissed the tips of her fingers, a gesture that sent a thrill of anticipation through her, since he had implied that the two-day trek would initiate a new phase in their relationship in addition to introducing her to the mysterious Anshaya.

"She'll tell you that herself," Ellery had said.

A hot gust of air sweeping up from deep within the cavern brought Serenity out of her musings.

"Ellery?" she called, shining her flashlight into the darkness ahead of her and trying to listen for the sound of his boots — a sound, she recalled, that she had not heard for the last several minutes. Only silence answered her.

"Ellery?" This time her voice wavered a little. A soft sigh wafted to her ears on the top of the warm wind, seeming to beckon her further into the darkness. She looked over her shoulder, hoping to see a glimmer of light from the world she had left behind and finding only darkness. They had maneuvered through too many twisting passages for her to find any solace in the last rays of the afternoon sun.

*In for a penny*, she thought. She had been dawdling, lost in her own remembrances, and Ellery had probably outdistanced her without stopping to consider that she might not be as quick as he.

The darkness around her grew thicker and her flashlight beam faded and dimmed, finally going out with one final surge that showed her a long narrow tunnel opening ahead of her. *This is going to require some tricky crawling*. She wondered why Ellery hadn't warned her about this part of the trek.

Then she remembered something that Ellery had said to her, and some of the tension building up inside her dissipated. "Anshaya always tests her





students," he had told her just last night. He had, in fact, made certain that they had only a single sleeping bag between them and had made good use of it. "The teacher always possesses the student in one form or another," he'd said when she tried to tell him he was too rough. "Hush and enjoy it," he'd whispered, and she'd done her best to obey, like a good student.

*This is a test. This is only a test.* She repeated the words over and over as she knelt down in the stony cavern and, on hands and knees, poked her head through the opening before her. Sharp rocks protruded through the thin material of her worn Levis and stabbed into her unprotected palms. After only a few feet in the darkness, she felt exhausted. Sweat dripped from her hairline into her face, stinging her eyes.

*Screw this,* she said and concentrated on shifting into feline form. Her body shrank and compacted, absorbing most of her clothing but leaving her backpack behind, changing shape until a pretty lynx female stood in the place where Serenity had knelt only moments before. For a few moments, she reveled in the luxury her new form afforded her — padded paws that cushioned her steps from the sharp rocks, stiff tactile whiskers to help her maneuver through the narrow passage. Her pupils dilated, adjusting to the darkness quickly. What she saw did not comfort her.

The darkness ahead of her seemed to take form, coalescing into inky shapes that sighed and breathed warm air that now carried a slight, fetid stench of rotting meat with it. She stopped, reluctant to go on while these odd phenomena flitted around her, nudging her with slimy protuberances and leaving a sense of decay in their wake, like a thin film on her fur. She tried to turn in the passage, only to find that it had grown narrower and she couldn't maneuver herself all the way around, even in lynx-form. There was no other way out but through.

Thoughts of Ellery entered her mind, driving her on like a compulsion now. *He'd better have some good answers for me after this shit.* Then the greatest riddle of the day struck her. How could he have gotten through this passage unless he, too, could assume another form? A chill ran down her back, her fur stood on end, and a low growl began in her throat. She had assumed that Ellery was some sort of occultist — knowledgeable in the ways of magic and hidden lore but otherwise just a normal human. She had kept the secret of her true nature from him, unwilling to frighten him and deprive herself of both his company and his knowledge. *Lot of good that did; he's probably laughing at my foolishness right now.*

Something inside her grew hard and cold. *I'll show him — and his mentor, too.* Still growling, she pushed on.

The passage narrowed even more until she had to creep, flattened nearly to the ground, belly scraping the rough cavern floor. The sense of oppressiveness grew as she became more and more aware of tons of rock over her. Now the whispers intensified as forms brushed her whiskers, startling her and causing her to jerk her head involuntarily. Twice she cut her cheek on a sharp rock jutting from the side of the passage as she tried to avoid yet another slimy touch.



Ahead of her, the whispers hardened into voices — a pair of them, one male and familiar, the other husky and sexually indeterminate but reeking of age and decrepitude.

"She should be here any minute now, wise one," a voice that was unmistakably Ellery's reached her ears. *Why doesn't it give me any comfort?* Despair filled her as she heard the reply.

"Good, child, good. You've been slow about bringing her to us."

Ellery groaned, almost as if he were in pain. "Forgive me. You'll see, when she comes to you. She's—"

"A pretty little slut, yes?" The hag — that was how Serenity thought of the speaker — cackled. "You've always had a weakness for the tiny, pretty ones. Too bad they usually don't survive the testing."

Serenity stopped still as she heard those words. *You fool!* She berated herself. *Blind, stupid fool!* Half-forgotten legends crept back into her mind, stories of others like herself who had fallen to the lure of one too many forbidden secrets. Knowing that she could not turn around, Serenity frantically tried to move backward through the passage.

"Too late!" a howling chorus sounded in her ears as she felt something cold and intractable shove her forward. She felt herself falling through the darkness, only a few feet, it seemed. She landed in a pool of chilly, noxious slime.

"Welcome, Serenity," Ellery said, his voice low and sinister, with none of the soft seductiveness it had held earlier. "You are lying in the arms of my master. Meet Anshaya."

The pool surrounded her, lapping at her with its liquid foulness. She opened her mouth to scream and the viscous water seeped into her and filled her throat. She felt herself burn as she shifted forms, running through all of her shapes randomly as the stuff of the pool filled her body and invaded her mind. It sifted through her thoughts and emotions until nothing was left that was unsoiled by its presence. Finally, she lay on the ground, soaking wet and covered with slime, in her human form.

Ellery stood over her. "You've met Anshaya and been judged worthy, barely, for the gift we're about to give you," he said. Dimly, Serenity sensed others enter the room. Hands stripped the clothes from her body, paws batted at her, and rough tongues licked her eyes and mouth as if tasting her fear.

"From now on, you will know the darkness like you have never known it before. You will learn secrets no one has ever thought to teach you. And you will come to love it. You will come to need the sweet smell of rotting blood and the soft, whimpering screams of the kill that you bring as a sacrifice to your teacher." Ellery's flat, hard voice seemed to come from a distance as Serenity tried to run away inside herself.

The others — four or five or six or a hundred others — surrounded her as she lay on the floor, naked and unable to do anything but wish she were somewhere else. "Welcome to the ranks of the Hishtpah, little kitten. This is your rite of passage into madness and wisdom."



Even before the first blow struck, drawing blood that congealed on her skin, Serenity felt a scream forming in her throat. With each successive blow, more blood ran over her body, forming a hard shell that enclosed her in herself. Her voice broke and then grew still as she felt her throat close up. Drying blood formed a stiff collar around her larynx, silencing her cries. Before she lost consciousness, she heard Ellery's voice once more.

"For your information, Anshaya is one of the many names of the Unmaker. It means 'Watery Torment.' Enjoy your rebirth. It only gets worse from here."





# Chapter One: Introduction

## *The Essence of Darkness*

To fully appreciate the dangers and ironies of existence in the World of Darkness, one always needs challenges that go beyond the everyday, as well as greater (or more frightening) foes. While werewolves might like to think of vampires as Wyrms-tainted, there exist other creatures who embody the very essence of corruption. These creatures of the Wyrms have yet to be detailed fully — until now.

Know as you read **Book of the Wyrms for Mind's Eye Theatre** that you hold in your hands the key to playing the twisted, the corrupt, the horrors beyond horror and the truly damned. Have you ever yearned to break free of the constraints of playing the hero — even the fallible, fallen one? Have you longed to play a villain beyond redemption? Then step right up. Let us seduce you with our dark vision. You know you want to.

## *What This Book Is*

**Book of the Wyrms for Mind's Eye Theatre** is the adaptation of the **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** sourcebook of the same name, but made with **Laws of the Wild** in mind. Herein, we detail the Wyrms, its minions, its creatures and its servitors. We look at its realm of Malfeas, Pentex and fomori, as well as the Gifts, rites, fetishes and other paraphernalia that followers of the Wyrms use to corrupt, weaken and destroy in their master's name.

But first, a short primer for both Storytellers and players on the subtleties of playtime among the hideous and the putrid.



## Horror

Horror is best invoked as a gradual revelation, not an immediate shock. Edgar Allan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft were both masters of the horror tale in which the ordinary slowly evolved into the frightening or the unthinkable, with the hero coming to the realization of being trapped in an inescapable situation. While some horror tales might feature the people caught up in them as unwitting and random victims, most *good* horror stories come about as the result of something from the heroes' past or their meddling in the present. Think of *The Sixth Sense*, in which classic elements of horror (echoing from a past mistake, a gradual revelation) combine into a chilling realization by the hero.

Horror takes its own time to unfold. It is best played out over a series of game sessions. Imagine the horror invoked in an apparently blasé Shadow Lord who once fought beside a pack of noted Garou to defeat a powerful Bane of Corruption. Because the Shadow Lord desired all the renown and adulation for himself, he failed to help rescue the last surviving Garou (besides himself) as she scabbled to escape the Bane's lair, a pit of acidic corruption. Her last despairing cry followed him for years and haunted his dreams until he hardened himself to it. Now a young pack has uncovered that pit and called him there to advise them, because even now, *something* is roiling within that

### *In Case It Needed Saying...*

The Wyrn can inspire some very sick and disturbing shit. The more blighted and twisted a desire or act is, the more the Wyrn rejoices in it. Even turning on the evening news may give you a glimpse of its face. However, in the end, this is a game, the ultimate purpose of which is to have fun. But, if you happen to learn something before you're done playing, there's nothing wrong with that either.

All that said, some people out there think that gore is more, and that Black Spiral Dancers make kewl characters. We're here to tell you, folks, there is *nothing* cool about rape, torture, incest, murder or selling your soul to a higher power whose ultimate goal is destruction and corruption. This book is not about sympathizing with the "misunderstood" bad guys — it's designed to demonstrate the depths to which the bad guys routinely sink in their efforts. If you find such stuff too disturbing, then don't pick up the book. Should you find yourself getting too wrapped up in things, put the book down and take a few steps back to collect your head. If you think this is a how-to-corrupt-yourself-in-12-easy-steps manual, you are hereby advised to throw this book in the trash right now and return to playing *Trivial Pursuit*, for everyone's sake.



dark abyss. He can't refuse without losing his reputation. As he looks down into the coiling corruption below, the ground begins to crack and shudder. A gloating female voice shrieks his name in gleeful recognition as the corruption vomits forth. Welcome to horror....

## Terror

Unlike the slow, seductive pace of horror, terror is immediate and visceral. Terror evokes an adrenaline surge, making your heart pound, your skin crawl or prickle into gooseflesh, drying your mouth and bringing on a cold sweat. It may freeze you into immobility or send you hurtling off in a panicked run. There is usually some element of surprise in terror, even if heroes are expecting *something* to challenge them. Either the foe catches them unprepared ("We don't *have* anything silver to use against these guys!") or he is far more frightening and formidable than anyone anticipated. Think of the most disturbing chase dream you've ever had. Someone pursuing you, only a step behind, armed with an axe to dismember you, perhaps? What about the young Garou cut off from the rest of her pack and fleeing the touch of a spirit that can infect her with an immediately deadly disease — one that can even slay werewolves? Now imagine that once slain, she would rise as an infectious agent herself rather than returning to Gaia and seeking out those she cares for most? Terrifying?

True terror is actually more difficult to induce than horror. First, when the thing that terrifies you actually manifests, it either does the thing you are so afraid of or it doesn't. In other words, it kills/ maims/ forever changes you, or its threat is proved false. So, terror is only terror while it is held in abeyance and its recipient remains in suspense. While players identify with and care about their characters, few will invest the emotional energy necessary to invoke the kind of terror that such situations cry out for. And that may be a good thing. We're trying to frighten the character, not the player. We wouldn't want to kick in the fight-or-flight response and emerge from a session with broken bones or heart attacks, after all.

## Splat

Splat is exactly what it sounds like — gory, twisted and revolting. It is gratuitous violence that's designed to shock and sicken its witnesses. Imagine the sound made by an eviscerated body falling 20 stories to land on the sidewalk below. See the body shatter, flesh flayed off, entrails writhing, blood spurting. Smell the odor as the bowels let loose and watch in sick fascination as an eyeball, torn from its socket, gently rolls to a stop just touching your toe. That's splat. While some become inured to it, most people would rather witness the carnage at a comfortable distance. The same people who devour footage of the result of an axe-wielding maniac's handiwork on the television screen would vomit if they came to the actual crime scene.

However, just as we don't use real or play weapons in MET play, we generally avoid creating a scene that actually depicts raw gore. Nonetheless, splat has its uses in games. Reports of carnage, even descriptions of a scene that the characters



are supposedly viewing, are not as immediate as visual representations, yet they can evoke feelings of fear in characters who use their own imaginations to consider that they might suffer the same fate. Usually, we imitate Greek drama in which all violent actions take place offstage. Splat, as depicted in countless Hollywood films is never offstage, but let's keep it that way in game.

## *Why Follow the Rules of Safety?*

Why should we go all cushy on violence of the splat variety? It's a matter of safety.

Indulging in live-action roleplaying provides a safe outlet for exploring our darker fantasies and baser capacities without hurting anyone, including — hopefully — ourselves. In any game set in the World of Darkness there is bound to be conflict. Challenge is, after all, what moves the game along and builds interest in it. In a game featuring Wyrms-creatures, however, the ante is upped due to the nature of the beast. Some players already go pretty far in portraying the darkness within the more normal characters available to them. Storytellers fall to the same temptations. With the potential for sick and twisted behavior and conscienceless violence unleashed, it's more important than ever to curb any tendency toward excess. Many people become excited when they're playing, losing themselves within the moment and reacting in character at inappropriate levels. None of us need this, Storyteller or players.

First, players should never play the game outside a safe environment — in the home, at conventions or in a confined area set aside for play. At all times, you must remember that it is just a game. It's exciting, scary, frustrating or even upsetting — but it's not reality. If you feel yourself getting too involved, take a breather. We'll all be glad you did.

Following the Rules of Safety outlined in every *Mind's Eye Theatre* book helps us remember those parameters. It's a game. Indulging in unsafe or threatening behavior endangers us, unsettles us and may cause those outside the game to react to threats that aren't real or censure our activities. When we're pretending to be hulking, slobbering mega-dark psychopaths, the lines between game and real world can get lost in the dance of destruction. We're here to enjoy ourselves in a creative activity, not play head-games or domination tag with one another. Let's keep it in focus.

## *The Only Rules That Matter*

The following are the only rules of *Mind's Eye Theatre* that absolutely must be obeyed. These common-sense rules are designed to keep us all — other gamers, yourself, bystanders and even police or security officers — safe and happy.

The rules are designed to limit opportunities for others to destroy the fun of your game. They aren't given here to interfere with gameplay, your enjoyment or your creativity. They're here to make certain that you play with safety and the fun of all in mind.





## **#1 — It's Only a Game**

This is the most important rule by far. If a character is killed, if a plot falls apart, if a rival wins the day, if your essence is given in bondage to the Wyrn — it's still just a game. Leave real-world problems at the door and game problems in the playing area. If the character played by your best friend hogties your character and delivers him to Malfeas, you don't go out and trash your buddy's car in revenge. Keep it in perspective.

Leave the game behind when it's over. While it's okay to talk about what happened and even plan for some future eventualities, doing so at work may gain you some weird looks and a quick trip to the company psychologist. Likewise, breaking in on another player's romantic dinner at a restaurant to talk game is a no-no. Use your common sense.

## **#2 — No Touching**

You should never actually touch any other players or have any other physical contact with them, no matter how careful and gentle you think you're being. Even if you have permission, just don't. Miscalculations or unexpected movement can lead to accidents. People can get hurt. Further, some people have an aversion to others coming too close to them. They may feel threatened or uncomfortable. Rely on the rules and verbal description to take care of physical confrontations.

## **#3 — No Stunts**

Never climb, jump, run, slide, swing from things or play balance beam. Don't indulge in any sort of horseplay during the game. Again, an injudicious action could result in injury or attract unwanted attention from people who are not playing the game. You already imagine that you're someone different, you can imagine leaping from a building onto a foe passing below.

## **#4 — No Weapons**

Weapons of any sort — real or fake, even the most obvious toys — should never be brought to the game or allowed into play. Even though you might have the best of intentions, keeping your nifty blunted sword peace-bonded in its sheath, some fool will dash around the corner and ram into you, driving the hilt into your midriff and breaking a rib. Even things that look like toys can cause problems. How many kids have police shot down when the kids pointed something like a bright red water pistol toward them? Use item cards. Enough said.

## **#5 — No Drugs or Drinking**

This one would seem like a no-brainer. When you're drunk or high, your concentration is shot, you're often more belligerent, and your judgment is impaired. That's why they don't want you driving a car while under the influence. Players impaired by alcohol or drugs lose their sense of



appropriateness, becoming a danger to themselves and others. Furthermore, to put it mildly, their acting stinks. Portraying someone who is drunk or high is fine; actually indulging isn't. In short, if you want to indulge, do it on your own time. Don't bring it to the game.

## #6 – *Don't Involve Outsiders*

Not everyone is involved in your game. Bystanders and passersby might be disturbed or even frightened by what they see. Particularly when the media seems to paint every gamer wearing black as a potential murderer who can't distinguish roleplaying from reality, you need to be considerate of those in the vicinity. Refrain from loud or apparently threatening displays that could be misinterpreted. Take actions that might be misunderstood out of public view. It's an exercise in futility trying to explain to the police that when you screamed, "I did it! I dropped him into the acid and the evidence is gone!" you were just kidding.

## #7 – *The Rules are Flexible*


Feel free to ignore or adjust any systems or rules that don't enhance your gameplay. If your troupe thinks that retests suck, don't use them. Just let all the players know what the home rules are. White Wolf calls this its version of "the Golden Rule." Change any rules that you find unpalatable. Be consistent and fair. Rules that change constantly just breed resentment and confusion. The point is to have fun, not be slaves to words in a book.

## #8 – *Have Fun!*

We didn't say, "Win the game." In a really good game, even those who die or fail to achieve all their goals can have a good time. There are no winners, no losers, just players and Storytellers working together to tell a good tale. So have fun, allow others to have fun. Don't go out to spread destruction and kill off the other characters just because you can. They want to enjoy the game, too. If everyone has a good time, you all win anyway.

## *Free Will and the Wyrms*

The Wyrms is neither omniscient nor an ever-present evil taskmaster. Despite its multiple arms of influence, it is not everywhere at once (although it can seem to be). That said, not every evil deed out there is committed in the name of the Wyrms. Simply claiming, "The Devil made me do it," strips the gravity from atrocity. The Wyrms could not have a foothold if people were not making active choices to do evil, and thus opening themselves to further influence. Not everyone who commits evil acts ends up in the thrall of the Wyrms. They do, however, do its work, and as long as things are going the way it wants, the Wyrms' not going to argue or interfere with them. The Wyrms is first and foremost a corrupter — it prefers to be a guide, but it ultimately let others make the decision. Mindless drones aren't nearly such great producers as those who can think and be creative. And in the end, that is the greatest horror — that people are *choosing*



to perform these acts, not because of some great entity hanging over their shoulder, but by their own free will and directive.

## On The Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth

The Wyrn has its own guidebook of sorts, a handbook of damnation and horror. This simple, slim volume details the history of the Wyrn's growth and corruption, from the fall of Scotland to contemporary degradation. The **Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth** is chock-full of interesting information and potential story tools, but rarely used.

If you're familiar with Lovecraft, recall to what use he put forbidden tomes of knowledge, such as *Unausprechlichen Kulten*, *Cultes des Goules*, the *Book of Eibon* and the most famous of them all, the *Necronomicon*. When his characters encountered such books, it was always a bad sign. Mere possession was suspicious; use of the knowledge was the surest indicator of worse to come. Such volumes were often produced in fearful ways (written on parchment with strange inks, bound in questionable leathers), and always contrasted with their surroundings somehow. The recent film *The Ninth Gate* uses a book very similar to the **Chronicle**, and adds the throat-tightening element of knowledge that is too dangerous to know, but which someone is willing to kill for. The **Chronicle** is cut from the same cloth, and it is capable of the same sort of scares — be it as a set of leather-bound books kept in a locked case although richly illuminated medieval manuscripts are left out, or an expensive-looking volume standing out among second-hand paperbacks. All of these might be used as potential ornaments to increase the creep factor of would-be Fausts. Depending on the setting of your chronicle, the book's potential as a prop or story hook can grow exponentially. Availability of books, literacy rates, a watchful Church and changing ideas regarding what is "right" can all place the **Chronicle** (and anyone possessing it for any reason) squarely in the crosshairs of the Wyrn or mortal authorities. Consider Europe's witch-hunts or the witch hysteria of colonial New England. What would they have done with someone who had this blasphemous text as bedside reading?

The original book is prefaced with an editor's note from an occult publishing company, suggesting that the book was published with little knowledge of or belief in its material. The editor seems to think that the book is merely sick doggerel on par with something of Crowley's or *The Satanic Bible* by Anton LaVey. Is he right? Could it be that the text floating on the market now is a highly expurgated version (with even fouler cut bits stealthily corrupting another editor who had to read it), or did someone pull a few strings to make sure that the "pure" text is available to the public?

Garou who possess parts of the text have even greater cause for concern. The book is known to be a corrupting influence on all who possess it. However, it is also one of the few reliable sources of Wyrn lore. Finding an unexpurgated copy may lead to all sorts of trouble. Should it be destroyed as a Wyrn-thing, or should it be preserved for its knowledge (distasteful though that knowledge may be)? And Garou are not the only ones who may seek out this knowledge or become



corrupted by it. A curious Qualmi, a Corax who made a bad deal, or even a Tremere vampire could all end up with the forbidden text.

Many Black Spirals believe that the book is largely nonsense or simply some half-muddled ravings of their Kinfolk trying to make sense of what they know of the Wyrms. Is it? There are rumors that the ruler of Malfeas hunts for every copy of the **Chronicle** he can find, and further, that some dark secret of his is hidden within the pages (which is why he makes such an effort). Other Dancers insist that the names for Maeljin are incorrect, or that they do not acknowledge these names, while others are equally insistent that the Maeljin names are correct, but the Urge Wyrms' names are incorrect. Which is correct, if anything?

Creative Storytellers can make all sorts of hay with this little book. Those with a bit of time on their hands (or trustworthy Narrators with a crafty touch) may choose to reprint bits of the text on parchment-colored paper or dress the text up so that it looks like something nasty and forbidden. Another idea might be to have the text copied onto lined notebook paper as a prop for a young would-be sorcerer or Kinfolk who's going into places he shouldn't. Narrator characters who have gone barking mad from reading the book may babble selections of the text.

## *Sense Wyrms and Wyrms-Taint*

Tainting Gaia is the primary function and ultimate goal of any creature of the Wyrms. Pentex, the Black Spiral Dancers, fomori — these creatures are only means to that end. The Wyrms doesn't want to kill every Garou on Earth. The Black Spiral Dancers are proof of that. What it does want to do is warp the natural order to fit its own vision, Wyrms-taint is the most direct method and sign of this change.

The question of how you handle Wyrms-taint in your game will often define the tenor of your entire chronicle. Many Storytellers will assume that anything over-hyped, insipid or just irritating about modern life is of the Wyrms. Conversely, many players will attempt to use *Sense Wyrms* on absolutely everything after a while, on the assumption that everyone and everything is suspect. While this level of paranoia is suitable for the World of Darkness, the constant Mental Challenges can bog a game down, and it makes springing surprises on the players that much harder. Likewise, players will have a hard time taking the Wyrms seriously as a threat if it randomly taints every brand of soda pop, annoying cartoon character or roleplaying game.

It helps if you use *Sense Wyrms* as just that — a sense, like smell or touch. *Sense Wyrms* rarely gives a clear positive or negative response, like a Geiger counter. Rather, it conveys a host of flavors and nuances that can be understood only with experience. A person who has merely worked for a week at a Wyrms-tainted office building might have an old, flat, stale scent to him, while a Nexus Crawler would smell fresh and bloody. The scent changes, too, as circumstances permit. A sudden whiff of wet garbage can carry on the breeze as a Buzzard flies overhead, only to be gone a moment later. Avoid saying simply “yes” or “no” when a player tests for Wyrms-taint. Make use of unfamiliar scents or circumstances that give hints. What's more frightening



— utter silence in a room that's been locked up for the night's rest, or a little scratching noise that seems to be coming from *inside* an inkbottle on your desk? Tantalizing hints that force the characters to actually work the room and root out the source can be a great way to build suspense. Now they actually have to get close to the thing, and they might well need to be in arm's reach of it to find it for certain.

Some players may want to make a study of these different Wyrmscents. After all, if they can catalog all the information that their Gift is giving them, they should be able to learn a great deal about their foe. This should also be a fine exercise in someone's madness (preferably not the Storyteller's). After all, every single person in the world has a different scent, and that scent can change in a variety of ways, so Wyrmscent should work the same. Where's that taint coming from — eating too much O'Tolley's slop, working in an office where someone is smoking a Bane-laden pack of Circinus cigarettes or being the next-door neighbor of a fomori? Trying to track down the source of each scent is going to be very time-consuming in the Wyrmscent-laden World of Darkness. And what does it say for a pack's purity when its members are so dead certain that they know the particular scents of some of the Maeljin Incarna? At best, it brings a Judge of Doom knocking on the door....

It is worth pointing out that the exact effects of taint on any being aren't defined in the rules. The exact effects of a taint should be up to the Storyteller. As a rule of thumb, a "soft" or weak taint carried just through contact or association with the Wyrmscent should have no immediate in-game effects. A human carrying such a taint might be more susceptible to cancer, depression or a host of other ailments. Eventually, a human that is tainted long enough will probably become a fomori. How long it takes for any given human to succumb is up to you. A Garou that is actively tainted by a Bane or even a Maeljin, however, is a different story. Such a Garou has been marked as the property of the Wyrmscent, and as such, she could be susceptible to any or all of the following effects. Bear in mind that this is just a list of suggestions, not a set of hard-and-fast rules. Feel free to add your own effects as you see fit. The effects of Wyrmscent-taint can and should change every time a Garou encounters it.

- The Garou is down two Traits on any Social Challenge against a Bane, including challenges relating to such Charms as *Possession* and *Agony*.

- The Garou is down two Traits on any attempt to hide from Wyrmscent-creatures. Gifts such as *Blissful Ignorance* are only partially successful. A Wyrmscent-creature will know that a tainted individual is trying to hide from him nearby, but he will not know her exact location.

- For every month that a Wyrmscent-taint goes untreated, a tainted character receives a Negative Social, Mental or Physical Trait of the Storyteller's choosing. This Trait may be bought off normally with experience.

- Spirits of Gaia will refuse to teach Gifts to a tainted Garou.

- Spirit summonings are more likely to bring Banes or other nasty spirits rather than Gaia-spirits.



## The Lore of the Wyrn

*Wyrn Lore* is one of those skills that should serve as a double-edged sword for characters. On one hand, the Garou are desperate to learn about their enemy; on the other, such knowledge may prove to be too much for the Garou to bear. A Garou should always be wary of learning too much, lest he succumb to the Wyrn's wiles. The Wyrn has been known to take as much interest in those who study it, as those who seek the knowledge take interest in it. This occasion is truly one in which a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

As a rule of thumb, one to three levels of *Wyrn Lore* should not be dangerous. A Garou should be able to pick up the first level of *Wyrn Lore* just by fighting the Wyrn and listening to his elders. However, the character is just as likely to have *incorrect* information, and guessing should be hazardous. Levels two and three are harder to acquire, but a Garou shouldn't have to do more than listen to the Galliards to find out the different tales of the Wyrn and to get a sense of its powers, and have a few encounters with Wyrn-spirits under his belt. This level of knowledge lets a Garou know about the powers and basic motives of most Wyrn-spirits, but it conveys nothing about the greater spirits of the Wyrn, nor does it reveal any information about the Far Umbral realms of the Wyrn. Still, he knows enough not to make foolish errors about basic material, and may be able to form hypotheses based on what he knows.

Level four requires that the Garou study a Wyrn spirit actively. He needs to summon one and question it, or observe it in the wild. An extended interview with a fomor may be helpful, although many fomori are ignorant regarding some of the intricacies that may be uppermost in the character's mind. A few conversations to wring the information from a Black Spiral Dancer somehow is another possibility. (Prof. W. Richard MacLish, also known as Writlish of the Black Spirals, teaches at the University of Edinburgh and is usually available for discussions on "scholarly matters.") Such contact is extremely hazardous, and it violates the Litany in any number of ways. At the very least, the Garou is no longer fighting the Wyrn wherever it lives and wherever it breeds. At worst, the Garou may have to pay his source for the information somehow, and is thereby actively aiding the Wyrn. Many tribes will overlook such behavior—the Uktena practically expect their tribemates to attempt such things. Other tribes, such as the Get of Fenris or Red Talons, will call out anyone who consorts with the Wyrn in such a fashion. No matter what an individual Garou thinks of such a student's quest, he is never fully trusted by the Garou Nation again. The Garou seeking knowledge has shown that he's willing to compromise Gaia to further his knowledge. Such an act may be forgiven, it cannot be forgotten.

A Garou with *Wyrn Lore* x 4 is always down two Traits in any Social Challenges with Garou who know of his reputation as a scholar of the Wyrn. Agents of the Wyrn are also likely to know of a character with such knowledge, and they will seek to kill him or convert him above all others. On the other hand, a Garou with this level of Lore knows the names of the Umbral Realms that belong to the Wyrn. He also has a rough idea of what Anchorheads and Wyrn



caerns are capable of, and he may attempt to take apart an Anchorhead without too much difficulty. As the Garou gathers knowledge, he may find that his further studies allow him to throw out mistaken beliefs and ideas. It should be as much about knowing what's incorrect as well as correct.

*Wyrms Lore* x 5 will shatter most Garou. Such knowledge can only come by visiting one of the Realms of the Wyrms. The answers to the darkest questions that a Garou might ask are written on the wall of the Abyss, or muttered endlessly by a worker within the Scar, or played out in terrible splendor deep within the Atrocity Realm. It's only with this level of knowledge that a Garou can determine where an Anchorhead goes without entering it, discern the powers of any given Bane on sight, or safely disassemble a Wyrms caern.

A Garou with five levels of *Wyrms Lore* is a prime candidate for a derangement of the Storyteller's choice, plus the other hindrances described with level four. *Paranoia*, obviously, is ideal, but other options exist. Feel free to select whatever you feel is appropriate. Such a well-versed student should always be fending off petitions and temptations by the Wyrms. She might also have other little problems, like other scholars (such as Writlish) leaving messages on her answering machine when the sept leader comes by, or being recognized by Wyrms-creatures during a fight.

## *How to Use This Book*

This book is meant to be a primer both for players to learn a little about the other side of the fence, and to help Storytellers find ways to use these things in their chronicles. Usually the chapters have the general material in the front, with the Storyteller section following. Storyteller sections have advisories on how to use the material, story seeds and potential resources for further information.

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

**Chapter Two: Cosmology** (While every Garou knows the story of the Wyrms's binding, few know that the Wyrms has become a hydra of many foul urges.)

**Chapter Three: A Map of Hell** (From the Blights to the Hellholes to the very duchies of Malfeas — the Umbra is no place to get lost.)

**Chapter Four: The Black Spiral Dancers** (The fallen White Howlers live on as the greatest plague of the Garou.)

**Chapter Five: The Fallen and the Wretched** (The Wyrms's many monstrous servants, from fomori, Banes and Wyrms-things to outright monsters and fallen shifters.)

**Chapter Six: Pentex and Subsidiaries** (The most outward sign of the Wyrms's corruption, spanning the globe and making a profit while they're at it.)

**Appendix: The Wyrms's Arsenal** (The many tricks in the Wyrms's bag — from weapons to poisons to fetishes and talents.)







# Chapter Two: Cosmology

## *In the Beginning*

So why is the world in this mess in the first place? No one is sure, and that uncertainty continues to fuel debates around the caern-fires. Every legend is different, and many elders maintain that the shapeshifters are not *meant* to know. Knowing what exactly happened between the three cosmic beings who make up the Triat would surely lead to insanity.

What is known is that there were three beings in the beginning. The Wyld created random energy, spawning endless creativity that had no real meaning. The Weaver imposed order on this creation, making forms and ideals out of the Wyld's material. The Wyrn balanced all, taking away those forms when they had served their purpose. This interplay was considered the original cosmic harmony. Then at some point, and no one really knows how, the Weaver acquired consciousness and went mad. Did she go mad from her awakening, or did she awaken only after going mad? Again, no one is sure. Whatever the reason, she started to spin her webs wildly, creating form with little of the Wyld behind it. The Wyrn grew to keep up and maintain the balance, and when it finished, it found itself with far too much power and likewise insane from the effort. The Wyrn was also entangled in its own logic. It felt it should destroy itself for taking up so much space when its function was fulfilled, yet to do so would leave the Wyld and the Weaver without balance. Yet, the Weaver was still out of control, so there was no balance.



Some Garou believe that the Weaver went mad when the Wyrms destroyed her creations in the name of Balance. Others think that the Weaver overstepped her bounds and sought to entangle everything of the Wyld in her webs. Still others maintain that the Weaver went insane when she saw that the Wyrms were the final arbiter of destruction on her works, not herself. And a few even believe that it's not the Weaver's fault — she's just trying defend herself from the mad Wyrms that's trying to destroy the other Triatic aspects. Whatever has happened, madness infected the Triat, the Triat was aware of itself and its actions, and the three parts that had worked together were now at each other's throats.

Is order ultimately responsible for today's chaos? The debate goes on....

At any rate, the Weaver entangled the Wyrms, and the Wyrms wanted out, right then. It struggled and stretched against its prison, but it succeeded only in tangling itself further. Worse yet, it was alone in its struggles. Without the Wyld, it could not create new growth. The Weaver was heedless of the Wyrms' thrashing, except perhaps as "some little disorder over there," and it promptly put more web on the problem. The Wyrms — alone, without purpose, confined, confused — reached out for anything that could help.

## *The Triatic Wyrms*

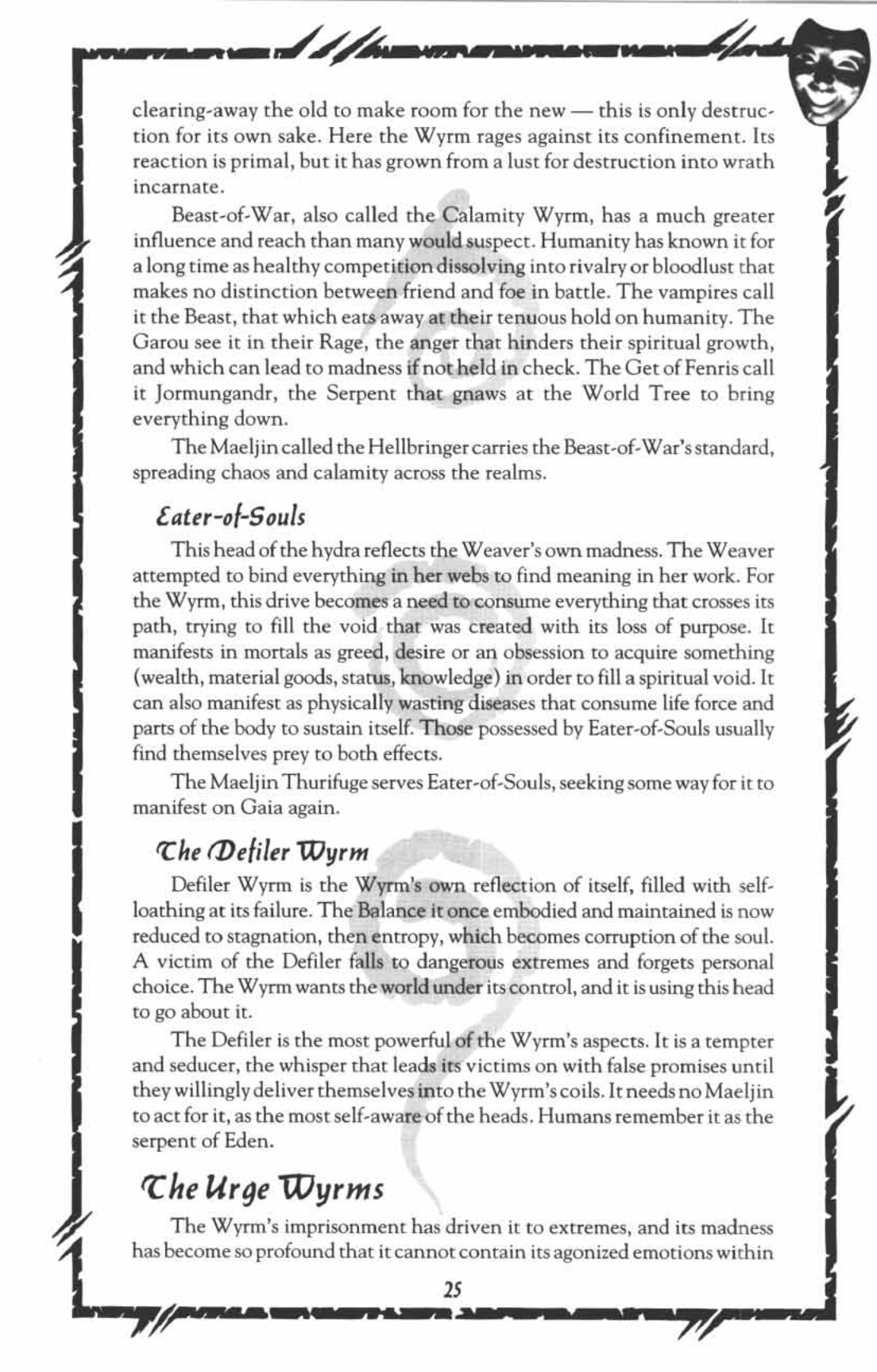
When the Wyrms were first confined, it tried to figure out what went wrong by reenacting a little psychodrama inside its head, creating the Weaver, the Wyld and itself from aspects of its own personality. Unfortunately, between the madness it endured from confinement, these three personas developed their own intelligence, and have become the Wyrms' dominant personae in its "multiple-personality disorder." Each has its own motivations, goals and drives, and that is fortunate for the world. Should these aspects (called the Triatic Wyrms) choose to unite, their power could rival Gaia.

Mostly, these heads of the hydra stay in Malfeas. Should one decide to travel, it takes an enormous amount of spiritual energy for it to manifest in another realm. Even worse, it becomes a creature of immense power, and it takes just as much energy, if not more, to send it back. The last time this happened, Eater-of-Souls attempted to settle on Earth, and the Croatan tribe responded with their legendary sacrifice, driving the beast from Gaia. This (as far as anyone knows) is the only time that such a creature has been able to manifest on Gaia.

More commonly, the Triatic heads have been encountered in dreams and visions, or on trips to the more easily corrupted Deep Umbral realms. The appearance of one of these monsters is tantamount to the appearance of a Celestine, with all the awe and horror that that sort of encounter should inspire.

### *Beast-of-War*

Beast-of-War is the Wyld aspect of the Wyrms' personality. It is raw power gone completely berserk, without form or direction. There is no



clearing-away the old to make room for the new — this is only destruction for its own sake. Here the Wyrms rage against its confinement. Its reaction is primal, but it has grown from a lust for destruction into wrath incarnate.

Beast-of-War, also called the Calamity Wyrms, has a much greater influence and reach than many would suspect. Humanity has known it for a long time as healthy competition dissolving into rivalry or bloodlust that makes no distinction between friend and foe in battle. The vampires call it the Beast, that which eats away at their tenuous hold on humanity. The Garou see it in their Rage, the anger that hinders their spiritual growth, and which can lead to madness if not held in check. The Get of Fenris call it Jormungandr, the Serpent that gnaws at the World Tree to bring everything down.

The Maeljin called the Hellbringer carries the Beast-of-War's standard, spreading chaos and calamity across the realms.

### *Eater-of-Souls*

This head of the hydra reflects the Weaver's own madness. The Weaver attempted to bind everything in her webs to find meaning in her work. For the Wyrms, this drive becomes a need to consume everything that crosses its path, trying to fill the void that was created with its loss of purpose. It manifests in mortals as greed, desire or an obsession to acquire something (wealth, material goods, status, knowledge) in order to fill a spiritual void. It can also manifest as physically wasting diseases that consume life force and parts of the body to sustain itself. Those possessed by Eater-of-Souls usually find themselves prey to both effects.

The Maeljin Thurifuge serves Eater-of-Souls, seeking some way for it to manifest on Gaia again.

### *The Defiler Wyrms*

Defiler Wyrms is the Wyrms' own reflection of itself, filled with self-loathing at its failure. The Balance it once embodied and maintained is now reduced to stagnation, then entropy, which becomes corruption of the soul. A victim of the Defiler falls to dangerous extremes and forgets personal choice. The Wyrms want the world under its control, and it is using this head to go about it.

The Defiler is the most powerful of the Wyrms' aspects. It is a tempter and seducer, the whisper that leads its victims on with false promises until they willingly deliver themselves into the Wyrms' coils. It needs no Maeljin to act for it, as the most self-aware of the heads. Humans remember it as the serpent of Eden.

### *The Urge Wyrms*

The Wyrms' imprisonment has driven it to extremes, and its madness has become so profound that it cannot contain its agonized emotions within



itself. Mortals deal with this kind of pain by losing consciousness or killing themselves, but the Wyrms has no such options. Its pain, fear and desperation for release was fed by its panic, until its wild thoughts developed into separate entities, known as the Urge Wyrms.

The Urge Wyrms are natural survival traits and feelings that have grown far beyond their original boundaries. Each began as a natural reaction to fear or confinement, but in the mind of a supernatural entity, they grew and took on autonomy. Such emotions eventually fade in humans when reinforcement is not continuous, but those touched by an Urge continue to hold onto and feed that emotion, even after whatever caused it has disappeared. The emotion builds until it overshadows everything else in the psyche, giving the Urge a greater hold on its victim, until possession is complete. Some believe that the Maeljin are an example of such total possession.

The Urges are the most likely Wyrms entities that will be encountered anywhere in the Tellurian. They go where there are sentient creatures with emotions (with the exception of a few Epiphs). As beings of pure, raw emotion, they are too difficult to comprehend in a rational manner. They can only be encountered in the dark spots in one's own heart, and even then, they are little different from normal emotions. Their touch is insidious, invisible and many times, too subtle to be recognized as an alien intrusion.

The names of the Urges were given to them long ago by the Black Spiral Dancers, so they are most likely corruptions of Pictish words. No one knows if the Urges acknowledge or respond to these names.

### *The Maeljin Incarna*

The Urge Wyrms, as entities of pure feeling, can never manifest physically. They need emotions and sentient minds to act through, and sometimes, they need servants to take up their banners in the realms. While possessed mortals can be useful, occasionally a more dedicated servant is needed. This is where the Maeljin Incarna come in. The Maeljin were once mortals, yet they became so thoroughly corrupted by a particular Urge that they were transformed into powerful spirits that embodied that Urge. Each serves his patron until he fails in some way, or until a newer and more powerful candidate floats to the top. The Maeljin act as the eyes, ears, voices and occasionally hands of the Urges whenever more direct action is necessary. Mortals who know of the Wyrms and wish to pledge themselves to its service must approach it through a Maeljin. A number of cults form around such servitude.

Black Spiral Dancers refuse to traffic with the Maeljin, whom they see as more interested in their own politics than serving their master. The senior Pentex board has such close relations with the Urges themselves and the Triatic Wyrms that they need no intercessors. The Maeljin, for their part, see the Pentex Board of Directors as a threat to their own positions, so they seek to discredit the board members in the eyes of the Wyrms. Few like to consider what would happen if the Maeljin got bored....



### *Foebok, Urge of Fear*

Fear has been called the oldest and strongest emotion of humans. Therefore, it makes sense that the Urge of Fear was the first to emerge. This Urge Wyrms was believed to have come about when the Wyrms first realized its predicament. When confronted with a threat, any creature's natural first reaction is fear, giving rise to the fight-or-flight instinct. Foebok, however, is about the irrational, groundless fear that feeds on itself, which can gnaw steadily away at the psyche. The holes created by fear lead the way for other Urges, such as hatred, to enter. Those possessed by Foebok must instill fear so that their master can feed, and those with only his light touch are often gripped with fear, even when no obvious threat is present. This Urge needs no Maeljin, as fear is found at the sub-conscious level of every sentient creature. Black Spiral Dancers call upon Hakaken, "The Heart of Fear," when they wish to petition Foebok.

### *Vorus, Urge of Greed*

This Urge grew from the Wyrms' desperate wish to have everything back the way it was, and from the way it grasped at anything in reach in order to make it so. Vorus inflames the natural desire to acquire necessities for life, turning it into unnatural avarice and the need to hoard resources. Those possessed often compare how much they've hoarded, even with each other (leading to contests), and they take pleasure in depriving others of even the least amount they need to survive. Needless to say, the 20th century has been a jubilee for Vorus, especially in America. A culture of conspicuous consumption and materialism, intertwined Greed and Desire, has instilled unnecessary wants and desires in the populace. Such a culture can destroy itself more handily than all the Banes in the Tellurian might.

No Maeljin serves this Urge. Apparently, Vorus either needs no help, or it refuses to share even the least bit of its power with another.

### *Mahsstrac, Urge of Power*

This Urge is believed to be the youngest of the Urge Wyrms, but it is also the most highly evolved. It was created out of the bound Wyrms' discovery that it could do nothing during its imprisonment except manipulate lesser creatures into doing its work. This Urge encourages the notions of control and manipulation as being the end-goal, rather than a means to an end. It seeks potential targets in natural hierarchies of authority, and it encourages its target to seek only dominance over all. Those who are touched by the Urge soon focus on directing and controlling others, while those who are fully corrupted by it become dictators and tyrants of the worst sort. In both cases, the target loses sight of his original goal that power would assist, and he reacts violently against any perceived challenge to his authority.

This Urge has no Maeljin servant, requiring no servitor to further its interests. Most Wyrms creatures serve it unconsciously. The Green Dragon



totem, “Destroyer of Life and Crusher of Enemies,” is the intercessor between the Black Spiral Dancers and Mahsstrac.

### *Karnala, Urge of Desire*

The Wyrms’ desire for freedom above all else created Karnala. Indeed, when the Wyrms’ desire eclipsed all others, the Urge was born and it attained the freedom that the Wyrms did not have. This Urge is the consuming desire that focuses upon anything to obsession.

Karnala feeds on its own actions, so the fulfillment of its yearnings would be its undoing. Instead, its attention roves constantly, seeking out new objects of attachment or choosing things that it knows it can never attain. This desire goes beyond simple wishful thinking or the natural desire for necessities of any kind. Karnala’s targets can think only of their own gratification, to the detriment of other things. As the Urge acquires a greater hold on the target, the line between possession of the desired and actual fulfillment blurs and leaves a spiritual void that Karnala simply fills with more desire.

#### **Empress Aliara — Countess Desire**

The Maeljin of Karnala is believed to have been a courtesan during the reign of Caliph Haroun al-Raschid. Empress Aliara is said to understand the workings of the heart better than any psychologist, and she has an uncanny instinct for a person’s lusts and weaknesses. Given enough time, she can incite reckless obsession with a few words and seductive promises. Most call the Countess Desire female, although “she” looks more androgynous. By a few changes in her posture and body language, she can create whatever her target most desires in life — from a devoted child to a nurturing parent to a charming lover.

### *Abhorra, Urge of Hatred*

Abhorra grew from the Wyrms’ overwhelming resentment and hate — hatred of the Pattern that bound him, of the Weaver’s insanity, of the Wyld’s inability to prevent the event, of the creation it was excluded from and, most of all, itself for failure. The Urge burst free as the root of malevolence, the internal self-loathing that manifests outwardly against external things. Mortals touched by this Urge become repelled by a person, a group of people, certain situations and even objects that remind them of something about themselves that they hate. As Abhorra’s urge grows, its targets go out of their way to antagonize those whom they despise, and they become more aggressive in turn when their targets respond to this violence. Complete possession results in a hatred that encompasses the entire world, unable to take pleasure in anything, except nursing their cold bitter resentment.

#### **Lord Steel — Duke of Hate**

This Maeljin was said to have been a conquistador who sacked the native civilizations of Central and South America. Supposedly, he loathed



not only the natives, but the actions of his own soldiers as well. The following centuries have seen Steel grow strong indeed from racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny and even ordinary people who get suspicious of their neighbors. He commands a following of devotees who raise offerings of burnt flesh to him. He cares little for the petty interactions of the other Maeljin, content (if it can be called that) to hold his throne, nurse his hatred and wait for times of war. When he rides forth, his cloak is a cloud of Banes, his serrated sword glimmers with balefire, and gunmetal shapes his armor. The totem Incarna Pegasus is his steadfast foe.

### *Angu, Urge of Cruelty*

This Urge is believed to have come into being later than the rest, possibly spawned from Abhorra. Supposedly, when the bound Wyrms first attempted to communicate its state of imprisonment and pain, it found that the other creatures of the universe could not understand unless it gave them some taste of what it was experiencing. Some took their lessons better than others, and the Urge of Cruelty developed from these sessions of inflicting pain. Angu manifests the drive to do nothing but inflict hurt and pain indiscriminately, all for the joy of watching suffering. This Urge works in subtle, insidious ways, taking aim at its victims' small lapses in compassion and feeding the urge to harm others in small ways with disrespect, neglect or disinterest. Such lapses often feed Abhorra, as that Urge adds "justification" for dispensing cruelty to a particular person, group or object (and further adds fuel to the fire by trying to work its will on the persecuted, encouraging them to hate their tormentor). Those possessed by Angu learn to act with deliberate malice, causing pain in a variety of ways, from physical to emotional, from abuse to outright torture. Some believe that Angu's existence is a sign that the Wyrms are beyond redemption.

### *Lady Aife — Caliph of Pain*

It is whispered that the Caliph of Pain was once one of the most ardent torturers in the Spanish Inquisition, and she has taken to her post as a Maeljin with great enthusiasm. Her interest in her victims is most frightening because it is the interest of a skilled professional who does a job very well, not the clumsy cruelty of one with an emotional stake in the issue. Not only skilled in inflicting physical pain, she frequently consults with Empress Aliara to determine a victim's psychological weaknesses, and nothing is sacred to her. When Lady Aife shakes her long red hair, glass shards rain from it, and her favorite weapons are two glass whips that splinter on contact with a victim's flesh.

### *Ba'ashkai, Urge of Violence*

This Urge came from the Wyrms' maddening, futile struggle against the Web that imprisoned it. Ba'ashkai is considered one of the most basic and mindless of the Urges, born from the drive to continue a fight even after the futility of the matter is proven or the goal is achieved. Those who fight for



anything — survival, self-preservation, protecting something, respect — have felt this one's seduction to continue the struggle. More importantly, Ba'ashkai's touch clouds judgment and causes its victims to not consider the consequences of their actions, especially extreme ones. While Ba'ashkai has little power to possess one who can reject its influence, the other Urges' activity can provoke circumstances that can lead to its entrance.

#### **The Hellbringer — Chieftain of Rage, General of the Armies of the Wyrms, Patron of Abuse**

This Maeljin is the servant of the Beast-of-War and Ba'ashkai. He thrives on brutality of all kinds — abuse, rape, rioting, bloodshed of any kind — and the world has given him much to feed on. So devoted is he to his cause that he has split himself into two personalities — the Hellbringer and Malik Harjaq, Master of Strife. This split has not diminished his powers in the least; indeed, both personalities seem to possess the full powers of an Incarna. The Hellbringer is believed to be Gilles de Rais, the notorious “Bluebeard” of medieval times; Nephandi mages still revere his memory. He is said to wear thorny armor crowned with antlers, riding in a cavalry of foul beasts and Banes. His preferred weapon is a crossbow with quarrels that drive others into bloodthirsty, berserk fits. Malik Harjaq rides as a Viking warrior with multiple arms, each arm bearing a different bloodstained weapon. Neither has ever been defeated in combat, and when they ride, carnage follows.

#### ***Khaalobh, Urge of Consumption***

Khaalobh is only vaguely understood, if at all, and many have doubted its existence. As the Wyrms thrashed and writhed in its bonds, distorting the Web but not breaking it, this Urge was created from the act. The Pattern may not be broken, but it can be distorted beyond recognition. The Urge's touch is difficult to discern, as it can invade on any level, breaking down the body, the intellect, the will or emotions (possibly opening the way for other Urges). Even the Wyrms' minions are affected by Khaalobh, leading some to believe that Khaalobh may be a manifestation of the original Wyrms of Balance. The Black Spiral Dancers revere the Dark Fungus as its messenger.

#### **Knight Entropy — The Wyrms' Spawn**

Legends claim that Knight Entropy was a Crusader in his breathing days, one who made the rivers of the Holy Land run with blood for no better reason than his own indulgence. As a Maeljin, Knight Entropy exists solely to destroy — his gaze brings rot, his touch reduces anyone or anything to dust. It is guided by neither bloodlust nor sadism, but works as a herald of the chaos of destruction, not change. It does not interact with its fellow Maeljin, and even they know little about it. It appears as a feral human knight bearing a shield that shows the Great Dragon encircling and strangling the world. On the rare occasions when it does speak, none can fully recall its voice or the words it said.





### *Pseulak, Urge of Lies*

This Urge sprang fully formed, like Athena from Zeus, when the Wyrms attempted to deny the fact of its imprisonment. Pseulak easily walks among the confusing twists and turns of enigma and paradox created by the Weaver's mad Pattern. Some believe that this Urge could not exist without the Pattern, without something to deny or bend, perhaps accounting for its amazing freedom. Deception is natural for survival, to lure prey and elude predators. Entertaining falsehoods such as myths, teaching stories and other fictions can communicate truth to the perceptive. Pseulak, however, teaches those it touches to find it easy and convenient to lie whenever the need (real or imagined) arises. The best liars weave elaborate webs of hypocrisy, and their corruption is complete when they can successfully lie to themselves and believe it. The Dancers appeal to Kirijama, "The Hidden Foe," when they wish to call on Pseulak's aid.

**The Honorable Maine duBois, Esq. — Corruption's Advocate, Chamberlain of Lies**

None are certain why this Maeljin bears this 20th-century moniker, when it is well-known that he was a corrupt statesman during the time of Confucius. He frequently appears in a well-slimed, tattered suit, followed by a storm of papers and papyri, and his unnaturally broad grin hides a forked tongue. He is known as the best liar in all the Tellurian, and if he could muffle his foul nature, many believe that he could convince the Garou that Gaia had abandoned them. Rather than interact directly in the Wyrms' affairs, he prefers catspaws to do his work. His favorite pastime is interfering with mortal politics.

### *Sykora, Urge of Paranoia*

The Urge of Paranoia came to be when the Wyrms first realized that it was losing touch with creation due to its imprisonment and believed that the world had turned against it. This Urge is found in the mental confusion that results when the mind cannot reconcile its perceptions of how things should be compared to how things truly are. In this dissonance, it builds elaborate constructs to explain matters, which cannot be shaken by real experiences or reasoning. Those touched by this Urge withdraw into themselves, unable to have meaningful contact with people due to their own clashing thoughts. Some project this struggle outward, declaring those who do not believe them to be the enemy (and their perceived enemies are many indeed). The Whippoorwill's cry conveys the Black Spiral Dancers' petitions to Sykora.

**Doge Klypse — Archbishop of Madness**

The Maeljin of Sykora is said to have been the leader of a cult of mystic fanatics during the early Islamic Empire. Little is known about how he rose to prominence with Sykora, but it cannot be pleasant. He prefers to appear when he is least expected, in the unlikeliest places, when his target's back



is turned. He resembles a clergyman, short and pudgy, with a round hairless head and eyes that mirror his inner storms. His black robes are shot with writhing purple threads, and he forces all to kiss his ring, a purple tumorlike growth covered with pulsing blue veins — the kiss grants only madness. As the avatar of the Wyrms' sense of betrayal by creation, Klypse expresses this feeling by defacing the world, especially its living creatures. He enjoys torturing and mutilating random victims plucked from the Umbra, from the streets of Malfeas or even captured by his Banes. The luckiest die quickly, while the rest live on as the Doge's playthings and servants.

### *Gree, Urge of Despair*

This Urge is believed to have formed when the Wyrms had tried and exhausted every means of escape and lost hope of ever regaining freedom. Gree is aided by the other Urges, with their violence, corruption and loss, and it works to destroy its targets' drive to act, learn from mistakes or just pick up and go on with life. Over time, those touched by Gree give up easily upon a first failure, and their personalities are slowly eclipsed by the Urge's whispers of a sense of failure and worthlessness. They become fatalistic, given to doom-saying and cynicism, which produces a counterproductivity that only deepens Gree's hold on them. Eventually, the targets' very will to live is obliterated, and they either die of self-neglect or suicide. More insidiously, Gree uses such deaths to its advantage, to gain a foothold in the hearts of its targets' loved ones. The Bat is the Black Spiral Dancers' totem of Despair.

#### **The Nameless Angel of Despair**

This Maeljin is the patron of suicides, appearing to those on the brink to encourage them to make the final step. It seems to have the ability to appear in many places at once, and it seems strangely (even for an Incarna) in tune with those who are teetering. The Angel stays removed from any politics of Malfeas, and the other Maeljin do not court its favor. It is said to appear clad in gray robes and masked in a cold, dark cloud, never speaking but for the wave upon wave of negative emotion that emanates from it. Rumor has it that the Angel is not a single person, but an office maintained by suicides, no doubt selected by Gree personally.

### *Lethargg, Urge of Apathy*

This Urge is almost a "child" of Gree, representing a different path for the wounded heart. Rather than becoming consumed with pain, self-loathing and loss, those affected by Lethargg simply cease to care about *anything* — their losses, their feelings, the troubles of others, their role in life. They become unsympathetic, uninvolved and distant from their emotions. Full possession results in a complete dissociation with reality, a kind of suicide whereby the victims don't even care about their own well-being, resulting in autism, catatonia or neglect. This Urge is frequently underestimated by others, as many forget that evil becomes even worse when no one takes any action against it.



### **Thurifuge — Master of Stagnation, Lord of Disease**

Rumor has it that a filmmaker who arrived in Kuwait after the Gulf War caught sight of this Incarna and his Banes frolicking on the coast. A bringer of plague and water pollution, Thurifuge offers his loyalty to both Lethargg and directly to Eater-of-Souls, working hard to continue Eater-of-Souls' work since that Wyrms was driven off Gaia by the Croatan sacrifice. He is said to enjoy moderately good relations with the Mistress of Toxins. The latest Lord of Disease is said to have been a Nazi death-camp surgeon during his breathing days, conducting hideous experiments on his captives in the camps and South America for no other reason than lack of spirit. These days find Thurifuge very busy, and he promotes desensitization, isolation and procrastination with morbidly good humor. He resembles a tall, lean man with corpse-like skin and an unsettling grin, usually manifesting from a pool of slime.

## *The Elemental Wyrms*

The Elemental Wyrms are the corrupted counterparts of the natural elements that make up the world. Students of tainted metaphysics believe that the Elemental Wyrms began as excretions of the primordial Wyrms as it constricted and thrashed in its prison. Not only do they have physical presences in the world, they frequently have some connection to the mind. They are considered to be Maeljin, but they exist primarily to be used by the Urge Wyrms. No one knows if the Elemental Wyrms were ever once human or how their ranks are replenished.

### *Hoga, Essence of Smog*

Hoga represents corrupted air, the gaseous parts of the Wyrms' body and its capacity to think and reason. It manifests on Gaia as noxious exhaust fumes from cars, factories or burning toxins. Contact with this elemental is difficult, as few creatures can breathe its vapors, and those who spend time in its presence suffer from breathing problems and difficulty maintaining a train of thought.

### **Lord Choke — Master of Smog**

The Master of Smog loves depriving his victims of fresh air almost as much as depriving them of their freedom. Rush-hour traffic and fuel fires that fill the air with choking fumes are his delight. A cloud of sickly sweet smoke follows him wherever he travels, numbing targets' senses and reason, muffling his bulbous body and making his true shape difficult to discern. He prefers offerings of organs, especially brains and lungs, and he targets these organs when he touches mortals.

### *Furmas, Essence of Balefire*

Furmas formed from the Wyrms' blood, representing its intuition and driving will and the perversion of natural fire. Balefire does not burn like



normal fire. Instead, it warps what it touches, and is found deep in the earth in pockets of natural geothermal energy that were corrupted by the Wyrms millennia ago. Balefire afflicts its targets with diseases of the blood and heart, and it causes their minds to be filled with wild delirium that prevents them from concentrating for too long.

#### **Lord Kerne — Master of Hellfire**

This Maeljin appears as a painfully thin man with boiling lava for flesh and atomic fire for breath. He travels via a great chariot of blazing hellfire that pours sulphurous black smoke out behind it. Kerne danced in the heart of the atom bomb's first explosion, and ever since, he has been a creature of radiation and fire. If he could work his will, every reactor in the land would melt down and wash Gaia in a tidal wave of poisonous fire.

#### ***H'rugg, Essence of Sludge***

H'rugg is earth's warped counterpart, created from the solid parts of the Wyrms and its fecal matter and representing physical sensation and perceptions. Sludge's touch is corrosive, and its direct touch reduces a thing or person to more sludge. A more diluted form results in targets becoming intractable and hard-headed to the point of denying the physical reality of their senses. Further, their bodies are also wracked with digestive ailments that are usually painful and always embarrassing.

#### **Lord Collum — Master of Sludge**

The Master of Sludge is a Maeljin of raw sewage whose foul touch extends through the sewers of every city across the world (and in some cities, he is quite powerful indeed). His noisome fingers have even brushed sewer inhabitants, including the Ratkin and Nosferatu. Often the consort of Lady Yul, he has been known to fertilize her eggs and adopt some of her fouler children, as well as work with her to contaminate drinking water with his element if a nasty disease could be the result. His form is not for the weak of stomach, for it is a humanoid shape of raw sewage with a nauseating stench.

#### ***Wakshaa, Essence of Toxin***

When the liquid parts of the Wyrms sprayed out between the bindings of the Web, Wakshaa was formed. As the mockery of water, it is associated with the Wyrms' emotions. It finds its way to earth in the form of corrupt scientific by-products, especially street drugs that damage the body's natural chemistry. Those damaged by these toxins become unusually antagonistic to anyone they encounter and often become unknowing plague dogs for virulent infections.

#### **Lady Yul — Mistress of Toxins**

This Maeljin is master of every toxin known, from drugs to poisons to acids and even some diseases. Her amazing knowledge of biochemistry



and genetics would shame any university professor, and with enough time and opportunity, she can alter a living thing's body chemistry (making it able to breathe water or methane instead of air, for instance) or create new "creatures" for her fellow Maeljin. Lady Yul is perpetually pregnant with poisonous litters, which she births and releases, then begins with another. Thurifuge and Aliara are her closest allies, excepting the other Elemental Wyrms.





# Chapter Three: A Map of Hell

The Wyrms has many, many faces in the World of Darkness. Sometimes it appears as Pentex, sometimes it shows itself through the Black Spiral Dancers. No matter what face it wears, though, it always uses the same tools and tactics. The Wyrms seeks to change the world in its own image. Its ultimate goal is to corrupt creation until it is indistinguishable from its own home, Malfeas. In this section, we'll take a deeper look at the nitty-gritty of the Wyrms — the taint that it uses to change things, the battlefields on Gaia where the Wyrms is winning the war and the distant shores of the Umbra that the Wyrms has already conquered.

## *The Battlefields*

Ninety percent of your werewolf game is going to revolve around Wyrms-tainted places. The places are loosely categorized as Blights and Hellholes. Occasionally, the Wyrms will create a nastier place where it can accumulate real power, such as an Anchorhead or even a caern of its own. Your players will devote the majority of their time and effort toward trying to cleanse these places for good. Your job as a Storyteller is to make this process as challenging as possible without completely overwhelming the players. The Wyrms has a vast amount of power behind it, but if you toss the entire menagerie of Banes at characters during the first game, the player's won't want to return for the second.

How tough do you want to make an encounter with the Wyrms? There's an art to determining the strength of any encounter with the Garou's ancient foe. No encounter should be so tough that the characters have no chance of survival at all. Even if the characters have stumbled across the heart of Malfeas, they should at least have the opportunity to discover their mistake and run. On the other hand, every encounter with the Wyrms should be



dangerous. The potential for serious harm is always present whenever the Wyrms is near. Finding a point between those two extremes is a skill that takes judgment and practice.

An ideal encounter with the Wyrms should challenge the players' characters on multiple levels. Characters shouldn't just fight the Wyrms with their teeth and claws. They should have to use their eyes, their noses, their instincts and their brains in order to prevail. If every encounter with the Wyrms is just a straight-up fight, then everyone but the Ahrouns will get bored.

Every Wyrms encounter should scare the players in some fashion as well. **Werewolf** is meant to be a horror game at heart, after all, and even elders should occasionally see a face of the Wyrms that gives them pause. As always, keep the maturity level of your players in mind, and know when to back off. It might be fun to completely freak out a player at times, but if you go too far, that player won't come back to the game.

Last, pay attention to what your players are asking for. Some players will profess a hard-core attitude toward game conflicts. The tougher it is, the better they like it. They want to feel like they've beaten the odds when they've taken on the Wyrms and survived. Newer players may still be finding their feet and need to work their way up to the hard conflicts, though. Scale your encounters accordingly. Remember, battling for Gaia should always feel dangerous, even if you've got something less than that on the menu.

Above all, keep your Wyrms encounters unpredictable. The Wyrms never fights the same way twice, and it never does exactly what the Garou expect. Neither should you.

## *Blights*

A Blight is any place where human misery has destroyed the hope of Gaia. Housing projects are always prime sites for Blights, as are good old-fashioned slums. Not all Blights are urban war zones, however. Strip clubs, corporate boardrooms and soulless trailer parks can all house the Wyrms. Many Garou feel that all major cities are one big Blight, and to a certain extent, they're right. Blights are extremely common in the cities of the World of Darkness. They don't just occur at random, though. Every Blight exists for a specific reason, and it serves the needs of the Wyrms in a specific way.

Before you put a major Blight into your game, answer these questions:

*Where is the Blight in the real world?* The biggest Blights tend to be slums or housing projects in major cities, but you don't have to follow this stereotype. Try using a sleazy bar or an abandoned factory or even City Hall. You need to keep the maturity level of your players in mind when you choose your site, however. Don't set a Blight in a strip club if your players will giggle and do immature things when their characters visit such a place. Dealing with the Wyrms often revolves around handling mature themes. Make sure that your players are mature enough to handle those themes before you use them.

*Why does this Blight exist?* Ninety percent of Blights simply exist because Banes frequent the area. Blights are their hunting grounds and their dens. These





Blight is dangerous, but not inherently sinister. These kinds of Blights are good for quick Wurm-hunting expeditions or for smaller plot lines that individual players indulge in. You should probably come up with some basic details for these sites, such as location and Wurm creatures in residence. Every once in a while, a group of players will come up to you itching to hunt the Wurm on a whim. Having a site like this on tap can help keep these players occupied.

It's those 10 percent of Blights that do exist for a specific purpose that you want to devote the bulk of your attention to. However, the truly terrible monsters live in these places. Blights serve as more than just watering holes for Wurm-creatures. They are places of power for the Wurm. Here, a strong servant of the Wurm can call down power from Malfear, or even build a gateway to the most horrific realms in the Umbra. The most horrific Banes in the Wurm's service are called Nexus Crawlers for a reason, after all — they frequent major Blights such as this, channeling power for their master. A Blight like this isn't just a Blight anymore — it's an Anchorhead, or maybe even a Wurm caern. These places are the true homes of the villains of your story, and they should be as memorable as possible for your players.

*What Wurm creatures live in the Blight?* The vast majority of Blight spirits rely on temptation and corruption, rather than combat. Garou visiting these places should have to deal with lies and ambushes on a regular basis. Spirits of lust, anger and hatred should be common in Blights. These spirits often have Charms such as *Possession* and *Agony*. Some of these Banes will have high levels of the *Stealth* Ability, and they will snipe at the Garou using their Charms. Other Banes may be skilled at *Subterfuge*, and they will try to convince the Garou that they are innocent victims of the Wurm so that they can attack when least expected. These techniques can devastate a group of characters looking for a brawl. Garou excel at physical combat, but they are ill equipped to cope with psychological warfare. A couple of sneak attacks by Banes can easily give any Bane-hunters nightmares for some time to come.

*How can the players cleanse the Blight?* Generally, most characters will kill the Banes in residence at a Blight, perform the *Rite of Cleansing*, congratulate themselves and leave. This sort of approach may work, but often a Blight will re-establish itself not long after the Garou pack up and go home. Blights don't always give rise to slums, but slums often create Blights. The negative energy that such places create will re-attract taint and Banes unless the Garou change things. Blights need to be cleansed in the real world as well as the Umbra. Sometimes it only takes something as small as starting a neighborhood watch in the community or turning a vacant lot into a park, but if the Garou only deal with the effects of the Wurm in the Umbra while ignoring the real world, they will have missed half of the equation. An effective hunter of the Wurm fights in both realms at once.

### **Hellholes**

A Hellhole is a place of the Wurm that has been tainted through physical corruption instead of spiritual corruption. A toxic-waste dump is the classic



Hellhole, but there's no need to stick solely with the stereotype. A Hellhole can be anything from abandoned parking lots to kudzu patches. Hellholes are less common than Blights in most Garou games, simply because they're less common in the real world. Environmentalist groups continue to fight to keep our world clean, and while things are not perfect, they are nowhere near as bad as they could be. Garou games, however, are set in the World of Darkness where the Apocalypse is just around the corner, and things are as bad as they could be. Every major forest hides some small illegal dumping ground; every great river has a taint lurking just beneath its surface. The Garou believe that these new Hellholes constitute an assault by the Wyrms on the natural places that serve as the Garou's last home. When you insert a Hellhole into your game, it should always serve as the front lines of the war against the Wyrms. Here is where the war truly takes place, and neither side asks for quarter.

If your game revolves around a caern set deep in the woods, it might benefit you to use Hellholes as the homes for your major antagonists instead of Blights. A lot of games fall victim to the "commuting Garou" syndrome. The characters will drive into the city, beat on the Wyrms for a while, and then come home where it's safe for a moot. This style of game is fine, but it's a little too safe a setup. The Wyrms have their place, the Garou have theirs, and nothing hits close to home. The Wyrms don't threaten anything important to the characters' lives. A Hellhole hits closer to home for the Garou who tend toward this sort of lifestyle. Here the Wyrms threaten the places from which the Garou draw their strength. If it grows, the caern weakens. If the Garou go to the Wyrms whenever it suits them, then they shouldn't be surprised when the Wyrms come to them.

Bear in mind that not every Hellhole has to be an industrial dump. A power line that cuts through the forest can serve as a highway for the Wyrms. An abandoned farmhouse might house an urban Bane that is spying deep in enemy territory. Show the players as many faces of the Wyrms as you can; you don't want to let them get blasé about visiting "just another dump." A Hellhole doesn't even have to result from mankind's destruction of the forest. A meteor strike deep in the woods can give birth to a horrific Hellhole, especially with the advent of the Red Star. An ancient Bane prison might wash up on the shore of a local creek and burst its seams. Feel free to use your imagination and build the Hellhole that fits your game best.

The toxic sprits in Hellholes tend to be brawlers, pure and simple. Affinity attacks, affinity defenses, and any other physically oriented Charms that hurt Garou are the order of the day. Remember, though, that the Wyrms are always willing to use under-handed tactics when it can. Spirits may often use Charms to steal Rage or Gnosis. Alternatively, they may use the Charm *Blight* to mark a Garou and follow him back to his caern. It may be very tempting to give a major Bane the Charm *Break Reality*. This Charm can absolutely devastate a solitary Garou, and it can turn the tide of battle. However, it is extremely costly in terms of Essence. Be sure not to use this Charm so often that your major foe for the evening self-destructs in a buff of Gnosis. If nothing else, it tends to be a bit anticlimactic for the players.



Like Blights, Hellholes tend to form naturally from human activities. The Wyrms doesn't plan them, but it takes full advantage of them. Characters will have to work at cleaning up these sites in the real world to have any long-term impact on such a place. The *Rite of Cleansing* alone is even less effective at destroying a Hellhole than a Blight; Gaia will have nothing to do with such a polluted place, and the Wyrms is all too happy to fill the vacuum that her absence creates. To get the site truly clean will require real work in the physical realm. If the Garou can't clean the place themselves, they may have to rely on Kinfolk, local authorities or private citizens to clean up the mess and restore the Hellhole to its natural state.

### *Anchorheads*

Anchorheads need to be very, very rare in your game. One is easily enough. Contact with the Far Realms of the Umbra should be rare and dangerous if the Umbra is to retain its sense of wonder. If an Anchorhead makes that access simple, then that sense of wonder becomes damaged. It might seem easy to insert a convenient Anchorhead into the game when you need a convenient shortcut to the Scar for a story, but in the long run, it just isn't worth it. Players will remember and abuse such shortcuts if you permit them. Remember, when it comes to the Far Realms, getting there is always half the fun.

If you aren't actively using a Black Spiral caern as your antagonist's home base, an Anchorhead can serve as an alternative power source for the Wyrms. Pentex has definitely created such nasty things in the past, and Nexus Crawlers flock to Anchorheads like cockroaches to spilled sugar. Closing a Wyrms Anchorhead is a grand central focus for a chronicle. The Garou will need to find the Anchorhead, scout out its defenses, find out how to close it, perform the deed and clean up afterward. Getting all those things achieved could easily take several sessions (and net the Garou involved a great deal of renown). Just remember, nothing is ever easy or straightforward when it comes to the Wyrms.

If you do end up using an Anchorhead as a focus for a chronicle, you'll need to sit down and plan out how the Wyrms defends it prize. In general, the advice given for Blights and Hellholes holds true here as well. You'll need to turn the volume up, though. Things should be a lot more dangerous at an Anchorhead than a Blight. Remember, the portal, the defenders and the physical location of an Anchorhead site all need to make sense together. Spirits of rage should live at a housing project that leads to the Atrocity Realm; Toxic spirits reside at a Hellhole that leads to the Scar. Don't design your haunted house just to be dangerous. Make it make sense as well.

### *Wyrms Caerns*

Taking out a caern that is dedicated to the Wyrms can be the ultimate prize in your game — the big mountain to climb, the climax to your chronicle. You should make every effort to make the assault as eventful and unique for your players as possible. Remember, a Spirals' caern is just as powerful as the



sept's caern, and the Garou that reside there are just as smart, tough and dangerous as your players' characters. The opposition that your players run into should be a bigger challenge than any other conflict that the players have encountered thus far in the story. Win, lose or draw, they should talk about the experience for weeks afterward.

How do you build an encounter that memorable? Start off by paying attention to the details of your Wyrms caern's design. Like a Blight, you need to decide exactly where the caern is located, why it is there and who resides there. Feel free to use as much creativity as possible in placing the caern. Try to avoid the classic "dungeon" setup as much as possible — no 10-foot x 10-foot rooms with a Bane and a chest in them. This format has been used so many times that players have grown to expect it. An encounter of this size deserves surprises. Just like Blights and Hellholes, Wyrms caerns can pop up in the unlikeliest places. Caerns have been found on board the space station Mir and in the gut of a giant worm underneath the Trinity nuclear test site. There's no reason not to make the Wyrms caerns in your game just as memorable.

The majority of caerns exist because an unusually large Blight or Hellhole has formed that provides the needed energy. Such isn't always the case, however. Sometimes, a Black Spiral Dancer will find a location that is easily defensible and turn it into a Blight. The exact procedure for tainting a place such as this varies, but it can involve anything from serial killings to the scattering of atomic waste. Some caerns are built to serve a specific tactical role in the war against Gaia. The most dangerous threat that a sept can face is a Wyrms caern that is designed specifically to destroy them. Usually, such a Wyrms caern will be created as close as possible to the sept's own caern, often in a massive Hellhole. Such a caern will be defended to the utmost and concealed as carefully as possible. If you throw this sort of caern at the Garou, they should expect a massive challenge and massive casualties on both sides before the dust settles.

Like a caern of Gaia, a Wyrms caern is defined by its totem spirit. Generally, these will be spirits of dark impulses, such as hate or fear. Use that one word describing the totem spirit and apply it to the caern's physical location and description. A caern of Hatred should be set in a bigoted neighborhood, while a caern of Fear could exist in a sub-basement below a state prison's death row. The Banes that reside in such a caern should also reflect the caern spirit's purpose.

A Wyrms caern does not have a pathstone in it. Luna generally objects to the Black Spiral Dancers using her moon bridges. However, a potent caern will work around this problem by creating an Anchorhead to a Column devoted to its caern-spirit's emotion. A caern of Hatred, for example, may possess an Anchorhead to the Column of Hate. Spirals can use this open sore in the Gauntlet to travel to like-minded caerns or other Anchorheads. It's a dangerous road, but one that the Spirals don't mind risking.

The caern spirit itself is going to be very tough — as potent as a major Jagglng at best, nearing Incarna level at worst. The exact powers of such a spirit should befit its nature. The Charms of a caern-spirit of Lust, for example,



should be more subtle than the tools of a Murder-spirit. Any attempt to fight such a creature should be epic in scope. If all else fails, the spirit may even be able to retreat down the Anchorhead, back to its home Calumn. If the players truly want to extinguish the Bane, they'll have to come up with a way to imprison it on the mortal plane or fight it on its home turf.

## *Stranger Shores*

The Wyrms' greatest power isn't in the physical realm. The Wyrms' true home is beyond all time and space, deep in the Umbra, where none but the hopelessly mad have traveled. Eventually, players will want their characters to travel to the Umbra and take the fight to the Wyrms. After all, this is where the legendary Wyrms-homes are located — the Scar, the Abyss, maybe even Malfeas. Why not try to cut the power off at the source?

Any Garou who do travel to these places, however, should recognize — and fast — that they are unwelcome. The homes of the Wyrms are actively hostile to the Garou. Each place can offer vital clues about how to fight the Wyrms, but the true fight is back on Earth, not in the Umbra's dark places. The Wyrms have already conquered the Atrocity Realm. Fighting it there is a losing proposition. It's back on Earth that the war can still be won.

## *The Calumns*

A Calumn is a place in the Umbra that is dedicated to a specific thought or emotion that resonates with the Wyrms. There are Calumns of Anger, Hate, Betrayal, Murder, possibly even Angst and Apathy. The places rarely have any sort of interesting geography — they're too primal for that. Anger might be a place filled with storm clouds racing over a desert, while Apathy could be a small, featureless gray room. Beyond that there's little to see.

A Calumn *feels* very interesting, though, like a nail through the hand is interesting. Any Garou who steps into a Calumn is immediately assaulted by waves of emotion. Garou visiting the Anger Calumn frenzy in minutes, while visitors to the Apathy Calumn find it almost impossible to muster the energy to leave. These places are the homes of the elemental forces of the Wyrms. No sentient creature can expect to visit such a place and survive for long.

### *Inhabitants of the Calumns*

A Calumn is a nest for Banes, pure and simple. When a Bane is destroyed on Earth or in the Near Umbra, it goes to a Calumn to renew itself. All of that rich hatred and anger is like mother's milk to a Bane of hatred. Usually a large maternal Bane watches over all the dormant Wyrms-servants. Once she's gone, though, the slumbering Banes can be dispatched with little or no effort.

### *Laws of the Calumns*

Every turn that passes in a Calumn, a Garou must make a Social Challenge. Failure costs the Garou three Social Traits. When a Garou loses



all of her Social Traits in a Calumn, she is overwhelmed immediately by the emotion that suffuses the place. This sensation often results in an immediate frenzy, but some Calumns don't provoke such a response. In any event, the Garou can do nothing but express the Calumn's emotion as strongly as possible until she leaves. No Garou engulfed in a Calumn's emotion has the strength of will to leave, though, so she must be rescued.

No Garou may be talked out of frenzy while in a Calumn. The emotion of these places does not engender calm.

Willpower may not be regained in a Calumn except by using a fetish.

### *Using Calumns*

Calumns are extraordinarily dangerous places, even by the Wyrms' standards. A Garou can go mad in such places in a very short period of time. Emphasize the unrelenting pressure of the emotions in Calumns. A Garou should want to get out of a Calumn as fast as possible, if she can maintain her grip on reality.

Garou may want to voyage to a Calumn to kill an especially dangerous Bane for all time. Spirits don't die easily; most recuperate after time if their Gnosis isn't drained completely. Here, in a Bane's incubation room, the Garou may get their second chance. The Bane guarding a Calumn is extraordinarily potent, however, and it can use the power of the Calumn's emotion to recharge her Willpower. Players should expect the guardian Bane to be at least as powerful as the Bane that they are pursuing.

Some creatures of the Wyrms also use Calumns as shortcuts. Calumns are very close to the material word, metaphysically speaking. Nexus Crawlers often seem to pass through a Calumn. Gifts and Rites used by the Black Spiral Dancers involving moon bridges often use these places as substitutes.

### *The Abyss*

The Abyss is the end of the Umbra. This barren hole is entropy given form — the graveyard where spirits and dreams fall away and die, unremembered. Some Garou may choose to come here to find hidden wisdom clinging to the Abyss's walls, like algae clinging to a cave wall. A precious few come back enlightened. The rest learn only one truth: every living soul ends in the Abyss... one way or another.

Initially, the Abyss appears to be a piece of moonscape transported to the Umbra — not the comforting ream of Luna, but barren gray rock surrounded by darkness. A few rocky trails wend their way to a crater in the center of the realm. Inside the crater is something that no Garou can ever manage to properly describe. Most call it "nothing," and shudder at the memory. A few understand that at the bottom of the Abyss is something more profound than nothing, but with that understanding comes an overwhelming desire to join the darkness. More than a few Garou have thrown themselves over the edge of the Abyss in despair, and the long journey down consumes all their hopes.

There are paths down into the crater, deep into the darkness. They are paths only in the most generous sense of the term, paths that an experienced mountain-climber would find difficult to travel. There is a Silver Path, a



Golden Path, an Iron Path and other, stranger, paths into the darkness. Some paths are said to be easier than others. The Iron Path, for example, is relatively broad and straight, while one must climb down the Golden Path as much as walk upon it. The Stargazers spoke of some great reward to be found at the end of the Silver Path. No one understands it now, or cares.

The spirit realm gutters and fails like a candle the moment one enters the Abyss. The Gnosis that is the part of each Garou becomes worthless, consumed by the Abyss the moment it is called upon. Spirits are easily called to this place, but those spirits that do come falter and die rapidly. Even totem spirits and familiars will wait on the Abyss's lip for their companions, rather than risk oblivion.

The moon still shines on this bleak landscape, but it only penetrates so far into this wound in the earth. If an explorer truly wishes to see the sights of the Abyss, he needs to bring his own light source. A hundred feet down, Luna's light fails. Travelers who bear light may yet find lost treasures buried in the Abyss's walls. Some find madmen, waiting for salvation. The Children of Gaia consider it a great honor to bring lost travelers back into the light. Some find strange treasures lost to time, like the Hearts of Midnight. These stones carry a little of the void in each of them. They drink in Gnosis whenever someone uses them, be it their bearer or her foes. Some Garou consider this double-edged sword worth bearing. In the end, they have always regretted it.

A few Garou have held a candle aloft in the Abyss, and in doing so, they have seen a face carved in basalt across the void — the face of a long-lost ancestor, preserved in the place where everything decays, a monument to memory and futility. No one knows who carves such faces, or why, but the Garou that see them call upon their ancestors' wisdom more easily ever after.

A mile down into the pit, all light fails. There is a wall of seemingly solid darkness. Nothing can be felt or heard or smelled beyond that empty space. To venture further is suicide. Without his senses to guide him, a Garou would not even know if he was falling off the trail or not.

Legends do exist about what lies beyond, of course. The most persistent tale speaks of the Night Master, a Garou who abandoned everything to the Abyss — his friends, his power, his sanity — until at last the Abyss spoke to him. It said that it was satisfied, and that now the Night Master serves the emptiness in eternity. According to legend, the Night Master waits beyond the wall of darkness, guarding the Abyss, keeping it safe from intruders. Any Garou that ventures here will doubt that tale, though. Nothing could possibly sate the Abyss's hunger. And beyond that darkness, there is only a terrible truth: Beyond the final darkness, there is nothing.

### *Inhabitants of the Abyss*

There are almost no spirits to be found within the Abyss. Even the toughest Nexus Crawler finds the natural hazards of this realm daunting. Creatures that are foreign to the Abyss hide in its caverns, though, such as maddened Garou and other Umbral travelers. However, the biggest hazard of this realm is the environment itself, not the creatures that dwell in it, and opportunities for combat are minimal at best.



## Rules of the Abyss

It is almost impossible to avoid glancing into the Abyss occasionally. No matter what the characters are doing, eventually, they will look down. Call for a Mental Challenge at the beginning of every scene within the Abyss. In addition, call for a Mental Challenge any time that a character looks down into the Abyss deliberately.

If a player fails, he must make a second Mental Challenge. Failure means that the character has fallen into fox frenzy. He must try to escape the Abyss immediately by any means possible. Success costs the character one temporary Willpower. If a character without Mental Traits or Willpower fails this challenge, he will be compelled to step off the path and into the Abyss. Any character who falls into the Abyss is immediately and irrevocably gone. The character's companions may engage in a Physical Challenge against the lost soul to catch him before he falls. If he is caught, then he will return to his normal state of mind. However, the rescuer has to make another Mental Test, as he looks down to save his companion....

All forms of magical flight fail within the Abyss. Creatures that can fly innately, such as Corax in the Corvid form or spirits that manifest with wings, may still fly, but Gifts such as *Spirit of the Bird* do not function.

The roads down the Abyssal walls are extremely treacherous. At the beginning of every scene within the Abyss, all character must attempt a Static Physical Challenge. If the characters are traveling along the Golden Path, they must test against seven Traits. On the Silver Path, the difficulty is five, and on the Iron Path, the difficulty is three. Remember to apply darkness penalties if the characters have no light source. Players may retest this challenge with the *Athletics Ability*. Failure costs the character three Physical Traits in a climbing mishap (a twisted ankle, exhaustion from hanging onto a ledge, etc.). In addition, characters on the Silver Path take an aggravated wound from their ordeal. If a character is out of Physical Traits and he fails a climbing challenge, he falls to his death in the Abyss.

No character may recover lost Traits or Willpower while in the Abyss, save by expenditure of Willpower or the use of a fetish.

No gift that requires expenditure of Gnosis may be activated. No talen or fetish that requires an expenditure of Gnosis may be activated. No spirit may expend Gnosis or Essence to activate a power while in the Abyss.

Somehow, everything that has ever been lost in the Umbra finds its way into the Abyss. If a character with the *Scrounge* ability looks for something specific in the Abyss, he may find it if he wins a Static Mental Challenge (difficulty at the Storyteller's discretion). The deeper within the Abyss a character searches, the better his chances become.

If a character sees the face of an ancestor on the walls of the Abyss, he may receive an extra point of the *Ancestors Background* (at the Storyteller's discretion). The player must still pay the Experience Trait cost for his new Background. It is entirely up to the Storyteller whether a character sees such a face or not.





The gloom of the Abyss shrouds everything. Due to the low-light conditions, all Physical Challenges in the Abyss incur a two-Trait penalty. Every scene in which a character travels downward into the Abyss increases this penalty by two. When the penalty reaches 10, the characters have reached a zone of total sensory deprivation. They must go back or fall into the Abyss. Artificial light sources may decrease this penalty, but they can never eliminate it.

### *Using the Abyss*

The Abyss is the ultimate home of angst and despair in the World of Darkness. This empty place drains away all hope. Emphasize the emptiness and stillness of the Abyss as you describe it to the players. The Abyss can seem more barren than the moon at times. The idea that everything will end up like this weighs down the soul. If you are playing the scene properly, tossing yourself into the Abyss should seem like a logical choice by the story's end — just as every suicide feels that his choice is the logical one.

Combat isn't common or even likely in the Abyss. Spirits rarely come here for any reason, and climbing down a sheer mountainside in the dark is enough of a challenge for most Garou. The Abyss itself is the greatest challenge that the characters will face here. Additional foes are just overkill.

Characters will generally travel here to try to find lost things that have been swallowed by time, knowledge thrown away in fear or maybe even the crystals that drink all Gnosis that grow in the walls. Make sure that the hunt is not an easy one. Even if a player's lucky enough to pass his challenge to find the loot right away, let the players travel for a few scenes — and experience the dangers associated with them — before getting to their prize.

It's also quite possible to end up in the Abyss by accident. After all, it is where all lost things end up. If the characters end up getting lost while traveling the Umbra... a set of three or more failures to navigate through the Umbra should bring them to the Abyss's lip, whether they wanted to get there or not.

### *The Atrocity Realm*

The Wyrms were born from an atrocity. Its imprisonment and mutilation was the beginning of the road that leads the Garou to the Apocalypse. That horrific genesis is captured a hundred times over in The Atrocity Realm, a place where every act of brutality in creation is lovingly recorded and the Wyrms give birth to new horrors.

Atrocity is a gray, lifeless waste of gullies and chasms. A soft rain falls constantly over the mud, turning the funeral ash into soup. Sometimes a hillside will collapse from the weight of the mud, revealing a jumbled heap of white bones. The rain cannot mask the sick organic smell in the air. The charnel smell that invades a visitor's nose stays there, even days after he's left the realm behind. The air echoes constantly with dim screams. Their source is always just around the corner, or beyond the next bend.

In every canyon of these badlands, a new horror awaits. Here, every act of brutality, horror or mayhem plays itself out endlessly for the amusement of



its audience. Here a father beats his child. Around the corner, a general methodically executes his prisoners. Around the bend, a robber shoots a pregnant woman in cold blood. Wherever a victim suffers, the Wyrms watches and records the deed here. A trip through the gullies of the Atrocity realm is like walking through the devil's own freak show. Around each corner, a new wonder awaits.

Every atrocity that a visitor to this realm encounters is a personal one. Every tragedy that a viewer encounters has a personal meaning. Get of Fenris arriving at the Atrocity Realm are treated to the spectacles of Viking ancestors destroying helpless villages, horrors beyond description from the Second World War... and maybe even the results of that frenzy in the nightclub last week. The Garou pride themselves of the brightest achievements of their ancestors. Here, they are privileged to bear witness to their worst depravities.

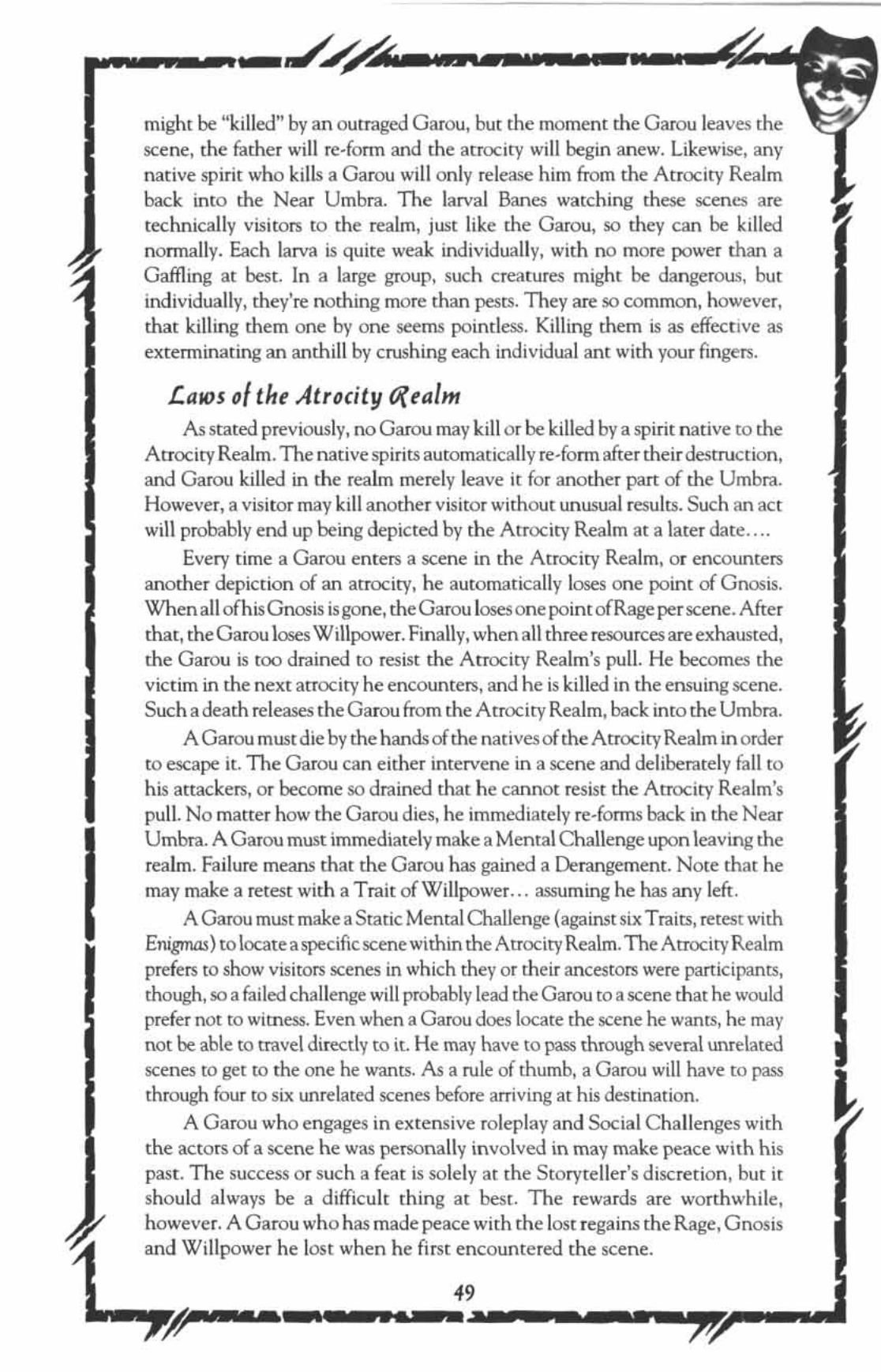
Larval Banes hide in every corner of this place. They wallow in the mud like leeches, or burrow under the bony hillsides like silverfish. They watch the endless displays of horror, and grow strong on the wickedness that men do. Here is where the Banes that scourge the earth are born. Some Garou take it upon themselves to slaughter larval vermin before they become true threats. They catch a few, but there are always hundreds more. No one bothers to stop the vengeful warriors. Eventually, the horror of this place becomes too great for them. They become numb, and eventually they find themselves cast as the victims in the next atrocity over the ridge. Death comes as a sweet release for these warriors.

Indeed, death is the only release that anyone finds in this realm. There is no way out. The only way to leave the Atrocity Realm is to die. A Garou must become a victim of the realm in order to be released from it. The Garou who do so return to the Umbra unharmed — physically, at least. Mentally, they may be scarred for the rest of their lives.

Legends say that a Garou can find clues from the past by studying the scenes in the Atrocity Realm. Some even suggest that a Garou can make peace with the realm by confronting his own terrible mistakes and atoning for them. And yet, the deepest truth of the Atrocity Realm lies deep within the badlands, past a million images of horror. There, half-buried in the mud, a Wall stands. The Wall is the same solid gray as the bones and the sky and the rain and the mud of this terrible place. Millions of names are scrawled on this wall, and every few seconds, a new one is added to the list. These are the names of the victims in the Atrocity. It is a monument to every act of horror remembered here, or a testament, or an accusation, or maybe just an index. No Garou truly understands the Wall's purpose. One thing is certain, however: No one has ever found the Wall's end.

### *Inhabitants of the Atrocity Realm*

The various actors and victims of the Atrocity Realm are technically spirits, but they only possess the powers of the beings that they mimic. No spirit native to the Atrocity Realm may kill or be killed by a visitor. A father abusing a child



might be “killed” by an outraged Garou, but the moment the Garou leaves the scene, the father will re-form and the atrocity will begin anew. Likewise, any native spirit who kills a Garou will only release him from the Atrocity Realm back into the Near Umbra. The larval Banes watching these scenes are technically visitors to the realm, just like the Garou, so they can be killed normally. Each larva is quite weak individually, with no more power than a Gaffling at best. In a large group, such creatures might be dangerous, but individually, they’re nothing more than pests. They are so common, however, that killing them one by one seems pointless. Killing them is as effective as exterminating an anthill by crushing each individual ant with your fingers.

### *Laws of the Atrocity Realm*

As stated previously, no Garou may kill or be killed by a spirit native to the Atrocity Realm. The native spirits automatically re-form after their destruction, and Garou killed in the realm merely leave it for another part of the Umbra. However, a visitor may kill another visitor without unusual results. Such an act will probably end up being depicted by the Atrocity Realm at a later date....

Every time a Garou enters a scene in the Atrocity Realm, or encounters another depiction of an atrocity, he automatically loses one point of Gnosis. When all of his Gnosis is gone, the Garou loses one point of Rage per scene. After that, the Garou loses Willpower. Finally, when all three resources are exhausted, the Garou is too drained to resist the Atrocity Realm’s pull. He becomes the victim in the next atrocity he encounters, and he is killed in the ensuing scene. Such a death releases the Garou from the Atrocity Realm, back into the Umbra.

A Garou must die by the hands of the natives of the Atrocity Realm in order to escape it. The Garou can either intervene in a scene and deliberately fall to his attackers, or become so drained that he cannot resist the Atrocity Realm’s pull. No matter how the Garou dies, he immediately re-forms back in the Near Umbra. A Garou must immediately make a Mental Challenge upon leaving the realm. Failure means that the Garou has gained a Derangement. Note that he may make a retest with a Trait of Willpower... assuming he has any left.

A Garou must make a Static Mental Challenge (against six Traits, retest with *Enigmas*) to locate a specific scene within the Atrocity Realm. The Atrocity Realm prefers to show visitors scenes in which they or their ancestors were participants, though, so a failed challenge will probably lead the Garou to a scene that he would prefer not to witness. Even when a Garou does locate the scene he wants, he may not be able to travel directly to it. He may have to pass through several unrelated scenes to get to the one he wants. As a rule of thumb, a Garou will have to pass through four to six unrelated scenes before arriving at his destination.

A Garou who engages in extensive roleplay and Social Challenges with the actors of a scene he was personally involved in may make peace with his past. The success or such a feat is solely at the Storyteller’s discretion, but it should always be a difficult thing at best. The rewards are worthwhile, however. A Garou who has made peace with the lost regains the Rage, Gnosis and Willpower he lost when he first encountered the scene.



The fetid rain, horrid stench and distant cries all conspire to make tracking in the Atrocity Realm a nightmare at best. All Perception-related challenges made within the Atrocity Realm receive a two-Trait penalty.

Last, there is no true rest in the Atrocity Realm. No Garou may regain Gnosis or Willpower by any means other than use of a fetish while in the Atrocity Realm.

### *Using the Atrocity Realm*

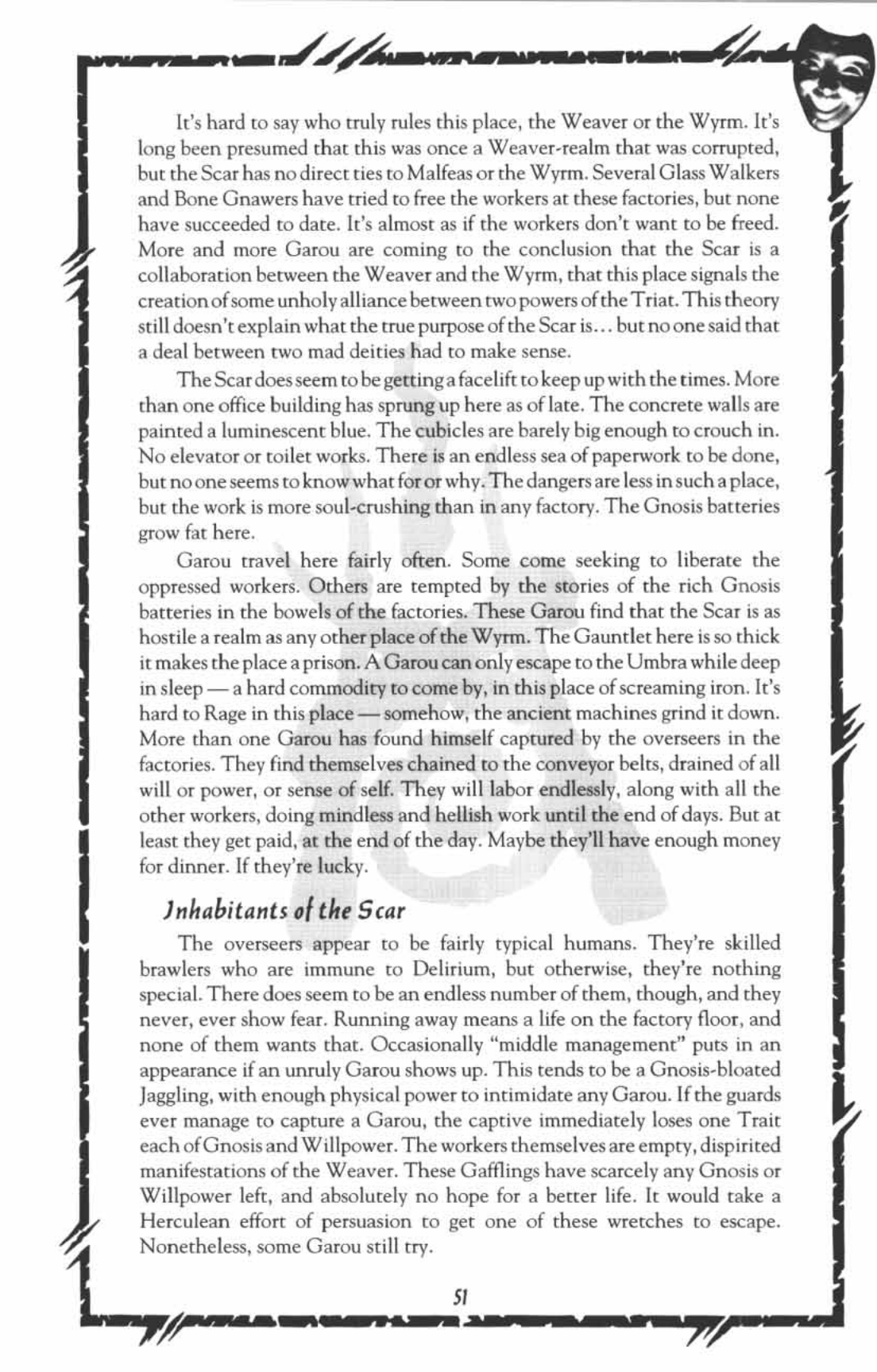
The Atrocity Realm is where you can show the characters the real face of the Wyrms on Earth. In a real sense, the Wyrms begin and end here. The violence and pain that the realm captures is what makes the Wyrms what it is. It's impossible to change anything in this place, though. The Atrocities cannot be fought here. Visiting this place should leave characters sickened, horrified and burning with desire to get back home and change things. There is no way to make a difference here. On Earth, it's a different story.

Garou might choose to come here to witness a particular atrocity, so that they can gain clues about the outrages of the past. A victimizer might hide his identity in the real world, but the Atrocity Realm records everything. Bear in mind, though, that the horrors of this place are always personal ones for visitors. Characters will have to endure seeing all their worst failures recorded for eternity before they can see what they want. Characters should always dread seeing what lies beyond the next ridge.

### *The Scar*

The Scar is the Wyrms' monument to the Industrial Revolution. It is a land of tar-black skies, ash heaps and rivers choked with coal. There are factories everywhere in the Scar — huge, cavernous piles of brick, filled with wheezing conveyor belts, burning iron, flashing carpet needles and a million other industrial hazards. Endless streams of withered gray workers stand lemminglike at their work stations, ignoring the pain of pinching, cutting machines, doing their job mutely, their will broken forever. The overseers stand watch, beating those workers whom they perceive as slacking off, being beaten in turn by their superiors, on and on up an endless chain that no one quite seems to know or understand. When the sun sets, the workers go to their shantytowns cut into the ashen wastes. They get their pay at the end of the day. It might even cover the cost of dinner, if they're lucky. In four hours, it starts again, day after day, forever.

It's extremely hard to say just what these factories make. Some turn out obvious Wyrms-fetishes. Others make more obscure products, blighted toys or gadgets for the real world. Some seem to produce nothing at all — workers on one conveyor belt busily disassemble what workers at another workstation are putting together. A close observer would see tiny tubes embedded in the flesh of these workers. The webs lead deep into the bowels of the factory, where a giant battery hums, feeding off the power of the worker's souls. The true product of such factories is pain and degradation. Anything else that they create is just a bonus.



It's hard to say who truly rules this place, the Weaver or the Wyrms. It's long been presumed that this was once a Weaver-realm that was corrupted, but the Scar has no direct ties to Malfeas or the Wyrms. Several Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers have tried to free the workers at these factories, but none have succeeded to date. It's almost as if the workers don't want to be freed. More and more Garou are coming to the conclusion that the Scar is a collaboration between the Weaver and the Wyrms, that this place signals the creation of some unholy alliance between two powers of the Triad. This theory still doesn't explain what the true purpose of the Scar is... but no one said that a deal between two mad deities had to make sense.

The Scar does seem to be getting a facelift to keep up with the times. More than one office building has sprung up here as of late. The concrete walls are painted a luminescent blue. The cubicles are barely big enough to crouch in. No elevator or toilet works. There is an endless sea of paperwork to be done, but no one seems to know what for or why. The dangers are less in such a place, but the work is more soul-crushing than in any factory. The Gnosis batteries grow fat here.

Garou travel here fairly often. Some come seeking to liberate the oppressed workers. Others are tempted by the stories of the rich Gnosis batteries in the bowels of the factories. These Garou find that the Scar is as hostile a realm as any other place of the Wyrms. The Gauntlet here is so thick it makes the place a prison. A Garou can only escape to the Umbra while deep in sleep — a hard commodity to come by, in this place of screaming iron. It's hard to Rage in this place — somehow, the ancient machines grind it down. More than one Garou has found himself captured by the overseers in the factories. They find themselves chained to the conveyor belts, drained of all will or power, or sense of self. They will labor endlessly, along with all the other workers, doing mindless and hellish work until the end of days. But at least they get paid, at the end of the day. Maybe they'll have enough money for dinner. If they're lucky.

### *Inhabitants of the Scar*

The overseers appear to be fairly typical humans. They're skilled brawlers who are immune to Delirium, but otherwise, they're nothing special. There does seem to be an endless number of them, though, and they never, ever show fear. Running away means a life on the factory floor, and none of them wants that. Occasionally "middle management" puts in an appearance if an unruly Garou shows up. This tends to be a Gnosis-bloated Jaggling, with enough physical power to intimidate any Garou. If the guards ever manage to capture a Garou, the captive immediately loses one Trait each of Gnosis and Willpower. The workers themselves are empty, dispirited manifestations of the Weaver. These Gafflings have scarcely any Gnosis or Willpower left, and absolutely no hope for a better life. It would take a Herculean effort of persuasion to get one of these wretches to escape. Nonetheless, some Garou still try.



## Rules of the Scar

All Rage expenditures cost twice as much in the Scar. That is to say, it costs two Rage to take an extra action or heal non-aggravated damage. In addition, all *Primal-Urge* tests accrue a two-Trait penalty in the Scar.

If a Garou is chained up in one of the factories, he loses one Gnosis per day.

A Gauntlet exactly like the one that surrounds the material realm surrounds the Scar. Stepping sideways requires a Gnosis Test. If the player fails the test, make a Simple Test. A second loss means that the Garou has been detected by Weaver-spirits that will immediately attempt to calcify him.

The light in the Scar is dim at best. All sight-related challenges receive a two-Trait penalty. Finding a specific factory in the Scar requires a Static Mental Challenge against seven Traits (retest with *Streetwise*).

Any spirit not affiliated with the Wyrms has no Gnosis and only one Essence in the Scar. Companion and totem spirits will generally refuse to enter this place.

## Using the Scar

The Scar represents the worst things about progress. Every urban nightmare becomes a reality in this place. When a Garou comes to the Scar, focus on the details of how the workers and the land are being torn apart in the name of modernization and a brave new world. It's possible to win minor victories in the Scar by destroying a factory, but doing so should be a difficult job at best. Simple combat alone won't do it — characters need to win the support of the wage slaves to free such a place. That job alone makes freeing a factory virtually impossible.

Some characters will come to the Scar hunting for the legendary Gnosis batteries. After all, there must be something good they can do with hundreds and hundreds of Gnosis points. . . . The overseers, however, watch the batteries closely, and tougher guardians are often only a heartbeat away. Even if a Garou could access such a battery, he has no way to transport it across the Gauntlet around the Scar.

However, there are other resources in the Scar for enterprising Garou. A surprising amount of information on the plans of the Wyrms can be found in a factory's ledger books. Some office parks in the Scar conform directly to the layout of Pentex offices in the physical world, so studying their layout can provide valuable insight. Most importantly, the factories often support Blights on Earth, providing material goods and raw corruption. Destroying such a place can often weaken a Blight to the point where it can be destroyed. The trick, of course, is determining which factory to destroy. A Garou will have to do a lot of research to find the right one.

## Malfestas

The Wyrms' home is an utter mystery to the Garou. Myths and legends exist about this or that legendary Garou visiting Malfestas and surviving, but



those tales rarely focus on just what Malfeas is like. All that the Garou can truly say is that it is the home of the Wyrms, and that to visit it is death. The White Howlers conducted the last large-scale invasion of Malfeas, and that voyage was somewhat less than a perfect success. Most Garou would not even think of going there now, lest they meet the Black Spiral Dancers' fate.

The Spirals themselves, of course, record the details of Malfeas' architecture in loving detail. They sing epic ballads about the impossible towers, the gardens of blasphemy, the lords of torture and despair and the dukes of lies and apathy.... The litanies go on and on about this baroque landscape of the damned. Malfeas is the Promised Land for the Spirals. It is where each of them came to finally understand the Wyrms and to join the tribe. Every Spiral works to bring Malfeas closer to Gaia. Many of them think that that day is soon.

While it might be beneficial to list all of the things that the Black Spiral Dancers claim about their master's home, there is simply no way of knowing if what they say is true. The tales of the Dancers contradict one another constantly; it seems that there is no one true home of the Wyrms to be found in Malfeas. The fact that all Dancers are as mad as hatters doesn't make them sterling witnesses, either. For the Dancers, Malfeas is as much an idea as a place, much like Gaia is as much an ideal as a spirit for the Garou. The actual details of Malfeas aren't important; the fact that it exists, and that the Wyrms reigns supreme there, is all that matters.

In the end, only two things can be said with any certainty. First, no Garou has ever returned from Malfeas completely sane and whole. At best, a Garou who voyages there comes back somewhat worse for wear. At worst, he joins the Black Spiral Dancers. Even the legendary heroes who voyaged to Malfeas were never the same thereafter; they brooded, or stared into space a little too often. More than one eventually walked the Spiral, although no songs are sung of those events. Second, and more importantly, no Garou of any stripe has come back from Malfeas since the Red Star was seen in the sky. The oracles of the Spiral that once raved about the glories of the Malfean sunrise now sit in the corners, catatonic, whimpering, afraid to be seen. There is a deep and abiding suspicion in some Spirals that something new and terrible has taken up residence in Malfeas. It goes by no fancy title. It is not a duke of pain or a doge of lies. It has only one name. And it is busy cleaning house before it finally strikes.

### *Laws of Malfeas*

Actually locating Malfeas is extremely difficult for most Garou. No Gaian spirit will admit to knowing where it is, and most tales sung by the Garou are silent on this point. Locating Malfeas requires at least a *Wyrms Lore* x 4 or more, or a Bane to serve as a guide (which may require some interesting bargaining, or even binding it). The road to Malfeas is littered with checkpoints and guards as well. It takes a Garou of considerable status to even think about confronting the spirits that guard the path.



Malfeas is as hostile an environment to the Garou as can be imagined. Any spirit or servant of Gaia stands out like a beacon in Malfeas — Baneskins or similar fetishes are a must for such travelers. Fetishes and talens that can replenish Gnosis are also necessities, since any Gnosis found here is likely to be foul with the Wyrms. If a Garou spends Rage or shifts in certain areas, he may risk frenzy or alerting something nearby. Many visitors leave with “souvenirs,” such as battle scars, derangements or Flaws.

The actual architecture of Malfeas is not constant. A Garou who enters Malfeas will quickly encounter whatever he feels is the ultimate evil in the world, no matter what that thing might be. A toxic factory, a husband turned rapist, a demonic figure out of history — the Wyrms is all of these things and more, and it will show its most terrible face to its visitors. This is usually an occasion for more frenzy checks, if not derangement checks.

Last, no Garou may leave Malfeas without the express permission of an agent of the Wyrms. One of the barons of Malfeas may give that permission, or another Black Spiral Dancer, or maybe even the Wyrms itself. Once it is given, though the Garou is free.

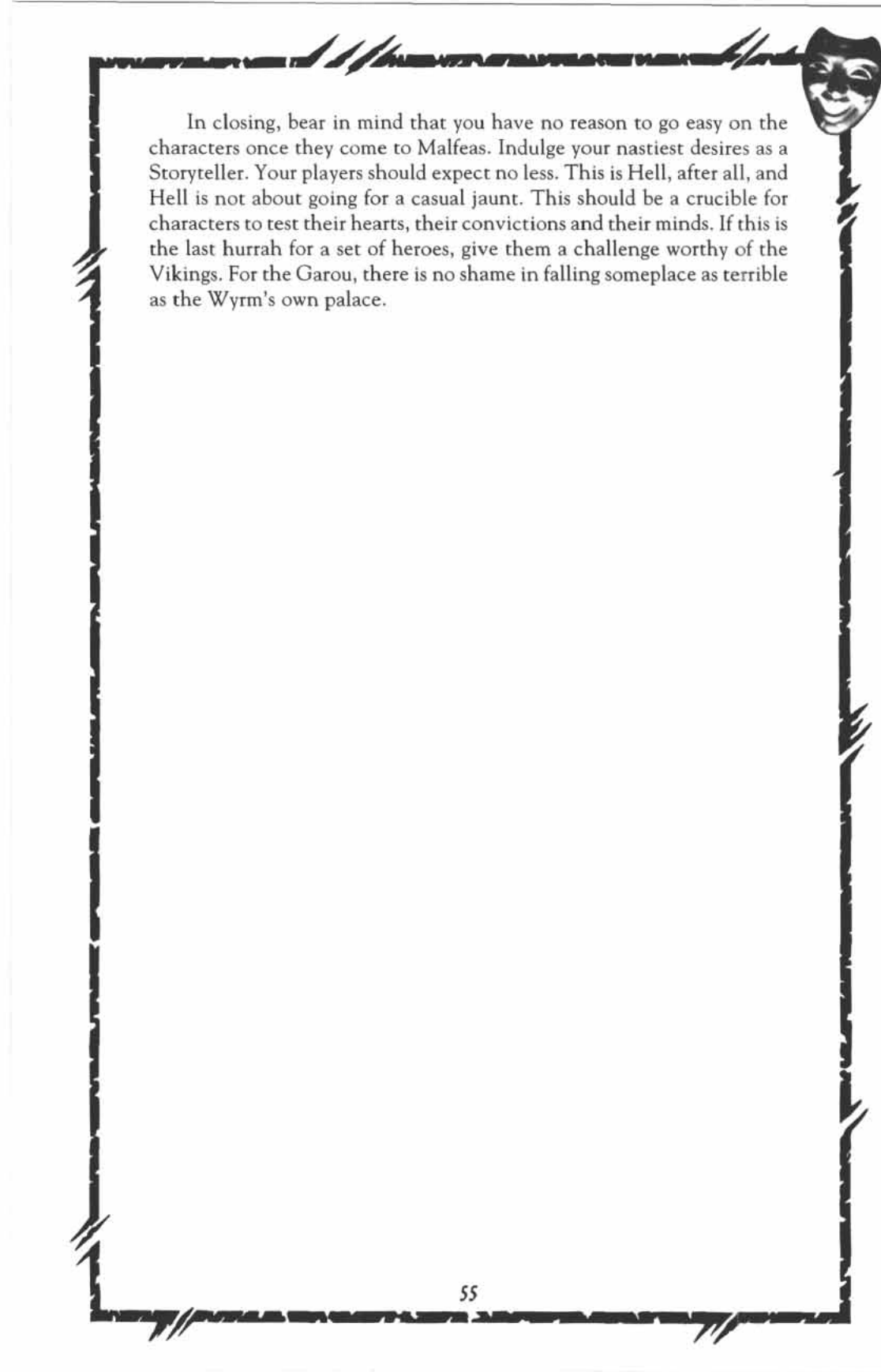
### *Using Malfeas*

Ultimately, the nature and encounters that take place within Malfeas are up to the Storyteller. Players should not expect their characters to come back whole... or at all. If Apocalypse is about the hero's journey, this should be the place where the hero goes to the Underworld, and comes back a little less together. That, or the hero plunges into the great maw to make that final sacrifice. (Even the Greek heroes didn't go to Hades for day-tripping.) It should be a name whispered, a threat brandished by the worst of enemies. Don't let Malfeas (or the threat it should represent) be used too casually.

The classic view of Malfeas is a hellscape that would make Dante lose his lunch. Visiting such a place can prove entertaining, but there are more intimate ways of showing the players what evil looks like. Everyone has his own idea of what “the ultimate evil” is. Malfeas is more than capable of showing visitors that evil. Use this opportunity to push the characters to the limit and give them the worst thing that you can imagine. Hell can be many things to many people; no two people need to see Hell in the same way.

While you're busy horrifying the characters, though, make sure that you don't push your players too far. You might want to make a character go berserk with terror, but it should be a different matter back in the real world. Make sure that your players know exactly what they can expect. Give them one last chance to turn back from the cliff. After that, go as far as you can without sending your players screaming.





In closing, bear in mind that you have no reason to go easy on the characters once they come to Malfeas. Indulge your nastiest desires as a Storyteller. Your players should expect no less. This is Hell, after all, and Hell is not about going for a casual jaunt. This should be a crucible for characters to test their hearts, their convictions and their minds. If this is the last hurrah for a set of heroes, give them a challenge worthy of the Vikings. For the Garou, there is no shame in falling someplace as terrible as the Wyrms' own palace.





# Chapter Four: The Black Spiral Dancers

## What Are They?

The Black Spiral Dancers are some of the most dangerous and frightening monsters in the World of Darkness. They're werewolves who willingly and eagerly serve the Wyrms, *en masse*. It was bad enough when they had allowed the Wyrms to seduce them. They were dangerous, yes, but most Garou saw killing them as a chance for glory. They were monsters to be hunted, not real threats. Yet everything changed in the last century. Now the Dancers represent a far greater threat. Corruption and madness spreads like a disease throughout the Garou Nation. Harano claims more Garou every year. Garou allow their fury to overcome them. Gaia's greatest defenders have also become a danger to her.

This is the legacy of the Black Spiral Dancers. It's so much easier to fall when there's an entire tribe waiting on the other side of that fall, with arms open to receive you. It's easier to succumb to your anger when a slight taint of Dancer blood runs through your veins. It's easier to let hopelessness overtake you when you see just how powerful the Dancers have become in service to the Wyrms, and how fractured the Garou have become in service to Gaia.

Once a werewolf loses the will to fight her own hopelessness, apathy and rage, she learns to embrace the pain and horror within her. Thus lies the path straight to Malfeas. Corrupted Garou are drawn or tossed straight into the coils of the Shattered Labyrinth, walking its path as surely as the White Howlers did. And once they have changed, they are welcomed eagerly by the winning side....

## History

The origins of the Black Spiral Dancers can be traced back to approximately 80 CE, during the Roman Empire's expansion into Britain. The last



defense of the caerns of northern Britain depended on the White Howlers, a fanatical tribe that stalked the Scottish highlands. This area was also home to the Picts, and the greatest Pictish warriors became White Howler Kinfolk.

The White Howlers and Picts were fierce and deadly together in battle. They often fought in the nude, displaying war paint and tribal tattoos, and they made for a truly fearsome sight. They reveled in savagery and brutality. Cubs proved their worth by descending into the darkness of Malfeas itself. They journeyed regularly to a realm known as the Black Spiral Labyrinth, or the Shattered Labyrinth. The shamanistic tradition of facing and defeating the spirits of this realm was known as "walking the spiral."

The legions of the Wyrms, however, were subtler than the Howlers. They allowed the Howlers to believe that they could weaken and strike at Malfeas itself. Meanwhile Banes seduced and tainted the Picts, corrupting them and causing them to become bestial and degenerate.

The Garou persist in the belief that the valiant Howlers were overwhelmed and eradicated from without. The truth is not so simple. The Howlers' rage had become completely uncontrollable, and their tradition of descending to Malfeas placed them at risk for seduction and corruption. Some warriors who returned from the Shattered Labyrinth brought dark mysteries and blasphemous revelations with them. Some even argued that the Wyrms was not a force of corruption, but rather one of balance. As the Howlers fought each other over their divisions, the Wyrms preyed upon their Kinfolk.

The tribe was never destroyed from without. It was corrupted from within. By the time the Romans finally broke through the defenses of the Picts, many of the Howlers had made pacts with infernal forces to protect their homelands. Those who came to serve the Wyrms simply destroyed those who didn't agree with them, except for the greatest heroes and elders of the tribe, who were dragged off to the Labyrinth. By the time the Romans arrived at the first corrupted caern, hell-spawn lay in wait to shatter their very souls.

In the following weeks, the Romans were driven back out of northern Britain, but at a terrible cost. The Picts were once again in control of their homelands, but the Howlers had fallen to the Wyrms. The caerns of the north bred Banes to be bound into Wyrms-tainted fetishes. The elders of the tribe returned from the Labyrinth, but not as White Howlers. When they returned, they returned as werewolves of the Black Spiral Dancer tribe.

### *The Taint Spreads*

The Fianna and Silver Fangs migrated into northern Britain, driving fomori and Wyrms-spirits out of the area. The Picts, however, were not entirely destroyed in the warring. Several families survived, and they integrated with the other tribes of the area. The Picts intermarried with the Scots, then later the Angles and Saxons, and this same integration happened among the Garou Kinfolk. The Pictish Kinfolk passed a thin streak of tainted blood on to the Fianna, the Silver Fangs and other tribes of the north, and a trace of this corruption survived. Degenerate Kinfolk were born with birth defects, a



predisposition for violence and symptoms of mental degeneracy. Some Garou dream of shocking past lives in which they committed terrible atrocities. Other Garou heard the voices of the Wyrms' servitors calling to them. The Black Spiral Dancers made use of this throughout the centuries, working rites to bring this taint to the fore and tempting their distant relatives to join them. The White Howler tribal totem, one of courage and ferocity, even came to the Garou under another name, Lion, and it occasionally helped the Dancers in their efforts to corrupt the Garou.

Anyone who doubts the ability of the Dancers to spread corruption needs only look at early Scottish history. Although the Scottish clans could have unified and secured their freedom, destroying the Dancers early on, they fought against each other instead. Heroes fell prey to greed and ambition. Garou fell to introspection and Harano. Overcoming the interior enemies of self-doubt, ambition, greed and lust is far more difficult than taking on a flesh-and-blood foe. And always, when morale was lowest, the Dancers would attack. Bane totems taught the Dancers that subtlety and corruption could destroy their foes much more effectively than outright warfare. Ironically, it was their fall to the Wyrms that taught the Howlers the value of restraint and careful planning.

### *Exploration and Migration*

The Dancers stayed in the most desolate areas of Scotland for a long time. They dreamt of retaking their tribal homelands, but they knew that the Garou vastly outnumbered them. While the Garou learned to use moon bridges, the Black Spiral Dancers had to find another way to spread their influence. Luna, after all, would never aid the Dancers. The tribes of the Garou Nation could get messages to each other and confer on matters, but the Dancers remained in exile. Eventually they realized that in order to survive they would have to explore, colonize and breed.

It took the Dancers centuries to migrate, for they had to be subtle and careful and hide their movements from the Garou. The Dancers established corrupted underground caerns called Pits, and they connected these Pits using underground spirit tunnels. Slowly, invisibly, the tribe spread into Europe. Europe, however, had become a battleground for vampires, witches and other supernatural creatures during the Middle Ages. Humanity had finally had enough of warring vampire lords, arrogant wizards, unpredictable fae and rampaging wercreatures running roughshod over their lives, and the Inquisition rose in response to the horrors. Many supernatural creatures died, including Dancers who had not been as careful as they had imagined. During those years of fire, all things unearthly — including the Dancers — learned a single hard lesson: Secrecy was of paramount importance.

Wherever humans explored, the Dancers followed. They migrated to America more slowly than their Garou cousins, smuggling their cubs onto ocean-going vessels. Over the decades, enough Dancers made the journey to begin breeding in the New World. The Dancers established their first Pits in New England, then worked their way across America. The isolated colonists



made easy prey. Dancers practiced rituals in the woods, stalked the colonists and abducted humans to serve as sacrifices and breeders. Some were offered places of honor in Dancer rites and orgies; those who failed to live up to expectations fed the glens with their blood, poisoning the ground and spreading the Wyrms' taint. The Dancers recruited humans of all sorts into their "cults," thus spreading their taint, recruiting servitors for the Wyrms, acquiring human agents and bringing fresh blood into the tribe. The Delirium masked Dancer activities as Indian attacks, harsh winters and witch rites.

### *The 20th Century*

In the last century, the Dancers found another way to spread the Wyrms' influence. Banes thrived wherever the Earth was poisoned. The Dancers spread toxic waste, radiation, pollution and filth, despoiling and corrupting the Wyld as they did so. In recent years, they've infiltrated extreme environmentalist organizations, exploiting the fanaticism and hatred of the activists. Their most effective ally in this business is the corporation known as Pentex.

Initially Pentex saw the Dancers only as shock troops who were easy to use and manipulate for the corporation's goals. In the mid-'80s, several Dancers ascended to positions of management within Pentex and even supervised minor operations. One Dancer Kinfolk, Robert Allred, blackmailed his way onto the Pentex Board of Directors, and after his death, a Dancer named Francesco replaced him. This werewolf supervises Project Iliad, which dedicates itself to the wonders of Wyrms' taint and genetic engineering.

The tribe has come a long way from its origins as a tribe of vicious Garou to the versatile, often subtle, corrupting force of today. Dancers have allied themselves with forces of the Wyrms in all quarters. Where Gaia has specialized servitors (the Garou as her warriors, the Corax as her information network, the Mokolé as her memory), the Dancers have learned to do for themselves, making them less specialized, more adaptable and more dangerous than their Garou cousins.

Only a century ago, the Dancers formed perhaps one-14th of the world's population of werewolves. Today they boast one-10th of that population, outnumbering any other tribe. They're the only tribe that's growing rather than shrinking. An increasing number of Garou fall to the Wyrms and join the ranks of the Dancers, and the Dancers spawn far more cubs than the Garou. Overpopulation has always been key to the survival of the Dancers. They revel in orgiastic procreation rites to ensure the perpetuation of their tribe. Even displays of dominance and submission typically possess a sexual element.

The Dancers have no taboos against breeding with their own kind or anything else, including other tribes' Kinfolk. An alpha female typically spawns with several partners at a time to ensure conception. The Picts lived in a matriarchal society in which females chose their lovers freely, and the Dancers have devolved this tradition into one of total abandon. Genetic abnormalities are seen as evidence of the Wyrms' blessing, giving metis an elevated position among the Dancers (and thus ensuring Dancers a bargaining chip when they seek to seduce metis).



Alliances with Pentex and other supernatural groups, such as Sabbat vampires, Nephandic mages and Unseelie changelings have also helped the Dancers to thrive. Such alliances don't always work out perfectly, but they help more than the Garou would like to believe. Alliances with Pentex in particular have worked out well. Both groups have similar goals, if wildly different ways of going about them, and they often find ways to meet in the middle or make use of each other's methods. Pentex provides financial backing for Dancer activities; they employ entire Hives in some areas. The Dancers, for their part, help to corrupt from the inside out those Pentex subsidiaries that haven't entirely fallen to the Wym. Pentex provides Dancer consultants with Banes, fomori and equipment.

The Dancers possess a fanaticism and zeal that even Garou envy. After all, they know they're winning, which does wonders for morale and enthusiasm. To them, the coming Apocalypse is the dawning of a new age. They believe that when the world has been plunged into darkness, the Wym will grant them power over all creation. They have the advantage of knowing that they're about to be on top, and this knowledge is a powerful motivator. It's hard to give up on such a bright future.

### *Abduction and Seduction*

Some Dancers form hunting parties to abduct Garou cubs and swell their ranks. They abduct Kinfolk and Garou, as well as other supernaturals on occasion, to act as "breeders." Lost cubs are particularly at risk, and considered great prizes — many tribes would shudder to realize how much attrition occurs in this way. The Delirium has warped these warrens into urban legends of satanic cults and sexual abuse. Dancer Kinfolk hear voices in their heads instructing them to walk willingly to places where they may be used for breeding purposes, while the kin of other tribes are likely used until they "break."

Subtler groups establish shadowy campaigns of victimization and destruction, demoralizing humans, Garou and Kinfolk alike. Banes direct the Dancers in their effort to find Garou locked in the grip of Harano or Rage, or those Garou with a thin taint of Pictish blood. Hives that serve the Whip-poorwill totem are particularly good at locating such recruits. Often, the Dancers need to give only a small push to send these Garou down the path to their own destruction or damnation.

### *The Fall of the Garou*

Why do Garou fall to the Wym? Why would one of Gaia's chosen warriors walk the Black Spiral willingly? What could make a werewolf prefer the demented, monstrous ranks of the damned to the kinship of his pack and sept? Unfortunately, there are all too many reasons in today's world why Garou fall.

The Garou aren't winning the war, and some of them realize this. The Dancers thrive under the thumb of the Wym, while the Garou die under Gaia's care. Lesser things have broken a zealot's faith, and what's left of a Garou when you take away his faith in Gaia? A Garou without his faith is a



tool without a purpose, a social animal without peers, a loaded gun with no target. Or worse, the Garou may decide that his pain is all Gaia's fault. It can take very little to convince such a creature that violence, abandon and being on the winning side are an attractive combination. The Dancers wait for such Garou with open arms. They happily spin tales of camaraderie, pleasure and total acceptance to any Garou who feels alone and betrayed.

The Garou are told tales of demented, monstrous Black Spiral Dancers all the time. It fires them up for battle and convinces them that they're on the right side, but in other ways, it plays right into the Dancers' hands. Some of the more presentable Dancers make friends with impressionable young Garou. The Garou inevitably find out that their new friend is a servant of the Wyrms, which sometimes gets them thinking — if this one Dancer is so different from all of the stories, then what if the stories are wrong? What if the Dancers are really just like us? The Dancers are all too willing to feed these confusions. If the Garou's sept comes down on him for getting suckered by a Dancer, then he now has resentment to add to his newfound confusions.


Some Dancers seduce Garou, using Gifts and rites or favors from spirits to draw the Garou into feelings of love and devotion. If they've chosen their target well, he may walk the Spiral to be with his new love, or his emotions may leave him vulnerable to further corruption.

Life at a Garou sept is hardly easy. The Garou come down hard on anyone who screws up in a way that puts the sept in danger, but everyone screws up sometime. Garou who endure violence and constant danger from the enemy and derision from their own septs may seek out the Dancers on their own, or at least listen when the Dancers make their offer.

As mentioned earlier, metis are frequently in positions of importance and power among the Spirals. Even though the Litany preaches to "Respect all beneath ye — all are of Gaia," most metis who serve Gaia's side see precious little of it. They bear the burden of their parents' sin, forced to be grateful to arrogant elders and leaders for the "privilege" of living, and the most unpleasant tasks are usually relegated to them. For them, service to Gaia means little more than being her kitchen drudge in exchange for their lives. It's a small wonder then that metis who are angry and fed up with their septmates' bad behavior listen when a Dancer speaks of the respect and power to be found in the Wyrms' service.

With the Dancers slowly gaining the upper hand, Garou are driven to more and more acts of desperation. They compromise the morals that they hold so dear in favor of the driving desire to accomplish something, to stem the tide of corruption and pollution in the final days. As they do so, they leave themselves vulnerable to that same corruption. The more they sacrifice the means to the ends, the worse the things that they're willing to do become. Eventually, they find that there's very little difference left between themselves and the enemy. These are the Garou most likely to decide that they're capable of entering the Shattered Labyrinth and killing the evil that lies there without being corrupted themselves. A fall to pride? A convenient justification for falling? Who can say? The answer is different for each Garou.





The reasons why Garou fall are as many and varied as the Garou themselves. The Garou aren't perfect. They fall prey to jealousy, anger, resentment and pride just like anyone else. They spend day and night fighting impossible odds and enduring hardships unlike those that any mortal experiences. They regenerate their wounds, but they still feel the pain — over and over and over. Gaia heals them up only to send them right back out on the battlefield again. Under those conditions it's hardly surprising that Garou succumb to the shadow.

The one thing that the Garou have going for them is their social nature and pack structure. It's easier to head problems off at the pass when you live with your packmates and spend most of your time with them. There's a chance for people to ask what's wrong, listen to your problems and remind you that it's all going to be worth it in the end. Unfortunately, that reassurance isn't always enough for some.

## *Philosophy*

Some Black Spiral Dancers have claimed that the Wyrms was originally a force of balance rather than evil. The solution to the current imbalance isn't to destroy the Wyrms and its minions, the way the Garou do. The solution is to free the Wyrms from the webs of the Weaver. This goal can only be accomplished by destroying human order, tearing down civilization and washing away human morality and ethics. Things are rarely so simple, though. The Dancers are subject to the madness and horror of the Wyrms; few of them claim pure motives anymore. And when they give in to their Rage in the heat of battle, they care little for reasons. They want only to destroy.

Many Dancers believe that there is no way to restore the balance, and that the only solution now is to destroy everything. The Garou must be brought into the fold or destroyed along with everything else. After the few remaining humans return to their former position of submission to the werewolves, the servants of the Wyrms will govern the world. Werewolves will herd humans, using them as they wish, culling them when necessary, just as they did during the Impergium. And all of these things will be done in the name of the Wyrms.

### *Metis and Other Genetic Anomalies*

When Black Spiral Dancers spawn with each other, they produce deformed, sterile werewolves whose breed form is Crinos, just as Garou do. In the case of the Dancers, however, as much as half the tribe is metis, since there is no stigma attached to the act of mating with another Dancer. Females of the tribe have authority over procreation, and they may mate with whomever they choose, so many simply choose to mate with other Black Spirals.

Metis often participate in the orgiastic coupling of the Black Spirals, acting as a third, fourth or fifth partner in the festivities. They may then be asked to raise the resulting cubs. The metis of a Hive often share the responsibility of raising the Hive's young, right up through their introduction into the tribe's breeding practices. Dancer Theurges work hard to find a way to make metis capable of breeding. If they were to succeed, the Dancers would experience a population explosion the likes of which the Garou have never seen.



Once in a generation, a pale mockery of a White Howler is born. These throwbacks are sacrificed almost immediately after birth. When such creatures are born among the tribes of the Garou Nation, the nearest Hive does its best to snatch and kill the cub. Such anomalies are also mistrusted by the members of their own sept. The Garou may not know the details of the fall of the White Howlers, but they certainly know that they are no more. Such a legacy is not taken lightly.

Some cubs are too twisted even for the Dancers. They're so insane that they endanger the safety of the Hive, or they're so misshapen that they cannot care for themselves. If they live long enough, such creatures may be given an "honorable" death in battle against the Garou. Others are sacrificed. Because these monsters are the first line of attack against the Garou, the Garou often underestimate the intelligence of the Dancers as a tribe. A few rejects are also allowed to go Ronin; they're accorded the same respect as pack members as long as they bring no harm to the Dancers. Any Ronin who abandon the cause of the Wyrn, however, are hunted down, tortured and slain.


## Moots

Black Spiral Dancer moots are different from Garou moots in almost every respect. While numerous Wyrn-spirits may be found in attendance, they do not have an equal say in the proceedings to the packs of the tribe. There is no one sept leader or Master of the Rite in charge; instead, three elders lead the moot. Where Garou moots tend to follow strict protocols, Dancer moots are chaotic and noisy. While Garou prefer to hold their moots out in the open, Dancers prefer to hold theirs in tunnels and caves.

Moots are a chance to ensure the morale and fanaticism of the entire Hive. The moot begins with all Dancers present casting aside their façades by divesting themselves of clothing, revealing hidden tribal tattoos and removing disguises. The *Rite of Woad* reveals less visible identities. Multiple discussions continue at once. Ragabash and Galliards offer impromptu performances of a humorous, obscene or violent nature.

There are very few cases in which the attention of the Hive as a whole is focused on an individual. One is when a renown rite is to be held. Another is when an individual is to be punished. In the latter case, the elders call all discussion to a halt as a Galliard announces the nature of the crime. The Hive splits into groups to discuss the offense, and the three elders rove the chamber listening to the discussions. The elders decide on a consensus and render a verdict, which often involves a further trial by ordeal.

At the conclusion of the moot, the elders gather at the center of the meeting area, where they inform each other of their uncoordinated and thus, hopefully, unpredictable plans. This gathering concludes with the Dancer version of the Garou revel. The Spirals' revel includes ingestion of drugs, displays of dominance and submission and acts of violence or violent sex. Once the revel ends, everyone goes their separate ways, for the Dancers have better things to do with their time than listen to stories.



See the *Moot Rite* (p. 100) for mechanical details regarding Black Spiral Dancer moots.

## *Camps*

The Black Spiral Dancers, like all good religious zealots, have their camps, disagreements and schisms. Although Dancers gather for moots by Hive, they also come together through isolated series of camps. A few are detailed here.

### *The Cluithi*

The White Howlers are no more, but the Cluithi have done their best to preserve the Howlers' heritage, or so they like to think. The Cluithi prowl the moors and forests of Scotland, wearing the clothing they believe their ancestors wore. They rend their clothing before battle and paint themselves with blue body paint, proudly displaying Pictish tattoos. In battle, they show no mercy and never flee from their enemies.

Of course, the Cluithi don't know the truth of how the Picts lived any better than most modern people do. They celebrate anarchical freedom while trashing the natural world that their ancestors revered. They're elitists who consider themselves the nobility of the Dancers. Other Dancers rarely appreciate this attitude (though some have been known to humor them long enough to let them lead a doomed charge in battle). Many Cluithi claim to be modern druids, and they go to great efforts to learn odd and unusual sorceries. They use their "research" to justify any bizarre or obscene practice that they enjoy.

### *The Genetic Irregulars*

Caerns deep in backwoods areas, far from the frontlines of Gaia's war, take in all sorts of Garou cast-offs, including metis shunned by their Garou "betters," Bone Gnawers tired of rejection by the other tribes, Garou deep in the thrall of Harano and Ronin of all types. Some of these Ronin are of the Black Spiral Dancer tribe, for when you're so far from the war, sides seem less important. Regardless of location, these groups have gained one derisive nickname: the Genetic Irregulars.

These corrupted werewolves band together to form communes near America's smallest towns. These little groups can be found from rural New England villages to isolated Southern hamlets. Enforcement of the Litany tends to be lax, and you won't find the typical Garou fanaticism and religious zeal here. As these groups indulge in a bit too much inbreeding, their children are easily tainted and corrupted by the Wym.

Garou who wander through these areas soon find themselves praying for deliverance, if they live that long. Some of these groups are always looking for a fresh infusion of blood or an entertaining game. Others just want to make sure they're never found.



Intelligence and social skills may be in short supply in these communes, but these werewolves often develop mutations that true Black Spiral Dancers would be proud of. Some Dancers find that these folk make fantastic shock troops when they get riled up, particularly if they think there's a threat to their placid little order. A few of these folk are allowed to walk the first circle of the Shattered Labyrinth. Most fail the test and go insane.

### *The Consultants*

These Black Spiral Dancers are the ones most loyal to Pentex. "Company wolves" are on the fast track to promotion, management and a good 401K plan. They may be loyal to the company, but they care little for the individuals they work with. As soon as a job is finished, they sever their ties and move along to the next assignment. Many "consultants" believe themselves to be superior to their other Dancer relatives, and they demand backup for their Pentex projects.

Consultants tend to drift away from their local Hives, spending more time at company meetings than at Dancer moots. Few Dancers truly trust these wolves, believing them to be too caught up in the Weaver's webs. These Dancers have more expenses than their fellows, which draws them deeper into Pentex's web.

### *Kinfolk*

Kinfolk of the Black Spiral Dancers are subject to the same taint as their Dancer relatives. Many of them hear voices in their heads, or bear some other trace of madness. They suffer the milder physical deformities and possess uncontrollable tempers or severe delusions. Many end up as members of hate groups, religious or doomsday cults, while others while away their time engaging in thrill-killing, animal abuse or general malice and mayhem. Lupine Kinfolk are rare; most are unstable dog-wolf crossbreeds. These animals are usually spotted running in packs through the streets on the bad side of town or late at night through small-town alleys, and they are the terror of solitary walkers or local dog wardens.

Dancer Kinfolk might serve the tribe without ever realizing it. The Wyrn commands them in dreams and nightmares, showing them what they must do in order to be released from their suffering. These Kinfolk are likely to believe that they serve angels, devils or aliens, and most don't even believe in werewolves.

Black Spiral Dancers not only feel free to breed with the Kinfolk of other tribes but prefer it. They enjoy the knowledge that their taint will pollute some proud Garou's "pure" lineage. They use Gifts and rites to distort and alter the memories of these breeders, leading to confusion on the Kinfolk's part. With the arrival of GHB (the "date rape" drug), kin who were victimized at parties or other gathers may believe that they were slipped something.

### *The Dark Litany*

It sounds fantastic in a nasty sort of way, doesn't it? Black Spiral Dancers do whatever they want, act out their most horrific fantasies, and don't take



orders from anyone. Or... maybe not. Even the Dancers wouldn't last for long if they ran around doing anything and everything without regard for witnesses, consequences and working relationships. Therefore, they have their own Dark Litany, a perverted form of the Garou Litany, and they observe its rules as strictly as the Garou observe theirs.

The Dark Litany can act as a quick-reference guide to Dancer behavior when the Storyteller is in a hurry and doesn't have time to prepare. Obviously it's better to have character background written up, but there isn't always time. While Dancers occasionally choose to break the Litany, the Dancers are even more vicious than the Garou about enforcing theirs. The usual punishment for breaking it is death, preferably preceded by torture.

### ***Serve the Wyrms in All its Forms***

The forces of the Wyrms must not allow petty differences to get in the way of victory. Unity within the tribe is paramount. The Black Spiral Dancers may work with forces such as Pentex and Sabbat vampires as long as they do so in service to the Wyrms. "Service of the Wyrms" is open to interpretation of course. Some Dancers argue that all Pentex and Sabbat activity inherently involves servitude to the Wyrms. Others argue that caution must be used, lest the Dancers become nothing more than a cannon for other forces to wield.

### ***Beware the Territory of Another***

Hives maintain separate territories, and there are enough Garou caerns to be taken over that the Dancers don't need to compete for land in most cases. A Dancer may travel through the tunnels of another Hive or near another Hive as long as he doesn't endanger it in any way. Any Dancer who endangers another Hive is tortured and devoured. Some Dancers guard their territory more jealously than others.

### ***Slay Those Who Will Not Join You***

Prisoners may be offered the chance to walk the Black Spiral, to transmogrify instead of submitting to long torture. Prisoners who reject and disrespect such an honor must be destroyed. "Offer" is a loose concept, however. A choice of walking the Spiral and having the opportunity to slay Wyrms-spirits and die with honor, or dying a weeks-long agonizing death is considered a perfectly legitimate offer. Some Dancers consider tossing a Garou bodily into the Labyrinth to be an offer as well. If he didn't want to go, he would have broken free or died fighting his captors, right?

### ***Respect All Those Who Serve the Wyrms***

Dancers may consider the advice, requests and offers of non-Dancers, such as humans in Pentex and vampires in the Sabbat. Some Dancers also see this stricture as forbidding the death of Garou or others who appear to be on the road toward eventual corruption.



### *The Veil Shall Not Be Lifted*

The Inquisition made this lesson brutally clear. Most supernatural creatures keep up some version of the Veil, in the simple self-interest of not getting caught and destroyed. The less humans know of the monsters in their midst, the fewer protections they have against them. When Dancers act discreetly, they keep Garou from finding out about their plans; it gives them the advantage of surprise. This point is one of contention with the Sabbat. Dancers won't go along with Sabbat plans that call for the Dancers to compromise the secrecy of their Hives and goals.

### *Do Not Suffer Thy People to Tend Thy Sickness*

Black Spiral Dancers uphold this stricture as religiously as any other. Weak cubs must not be allowed to grow, breed and poison the tribe's gene pool. Weak elders are liabilities. Dancers so insane that they pose a danger to the Hive may be torn apart as sacrifices to dark powers.

### *The Leader May Be Challenged at Any Time in Peace*

Defeating renowned Black Spiral Dancers is a time-honored way to gain power and acclaim. Any leader who cannot defeat his own followers cannot be trusted to lead them against their enemies.

### *The Leader Shall Not Be Challenged in Time of War*

The forces of the Wyrn must be united in times of war. This distinction is usually taken to refer to outright skirmishes and battles, as the Dancers are technically always at war with someone. There are one or two exceptions to this law. Any non-Dancer who leads the Dancers in battle and does so poorly may be killed. Under extreme circumstances of physical disability, a Dancer who refuses to appoint a more fit leader may be destroyed, but this resort is reserved only for the most dire of circumstances.

### *Ye Shall Take No Action That Causes a Pit to Be Violated*

This point of the Litany is generally interpreted as referring to secrecy and security. Any non-Dancer who enters a Pit must be destroyed immediately. Prisoners are never brought back to a Pit, nor does anyone speak of the Pit when they are outside of it. If prisoners are invited to walk the Shattered Labyrinth, the rite must be performed elsewhere. Any Dancer who leads enemies (or allies!) back to a Pit will be tortured and killed.

## *The Black Spiral*

Since the very origin of the Black Spiral Dancers as a tribe, they have descended into Malfestas itself to better prepare themselves to serve the Wyrn. The dimension they travel is known by various names, including "the Shattered Labyrinth" and "the Black Spiral Labyrinth." Dancer cubs usually attempt their *Rite of Passage* at age 14, and they return each time they are ready to increase in rank. The metamorphosis that the Dancer undergoes in the Labyrinth is referred to as *transmogrification*.



The *Rite of Passage* and the increase in rank are both recognized in front of the entire Hive with elaborate ceremony and ritual. The Theurge begins the ceremony by tracing out a design (representative of the Labyrinth) on the floor of the Pit's central chamber, which takes 10 minutes and serves to open a gate to Malfeas. Meanwhile, a Galliard representing the petitioner chants the petitioner's accomplishments (or his lineage, if this is his *Rite of Passage*). (Note: when this rite is performed for prisoners or Garou who wish to convert, it is never performed within the confines of the Pit. Such an action would endanger the security of the Hive.)

The initiate then enters a trancelike state in which he moves in a shuffling dance. With the Theurge's help, he dances sideways into the Labyrinth. As he crosses the Gauntlet, he is assailed by vast, horrific visions. Once he reaches the Labyrinth, his spirit moves through "circles" (of which there are nine), and he is tested at each circle. The amount of respect the Dancer is accorded when he finishes depends on how many circles he has crossed, but Dancers usually cross only one circle at a time.

The Dancers may hurl abducted Garou straight into the Black Spiral. The first circle gives the Garou insights into the taint of evil within him, usually driving him insane and causing him to abandon all hope. Some rare, valiant heroes have crossed several circles in their first vision quest, achieving impressive respect despite being outsiders. The initiate's very identity is reshaped. "Adopted" Dancers are given as a name the first two or three words they utter upon leaving the Labyrinth, but particularly impressive converts may be given deed-names later in life.

### *The Madness of the Shattered Labyrinth*

A Garou cub's First Change brings with it a sensitivity to Gaia's suffering. A Black Spiral Dancer's transmogrification brings with it an echo of the Wym's fury and madness at its confinement. Not every Dancer is driven insane by his transmogrification. Those who return from the Labyrinth with a touch of insanity are seen as blessed, touched by one of the Urge Wyrms as an omen of great things to come. Some return hearing voices in their heads, which are seen as guidance from an Urge Wym that took an interest in the initiate.

### *The Nine Circles*

Most entrances to the Shattered Labyrinth are temporary ones created for the purpose of the *Rite of Transmogrification*. There are few permanent entrances. The largest of these is an inlaid spiral permanently stained in blood and worked into the floor of a Gothic cathedral called the Temple Obscura. The temple is filled with an overpowering stench and illuminated by the sickly green light of balefire.

The nine circles, or thresholds, of the Shattered Labyrinth offer tests that the Dancer must overcome or outwit in order to advance in rank. Strong or ingenious petitioners may emerge with Gifts taught by the servitors of the Labyrinth. These vision quests may take many forms, but they often appear as surreal stories and vignettes presented by dark Umbral spirits.



The first five circles represent the first five ranks. It is extremely unusual for a Black Spiral Dancer to proceed to the sixth circle or beyond. Only two Dancers are supposed to have bested the ninth and final circle.

**The First Circle, The Dance of Insight:** The first circle offers the first ordeal that a Black Spiral Dancer must overcome in order to be seen as a full-fledged member of the tribe. Darkness initiates the experience, swiftly filled by visions that offer up dismal truths contained within the Dancer's own soul. The Dancer must overcome the limitations of her mind in order to accept the evil within her. The revelations offer great understanding, but those who are weak become hollow, shattered, mad shadows of their former selves.

**The Second Circle, The Dance of Rage:** In this second circle, the initiate learns the strength of indulgence in violence of the most extreme kind. A Dancer who enters this portion of the Labyrinth encounters problems that may only be overcome through extraordinary violence and frenzy. This circle encourages the Black Spiral Dancer to give in to any act of violation or psychotic destruction imaginable.

**The Third Circle, The Dance of Endurance:** This circle presents tests of physical and mental anguish that must be endured. The test makes use of the Dancer's own experiences, showing him that he is stronger than he once was, that he can endure that which defeated him before. The Dancer often emerges with a higher tolerance to pollution, radiation, pain, fear and so on. The mental anguish caused by this test may help the Dancer to commune with the Urge Wyrms, encouraging a greater sympathy with the Wym's traumas.

**The Fourth Circle, The Dance of Cunning:** A treacherous Bane guards this circle, and he must be bested in a test of wits. The Dancer must learn to draw upon her Gnosis, to twist wisdom into false logic. Doing so teaches the Dancer to see through the deception of others, particularly the Dancer's own allies. The Dance of Cunning may also teach the Dancer the truth behind a great lie.

**The Fifth Circle, The Dance of Combat:** This is a symbolic battle, not a blow-by-blow contest. The Dancer must impress her foes by using violence in imaginative ways and by not showing fear. Traditionally, success bestows greater ability in combat.

**The Sixth Circle, The Dance of Corruption:** The sixth circle brings about terrible physical mutations and mental abnormalities, all but destroying the Dancer's sense of identity and self. The experience systematically destroys the most secure aspects of his identity, one by one, until he no longer sees himself as the same person he was. This test causes radical shifts in personality and results in at least one physical deformity and one mental disorder, sometimes more. It undermines the Dancer's faith in what seemed to be a sane, secure and stable part of reality.

**The Seventh Circle, The Dance of Loyalty:** The Dancer must prove her willingness to sacrifice for the Wym. She must sacrifice her dearest possession, whether that is a fear, a love or a hidden link to the sane, human world that she supposedly left behind a long time ago.





**The Eighth Circle, The Dance of Paradox:** The Dancer must overcome a riddle posed by a Bane of Enigmas. Any Dancer who returns successful from this test loses any understanding she gained through the experience, and no one has ever been able to explain what happened to them within this circle. Some Dancers speculate that the secret of the Eighth Circle has something to do with the true nature of the Triat.

**The Ninth Circle, The Dance of Deceit:** The Dancer must overcome a manifestation of the Wyrn in combat and destroy it. Only two Dancers have ever passed this ordeal and returned; they became an Incarna and a Malfean. Some speculate that the Dancer must briefly *become* the Wyrn within this circle.

## *Playing with Others*

Black Spiral Dancers play well with others — in theory. It is true that the Dark Litany requires them to “Serve the Wyrn in All Its Forms” and to “Respect All Those Who Serve the Wyrn.” It’s impossible to dictate feelings, however, and a lot of Black Spiral Dancers just plain don’t *like* their allies. This dislike leads many Dancers to conveniently interpret the Dark Litany to mean what they want it to mean, or get away with things that they think others won’t notice.

Differences in philosophy and attitude tear the “forces of evil” apart. They’re all used to taking what they want and doing what they want. Many of them have difficulty curbing this instinct just because some Dancer a couple of Hives away thought that an alliance would be a great idea. Even when they do have decent intentions, the will may be weak. It’s one thing to say, “I won’t take the pretty thing that belongs to our allies,” but it’s another to actually keep one’s paws off. A simple temptation has ruined more than one budding alliance.

### *The Sabbat (Vampires)*

While these vampires may seem to have similar goals and attitudes to the Dancers, plenty of differences pull them apart. The worst of these come down to religious differences. No matter how similar two religions seem on the surface, it’s never a good idea to put zealots of different faiths on the same team. Distinctions, however minor, inevitably emerge, and violence follows.

It doesn’t help that the Sabbat like to be in control, and the Dancers hate being controlled. Many Sabbat would like to think of the Dancers as their convenient daytime watchdogs, but the Dancers have other ideas. Those Dancers who follow totems of strength are the most likely to work with and for the Sabbat. They’re also the most likely to break off such a relationship (usually with violence) when they start to feel used or under-appreciated.

### *The Unseelie (Changelings)*

The Unseelie are occasionally useful to the Dancers, but not all Dancers like these allies. The Unseelie may be masters at subterfuge, trickery and politicking, but they’re rarely as fond of sheer, intense, psychotic violence as the Dancers are. Some among the Shadow Court may enjoy a good slay-ride



through town, but many times, the rest of the Shadow Court tries to rein these ones in rather than risk inappropriate attention. Some Dancers look down on them for this, and it doesn't help that few Dancers appreciate (or in many cases, tolerate) the intricacies of changeling court politics. For this reason, the Unseelie will never be seen as the Dancers' equals. Followers of the totems Kirijama and Aucol get along best with these changelings.

### *Nephandi (Mages)*

The Dancers don't trust the Nephandi as far as they can throw their headless bodies. The Nephandi are useful, but anyone who wants power that much is a betrayal waiting to happen. The Dancers are more than willing to get there first. Followers of Whippoorwill and Caterpillar are the most likely Dancers to work with Nephandi.

### *Spectres (Wraiths)*

The Dancers admire the methods of these ghosts, as well as their ability to seduce, corrupt and destroy. Those who are familiar with them are quite aware, however, that the ultimate goal of the Spectres is incompatible with the plans of the Dancers as a whole. Followers of Bat are the most likely to work together with Spectres.

### *Pentex (Humans)*

The Black Spiral Dancers work best with Pentex, their long-time ally. Only short-term disagreements as to method and the relative importance of different goals are likely to get in the way of this alliance, as well as the occasional personality conflict. Also, Pentex prefers to hire people on long-term contracts, and the Dancers prefer to move around as they will.

This isn't to say that they always have each other's best interests at heart. Many Dancers believe that they're happily using Pentex for their own goals, and many Pentex operatives believe that they're using the Black Spiral Dancers for theirs. Since both groups' work is so completely wrapped up in the desires of the Wyrms and its servants, however, this is only occasionally a problem. Dancers of all kinds end up in arrangements with Pentex, and many of them pull in a paycheck from the company coffers.

## *The Shattered Moon: The 13 Tribes Corrupted*

The Wyrms rejoice when the tribes do its work, and many times, they do so unwittingly. Race hatred, elitism and stereotyping appear more frequently than many would like, and even the best packs have been guilty of it. Every tribe also has some weakness that can provide an opening to a Dancer who is clever enough to exploit it.

Gaian Garou spend most of their post-Change waking lives on the front line of the war against the Wyrms. There's little shore-leave, rest-time is scarce, and many hardened leaders in the tribes or septs see requests for time away as being selfish or indicative of weakness. Garou who tire of this pressure



eventually return to their human or wolf lives, often in the first stages of Harano. As Harano deepens, the Garou isolates herself, plagued with dreams and nightmares of her past lives. It is often during this time that she feels called to come to the Underworld, where her pain will end at last.

A Garou who accepts the revelations of the Shattered Labyrinth becomes something utterly different from what she was. She may use her knowledge of her tribe's weakness to tailor the temptation tactics, or she might betray her sept with her memory of its defenses. Some Garou do come looking for fallen packmates, and they may end up fallen themselves. Worst of all is when a pack must stare into the face of their fallen comrade, knowing that she wishes them all dead or riddled with Wym-taint.

**Black Furies** — The Furies have grown frustrated over the years with the Garou Nation's inability to do more for women beyond attempting to alter society's attitudes and the fact that many male Garou only perpetuate the things the Furies seek to end. Life after the Spiral is one of consummated dreams. Women hold a great deal of power among the Dancers, and some take advantage of this, although some few do give up their independence to become breeders for the tribe. Their dementia frequently revolves around violent misandry, extreme sexual practices or altered notions of gender.

**Bone Gnawers** — Gnawers are often treated with scorn by their "betters" among the tribes, and they're seen as mere street mutts. Many grow frustrated in their efforts to improve their lives, then angry at the notion that Gaia must intend for them to suffer like this. Those who walk the Spiral are often appalled to recognize what they have suffered in Gaia's name. Survivors are often plagued with neuroses such as compulsive cleanliness (in rebellion at what they saw in the Spiral) or other obsessive behaviors. Depression is common. Since mental illness is common among the homeless, many Gnawers walk openly on the streets, spreading their taint, which the Dancers reward.

**Children of Gaia** — Many Children are known (and sometimes scorned) for their attitudes regarding recreational drugs and free love. Some do find love or revelation in these practices, but others become jaded, using them to hide from responsibility. The Spirals offer many perks to fallen Children, such as the tribe's orgiastic breeding ceremonies, amazing drugs and a fanatically bound community of allies. Sexual fetishes and manias are indulged, and even encouraged. A number of the Children go on to serve the Dark Fungus.

**Fianna** — Many Fianna treasure their Celtic heritage, unaware of the taint that runs through it. The Dancers have preserved many traditional beliefs of Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, and the lure of forgotten knowledge can pull at some. Some Fianna have so much of the old tainted blood in their veins that they dream of the Pictish lands and pasts that are best forgotten. On their return from the Spiral, some Fianna join the Cluithi camp, seeking to rekindle their lost heritage. Others become strangely ashamed of their pasts and blood, and take to stalking humans who bear Gaelic blood (northern Ireland has become a popular hunting ground...).



**Get of Fenris** — The Get are filled with Rage, and they stoke the furnace with violence. But with violence comes the risk of frenzy, and for some Get, too many frenzies risks making the Wyrn-taint in their souls grow. Eventually, the taint consumes the Get, and they walk the Spiral, looking for blood in which to drench their claws. Fallen Get lose their moral inhibitions. They can experience long bouts of fighting and ultraviolence without a single qualm. Indeed, it may be truly ecstatic! Since the tribe appreciates pain, it often forms some of their madness, from sado-masochism to mutilation to thrill-killing.

**Glass Walkers** — For once, the Garou and the Dancers agree on something: The Glass Walkers are an abomination. The cities where they live choke off all aspects of the Triat, and they embrace technology with unhealthy fascination. Pentex is most likely to recruit Glass Walkers to the Spiral, often in the form of job searches or corporate headhunters. Those Glass Walkers who go through “employee orientation” bring their not inconsiderable knowledge about the Weaver and the modern world with them. Some experience a dramatic turnaround, becoming raging technophobes. Obsession-compulsion and mechanophilia are other common forms of Glass Walker dementia.

**Red Talons** — The Red Talons are just as likely to fall as any other Garou. What begins as irritation with the leaders who sit and jabber like the stupid monkeys that they imitate develops into full-blown hatred as the humans consume the world and the Garou do nothing. Their hearts break under the strain of their Rage, and they welcome the Wyrn as an ally. Fallen Talons dream of the Impergium at its height — when the foolish humans were kept in their place, when those who strayed were culled — and they enforce it with gruesome enthusiasm. Cannibalism and brutal bestiality are common forms of dementia for this fallen tribe. Abhorra, Urge of Hatred, takes particular interest in these former tribe members.

**Shadow Lords** — The Shadow Lords fall more frequently than they would believe, and their weaknesses — power-lust and pride — make them easy targets. Their attempts to play both ends against the middle may likely finish when something comes up that they can't put down. Fallen Lords either rise to positions of power or humble themselves before greater powers than they've ever encountered. Hakaken has entire packs of Shadow Lords to do his bidding, while Sykora and Kirijama seek elite Lords to work for them. Fallen Shadow Lords usually suffer from paranoia or delusions of grandeur.

**Silent Striders** — Silent Striders frequently travel to some of the most dangerous places in the earthly realm and the Umbra, especially the lands of the Dead. Not every path to the Spiral begins in a Pit. Not a few Striders stray from their paths in the Underworld, led on by the pain in their souls, and end up at the First Circle. Fallen Striders become masters of Malfestas and the Underworld, and many also take on the challenge of learning to navigate through the thousands of miles of tunnel connecting the Hives and Pits. They also take up communicating with *things* in the outer darkness. Spending so much time in the Underworld, the Striders forget the norms of behavior in the earthly world and take up shocking practices that they learned in the Stygian depths.



**Silver Fangs** — The so-called kings of the Garou teeter perilously close to the edge, and their madness makes them easy prey to further corruption. Some have trouble remembering their past lives, or they can't remember anything but the worst details. Once past the Shattered Labyrinth, many Fangs suffer from amnesia, which the Dancers take as a sign of the Wyrms' forgiveness, allowing the new ones to start with a clean slate. Others suffer from multiple personalities or delusional past lives due to their nightmares during transmogrification. The most wild suffer delusions of grandeur, believing that they will be the ones to lead the Dancers to glorious victory against Gaia. The Dancers are always happy to let these ones lead the charges.

**Uktena** — Uktena are likely to fall in one of two ways. Either they grow frustrated with their failing efforts to preserve tribal homelands and indigenous Kinfolk (and start looking for outside help), or their occult studies lure them into seeking forbidden knowledge (and they make deals with one too many dark powers). Bane Tenders are watched constantly for signs of taint due to their particular duties, but even the most vigilant sentinel blinks once in a while. Fallen Uktena often carry encyclopedic knowledge of Banes and other Wyrms-spirits, Spectres and the Nephandi's demonic servants. Many submit themselves to humiliating obeisance and develop penchants for live sacrifice, scarification, self-mutilation or torture. Panzaim — a belief that supernatural influence is so pervasive that only the true occultist (the believer) can command it — is also frequent.

**Wendigo** — A Wendigo isolated from his tribe and homelands becomes easy prey for the Wyrms as doubt and introspection creeps into him. Frustration over his failed attempts to protect his homeland or raging hatred for the work of the white man often push him over the edge. After the fall, Wendigo often use their knowledge of local defenses in the service of the Wyrms, and they show little interest in defending their lands. Many take up worship of Eater-of-Souls, an even greater cannibal spirit than Great Wendigo. Some also dream of something buried in the great ice of Antarctica, some great mystery that follows another Black Spiral migration....

## *Agendas*

The major agenda of the Black Spiral Dancers is clear: the destruction of human order, the death of all Garou who will not join them and the subjugation of the mortal world. How, then, do they intend to get there?

### *Corruption*

Corruption is the first order of business for most Dancer Hives. Some Dancers work slowly and carefully, using research, rites and delicate manipulation to orchestrate the fall of their foes. Others spread their taint physically, through rape, abduction and the spread of radiation, toxic sludge and pollution. Still others demoralize the Garou through repeated attacks, leaving them subject to exhaustion and Harano.



The Dancers work paw-in-hand with Pentex to corrupt humanity and the Wyld itself, creating fomori, birthing Banes and despoiling wild places. In particular, the Dancers have made ample use of the *Rite of Blood Taint* and similar rites of late to exploit the pollution that they have spread throughout the Garou Nation. Pentex is also working on drugs that will make the job of corruption easier, weakening the resolve of Garou and Kinfolk alike.

Thanks to the resources of Pentex, the Dancers have also rediscovered a few of the other Changing Breeds. They've begun efforts to taint the other breeds as well. In some cases, their job is easy. For example, the Bastet tribe of the Simba (the werelions), have already fallen much of the way on their own. The Dancers hope to drag the entire tribe over to their side, where Lion would no doubt welcome them graciously. The sudden infusion of numbers, fresh blood and sheer surprise should put them a large step ahead of the game, if they succeed. There's no guarantee, however, that the lions will be willing to work with the Dancers if they fall.

### *Reproduction*

The Dancers do their best to increase their numbers day by day. They abduct humans, Garou and Kinfolk to act as breeders. They rape unwilling subjects and warp their memories through the *Rite of the Survivor*. They enact procreation rites and work furiously on a means to make their metis fertile. There are few taboos where sex is concerned. The only abomination is chastity.

Some Dancers have pinned their hopes on the Pentex interest in genetic engineering; perhaps Pentex can prevail where the Theurges have not. A handful of metis participate willingly in Pentex experiments to this end.

Dancers don't care whether or not their cubs are raised within the purview of the Hive, as long as they can be found and brought home eventually. This leaves them free to spawn with whatever partners they want, caring little for the ultimate disposition of those partners. It also means that, in many cases, they don't need to worry about paying child support, college tuition and other costs traditionally associated with having children. On the other hand, as their taint asserts itself, these children are likely to spread corruption to the very youngest and most defenseless victims.

### *Destruction*

This goal may be harder to achieve than one would think. The Dancers must be careful not to give away the location of their Hives. If they simply launched wave upon wave of assaults on Garou caerns, the Garou wouldn't need to wonder long where the attacks were coming from. When the Garou know what they're fighting and where to take the fight, it gives them a morale boost that the Dancers most definitely don't want them to have.

The Dancers prefer to work like terrorists. They pay attention, and keep abreast of their enemies' movements. They take advantage of a momentary weakness in the defenses, or they engineer one themselves. They wait until



the Garou are busy elsewhere, divided and already fighting a war on another front. Then they attack, quickly and decisively. They do as much damage as possible and then disappear again.

### *The Apocalypse*

Above all, the Dancers await the coming Apocalypse. They do what they can to prepare for it. They want as many Garou as possible in the grip of Harano, hopelessness, despair and corruption when that time comes. The greater the numbers of Dancers and the fewer the number of Garou, the easier the Apocalypse will be in coming. The Dancers watch their allies closely in these times for signs of betrayal. They know that the Wyrms has promised them dominance, but they also know that their allies may have other plans.

## *Deformities, Illnesses and Abnormalities*

Deformities and mental disorders of all kinds show up among the Black Spiral Dancers for many reasons. The prevalence of metis Dancers is one. Inbreeding is another. While there is some pressure to bring fresh blood into the Hives, females may mate with anyone they choose. The touch of the Wyrms inspires some particularly nasty deformities, and Dancers do play around with things like toxic waste and radiation. Even the Shattered Labyrinth itself may warp the mind and body of a Dancer.

Dancers range from the surprisingly beautiful to the monstrous. They might appear to be lucid, or they might be raving lunatics, and there's plenty of room in between the extremes. Use the occasional monstrous Dancer to strike fear and horror into the Garou, but otherwise use a little subtlety. Too many deformities piled into one character become silly and laughable rather than scary.

Both deformities and madness are seen as blessings, unless the madness makes the Dancer dangerous or the deformity makes the Dancer useless. The longer a Dancer is around and the more trips he makes into the Shattered Labyrinth, the more twisted he's likely to get. Therefore, the most corrupted Dancers are most likely to show up in two places: on the front lines getting killed, and in the higher ranks of the Dancers.

### *Physical Deformities*

Physical deformities and handicaps range from the very mild (cleft palate or harelip) to the extreme (stunted, twisted limbs or complete hairlessness) to the... unusual (tentacles and sores that drip acid). Some may show up only in certain forms. Some can be covered up with a shirt, hat or scarf; others can't be missed. Such deformities obviously limit whether or not the Dancer may go out in normal society, so take into account what you want the Dancer for when you consider physical abnormalities.



A large proportion of Dancers and their Kinfolk just aren't pretty creatures. Dancer fur may be black, gray-green or albino white, although Dancers who started out as members of other tribes exhibit a wider range of fur coloration, as do their children. Dancers range from the average boy-next-door to hideous things that could send a battle-hardened Ahroun running in fear.

There is a mild tension between those few Dancers who somehow come out clean and attractive, and those with hunchbacks, lank hair and twisted limbs. Each side often claims that their state indicates a certain superiority, although it's generally accepted that deformities are blessings from the Wyrms. Some of the pretty ones try to claim that in its own way, beauty is a deformity. By and large, however, the Dancers care far more about unity as a tribe than who has nice hair. So while snipes and gibes get traded, they usually don't get in the way of the cause.

### *"Normal" Birth Defects*

Some Dancers are missing fingers or toes. Others have digits that are fused together. Limbs are too short or too long, or they're missing altogether. Arms dwindle away into stunted, useless ends. One or both eyes might be blind, although blindness may lead to the early death of the Dancer if he doesn't adapt well. Some Dancers have cleft palates and harelips. Odd birthmarks show up in unusual places. Colorblindness is particularly common. Skin, eye or hair color may be unusual in some way. Any birth defect that a human can have, a Dancer can have as well.

Some Dancers are born with an unnatural, surreal beauty to them. This is often paired with albinism or rich, black fur, and almost invariably with intense (although sometimes subtle) madness.

### *Nasty Things*

Many Dancers don't pay much attention to cleanliness and hygiene. Crooked teeth are fairly common, although Dancers rarely lose their teeth. Dancer fur can be infested with lice or even stranger things. What fur they do have is often mangy, ragged and patchy. The occasional Dancer is completely hairless. Facial features might be a little off, such as slightly asymmetrical or spaced irregularly. Blisters or tumors cause lumps under the Dancer's skin, or they burst into open sores that drip blood, pus, oil, poison or acid. Exaggerated curvature of the spine is relatively common. Painful mutations can result in penalties to actions or fewer health levels than normal.

### *Beyond the Pale*

A Dancer could have a forked tongue (which tends to make speech difficult) or a cat's eyes. Large bats' ears are surprisingly common. Flaps of skin called patagia (such as you might find in a bat's wings or on the body of a flying squirrel) extend from arms to legs along the body. Tentacles sprout out of odd and unusual places, replacing hands or even teeth. Spines, spikes, barbs, hooks, horns and antlers supplement or replace fur, hands and so on to act as





weapon, protection, poison delivery system or hindrance. Fur is replaced by thick, armorlike hide. Eyes lack lids. Skin secretes an oily or slimy substance. Talons replace fingernails. Teeth drip venom or acid, and the Dancer could even have arachnid fangs.

The deformity might confer a mechanical advantage of some sort, such as the spines, venom or armorlike skin. Simply write these up as Gifts and give those Gifts to the relevant Dancers.

## *Mental Abnormalities*

Almost every Dancer should be a bit screwed up in the head. They're subjected to brutality and degradation, and they regularly commit atrocities the likes of which most people have never seen. They go through mind-shattering experiences in the Shattered Labyrinth. Emotions such as compassion, sympathy or pity are seen as dangerous weaknesses. They're twisted and remade by the Wyrms in its own image, and many of them share a painful sympathy for the Wyrms' madness. In addition, the radiation, toxic waste and inbreeding undoes their brain chemistry as well as their bodies. This is why the listing of mental disorders that follows is fairly long. If all of your Dancers have the same derangements, they'll start to sound alike.

When you play with mental disorders, start small and subtle. Avoid "cute" mental problems; they're entirely inappropriate for the existence that the Dancers lead. Mental illness is scary both for the mentally ill and those around them, particularly among huge, clawed, sharp-toothed werewolves who can tear you apart without a second thought. Play with small details and oddities and build up to a large, scary picture, rather than throwing all sorts of extreme behavior out at once. Dancers may have symptoms of a mental illness (or of more than one) without having the full-blown disorder. Plenty of mental problems cannot be classified easily.

Most Dancers suffer from at least a little bit of brain-weirdness. Mood disorders alone strike about one in 10 normal people. They must be all the more prevalent among creatures that abuse substances, subject themselves to mystically mind-altering experiences, and grow up in abusive homes. Dancers are moody or temperamental. They have insomnia or nightmares, or their minds flash back to the abuse they suffered at the hands of their tribesmen or Kinfolk.

Some Dancers experience periods of disconnection, during which they might hurt themselves just to be sure that they're real. They could have "flattened affect" — a lack of visible emotion. Maybe they have tendencies toward the hypochondriacal, imagining illnesses that aren't there or exaggerating ones that are, or experiencing phantom pain. They suffer from exaggerated weight gain and loss in cycle with their moods. They experience "religious feelings," imagining that they possess tremendous power. They become hyper-sexual, or they loathe the very thought of sexual contact. Their thought processes always seem just a step out-of-synch with everyone else's, making them difficult to follow and make sense of.



Disorders are mental problems that are extreme enough to seriously impair performance or thinking in some way, and they're surprisingly common among Black Spiral Dancers. Psychology isn't an exact science — some of the items listed here will be found as their own disorders, or as symptoms of other disorders.

### *A Note on Roleplaying Mental Disorders*

A number of these ailments involve interaction with another person, and some of the behavior involved is not appropriate for **Mind's Eye Theatre** beyond verbal description at most. If a "victim" is uncomfortable with what is going on, it should *stop*. Right away. No arguments; no back-talk. Just do it.

If the Storyteller does not believe that the players are mature enough to handle some of these disorders, then she may disallow them. People play to have fun, not to traumatize each other.

### *Anxiety Disorders*

It is fairly common for one Dancer to have more than one *anxiety disorder* at a time. Some anxiety disorders may be triggered by childhood or adult incidents; others are due to substance abuse or medical conditions. Anxiety can range from mild nervousness and worry to all-out panic attacks, which can include the inability to breathe and chest pains, mimicking a heart attack.

*Acute Stress Disorder*: This disorder is much like *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, but it begins during or immediately after the triggering event and is of limited duration (less than a month).

*Agoraphobia*: Fear of public situations and places where the person might have trouble escaping or getting help if he becomes anxious.

*Generalized Anxiety Disorder*: General tense or anxious feelings.

*Panic Disorder*: Repeated panic attacks, worry about having additional panic attacks, mental and behavioral changes related to the attacks.

*Social Phobia*: Fear of embarrassment related to a public behavior, such as writing, speaking or eating in public.

*Specific Phobia*: Fear of a specific object or situation, such as heights, insects, storms, airplanes, enclosed spaces, blood, situations that could lead to the development of an illness et cetera.

### *Delusions*

A *delusion* is a false belief that cannot be explained by the education or culture of the person. The sufferer cannot be convinced that his belief is wrong, even when presented with what should be convincing evidence. Some may even become violent with repeated attempts to show them the truth. Various types of delusions exist, including:

*Disease*: The Dancer believes that he has a terrible disease.

*Erotomantic*: The Dancer believes that someone is in love with him who clearly isn't.



*Grandeur:* The Dancer believes himself to be of great importance and station, to have special knowledge or power, or to have a relationship with someone important or famous.

*Guilt:* The Dancer believes he has done some unpardonable, terrible thing.

*Jealousy:* The Dancer believes that someone has been unfaithful. (This is usually taken to mean marital infidelity, but in the case of the Dancers, it can refer to infidelity to the Wyrms.)

*Passivity:* The Dancer believes that he is controlled and manipulated by an outside source (usually one of the Urge Wyrms).

*Persecution:* The Dancer believes that his actions and life are being interfered with by unknown outside parties.

*Poverty:* The Dancer believes that he is on the brink of bankruptcy, despite having money.

*Reference:* The Dancer thinks that everyone is talking about him, particularly sources such as newspaper articles and TV programs.

*Somatic:* The Dancer perceives odd physical sensations (odors, the sensation of insects crawling on him), but without physical evidence.

*Thought-Control:* The Dancer thinks that someone is putting thoughts into his head (again, usually one of the Urge Wyrms).

### *Dissociative Disorders*

In *dissociation*, some of the Dancer's thoughts, behaviors or feelings become removed from conscious awareness and control. The episodes usually begin and end suddenly, they are often precipitated by stress, and they generally involve a disturbance of memory.

*Depersonalization Disorder:* The Dancer experiences episodes of detachment, as if observing his own behavior from outside of himself. This usually does not include memory loss.

*Dissociative Amnesia:* The Dancer cannot remember important information, usually details of a personal nature. This dissociation may be localized (an entire time period), or selective (pieces of a time period related to a particular subject).

*Dissociative Fugue:* The Dancer travels away from home suddenly and cannot recall details related to where he is and how he got there. He may also not remember all the details of his own identity.

*Dissociative Identity Disorder:* Additional identities may take control of the Dancer's behavior. (See also *Multiple-Personality Disorder*.)

### *Body-Related Disorders*

*Addiction:* Addiction to alcohol and drugs is often as much a mental problem as it is a physical problem. One determines whether an addiction is actually a mental illness by examining how much it interferes with the individual's life, work and relationships.



*Eating Disorders:* Abnormal eating behaviors include: *Anorexia Nervosa*, in which a person sees herself as fat despite being underweight, and *Bulimia Nervosa*, in which a person binges on food and then makes up for it with vomiting, purging and excessive exercise. Some Dancers also experience hunger for non-food or “inappropriate” items, such as dung, plastic or dirt.

*Factitious Disorder:* The Dancer fakes symptoms of illness, not to obtain anything material (money, revenge, avoidance of responsibility), but simply out of a need or desire to occupy the role of a sick person. Manufactured symptoms, particularly those of new and little-known or mental illnesses, can be very difficult to detect. This is also called *Münchausen syndrome*. People who project symptoms of illness onto other people (typically their children) are said to have *Münchausen syndrome by proxy*.

### **Hallucinations**

*Hallucinations* are false sensory impressions. They can affect any of the senses, but it's rare for them to be anything but auditory or visual. People who are hallucinating often go to great lengths to avoid proving the unreality of their hallucinations. For example, someone hallucinating an unwelcome person would avoid trying to shake that person's hand. People also tend to hallucinate things that it will be easy for them to believe in. So a Dancer on the subway is more likely to hallucinate seeing a man with a gun than a pink elephant. Auditory hallucinations are the classic “hearing voices,” although it could just as easily be the sound of a buzzing fly or running water.

### **Impulse-Control Disorders**

A number of disorders that really don't fit anywhere else get lumped under this classification. Most (if not all) of these disorders are characterized by a cycle of tension and release. The tension builds up until the Dancer engages in the activity, at which point he relaxes. Episodes often occur at regular intervals, although stress can speed up the schedule or trigger episodes. The Dancer may also engage in the activity to make himself feel better when he's upset. This tension-release cycle is also experienced by some serial killers.

*Intermittent Explosive Disorder:* This Dancer has episodes in which he acts out aggressively, destroying property and harming others. This is particularly prevalent among Dancers.

*Kleptomania:* An irresistible need to steal things.

*Pathological Gambling:* Gambling to the point of losing jobs, friendships and marriages.

*Pyromania:* The need to set fires.

*Trichotillomania:* Pulling hair out of one's body, sometimes accompanied by swallowing the hair.

### **Mood Disorders**

A “mood episode” is a period of time in which a patient feels abnormally happy or sad, lasting for at least two weeks, but perhaps for months at a time.



Depressive episodes involve feelings of sadness and worthlessness, problems eating and sleeping, lack of energy, guilt feelings, problems concentrating and repeated thoughts of death or suicidal tendencies. Manic episodes involve elation or irritation. The sufferer may be talkative, hyperactive, grandiose or easily distracted, and she usually has very bad judgment. She may spend ridiculous amounts of money or stay up all night cleaning. In extreme cases, hallucinations may be involved.

Most people with mood disorders either have only depressive episodes or both; patients with both have "bipolar disorder." Mood disorders are very common, they interfere with people's lives more than most people realize, and they often come packaged with other disorders. Some patients with mood disorders attempt to "self-medicate" with alcohol or illegal drugs, leading to addictions. Mania may also be associated with flights of creativity, and bipolar disorder is highly correlated with intelligence.

### ***Multiple-Personality Disorder (Dissociative Identity Disorder)***

The Dancer with *Dissociative Identity Disorder* has at least two different and distinct personalities, but the number has been known to go as high as 200. For ease of roleplaying it is recommended to keep the number small. These personalities may be fairly complete, including their own names, or they may be symbolic of a concept. They may vary in gender, age and style, such as a wizened elder, a rough-and-tumble boy, a battle-scarred veteran and a timid little girl. Some of the personalities are often unaware of others, or only partially aware of them.

The transition between personalities is usually brought on by stress and is often sudden. This disorder usually begins during childhood, occurs predominantly among women, and is highly correlated with sexual abuse. Each personality must have its own different way of thinking about and relating to its environment. If a personality is not aware of the other(s), it will see the missing time as blank spots in its memories.

### ***Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)***

Take *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder* in two parts. Obsessions are things that dominate a person's thoughts. Compulsions are actions that a person cannot help repeating, even though she realizes that they're inappropriate or useless. The Dancer with OCD who is prevented from performing his compulsion becomes tense and prone to frenzy.

Compulsions range from the simple (checking the stove for hours after every use to make sure the burners are off) to the unbelievably complex (bedtime rituals that take hours to perform). The compulsion always relates to the obsession. The person who checks the stove repeatedly may have obsessive thoughts about his house burning down.



## Paraphilias

Paraphilias are sexual behaviors that are seen as abnormal. Some of these may also exist as "normal" sexual behavior. The dividing line is usually whether or not the activity interferes with the person's life, work and relationships. Most paraphilias begin during adolescence, and if not controlled, they can lead to trouble with the law. The Storyteller can leave these disorders out of the game entirely if the players aren't able or don't want to handle them.

*Exhibitionism:* The urge to expose oneself to a stranger who doesn't expect it.

*Pedophilia:* Sexual urges related to children.

*Sexual Masochism:* Sexual desires related to being humiliated, bound or injured.

*Sexual Sadism:* Sexual desires involving the infliction of suffering or humiliation on someone else (another common disorder among Dancers).

*Voyeurism:* The urge to view unsuspecting people naked or involved in sexual activity.

## Personality Disorders

Personality disorders are clusters of personality traits that are rigid and that interfere with a Dancer's life. They are present from early adult life. They're normal personality traits and behaviors, taken to an extreme.

*Antisocial:* Irresponsibility, criminal behavior, truancy, cruelty, destructiveness, theft, lying, recklessness, impulsiveness and lack of remorse.

*Avoidant:* Timidity, inability to handle criticism and easily embarrassed.

*Borderline:* Impulsiveness, boredom, emptiness, fear of abandonment, unstable relationships, threats of suicide and intense, inappropriate anger.

*Dependent:* Inability to make independent decisions, fear of abandonment, and feeling of helplessness when alone; often easily hurt, and will go to great lengths to gain others' approval.

*Histrionic:* Emotionalism, vagueness, need for attention and reassurance of attractiveness, self-centered behavior and seductiveness.

*Narcissistic:* Self-importance, envy, feeling of uniqueness, lack of empathy, need for constant attention, sense of entitlement, taking advantage of others and rejection of criticism.

*Obsessive-Compulsive:* Perfectionism, rigidity, workaholic tendencies, preoccupation with detail, indecision, lack of generosity, pack-rat tendencies and difficulties expressing affection.

*Paranoid:* Very suspicious, believes that he is being victimized by others, takes offense easily, with few close friends.

*Schizoid:* Lack of concern for social relationships, limited range of emotion, lack of concern about praise or criticism and solitary tendencies.

*Schizotypal:* Discomfort in social situations, suspicion, eccentricity and inappropriate emotions. Schizotypal Dancers tend to be seen as thinking and feeling in "alien" ways.



## *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*

*Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* is extremely common among Dancers, who have often lived through particularly terrible experiences. People with PTSD survived severely traumatic events such as rape, molestation, wartime atrocities, torture or any extended and extreme fear for their lives.

After some delay, the person then relives the event — typically through repeated flashbacks or nightmares. The sufferer has a physiological reaction, which usually involves high heart rate, increased startle response, insomnia and/ or extreme temper. He does his best to distance himself from the event through detachment and possible loss of memory regarding the event.

This may result in the Dancer cycling back and forth. One month he's wrapped up in flashbacks and nightmares, unable to shake his memories. He lashes out at loud noises and can't sleep. The next month, he has completely repressed the memories, or he may have convinced himself that he's dealt with his problem and it's okay now — until the next time he cycles around again.

## *Psychosis and Schizophrenia*

*Psychosis* usually shows up as part of another disorder, or in response to extreme stress. It may involve delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech or disorganized or catatonic behavior. *Shared Psychotic Disorder* is an extremely rare state in which several people (generally from the same family) share psychotic symptoms. Usually only one person is actually psychotic, but the others have come to share and believe in that person's delusions and experiences. As Dancers often isolate themselves from society at least in part, this disorder is more common among them than the general population.

*Schizophrenia* is a type of psychotic disorder. Before becoming psychotic the Dancer was probably withdrawn, or in other ways had a "strange" personality. The illness itself started gradually. It may have started with beliefs that were odd, but not quite odd enough to be considered psychotic. It probably moved from there to delusions or hallucinations. The illness causes severe problems with work and relationships. Subtypes of schizophrenia include *paranoid schizophrenia*, *disorganized schizophrenia* and *catatonic schizophrenia*.

*Disorganized actions* are physical actions that don't seem to have any point or motivation, from taking off clothes in public to making the sign of the cross repeatedly and without reason. This is typically a symptom of other disorders, such as *psychosis* and *schizophrenia*.

*Disorganized speech* is speech governed by rhymes, puns or completely inobvious rules. It is speech that doesn't follow logical thought patterns. It must clearly interfere with communication. This is typically a symptom of other disorders, such as *psychosis* and *schizophrenia*.

## *Sleeping Disorders*

*Sleeping Disorders* may exist as symptoms of more complex disorders or by themselves.



*Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorder:* The Dancer's biological clock is out of step with that which is normal for society.

*Hypersomnia:* Sleeping too much.

*Insomnia:* Sleeping too little.

*Narcolepsy:* Sleeping at the wrong times; usually the person falls asleep almost instantly, sometimes even when standing up.

*Nightmare Disorder:* Particularly bad dreams.

*Sleep Terror Disorder:* The Dancer may not wake up during the night, but his nightmares terrify him to the point of crying out in his sleep.

*Sleepwalking Disorder:* Persistent sleepwalking, usually early in the night.

## Bane Totems

As always, the best place to start when creating Black Spiral Dancer fodder is the Garou. Take a Garou totem or two and twist them. Plenty of totems, if taken a little too far, would make fantastic Bane totems. Alternatively, start with evil creatures from myth and legend and write them up in totem terms.

## Totems of Cunning

Black Spiral Dancers who follow totems of cunning are masters of false logic and deceit, followers of the Fourth Circle. Totems of cunning typically require seemingly impossible quests from those who would follow them, often involving a spectacular theft, abduction or betrayal.

### *Aucol (Arctic Fox Kit)*

**Cost:** 4

Aucol is a tiny kit, small enough to fit in a person's outstretched palms. His fur is bone-white, and his eyes are milky jade. There is always something a little wrong about his behavior; his emotions never quite fit the circumstance. At times, Aucol exhibits a childlike mischief and deviousness; at others, he displays a cold, calculated cunning. He cycles back and forth between these moods over the course of hours or even minutes. He expects his followers to outsmart their opponents, and he looks down on those who win their battles through strength rather than smarts. Therefore, his followers lag behind in Glory Renown.

**Traits:** Aucol teaches his followers the Gift: *A Thousand Voices* and gives them one Willpower Trait, as well as the Mental Trait: *Creative*. His followers gradually develop bipolar disorder.

**Ban:** Followers of Aucol may not solve a problem through sheer strength of arms unless all other options have been exhausted, or the use of strength is simply a step in a cunning plan.





## Kirijama, "The Hidden Foe"

**Cost:** 7

Kirijama can materialize only in the physical world as a faint shadow. He manipulates darkness to deceive his enemies by creating imaginary foes. He may also appear in the Umbra in a form just beyond the senses of Garou, seen as a fleeting shadow in the corner of the eye. Most of the Garou believe that Kirijama was destroyed long ago.

Kirijama's followers prefer to stay hidden when attending Dancer Moots, appearing only as shadows on the wall. Only one member of the pack may speak for it at any time, and then only as a faint whisper.

Dancers who follow Kirijama prefer the use of subtlety, intrigue, subterfuge, trickery and politics to outright displays of physical prowess and combat. They particularly delight in tricking the Garou into defeating themselves, or setting the Garou up for a quick fall when more combat-oriented Dancers arrive.

**Traits:** Kirijama's followers learn the Gift: *Invisibility*. Unlike most Garou, they have the ability to cast false shadows and leave odd clues of their presence when using this Gift. They also gain the Ability: *Stealth* x 2.

**Ban:** Kirijama's followers are denied the fame of renown, even within their own Hive. Therefore, they rise in rank slowly. They care about their renown only among the followers of Kirijama, and their achievements are recognized only immediately before a transmogrification.

## The Whippoorwill

**Cost:** 6

The whippoorwill is a nocturnal bird with insight into the mysteries of the world, particularly those involving death. Legend has it that the whippoorwill eats the souls of mortals as they die. The Whippoorwill totem seeks out souls weak enough for the Wyrms to devour or convert, particularly Garou who are losing the battle against Harano. A spirit guided by this totem advises its Dancer servitors on how they may best bring the falling Garou to the Shattered Labyrinth.

The followers of Whippoorwill spend most of their time working on the corruption of Garou, bringing as many as they can to the Labyrinth. These Dancers specialize in long, slow, careful corruption by means of trickery, deceit and fear.

**Traits:** Whippoorwill gives its followers the ability to imitate all known species of birds, and Dancers who follow Whippoorwill use perverted birdsongs instead of howls. Whippoorwill grants his followers two levels of *Blind Fighting*, usable only at night or in darkness.

**Ban:** Followers of Whippoorwill must hold a moot in his honor twice every year, at which they sacrifice a spiritually corrupted mortal to the Shattered Labyrinth. Followers of Whippoorwill must also avoid harming birds of any kind, including Corax. The torture of those who prey on birds will gain its favor.



## Totems of Strength

Packs that serve totems of strength are not incapable of cunning and deceit; they just prefer the simplicity of combat. These totems usually require the brutal victimization of an innocent or a brilliant victory in combat, before they'll accept new followers.

### *The Bat*

Cost: 4

The Bat makes her home in the Shattered Labyrinth itself, and her voice mocks those who fail its tests or lose their way within the twisting passages. She uses her comfort in and familiarity with the darkness to torment the lost and uncertain, spreading terror wherever she goes. Her followers prefer to attack under cover of darkness, using surprise to their advantage.

Bat's followers preserve the Veil fanatically, since it embodies all of their values of stealth, survival and surprise. They would rather pass up an opportunity to harm the Garou than rend the Veil. They even act to prevent others from rending the Veil as well. These Dancers have the least love for the Sabbat, and they are unwilling to work with them except when it is necessary to survival.

**Traits:** Bat grants her followers a level each of *Intimidation*, *Stealth* and *Survival*. Dancers who follow her path find the Second and Third Circles of the Labyrinth difficult, but she rewards them later by granting them patagia, skin-flaps that allow the Dancer to glide on the wind.

**Ban:** Each pack that follows the Bat must breed and keep a small family of bats, devouring insects themselves whenever the bats feed. They must also preserve the Veil.

### *The Green Dragon*

Cost: 9

The Green Dragon is a monstrosity and a force of pure power. It cares only to destroy its foes through the use of overwhelming force, and its rage scorches the very Earth. Pure, unadulterated, frenzied combat is this totem's great love, and its servants seek nothing less than mastery of the Second and Fifth Circles both. Those who worship the Green Dragon would not dare consider themselves his followers — they are his servants.

**Traits:** Servants of the Green Dragon can breathe toxic flames up to three times a day, and if the attack succeeds, it inflicts two health levels of aggravated damage. The Green Dragon gifts his followers with two extra Healthy health levels and the Negative Mental Trait: *Violent*. The servants of the Green Dragon are revered among the warriors of the Black Spiral Dancers.

**Ban:** Any servant of the Dragon who flees combat loses all bonuses associated with serving the Green Dragon for a full month. If the cowardice is particularly noteworthy, the Green Dragon may command his other servants to hunt the offender down and torture him.

## Hakaken "The Heart of Fear"

Cost: 5

Hakaken was a corrupted Shadow Lord Ahroun. His overconfidence in his ability to defeat the forces of the Wyrms caused him to attempt to defeat the Shattered Labyrinth. Dancer legend has it that he danced to the threshold of the Sixth Circle on his very first transmogrification. He is one of only two Dancers to ever have made it to the center of the Labyrinth. The experience destroyed his sanity so utterly that he became an Incarna.

Hakaken's followers instill fear and madness in their foes, and they have been known to paint themselves in blood before entering battle, the better to terrify their opponents. They utter awful, alien war cries as they charge. Some Shadow Lord cults secretly worship Hakaken.

**Traits:** Hakaken gifts his followers with a level of *Intimidation* and the Gifts *True Fear* and *Icy Chill of Despair*.

**Ban:** The followers of Hakaken must instill fear into their opponents before they are allowed to slay them.

## Totems of Corruption

These totems serve the Defiler Wyrms, and they revel in corruption, foulness and despair. Their followers prefer infamy to fame and revulsion to glory, and they care little for the Veil when they can get away with rending it. They rely on the Delirium to cover up the worst of their atrocities. These totems require from those who would follow them vile acts of corruption, such as the infusion of a forest with toxic waste, the establishment of a dark cult and the corruption of a true innocent. The more powerful the totem is, the more ingenious or atrocious the act must be in order to catch its attention.

## Caterpillar

Cost: 4

The caterpillar devours all life set before him. His followers commit acts that drain the life and hope from those whom they victimize. Those whom they victimize then victimize others in turn and spread their pain along, continuing the cycle. The followers of Caterpillar are required to spill their own blood during each *Moot Rite*, rather than someone else's.

**Traits:** Caterpillar teaches all of his followers the *Rite of the Survivor* and the *Rite of the False Memory*.

**Ban:** Caterpillar's followers are not allowed to help anyone who does not serve the Wyrms. They may not commit any act of kindness unless it is a direct lead-in to an act of victimization. Some carry this ban to an extreme, refusing to help other Dancers unless there is an element of pain or destruction involved, or at least a price to be paid.



## *The Dark Fungus, "His Mycological Majesty"*

**Cost:** 3

Those Dancers who serve the Dark Fungus farm mushrooms and lichen in the Umbral reflections of the tunnels beneath their Hives. Spirits imbue these fungi with psychoactive chemicals. Only followers of the Dark Fungus may eat these wonders, gaining great insight and losing sanity. Any Dancer who eats a fungus and fails a Physical Challenge gains a mental disorder and experiences a terrifying and potentially deadly bad trip.

Followers of the Dark Fungus use drugs to corrupt humans and Garou alike. He occasionally allows them to mix tiny amounts of the special fungi with traditionally "harmless" drugs. They use these special mixes to lead people farther down the road of addiction and corruption.

**Traits:** The Dark Fungus bestows one level of *Enigmas* and *Occult* to its bastards. Its followers typically have access to an incredible stash of drugs.

**Ban:** Followers of the Dark Fungus must tend to and protect any sort of growing mushrooms when they find them. Ironically, this has led to some Dancers protecting wild areas.

## *G'louogh, "The Dance of Corruption"*

**Cost:** 15

G'louogh appears as an ever-shifting ball of energy, continually forming and reforming anatomical horrors. Some worship her as a twisted fertility goddess. Her followers say that she spawns an army of evil Banes at the center of the universe, and she can spawn Jagglings and Gafflings easily by splitting off a piece of her terrible form. The Nexus Crawlers are the most deadly of her children, and they do her bidding with glee.

G'louogh's followers work on a way to make the Black Spiral Dancer metis fertile. They also abduct Garou, Kinfolk and humans to serve as breeders for the Dancers.

**Traits:** G'louogh grants her followers the Gift: *Dagger of the Mind*.

**Ban:** G'louogh's followers must act capriciously and independently; they may not support the status quo. They must also sacrifice one mutilated body part each month. If they cannot find a victim, G'louogh will choose one at random from the pack.

## *Relshab, "The Faceless Eater"*

**Cost:** 10

This Bane totem appears to its followers as a huge, anthropomorphic hermaphrodite covered in rolls of flesh that crawl and ripple in sick waves. Relshab is called faceless because roiling layers of fat obscure its face. Its right arm is a tube that allows it to ingest any substance. The palm of its left hand shows a chattering maw of teeth that constantly demands flesh from its followers. It's hard to say which is more appalling — its hungers or its sexual activities.



**Traits:** Relshab teaches its bastards the Gift: *Whelp Body*, allowing them to “eat” portions of a victim’s soul. If the Dancer can humiliate her target sexually, she can drain two Traits of Willpower. By spending a Gnosis Trait, the Dancer can consume anything smaller than her head, including body parts, steel, toxic waste, tires, *anything*.

**Ban:** Relshab’s servitors must consume any edible substance placed before them. They are also ordered to fight Unseelie redcaps on sight.

## Gifts of the Wyrn

Just as Garou learn Gifts from spirits, Black Spiral Dancers learn Gifts from Wyrn spirits, often during their time in the Shattered Labyrinth. Black Spiral Dancers can take Garou Gifts, particularly if they were “converted” rather than born into the Dancers. They cannot take those Gifts that draw on the aid of Gaia or Luna, or those taught exclusively by Gaian spirits.

Many Dancer Gifts are corrupted versions of perfectly normal Gifts, so Garou Gifts are a good place to start when creating Dancer Gifts. For instance, you might start with the Basic Theurge Gift: *Sight from Beyond*, which allows cryptic visions of the future and warnings of danger. This Gift for a Black Spiral Dancer would have a similar effect, but the visions would be maddening, dark, head-twisting things, perhaps accompanied by migraine headaches. Instead of heralding a threat to the Dancer, this Gift might offer glimpses of opportunities for the Dancer to spread corruption and agony. Dancers also learn Gifts that allow them to survive their poisonous lifestyle, such as *Resist Toxin*.

When converting Gifts, take one major point of view into account: If a Wyrn spirit were to give this Gift to a Black Spiral Dancer, what would its goals be? What would it want the Dancer to be able to do with it? What would it want the Gift to force or trick the Dancer into doing? How would it want to deliver its message?

## Black Spiral Gifts

### Basic Gifts

- **Bane Protector:** The Dancer can summon Banes to aid her, but she must convince them that her actions are in the best interest of the Wyrn before they will act in her favor. These Banes can fight for the Dancer, but they will not allow themselves to be destroyed or bound. They prefer to bargain and extract services in return for their aid. A Dancer learns this Gift in the First Circle of the Shattered Labyrinth, or after he performs a particularly difficult task for a Bane totem. This Gift requires the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait and a Social Challenge.

- **Madness Induction:** The Dancer induces a mental disorder in himself. The Dancers believe that madness is the blessing of the Wyrn, so many Dancers revere the ability to enter such altered mental states at will.



When he learns this Gift, the Dancer must choose three disorders that it will trigger; the Gift bestows one at random when activated. This Gift lasts one scene and requires the Dancer to succeed in a Mental Challenge. This Gift lends the Dancer flashes of cryptic insight into a situation.

- **Worm Hide:** The Dancer hardens his skin into a leathery hide, which causes his flesh to become discolored and covered with sores. This Gift is taught in the Second Circle of the Labyrinth, and it can also be taught by spirits associated with pain. The Dancer spends a Rage Trait while stomping about and taunting his enemies, and he gains three extra Healthy health levels in doing so. These levels are the first to absorb any damage, and they last until they are damaged or the session ends, whichever comes first.

### *Intermediate Gifts*

- **Beautiful Lie:** The Dancer uses this Gift to channel and strengthen the Delirium, producing misdirection or false evidence to cover up his atrocities. A Dancer who recruits servants to aid in the schemes of Kirijama or Hakaken may be rewarded with this Gift. Dancers who engage in an ingenious dance of cunning in the Labyrinth may also be taught this Gift. The Dancer who wishes to cover up a crime activates this Gift by chanting a story of what he wants the humans to see, spends a Gnosis Trait, then makes a Static Mental Challenge against eight Traits (retest with *Performance*). Mass delusions and ephemeral evidence (bloody footprints, saliva from a rabid dog, etc.) may occur for up to an hour to cover up the truth. This Gift only works on those who are susceptible to the Delirium.

- **Call Elemental:** As the Uktena Gift, but the Dancer's call is always answered by a Wurm elemental. See **Laws of the Wild**.

- **Dagger of the Mind:** The Dancer commands a Bane to seed a dark emotion (which must be chosen when the Gift is learned) in the mind of his prey. Options include paranoia, lust, greed, despair, depression, remorse and so on. "Rage" is not an option, although anger is. The Dancer calls upon the relevant Urge Wurm, and one of its servitors evokes the emotion in the victim. This Gift is taught in the Third Circle of the Labyrinth. It may be used to weaken enemies before battle or to give the Dancer an edge in negotiations. This Gift requires the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait and a Static Social Challenge against seven Traits (retest with *Intimidation*). If the Dancer spends a Willpower Trait, the madness is accompanied by a brief revelatory hallucination. The target remains afflicted for an hour, but he may spend Willpower as normal to allow for brief lucidity.

- **Disguise Deformity:** This Gift allows a Dancer to cause his own physical deformities to disappear temporarily. The effects last for one scene, and they require the expenditure of one Gnosis Trait per deformity that the Dancer wishes to disguise. During that time, the Dancer's body behaves in all ways as though the deformity did not exist. (As an alternative, a version of this Gift that acts in form only, causing the body to function as though it still bore the deformity, could be taken as a Basic Gift.) Most Dancers who learn this



Gift hide that fact from their fellows; they may be seen as being ashamed of their "blessings."

- **Open Wounds:** As the Shadow Lord Gift. See **Laws of the Wild**.
- **Sharing Madness:** The Dancer spends one Willpower Trait, and he must best his target in a Mental Challenge. If he succeeds, his target suffers one of the Dancer's mental disorders (Dancer's choice). This effect lasts for one session.
- **Unseelie Faerie Kin:** The Dancer may call on Unseelie changelings to aid him. This Gift is taught only by Unseelie nobles or members of the Shadow Court, and usually only in return for a quest of some sort or the ability to summon the Dancer's pack. This Gift requires a Social Challenge and the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait, and the Dancer must convince his ally to help. Putting on a good show is more important than having good reasons, and attempts to convince are often accompanied by stories, songs or violent displays.

### *Advanced Gifts*

- **Totem Form:** The Dancer takes on the appearance (and much of the power) of the pack's Bane totem. A follower of the Dark Fungus might grow molds and toadstools in place of fur and radiate hallucinogenic spores, while a follower of the Green Dragon might take on a dragonlike war form. This Gift is taught only by the pack's totem spirit, and to only one Dancer per pack (the one who pleases the totem most). This Gift requires a Physical Challenge and the expenditure of one Willpower Trait. It takes a full turn to transform, and the transformation lasts for one scene. The appearance and abilities of the totem form are up to the Storyteller.

## *Ragabash Gifts*

### *Basic Gifts*

- **Defuse Tension:** The Dancers and their allies experience many differences of opinion. The Dancer with this Gift uses laughter and jokes to defuse tension, bringing a potentially violent situation back under control. The Dancer spends a Willpower Trait and says or does something funny. If he succeeds at a Mental Challenge, then the targets find themselves inclined to laugh and the tension dissipates for the rest of the scene. New events and differences, however, can bring the tension level back up again. Ragabash with this Gift are often included in joint efforts with Dancer allies.

### *Intermediate Gifts*

- **Touch of the Eel:** The Dancer releases a current of electricity through any conductive materials nearby. Anyone who touches him receives an even greater shock. The Ragabash must capture and torture an electricity elemental until it offers him this Gift. The Gift requires the expenditure of one Rage Trait to release one charge. The charge can carry up to 30 yards if it is transmitted through a good conductor. At a distance, it inflicts two health levels of lethal damage; by touch, it inflicts three levels.



## Theurge Gifts

### Basic Gifts

- **Distract Spirit:** This Dancer approaches a spirit to speak with it and draws its attention to himself for a maximum of one scene. Doing so allows his packmates to slip past or sneak up on the spirit. Dancers who want to slip through Garou defenses often use this Gift. The Dancer must spend a Willpower Trait and win a Social Challenge.

### Intermediate Gifts

- **Blood Omen:** The Dancer examines the entrails of a freshly killed creature to gain insight into a possible future. The vision is almost always tragic or violent. A Theurge typically receives this Gift during the Dance of Cunning, and she may even experience seeing her body being ritually dismembered and being asked to read her own organs. This Gift is activated through the expenditure of one Gnosis Trait and a Static Mental Challenge (difficulty based on the type of creature; retest with *Enigmas*). If the Dancer uses a normal animal the visions are enigmatic or indistinct. If she uses a Garou or human, the visions are clear.

## Philodox Gifts

### Basic Gifts

- **Smell Fear:** This Dancer can tell if anyone nearby feels threatened by her, as well as the degree of the fear. For each Gnosis Trait the Dancer expends, this effect lasts for one hour. This Gift requires a successful Mental Challenge. As a side effect, the Dancer can tell if anyone uses *Sense Wyrn* on her.

- **A Thousand Voices:** The Dancer creates small, minor illusions, primarily sound (howls and footfalls), but some shadowy apparitions and faint scents as well. The Dancer spends one Willpower Trait to activate this Gift, and it lasts for a maximum of one scene. He may create only as many illusions as he has permanent Willpower Traits. Supernatural senses respond unexpectedly to these illusions. Enhanced hearing may struggle to find the sound of footsteps, while enhanced smelling may become overwhelmed by the stench of old blood. The Dancer must remain hidden for this Gift to work. If he is spotted, the Gift fails.

## Galliard Gifts

### Basic Gifts

- **Cover Scent:** For as long as the Dancer sings or otherwise puts on an artistic performance (which does not involve direct violence or combat), his scent will seem normal to Garou. This Gift works against *Sense Wyrn* and *Scent of the True Form*. The moment the performance ends (maximum duration of one scene), such abilities produce their usual good results on the Dancer. This Gift requires the expenditure of a Willpower Trait.





## *Intermediate Gifts*

- **Allies Below:** The Dancer lets forth a great cry, and the spirits below answer him. Wyrms creatures far beneath the Earth's crust cause tremors and minor quakes in the ground above. Expending one Gnosis Trait causes minor tremors, possibly enough to knock someone to the ground. Expending two Gnosis Traits collapses underground tunnels, knocks down trees and opens small sinkholes. Expending three Gnosis Traits causes structural damage to buildings.

## *Ahroun Gifts*

### *Basic Gifts*

- **Horns of the Impaler:** The Black Spiral Dancer grows a pair of spiraling, chitinous horns. This feature is usually a permanent fixture that shows up in all but the Dancer's breed form; it adjusts to the size of the form. The horns are generally worn as antlers. They cause damage as a bite attack, and they may be used a maximum of twice per round of combat.

## *Rites and Rituals*

Black Spiral Dancers are creatures of faith and devotion, even if their religion is a very different one from that of the untainted Garou. Dancers have rites, rituals and sorceries of their own. Rites work much the same way that Garou rites do. The ritemaster leads other Dancers in a rite; only the ritemaster needs to know the rite. See the rules for Garou rites for specifics on Trait requirements, length of rites and minimum number of participants.

Not all rites are meant to have noticeable in-game effects or effects on mechanics. Some exist for roleplaying purposes as much as anything. Remember that Black Spiral Dancers are all religious zealots, and the more zealous they are, the more ritualistic they're likely to be in their actions.

Specific details of how to perform rites are not provided; such scripts tend to turn roleplaying into boring games of concentration and memory. Be creative with rituals that happen in game. Consider atmosphere, intent and how difficult a given ritual should be.

## *Creating Rites*

Start with Garou rites and pervert them. Take the *Rite of Cleansing* as an example, a basic rite of accord. This rite removes Wyrms-taint from an area, person or object. What would a Dancer version of this rite be like? Perhaps it "cleanses" an area of the pure spiritual energy left behind by the Garou, or it taints an area mildly.

Alternatively, create your own. Start with an effect you'd like to achieve. Check the descriptions of the types of rites and see where this effect would fit best. Then check Garou and Dancer rites of that category and figure out whether the power level should be Basic, Intermediate or Advanced. Use the systems provided in other rites as the basis for your new rite.



## Rites of Accord

These rites draw their power from the Dancers' fundamental connection to the Wyrms, and they are characterized by taint and corruption. To channel this power the Dancer must use a talen, fetish or object that is tainted or corrupted. Dancers who have achieved the Sixth Circle of the Shattered Labyrinth are immune to this requirement. Rites of accord are based on the ritemaster's Social Traits for making challenges.

### Basic Rites

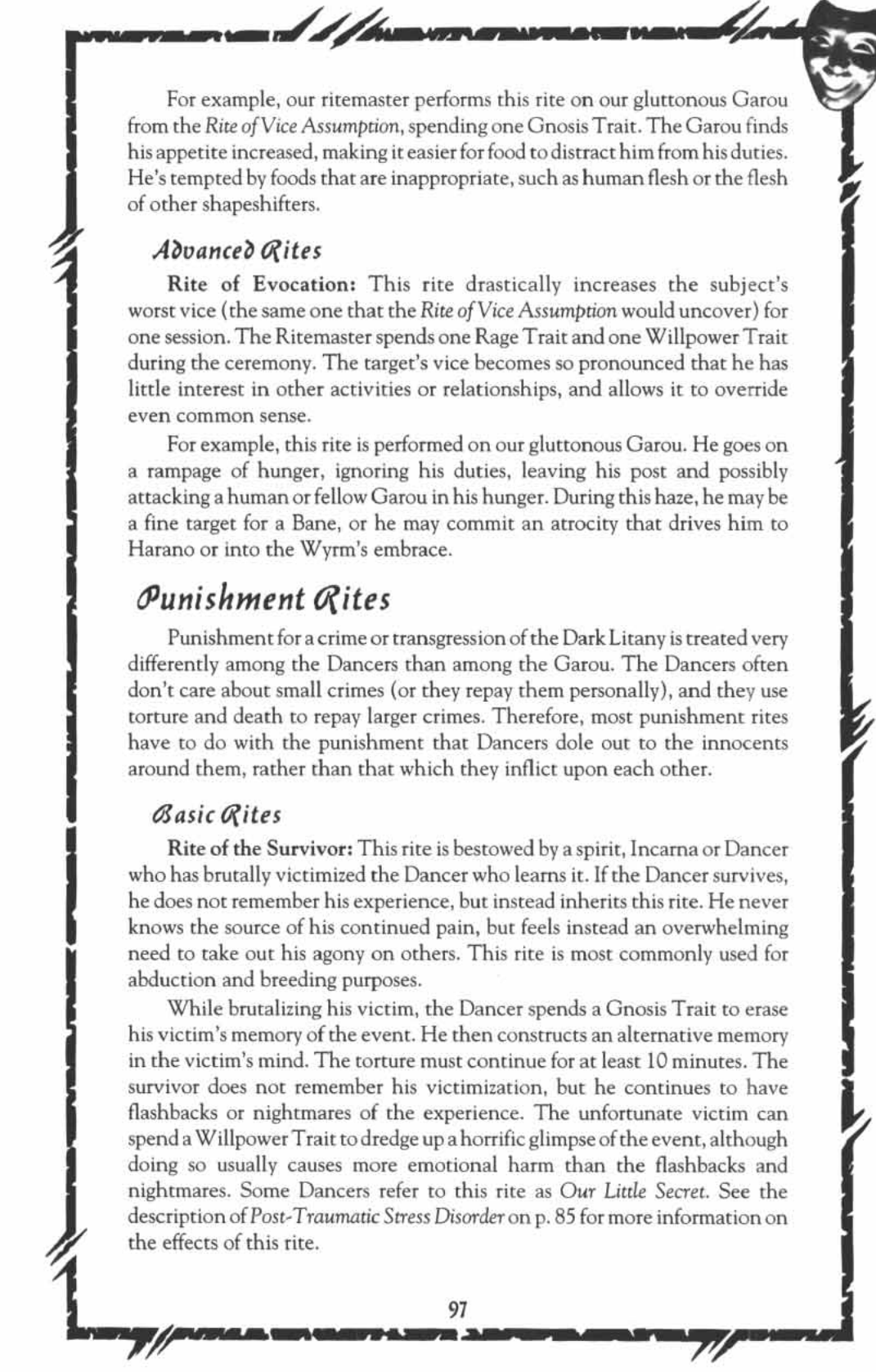
**Rite of Blood Taint:** If the Dancers suspect that someone contains the taint of Dancer blood in their heritage, they perform this rite. The ritemaster spends one Gnosis Trait. While the target does not need to be present, the ritemaster must have possession of something that the target touched within the past five days. This rite "activates" the tainted blood subtly, giving glimpses of violent and terrifying past lives, or causing Garou or Kinfolk to hear voices that urge them to commit atrocities. The stronger the taint of blood is, the more pronounced the effects are. A full-blooded Dancer Kinfolk might suffer a psychotic break, for example. These effects last for one session.

**Rite of Vice Assumption:** Dancers use this rite to uncover a vice or weakness in an opponent that might be used to corrupt her. The ritemaster spends one Gnosis Trait. For one full session, the vice that is strongest in their prey (be it greed, lust, envy or something more specific like gambling or alcoholism) is evoked in participating Dancers. The compulsion to follow the vice may serve to distract the Dancers from their attentions to their prey, but it can also give the Dancers a way into someone's heart, if they use it cunningly.

For example, a Dancer uses this rite on a Garou whose chief vice is gluttony, appetite for food. For the rest of the session, the Dancer finds that he's always hungry, sometimes for traditionally inappropriate things or for items that he doesn't usually like.

### Intermediate Rites

**Rite of the Small Push:** This rite increases the target's worst urges. The effects are mild, and they last for one session. The idea is to make the target believe that everything she did was of her own will, so the effects of this rite are not intense or dramatic. Using this rite may serve to push weak or guilt-prone people into their own downward spiral or to foul up their relationships. The ritemaster chooses one of the following options: He spends one Rage Trait to increase the subject's temper, and the subject considers her relevant Traits halved for the purposes of challenges to resist frenzy. The ritemaster spends one Willpower Trait to weaken the subject's resistance to temptation, and the subject must spend twice as many Willpower Traits as normal in order to resist bad actions. The ritemaster spends one Gnosis Trait in order to increase one vice in the subject, and the subject's interest in the vice expands accordingly.



For example, our ritemaster performs this rite on our gluttonous Garou from the *Rite of Vice Assumption*, spending one Gnosis Trait. The Garou finds his appetite increased, making it easier for food to distract him from his duties. He's tempted by foods that are inappropriate, such as human flesh or the flesh of other shapeshifters.

### *Advanced Rites*

**Rite of Evocation:** This rite drastically increases the subject's worst vice (the same one that the *Rite of Vice Assumption* would uncover) for one session. The Ritemaster spends one Rage Trait and one Willpower Trait during the ceremony. The target's vice becomes so pronounced that he has little interest in other activities or relationships, and allows it to override even common sense.

For example, this rite is performed on our gluttonous Garou. He goes on a rampage of hunger, ignoring his duties, leaving his post and possibly attacking a human or fellow Garou in his hunger. During this haze, he may be a fine target for a Bane, or he may commit an atrocity that drives him to Harano or into the Wyrms' embrace.

### *Punishment Rites*

Punishment for a crime or transgression of the Dark Litany is treated very differently among the Dancers than among the Garou. The Dancers often don't care about small crimes (or they repay them personally), and they use torture and death to repay larger crimes. Therefore, most punishment rites have to do with the punishment that Dancers dole out to the innocents around them, rather than that which they inflict upon each other.

### *Basic Rites*

**Rite of the Survivor:** This rite is bestowed by a spirit, Incarna or Dancer who has brutally victimized the Dancer who learns it. If the Dancer survives, he does not remember his experience, but instead inherits this rite. He never knows the source of his continued pain, but feels instead an overwhelming need to take out his agony on others. This rite is most commonly used for abduction and breeding purposes.

While brutalizing his victim, the Dancer spends a Gnosis Trait to erase his victim's memory of the event. He then constructs an alternative memory in the victim's mind. The torture must continue for at least 10 minutes. The survivor does not remember his victimization, but he continues to have flashbacks or nightmares of the experience. The unfortunate victim can spend a Willpower Trait to dredge up a horrific glimpse of the event, although doing so usually causes more emotional harm than the flashbacks and nightmares. Some Dancers refer to this rite as *Our Little Secret*. See the description of *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* on p. 85 for more information on the effects of this rite.



## Intermediate Rites

**Rite of the False Memory:** This rite has most of the same effects as the *Rite of the Survivor*, but the memories are false. A Dancer uses this rite to instill memories of horrific experiences in the mind of someone whom she hasn't actually victimized. The rite must be cast while the victim sleeps, but it needs not be cast in his presence. The Dancer expends one Gnosis Trait and one Willpower Trait and spends an hour constructing the false experience in her mind.

During this time, she anoints an item that belongs to the victim with three drops of her own blood. Once the item has been returned to the victim's possession or home, he will suffer flashbacks and nightmares of the fictional experience. If he spends a Willpower Trait to get a better picture of what happened, he'll develop a temporary and strong feeling of disconnection and unreality (see *Depersonalization Disorder*, p. 81), and the details of the event will slip just beyond his grasp. If the anointed possession is destroyed, the false memories slip away, never to return.

See the description of *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (p. 85) for more information on the effects of this rite. The fictional event must be one capable of evoking PTSD-like symptoms (for example, torture, rape or war). The Dancer cannot control which pieces of the experience the target sees.

**Rite of the Haunting Moment:** At its height, this rite causes a target to see briefly what the ritemaster wants her to see. The effects can be subtle (shadows off the corner of her eye; the silhouette of a friend looks like that of an enemy; a packmate's face grows dark and cold), or they can be straightforward (the face of the ritemaster superimposed over that of a friend, speaking the ritemaster's words). The effects last for 15 seconds maximum, and the ritemaster must spend a Gnosis Trait during the ceremony. Such dark visions are often mistaken for true prophetic visions.

## Advanced Rites

**Rite of the False Hunt:** This rite turns an evening into one long waking nightmare. The target(s) of this rite spend the time from dusk to midnight having hallucinations, usually of their enemies. A pack of Garou might find themselves fighting phantom Dancers, some of whom turn out to be their own packmates when the dust clears. The ritemaster and his pack spend the entire evening performing this rite, and if they're interrupted, the effects end immediately. The ritemaster must spend one Gnosis Trait plus one Willpower Trait per target. The ritemaster has no control over the hallucinations; they take their form from the fears of the targets. Any target can spend a Willpower Trait to see through the hallucinations for one scene, although he will still see flickers of movement and shadow from the corners of his eyes and feel as though he is being watched.

## Mystic Rites

These rites involve spirits, Umbral entities and the spirit of the ritemaster or other Dancers. They must be performed by a lone Dancer unless they are specifically designed otherwise.



## Basic Rites

**Rite of the Sacred Tattoo:** A Black Spiral Dancer Theurge uses this rite to permanently mark a sacred tattoo on another Dancer, forming a spiritual link between the initiate and the dark spirit represented. The first tattoo a Dancer receives is usually his personal totem, and the second is his pack's Bane totem, although tattoos might also represent personal accomplishments. The Dancer chooses whether the tattoo will be visible or hidden. (Hidden tattoos are only visible when the *Rite of Woad* is performed.) The ritemaster and the Dancer being marked each spend one Gnosis Trait. The ritemaster performs a Physical Challenge (at the Storyteller's discretion, the Abilities of *Body Crafts* or *Occult* may add to the ritual's success.) If he ties or wins, he performs the rite successfully. The rite requires standard tattooing equipment.

## Intermediate Rites

**Rite of the Bane Totem:** This rite binds a Bane totem to a pack of Black Spiral Dancers. The ritemaster begins the rite, and the pack steps into the Umbra at the first light of day. There the pack finds some trace or trail of the totem it has chosen. For normal Garou totems, the tracking is a formality. Bane totems take Dancers through dangerous territory, forcing them to prove themselves right away. The test that the pack undergoes will in some way require the pack to show that its goals or attitudes match up with the totem's. Dancers who fail to research their future totem might never get the chance to speak with it. If they fail the test, the trail disappears, ending the rite. Powerful totems sometimes require a trial, task or quest in addition to this test.

**Rite of the Corrupted Fetish:** The mechanics for this rite are the same as the Garou *Rite of the Fetish*. Dancers prefer to use Wyrmspirits in their fetishes. When they use other spirits, they prefer to compel, torture and torment the spirit, forcing it into a fetish rather than gaining its cooperation. Doing so typically robs the spirit of the will to possess an item, leaving it cursed instead. Cursed fetishes are deemed particularly valuable by Dancers. In a variant of this rite, the ritemaster may channel one Gnosis Trait and a full 24 hours of ritual into the torture and corruption of an existing Gaian fetish, causing it to become cursed.

**Rite of the Opened Eyes:** This rite enables the ritemaster to see through the effects of the *Rite of the Shrouded Glen*. He must still pick where to look, but he must win a Mental Challenge against *one-third* of the Gnosis spent in the veil's creation (rounded down), rather than all of it. This rite requires the expenditure of one Willpower Trait.

**Rite of Woad:** The Picts used a particular blue pigment called woad to create tattoos and battle-paint; the color was supposed to draw upon the mystic's energies. A Theurge who casts this rite reveals all sacred tattoos worn by any Dancers present, be they visible or hidden, covered by clothing or not. They glow with an unnatural blue light. The subject must assent to this rite; it may not be used to reveal Dancers who do not wish to be revealed. The shadows of the Dancers also glow with the light of their markings when this rite is cast. When all hope of subtlety has been lost, Theurges invoke this rite to reveal their



warriors. Doing so indicates that the Dancers will not retreat, fighting until one side or the other has been destroyed. The ritemaster spends one Gnosis Trait and names all of the Bane totems that he and his side truck with.

## Caern Rites

These rites align with the heart of Dancer power: corrupted caerns, once pure and now nursed on the Wyrms' sickness. These rites can be performed only within the bounds of a caern — a corrupted caern, unless otherwise specified. For every level of the caern, the ritemaster receives a free Trait to use in the rite's contest, in addition to any other bonuses that he might have.

### Basic Rites

**Moot Rite:** The mechanics are the same as for the Garou *Moot Rite*. However, the expenditure of Gnosis must be accompanied by a sacrifice of fresh blood — one health level per Gnosis Trait — which must be allowed to sink into the earth of the caern, stain the stone or mark the place in some other way. If the caern in question lies within a Dancer Pit, then the sacrifice must come from the Dancers present; no one else is allowed within a Dancer Pit. If the caern in question does not lie within the Pit, then the Dancers may sacrifice the blood of either shapeshifter or human, the more corrupt the better. Some packs have tried sacrificing innocent blood to their caern during a Moot Rite, but doing so always causes the caern to drop one power level.

### Intermediate Rites

**Rite of Synchronization:** The mechanics are the same as the Garou *Rite of the Badger's Burrow*. However, in order to enact this rite, the ritemaster must first spill his own blood at his caern's moot for two months in a row. If he ever fails to enact this monthly sacrifice, he loses his connection to the land around the caern and must start this rite over again.

### Advanced Rites

**Rite of Caern Corruption:** Once the Dancers take a caern from the Garou, their work is not done. This rite must be performed once a week (no more, no less). It takes a full 24 hours to perform, and it requires at least five Dancers from the same pack to perform it. The rite must be performed twice for each level of the caern. During this time, the Dancers may not perform other caern rites there, with the exception of the *Moot Rite*, which is performed as a part of the day-long *Rite of Caern Corruption*. This rite is typically enacted as a perversion of the Garou *Rite of Caern Building*.

## Rites of Death

The Dancers have no quarrel with death. They may even show gratitude, glee or reverence toward it.



## *Basic Rites*

**Rite of the Goodbye Party:** This rite is performed to send off Dancers who have died. Some Dancers only perform it for those who died in battle against the Garou, but most Dancers have widened the use of this rite in the interest of having a good time more often. The rite is meant to push the Dancer along on his journey around the wheel and make sure he comes back soon. It's a wild, raucous party, including drinking, mock battles (that sometimes turn real), sex and possibly the torture and death of prisoners. Some Dancers throw this party to honor particularly difficult-to-kill enemies. The hope is that the rite will push the Garou's spirit toward the "right" side the next time around.

**Rite of Unburdening the Soul:** This rite is performed by any Dancer too sick, wounded or old to serve the tribe, and it is performed alone or only with the Dancer's pack. If a Dancer is sick or old enough that her peers see her as a burden and she refuses to perform this rite herself, her packmates can perform it for her, forcibly holding her down and killing her. Some young pups refer to this rite as the *Rite of the Sick Puppy*.

## *Rites of Renown*

These rites reward those Dancers who serve the Wyrms well and distinguish themselves among their fellows.

### *Basic Rites*

**Rite of Passage:** This rite is performed when a Black Spiral Dancer cub or Garou prisoner is first sent into the Shattered Labyrinth. The ritemaster spends a Gnosis Trait to activate the design traced on the floor and open the gate. The initiate then enters (or is tossed into) the Labyrinth. The tests he faces there are roleplaying-oriented rather than mechanical in nature, with one exception. The initiate must tie or win a Static Mental Challenge (against seven Traits, retest with *Occult*) in order to make it through the First Circle without going insane.

**Rite of Transmogrification:** This rite is performed whenever a Black Spiral Dancer is ready to go up in Rank. Functionally it is identical to the *Rite of Passage*.

### *Intermediate Rites*

**Rite of the Sixth Circle:** This rite is performed for any Dancer who attains the Sixth Circle of the Shattered Labyrinth. It is solemn and reverential, and it involves many gifts, valuable or symbolic, from the Dancers of a Hive to the Dancer being honored. This rite rarely has occasion to be performed. When it does, Dancers come from several Hives away to participate.

## *Seasonal Rites*

The seasons have many traditional associations, both practical and mystical.



## *Basic Rites*

**Autumn Harvest of Souls:** The Dancers may perform this rite only during the autumn. The rite enables them to see and speak with ghosts for the next three days. Whether they can convince those ghosts to aid them in any way is another matter entirely. This rite also gives its participants a brief chill down their backs when they're dealing with a Spectre as opposed to a normal wraith. The ritemaster spends a Gnosis Trait to activate this rite.

**Springtime Procreation Rite:** The Dancers use this rite to encourage high pregnancy rates and large litters among their Hives. It primarily consists of sex, but it's a surprisingly solemn rite. The ritemaster spends one Rage Trait to invoke it.

## *Intermediate Rites*

**Summer Rite of No Holiday:** With summertime comes the emotional need for rest, and the Dancers are happy to take advantage of this need. A Hive performs this rite on the first day of summer. Its purpose is to give the Hive a good sense of timing, so that their raids on local Garou will always come when the Garou are most in need of a rest. The ritemaster spends one Gnosis Trait during this ceremony. For the rest of the summer, he feels restless and angry any time the Garou within a five-mile radius collectively start to relax.

## *Advanced Rites*

**Winter Rite of the Wandering Soul:** Any given Hive of Dancers may perform this rite only once each year, on the winter solstice, within six hours of having killed a Garou. The purpose of the rite is to keep the soul of that Garou from moving onward properly to be reborn, to cause it to haunt its former friends. Treat such Garou as wraiths. The Dancers must have the body of the Garou in their possession in order to perform this rite on it, and the ritemaster spends two Gnosis Traits. The ceremony itself takes from sundown to sunup.

Such spirits may be set to rest, but only by the completion of a great quest performed in the dead Garou's name. Garou who take on this quest give up any individual renown they might acquire during the quest, giving it instead to their dead comrade. They receive a single Honor Renown award for freeing the lost spirit.

## *Minor Rites*

Minor rites take about 15 minutes to perform. Modifiers they grant are not cumulative, but an individual Dancer can receive the modifiers from a number of minor rites equal to her rank. If the Dancer misses performing the prescribed action in any given session, she must start the whole process over again before regaining the benefits.

**Curse the Soul:** The Dancer steps into the Umbra after killing an enemy and curses the spirit of her prey in the name of the Wyrn. If she does so for four consecutive sessions, she receives one free retest thereafter when using





rites or Gifts that harm her enemies directly. This free retest returns after each enemy so treated, maximum once per session.

**Greet the Wurm:** This Dancer howls an elaborate greeting to the Wurm when night falls. If he performs this rite over three consecutive sessions, he gains a free retest that can be spent on any Social Challenge. This retest returns each session.

**Hunting Prayer:** The Dancer chooses an item associated with death and destruction (preferably a weapon) and prays over it in praise of the Wurm for three consecutive sessions. Thereafter, the Dancer receives one free retest per session when tracking and hunting her enemies. If the Dancer loses the item or fails to take it with her when hunting, she must start the process over with a different item.

**Respect the Totem:** The Dancer meditates for at least 15 minutes, praying silently to his personal or pack totem during four consecutive sessions. Doing so gives the Dancer one free retest to be spent when performing any task that her totem mandates. This free retest returns each session.

## *How to Use Black Spiral Dancers*

As a whole, the Black Spiral Dancers may truly be called “evil.” They are murderers, serial killers, rapists and torturers. They’re all the worst of the front page of the newspapers and more. They are the monsters in the night. They can represent the seductive, veiled face of the Wurm, gently leading the Garou down the dark path, or they can represent sheer madness, destruction and damnation.

There is nothing pretty about the Dancers, although some of them wear pretty faces. There is nothing enticing about the Dancers, although some of them put forth convincing arguments. They’re crazy, sick bastards — the worst that Garou and humanity have to offer — all wrapped up in one demented package. They take ideas and concepts that might sound like fun on the surface (wild sexual antics, giving into one’s desires and urges) and take them way too far. They turn everything into a mess of rage and pain.

This is why Dancers are not generally recommended as players’ characters. There’s nothing cool about rape and murder, and there’s rarely any gain to be had by roleplaying down that path. The Black Spiral Dancers do, however, make splendid villains and antagonists.

### *Use Them Well*

Dancers are more than combat machines, even though that’s often the most obvious use for them. After all, you’ve finally found something to throw at the Garou in combat that’s scaled to give them an “even” fight, and it’s hard to pass that up, isn’t it? Dancers are remarkably versatile, however, and the following are just a few of the ways in which you might use them.



## Fear

Dancers can strike fear into the hearts of even heroic Garou. Not just because the Garou might die at their hands, but because the Garou might *become* them. Dancers are violence, mayhem, madness and chaos. They are the seduction and the easy way out.

Dancers understand how to wage a campaign of terror. They know how to prey on the fears of Garou and Kinfolk alike. Begin with the rites — there are several that should give you ideas. Dancers make use of spirits, hallucinations, shadows, nightmares and past lives. They orchestrate situations to drive as much fear as possible into the Garou whom they stalk. They are well aware of how breakable Kinfolk are, and many enjoy the double feast of the Kinfolk's terror and the Garou's worry for their kin's safety.

The Garou fare best against foes that they can fight. The Dancers fare best when they operate from the shadows, where they cannot be seen. They pull the strings and arrange for events to happen in certain ways, all without providing the target that the Garou needs to focus his rage and anger. The Garou is left with only three places to focus those emotions: himself, his allies and the uninvolved bystander. Acting out against any of those targets aids the Dancers' cause.

If you want to make the point that every Garou bears the seeds of destruction within his heart, then play with one or more Storyteller characters who were once Garou themselves, and fell (or were forced) into the Shattered Labyrinth. Don't give them the obvious deformities that many Dancers bear. Make their derangements mild. Bring such characters in under circumstances in which good chances to use Gifts like *Sense Wyrms* don't come up, or have them introduce themselves to Garou who don't have such Gifts. Allow your players' characters to think of these Dancers as normal Garou (albeit Garou with some bad habits or personality flaws), ones not unlike themselves. Subtly play up their similarities. Then let them discover the truth.

You might start by having the characters see only the obviously nasty Dancers and allowing them to draw the conclusion that all Dancers are deformed nuts. This misconception allows a more attractive, subtle Dancer to approach the Garou without them immediately figuring out what he is. The Dancers count on this approach. Play with the differences between form and substance, surface truth and inner verity. Work with beauty and ugliness, light and darkness, hope and despair, friendship and malice.

## Versatility

Dancers have been forced to develop a versatility that goes beyond the normal Garou adaptability. Some Dancers quietly seek secrets in much the same way that the Bastet do. Some Dancers act as information brokers, not unlike the Corax. There must be Dancers whose job it is to keep records and knowledge for the greater good of the tribe, even if they don't have the long memories of the Mokolé. Some Dancers see themselves as tricksters and



teachers, much like the Nuwisha, even though the lessons they teach will be very different from those of the wercoyotes.

Many people associate evil things with nighttime and darkness, but the Dancers can go about at any time of day. Dancers are capable of holding jobs and having families, even if their work records are likely to be spotty, even if their families are probably dysfunctional. Keep in mind that there are exceptions to everything. Why not play with a Dancer who dresses impeccably, works hard and has a loving husband and obedient children?

Most of all, remember that Black Spiral Dancers are individuals. Some are thoughtful, intelligent, well-educated people. Some are crafty, cunning, sneaky bastards. Still others are complete morons who aren't much good for anything other than beating someone's head in with the butt of a rifle.

### Think Garou

When creating antagonists, most people start from one of two places. One, they think of how the antagonist might interfere with the specific plans and actions of the players' characters. Two, they devise ways in which the antagonists can oppose the grander goals and moralities of the players' characters.

Instead, think of the Dancers much like you would any normal Garou. What do Garou do? They shepherd cubs through First Changes and Rites of Passage. They look for ways to earn renown. They study rites and seek out Gifts. They perform quests for spirits. They go on spiritual journeys and vision quests. They seek out new areas to inhabit and new caerns to keep. They protect their own dwellings. They search for interesting knowledge. They work on perfecting new rites and Gifts. They create fetishes and talents. They have prophetic dreams and visions, and they work to fulfill or avert them. Dancers do all of these same things.

Think of ways that your Garou characters might get mixed up in any of these activities. How might a Dancer quest, mandated by a Wyrmspirit, end up in the Garou's backyard? What would happen if your Garou stumbled across a Dancer ritual? What would happen if the Garou found a Dancer cub who didn't grow up inside the Hive and just went through his First Change? What if your characters just happen to plan their outing for a part of the woods that overlaps with Dancer territory?

Maybe a spirit wants a Dancer to steal an item from a Garou in order to prove himself or to somehow trick a Garou into parting with a particular piece of information. Perhaps your characters stumble across a pack of Dancers performing the *Rite of the Goodbye Party* for a fallen Garou hero they hope to snag when he's reborn. How would they figure out what's going on, and what would they do about it?

In other words, first figure out what odd, perhaps even seemingly innocent activity the Dancers may be up to, then figure out how your characters will get involved. What will they see and hear? How will the situation look to them? How does that differ from what's really going on? What about the situation will interest them and drag them in?



## *The Epic Story Arc*

As the Black Spiral Dancers are, in many ways, the “opposite numbers” of the Garou, they make the perfect opposition for epic story arcs. Epic stories are long-term stories, involving heroism and tragedy. The plot is large, and it could have a great effect on the world. Many smaller plots happen as parts of the larger one.

Epic story-arcs are best used in moderation, or players come to expect that each plot will be bigger and more impressive than the last. Every now and then, however, they add excitement and passion to a game. Epic stories often involve prophecy. This is a good place to keep in mind the lesson of the last section: Remember that the Dancers have prophecies, heroes and tragedies as well.

## *Long-Term Annoyances*

Black Spiral Dancers know very well the value of secrecy and security. It should be very difficult for the Garou to track them down to their Pit and root them out for good. It should also be difficult for the Dancers to eliminate the Garou. They must be very careful about moving in and out of their Pit. They must uphold the Veil. The preservation of their own species is more important than wiping out the Garou. Last but not least, the more Garou they kill, the fewer Garou they can tempt into the Shattered Labyrinth.

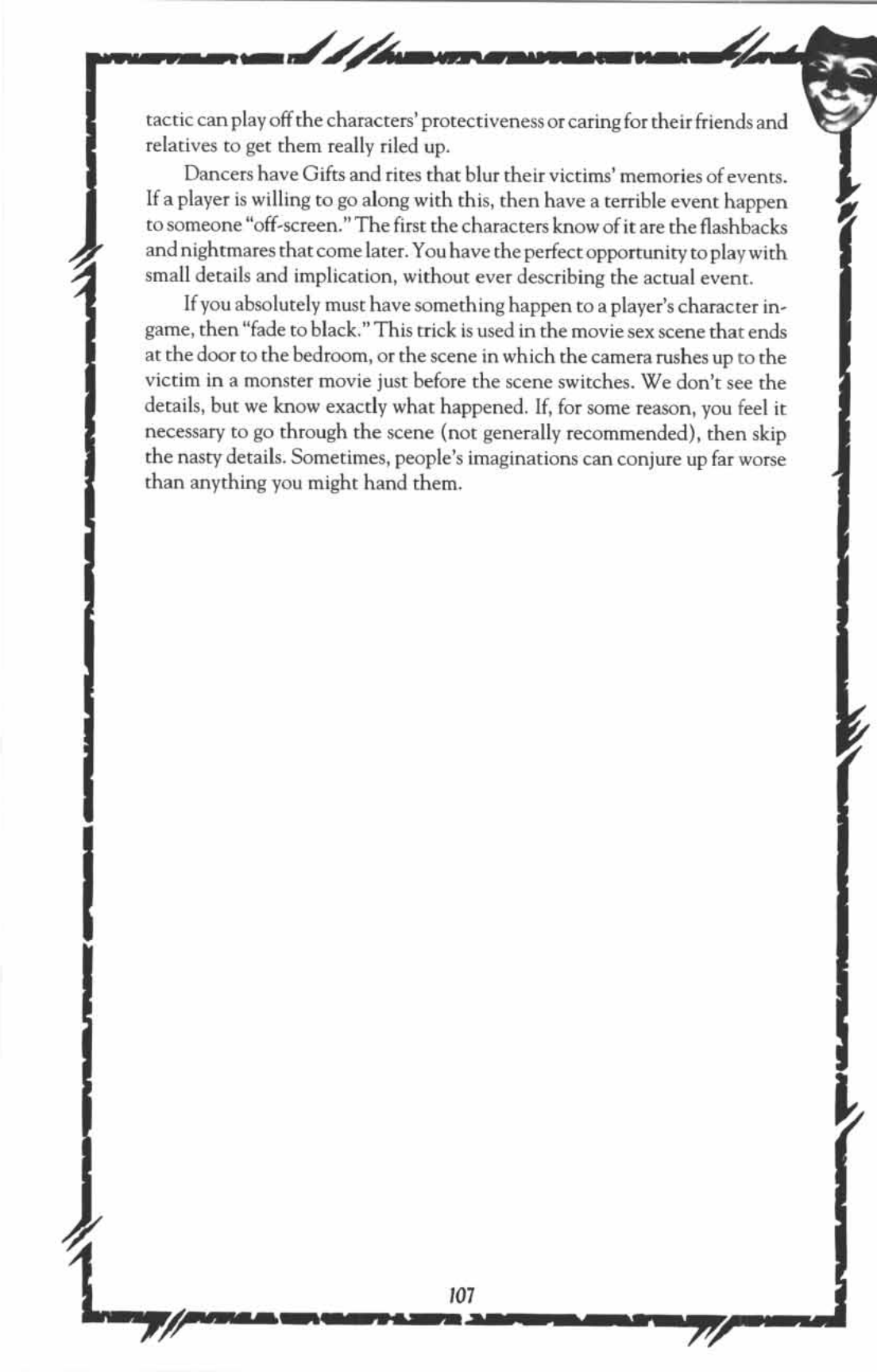
Thus, they're likely to be a long-term thorn in the Garou's sides with occasional tragedies, rather than a quick thing that's dealt with easily. Many Dancers study the Garou carefully before messing with them. They'll wait for weaknesses before attacking. They'll single out Garou who seem ripe for corruption and turn them slowly. They're not looking for the one decisive victory; they want to wear the Garou down.

## *Atrocities and Victimization*

The Black Spiral Dancers commit horrible acts. They hurt people. They kill people. When they let people live, they often leave them with muddled memories, flashbacks and nightmares. It can be difficult to know how to deal with these subjects when storytelling. Most Storytellers don't want to roleplay atrocities and victimization, and with good reason! These subjects make people uncomfortable. They cause real problems for people sensitive to particular subjects. They cause players to leave games, and in some cases, they ruin friendships.

There are several ways to handle this. First, you should always try to check with your players before exploring any particularly sensitive or horrifying subject, and make sure they're up to such things. It might be a good idea to have them fill out a brief questionnaire when they join a game that asks what subjects they don't feel comfortable dealing with.

Approach things in a sidelong manner. Have the truly terrible things happen to Storyteller characters, so that the players' characters see only the victim's horror, injuries and terror, rather than seeing the actual event. This



tactic can play off the characters' protectiveness or caring for their friends and relatives to get them really riled up.

Dancers have Gifts and rites that blur their victims' memories of events. If a player is willing to go along with this, then have a terrible event happen to someone "off-screen." The first the characters know of it are the flashbacks and nightmares that come later. You have the perfect opportunity to play with small details and implication, without ever describing the actual event.

If you absolutely must have something happen to a player's character in-game, then "fade to black." This trick is used in the movie sex scene that ends at the door to the bedroom, or the scene in which the camera rushes up to the victim in a monster movie just before the scene switches. We don't see the details, but we know exactly what happened. If, for some reason, you feel it necessary to go through the scene (not generally recommended), then skip the nasty details. Sometimes, people's imaginations can conjure up far worse than anything you might hand them.





# Chapter Five: The Fallen and the Wretched

## *The Fomor World*

A fomor is the product of the fusion of a human being and a Bane spirit in service to the Wyrn. For one reason or another, and through a wide variety of means, an otherwise normal man or woman is violently forced into the pus-filled clutches of servitude to the Wyrn.

It is a common misconception that Pentex creates and directs all fomori. Pentex goes to great lengths to create the most cutting-edge and most innovative fomori on the market, but the company did not create the process by which Bane spirits bond with human souls. There have been fomori of one sort or another since men and women were willing to sell themselves for power. The Pure Ones called them mockeries, the shapeshifters of the East called them bakemono, but from their legendary fights with the faeries and Fianna of Ireland, they received the name by which they are known today.

## *Types of Fomori*

Although many types of fomori exist in the World of Darkness, only a few are common enough to highlight. The following are the most common fomori that a character is most likely to encounter.

### *Pentex Fomori*

The fomori of Pentex are, in sum, constructs of terror and destruction. In-house scientists work late into the night to create these creatures for a variety of purposes. Human hosts range from willing recruits (although it must be wondered what they were offered that made them so "willing") to wayward



employees to unlucky vagrants plucked off the streets by scout teams. Many are injected with Fomorol, while others have even more violent transformations. The result is a fomor created to company specifications. Although no two fomori are exact duplicates, Pentex's breeds have more in common with one another than other fomor, and all of Pentex's fomori legions are immune to the Delirium solely because of their Delerex Lupus-7 drug.

Fomori serve a variety of functions in Pentex, often dependent on their type or breed. The most skilled usually serve in First Teams, in the ranks of advertising or other plum positions. Fomori who are unable to hide their deformities or who have less valuable powers end up as cannon fodder.

## *Non-Pentex Fomori*

As was mentioned earlier, fomori flourished on their own long before Pentex. This section details a few examples of the types of fomori that can be found, created either in the Pentex periphery or devoid of Pentex influence altogether. Storytellers should feel free to consider whatever tale of woe drove their fomor into the clutches of a Bane.

### *The Hapless Victim*

These fomori are victims of circumstance, and they are no different from most people's next-door neighbors. A Bane-spirit is attracted to them in a number of different ways, from ingestion of prescription or even over-the-counter drugs, certain types of beer, even certain toys and video games, all manufactured by a Pentex subsidiary. A person might even pop a few Pentex subsidiary-manufactured Tyrannull pills before going to sleep, only to wake up with a start, wondering why he suddenly has a lashing tail. Others might notice a particular change in their physical anatomy when their skin starts to shed like a snake, or it becomes pocked with strange scabs. There are a number of such causes, including even their favorite Action Bill doll or the new Doctor Violence game they bought at Fly's Electronics.

Pentex has a variety of ways of finding out about new fomori, and most times, a team shows up to retrieve the "wayward" one and return him to Pentex for proper indoctrination. The team usually does so under the guise of wanting to help the victim, getting him medical attention or performing some other kindness. These poor souls are usually grateful not to be shot on sight or locked up as the monsters they're becoming, and gratitude can form the basis of many a fomor's relationship with Pentex. Those who aren't as "lucky" may take to wandering in the shadowy alleys or out in the countryside, unable to understand what's happening to them as the Bane slowly devours their consciousness. These unfortunates often end up the targets of Garou packs.

Another example of the Hapless Victim is the poor schmoe who isn't sure why it's happening, but he suddenly wakes up one morning vomiting worms or engaging in some other unpleasant habit. The opening comic of **Freak Legion** is a prime example of this type of transformation. Banes look for





comfortable places to bed down, and while our “hero” doesn’t seem like the sort to attract a Bane, his soul has been worn down and made callused from the grind of an apparently inescapable life. This spiritual exhaustion can leave a victim without the wherewithal to fight off whatever is happening to him. Other Hapless Victims are victims only by the surprise that the Banes sprang on them. It might be that their raging tempers, or love-’em-and-leave-’em ways (or some other character flaw) that is magnified in them attracted the notice of a Bane. As of late, fomor are a reflection of the seven deadly sins; the results of a base drive in mortals that Bane-spirits find irresistible. Fomor come in all shapes and sizes, and a Bane-spirit will warp a human’s body to fit her greatest desire. A person who is constantly teased as “noodle boy” and is consumed with the vanity of physical beauty might attract a Bane spirit that will “bless” him with rippling muscles. A person who stuffs herself with food might attract a Bane that shifts her ravenous appetite for food to a desire for the “other *other* white meat.”

### *The Fallen Kinfolk*

It takes a lot for a Kinfolk to renounce her heritage and accept the Wyrms’ embrace. Unfortunately, there is rarely a lack of reasons for many kin.

The decision is often made in the heat of the moment, and it could be caused for a variety of reasons, stemming from a jealousy over the lack of a shifting gene or perhaps the result of a deep-driven depression. In some Garou tribes or families, being continually pushed aside or ignored in favor of those who bred true can engender resentment or a powerful lack of self-esteem in those who somehow didn’t make the cut. Kinfolk are expected to fulfill their duty to Gaia, but to what reward? Many Garou are all too ready to hand out punishment and lectures to Kinfolk who fail, but they have precious little praise for those who succeed. Female kin suffer inordinately when their Garou mates become “over-enthusiastic” in celebrating victories, or they become the closest targets when those same mates fall into Harano or need something to vent frustration on. And of course, the old “just not good enough” feeling is always present, whether it’s self-inflicted by a resentful kin or it’s reinforced by the tribe’s mores and values.

Regardless of the reason, the Wyrms is exceedingly good at promising the kin whatever she needs to hear, and it rarely passes up the opportunity to use one of the Garou’s own weapons against them. The Garou, however, have yet to learn the lesson.

### *The Breeds*

Fomori are, by and large, unique as the individuals that they once were. They all come about through the intervention of a Bane, though some strains occur naturally (a certain group of Banes that tend to possess the same sort of people to a particular end), and some are engineered deliberately (whether through Project Iliad or others). The following breeds are the ones seen most commonly.



## Enticers

Enticers make up one of the most subtle fomori breeds and one of the most insidious. They continuously exude pheromones that stimulate their prey's pleasure centers, and they can simultaneously extract images of the prey's ideal mate from his mind. The result is pure seduction that is impossible to resist.

While some occur naturally, most Enticers are created through the work of Siren Cosmetics, yet another Pentex subsidiary. The company sponsors a yearly contest, in which the prize is a collection of "special hypoallergenic" makeup and skin-care products. The Banes in the products do their work carefully over the course of at least a month, both to ensure that the takeover is successful and to ensure that their unlucky hosts are thoroughly addicted to the products. Most Enticers become so addicted to the special cosmetics that they sign on with Pentex to obtain a steady supply, and Pentex has plenty for them to do. (King Breweries has a number of Enticers seeded through their "King's Wenches.") Enticers may be found advertising other Pentex subsidiary products, or they may be sent out to entrap Pentex enemies.

Enticers look like normal humans, except for the rows of barbed teeth in their mouths, but their Wyrn powers allow them to be intensely alluring. They rarely look anything but their best, and they usually have expensive clothing and cars or other luxuries (acquired from previous victims). Most prefer to avoid fighting. They are masters of seduction and corruption, and they would rather draw their prey in to fight for them.

**Attributes:** *Beguiling* x 3, *Charming* x 2, *Clever* x 2, *Dexterous*, *Expressive* x 2, *Graceful* x 2, *Gorgeous* x 3, *Insightful* x 2, *Knowledgeable*, *Observant*, *Patient*, *Seductive* x 3

**Abilities:** *Academics*, *Athletics*, *Brawl*, *Dodge*, *Drive*, *Empathy*, *Etiquette*, *Expression*, *Firearms*, *Performance* x 3 (*Seduction*), *Subterfuge* x 2

**Backgrounds:** *Allies* x 2, *Contacts* x 2, *Resources* x 3 (Enticers can pick up almost any other Background from their alliance with Pentex or previous victims.)

**Willpower:** 6

**Powers:** *Enhancement*, *Fangs*, *Succubi's Veil*

- **Enhancement** — With a successful Social Challenge against her target, the Enticer can scan her target's mind and learn enough to physically appear as her target's ideal mate, even appearing to change genders if needs be. On a loss, however, the Enticer can make the change, but her target senses that she desperately wants to be liked and needed.

- **Succubi's Veil** — With a Static Social Challenge (difficulty of eight Traits, retest with *Subterfuge*), the Enticer can cause her target to become completely enthralled, wanting nothing more than to serve and protect her. At a cost of two Willpower Traits, she can make the enchantment more binding, so that the target becomes fanatically dedicated to the Enticer, ready to die at her command. However, if the Enticer fails her test, the target can make a Static Mental Challenge (difficulty of seven Traits, retest with *Primal-Urge*). If he succeeds, the target gets a "gut feeling" that the Enticer is somehow dangerous, and the enthrallment fails.



## Ferectoi

These so-called “princes” of the fomori are cross-breeds between human genes and a Bane parent. They are cunning, vicious and extremely powerful, and they can walk unnoticed among human society. Well aware of human weaknesses, they exploit them ruthlessly.

Ferectoi are the spawn of a Breeder Bane, a spirit that exists for no other purpose than to breed. Breeders rape humans while they slumber, using potent Charms to make them forget the encounter or believe that it was a dream. The Breeders then retreat to let the Ferectoi gestate in the Umbra, then reappear in the real world to birth them. Ferectoi look and act like rich, powerful humans, but they are ultimately less human than any other fomori. Whatever human interests and shortcomings they have seem to have a strangely alien cast to them. Time is not kind to these creatures — they grow steadily *less* human as they age.

The Ferectoi’s humanity is often in conflict with their overwhelming Wyrn-tainted nature, and most times, it is a short struggle. However, rumor has it that the human nature of some rare Ferectoi does manage to gain the upper hand. No one ever seems to have met such a fomor, though. Apparently they atone for the sin of their birth in a blaze of glory before their Bane sides can regain control.

Despite their monstrous natures, these creatures appear human in every way. Even their Bane powers do not physically betray them. (Extra limbs are retractable, slimy skin activates on contact, and so on.) Born to evil, Ferectoi aspire to nothing but further evil, and they are quite capable of doing *whatever* is necessary to ensure their own survival and power. A vampire would easily meet his match against one of these princes of darkness.

**Attributes:** *Brutal* x 2, *Commanding* x 3, *Dedicated* x 2, *Determined*, *Dignified*, *Disciplined* x 2, *Ferocious* x 2, *Intimidating* x 3, *Knowledgeable* x 3, *Magnetic* x 2, *Quick* x 3, *Shrewd*, *Tenacious* x 2, *Tough* x 3, *Wily*

**Abilities:** *Academics*, *Brawl*, *Dodge*, *Enigmas* x 2, *Intimidation* x 3, *Leadership* x 2, *Occult* x 3, *Streetwise* x 2, *Subterfuge* x 2

**Backgrounds:** *Allies* x 5, *Contacts* x 4, *Resources* x 4 (Ferectoi have whatever they require to run their business — mundane and otherwise).

**Powers:** All Ferectoi are unique, but they have at least five fomori powers.

**Willpower:** 9

## Gorehounds

Enticers seduce, Ferectoi scheme, Toads organize, but Gorehounds exist for one purpose — to kill. Gorehounds come to exist when a vulnerable teenager watches a movie from Slaughterhouse Video, a vile filmmaking outfit on the Pentex payroll. These movies are found in seedy, back-room video stores, where they’re readily accessible to young people. Each film has a sort of “Bane magnet” that attracts the Bane that creates this particular



fomori. Particularly disturbed viewers risk possession, and the Banes turn their hosts' wild fantasies of bloodletting into a full-scale lust for killing.

Ideal specimens to become Gorehounds could easily fit the profile for many disturbed teenagers in school today — kids who are isolated, often picked on by other kids, who entertain violent fantasies of turning on their tormentors. They may come from abusive or broken homes. Banes tap into that bottled-up rage and encourage thoughts of revenge against those who hurt them. These Banes are not picky about whom they possess either. It is entirely possible that they could possess a lost cub who has not yet undergone her First Change.

Once fully possessed, Gorehounds start to act out their sadistic fantasies, usually starting on small targets (such as animals) and moving up to human targets. The host becomes consumed with the idea of becoming a powerful killer, a figure of fear like his “heroes” in the slasher films. Many start adding personal touches to their work, such as wearing masks, using particular weapons, leaving calling cards at the scene or even inflicting scars on themselves (because it looks “cool”). They display a fiendish cunning beyond their youth, and they can conceal their homicidal rages at first. As the killings mount, the Banes usually goad their hosts into full-bore sprees, riding them into death. Banes rarely give their hosts any extra benefits, beyond more muscle mass.

**Attributes:** *Alert* x 2, *Brutal* x 3, *Cunning* x 4, *Enduring*, *Ferocious* x 2, *Intimidating* x 2, *Intuitive*, *Rugged* x 3, *Tough* x 3

**Abilities:** *Brawl* x 3, *Intimidation* x 2, *Melee* x 4, *Stealth* x 4

**Powers:** *Berserker*, *Immune to Delirium*, *Regeneration*

**Willpower:** 7

### **Toads**

Toads are considered the Wyrnish equivalent of middle management. They squat at the centers of their own little webs of intrigue, lording it over any weaker fomori in their circles and kissing butt to those more powerful. They are masters at avoiding and deflecting attention until they spy the right opportunity to either attack or put someone else on the problem.

No one quite knows where Toads came from. They simply started appearing in Pentex middle management during the mid-'80s, and they excelled there. They did so well, in fact, that headhunters wheedled them away to other firms and Toads are now found in many companies across the nation. Many seem to enjoy their positions, at which they can destroy careers or employee self-esteem on a whim.

Toads look more or less human on casual inspection. All of them are short, overweight males who dress in a “uniform” of scuffed shoes, stained trenchcoats and badly fitted suits. Toads are also bald, with thick fingers and bulging eyes, and they are peppered with warts everywhere the eye can see. Should a Toad open his mouth, however, others will see what makes him a Toad — a 15 foot lashing tongue that ends in a sharp barb capable of cutting



through flesh or sheetrock. Most Toads tend to talk as though their mouths are full (which they are).

**Attributes:** *Commanding* x 2, *Cunning* x 2, *Intimidating*, *Knowledgeable*, *Nimble* x 3, *Patient* x 2, *Persuasive* x 2, *Robust*, *Tenacious* x 2, *Tough* x 3, *Wily* x 3

**Abilities:** *Brawl*, *Intimidation*, *Investigation*, *Stealth* x 2, *Streetwise* x 2, *Subterfuge* x 2

**Backgrounds:** *Contacts* x 5 (Toads know everybody)

**Powers:** *Barbed Tongue* (As *Lashing Tail*, but inflicting aggravated damage — the tongue does one level going in and one level pulling out. Rumor has it some very old Toads can add a payload of neurotoxin.)

## *Storytellers Guide to Using Fomori*

Fomori are unlike any other creature in the World of Darkness. On one hand, they can represent the icky critters that end up as so much slime under the claws of raging Garou warriors after a Pentex raid. On the other hand, with enough time and effort and a little imagination, a fomori can become a very deadly adversary. That said, fomori are most likely the most versatile foes in a Storyteller's arsenal. They work as weak first lines of defense against a pack of werewolves, as spies to infiltrate a Kinfolk home or as the bloody fist of a top executive in Pentex. They also work as unwilling antagonists, such as the teenager who suffers Powers and Taints and who wreaks absolute havoc in his high school, the victim of too many hours of mindless video game play.

If you, as Storyteller, require a quick fight encounter for your players, one with little preparation and almost zero perspiration, it's always a good idea to have a few ready-made low-level fomori on hand, at least one pack's worth. You can make a fomori character template, and tweak the Powers and Taints as you see fit. The most common Powers (and the easiest ones to work with) are *Claws*, *Fangs and Horns*, *Lashing Tail* and *Stomach Pumper*. For these types of battles, it is not as important to flesh out all of the detail that a full character requires. Focus on Physical Traits, and leave the other two Attribute categories blank; you can make them up if necessary. Two *Brawl* Abilities are probably fitting for each Narrator fomori, as belaboring combat can be as detrimental to the morale of the players as a lack of preparation. Don't concentrate on any single character; try to spread the wealth per se. A successful fomori first line will weaken each character just a bit. Try not to throw too much defensive strength at the characters in this early stage, for fear of scaring away the players altogether. After all, there is no Wisdom in attacking a superior enemy. For the best results all around, only weaken the characters enough to where they know that their attack is "just getting started" and that the worst is yet to come.

If the players crave a well-rounded enemy and one more worth their concentrated efforts, you can appease them with a more powerful fomori. You might even want two fomori, of equal yet different calibers. Give these the full creation treatment, yet keep in mind that they are still Narrator



characters. The aforementioned breeds should give you some ideas about these kinds of characters.

Storytellers should also remember that this scale may need adjusting. You don't want to send in a big-league fomori to slaughter the new players' characters, nor do you want to send a small-fry against five adren Get of Fenris Ahroun. Both situations will end too quickly and with little room for player creativity.

Storytellers also need to consider what kind of results they want to get with their fomori. Do you want to emphasize that the characters have been too cavalier with their Kinfolk? Hit 'em up with a sympathetic Kinfolk character who takes the bad bargain, or regular fomori who target Kinfolk. Want to tell a story about a Pentex-related factory in the neighborhood? Start having victims sprouting Taints, or introduce a few Hapless Victim fomori.

Fomori should reek of lost humanity — each one is a human being who either bartered away his soul for something that was not worth the price or who was forced into an unwanted transformation. This is the future of the human race if the Wyrms win. Granted, fomori are better off dead, but if you can evoke the lost humanity of these creatures, any Garou with a conscience should feel some twinge that these poor bastards came to this. When fomori become nothing but orcs (something crunchy for endless rounds of stand-up fights like you'd get in shoot-em-up video games), then you lose the meaning behind who they are and why they exist.

## *Creating Fomori*

Follow the character-creation rules for humans found in the **Laws of the Hunt** before continuing into this section. First begin with a Nature and Demeanor, and then allocate the six, four and three Attribute Traits in either the Physical, Social or Mental categories. Next you must choose five Abilities, also found in **Laws of the Hunt**. Then assign your character's Backgrounds, Willpower, Negative Traits and Merits and Flaws. Ignore the Humanity category, as the character's humanity will quickly crash and burn with the incumbent Bane's influence over the psyche.

Now you are ready to address the Wyrms side. You need to decide whether this fomori intends to work for Pentex or is an unlucky loner. Then assign Powers and Taints.

Storytellers are ardently warned against allowing a regular player to play a fomori character. Fomori are creatures of evil, the embodiment of the seven deadly sins that drive mortality, certainly not part of the in-crowd. No matter what kind of story a player dredges up to sway your vote, you must keep in mind that the Garou in the game will slaughter a fomori character on sight. There is no rational reason for a fomori player to work toward the benefit of the Garou, nor would any self-respecting werewolf allow himself to spit in the face of Gaia and his ancestors by working alongside one of the Wyrms' most foul minions.



## *Fomori Powers*

The following list describes many fomori Powers, and the Taints that are the piper's payment. These are only suggestions, though. The Wyrms may grant certain Powers to fulfill specific needs, and the host may react in unexpected ways to Wyrms-taint.

### *Berserker*

The fomor has five Rage Traits, which he may spend and regain in the same fashion as a Garou uses Rage.

### *Brain-Eating*

A character using this Power steals away the mental facilities of a victim and adds them to his own. In order for this Power to take effect, the fomor must ingest the brain of his victim. Each Mental Trait "ingested" or stolen adds one to the fomor's own Mental Traits and remains for one game session. Fomors may increase their Mental Traits beyond their normal capacity in this manner, so *bon appétit*.

### *Body-Barbs*

The fomor has razored, bladelike bone growths at his elbows, wrists, knees or feet. The size, shape, number and placement of the barbs vary from fomor to fomor. These barbs inflict two levels of lethal damage, however they are brittle and likely to break off. (Make a Simple Test after a successful strike; the barb breaks on a loss or tie). The barbs will break or shatter if they are used on very hard surfaces, and they must be regenerated in order to grow back.

### *Chameleon Coloration*

The fomor has the ability to blend in with his surroundings, making it near impossible to distinguish his presence in almost every type of environment. With the expenditure of a Mental Trait, the fomor's skin changes color to blend in with his surroundings. Movement is restricted to a slow walk. You should cross your arms over your chest to show when you are under this Power's chameleon effect. Creatures extending themselves with supernatural perceptions to locate you are two Traits down, and they will notice only your blurry outline if they succeed.

### *Claws, Fangs and Horns*

With this natural weaponry, the fomor may bite, gore or slash his opponents if he is so inclined. These appendages are not generally removable without injury, yet they could be sheathed, such as retractable claws. Damage inflicted with claws or fangs is now aggravated instead of bashing or lethal. Fomors with fangs have a huge maw of razor-sharp teeth that, on a successful bite, can inflict a second level of aggravated damage by winning a Simple Test. In the case of horns,



not only does a fomor inflict aggravated damage, he can opt to make a gore attack that inflicts two levels of aggravated damage on a target. If successful, the target is impaled on the fomor's horns, and must succeed in a Physical Challenge to remove himself. While a target is impaled in this fashion, the fomor may not initiate any further attack other than to thrash side-to-side, which inflicts one level of lethal damage on the victim. The fomor can defend himself, although he is two Traits down on all Physical Challenges.

### *Darksight*

The fomor can see in the dark. This Power spawns from an innate affinity with darkness, and it works where not even a sliver of light is present. The fomor suffers no vision penalties, even in total darkness.

### *Exoskeleton*

The fomor has grown a hard, osseous carapace all over his body. The exoskeleton is often quite gnarled, sporting veinlike tubes and odd muscular shapes. The coloration varies, but it is usually a dull rust or oily black. The fomor adds the Physical Traits *Resilient x 2* and *Tough x 2*, and these Traits may surpass the character's Trait maximums.

### *Extra Limbs*

The fomor has a number of extra limbs, which are usually tentacles or masses of tendrils, though they can also be duplicates of his other two arms or legs. Such extra limbs often sprout from awkward places, such as an extra arm growing from a fomor's thigh. Most fomori have no more than four extra limbs. These limbs allow the fomor to perform basic, uncoordinated chores, but they will not convey multi-tasking feats. In order to perform independent actions with these extra limbs, such as firing a gun from each hand at multiple targets, or grappling with or defending against multiple targets, the fomor must bid two Traits when using any extra limb for independent action. This purchase also grants the fomor an extra Physical Trait per extra limb.

### *Eyes of the Wyrn*

The fomor locks eyes with his opponent, giving her a glimpse of the horrors of the Wyrn and effectively paralyzing her with fear. The fomor spends a turn locking eyes with his opponent, then engages in a Social Challenge. Success forces the target to remain rooted to one spot for five turns. If the target is attacked, the effect ends.

### *Foot Pads*

The fomor has soft pads on the bottoms of his feet, allowing for silent movement over most surfaces. In the event that a fomor fails to move silently, he may call for an automatic *Stealth* retest. If he loses this challenge, however, he fails to move silently.





### *Frog Tongue*

The fomor can elongate his tongue as a frog would and stick it to surfaces. He can flick it out (to a distance of two yards) and use it to grasp things or to inflict damage. However, the tongue can make the fomor's speech unintelligible, and quite possibly give its owner a taste for insects. The tongue has half the fomor's Physical Traits, and the player may retest using the *Brawl* Ability. The fomor may use the tongue for grappling or inflicting one level of lethal damage. Some fomor combine this Power with *Body-Barbs* for a vicious whip attack.

### *Gaseous Form*

The fomor can virtually boil his body down into a gaseous state in a mere two to six seconds. The gaseous form holds together well even in a strong wind, it usually stinks of sulfur, urine, excrement or some other horrible stench, and it actually looks more like air pollution than a mist. The fomor must expend a Willpower Trait to become gaseous and expend another Trait to become solid again. In this form, the fomor may glide through the air at the pace of a slow walk. Some Garou Gifts, such as *Cutting Wind*, will harm the fomor in his gaseous form.

### *Hands from Beyond*

The fomor must have the Power: *Umbral Passage*. The fomor can enter the Umbra then reach back into the material world to pull others into the spirit world with him. He can even pull more than one person through the Gauntlet at a time. The fomor must first enter the Umbra. He then spends one Gnosis and pulls in one or more willing targets (the targets must hold hands). He may bring in one person for every permanent Gnosis he possesses. If the target is unwilling, the fomor must make a Static Gnosis Challenge against the target's Willpower, and then a test with a Narrator against the Gauntlet in the area.

### *Hide of the Wyrn*

The fomor has a leathery, almost iron-hard skin that is usually covered in knots, scales, lumps, boils or other foul features. The fomor may add three extra Healthy health levels, which are the first to absorb any damage.

### *Immunity to the Delirium*

Most fomori are immune to the Delirium. Wyrn-taint usually erases the Veil along with their humanity. Not all fomori are immune, and the degree of immunity seems to depend on the amount of Wyrn-taint possessed. Pentex injects its fomori with a special serum that destroys the part of the brain susceptible to the Delirium. The fomor may ignore the effects non-supernatural creatures suffer when witnessing a Garou in his Crinos form.

### *Infectious Touch*

The fomor is able to spread fever and sickness through his touch. After winning a Physical Challenge (to touch the target), the fomor then



spends a variable number of Mental Traits to inflict sickness on his target (no more than three levels may be inflicted at one time). The target suffers lethal damage equal to the amount of Mental Traits spent. Unless he is healed by mystical means (*Mother's Touch* is insufficient), the damage heals at the rate of one level per week, during which time the target suffers from illness. This illness is never more serious than a heavy chest cold or infection, but for humans (especially with compromised immune systems), this effect can be quite serious.

### *Lashing Tail*

This six-foot tail is similar to an extra limb, but it cannot be used for precision work. This tail may be used to attack, and it inflicts two health levels of lethal damage. As with the *Power Frog Tongue*, many fomori add *Body-Barbs* to the end of this tail, for a signature scorpion attack.

### *Mind Blast*

The fomor can send a mental blast of energy into a target's mind, immobilizing him with pain. The fomor spends one Willpower Trait and a number of Mental Traits. The target may resist with a successful Willpower Challenge. The fomor can affect any one target within his line of sight. For each Mental Trait the fomor spends the victim cannot act for one turn as her mind is racked with fiery agony.

### *Mouth of the Wyrn*

The fomor can distend his jaw to swallow objects or creatures in his grasp, up to the size of a medium-sized dog or a small person. If he devours a living creature, the victim may well suffocate if it cannot escape somehow, and it will be digested as food. All indigestible parts (bones, shoes, glasses, etc.) are excreted normally. The fomor engages in a Physical Challenge with the target he intends to devour. For a small-sized target, only one successful challenge is required. For a human-sized target, three challenges must succeed. For a Crinos-sized target, five challenges must succeed, accompanied by some Alka-Seltzer.

### *Numbing*

The fomor's body can become completely numb, allowing her to function without feeling pain. However, she is numb to *all* sensations — she cannot talk properly (her tongue feels permanently anesthetized) and she may cut herself and feel nothing, which may result in infected or gangrenous wounds of which the fomor is unaware. Many fomor with this Power end up missing toes, fingers and other small body parts that they have damaged and neglected. The fomor spends one Willpower Trait; the effect lasts for one scene. The fomor suffers no health level-related penalties and gains an extra Healthy level. However, when this Power wears off, the extra health levels disappear, if the fomor is below Incapacitated, she dies.



### *Plasmic Form*

The fomor can literally melt into a puddle of thick reddish-brown liquid which can move about of its own free will. The fomor must spend a point of Willpower to become liquid and spend another point to become solid again. The liquid is immune to kinetic attacks (knives, bullets, fists, etc.) Most mental and mystical attacks will affect him, however (except those involving eye contact).

### *Poison Tumors*

The fomor is covered in tumors, and whenever the fomor is hit with a claw (or other sharp weapon), the attacker is splattered with acidic pus that inflicts one level of aggravated damage. If the attacker bites the fomor, he suffers three levels of aggravated damage. If the fomor is hit with a melee weapon, the attacker must attempt to dodge in order to avoid the flying pus. Ranged weapons pose no risk to the user, but any allies fighting near the fomor may be splattered.

### *Rat Head*

This Power is named after a rat's ability to squeeze through holes much smaller than its body size. The fomor can wriggle through holes as small as 1/20th of his fomor circumference. A human-sized fomor can thus squeeze through holes smaller than a quarter. The effect lasts for one "slide" (until the fomor reaches an area wider than its original size). The fomor must wiggle like a snake in order to propel itself forward. The fomor may slide at one half his normal running speed.

### *Regeneration*

The fomor recovers from normal, non-aggravated damage in the same fashion as Garou. Aggravated damage, from fire or fetish weapons, cannot be regenerated (it is healed at the rate of one health level per day). The metabolic alterations necessary for nearly instantaneous recovery from even mortal wounds take their toll on the "human" system, however, and fomori who possess this Power usually die from cancer before their late 30s. This Power acts no differently from the Garou's regeneration ability, with all of the benefits and drawbacks.

### *Roar of the Wyrn*

The fomor is able to strike terror into the hearts of all near her by issuing a guttural scream. The fomor spends one Willpower Trait and initiates a Social Challenge with anyone within earshot (mob rules may apply). Those victims who lose the challenge become so frightened that they run as fast and as far as they can to get away from the fomor. Once the affected are out of earshot, the effect wears off.

### *Scent of the Wyld or Weaver*

The fomor is able to mask his Wyrn nature by wrapping himself strongly in the aura of either the Wyld or the Weaver (the power must be bought twice



to do both). This power doesn't eliminate the Wyrms-taint, it only overpowers it. Garou may still sense the Wyrms-taint with the Gift: *Sense Wyrms*, but it is less suggestive of a Wyrms-creature. The fomor makes a Mental Challenge; the effect lasts for one scene.

### *Sense Gaia*

The fomor can sense manifestations of Gaia in the nearby area. This Power requires active concentration, and it works like the Garou Gift: *Sense Wyrms*.

### *Slobber Snot*

The fomor's skin is covered with small warts that excrete an extremely slick and runny slime. This slime renders the fomor's body virtually frictionless, making it almost impossible for opponents to grasp him. The slimy gel also helps the fomor to squeeze through tight spaces, not to mention being unbelievably gross. *Slobber Snot* dissolves in direct sunlight. Most fomori who takes this Power are highly vulnerable to *The Crusties* (see "Taints"). The fomor spends one Willpower Trait, and the effect lasts for one scene. During this time, opponent's difficulties to grapple or grab the fomor suffer a penalty of three Traits. In addition, the fomor halves all bashing damage. Opponents trying to track a fomor who is covered in *Slobber Snot* suffer a two-Trait penalty due to the offensive smell.

### *Stomach Pumper*

The fomor can vomit forth all that he's eaten recently (which is, of course, covered in a gout of clinging stomach acids), up to a range of 25 feet. Each regurgitative blast can cover a single foe. The fomor initiates a Physical Challenge. The blast inflicts two levels of lethal damage, but the victim must expend a Trait of Willpower to keep from stopping whatever he is doing and start retching. Only three such blasts may be performed between complete meals.

### *Tar Baby*

With this Power, the fomor's skin becomes coated with a thick, sticky substance like molasses that traps anything foolish enough to touch it. Any person attacking the fomor with *Brawl* gets stuck to the fomor like a fly on flypaper, and she cannot use the limb until she pulls it free with a successful Physical Challenge. If the fomor is hit with a melee weapon, he may make a Physical Challenge with his attacker to wrench the weapon out of his opponent's hand. Fomori with this Power are also subject to *The Crusties*.

### *Umbral Passage*

The fomor is able to step sideways in and out of the Umbra just like a Garou, except that he makes a Willpower Challenge, rather than Gnosis.



## *Webbing*

The fomor has a special gland about the size and shape of a football over his abdomen; the organ's orifice usually lies above the navel. This spinneret can spin massive amounts of gunk rather like spider silk. Fomori must learn how to utilize *Webbing* by purchasing *Webmaking* as a *Crafts* specialization. Skilled weavers may seal off passages or objects, capture opponents or lower themselves from high positions. *Webbing* has six health levels. It is extremely strong and sticky, allowing the fomor to entrap his prey. Entrapped victims must make a Static Physical Challenge resisted by the web's eight Physical Traits. The webbing is thicker than a spider's, almost one inch in diameter, but it is very sheer and hard to see from a distance.

## *Taints*

Taints are the con to the pro of fomori Powers. They embody the disfigurement that the Wyrms wreaks on the body.

## *Addiction*

The fomor must engage in a particular addictive activity (such as smoking cigars, drinking coffee, eating human flesh, taking drugs, etc.) within a certain span of time (once every 36 hours, once a week, etc.) or suffer great pain. For every cycle that the fomor does not assuage his addiction, he is overcome with wracking pain. He suffers a one-Trait penalty to every Physical Challenge for each successive cycle he misses. When the amount of penalty Traits equals the number of Physical Traits the fomor possesses, he dies.

## *Brainwashed*

The Bane within has really done a number on the fomor's mind, forcing her to believe what it wants. This brainwashing comes in the form of a powerful, obsessive belief — the most common of which is a rabid loyalty to Pentex. Such fomori are company men (women/ things) to the death. Other beliefs can be a religious zeal for the Wyrms or one of its manifestations, a paranoid suspicion of "softies" humans, a diehard belief that Garou are demons out to destroy the earth, or any other extreme conviction that may well lead the fomor into a dangerous, no-compromise situation. Whenever the fomor's belief is questioned, he will usually go through three distinct stages: denial, anger and finally doubt. For instance, if a Garou were to try to convince a Pentex-loyal fomor that Pentex is bad for him and the world, the fomor would first scoff at such a thought. If proof were brought forward, the fomor would believe it was a trick, and he might try to attack the bearer of such evidence. If undeniable proof piles up, then the fomor may begin to doubt — and thus his world falls to pieces. Such fomori become suicidal, and usually try to destroy the former object of their beliefs.



## *The Crusties*

Think of the worst case of dandruff ever seen. Now imagine it over the entire body and multiply its severity a hundred times. That's *The Crusties*, a malady common to fomori with the *Slobber Snot* or *Tar Baby Powers*. For three to 10 days every month, the fomor's skin dries out and is covered with a thick, crusty residue. This residue flakes off in large crumbly pieces, and it leaves a trail of fine brown powder everywhere the fomor goes. The dust collects in clothes, lungs and especially eyes (take a one-Trait penalty to Dexterity- and Perception-related challenges due to the discomfort). No matter how much the fomor scratches, picks or bathes (the very thought of bathing is enough to terrify many fomori), there seems to be no way of easing it.

## *Derangement*

Many of the Wyrms' chosen return from their genesis twisted in not just body, but mind as well. While it is rare to have more than one derangement, it is possible. The following is a list of common derangements. Storytellers should feel free to create their own.

*Amnesia:* The fomor can remember nothing of her life before becoming a fomor.

*Delusions of Grandeur:* The fomor believes she has been "chosen" by the Wurm, and only she can perform the deeds necessary for its ultimate conquest. Why won't others recognize this?

*Habromania:* The fomor has a constant morbid gaiety that others may find perverse. He doesn't necessarily crack jokes about it, but he may giggle at the most inappropriate times or take inordinate pleasure in bad events.

*Hallucinations:* The fomor was so unhinged by the Bane possession that her very perceptions now reverberate with its meaningless madness. At random times, she sees and hears things that are not really there.

*Homicidal:* The fomor is filled with a lust to kill, to the point of ignoring orders or jeopardizing his own safety.

*Klazomania:* The fomor has a constant compulsion to shout, rather than speak normally.

*Masochism:* The fomor takes inappropriate pleasure when pain is inflicted on him, and he will rarely pass up an opportunity to have pain inflicted (even to the point of staying on too long in a fight).

*Multiple Personalities:* The fomor has different "people" inside her who seek expression. Sometimes she can control which one comes to the fore, but most times, she cannot. No one knows where these split sides come from. They may be latent possibilities awoken within the fomor, remnants of abuse from the fomor's mortal days or multiple possessing Banes.

*Obsession:* The fomor fixated on something during her possession, and she cannot forget it. Every moment, it swims into her consciousness, and she believes that she must pursue until it ceases to haunt her....



*Paranoia:* The fomor believes that something even worse than the possessing Bane tried to get to her during transformation, and it will be back. Anyone or anything could be the scouts of this hidden enemy.

*Phagomania:* The fomor has an obsession with food all the time, and he feels the need to consume constantly, even when he's not hungry.

*Phobia:* The fomor fears one thing greatly, and she will do anything to avoid it, to the point of abandoning her task to get away from it. It could be daylight, nature, technology, humans, clowns, wolves, snakes, spiders, closed spaces, the dark et cetera. Be creative — the threat should be something that could be encountered in everyday life.

*Sadism:* The fomor takes inappropriate pleasure at causing pain and suffering in others, and he may delay leaving battle if it means he can get in a parting shot at someone.

*Temperamental:* The fomor is prone to frenzy (with none of the benefits) if he is pushed too far. This Taint is common among fomori who have the *Berserker Power*.

### *Infections*

Choose a particular Power to pair with this Taint. Whenever something goes wrong with the use of that Power, the fomor suffers a gangrenous infection. The fomor will lose one health level per day until he is Incapacitated. This damage will heal after one week, at the rate of one level per day.

### *Inner Volcano*

Burn, baby burn! Inside the Bane-ridden one, temperatures rise to unhealthy levels. She has a perpetual fever, strong enough to break most thermometers under the best of circumstances. When she's under stress or exertion, this fever literally cooks her from within. Death by this Taint is gruesome and unpleasant. Each three turns of hard physical labor (combat, running, heavy lifting, etc.) inflicts one non-soakable lethal health level on the hapless fomor. Naturally, anyone who gets too close to the fomor during this stage shares her pain. A person who holds, carries, sleeps with or operates on the burning fomor before she cools down suffers a health level of lethal damage unless he insulates himself somehow from the heat.

### *Mental De-evolution*

Choose a particular Power to pair with this Taint. Whenever this Power is used, the character may suffer a temporary loss in mental capability. However, the more frequently the fomor uses the Power, the more permanent the *Mental De-evolution* becomes. Every time the Power paired with this Taint is used, the fomor must make a Willpower Challenge with the Storyteller. If the player succeeds, there is no effect. If he is unsuccessful, the character loses a Mental Trait *permanently*. When the fomor reaches zero Mental Traits, he dies.



### *Physical Wasting*

Choose a particular Power to pair with this Taint. Whenever that Power is used, the fomor suffers a loss in physical capability. The loss is temporary, although the more frequently the Power is used, the more permanent the wasting becomes. Every time the Power paired with this Taint is used, the fomor must make a Willpower Challenge with the Storyteller. If he succeeds, there is no effect. If he is unsuccessful, the character loses a Physical Trait *permanently*. When the fomor reaches zero Physical Traits, he dies.

### *Rotting*

The fomor is rotting away; over a period of months, his body will fall apart. Every time the fomor suffers more damage from a single blow than half of his health levels, he will lose whichever part of his body was hit (which might kill him if someone strikes his head or heart). In addition, once per month, the fomor will lose part of his body. Early on, he might just lose fingers and toes, but in the latter stages, his arms or legs begin to rot away. Eventually, he may begin voiding his internal organs through his bowels. If the fomor has the Power: *Regeneration*, his lost limbs will grow back in one month, although he may lose them again.

### *Severe Allergy*

The fomor is very allergic to something, such as plastic or a pesticide. This thing causes the fomor damage, although it may be perfectly harmless to others. In addition to breaking out in distinguishing rashes, he suffers one health level of bashing damage each turn that he is exposed to it. This damage will not heal as long as the fomor is exposed to the allergen.

### *Special Diet*

The fomor cannot gain sustenance from normal food sources. He requires food of a different sort, the sort that is dangerous to get, such as blood, human flesh or fomor flesh. It is simply the only food source on which the fomor can survive. The fomor can gain nourishment from only this special food source. Going too long without this food results in the loss of one health level per day, reflecting the fomor's slow and painful starvation.

### *Teledementia*

The fomor is a powerful telepath, or at least she thinks so. Iliad scientists have confirmed the reality of *Teledementia*, but its usefulness is questionable. Fomori with this Taint (sometimes called Psychonauts; also Psycho-nuts) are receiving telepathic messages, but the content is garbled, sick and deranged. Psychonauts consider the world a living hell. They are bombarded daily with only the vilest of thoughts around them. These thoughts are further twisted and increased in intensity by the Bane within them. Everyone in the world is either a worthless victim or a sadistic brute. There is no middle ground. The Psychonaut may revel in this condition, but she also perceives everyone to be





plotting against her. Since the information from this kind of telepathy is so distorted, information gained through it is usually worthless. (The Storyteller may let an occasional truth slip in, but the fomori shouldn't be able to tell the difference.) Psychonauts must make a Willpower Challenge every day, lest they become trapped in a harrowing psychic loop where reality is completely altered. Fomori caught in these loops often go on killing sprees. They will attack allies, as well as enemies and innocent bystanders. Pentex often gives other fomori the authority to put Psychonauts down hard and fast if this occurs. Psychonauts have short life spans, even by fomori standards.

### *Ugly as Sin*

The character is horribly ugly, possibly because of a facial disfigurement or a tragic accident, or because of another Power which makes the fomori unable to pass among humans without eliciting an extreme reaction. Treat this Taint as permanent *Repugnant* x 3.

### *Walking Bomb*

Pentex has implanted a safeguard in the fomori to protect themselves — a bomb in her head. They can activate it anytime they want, and they can do so from any distance. Only they can disarm it, but a bomb expert must do so in person. When activated, the bomb will explode in the fomori's head for eight levels of aggravated damage, anyone standing too close to the blast will suffer lethal or aggravated damage at the Storyteller's call. If she survives, Pentex may send First Teams out to finish the job.

### *Worms*

This foul Taint personifies the Wyrms' influence, for the infested character hosts parasitical worms. These worms cause him endless pain and periodically emerge from his mouth, ears or other orifices. Unless he vomits them up at least once a day, the worms will swell his belly, clog his internal passages and begin to eat organs. If some circumstance keeps him from purging the worms from his system, he will sustain one level of aggravated damage per day until the worms consume him utterly.

Attacks that include *Worms* must be bought with *Stomach Pumper*. If used in combination with a Power, the *Worms* cause an added level of aggravated damage on top of any other damage that a target suffers.

### *Banes*

Banes — the very name conjures images of something foul and dreadful. It's easy to blame them for the ills of the World of Darkness — after all, don't they possess the unwary, creating fomori, and ride their hosts into causing havoc and misery? That statement is true, but it's not the whole story. Banes are symptoms of the world's misery, not the root cause. Banes are created as humanity sells out Gaia for a quick buck or an easy lifestyle, and they are drawn to places of human suffering. There must be something to create and



feed them, and more often than not, that job falls on the unknowing soul of humanity at large.

Only the really big Banes are powerful enough to be antagonists. Most of the smaller Banes are either in service to a larger one, or they cluster in swarms since they are too weak to do much damage on their own.

### *Bitter Rages*

Bitter Rages are unusual among Banes, in that they possess hosts but do not turn them into fomori. They can be driven out, but doing so is difficult. They have no other purpose beyond driving Garou insane. They feed on Rage and fuel their hosts' Rage to drive them into greater and greater frenzies. Bitter Rages prefer to target Garou and other shapeshifters, but humans and animals who wander into their field of vision will do just as well. Even creatures that don't normally frenzy or have Rage can be affected by Bitter Rages. These monsters are the spiritual equivalent of rabies.

Being possessed by a Bitter Rage is to be continuously on the edge between frenzy and insanity. It begins as a minor headache, then grows slowly into sensory overload that drives the target into madness. A candle-flame becomes a roaring bonfire, a whisper like a jet-engine, the lightest finger-touch like sandpaper — the result is nerves that are constantly on edge until the Bane feeds its host's Rage the last little bit to push her over the brink. Only exhaustion slows a host in the throes of a Bitter Rage frenzy, and that's only until she gets rested enough to start attacking again. Even worse, a Bitter Rage can start siphoning her host's Gnosis to fuel her Rage, should the Bane use up its own power. Bitter Rages are notorious for fleeing as soon as they're spotted in the Umbra. Most consider them to be lessons in losing control of one's Rage.

Vampires can be affected by Bitter Rages, because they have the ability to frenzy. As they gain Rage from the bane, they become edgy and restless, ready to snap at any provocation. When the Bane finally pushes them over the edge, they fall into a full-bore frenzy, but their frenzy turns more closely to a Garou's Rage, including the ability to regenerate. They cannot use Mental or Social Disciplines, and their blood-thirst is tremendous. *Animalism* does not calm these frenzies.

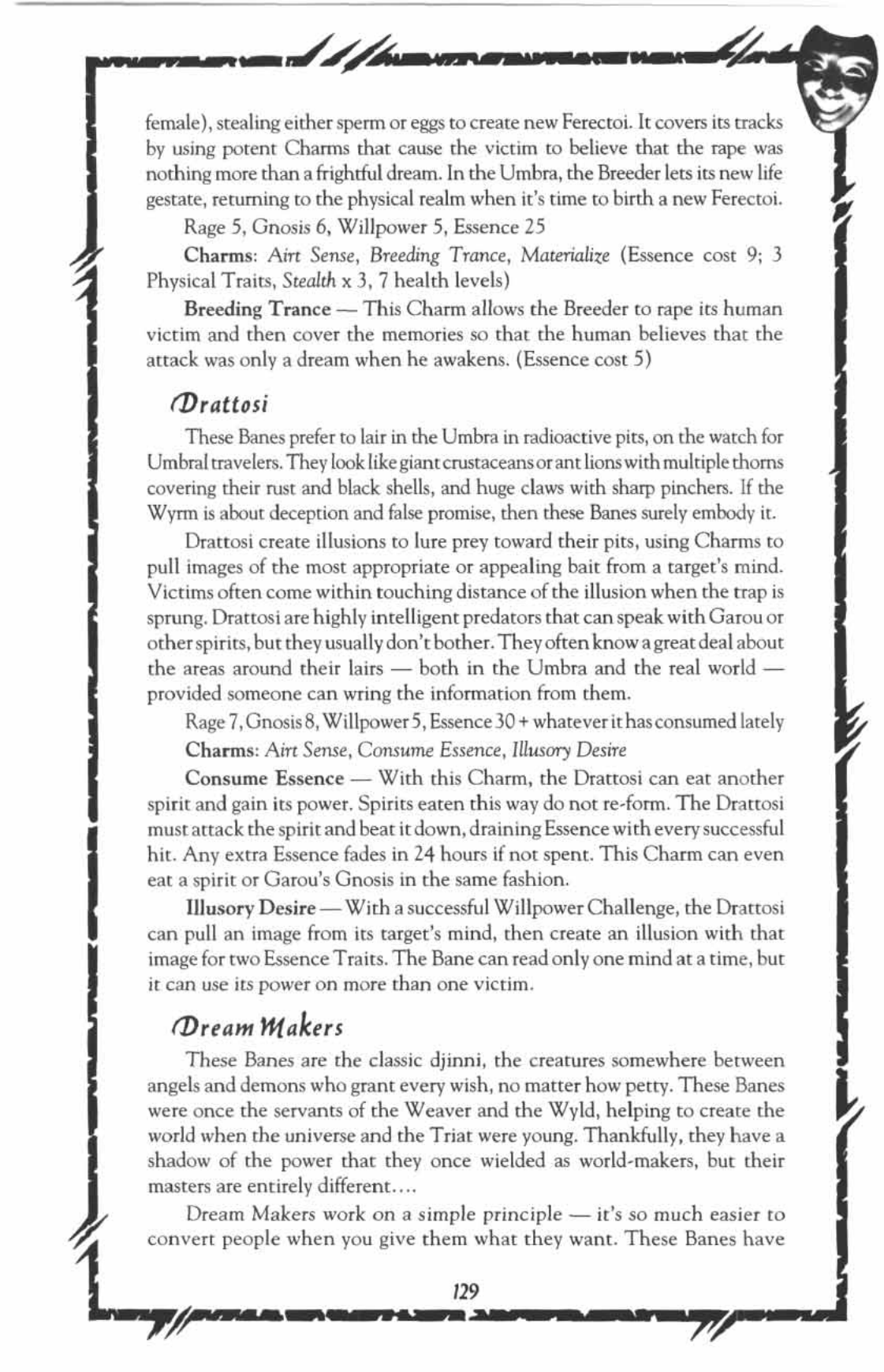
Rage 8, Gnosis 6, Willpower 8, Essence 60

**Charms:** *Airt Sense, Possession, Raging, Re-form*

**Raging** — With each Essence Trait the Bitter Rage spends, it can increase its target's Rage by one Trait. Creatures without Rage cost two Essence Traits. The increase is usually gradual; the target becomes more snappish and irritable, with all the benefits and drawbacks of increasing Rage. The Bitter Rage can up the ante, however, and send any target it has touched into a full-throttle frenzy.

### *Breeders*

These foul things are responsible for the Ferectoi, and they are little more than mobile wombs. Breeders materialize and rape sleeping humans (male and



female), stealing either sperm or eggs to create new Ferectoi. It covers its tracks by using potent Charms that cause the victim to believe that the rape was nothing more than a frightful dream. In the Umbra, the Breeder lets its new life gestate, returning to the physical realm when it's time to birth a new Ferectoi.

Rage 5, Gnosis 6, Willpower 5, Essence 25

**Charms:** *Airt Sense*, *Breeding Trance*, *Materialize* (Essence cost 9; 3 Physical Traits, *Stealth* x 3, 7 health levels)

**Breeding Trance** — This Charm allows the Breeder to rape its human victim and then cover the memories so that the human believes that the attack was only a dream when he awakens. (Essence cost 5)

### *Drattosi*

These Banes prefer to lair in the Umbra in radioactive pits, on the watch for Umbral travelers. They look like giant crustaceans or ant lions with multiple thorns covering their rust and black shells, and huge claws with sharp pinchers. If the Wym is about deception and false promise, then these Banes surely embody it.

Drattosi create illusions to lure prey toward their pits, using Charms to pull images of the most appropriate or appealing bait from a target's mind. Victims often come within touching distance of the illusion when the trap is sprung. Drattosi are highly intelligent predators that can speak with Garou or other spirits, but they usually don't bother. They often know a great deal about the areas around their lairs — both in the Umbra and the real world — provided someone can wring the information from them.

Rage 7, Gnosis 8, Willpower 5, Essence 30 + whatever it has consumed lately

**Charms:** *Airt Sense*, *Consume Essence*, *Illusory Desire*

**Consume Essence** — With this Charm, the Drattosi can eat another spirit and gain its power. Spirits eaten this way do not re-form. The Drattosi must attack the spirit and beat it down, draining Essence with every successful hit. Any extra Essence fades in 24 hours if not spent. This Charm can even eat a spirit or Garou's Gnosis in the same fashion.

**Illusory Desire** — With a successful Willpower Challenge, the Drattosi can pull an image from its target's mind, then create an illusion with that image for two Essence Traits. The Bane can read only one mind at a time, but it can use its power on more than one victim.

### *Dream Makers*

These Banes are the classic djinni, the creatures somewhere between angels and demons who grant every wish, no matter how petty. These Banes were once the servants of the Weaver and the Wyld, helping to create the world when the universe and the Triat were young. Thankfully, they have a shadow of the power that they once wielded as world-makers, but their masters are entirely different....

Dream Makers work on a simple principle — it's so much easier to convert people when you give them what they want. These Banes have



been around for centuries, in various forms, but with the same purpose of corrupting the bitter and angry by granting their desires. They choose their “masters” carefully, looking for those who are morally and spiritually bankrupt and whose wishes serve the Wyrms. The one thing that prevents them from wholesale destruction is the complicated rules that bind them. Dream Makers are bound outside Gaia’s Realm, unable to enter unless they are invited. They are incredibly malicious and ruthlessly powerful, but they can act on only the desires of humans. They will fulfill their masters’ wishes, but with their own special touch. They also work to encourage their masters to make a wish that they materialize in the Gaia Realm — which has come perilously close to happening on several occasions. Should its master die, the Dream Maker will depart to find a new one — there are plenty to choose from.

Dream Makers look however they want to look, especially if it will help their work with their masters. Some go for the classic Hollywood look of turbans and Arabic clothing, some for a scantily clad voluptuous harem girl, and others prefer to look perfectly normal. A few pull out the old myths of djinni, looking like something straight out of *The Thousand and One Nights* (which is not necessarily a good thing). The newest trend is to look like angels.

Rage 10, Gnosis 10, Willpower 10, Essence 300

**Charms:** *Airt Sense, Armor, Alter Reality, Break Reality, Blighted Touch, Calcify, Cleanse the Blight, Corruption, Create Fire, Create Wind, Disorient, Flood, Freeze, Frozen Breath, Healing, Ice Shards, Lightning Bolts, Materialize, Reform, Shapeshift, Solidify Reality, Tracking, Umbraquake, Updraft*

### ***Gray Masses (and Gray Men)***

Gray Masses were once servants of the Wyld, fungi that assisted in the cycle of life by doing what all fungi do naturally — breaking down dead matter (in this case, dead spirit matter) and returning it to creation. Now they rank among the Wyrms’ corrupted servants, and ignore their duties of tending the dead in order to infest the living. In the Umbra, these creatures are by and large an ignorable nuisance, simply a noisome smell that festers and waits. Should they enter the Gaia Realm by some breach in the Gauntlet (easily done when one is a fungus), they grow with frightening speed. Almost as soon as they arrive, materializing as normal-seeming fungal spores, the Gray Masses find hosts and start multiplying. They can spread their spores no differently than any other fungus, but with much worse results.

Gray Masses have no Umbral allies, and 99 percent are destroyed by Garou, other shapeshifters, other Banes or some other threat. These Banes have no real spiritual presence, being tiny fungus spores in the Umbra. They become more obvious when they manifest in their hosts, called Gray Men. They live only to consume and corrupt whatever living matter they come across. Their hosts can maintain rational thought (no doubt watching their transformation), but their possession spreads very quickly. An entire village might be infected within a week.



Gray Men are the fomori that result when Gray Masses infect humans, although the Bane will accept any living host. Like their masters, Gray Men are parasites that live only to spread this blight to any other living creature. They look like little more than animated heaps of fungus that are capable of combat and some limited rational thought. Their greasy-looking gray skin releases a foul slime that spreads Gray Mass spores in the form of a highly contagious infection. If killed, Gray Men explode like giant puffball mushrooms, releasing millions upon millions of spores. While most are shuffling mushroom farms, a few are said to be capable of deep thought and can achieve contact with the Wurm. No one knows if there are old and powerful Gray Men out there, but the possibility certainly exists, and those who speculate on this agree that they never want to meet with one.

**Gray Men Powers:** *Fungal Touch, Immunity to the Delirium*

Rage 0, Gnosis 4, Willpower 2, Essence 10

**Charms:** *Blighted Touch, Corruption, Possession, Sporing*

**Sporing** — Gray Masses live to reproduce, and this is how they do it. On discovering a suitable host, they make themselves comfortable and start multiplying. For each Essence Trait spent, the Gray Mass can make a duplicate of itself. Each of these duplicates is as powerful as the original and it also starts multiplying when it finds a suitable host. Each Bane is capable of producing eight or nine copies of itself, all of which are capable of creating another fomori, which will have plenty of Gray Masses busily producing copies of themselves....

### *Phantasmi*

Phantasmi are the remains of the truly wretched fomori who find no peace in death. Those who die at the hands of Garou become bound to the site of their death, watching and waiting for a Garou (or any shifter) to come within reach. Unable to escape the Wurm's hold on their spirits, they know only an endless thirst for revenge, and they can be quite efficient when it comes to carrying out that revenge. Unfortunately, they cannot escape the places to which they are bound, nor can they act of their own free will — they must wait for a shifter to come within range. Worst of all, each is insane. Many Garou use stories of these creatures to warn reckless cubs about being aware of the consequences of one's actions.

Since the Phantasmi have no solid forms of their own, they build them from whatever is handy — from plastics to papers to wires to toxic waste. Even more disturbing, the different forms can result in a variety of attacks, from a liquid attack that gags the victim to claws to stinging wires whipping about the face.

Rage 10, Gnosis 6, Willpower 5, Essence 50

**Charms:** *Airt Sense, Materialize (10 Physical Traits, Athletics, Brawl x 2, Dodge, Melee)*



## Ooralath

They were once the servants of the Weaver under a forgotten name. Now, they are the Hounds of the Wym, corrupted into his service. Known for their perseverance and teamwork, the Ooralath will stop at nothing until their prey is run to ground or they are destroyed. These hunters have become mindlessly and brutally efficient — good for terrifyingly effective pack tactics, but poor for creativity or cleverness. They prowl the lonely places in the Umbra, hunting lone travelers and Net-Spiders.

Ooralath look like a strange cross between hounds and dinosaurs. Their bodies are composed of thick, serrated shells that clack when they run. Their Weaver-nature has had a strange side effect on their corruption — they have only static physical forms in the Umbra, and should they be dragged into the physical world (they cannot materialize on their own), their forms are completely mortal.

**Attributes:** *Dedicated* x 2, *Determined* x 3, *Ferocious* x 2, *Quick*, *Tireless* x 2, *Tough* x 3

**Abilities:** *Athletics* x 2, *Brawl* x 2, *Dodge*, *Primal-Urge* x 2

Rage 5, Gnosis 3, Willpower 7, Essence 50

**Charms:** *Airt Sense*, *Armor* (three levels), *Burrowing*, *Embody* (no cost; permanent Charm)

**Burrowing-** With this Charm, the Ooralath can burrow through any ground, Umbral or physical, as easily as a fish swims through water (one Essence per turn).

**Embody-** This Charm is nearly identical to *Materialize*, except the Ooralath is not building a physical body. Instead, it spends Essence to create a more suitable combat form in the Umbra.

## Scryers

Scryers are weak servitor Banes that typically bind themselves to the service of a larger Bane or spirit for the purposes of spying, which is rewarded with Essence. They have no means of attack, and they prefer to flee or use *Re-form* to escape. No one knows if they have any other purpose beyond spying, and some wonder if there are other types of Banes that are similarly specialized.

Scryers are generally thin and fleshy, easily ripped apart. They seem to be made up of too many eyes of all different types — from a cat's luminous gaze to a hawk's amber eyes to an insect's compound eyes to the beady multiple eyes of a spider or bloodshot human eyes and anything in between. Subjects of a Scryer's gaze (with Gnosis of 7 or greater) can often feel the sensation of the Bane's scrutiny, and they have the uncomfortable feeling of being watched. Garou with *Pulse of the Invisible* or *Umbral Sight* may be able to spot their tormentors from the physical realm, but those without such Gifts may be driven slowly mad by the constant observation.

Rage 2, Gnosis 7, Willpower 4, Essence 30

**Charms:** *Airt Sense*, *Re-form*, *Report*, *Scry*



**Report** — This Charm allows the Scryer to maintain a mental link with its patron for one Essence per turn.

**Scry** — This Charm allows a Scryer to peek into the material world from the Umbra and use *Scent of the True Form* on whomever it sees.

## Wyrmholes

Once, when the cosmos was in the balance, Wyrmholes were spirit doorways that allowed the creatures of Balance to walk from the spirit world to the physical realm wherever they needed to be. With the collapse of that order, Wyrmholes have become some of the Corrupter's deadliest weapons, allowing the Wyrms to spew monstrosities across the landscape. Most times, these Banes form in the air or water to create a one-way passage to Gaia for other Wyrms-creatures. More common, however, are living hosts that welcome the Wyrmhole and the power it grants, including some control over whatever disasters spill from them. Worse, these once-rare Banes are becoming more common all the time.

In the spirit world, these very dangerous Banes look like waterspouts made of some oily spirit material. The passage of Banes swells the Wyrmhole, like an egg being swallowed by a snake. When a Wyrmhole possesses a human or animal, the host develops eyes of swirling indigo, and static electricity seems to follow the new form. Fomori of Wyrmholes often gain amazing powers, not only from the Wyrmhole itself, but from other grateful Banes, who need not expend their precious energy to materialize.

Rage 0, Gnosis 10, Willpower 0, Essence 200

**Charms:** *Gateway, Possession, Re-form*

**Gateway-** With this Charm, the Wyrmhole can use *Materialize* on other Banes, spending its own Essence to bring the creatures through without any expenditure on their part. The cost to the Wyrmhole is no different than the passenger's cost to materialize on its own. Even Banes that normally cannot materialize can do so through a Wyrmhole. If it is in a mortal host, the Wyrmhole must still keep track of its Essence, regaining it at one per day.

## Wyrms Elementals

The following creatures are Gafflings of the Elemental Wyrms (described in Chapter Two). They have little individual personality, and they prefer to cluster in "safe" places in the Umbra, such as Blights, Hellholes or the Scar. Each by itself is a minor threat to the average Garou; in droves, however, they become deadly.

### Furmlings (*Balefire*)

Like mad fireflies, these elementals glow with a strange, irradiated phosphorescence and resemble glowing blobs of napalm, darting frantically and rarely staying in one place for long.

Rage 10, Gnosis 5, Willpower 5, Essence 30

**Charms:** *Airt Sense, Blast Flame*



### *Hoglings (Smog)*

These creatures look like thick clouds of the most noxious urban smog, usually bluish in color and sometimes showing a facial feature or two. They prefer to roil and hover ominously over their targets.

Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Willpower 3, Essence 40

**Charms:** *Airt Sense, Create Wind, Re-form, Updraft*

### *H'ruggings (Sludge)*

Seasoned Umbral travelers recognize these things by their passage — a trail of raw sewage. H'ruggings appear as roiling piles of the stuff with an appropriately nauseating stench.

Rage 3, Gnosis 5, Willpower 9, Essence 40

**Charms:** *Umbrquake*

### *Wakshaani (Toxins)*

The toxin elementals prefer to appear as sheets of purplish fluid with constantly shifting features including veins, blotches or bubbling pustules. When attacking prey, they wash over their targets like waves.

Rage 7, Gnosis 7, Willpower 3, Essence 40

**Charms:** *Blighted Touch, Flood*

## *Monsters*

The Wyrn has a great many tools at its disposal, some that the other shapeshifters have only guessed at. What lurks below the surface of the world? Only a few know, and many times, that knowledge drives them mad. They have seen where the monsters dwell. The Black Spiral Dancers maintain some of these creatures by feeding them in exchange for service, although who is getting the better deal is hard to say.

Monsters are the least subtle of the Wyrn's minions — they are weapons of outright terror and carnage, and they prefer to make use of such tactics rather than quieter means. When using monsters, Storytellers should emphasize that these are things that should not be. There is nothing natural about these aberrations, who have somehow managed to exist on the fringes of civilization and the mind for centuries, preying on the strays and unfortunates. Don't haul them out too much, though. Monsters terrify best by being little-known and even less understood, even by the most wise or seasoned shifters, and that which is too familiar will be reduced to rubber-mask scariness. Further, don't use a bazooka to shoot a mosquito — cubs and cliath are no match for a full complement of War Wolves, unless you want to emphasize to some cocky youngsters that attitude doesn't handle every problem. Consider the amount of threat and danger that you want to introduce with the ranks of the characters and feel free to adjust the monsters' Attributes. It's no fun to have opponents who are too large to make a dent in them, or so small that elder characters can dust them off in an afternoon.





## Blood Vines

Blood Vines are semi-sentient predatory vines that exist solely to eat and multiply. The plant bears a striking resemblance to kudzu, except for the long, thin, flexible thorns on the vines, and it has a texture similar to raw meat. Few Garou have encountered them, and tales of the monstrous plants are hard to come by. Some believe that Blood Vines were nearly destroyed long ago through a concerted effort, but apparently someone managed to preserve some clippings and raise the plant back into full growth.

Blood Vines infest a host by forcing themselves into the host's body and slowly devouring it from the inside. As the fluids and organs are consumed, new vines grow to take up the space. Despite the violation, the host appears to be physically unchanged, even as vines fill his body cavity and animate him in a semblance of life. However, the vines can only mimic human actions by rote, working on the simplest memories of the host's life—those familiar with the host will note that he does not seem to be himself. When the host is consumed entirely, the plants depart to seek another, leaving behind an empty, ruptured shell that's completely without bones or vital organs. Once the vine starts devouring, it's already too late for the victim.

Blood Vines aren't a particularly powerful threat individually, but they are hard to kill, and they multiply very quickly. It's entirely likely that a small, isolated town or a stretch of suburb might be overrun with their voracious hunger. Any attempt to kill them must be thorough, since letting even one vine escape continues the cycle.

**Attributes:** *Cunning* x 2, *Graceful* x 2, *Resilient* x 3, *Tireless* x 2, *Tough*

**Abilities:** *Brawl*, *Survival*

**Willpower:** 2

**Health Levels:** 10

**Powers:** *Seeding*

- **Seeding** — Seeding is how the Blood Vines propagate themselves. By winning a Physical Challenge, a Blood Vine takes over a host by forcing itself into the host's body. Once inside, the vine attempts to imitate human life as a camouflage while waiting for its offshoots to grow, a process that takes five days. More than one Blood Vine may possess a host. If encountered outside a host or driven from a host, the Blood Vines attempt to ensnare their attacker, and if successful, will start attempting to infest him. A Blood Vine attempting to fight through a host has only the meager skills of a child.

## Heart Eaters

Heart Eaters are among the most cruel of Wyrms-monsters, feeding eagerly on pure emotion, particularly fear and pain. This Wyrmling serves Empress Aliara, the Countess of Desire, and by sadistic acts of betrayal, she leads victims ever closer to the Countess' domain and servitude to the Wyrms.

The Heart Eater's preferred targets are lovers. It chooses one to attack, then it devours the brain and heart, using a crude divination to discover the



other's identity and something of the personality of the first victim. It then flays the victim and wears her skin as a costume, contorting its own body to fit perfectly inside the skin. A Heart Eater's charade can last for days or even weeks, with the skin a seamless natural fit, until it tires of the game and chooses to reveal itself. But the Heart Eater's worst act is to use its ill-gotten knowledge to plan a betrayal against the lover, something cruel, at the time that will cause the most fear and pain.

Heart Eaters often leave their victims alive, in the hope that the betrayal will grow into something much worse. Sadly, it often does. Fear and bitterness often spiral into rage, frustration and emotional devastation, which lead the victim one step closer to Empress Aliara's desires. Heart Eaters are cowards by and large, preferring emotional damage to messy physical conflict. Their main purpose is corruption, not murder. Human targets are most likely to be killed, although some are left alive to enjoy repeat visits by the monsters, which drives them insane eventually. Garou and other supernatural creatures are also favored targets, particularly since their isolation from most of humanity makes the betrayal that much more potent.

**Attributes:** *Agile, Alluring, Beguiling* x 3, *Charming, Creative, Dexterous* x 2, *Discerning* x 2, *Energetic, Expressive* x 2, *Friendly, Gorgeous* x 2, *Graceful, Insightful, Patient* x 2, *Persuasive, Reflective* x 2, *Seductive*

**Abilities:** *Empathy* x 2, *Expression, Investigation, Performance* 2, *Subterfuge* x 2  
Rage 5, Gnosis 8, Willpower 6

**Health Levels:** Normal

**Powers:** *Body-Barbs, Clean Scent, Empathy, Extra Limbs, Sting*

- **Clean Scent** — The Heart Eater spends one Gnosis, which allows it to hide its Wyrms-taint for one scene. Gifts that detect Wyrms-taint find nothing out of the ordinary, and other supernatural means of spotting corruption likewise find nothing.

- **Empathy** — By winning a Mental Challenge (retest with the *Empathy* Ability) and some concentration on its target, the Heart Eater can determine whom its target loves most passionately. This same power used on the target's love can determine if the lover returns the feelings. Further, if a Heart Eater consumes a lover's brain and heart and spends two Gnosis Traits before using this power, it can impersonate its victim successfully.

- **Sting** — The Heart Eater can inject a powerful venom into its target, paralyzing him for one scene.

## *Skull Pigs*

Skull Pigs look like very large wild boars that reek of the grave. Only very thin, pale flesh covers their heads, giving the impression that their heads are only bare skull. Most shifters believe that the Skull Pigs were originally natural wild animals, such as tapirs and peccaries of ancient North America, that were corrupted somehow by the Wyrms' influence. Skull Pigs travel in packs of three to seven, which are either families or a group of males.



Sometimes single, elderly males travel by themselves. They are believed to litter like normal pigs, although no one has ever seen very young Skull Pigs.

Skull Pigs are carrion-eaters first and foremost, and their horrible diet grants them supernatural abilities. They tend to subsist on flesh and garbage, although toxic waste is considered a treat. They also root through graveyards for human bones, eating them to regain Rage. If they eat bones from a Wyrms-tainted creature, however, they gain a strange intelligence that makes them even more dangerous. Some, known as Voodoo Pigs, may even develop a talent for magical powers, learning the equivalent of one Gift for every Mental Trait they have. Storytellers may wish to consult sorcerous paths from **Laws of the Hunt** or Thaumaturgy from **Laws of the Night** to simulate this type of Skull Pig's powers. The flesh of these creatures is deadly poisonous. Anyone who bites a Skull Pig suffers a level of aggravated damage, although *Resist Toxin* is proof against this damage.

The Pigs almost always attack Garou, and they tend to ignore humans. Humans think they see a normal animal, (as per the Delirium). Normal Skull Pigs are possessed of animal cunning and little else, but Voodoo Pigs have a distinct, malevolent intelligence. These Pigs can easily ferret out weakness in a group and begin their attacks on the weakest.

Of special note to Storytellers, the Skull Pigs are all that remain of the Grondr, or wereboar, shapechangers. These mighty beasts once served Gaia by grooming and cleaning her, rooting out parasites and taint. When the Garou had slaughtered most of them in the War of Rage, their boar-kin became domesticated pigs and their human Kinfolk were enslaved. The last Grondr gave himself to the Wyrms in despair, and the Skull Pigs emerged soon after. Very few shifters remember that the Grondr ever existed.

**Attributes:** *Alert, Brutal x 4, Cunning, Ferocious x 2, Quick x 2, Rugged x 4, Tough x 2, Vigilant x 2, Vigorous* (add more Mental Traits for Voodoo Pigs)

**Abilities:** *Athletics x 2, Brawl x 3, Dodge x 2, Intimidation x 3, Primal-Urge x 2, Stealth, Survival x 2* (Add *Occult x 2* for Voodoo Pigs)

Rage 5, Willpower 3

**Powers:** Regeneration (as per Garou)

**Health Levels:** 10

### **Thunderwyrms**

Uktena lore states that these massive creatures were spawned from radioactive soil at a nuclear test site. They are a threat unlike any that the Garou normally face. They can range in size from huge to gigantic, and those that werewolves encounter most frequently are usually 30 feet long and nearly eight feet wide. The largest of them all — Grandmother Thunderwyrms, or “Grammaw” — is as long as two football fields, and she carries an entire Wyrms caern in her gut. The very smallest Thunderwyrms — presumably hatchlings — are five feet long. These pale gray pillars of flesh move silently under the earth, hiding all traces of their passage by literally devouring the earth, then defecating it behind them as they move. Thick, mucuslike stuff oozes from



their bodies constantly. They look much like earthworms with maws filled with jagged teeth, although some Garou report seeing aquatic varieties that resemble leeches. Rumor has it that the monsters' numbers are swelling in preparation for the Apocalypse, and increasingly frequent encounters with Thunderwyrms would seem to bear this rumor out.

Thunderwyrms are generally found in rural areas, and they develop unique patterns of attack. One may have favorite locations to terrorize, another comes out with storms, and another may have a haunt along a river's length. Their tornadolike trails reek with obvious Wurm-taint, but neither their slime or consumed soil indicates that they alter the ground where they pass. They can consume up to 70 times their body weight in vegetation (and other things), and they spend much of their time slumbering as their food is metabolized into sheer bulk.

**Attributes:** *Enduring* x 3, *Intuitive*, *Lithe* x 3, *Tireless*, x 2, *Tough* x 5, *Vigilant* x 2 (Stats for an average Thunderwurm of 25 ft.)

**Abilities:** *Athletics* x 5, *Brawl* x 5

Rage 6, Willpower 5

**Health Levels:** 16

**Powers:** *Armor* (four health levels), *Burrow* (as the Garou Gift, no Gnosis cost)

### *War Wolves*

War Wolves are the result of Pentex experimentation on captured Garou. Using genetic material from their subjects, scientists have created monstrous killing machines that have neither morals nor any need to understand their prey. They are created from dogs and wolves who are genetically altered with Garou DNA, giving them fighting abilities as savage as the Garou and immunity to the Delirium. Only the flesh of Garou or Kinfolk satisfies their constant, gnawing hunger and strengthens them. Other meat is nourishing, but it does not strengthen and satisfy them the same way. Like wolves, they hunt in packs. Their very existence is considered an insult to Garou everywhere, and they are the most terrible threats against their kin.

War Wolves look like mangy, starving wolves or dogs with a variety of coat colors and patterns. In Crinos, they still have a slightly starved look but one tempered with savagery. They smell faintly of the Wurm, and often of sickness as well, but they smell just enough of wolves that few Kinfolk recognize the danger until it's too late. While they can shift forms, they are not part spirit like true Garou. Therefore, they can manage only two forms — Crinos and Lupus. They have no Gnosis, they cannot use Gifts, and they are not Garou in even the broadest of definitions. Silver affects them in the same way it affects Garou, and they can take on the best Ahroun, but in the end, they are not much different than fomori who think they're werewolves.



**Attributes:** *Brawny, Brutal x 2, Cunning x 2, Determined, Dexterous, Enduring x 2, Intimidating x 3, Quick x 2, Vigorous, Wily x 2*

(Add Crinos or Lupus form modifiers as normal)

**Abilities:** *Athletics x 2, Brawl, Dodge, Primal-Urge, Stealth, Survival x 2*  
Rage 6, Willpower 6

**Health Levels:** As per a normal Garou

**Attacks:** Claw and bite (aggravated damage)

**Powers:** *Immunity to Delirium, Regeneration*

### *The First Ronin*

All Garou are told the story of the First Ronin, who was also the first metis. Legends say that he was ostracized and banished for the sins of his parents, then driven into the wilderness to die while still a pup. Legends also say that the Wyrn came to him, offering him friendship, and the grateful pup allied himself with the Corrupter. The Wyrn taught the deformed cub all that he needed to know to survive under any circumstance, and the lessons have not been wasted.

Many Garou think that the story is just that — a cautionary tale about treating metis with respect, and a warning against walking alone. Those who have encountered the First Ronin, however, know that this tale is anything but. Many would-be Ronin have had their quest end in vicious bloody death, as the First Ronin exacts retribution against what was done to him.

The First Ronin is said to stand almost 12 feet tall in Crinos form (the only shape anyone has ever seen him wear). His ghost-white skin is patterned with glyphs that describe the name and legend of whatever Garou he is facing. He is armed with silver claws and teeth that blacken the surrounding skin as they burn. His only expressions are hatred, rage and malice — he is without a shred of compassion for any creature, especially Garou. He never speaks, although he can be forced. His corruption is complete, and he will commit whatever atrocity his master commands of him.

The First Ronin cannot be captured, but it is possible to escape him. He cannot be killed, but legends claim that some of the mightiest Garou have managed to best him (unfortunately, there are twice as many legends about how many mighty Garou fell before him). One of the deadliest foes any Garou could face, he is not something to throw at inexperienced Garou, unless the Storyteller wants to rack up a body count. A pack of cliath looking for the First Ronin is comparable to a bunch of kindergartners going out to find a grizzly bear — with similar results. If they're very lucky, they won't find anything. If they do encounter the First Ronin, it may be more worthwhile to scare them witless rather than butchering them.

**Traits:** The First Ronin is at least as strong as whatever opponent he faces, and he knows every tribal Gift up to the Advanced level. He enjoys tormenting his prey, giving them just enough harrying to worry them about the coming fight. Single opponents he will face head-on; multiple opponents face hit-and-run attacks.



## Buzzards and Other Fallen Changing Breeds

The Garou might be the only changers who have an entire tribe devoted to their great enemy, yet other changers have their individuals. The Wyrms aren't picky about who accepts its devotion, and if it happens to be another Changing Breed or a Garou enemy, so much the better. These poor souls are proof that *no one* is immune to the Wyrms' blandishments. Their presence in a story should encourage a shudder and a considering: "There, but for the grace of Gaia..."

### *Buzzards (Fallen Corax)*

Just as Corax are not "born," but are carefully crafted from the mystical union between human or raven host and spirit egg, so fallen Corax are formed from a grotesque perversion of the *Rite of the Fetish Egg*.

Making a Buzzard involves locating a spirit egg, which is not an easy task since these rare and treasured items — the spiritual essence of true Corax — are guarded jealously. Usually, Black Spiral Dancers are the culprits in the theft of a spirit egg. As the prize is carried back to Malfeas, the spiritual connection of the egg begins to fray and finally snaps. This traumatic experience not only severs the mystical connection between the spirit egg and its original host but tends to drive the human or raven linked to it incurably insane.

One of two things happens when the connection breaks. Either the substance of the egg dissipates so that the Corax-stuff disappears and the egg becomes an empty shell (the best-case scenario), or else the kidnapers make it back to Malfeas with the egg relatively intact (the worst-case scenario).

Safely ensconced in Malfeas, the kidnapers place the egg, along with a stolen human infant, into a "birthing pit." *The Rite of the Broken Wing* takes place, mocking in its form the sacred *Rite of the Fetish Egg* that originally linked the Corax-to-be with its human or raven counterpart. If the rite fails, the egg's essence fades and the mortal child dies. If the rite succeeds, the human and egg form a bond, and a false Corax (or Buzzard) emerges.

Since Buzzards resemble Corax closely except for their twisted origins and even more twisted upbringing, they still retain Gnosis, renown and other characteristics of their breed. They have not, like Black Spiral Dancers, walked the Black Spiral, and they do not serve as hosts for Banes. They are simply twisted, perverted Corax who work for the Wyrms.

Buzzards usually grow up in the company of Black Spiral Dancers or other Wyrms-driven shapeshifters. They learn from their earliest age whatever Corax lore their mentors have managed to acquire. Usually, these pathetic individuals are driven mad from infancy due to the trauma of their creation, which makes them fit company for their caregivers, who are often insane themselves. Young Buzzards learn the arts of sabotage, assassination, stealth and reconnaissance along with whatever mystical rites they can absorb. They



### *Sunbane: The Mark of Helios' Wrath*

Both Mokolé and Corax who work for the Wyrms often suffer visible marks of Helios' displeasure in the form of lingering or mysterious illnesses or skin conditions. Referred to as Sunbane, Sun's rage manifests as disfiguring molts, skin cancer, appearance-destroying burns and even leprosy — all blatant announcements that the marked individuals have fallen afoul of Helios. Storytellers should use Sunbane as a constant threat for Buzzards and Dumenkara, but they should invoke this curse only in extreme circumstances or to exercise some form of control over antagonist characters. Diseases that affect the skin may cause feathers to fall out, hampering winged characters' ability to fly, or they may damage scales, weakening a character's defenses until the scales grow back.

are taught to operate solo, as befits any true Corax, for their job is to serve as a spy and an infiltrator.

In their late teen years, Buzzards are turned out into the world to make their way as best as they can, inserting themselves where they are able into Corax society. As spies, they absorb as much information as they can then (true to their quasi-Corax nature) blurt it out to the first servant of the Wyrms that they happen upon. Of primary importance to Black Spiral Dancers is the discovery, through the spying efforts of their Buzzard flunkies, of how much the Corax know of what the minions of the Wyrms are up to. This information is prized above inconsequential tidbits of Corax comings and goings.

Buzzards also work as agents of misinformation and disorganization. Breaking up the smooth workings of Corax society gains kudos for Buzzards from their Black Spiral masters. General espionage work also falls under the provenance of Buzzards, who try to get as close as possible to moots and other gatherings of Changing Breeds to find out what the enemies of the Wyrms are up to.

Lastly, Corax scour the Umbra searching for other spirit eggs. For some reason, Buzzards cannot touch these eggs themselves, but they generally mark their location and then return leading a group of Black Spirals who do the dirty deed.

### *Systems*

The *Rite of the Broken Wing* forces together human and Corax into an uncomfortable mix that holds a few telltale signs to observant onlookers that something is "not quite right with that bird." Most Buzzards display some nervous tics, weird mannerisms or other odd behavior patterns. Each Buzzard character begins with one derangement and two Negative Physical Traits, such as *Clumsy*, *Nervous* or something equally appropriate. In addition, many



Buzzards display some form of metis physical deformity such as a total lack of feathers. Buzzards all possess one metis deformity (see **Laws of the Wild** for examples, and adapt where necessary).

Buzzards are rejected by both Raven and Helios, who will not serve as totem spirits for them. In addition, Buzzards, along with fallen Mokolé, may suffer the effects of Sunbane should they prove so offensive to Helios that he decides to mark them with the signs of his displeasure.

### Gifts

Buzzards may not learn the following Gifts: *Raven's Gleaning*, *Truth of Gaia*, *Word Beyond*, *Sky's Beneficence*, *Swallow's Return*, *Sun's Guard*, *Helios' Child*, *Moments of Eclipse* or *Theft of Stars*. They do, however, have their own Gifts, either stolen from or taught by Banes and fallen bird spirits.

#### Basic Gifts

- **Targeted Heave:** This power is one of the most disgusting weapons that a Buzzard can make use of. By winning a Physical Challenge, the Buzzard can disgorge the contents of his stomach — including digestive juices — at a target up to 10 feet away. If the victim cannot dodge the attack, she takes two health levels of lethal damage. Anyone struck by this attack must also spend a Willpower Trait to resist stopping whatever they are doing and gagging from disgust and revulsion.

- **Poisoned Flesh:** The use of this Gift allows the Buzzard to taint the meat of a corpse — human, animal, roadkill or any other dead creature — rendering it poisonous. Even creatures that are used to eating carrion can gain no sustenance from meat subjected to *Poisoned Flesh*. The Buzzard spends a Willpower Trait and spits on the targeted corpse. Success in a Social Challenge means that the meat becomes highly poisonous. Shapechangers partaking of flesh affected by this Gift become violently ill for 24 hours unless they succeed in a Physical Test. In any case, a character takes one health level of lethal damage (which heals normally) from ingesting the tainted meat. Humans and animals suffer three levels of lethal damage. The sickness includes vomiting, dizziness and sometimes hallucinations. The victim also smells of the Wyrn until her sickness is purged.

#### Intermediate Gifts

- **Plague Feather:** Through the use of this Gift, the Buzzard permeates one of his pinfeathers with a contagious disease and leaves it behind to entrap the unwary. The first three people to touch this feather fall prey to this disease. Children are particularly vulnerable and tend to infect their parents and playmates. The Buzzard must spend a point of Gnosis and a point of Willpower as well as succeed in a Social Challenge to infuse the target feather with the disease. The feather then infects the next three individuals who touch it with their bare hands. Garou and other shapeshifters may resist the disease with a successful Physical Challenge, or they may use *Resist Toxin* to cure themselves once they have caught the disease. Normal humans have no inherent resistance, and the disease runs its normal course unless magical healing is used on them.





## Rites

Buzzards may not learn the *Rite of the Sun's Bright Ray* or any other rite that deals with Raven or Helios in particular. They do have a pair of mystical rites that are unique to their fallen nature.

### Basic Rites

- **Rite of the Closed Eye:** In a parody of the Corax's ability to glean truth from the eyes of the dead, this rite enables those who perform it to wipe the memory from the eyes of a corpse. Any Corax who attempts to drink from an eye marked by this rite receives a potentially fatal shock. The rite takes 15 minutes for one Buzzard to complete. Additional participants can speed up the process by five minutes per participant, although the rite takes a minimum of five minutes to complete. At the end of the rite, any useful memories disappear from the corpse's eyes. In place of the memories, the rite substitutes a gut-wrenching vision of sheer horror. A Corax who drinks from the eye of a rite-tainted corpse receives the vision in all its visceral reality, and he must succeed in a Willpower Challenge or go temporarily mad with the vision, becoming unable to do anything except react to the horror for five minutes.

### Intermediate Rites

- **Rite of the Lowered Sky:** When performed properly, this rite makes tracking from above impossible, and it even restricts a Corax's ability to fly. The "sky" is actually a bank of foul-smelling fog created by the rite. This mass of greenish fumes hangs in the air and obscures sight, fouls tracking by scent and mutes sound. This miasmic mess can hang over an entire city, alerting true Corax to the presence of Buzzards nearby. This rite takes an hour of game time to complete, and it requires that four Buzzards work together. Each must spend at least one Gnosis Trait to create the fog. Each additional Gnosis Trait expended allows the rite's effects to persist for an hour after its normal duration would expire. Under its effects, anyone attempting a Mental Challenge that involves the senses (such as supernatural hearing or smell) suffers a two-Trait penalty. Those out in the miasma will endure the choking smell on their clothes and hair for at least two days.

## Storyteller Section

Buzzards make excellent foils for Storytellers in Changing Breeds chronicles. Many of the other shapeshifters find the talkative Corax downright annoying, so they tend to ignore the ones that seem to hang around the fringes. These otherwise alert and suspicious characters may make the mistake of assuming that the scruffy-looking "birdbrain" lurking nearby is harmless. On the other hand, players may rely on Corax as messengers. Imaging their surprise when one of these messengers turns out to be taking their messages to the wrong people or returning with false replies.

**Who's Got the Egg?** — A spirit egg disappears from its hiding place. A "friendly" Corax offers to help the search party track down the kidnappers, claiming that she saw a group of nasty-looking individuals carrying an egg-



shaped object with them. If the searchers believe the “Corax,” they may end up as reluctant “guests” at a Buzzard’s baby shower.

**Oversight** — A caern finds that someone has been leaking information of various sorts to the wrong people. All the usual suspects are accounted for. Only the unusual ones remain and it seems that the spy has aerial connections.

**Redemption** — A group of Corax captures a Buzzard and attempts to return it to Helios and Raven. Can these Corax succeed, or is this a ploy to waste their time while their enemies converge?

## *Hishtpah (Fallen Cats)*

Seductive darkness, keeper of mysteries — Cahlash, Father of Night, beckons to his children, the Bastet. As attractive as shadows and sunlight, those captured by his song are lost. Hisses, snarls and narrowed eyes are all a part of the Bastet term for Hishtpah, given to those cats corrupted by the Asura, known to the Garou as Banes.

For these corrupted creatures, nothing matters but the secrets they hold and the misfortune and misery that they cause by spreading misinformation and passing on painful truths to any who listen. Sadly, the Bastet who are most renowned for cleverness are those seduced most frequently. For most Hishtpah, the path of corruption comes from an overwhelming need to know. Curiosity does not kill these cats — it seduces, as Cahlash whispers tempting offers of greater power, greater mysteries, thereby drawing Bastet into situations meant to taint their natures and destroy their minds.

While many would look to the Bubasti as likely Hishtpah, there is no tribe that is particularly susceptible (or immune) to Cahlash’s song. Father Night is all too aware of what will seduce each cat. For the Balaam, it might be hidden lore to drive the invaders from their homelands, while the Simba might be drawn to knowledge that would ensure the final destruction of the Ajaba. Even more horrible are those wise cats who walk into the darkness unaware and with the best of intentions, seeking lore to help in the fight against Cahlash or other enemies. Many Khan and Bagheera have been lost in such a manner.

When a Bastet can no longer withstand the whispers, the delightful, horrific possibility of discovering *something* hidden that he will otherwise never know, other Hishtpah are drawn to the area. Forming into a frightening parody of a Garou pack, they circle their prey. Claws flashing, teeth bared in rictus grins, the Hishtpah attack, each wounding and licking their willing convert by turn. When they have finished, the fallen one has been encased in a shell of saliva and blood. Trapped within this chitinous mass, the newly formed Hishtpah listens intently as those who change her whisper the dark secrets of the Unmaker. Few escape remotely sane.

Playing one of the Hishtpah is a challenge. Seeking the hidden, as all Bastet do, each must find a way to subvert and twist their secrets and then spread the information — insidiously — while still pretending to be the oh-so-mysterious and independent creature of Nala and Selene. Spotting the



Hishtpah can be difficult. Born in pain, befouled beneath their skin, they still continue to present an elegant and attractive appearance — although often going beyond the average in their attempts to stay scrupulously pristine, which they never truly feel again.

## Gifts

Bastet may not learn the following Gifts: *Asuras' Bane*, *Banish Cahlash's Brood*, *Banish Sickness*, *Blinding Moonbeam Gaze*, *Chariot of Lions*, *Jump to the Moon*, *Redeem the Waste* or *Righteous Gaze*. In addition, Storytellers may wish to modify the effects of other Gifts to reflect the Hishtpah's new allegiances. The following Gift is unique to the Hishtpah.

### Intermediate Gift

- **Sway of the Hypnotic Serpent:** This Gift provides the Hishtpah with a seductive grace and flowing movement that allows her to hypnotize her opponent and gain one secret without the other realizing that the information has been taken. Hishtpah often use this Gift in seduction, dance or in places where their movements will not be noticed. The Hishtpah must spend five minutes seducing her target and spend a Gnosis Trait. After making the seduction, she makes a Static Mental Challenge with her target. (Difficulty is the target's Willpower; retest with *Subterfuge*. The difficulty may be reduced with appropriate Abilities.) With success, the character may ask for one "secret" (Nature, Primary Attribute category, one Flaw or one derangement), and the target must answer truthfully. Upon answering, the target forgets both that he was asked a question and that he answered.

## Rites

Although the Hishtpah still make use of the rites they learned before their corruption, they have modified these rites to reflect their warped natures. In addition, some of the rites differ in their effects. With each successive performance of the *Rite of Nine Lives*, the targeted Hishtpah returns looking more tattered and bearing evidence of rot and decay about her person. Storytellers may wish to make other adjustments to Bastet rites for use with their Hishtpah characters or antagonists. The Hishtpah may not successfully perform the *Rite of Exile*. The following rite is unique to the Hishtpah, and it details the process of transforming a Bastet into one of the children of Cahlash.

### Intermediate Rite

- **Rite of the Unmaker's Song:** For a Bastet to become a Hishtpah requires at least three other Hishtpah to perform the ritual. At least two of the Hishtpah involved in the ritual must win a Social Challenge. Performing it on an unwilling participant requires not only a Social Challenge, but also a Physical Challenge against the unwilling Bastet. If the rite is successful, the Hishtpah gains one Social Trait — generally *Seductive*, *Beguiling* or *Magnetic* — and he exudes an air of mystery that is nearly palpable to those around him. He also gains a derangement — see the derangements detailed in *Laws of the Wild*.



## Storyteller Section

The following provide some ideas for using Hishtpah in a story or chronicle.

**The Bait** — “Young Bubasti seeks same for secret exchange and possibly more.” A group of “Bastet” has come asking for assistance in discovering a hidden powerful talisman, and they are offering to share secrets in exchange for the characters’ help.

**Father’s Fall** — What has become of the Mtolo of a pride of Simba? His children have noticed that their father has grown solitary and snappish. Then one caught him in a lie that caused great trouble in the pride. Now they (or other Bastet with reason to care) must follow him and discover where he goes and what he does each night at the moon’s setting or set the stage to challenge him to a battle to the death for leadership of the pride. Is there a way to save him?

**Conundrum** — At a Qualmi riddling contest, one contestant poses riddles that no one can solve. This mysterious Bastet offers to share his answers if those to whom he divulges the secrets prove willing to help him perform a secret ritual.

## Purgers (Fallen Bears)


Purgers hear the world scream in pain. Their long sleep was haunted by it. Now it is time for a new beginning. Now is the time for the world to be purged of all so that it may be reborn from the ashes.

The Gurahl went to sleep in order to escape the fury that threatened them during the War of Rage. Many went to this sleep already enraged at the foolishness of the Garou. Purgers allowed that rage to consume them as they slept. In their dreams they saw atrocity after atrocity, and they watched the Garou perpetrate, ignore or be ineffective against the rape of the land. The anger that was within them boiled slowly and deeply into their souls until it was all they could see, all they could remember. They woke ready to destroy the world in order to cleanse it, convinced that no living being is worthy of saving. If the world were destroyed, it could be born again from the ashes of the old one. They accept that they must kill *everything* in the world in order for it to be reborn to Gaia’s original intentions.

The Purgers have abandoned their roles as healers and teachers. They work to bring about the End Days and to ensure that nothing escapes the cleansing fires of the Apocalypse. To achieve this end, they dedicate all their talents and energy to destructive arts. They use a rite of tainting to force other changers away from caerns and other pure lands. They also work to taint food supplies, water and the air in order to purge the human population. They normally work alone, but they can work with others for a common goal. When not moving behind the scenes spreading their poisons, they delight in killing sprees.

## Systems

Purgers have turned their backs on their totem, so the Gifts that they use are twisted. Wherever a Gurahl Gift would heal, theirs harms. Where a



Gurahl Gift would cleanse, theirs taints. The same is true of their rites. They are the same rites as those they learned, but these rites are skewed to bring about corruption and death.

### *Storyteller Section*

In most cases, Purgers operate alone, and most likely in a rural setting where they might wreak devastation. They could work with a group for a common goal if they were working against a large sept or city. Some ideas for using Purgers in a chronicle include:

**Infiltration** — A Purger pretends to be an ally to a local sept. The Garou may wonder what's going on when birds and other small animals all around their caern begin dying. Has their caern already been poisoned past saving?

**No Parking** — Garou feel taint spreading from a nearby national park. The Purger is working as a park ranger. When the Garou move in to stop the depredations, the Purger uses the opportunity to kidnap selected Garou for torture, tainting and eventual dismemberment.

**For the Children** — A local day care center frequented by Kinfolk has an outbreak among workers and children of a foul disease that stumps all the doctors. Unless stopped, the Purger may succeed in killing off the new generation of potential Garou.

## *The Dumenkara (Fallen Reptiles)*

"Send to us a whisper of memories forgotten. Give us hope for history's return." As keepers of memory, each Mokolé traces a thread of memories that leads to a time of prehistory. For the servants of the Dissolver, known to the Garou as the Wyrms, creating the Dumenkara — Bane-tainted Mokolé — provides a method to corrupt and destroy these millennia-long weavings of history.

As the Mokolé pride themselves on being the only tribe dedicated to both Sun and Moon, the Dumenkara call to neither, denying their past, shunning traditions as lies and trickery. Each Dumenkara finds himself lost in a different fashion, although most are corrupted when they disavow the lessons that their memories attempt to teach them. From this beginning comes the opening of their hearts to Banes lying in wait to take control. Note that, like the Buzzards, Dumenkara may suffer the visible effects of their rejection of Helios.

For the Dumenkara, the Dissolver has a special torment. The Bane within takes away the surety of their beliefs, their memories and twists all into darker reflections. A friend saved your life? No — he actually meant to kill you, and you had to claw your way back to safety on your own. Traditions state that blood-drinkers are not to be trusted? Why, when you clearly remember exchanging memories with one? For the Dumenkara, nothing is sacred. They live to distort and destroy beliefs and practices that have been handed down throughout history — for to them, history is a lie. Their greatest achievements are to come together long enough to wipe out a local clutch — destroying group memories formed over countless millennia. Often the Dumenkara seek



out Mokolé eggs and offspring — which make fine tender meals or may be used in mock “rituals” devised on a whim.

Playing a Dumenkara — especially one surrounded by other, more tradition-bound werereatures — can be difficult and dangerous, but it’s a lot of fun. Slithering up to a pack of Garou in the midst of a special rite and ruining their solemn occasion — blaming it on the local clutch, or burning the local public library to the ground — all in a day’s play.

When a Mokolé becomes Bane-tainted, he gains one Negative Mental Trait as his memories become diffused and twisted, and he loses the respect for the traditions that hold his people together. More tragic than a Pranastajjanika (a Mokolé that has lost his memory through other means), the Dumenkara cannot regain his memories because they are not lost to him — only corrupted. Flaws such as *Confused* and *Absent-Minded* and the Negative Trait *Untrustworthy* are particularly appropriate. Conversely, the Dumenkara gains one Physical Trait, since he no longer spends time analyzing his experiences or traditions before taking action, usually whatever impulse (or the Bane) insists he do. A Mokolé with *Mnesis* is in even worse trouble — *Mnesis* merely ensures that the Mokolé’s corrupted memories stretch even farther, and may even spread her corruption through inwitting or other sharing of memory.

Certain rites are more appropriate to the Dumenkara: *Last Communion*, *The Bones of Time* and *Burn the Library* all provide methods for stealing or destroying the memories of others. Particularly talented Dumenkara enter the memory realms of the Umbra in order to destroy and distort others’ memories. They change history either on a whim or to match the distortions within their own minds.

### ***Storyteller Section***

Dumenkara are powerful creatures (a Bane-tainted Archid should give most characters nightmares for weeks), and they should be used sparingly in a chronicle. Mature players should work along with the Storytellers to be certain that chronicles are not damaged beyond repair and players made personally angry by choices the Dumenkara’s player makes.

**One of These Things is Not Like the Others** — A clutch of Mokolé and/or others, begins to feel as though their memories are becoming confused about a certain murder that they are investigating. Each of them remembers something very different from the others. Good thing the wise old dragon down the road is willing to come help them sort the situation out.

**Memories of Shadow** — Several Umbral travelers decide to help their Mokolé friend with his *Mnesis* Quest — a dangerous thing on its own — but why is he acting so oddly?

**Don’t Count Your Eggs** — A very fertile mating has given the clutch a pair of Unktehi eggs. Now the eggs are missing, and the mother is frantic. No one but members of the clutch had access to her eggs. Hey! Where did that one clutch member say she was going yesterday?



## *Bitter-Grins (Fallen Coyotes)*

Some changing creatures would argue that the Nuwisha don't need to fall to corruption to be worthy of death. Their pranks and attitude are enough to condemn them. Others wonder if the coyotes *can* fall to the Wyrms' blandishments. Sadly, the answer is yes.

Nuwisha freely admit to a curiosity that seems boundless. According to their legends, the Wyrms has hated Coyote from the earliest of times. Some say it was because Coyote laughed at Wyrms' original predicament, while others believe that it's because the Trickster pokes his nose where even the Wyrms rarely crawls. Regardless, Wyrms lays traps for Coyote's unwary children, and some few do fall into them. The followers of Ti Malice are most susceptible, since they deal with the machinations of the Wyrms daily, but any who forget Coyote's lessons or become disheartened or disillusioned can be led astray.

Nuwisha who fall to the Wyrms are known to their brethren as Bitter-Grins. They display a wide variety of personalities, but most exhibit a twisted sense of humor, from the cynical bitter wit to the sadistic jester whose pranks prove fatal. The particular face of Coyote that the Nuwisha followed most closely before she fell gives some indication of her current personality quirks. For instance, a fallen follower of Xochipilli might decide that beating the odds oneself pales in comparison to the joy found in putting others into situations where the odds of survival are impossibly long, then making bets on the outcome.

Fallen Nuwisha abandon their role as teachers and watchers. They sow chaos and destruction in either bitter rage or with insane delight. While a follower of Ti Malice might slip into a factory, cross-wire the electrical system and watch gleefully while a machine explodes and kills several workers, a fallen Nuwisha would wait until the factory was filled to capacity, lock all the exits and start a fire designed to gut the entire building. Fallen ones have decided that the world is not worth saving, humans are not worth teaching, and the other changers are chumps for fighting the inevitable. They either want revenge or they want to have as much ironic and deadly fun as possible at the world's expense.

Pride is normally the trap that ensnares the Garou. It works on Nuwisha as well. More often, though, their curiosity leads them into corruption. Those brought down by pride become embittered that their teachings go unheeded as their lessons cause anger in those that they hoped to enlighten. Those Nuwisha who succumb to curiosity tumble into the same darkness as the Hishtpah. Unlike the cats, however, Nuwisha undergo no special rituals, nor (most disturbingly) are Bitter-Grins easy to spot. Most other changers feel that the Nuwisha are on the verge anyway due to their incessant tomfoolery, and they pay little heed to the change in severity of such actions.



## *Storyteller Section*

Storytellers can use the following to introduce Bitter-Grins into a story or chronicle. While Nuwisha are usually solitary, Bitter-Grins may have learned the usefulness of allies like themselves. Then again, can they really trust one another not to indulge in deadly one-upsmanship in the name of humor?

**Cuckoo's Nest** — Other changers are waiting for the arrival of a Nuwisha who is renowned for his wit and wisdom. The Nuwisha arrives and ironic, twisted events occur that injure some of the participants or cause them to withdraw from the group in anger or distrust.

**The Search** — A sept loses some of its assets when young Garou disappear during missions. The Bitter-Grin, who claims to have been watching the caern for some time offers to help locate the missing pups. More may disappear if his offer is accepted....

**The Enemy of My Enemy is Still My Enemy** — Enemies of other changers seem to know all about them, including defenses and other secret information. The Bitter-Grin spy who clued the foes in smiles and prepares to call in yet a third interested party.

## *The Breakers (Fallen Spiders)*

Banes seeking a home within the webbed mind of an Ananasi may find themselves surprised by the comfortable fit. Come into my parlor, indeed....

The Ananasi are the most accepting werewolf of the necessity and symmetry created by the existence of the Wyrms. Having three aspects, one each dedicated to the Weaver, Wyld and Wyrms, they do not hate the Wyrms. In fact the Hatar, their warrior aspect, is dedicated to furthering the original purpose of the Wyrms — controlled destruction so that the pattern of the universe may be improved. Very few Ananasi ever fall prey to a Bane's control, but somehow, those that do still consistently follow inverted versions of their original patterning in the Great Web.

First are the Kumoti, those dedicated to the Wyld. When broken by the corruption of a Bane, these Ananasi lose much of their logic and emotional steadiness, becoming increasingly chaotic. As their Bane takes control, these spiders build webs of chaos-destroying patterns around them as they gradually go insane. Most who are discovered are hunted down and destroyed, although the Ananasi have often watched patiently to see the patterns that form during their fall into madness.

Secondly the Tenere, those of the Weaver aspect. These creatures become painfully obsessed by the encroaching taint of the Wyrms, fighting their undeniable spiral into corruption by creating more and more elaborate weavings. Often lauded at first for their industry and artistic enthusiasm, their impossible striving for excess soon gives observant untainted sisters a sign of their corruption.





Lastly, the Hatar, those dedicated to serve the Wyrms. As was stated previously, few Hatar have ever been corrupted by Banes... or have they? Those few are rarely detected. As warriors for the Wyrms, the fact that the Ananasi have become a bit more violent, a touch more emotionally unstable, does not often lead to an investigation. These Bane-infested creatures watch and work as spies within a spy stronghold. As double-agents among the spiders and friends to Pentex and Black Spirals, they watch and wait.

Bane-tainted Ananasi have become more than watchers. They work to break and change the patterns around them, while continuing to weave their hidden corruption. Although they (at least those of the Wyld and Weaver) will eventually fall into a madness that leads to their detection, they may still find ways to distort the workings of the Great Web around them for a while.

Playing a Breaker requires subtlety. If such a character is part of a chronicle, her downward spiral into madness should come as a gradual change. An odd mannerism here, a raised voice there, and eventually companions will discover the horror within their midst.

### *Building the Pattern*

When an Ananasi becomes a Breaker, she gains one Social Trait to represent her increased emotionality, while losing one Mental Trait, a sign of her beginning downward spiral into madness. Many also gain the derangement *Obsession* and the Flaw: *Compulsion*. Otherwise, the Ananasi does not change.

### *Storyteller Section*

The following ideas may help Storytellers insert fallen Ananasi in their chronicles.

**Help me...help meeee** — One of the local Garou tribes has spoken of a spider cult, which has formed in the dark hills near their sept. Realizing that the Garou will quite probably go in and destroy whatever they find, a group of Ananasi goes to investigate while the werewolves discuss what to do.

**Threads of Nothing** — One of the Plicare, a wise woman of the area, has begun a new project. Now bodies are being discovered, human bodies, drained of blood and left where the local police can get nervous. A group of characters are drafted to go visit the wise woman and see just what she has invented.

**Shadow of the Great Web** — The Ananasi have discovered several strange patterns in the Great Web nearby. Within the pattern lie strands connected to all the different Changing Breeds as well as a shadow of Bane-taint. A group of characters must go into the Umbra to explore the patterns and figure out what is causing this change before it is too late.



## *Vermin (Fallen Rats)*

Most other changers already consider the Ratkin corrupt. Their role in the world is to restore the balance by whatever means necessary, and their use of plague as a tool revolts most other shapeshifters.

Vermin, the fallen Ratkin, no longer care even about the survival of other Ratkin. They want to kill and kill again, as often as possible. They don't even care if they destroy themselves as long as they take a good body count with them. Banes infesting Vermin find hosts eager to take up the cause of murder and mayhem, probably less for the Wyrms's sake and far more for the pleasure of killing.

Vermin hear the voices of the rat spirits and see memories of the War of Rage over and over. They seek vengeance — particularly against the Garou — by spreading sickness and disease wherever they go. These diseases even affect other changers, in fact, some seem made to affect changers in particular.

Ratkin who survive the Birthing Plague alone and those who are later consumed by Rage are the ones most susceptible to becoming Vermin. When birthed alone, Ratkin may become subject to the whispers of Banes who speak of nothing but the Garou's betrayal or pain and death. Those Ratkin who find disillusionment and become ever more angry make themselves targets for the same attacks. The whispers never cease, and the Ratkin's mind eventually snaps, sending her into an inescapable insanity.

### *Handsome is as Handsome Does:*

#### *The Wyrms's Brand*

Frequently, when one of the Changing Breeds falls to the Wyrms, she begins to manifest physical characteristics that indicate her changed status to the watchful observer. These "marks" of the Wyrms need not be obvious (with the exception of the effects of Sunbane), but they should give hints to suspicious characters that something is "not right" with her erstwhile packmate, friend, ally or acquaintance. These marks can be as diverse as skin lesions, an odd smell or minor disfigurements that do not affect Physical Traits. In Crinos form, however, the mark of the Wyrms is much more obvious, resulting in weeping sores, oily rancid fur or feathers, blackened scales and other hideous accoutrements.

Clever players may find ways to conceal these marks, but the Storyteller has the final decision as to whether or not these disguises succeed in fooling others, usually through the use of a Social or Mental Challenge.



## *Storyteller Section*

Here are a few suggestions for Storytellers who want to introduce Vermin into a chronicle:

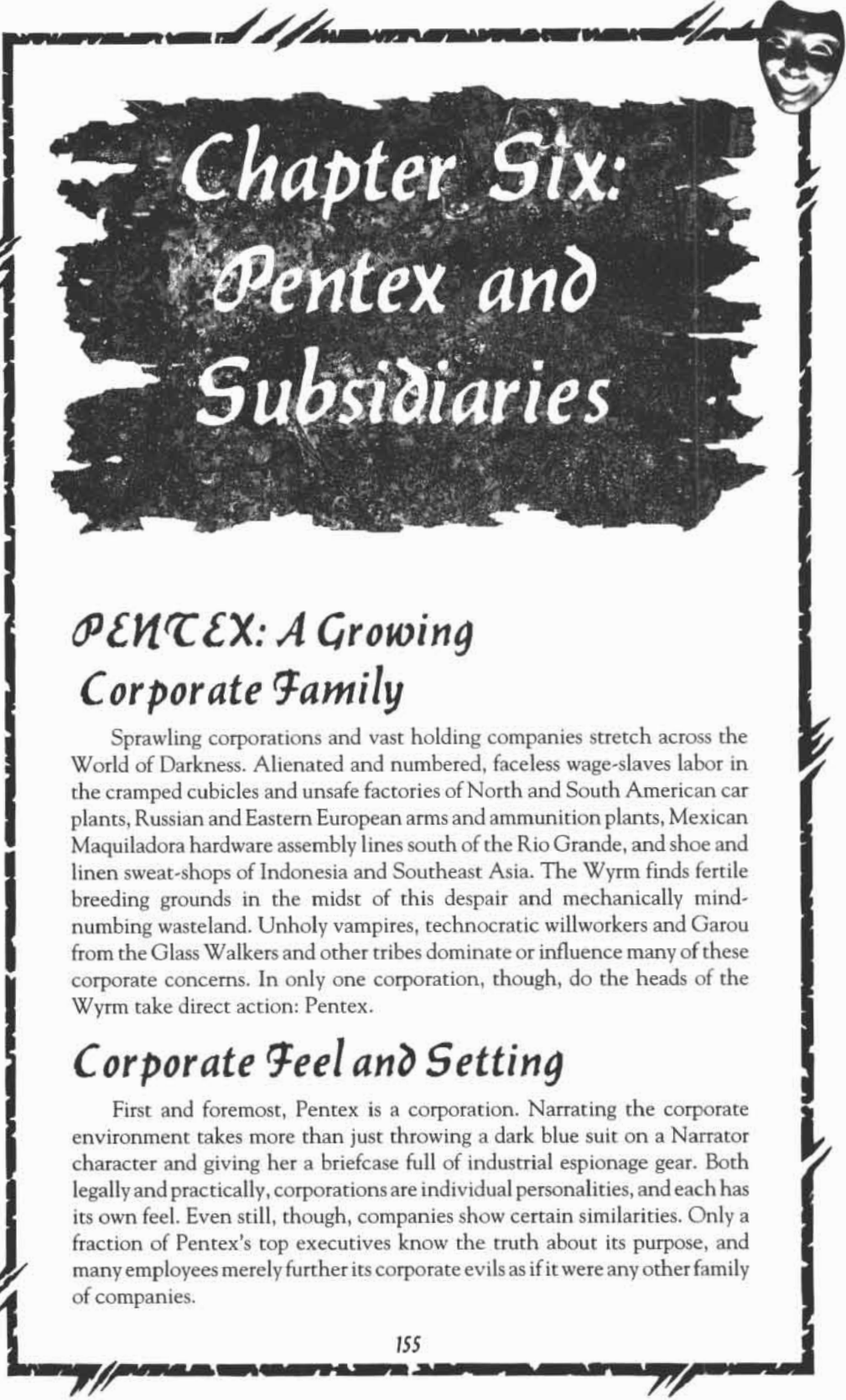
**Water Rats** — A pack of Vermin has infested a city water supply station. To stop the spreading plague, characters must locate the source and deal with the Vermin, making themselves targets of the very plague they seek to stop.

**Germ Warfare** — The Garou notice that sickness is afflicting their Kinfolk, although humans all around them remain unaffected. A Vermin has moved into the area, and he is using this as an opening salvo in a planned war against the Garou.

**Plague Dogs** — Stray dogs are running rabid through the streets, having been infected by a group of Vermin. There seem to be many more strays than usual, however, for the Vermin have raided a nearby lab that does animal testing and loosed test subjects that are crawling with a new designer virus that was designed by Pentex. Here, boy!

NEW





# Chapter Six: Pentex and Subsidiaries

## *PENTEX: A Growing Corporate Family*

Sprawling corporations and vast holding companies stretch across the World of Darkness. Alienated and numbered, faceless wage-slaves labor in the cramped cubicles and unsafe factories of North and South American car plants, Russian and Eastern European arms and ammunition plants, Mexican Maquiladora hardware assembly lines south of the Rio Grande, and shoe and linen sweat-shops of Indonesia and Southeast Asia. The Wyrms find fertile breeding grounds in the midst of this despair and mechanically mind-numbing wasteland. Unholy vampires, technocratic willworkers and Garou from the Glass Walkers and other tribes dominate or influence many of these corporate concerns. In only one corporation, though, do the heads of the Wyrms take direct action: Pentex.

## *Corporate Feel and Setting*

First and foremost, Pentex is a corporation. Narrating the corporate environment takes more than just throwing a dark blue suit on a Narrator character and giving her a briefcase full of industrial espionage gear. Both legally and practically, corporations are individual personalities, and each has its own feel. Even still, though, companies show certain similarities. Only a fraction of Pentex's top executives know the truth about its purpose, and many employees merely further its corporate evils as if it were any other family of companies.



## The Average Employee

Most Pentex employees are ignorant of the Wyrms. They are more likely to be mildly Wyrms-tainted from eating at the company cafeteria than from promulgating the Wyrms' nastiness directly. Most live otherwise upstanding lives, and they may even be inclined to do the right thing when the occasion presents itself. In the head offices, only 10% or so of the corporate staff might actually know about the Wyrms, and these staff members are usually top executives. The rest are little different from employees found at any good-sized company.

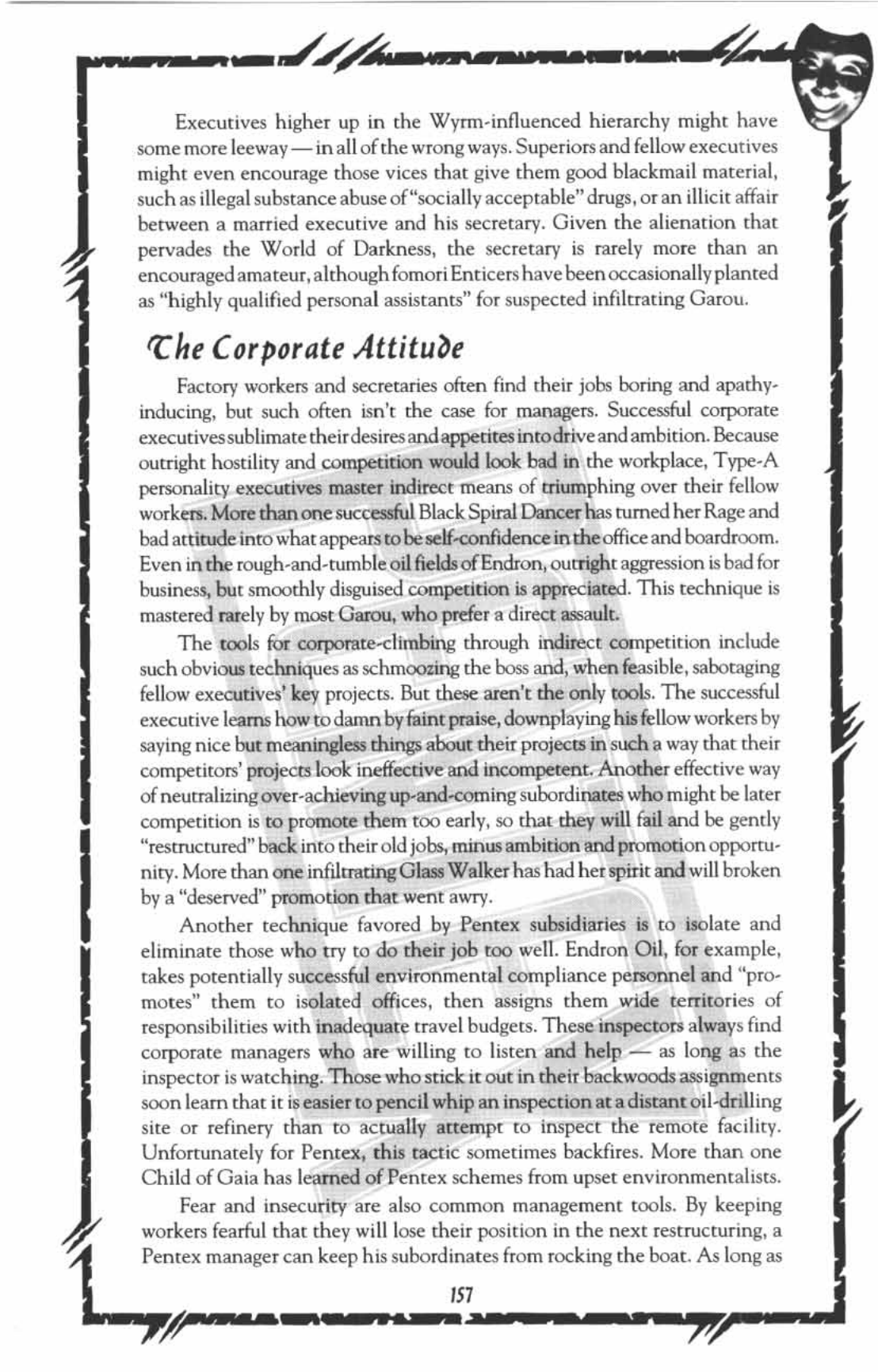
In the subsidiaries, even fewer employees know what the real deal is, even though they may actually be closer to the source. Most are just trying to get by. Of course, there *are* Black Spiral Dancers, Dancer Kinfolk, and fomori ranging from Toads to Enticers to Ferectoi working for Pentex — they just aren't the "usual" employees.

## The Corporate Look

A living body's immune system protects itself from foreign intrusion by recognizing and attacking anything that is *different*. Corporations are the same. From factory worker to secretary to executive, each company stratum has its own look and corporate appearance. If a character who is attempting to impersonate a Pentex executive shows up at a board meeting for Endron Oil looking like lower management in her Oxford shirt and khakis despite the fact that all of the executives are wearing tailored suits, she will stick out as surely as an overweight middle-aged beat cop at an all-night rave. The same holds true for the Kinfolk wearing an Armani suit who tries pass himself off as a lower-level King Breweries official. (What middle management guy can afford Armani?) In each case, corporate employees react by limiting contact with the intruder and attempting to isolate and expel him. An arriving First Team might be the first sign that an infiltrating character's shoes weren't pricey enough for the office.

## Conform, Conform, Conform

Companies couldn't rely on appearance and behavior to identify outside threats if employees didn't share a common corporate look and way of acting. Fortunately or unfortunately, most employees do conform to a common mold. They rarely do so overtly or quickly, except through corporate mission statements and generic dress codes, which are often vague and misleading. Instead, companies rely on small hints, comments during annual appraisals and slightly derogatory comments made in passing about anything too *outré*. In the unstable economies and uncertain job markets of the World of Darkness, many wage-slaves and loyal *sarariman* are quick to catch on and conform. Unusual clothes, hobbies, pastimes, religious views and political leanings are quickly put under wraps or sacrificed to the great god of Job Security.



Executives higher up in the Wyrn-influenced hierarchy might have some more leeway — in all of the wrong ways. Superiors and fellow executives might even encourage those vices that give them good blackmail material, such as illegal substance abuse of “socially acceptable” drugs, or an illicit affair between a married executive and his secretary. Given the alienation that pervades the World of Darkness, the secretary is rarely more than an encouraged amateur, although fomori Enticers have been occasionally planted as “highly qualified personal assistants” for suspected infiltrating Garou.

## *The Corporate Attitude*

Factory workers and secretaries often find their jobs boring and apathy-inducing, but such often isn't the case for managers. Successful corporate executives sublimate their desires and appetites into drive and ambition. Because outright hostility and competition would look bad in the workplace, Type-A personality executives master indirect means of triumphing over their fellow workers. More than one successful Black Spiral Dancer has turned her Rage and bad attitude into what appears to be self-confidence in the office and boardroom. Even in the rough-and-tumble oil fields of Endron, outright aggression is bad for business, but smoothly disguised competition is appreciated. This technique is mastered rarely by most Garou, who prefer a direct assault.

The tools for corporate-climbing through indirect competition include such obvious techniques as schmoozing the boss and, when feasible, sabotaging fellow executives' key projects. But these aren't the only tools. The successful executive learns how to damn by faint praise, downplaying his fellow workers by saying nice but meaningless things about their projects in such a way that their competitors' projects look ineffective and incompetent. Another effective way of neutralizing over-achieving up-and-coming subordinates who might be later competition is to promote them too early, so that they will fail and be gently “restructured” back into their old jobs, minus ambition and promotion opportunity. More than one infiltrating Glass Walker has had her spirit and will broken by a “deserved” promotion that went awry.

Another technique favored by Pentex subsidiaries is to isolate and eliminate those who try to do their job too well. Endron Oil, for example, takes potentially successful environmental compliance personnel and “promotes” them to isolated offices, then assigns them wide territories of responsibilities with inadequate travel budgets. These inspectors always find corporate managers who are willing to listen and help — as long as the inspector is watching. Those who stick it out in their backwoods assignments soon learn that it is easier to pencil whip an inspection at a distant oil-drilling site or refinery than to actually attempt to inspect the remote facility. Unfortunately for Pentex, this tactic sometimes backfires. More than one Child of Gaia has learned of Pentex schemes from upset environmentalists.

Fear and insecurity are also common management tools. By keeping workers fearful that they will lose their position in the next restructuring, a Pentex manager can keep his subordinates from rocking the boat. As long as



workers fear for their next paycheck, they usually won't have time to worry about the company's big picture. The same applies to annual appraisals, bonus programs and sales-commission schemes. Pentex managers usually reward conformity and discourage anything out of the ordinary from the rank-and-file. When even the janitorial staff is expected to be "normal," it is easier to spot intruders, such as the occasional corporate espionage agent or monkeywrencher.

## *The Whole is More than the Sum of the Parts*

A company's interests always reflect the survival and growth of the company, often at the expense of the individual, whether that individual is a janitor or Chairman of the Board of Directors. It is even more true in Pentex, where the agents of the Wyrn can always recruit and corrupt another corporate suit.


For example, as soon as a company's chief executive officer develops an altruistic pattern of spending corporate funds, or sometimes even his own funds, his subordinates and his stockholders and the Board of Directors will begin looking for the return-on-investment of his actions. If he can show in his next quarterly report that his philanthropy generates revenue through public goodwill and lenient treatment from local government officials, he might be forgiven a little humane excess until the next cash-flow or budget crunch, when his philanthropy can be gently curtailed. If he cannot show that his actions generate more revenue and profit, then he will find himself either "corrected" or replaced by someone who does a much better job of listening to her corporate masters.

Pentex companies are much more likely to encourage unsavory executive hobbies such as mild drug use, illegal pornography or sexual excesses that can be used to blackmail straying executives. This may give monkeywrenching characters a way of influencing a Pentex executive... or may become the downfall of a Glass Walker trying to infiltrate a Pentex subsidiary such as the pharmaceutical giant Magadon. No employee is irreplaceable, and this is even more true in Pentex. And sometimes the replacement even looks like the original, but with a more corporate-friendly attitude.

## *Exception to the Rule: Corporate Giveaways*

Pentex *does* sometimes dance the public-relations waltz with token philanthropic deeds when it has to do so: It just limits such expenditures, and taints these goodwill gestures when it can. And sometimes what looks like a goodwill gesture is a move to corner a market and garner a monopoly. There are times when a company will seem to give away a product. Usually, these 'Potlatch' giveaways serve to undermine a competitor or gain an early corner on a budding new market. Think of the Internet browser wars of the 1990s. Consider also the recent moves by Phillip Morris to show how it engages in philanthropy—halting a beer plant's production to bottle drinking water for a flooded town, sending supplies to refugee camps in Bosnia. Most Pentex firms understand this strategy, and they do the same—often with Bane-infected goodies. It's hard for a sept to





try to shut down a project that's giving out free food for the homeless that just happens to be spreading Wyrn-tainted boxed lunches.

## *Mission Statements and Overall Goal*

A publicly owned company's mission statement reflects what its stockholders want, and not necessarily the goals of its top management. In like manner, Pentex's goals of spreading the Wyrn's despair, corruption and destruction isn't published as part of its Annual Report to Stockholders. Instead Pentex pursues its goals in secret. Crime, absenteeism and depression might arise around a Pentex-owned factory or landfill... but rarely because of effects linked directly to Pentex. And while Endron International might be spreading Pentex's influence into the NASCAR circuit, it won't resort to outright sabotage and intimidation; that's what Bane-tainted gasoline and lubricants are for. Pentex is pervasive, persistent and patient. As it spreads, the company is slowly choking the world in its destructive stasis just like the heads of its Master, the Wyrn, are slowly choking Gaia. Among the division and subdivision directors, this is part of the unwritten "Omega Plan," a three-step plan to dominate the world by surreptitiously destroying it, then solving its problems, and then ruling it. And who will stop them?

## *Pentex Jargon*

Partly from Kathryn Mollett's influence, Pentex is up to its ears in management jargon and acronyms. It's part of the whole employee dehumanizing process.

**AQD:** Acquisitions Division, one of the four main divisions of Pentex under the EXD.

**ARD:** Areas of rapid development; refers to growth in overseas subsidiaries.

**DD:** Division Director; refers to heads of the AQD, OPD, PCD and SPD.

**EXD:** Executive Director; oversees the four main divisions of Pentex; controls a highly secret spy and assassin cadre called Team Prime (PRI).

**FIN:** Finance; a subdivision under the PCD.

**HRD:** Human Resource Development; a subdivision under the OPD.

**ICS:** Information Collection Systems; a subdivision under the AQD.

**IL:** Project Iliad; a subdivision under the SPD.

**OD:** Project Odyssey; a subdivision under the SPD.

**OPD:** Operations Division, one of the four main divisions of Pentex under EXD.

**QCE:** Quality Compliance Experts, the watchdogs of the AQD.

**PCD:** Project Coordination Division, one of the four main divisions of Pentex under the EXD.

**PENTEX 2100:** Acronym for Partnership, Energy, Novelty, Technology, Enthusiasm and Excellence; a group of meaningless employee-managed projects designed to eliminate free time.

**PR:** Public Relations; a subdivision under the PCD.

**PRI:** Team Prime, the top-secret spy and assassin cadre controlled by the EXD.



**RD:** Regional Directors; administrators of Pentex subsidiaries around the world under the OPD.

**SAP:** Strategic Actions Plan; a list of goals, objectives and actions for corporate policy.

**SDD:** Subdivision Directors; refers to the heads of PR, FIN, ICS, HRD, IL and OD, all of which operate under the four main divisions of Pentex (AQD, OPD, PCD and SPD).

**SPD:** Special Projects Division; one of the four main divisions of Pentex under the EXD.

**TQM:** Total Quality Management; Pentex uses TQM to build a facade of employee empowerment and influence.

## *Pentex Itself: Headquarters*

Spread around North America and the rest of the world, "Pentex" is used by its employees to refer both to the head holding companies of the multinational conglomerate and the total conglomerate of its subsidiary corporations. This may be confusing... and it's supposed to be. Even so, outsiders are more likely to know the names of Pentex subsidiaries like Circinus, Endron Oil, Herrick's grocery stores or O'Tolley's fast food restaurants than the name Pentex itself, which suits the Wyrms just fine. Looking like any other 21st-century corporation, Pentex offices are found in most major metroplexes, handling basic tax and employee information, and little else.

## *Pentex History and Hierarchies*

Founded as Premium Oil by the ruthless oil tycoon, Jeremiah Lassater, the ancestral company fell under the sway of the Wyrms when Lassater stumbled across a powerful Bane entrapped by Uktena Bane-tenders and freed by drilling done by Lassater's company. Bargaining for his life, Lassater allowed the Bane to influence Premium. After Lassater later committed suicide and his son died, the now powerful oil company came under the leadership of a dedicated businessman, Colin Jenner, in 1913. Restructuring Premium under a five-person Board of Directors, the company became Pentex in 1915. Jenner died in a fiery car crash in 1917, and he was replaced by fellow board member Fulton Clark, a Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk who was later approached by and fell under the sway of his unhealthy Garou relatives. In 1947 Clark made another deal with a different devil — Harold Zettler, a fifth-generation Malkavian *antitribu*. Clark then died in an oil rig fire and was replaced by the current chairman, Peter Culliford. Culliford restructured the Board in 1994 into autonomous divisions and sub-divisions after Garou monkeywrenchers killed several board members. Although he has only been Chairman and then Executive Director of Pentex for a little more than half a century, Culliford is actually much older. Born in the time of Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth, he is over 400 years old.



## *Executive Director (EXD)*

The Executive Director's office oversees Pentex's four divisions: Project Coordination Division (PCD), Acquisitions (AQD), Operations (OPD) and Special Projects (SPD). Despite the 1994 reorganization, the division directors and sub-directors still refer to themselves as the Board of Directors, and they meet monthly. Most of the divisions cooperate extensively. For example, Acquisition's Information Collection Systems (ICS) works extensively with all other divisions, as does the Finance division.

As Executive Director, Peter Culliford rarely exercises his veto powers over proposed policy. Instead, he uses Machiavellian manipulations to control and direct his subordinates. He also has a secret ace up his sleeve: Team Prime, also known as PRI. Secretly recruited after staged "deaths" from other Pentex operations such as Project Iliad, Project Odyssey or Pentex First Teams, Team Prime's dozen or so agents combine the best (or worst) of commando, psychic, techno-geek and spy. Willing to do literally anything for the EXD office, PRI members are fanatically loyal to each other and the EXD.

## *Project Coordination Division (PCD)*

The largest Pentex division, PCD coordinates Pentex's world-wide destructive operations, from Wall Street to Tokyo ghettos to rain forests around the globe. Through both Finance and its Quality Control Experts (QCE), PCD pervades all Pentex operations.

PCD has two major subdivisions: Public Relations (PR) and Finance (FIN). Under James Kiker, an aging South African businessman, PR attempts to *limit* public awareness of Pentex activities. Under Franklin Rubin, who replaced the late Enzo Giovanni, Finance sponsors Pentex activities. Pentex has operated profitably since the late 1800s, so there is usually no shortage of capital funding for promising projects.

## *Acquisitions Division (AQD)*

AQD oversees Pentex's many subsidiaries and coordinates their activities. Blackmail, extortion, assassination and terrorism are considered legitimate business practices by AQD, which gives new meaning to the term "hostile takeover." Controlling Pentex's infamous First Teams, AQD also coordinates activities with the Sabbat and the Black Spiral Dancers. AQD's Information Collection Systems (ICS) helps to coordinate this effort, using everything from computers to psychics and fomori on loan from Projects Iliad and Odyssey. At the heart of ICS' operations is a giant main-frame that has a living Umbral presence of giant glowing networking that stretches like a spider web over more than a city block, with bound and corrupted Pattern Spiders collating and correlating data. Tended and guarded by Black Spiral Dancer Theurges, this web is a well-protected yet still vulnerable spot for ICS.

## *Operations Division (OPD)*

Operations oversees the day-to-day operations of Pentex, from mail to purchasing. Putting efficiency and precision above everything, including



safety, OPD keeps the company running, reflecting the cold and impersonal style of Division Director Adrian Newberry. OPD's Human Resources (HR) oversees hiring, firing and employee orientation and indoctrination. Under Kathryn Mollett, HR excels in creating the illusion of empowerment while crushing the spirit.

### *Special Projects Division (SPD)*

SPD handles the esoteric Pentex research activities: biotechnology, animal and psychological experimentation, creating fomori, testing and using psychic phenomenon and promoting Wyrms taints and Bane manifestations. Needless to say, Pentex's already tight security is tightest among this division, whose director is a Malkavian *antitribu* Methuselah known as Harold Zettler. Under the guidance of its subdivision director Francesco, a lupus Black Spiral Dancer Philodox, SPD's Project Iliad (IL) creates and trains fomori, housing them in quasi-military barracks. While only one out of eight or so of Project Iliad's fomori can pass as human, these fomori make ideal candidates for First Teams. Project Odyssey (OD), on the other hand, focuses on psychic powers such as telepathy and telekinesis, carefully guided by Japanese business tycoon Kiro Yamazaki. OD personnel will gladly kidnap or blackmail potential recruits who do not volunteer freely. A small offshoot, Project Aeneid, combines OD and IL's efforts by binding a Mind-Feeder Bane into a psychic host. Doing so enhances the host's powers, but the resulting psychic fomori develops an addiction to human brains. Although it is the smallest of Pentex's divisions, SPD commands enormous resources. It is also the strangest place in which to work, though its employees know enough to keep quiet.

### *Pentex Corporations*

Pentex spreads its taint around the world. Pentex is strongest in North America, with over 70 Pentex offices and hundreds of offices of its subsidiaries in the United States and Canada. With headquarters in Seattle and New York and major field offices in Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Miami, New Orleans, Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, Pentex has entrenched itself well. Pentex also sports offices in Central and South America, where the corporate family works on destroying the rainforests (though some Garou actions have recently increased the costs of planned deforestation). Pentex is slowly spreading into Europe as well, with an eye on Eastern Europe, but finds itself stymied in Africa. The Asian market represents one of Pentex's latest successful tentative expansions, though recent economic downturns have hurt some subsidiaries.

### *Likely Encounters*

Pentex has many resources and connections among the denizens of the World of Darkness. It could hardly be otherwise, with Zettler's connection to the Sabbat and Francesco's ties to other Black Spiral Dancers. These resources, both internal and external, help make up some of the more *unusual*



agents of Pentex that players' characters might encounter, from fomori to well-trained Pentex First Teams.

### *Pentex Agents and Game Balance*

Storytellers and Narrators need to balance the strength of Pentex agents against those of their players. A large group of players with elders and legends of will make short work of foes with only five or six Traits, and they get no satisfaction from the easy victory. On the other hand, a First Team with combat shotguns might make short work of beginning characters who are created straight out of **Laws of the Wild**, and players will become very frustrated if every security guard has more Physical Traits than an Elder Ahroun Get of Fenris in Crinos form.

A creative Storyteller will find many ways to balance the threat of Pentex characters. For example, you may want to balance out Attributes by giving First Team members a Magadon-developed drug that increases an Attribute temporarily and is horribly addictive as well. Perhaps they have access to talens and special weapons. On the other hand, perhaps a small, weak force can sneak into a Magadon pharmaceutical plant or Endron refinery more easily than a whole sept can.

### *Unusual Employees*

Most Pentex employees are normal, average citizens of the World of Darkness. In **Mind's Eye Theatre** terms, they might have low or average Traits, no unusual Abilities and no unusual equipment (maybe a clipboard or whatever equipment is necessary for the job). Unusual employees will have more, of course, depending upon who they are and what they are doing. **Laws of the Hunt** describes some of the powers that might be available to special agents, such as the psychics of Projects Odyssey and Aeneid, while the Arsenal found in the Appendix describes some of the weaponry and other nasty surprises that might be issued.

Use these unusual folks sparingly. It's unlikely that a Circinus factory will have a dozen guards packing large guns and chemical warfare agents, but the leading office for Endron in the northwest might have a half-dozen on staff. A Project Odyssey psychic wouldn't be on the staff at a Magadon-run women's clinic without a very interesting reason. The use of strange or unusual employees should be part of the bait for a story of much greater proportions than simply "another day at the office."

### *First Teams*

First Teams are highly trained and extensively equipped squads of six to seven mercenaries, fomori, psychics, Black Spiral Dancers and neonate vampires. Cross-trained in combat, espionage, demolitions and other esoteric specialties, these squads run special missions from "recovering" straying scientists to desecrating Garou caerns. Most First Teams have a human leader who has been made immune to the Delirium, a Black Spiral Dancer, three or



four combat-trained fomori and a Project Odyssey psychic or neonate Sabbat vampire if available. Pentex equips them with knives, light and heavy pistols, silver ammunition, encrypted radios and any other equipment or weapons suited for the job.

Mechanically speaking, a First Team leader should be at least a match for the average character. Psychics should be well stocked in their power's Attribute, while fomori might be anything from ax-wielding thugs to masters of a particularly gruesome talent. Addictive and rarely issued Magadon pharmaceuticals might raise human and psychic Traits by another three or four Traits for one scene. Fomori might gain up to six Traits from the horribly addictive Fomorol, a drug made from the bodies of recycled "fomorach" fomori, and they might have Traits far beyond the norm.

### *Psychics*

The psychic teams of Pentex's Project Odyssey do not always work as First Team members. Sometimes they serve as troubleshooters or investigators for Division and Subdivision Directors. Psychopathic employees who could easily fool a lie-detector machine find it much harder to fool a mind-reader or psychometrician, and management likes it that way.

See **Laws of the Hunt** for rules for psychics.

### *Sabbat*

Pentex will gladly use any Sabbat packs that Harold Zettler's Special Projects Division can hire. Unfortunately, though, most Sabbat packs look down on Pentex liaisons as mortal "juice bags" and cooperate sporadically at best. Zettler can do little to counter this attitude directly, lest the younger Sabbat turn on him. On the other hand, a few nomad packs make it a habit of working with Pentex regional offices in return for quick havens, plentiful blood and the occasional sport with "expendable" employees.

### *Pentex and Progenitors*

Both the Special Projects division of Pentex and the Progenitors of the Technocracy often use the life sciences to do their dirty work. There is a difference, though. Let's say that Pentex decided to plant an agent provocateur who was a clone of someone else, just like Progenitor mages might do. With the help of Banes and corrupted Pattern Spiders, cloning isn't that hard to do, but Pentex cannot do it as "cleanly" as the Technocrats can. While a Progenitor clone may have to worry about slowly accruing Paradox, she is not as likely to face constant problems of cancer, hormonal imbalances, severe spiritual corruption and outright Wyrms taint.

An SPD clone created by Pentex, on the other hand, has to worry about all of these, thanks to the deleterious effects of the Wyrms' emanations. And, of course, the Progenitors would attempt to destroy any SPD clone as a "reality deviant" if they became aware of one (just as Pentex would attempt to buy and corrupt Progenitor sites if it knew of them).



## *Black Spiral Dancers and Kinfolk*

Because of their connection and supposed dedication to the Wyrms, quite a few Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk work for Pentex in Special Projects and places that require special clearance. Kinfolk often have a mild edge on ordinary people, since they don't succumb to the cancers and madness of fomori, and they do not fall into Rage-driven frenzies like their Garou cousins do. On the other hand, Black Spiral Kinfolk often have strange and gruesome hobbies that lend themselves to blackmail.

Thanks to Rage and madness, few Black Spiral Dancers work directly for Pentex, although permanent employees do exist. Indeed, a camp within the tribe is dedicated to serving Pentex, and executives such as Francesco have shown just how corporate these mad wolves can be.

## *Fomori*

Fomori have long been spawn of the Wyrms, but Pentex has taken things further. With Project Iliad, Pentex has gone so far as to intentionally and scientifically breed fomori. Perhaps it is because of these controls, but Project Iliad's fomori are often better able to pass as normal in society or serve as Pentex employees. Top management has more than one Ferectoi, while Toads and Enticers often appear in middle management and other administrative roles. First Teams, of course, also use many fomori. (Some would say that First Teams use them up.)

## *Top 21 Pentex Subsidiaries*

As a truly multinational megacorporation, Pentex has hundreds of subsidiaries under various pseudonyms of different directors. For example, Harold Zettler holds controlling interest in Autumn Health Management Systems under the alias Zeldt Erohlar, a Swedish banker. The following are the star players in the Pentex lineup. These are the most profitable of the subsidiaries, selling cheap, shoddy goods that the consumers want most. Most of these corporations work together for mutual gain. For example, Young and Smith sells its Wyrms-tainted products at minimum cost to Herrick's retail chain. All in all, the Pentex subsidiaries have a rather incestuous relationship.

### *Arduus Enterprises*

Arduus Enterprises claims to be a waste-management company that responsibly handles municipal waste, hazardous waste and other toxic materials, such as PCBs and radioactive wastes. In fact, they are responsible for the careless disposal of many wastes, often forging records and shipping papers and switching the names and labels of hazardous wastes so that they can be dumped in uncontrolled landfills or into unwatched rivers.

### *Autumn Health Management Services*

Autumn manages hospitals all over North America, and the company seeks expansion to Europe and Asia. Its health care facilities operate at



minimum standards, and they are generally great places for infestations, pain and suffering. Magadon often uses these facilities to test out new products.

### *Avalon Incorporated*

This toy manufacturer seems harmless enough at first glance, but its products range from gross to destructive, and they're designed to promote cruelty and violence among the youngest victims. Avalon's best sellers include *Pet Pal*, a veterinary kit that subtly provokes cruelty to animals; *Nuke 'Em*, a violent board game; and *Poopi Suzi*, a doll that screams and spits up, until a child tosses the toy against a wall. Some parents have complained about Avalon, to no avail.

### *Black Dog Games*

Once a dinky, back-porch operation, Black Dog is now the undisputed leader in roleplaying games. Favorites include *Zombie: The Putrescence*, *Lycanthrope: The Rapture*, *Warlock: The Pretension*, *Pixie: The Delusion* and *Spectre: The Annihilation*. These games extol the virtues of tragic hipness, ultra-violence and the uncoolness of regular people. Players tend to wallow in their own angst, whining about the state of their dark souls through their antihero characters' voices.

### *Circinus Brands Tobacco*

A cigarette and tobacco products company, Circinus appeals to young, hip and trendy smokers. It keeps label warnings to a bare minimum and spends enormous amounts of money on fashionable advertising campaigns. What Circinus isn't saying is that its tainted products are highly addictive and ultimately fatal.

### *Consolidex Worldwide*

An international investment firm, Consolidex offers a variety of no-load stock options and mutual funds with a low level of initial purchase. This appeals to the young, inexperienced investor. The company then takes the money and plunges it into other Pentex companies and projects, returning just enough growth to keep investors coming back for more.


### *Endron International*

Endron, the oldest Pentex cooperation, also became the largest after absorbing Atlas International in 1995. Endron now specializes in cheap petroleum, natural gas and nuclear energy. All their products are below minimum standards for emissions and octane levels. Safety standards at the refineries and power plants are a joke. Worse, the company has been responsible for a number of oil spills and contamination incidents. The death, disease and ecological nightmares have been well worth the price of clean-ups.

### *Good House International*

Good House manufactures paper products of all kinds, from cheap notebooks to flimsy baby wipes. They are a major source of deforestation,





particularly in Canada and the Amazon. Good House is the second oldest company in Pentex, and it has a widespread market.

### ***Hallahan Fishing Corporation***

Hallahan floods the seafood market with its products, which come at the cost of illegal whaling and fishing. The company doesn't care that hundreds of dolphins die in its tuna nets; the products are much cheaper to produce than albacore. Hallahan has its own small restaurant chain, and it supplies O'Tolley's as well. Most consumers have no idea of the company's practices. A successful ad campaign, featuring jolly Cap'n Bill Hallahan, has merrily misled consumers for the past few years.

### ***Harold and Harold Mining, Incorporated***

This company mines all sorts of materials, such as coal, copper, lead, zinc and uranium. Strip-mining is preferable, since it's low cost and does a nice job of tearing up the landscape. Harold and Harold is slated for expansion into South Africa as soon as tensions in the region settle down.

### ***Herculean Firearms Incorporated***

Herculean Firearms manufactures all types of handguns and ammunition, including semiautomatic weapons. The company's real strength is in its powerful PAC and lobby. Every year, it manages to convince more and more politicians to ignore the issue of gun-control. Herculean's arms are cheap, too. Just about any young criminal can find one to buy or steal.

### ***Herrick's***

A US grocery and retail chain, Herrick's is the perfect outlet for other Pentex corporations' products. Here, Avalon, Circinus, King, Rainbow, Vesuvius and Young and Smith all find an easy way to make lots of money. Because of this cooperation, Herrick's is able to undersell many other retail chains, raking in enormous profits.

### ***King Breweries and Distilleries***

Much like Circinus does with tobacco, King Breweries and Distilleries is doing an admirable job of always keeping alcohol "cool and hip." Ads show only beautiful people sipping their drinks, always in trendy settings. Most products are tainted, leading to fast addiction.

### ***Magadon, Incorporated***

Second only to Endron International in sales, the pharmaceutical giant Magadon has increased revenues since purchasing Aesop Research Company. Aesop's job is cruel animal experimentation. Another top subsidiary is Panacea Pharmaceuticals, which specializes in product development and testing. Overall, Magadon has been responsible for numerous deaths. It gives the public what it wants: diet pills, energy supplements and cosmetic implants.



### *Nastrum Enterprises*

Nastrum produces cheap weapons of mass destruction, including missiles, explosives and stealth aircraft. They'll sell their products to anyone, a fact kept secret from prying eyes in the US government. Nastrum is more than willing to supply terrorists; they've also sold weapons to both sides of various conflicts.

### *Omni Television*

A syndicated network, Omni produces a number of mind-rotting television shows, such as *Knights of Angst*, about chic high school girls who fight monsters of the week; *MSG Express*, a cooking program; and *Concrete Dreams*, a brutal, live-action cop drama. Omni's commercials, which show a lot of fellow subsidiaries' products, are subliminal advertising.

### *O'Tolley's*

Batter-dipped and double-fried, that's O'Tolley's, the Family Place. This is a chain of fast food restaurants specializing in the most greasy, fat-filled food imaginable. As such, it appeals to loads of consumers who want quick meals, not realizing that some products are tainted. O'Tolley's ads do a good job of promoting a wholesome family atmosphere. What they don't show are the sad conditions of the cattle farms and destroyed rainforests that make way for grazing pastures. Eating at O'Tolley's is a great way to gain 20 pounds, or shred your gallbladder. Since such health hazards don't show up for days or weeks after eating at O'Tolley's, consumers don't realize the ultimate source of their sickness.

### *Rainbow Incorporated*

This company produces a variety of plastic and rubber products, from sandwich baggies to tires. Moreover, it has a powerful lobby and media campaign that praises the value of plastics to consumers. Expansion into Africa and Asia will be vital to Rainbow's continued growth, as labor costs are rising in North America.

### *Tellus Enterprises*

Formerly a video game producer, Tellus Enterprises' takeover of Sunburst Enterprises International, a computer company, has led to a substantially increased profit margin. Tellus hardware looks sleek, and CPUs come packed with attractive and noisy games, thanks to Sunburst. The cost is well below that of its competitors' products. Anybody can buy a Tellus game platform. What the ads don't say is that the computers encourage the average techno-geek to turn into a lazy addict. Sometimes kids forget to eat, they're so keyed into these machines.

### *Vesuvius Incorporated*

Vesuvius publishes a wide range of books, comics and periodicals, and advertisers, not surprisingly, include a lot of other Pentex companies. The publisher's most important function is placating the public's fears about



environmental hazards and issues like gun control and the state of global economics. The comic book lines appeal to the worst instincts of teens, and they have been linked to violent crimes.

### *Young and Smith, Incorporated*

Behind Endron and Magadon, Young and Smith is the third largest Pentex subsidiary. This company produces a wide variety of foods and personal care products, all of which are unsanitary and chock-full of preservatives. Even the packaging, usually obtained from Good House or Rainbow, is tainted. Chances are that every family has some kind of product from Young and Smith on its shelves.

## *Endron International*

Endron is the oldest Pentex corporation, and now the largest. Stretching from the North Sea to Nigeria to Texas, Endron is responsible for oil spills in the Aleutians, radioactive releases along the eastern US seaboard and trouble in Indonesia. Endron is one of the few truly global Pentex subsidiaries, and it spreads its clawing and grasping net wide in the service of the Wyrms.

### *Black Gold*

Endron is, in a sense, the archetypal Pentex company. Corporate executives dress in subdued blue suits, crisp white shirts and red ties like the IBM of yesterday. All corporate employees who aren't in the field are expected to act as representatives of the corporation, and woe betide those who do not. Casual Fridays are not a feature of Endron offices.

### *History*

Pentex began in 1865 as Premium Oil in the Pennsylvania oil fields. As it bought politicians, snapped up competing companies, and spread into the giant that became Pentex, though, it lost its focus on the oil and energy business. Pentex restructured its board in 1915 and, amidst the energy crises of 1916, spun off its oil field businesses as Endron.

By publicly offering stock in the new company, Pentex received the shot of capital that it needed to stay afloat, and the new company began diversifying, spreading into refinery operations in the 1930s and gasoline stations a decade later. Endron believes in slow and steady progress. Let others jump first and find out what the problems are, then Endron will move in slowly and surely.

### *Organization*

Endron has an *unusual* hierarchy. The organizational chart that appears in the boardroom does not truly reflect who the hidden leaders of Endron are, nor do even they know all.

Max Carson is Endron's Chief Executive Officer. With his Chief Operations Officer, Nicholas Morgan and his Chief Financial Officer, Justin Chen,



he controls the majority of Endron's structure and corporate headquarters, but not what the company does. The Board of Directors can dismiss the President, but it does not set corporate policy.

Most employees realize that the CEO and BoD have limited control of the company. Instead, "They," hidden movers and shakers, control the company covertly, and they are possessed in turn by an Umbral manifestation that coordinates these elements as a single consciousness. For 30 years "They" have loyally served the company in a variety of positions. Few can fathom who "They" are, but those who know dare not tell.

Of course, even "They" and the spirit of Endron that animates them do not know the full truth of who leads whom. When Harold Zettler, Pentex's Director of Special Projects, arranged for the death in 1959 of Endron's first President, Hiram Bollingsworth, Zettler had no idea of how tenacious Hiram would be. Spade-bearded, 300 pounds and only five-and-a-half-feet tall, Bollingsworth was willful enough to get his way, even after death. Now the Risen Bollingsworth pursues his driving goal of keeping Endron successful, and he is also beginning to stalk the paranoid Zettler, over 40 years after the Malkavian arranged for Hiram's death.

### *Endron's Policy*

"Make as much money as quickly as possible with as little overhead as possible." This is Endron's policy in a nutshell; all else is window dressing. This hell-bent-for-leather profitability grab makes the stockholders happy and furthers the Wym's goals. Senior executives worry about the next quarterly statement; middle managers worry about the monthly profit-and-loss (P&L) statement for their facility or branch. Spend money on maintenance? Just enough to keep the oil flowing — and not a drop more. Printed in neat block lettering on white paper, the following motto is found in nearly every high-level Endron executive's workspace: *"The cost of the fine is always less than the cost of the compliance."*

### *Average Employee*

Like most Pentex companies, the average employee has no idea of what Endron really pursues. From service station "petroleum transfer engineers" to district managers or field geologists, most employees do their jobs, collect their paychecks and do not worry where the company is going. Half or so could name Carson as president of Endron, thanks to his many memos, but otherwise, the normal employee has no idea of what happens at headquarters. Since most employees receive a slightly above-average wage and are fired if they are not efficient, well-groomed and well-mannered, Endron has a good public face, behind which it can hide its intentions.

### *Putting the International in Endron International*

Whether bribing politicians, exploiting and exploring Third-World locations, shipping vast amounts of oil or mismanaging nuclear power,



Endron is active around the world. In some places, it uses well-armed exploration crews. In others, it uses the most advanced deep-drilling techniques. In yet others, it muddles through the acts of making and distributing power derived from coal, gas and the radioactive heart of the atom. In all these areas, Endron uses a century and a half of tricks and techniques to keep petroleum flowing out and cash flowing in while doing the work of the Wyrn.

### *Political Activities*

Unsurprisingly, Endron remains active in lobbying the political arena through several different means. Through overt PACs and under-the-table political donations, Endron engages in the normal buying and selling of political candidates. Endron also sponsors many official-sounding "citizens groups," such as The Partnership for Energy-Rich America and Citizen Alliance for Reduced Strictures. Of course Endron limits the money available for these groups, so the Partnership for Energy-Rich America only has one office, six workers and fancy stationery, but that's all that it takes to impress the junior staff of a Congressman. Finally, Endron also spends money on advertisements and other means of affecting public opinion, attempting to sway the average voter into thinking that government regulations cost the taxpayer money and jobs. Outright blackmail and bribery are also used, as needed.

### *Petroleum Production: Onsite Operations*

Whether exploring, drilling or refining, petroleum and energy production are the heart of Endron's international operations. And once Endron moves into an oil field, it's there to stay as long as there's oil. Fenced with concertina wire (which is sometimes electrified), Endron sites have limited road access and their own helicopter pad or airstrip. Motion detectors, cameras, towers and armed guards cover both gates of a standard Endron site, and the guard's schedules change weekly to prevent infiltration. Outsiders, even visiting officials, are never welcome on Endron sites. Visitors are treated with all the warmth that an American general would have received during a Cold-War-era inspection of a Russian missile site in the Urals.

Endron uses the same general blueprint from the Gobi to Mexico to Canada: barracks for the workers, individual rooms for shift foremen and supervisors, and separate quarters with a kitchen for scientists, management and other white-collar personnel. Workers are housed away from the around-the-clock activities of the production site, although the main road of the compound does wend through the producing wells to make trucking and (minimal) maintenance easier.

Sometimes Endron puts in pipeline to the nearest coast, and sometimes it relies on trucks, but either way, the oil flows. When Endron relies on trucks, it arms and protects its convoys well. Convoys normally have Uzi-toting guards fore and aft, and they often enlist local peace officers as well.



## *Deep Dark Oceans: Drilling and Shipping*

Endron developed its 21st-century hexagonal Menantol offshore drilling platforms to get at the oil that lies deep under the three-quarters of the world blanketed by water. Menantol platforms drill up to half a mile deeper than their predecessors, and they are built to handle the severe storms of the North Sea, where Endron has put the bulk of its offshore drilling. Of course these platforms are more than just wells and living quarters. Endron also uses them to explore the odd *things* and inhuman sea-floor constructions it sometimes finds.

Endron maintains a massive fleet of supertankers that cruise the seas from the Persian Gulf to the North Sea. Although other companies envy the Endron fleet, which is the largest in the world, few would envy the poor crew and equipment conditions on the sadly serviced fleet. From Endron's perspective, every trip for which basic maintenance is put off is more profit, and if the ship has a severe spill after several trips without maintenance, the company still comes out ahead economically. More than any other company, Endron is responsible for the proliferation of oil spills around the world.

Although they are only profitable when an oil field will last decades, pipelines are often the fastest, cheapest way for Endron to move oil from an oil field to the coast. The benefits for Endron, of course, are more than just to the bottom line. A 10-meter-wide swath of ecological horror running from the heart of a continent to its coastline is nothing for the Pentex board to sneeze at. While the pipelines are usually oil-tight, the toxins that leach from the pipeline construction area into groundwater, the barbed fences that often carry pheromone lures to tempt animals to their deaths, and the catastrophic erosion that often accompanies Endron's poor re-sodding are benefits as well.

### *Endron Convoys and Drilling Sites*

Most Garou (and other) characters are more than a match for convoy and production site guards. Under *Mind's Eye Theatre* rules, guards have four to eight Physical Traits and a few *Firearms* and *Brawl* Abilities. The average cliath or fostern will be more than a match for a guard.

Storytellers and Narrators should remember, however, that characters rarely have a means of disposing of a convoy's crude or shutting down a drilling site for good. It's hard to put the oil back, and dumping it just does Endron's work for the Wyrms. Plus, there are a *lot* of Endron sites. So when your players decide to try to shut down all of the Endron oil fields in say, Texas, let them affect a dozen or so, then explain that there are still dozens more.

And if they keep trying, consider bringing in Pentex First Teams.



## Exploration

Oil is the heart of Endron's business. Searching for this black lifeblood of the company is one of the things that Endron does best, and at which it does its worst as well. From Oman to Texas to the Gobi, Endron looks constantly for new resources to exploit.

Endron Exploratory Personnel Squads, or EEPS, are the five to 30-man teams that Endron sends out to search for oil. EEPS personnel are armed with the latest technologies and a fine disregard for borders, national laws and environmental regulations (although a surprising number of EEPS members honestly consider themselves "green," eco-friendly or at least outdoorsy). Each team always has at least two geologists, one support staff member, one logistics specialist and one security officer. In dangerous or remote areas, Endron will add cooks, mechanics and more security personnel. In extreme cases, up to 15 security members will escort two or three geologists.

Support and logistics staff members take care of daily and mission needs, ranging from food to passports to work permits. They are also good at other things, ranging from graft to negotiating with bandits; smuggling is a frequent pastime. Security personnel are often well-trained and equipped. While they may spend most of their time herding drunken geologists, security personnel must also be ready to shoot back at locals who object to Endron operations — or sometimes even shoot first.

Standard EEPS equipment includes a Hummer or similar vehicle for every two to three team members, including at least one truck carrying 200 gallons of extra fuel. Several of the vehicles will be fast enough to escape dangerous situations. The vehicles also carry supplies such as tents, cots, food and exploration gear, including a sizable cache of firearms and a small arsenal of explosives (ostensibly for mapping geological substrata).

Field missions normally last from six days to six months. Normally, only one or two team members are "in the know" about Endron's activities, but some teams are composed wholly of fomori and humans who accept working with fomori. These groups are often sent in when strange tunnels or unusual phenomenon appear. While these EEPS teams have high turnover rates, they suffer from no shortage of volunteer team members. These teams are often the best equipped and trained, and they sometimes make the tastiest gifts for trapped Banes.

## Techniques

Searching for oil is a painstaking process. EEPS teams carefully analyze all aspects of local geology. Even a large pocket of oil does them no good if it is trapped by a slip fault. However, one aspect of exploration is its own reward: explosions used to map the underlying strata. The EEPS team member who is "in the know" gets first crack at the mapping data. That member is looking for oil, of course, but also other things: cave systems, strange anomalies and even shadows that might be giant semi-humanoid monsters asleep in the belly of the earth.



One of the least likely suspects but best tools for helping Endron prospectors are tiny fossils called conodonts. Originally thought to be fossilized teeth, conodonts in truth are the wedge-shaped remains of aquatic invertebrates that have been extinct for millions of years. While all of that is endlessly fascinating, conodonts do have one very useful trait: they tend to pick up iron oxide in strata that are oil-bearing, making them bright red and highly visible. An experienced EEPS geologist takes a band of rust-red conodonts in an outcropping as an excellent sign, and while the correlation between such fossil beds and oil isn't absolute, the presence of the oddly colored fossils is one of the most reliable indicators out there.

What's even more interesting is that for whatever reason, conodont fossils are particularly susceptible to all sorts of outside influences, including Wyrmtaint and the natural energies of caerns. High-security EEPS groups know how to read the coloration of conodont fossil beds to gauge the area's supernatural geology, often with egregious result. Black or oily purple conodonts are particularly sought after by EEPS teams, since such odd coloration tends to reflect the slumbering presence of something truly unpleasant in the strata below.

Needless to say, drilling is always called for at these sites.

After the EEPS team has found a likely spot, the drilling teams come in. A rotary drilling rig is not a small thing, and Endron cannot hide the roads, permits and logistics needed to support a site, so Endron only drills when it is reasonably certain of finding oil. Endron doesn't engage in "wildcatting," the practice of randomly drilling. Endron uses "developmental drilling" instead. They find an operating well, called the "infill well," then spread from there with "stepout wells" for petroleum and service wells to manage fluids other than petroleum and natural gas. Endron does frequently dabble in line lease drainage, drilling wells on property lines bordering on other producing wells.

## *Refinery Operations*

Looking for all the world like a metal-and-flame ghetto designed by Bosch and Giger, Endron's refineries reveal a little of who they are to the world. Worldwide, but centered in Delaware and San Diego, Endron's refineries turn crude oil into natural gas, gasoline and petrochemicals, in a messy process that burns off many chemicals but also spills PCBs, trichloroethylene and other toxic chemicals into the nearby environment. Endron has also experimented with adding teratogenic chemicals to increase birth defects in their area, but to no avail. The current run-offs are already too toxic to improve. Endron refineries are toxic and explosion threats in the offing. Five aboveground gasoline tanks have detonated over the past decade.

## *Research, Development and Destruction*

Ostensibly, the job of the research and development arm of a petroleum company is to find new and better uses for crude oil and natural gas, and this is in fact some of what Endron's "secret labs" do. After all, the bills must be paid. Endron's Research and Exploration Entities, or REEs, investigate many other





things that are useful to the Wyrn. Dedicated and amoral, the scientists and fomori who staff REEs explore new ways to use Banes, chemistry and combinations of the two to further Endron goals. Here are some current projects:

- Ways to use Endron products to make vehicles easier to possess by unfriendly ghosts or spirits.
- Untraceable infusions of mildly psychoactive or supernaturally active chemicals in car deodorizers.
- New techniques for increasing toxic atmosphere emissions from refineries in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
- Modifications to higher-grade gasoline formulas to promote catalytic converter decay.
- Hunter-killer microorganisms designed to prey on the oil-eating bacteria used to clean up oil spills.

### *Distribution and Sales*

Endron maintains a massive truck fleet of surprisingly professional drivers. While Endron's drivers often skip required services and cheat on their hours in their logbooks, they do try to get their tanker truckloads to the service stations on time. Although Endron's secret labs are experimenting with ways to use truck paints to attract Banes of fear, anger and other negative emotions, the company tries to keep its trucks professional and its gasoline clean, to avoid suspicions. On the other hand, about one in a hundred cans of Endron's motor oils contain a Bane-generated corrosive designed to damage and destroy cars.

### *Endron Service Stations and End Run Mini-Marts*

Clean and well-managed, Endron service stations subscribe to the old adage that one catches more flies with honey than vinegar. Now the second largest gasoline retailer in the United States, Endron is the most popular among married consumers in the 25-49 year old range. Although Endron's gasoline is high on emissions and low on octane, many consumers have switched to Endron's Ruby, Sapphire and Diamond grade fuels, because these brands eliminate knocks and pings in older cars... but at the cost of "addicting" the car to Endron fuels. Attempts by consumers to switch to other brands just bring the knocks and pings back even worse than before. The pumps themselves are less than straight. Although they pump the five- and 10-gallon increments measured by federal and state standards and practices engineers accurately, the pumps otherwise cheat consumers when pumping less than or more than these amounts (basically, the pump puts out three gallons when it reads four, but "catches up" at 5 gallons). Invented by Endron engineer Willie Quesada, these pumps appear worldwide.

### *Power Production*

Endron doesn't just find and ship oil. It makes power, as well — and in the messiest ways possible.



## *Conventional Coal Plants*

The fastest-growing division of Endron is its fossil fuels power plant division, which operates anthracite-burning coal-fired power plants across North America. Endron doesn't mine coal, but buys it from the cheapest producers, usually those who have the most acidic, dirtiest strip mines. Coal is cheap and easy and very, very dirty. In addition to greenhouse gases and particulate matter, Endron coal plants dump mercury, lead and other toxic metals directly into the air. Endron emission scrubbers, of course, are a joke.

## *Nuclear Power*

With firms like Con Edison facing massive overhauls to keep their plants running, most companies are trying to get out of nuclear power plant operations. Not Endron. Endron currently owns seven plants in the United States, and it has applied to build four more. Unfortunately, these plants are cosmetically overhauled when purchased but never repaired. They are disasters waiting to happen.

## *Blackouts and the "Oops" Switch*

Considering the delicate interdependencies of modern society, it is no wonder that blackouts in major urban areas are regarded as catastrophes. While hospitals and the like can supply their own power, anything that plunges an entire city into darkness for even a little while risks plunging it into chaos and madness. When the lights go out, every storefront becomes an open invitation to loot, every windshield begs to be smashed, and every pile of debris promises the heat of a bonfire. Blackouts cause untold millions of dollars in property damage, massive damage to a city's communities and scores of deaths from rioting or the simple failure of medical equipment, air conditioning in heat waves and the like. Is it any surprise, then, that every so often someone at an Endron-owned power plant hits the "Oops" switch — a small, well-hidden deadman switch that completely cuts off output from the plant for a period of up to six hours — smiles, and walks away to watch the fun?

## *Magadon*

Founded as a research company by retired US Army doctor Bryant Vandegrift in 1946, Magadon has grown to be a multinational corporation devoted to all areas of medical research, service and production with over 70 facilities in two dozen countries. With net earnings of \$8.115 billion last year, Magadon is among the world's leading pharmaceutical corporations.

## *Area of Business*

Magadon creates, develops and extensively tests health products at 10 major research centers in the United States, Canada and Europe, and it produces, formulates and packages its products in 68 plants in North and South America,



Europe and Southwest Asia. The company produces over 600 different products, for health care needs ranging from cardiovascular and neurological issues to vaccines and antibiotics and veterinary operations and treatment. Magadon makes both prescription medicines and over-the-counter remedies.

## *Magadon: History*

In October 1946, a doctor named Bryant Vandegrift retired from the Army Medical Corps at the rank of brigadier general. Together with four of his former subordinates, Vandegrift founded a small research firm named Magadon Limited in Trenton, NJ. This company's focus was on counter-biological warfare. It developed vaccines for diseases that might be used as weapons in future wars. By 1950, Magadon Limited had five research contracts with the United States Army and one with the United Nations, and construction began on a new research facility in West Virginia.

By 1956, Magadon, Incorporated's future looked bright. It had recovered from the resource depletion that its rapid expansion had caused, and stocks (first made public in 1955) were climbing steadily. The company first went overseas in this year with the acquisition of Dunlop & Farrier, a British firm specializing in cancer treatments.

However, several setbacks halted Magadon's ascent and threatened to destroy the corporation. The company acquired holdings in Germany just in time to be caught by the first reports of Thalidomide-induced birth defects, a scandal that rocked the entire pharmaceutical industry. Shortly thereafter, a containment failure in the West Virginia facility resulted in the death of over 400 scientists and workers from an unknown virus. Only a heavy rainstorm and extensive security precautions kept the bio-warfare agent from spreading to nearby communities. The facility was a complete write-off. At the order of Magadon's Board of Directors, the site was sterilized and destroyed with military incendiary weapons. Shaken by the close brush with disaster, the board met in a closed session to discuss Magadon's future. What was said in this series of meetings is a matter of conjecture. What is known is that when the board adjourned two weeks later, the groundwork had been laid for Magadon's buyout by a megacorporation named Pentex.

The Pentex takeover was completed in late 1959. Magadon was able to pay off its last few outstanding debts (both acquisition-related and a handful of product liability lawsuits) with the huge influx of ready capital that the buyout gave it. However, some of the directors objected to the restructuring and policy changes that Pentex demanded. Pentex extended the restructuring to upper management, and the objectors were paid off handsomely and replaced with newly promoted former division heads who were more amenable to Pentex's "suggestions." (Several founders died of gunshot wounds or "natural causes." However, at least one of the founders, Matthew Davies, slew the First Team sent to kill him and escaped. He may still be at large vexing Pentex.)

Once the initial shakeup following the Pentex takeover was complete, Magadon took off with renewed vigor. Its strong corporate partnership with



Autumn Health Management Systems, another Pentex-held corporation, gave it a guaranteed market share as well as access to an entire network of hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and related facilities. Magadon also took advantage of the Pentex ICS to implement advanced market analysis techniques, giving the company a leg up on its competition. Between 1958 and 1998, Magadon went from a 12.8% market share to a 22.5% share, making it one of the three largest pharmaceutical companies in the world. With its recent takeover of Aesop Research and the rumors of an upcoming merger with Autumn, it looks like Pentex may be setting Magadon up to be the dominant global health care provider by the end of the next decade.

## *Ethical Conflicts*

Magadon is, in large part, a legitimate company with caring, well-meaning employees who truly want to do their best for humanity. Although the company is a tool of the Wym, it is also a tool of the untainted medical industry. Don't hesitate to confront players with deep moral questions if their characters decide to destroy a Magadon facility or crash a section of MagNet. Will the data and resources denied Pentex be worth the innocent human lives that the loss of legitimate medical research may cost? There shouldn't be an easy answer to this one. Make the players think; make the characters sleep restlessly.

## *Corporate Organization*

Magadon's corporate structure is arranged on a slightly haphazard model. Each operational division (every division but Administration and Sales and Marketing is classed as "operational") has its own specialized internal bureaucracy and its own research arm. This inefficient distribution of tasks leads to a great deal of duplication of effort, but it also allows the corporation to micromanage itself to a painfully fine degree.

### *Administration*

Administration, the largest division of Magadon, handles the tasks of salary disbursement, human resources, corporate information systems and legal defense, keeping the multinational conglomerate functioning to leave the operational divisions free to pursue research and profit. Actually, Admin is a bureaucratic nightmare in which employees quickly learn that it is more productive to work around the system rather than with it.

This division is responsible for MagNet, the wide area network mainframe that connects every Magadon facility. Despite the minor Y2K problem and the loose security, Magadon is currently attempting to place remote terminals for this system in their clients' facilities to provide easier access to fill orders and answer questions. Yet despite MagNet, all information that comes to Magadon is stored in hardcopy form, by Admin, inside giant data warehouses. If a party has several nights and an idea as to where to search, these gold mines of information can prove useful.



## *Sales and Marketing*

Sales and Marketing is responsible for getting Magadon's products onto the shelves and for keeping the company's public image clean. These are the people that the public is most likely to see. Employees of this division can afford no screw-ups because they are the ones in the foreground, providing college recruiters, the cheerful sales reps who come equipped with free samples for the physician or pharmacist, and the smiling TV spokespersons.

The Media Crisis Team (MCT) is kept on 24-hour call to vanquish any negative press from the public's eye as quickly as possible. With their skills of old-fashioned double-talk (rather than supernatural or biomedical means) these skilled spin-doctors and their intermediaries, such as Omni Television and Vesuvius Publishing, can put to rest any concerns raised to the public or even subtly move the blame to their competitors.

## *Gerontology (GerDiv)*

Gerontology is the study of the aged. This division specializes in using elderly patients dropped off in Pentex-affiliated nursing homes as convenient human test subjects while carrying on the façade of providing high quality care for those who need assistance in their daily lives. Under an image of "Volunteer Health Programs" designed to administer the latest in cutting-edge geriatric medicine in conjunction with Autumn health care systems, these facilities can study the effects of new chemicals and supernatural substances in completely controlled environments. Gerontology tends to work in conjuncture with other Magadon divisions.

## *Pediatrics (Peds)*

Pediatrics is the medical study of individuals under the age of 18. Peds must be extra cautious because a scandal involving children will assuredly bring down the entire corporation. Therefore, there is a tendency to create and administer medications that will have long-term effects. For example, a medication for acne may cure the present symptom, but over long-term use may lead to cataracts when the child reaches early adulthood.

In conjunction with the PsyDiv a number of "mood-altering medications" have been created and distributed that when administered in early puberty can prevent a Garou cub's First Change.

## *Women's Medicine (FemMed)*

The Women's Medicine division is devoted to reproductive medicine, including gynecology and neonatal care. An avid feminist, Dr Julia Miller, runs this facility. Sales and Marketing is often concerned about her profemale tirades and the division's stance on abortion. Some theorize that she has come to her position uncorrupted because of her frequent national appearances, which draw attention away from the other Magadon divisions. This division will work with Public Health to dispense counseling and medications to women (which actually deliver what they promise).



### *Infectious Diseases (ID)*

ID studies fungi, bacteria and viruses that are harmful to human health. Oddly enough, this division's work ethic is sincere — it really does want to cure the diseases of mankind, making it rely on its products. Because of the nature of its work, it is in a great position to develop biological weapons. This division is allocated the largest budget, and Pentex is aware that an estimated 60% of America's vaccines come from Magadon. Pentex corporate occasionally orders certain batches to be "altered" before shipment.

### *Genetics (GenDiv)*

The newest Magadon division, Genetics was established in 1986. Under the guise of medical research to discover cures for diseases that are suspected to be genetic in origin, this division develops methods of introducing new diseases to the general public. Through ID's vaccination program, it has been able to distribute cures for one sickness (flu inoculations, tetanus boosters, etc.) while leaving an underlying strain of another that can remain dormant until an activator is introduced. At this point, Pentex affiliates give the public the breakthrough cure for this tragic disease. Currently, this division is attempting to find a way to completely suppress lycanthropy.

### *Nutritional Health (NHDiv)*

With the aid of Sales and Marketing, NHDiv has launched an aggressive ad campaign to push the "health" food, drinks and supplements all across North America's middle class boasting a "new and better you." From the sports drinks, to the over-the-counter diet pills, these products are highly psychologically addictive. They may grant short-term wellness, but they still have a long-term underlying effect. Energy bars will give a strong energy boost, but once the victim is off, she feels drained and depressed. An appetite suppressant may help a woman lose weight, but she could develop ovarian cysts years later. A small number of these products contain dormant Banes waiting to shape the consumer into a fomor.

### *Psychiatric Therapy (PsyDiv)*

The medications produced by this PsyDiv are highly addictive and unpredictable, with the largest percentage of Bane-infested products of the company. The infested doses are sometimes doped with short-term memory inhibitors, so that the patient will miss several doses and become unstable. Should this patient go on a killing spree, his mood stabilizer won't be found in his system (although the Bane is), allowing for company deniability.

### *Consumer Products (CP)*

This division develops and manufactures a vast array of everyday drug-store products, including everything from antiperspirant to decongestants. These products provide the Wyrms with the greatest opportunities to spread its work all over the globe, from painkillers to which users quickly develop a tolerance to condoms with pinholes in them.



## *Technologies and Applications (Techs and Apps)*

This division handles the production of all medical and pharmaceutical equipment. Their products are not considered the industry's best, but they include anything from syringes and rubber gloves to heart monitors. As with Consumer Products, Technologies have many opportunities to spread chaos and despair.

## *Public Health (PubHealth)*

Under the name Metcalf, this division is known for managing drug rehabilitation clinics, detox centers and women's clinics. Joining with August Health Management systems, they use recovering addicts as specimens on whom to test new biomedical concoctions in a controlled environment. Under the guise of counter-addiction research, these laboratories also process and distribute illicit drugs.

## *Deterinary Health*

Before the Aesop Research Company merger, VetDiv's responsibility was focused on pet health. Now, this division operates as an animal-testing program. Products from the other divisions are tested in this division. One program that survived the Aesop merger was the Endangered Predators Preservation Foundation (EPPF). EPPF is financed through so many layers of laundering that it is virtually impossible to trace it back to Magadon. Most shapeshifters are unaware of Pentex's involvement with this organization. As such, they tend to trust and approve of its attempt to relocate species to less populated areas, never realizing that Pentex uses this program to put suspect breeding stock in surveillance areas. Several shapeshifters have been killed or captured during these creatures' attempts to find mates.

## *Special Projects*

This division is virtually unknown to the public. One of its main projects is the production of chemical and biological weapons that are in demand by governments. SP also develops and provides Pentex First Teams with chemical and biological agents tailored specifically to affect shapeshifters. The limiting factor in advancing this project is the shortage of live test subjects. Divisional information exchange is kept to a minimum so that it's difficult to trace Magadon's projects, and so that any unsavory projects that come to public awareness can be written off as "rogue" and the company's image left relatively untarnished.

## *Magadon Manual of Pharmaceuticals*

Like any other pharmaceuticals company, Magadon produces medicinal drugs for both over-the-counter and prescribed use. The majority of Magadon products and projects are actually benign and untainted. Although the corporation is a tool of the Wyrms, it needs to make a great deal of money. It does so by working within the governmental guidelines placed on health care products. Magadon is perfectly respectable 99% of the time. It's that remaining 1% that keeps Garou worrying about what their Kinfolk ease their headaches with.



## Riot-Control Chemicals

Widely used by law enforcement officials, tear gas and other riot-control agents were widely used against protesters during the latter half of the 20th-century. Disseminated by grenades, canisters fired from shotguns, backpack and vehicle-mounted sprayers (and even artillery shells), riot-control agents sting and burn the eyes, nose, sinuses and other mucous membranes.

### Pepper Spray

Also known as Oleo-resin capsicum, pepper spray is widely available and socially acceptable, but it is normally restricted from airports and other sensitive locations. Pepper spray causes tears and intense pain. Attacking someone with pepper spray requires a normal Physical Challenge. If the attack is successful, the victim is unable to use his sense of smell and is two Traits down for combat and perception challenges. If the victim was using *Heightened Senses*, the penalty is doubled. The effects last for 10 minutes or one scene, whichever is longer.

**Form:** Sprayed liquid **Availability:** Over-the-counter

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** Activating the Gift neutralizes the drug effects completely

### Tear Gas

Commonly used by police and paramilitary officers in the western world, tear gas is widely available to the right officials.

Tear gas causes intense pain and tearing as well as skin irritation and nausea. Tear gas normally affects an area (use a three-foot radius for the average grenade in open areas, or affect a whole room). An affected victim is unable to use her sense of smell and is three Traits down for combat and perception challenges. If the victim was using *Heightened Senses*, the penalty is doubled. The effects last for five minutes or one scene after the victim gets to fresh air, whichever is longer.

**Form:** Thrown or fired canisters or grenades

**Availability:** Issued by police or similar agency, or on the street (two or more *Police* or *Underworld Influences* or three or more *Street Influences* for one canister).

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** Activating the Gift neutralizes the drug effects completely

### Gas Masks and Wet Blankets

Law enforcement officials normally wear gas masks and other types of respirators to protect themselves from tear gas or other riot-control agents. Protesters and other victims often try to gain the same protection from wet cloths and other improvised protection. For *Mind's Eye Theatre*, a victim of a riot-control agent may use the same technique... but she will still be down two Traits for most challenges from the clumsiness of holding the wet cloth over her face.

## Pharmaceutical and Supernatural Drug Effects

The *Mind's Eye Theatre* system is *not* supposed to be a contest to see who can memorize the strangest trivia from the published rules. The drug effects listed here are suggested for use in MET chronicles — but use common sense.





Don't become so dependent on the descriptions that you walk around with a finger on it all the time. Remember that different beings react to drugs differently, and use Storyteller discretion.

If you need to create new drug effects for supernatural drugs, consider using other **Mind's Eye Theatre** sources. For example, look at the different alchemical potions listed in **Laws of the Hunt**. Drugs that are widely available to Pentex personnel might have minimal side effects (like Wyrms-taint) and act like a Basic alchemical formula. Those available to a First Team might act like a potion that was created at the Intermediate or Advanced level and have much more deleterious side effects.

For good and ill, Magadon has developed quite a few supernaturally active drugs and devices. Many of these items carry Wyrms-taint. Some items are naturally Wyrms-tainted because of their purpose. (Nerve agents for use in chemical warfare carry Wyrms-taint almost solely because of their intended use.) Other items are intentionally tainted; a few are even nastier. Oddly, many of these items are so low-key that they may not even register as 'magical' to Uktena or human sorcerers who search for such.

Of course, Magadon has also developed many drugs to enhance the lives and livelihoods of Pentex employees as well. Some are widely available, while others are more tightly controlled. Not a few of these would be widely sought after and harder to get if they became known outside the Pentex corporate family — which is yet another reason Pentex employees are so very loyal to the firm.

### *Harmful Supernatural Drugs and Devices*

Not a few of Magadon's supernaturally active drugs are designed to sow confusion among Garou and others who can sense Wyrms or Jhor taint or who are susceptible to harassment by Bane spirits.

#### **Wyrms Faux**

Wyrms Faux is a substance that creates a false "aura of the Wyrms." Magadon slips it randomly into some of its pharmaceuticals. When ingested, Wyrms Faux causes the subject to show Wyrms-taint to the *Sense Wyrms* Gift for a week. This false reading can be dispelled by the *Rite of Cleansing...* or by killing the (probably innocent) victim.

**Form:** Capsule or tablet

**Availability:** Magadon slips it randomly into some of its pharmaceuticals.

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** Activating the Gift neutralizes the drug effects completely

#### **Bane Lures**

Bane Lures are small pellets made from Black Spiral Dancer bone that draw Banes to a victim's vicinity. The Banes do not actually possess the victim, they merely follow her and raise havoc. When ingested, a Bane Lure lodges itself in the victim's appendix (or passes out if there is no appendix). Once there, it remains for four months, slowly summoning Banes to the vicinity until there are Banes present with a total Gnosis equal to the victim's Willpower x 10. It can be detected with *Sense Wyrms*.



The Bane Lure can be removed by surgery or destroyed by a *Rite of Cleansing*.

**Form:** Capsule or tablet

**Availability:** Magadon slips it randomly into some of its pharmaceuticals.

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** No effect

#### **Bane-in-a-Bottle**

Bane-in-a-Bottle is essentially a "binary" Wym infestation. The victim ingests something infested with a Bane, which isn't released until it is exposed to a drug trigger. When ingested, a Bane-in-a-Bottle implants a sleeping Bane Gaffling or Jaggling in the victim. It can be detected with *Sense Wym*, provided the Gift-user knows what to look for. A *Rite of Cleansing* can destroy it. If this sleeping Bane is later exposed to the drug Umbrophrenol-6, the Bane awakens and attempts to use its *Possession Charm* against the victim. If it succeeds, the victim becomes a *fomor* in as little as six hours.

**Form:** Capsule or tablet

**Availability:** Magadon slips it randomly into some of its pharmaceuticals.

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** Activating the Gift neutralizes the Bane-in-a-Bottle effects completely

### ***"Beneficial" Supernatural Drugs and Devices***

While Magadon does create many harmful drugs, it also crafts many that are ostensibly helpful for its employees and the rest of Pentex.

#### **Delerex Lupus-7**

A clear blue liquid issued in auto-injectors, Delerex Lupus-7 is used across Pentex to block the effects of the Delirium. Fortunately, the latest version is not as likely to cause chemical lobotomization. When injected, Delerex makes the user immune to the Delirium for three hours, but it gives the user the Negative Trait *Witless*. If used more than once in 24 hours, the user must make a Static Physical Challenge against six Traits or lose one Mental Trait permanently and acquire the Negative Trait *Witless* until he can buy it off with Experience Traits.

**Form:** Liquid in an auto-injector

**Availability:** Pentex-wide

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** Activating the Gift neutralizes the drug effects completely

#### **Anagath F45.6**

Anagath F45.6 is an anti-aging drug that has been around since the late 1940s. Used monthly, Anagath F45.6 retards the aging process by a factor of 10. Only "normal" humans benefit; partially Awakened mortals and other supernatural creatures gain no effect. Users are one Trait down to resist the vampiric Discipline of *Dominate*.

**Form:** Clear, pale yellow liquid injected with a syringe

**Availability:** Only available to Pentex scientists and executives with salaries in the \$80,000 per annum or more range

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** Activating the Gift neutralizes the drug effects completely



## Psiphrenol

Psiphrenol is a combat drug for psychics that acts as a neurotoxin on ordinary humans. It is made from the spinal fluid of dead psychics. Used by a psychic, Psiphrenol lasts for five turns after injection. During that time, the psychic gets an additional action each turn and is two Traits up for psychic numina. If used more than once in 24 hours, the user must make a Static Physical Challenge against six Traits or lose one Willpower Trait permanently and take a level of lethal damage. If injected into a non-psychic, the victim must make a Static Physical Challenge against six Traits or take three levels of aggravated damage.

**Form:** Clear yellow liquid with an acidic odor injected with an auto-injector

**Availability:** Project Odyssey and First Teams

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** Activating the Gift neutralizes the drug effects completely

## Fomorol

The highly addictive Fomorol is a drug made from the bodies of recycled fomorach fomori, and it enhances fomori powers. Used by a fomor, Fomorol lasts for one scene (or up to one hour, whichever is shorter) after injection. During that time, the fomor roughly "doubles" his powers. Moreover, for fomori with mostly physical powers, Fomorol adds up to six Physical Traits.

**Form:** Viscous green liquid with a bitter odor injected with an auto-injector

**Availability:** Project Iliad and First Teams

**Resist Toxin and Related Gifts:** No effect

## Avalon

Get 'em while they're young. This toy manufacturer seems harmless enough at first glance, but its products range from gross to destructive. Avalon's best sellers include Pet Pal, a veterinary kit that subtly provokes cruelty to animals; Nuke 'Em, a violent board game; and Poopi Suzi, a doll that screams and spits up, until a child tosses the toy against a wall. Some parents have complained about Avalon, to no avail. Their most disturbing new invention is a digital pet that sings happily... after it dies from neglect.

Avalon's intent is simple: to promote the Pentex goals of desensitization, materialism and urbanization through Avalon's toys. It does so with everything from violent toys to marketing campaigns that promote expansion kits and an urban megalopolis background.

Avalon's methods are underhanded and subtle. After all, it is geared toward children and as such, nothing should seem too obvious. The objective is to produce self-absorbed, apathetic adults who are easily influenced by propaganda. To achieve this, these toys are designed to stifle a child's self-esteem and normalize violence. Their top-sellers are Action Bill figures which come equipped with combat fatigues, bazooka and "enemy soldiers and shapeshifters" with pop-off appendages.



## *Avalon's Organization*

Founded by a Pentex intern, Daniel Dial, in 1968, Avalon is relatively small compared to other Pentex affiliates. The five divisions that make up Avalon are Production, Public Relations and Marketing, Consumer-Reaction Management, Engineering and Production, and Testing and Application.

### *Production*

Currently there are four major production centers in operation. These are in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and Las Vegas. There are about 450 assembly line workers at each center, turning out products as quickly as possible. Each center produces two or three toys, except Las Vegas which is diversified enough to produce any of the toys and games that Avalon markets. Therefore, Las Vegas can keep the output going until the regular center is back on line, should any of the production lines elsewhere go down.

### *Public Relations and Marketing (PRM)*

This department is responsible for getting the toys to the public and creating demand. It's employees attend store openings with additional toys to give to the first 100 kids. In conjunction with North America Wrestling Association (NAWA) they have placed Action Bill in the spotlight and watched profits soar. They design TV commercials for highest appeal to their select audiences.

### *Consumer-Reaction Management*

This new division works closely with PRM. They work to gather qualitative information so that PRM can do its job more effectively. Its methods include using mock consumers that attempt to find the overall feel of the market. These are the people who will face the Consumer Watchdog groups.

### *Engineering and Production*

These designers are content to implement ideas for the newest toys. They will map out to the exact detail what the toy will do, what materials are needed and where they go, as well as the plastic moldings, paints and the devices needed to create it, and give a full feasibility analysis.

### *Testing and Application*

This department has the task of seeing the newest products in use. They tend to do their field testing in daycare centers in low-income areas. It has been observed that these areas have the highest demand for the newest toys. It is believed that this is because the sample toys are given to the children at no charge. After several days, the researcher returns to the daycare centers to see if the children are still playing with the toys.

## *Likely Encounters*

Garou and others may encounter everything from Wyrms-tainted toys to arcane artifacts amongst Avalon's toys. Others may also encounter some of



Avalon's strangeness. Daniel Dial, the president of Avalon, is actually a fallen Son of Ether mage. He is not a *barabbus*, a Wyrn-corrupted mage, but rather a disillusioned soul whose goals are more toward that of the Weaver-influenced Technocracy than that of the Wyrn.

### **Cici®**

Cici and her friends Muffy, Helena and the British Emma are dolls designed to subvert the self-image of those children who play with the disproportionately thin little mannequins. While not necessarily Wyrn-tainted, the latest of these dolls do their work with voice chips that tout the importance of being slender, pretty and popular. New additions like the coloring book with characters such as "Eat it all Elaine" (an unpopular fat kid) further this goal. The chips in the dolls cause them to interact with each other, to the point of excluding the child, leaving her a passive spectator and causing her self-esteem to plummet.

### **Action Bill®**

Originally appearing in the Vesuvius comic series and on the animated OmniTV show *Action Bill and the Danger Squad*, Action Bill is an 11" doll who can be outfitted with many items from the expensive expansion packs. (The comic books have helpful tips on Improvised Munitions.) Sprinkled among these packs is the occasional Bane ensconced in a Wyrn-tainted talen (remember, non-Garou may activate talens with Willpower).

**Bane Talen: Action Bill Special Police Badge®**

**Gnosis: 2**

**Spirit Affinity: Bane**

These badges allow the child one free use of the *Subterfuge* Ability and a follow-up retest as if with the Basic Gift *Persuasion* when attempting to countermand authority figures — including Garou relatives or Kinfolk — or otherwise get what they want. The intent is to teach the child how to subvert his authorities in the interest of avarice.

### **Pocket Beasts**

A calculator-shaped electronic toy that imitates a puppy or kitten that barks, whines and begs for food and attention on its LCD screen, this toy actually encourages children to actively "shush" and ignore the pet's barks or meows. After several days of neglect the pet "dies" and a winged form goes to an LCD heaven, singing happily, allowing the child to start over... and kill another pet.

### **Kinfolk and Toys**

The truly nasty Storyteller might inform Garou players that their Kinfolk's children are acting more and more like Stepford automatons. If they investigate, the players discover that the Kinfolk children have been exposed to Banes infesting their Avalon toys, then face the choice of depriving the children of their toys (and aiding the Wyrn indirectly by upsetting children



and angering relatives) or allowing the atrocity to continue. Hopefully, the characters will investigate more, potentially discovering even more Wyrmtainted, Bane-infested toys requiring action.

What can really defeat the influence of an Avalon toy on a child? In the end, it comes down to two things — time and attention. Children who are receiving loving attention and quality time with parents, other relatives, neighbors, teachers or mentoring adults are less likely to suffer from the influence of a Bane. A self-confident little girl who's taught to love herself may be less likely to be influenced by Cici and friends, while a little boy with a strong father-figure may not turn to Action Bill. Unfortunately, in the World of Darkness, time and attention are two things that most children do not have, as parents struggle to make ends meet and the neighborhoods shutter their windows in fear. Garou may find themselves at an interesting crossroads when their work is done. Do they simply depart and hope things don't slide back, or do they stick around and fill the void that Avalon was trying to choke?

## *King Breweries and Distilleries*

Composed of seven separate corporations, King Breweries and Distilleries is the name of the Pentex holding company that controls them all under the aegis of the King family. Its assets range from a Rhode Island microbrewery to King Breweries itself, the fourth largest brewery in the United States. While most of its employees are ignorant of King's mission to further the Wyrms corruption, those that enjoy the free weekly six-pack tend to fall under the Wyrms sway, gravitating toward the odd night shifts found at so many King facilities.

### *Organization*

Controlled by Jeremy King, the corporate headquarters is located on a single floor of a Pentex-owned building in Denver (although the paperwork for incorporation is filed in Delaware). From these offices flow the directives of Corporate, and woe betide those who do not abide by those dictates. Corporate backs up these draconian policies with frequent surprise inspections as well. Founded in 1884, KBD is still under the control of its founding company, despite the Pentex buy-out of several years ago.

King's companies include King Spirits, which produces hard liquor, as well as other companies. Connecticut's King Import imports fine beers and illegal contraband. Massachusetts' Ruskaiya Distilleries produces cheap, low-quality vodka for many other brand names, and it may be single-handedly responsible for the bad name of US vodkas. The poorly run Thaw Beverages produces carbonated non-alcoholic mixers (which aren't quite tainted but do accelerate gestation for the Bane-infested). Dragon Valley Wines is a small California vintner, whose main Bane influence is the single mutant vine that produces all of its grapes. Rhode Island's Ten Tickle Ales is King's experiment in the thriving microbrewery market.



## Likely Encounters

Players might encounter everything from the occasional tainted King product to corrupt and Wyrn-tainted fomori employees. Remember that not every beer is Wyrn-tainted. If that were so, the FDA would shut King down, even in the World of Darkness. Instead, their products are just a little cheaper, a little more addictive, a little rougher on the liver. Signs of King are omnipresent, like the frat house posters of King's Laws of Partying (including the rules for Beer Pong and other drinking games). The actual Wyrn-sign is rarer.

### The King's Wenches

A troupe of models working under the *nom de stage* of "The King's Wenches," these ladies have the role of presenting King products in the best light possible, and themselves as well. They wear sheer swimsuits, low-cut bondage/fantasy maid outfits, even the occasional sharply cut schoolteacher's outfit with just the right slit to the skirt. These ladies have the job of luring fans back again and again without actually doing anything other than trying not to look bored. Seeded among the Wenches are a few Enticer fomori, who may seduce some of their fans, preparing them to become new hosts for Banes. Pity the poor fool who thinks he's getting lucky with a Wench.

### Dragon Valley Vine (and Offshoots)

The single vine that is the Dragon Valley vine is alive, sentient and malicious. Using seed-borne mind control to possess the Weeden family, it dominates its valley in California. Since those who have eaten its seeds and been possessed may have wandered off and died after a few years, it may have siblings elsewhere. The vines are capable of tripping victims, strangling them, slashing at them for one level of lethal damage or simply just popping a fat, juicy grape in an unfortunate's mouth before letting her wander away.

**Ten square foot patch of vine**

**Physical Traits (12):** *Ferocious* x 4, *Quick* x 4, *Resilient* x 4

**Abilities:** *Awareness* x 1, *Brawl* x 3, *Dodge* x 3

**Health Levels:** Healthy x 3, Bruised x 6, Wounded x 3, Incapacitated, Dead

## Tellus

*It's Not Just a Game, It's Your New Reality: Lose Yourself*

—(Tellus marketing slogan)

Known for its frenzied, violent video games, Tellus has a reputation for pushing the limit on violence and sex in the video game industry. Founded by whiz-kid programmer "Doc" Abraham Riegel in 1985, the company has grown by leaps and bounds, purchasing ailing Japanese publisher Tetsumomo Studios in 1992 and fellow Pentex subsidiary Sunburst Enterprise International (a computer hardware company) in 1997. With the release of the Typhoon, its 128-bit machine, Tellus is doing better than ever.



Focused on desensitization, Tellus makes happily addictive games of gore (such as *Slaughtercraft*), which occasionally feed Gorehound fomori. This promotes Pentex' long-range Omega Plan by destroying its customers' interpersonal skills and depriving them of motivation. Of course, the occasional Bane-infested program doesn't hurt in the short term, either. One of the surprisingly successful lines are the ecological games like *A Wolf's Life* and *The Big Pond*. Aside from intimating that predators kill for fun as well as food, these games are moderately accurate, but they play up the gore and violence found in nature, either turning the child away from a love of nature or encouraging violence.

## *Divisions*

With locations in Europe, Japan and California's Silicon Valley, Tellus makes both hardware and software. The California-based Sunburst makes the hardware, which has fewer Banes than before (in the interest of some reliability). In turn, the Japanese and European houses work on design, translation and licensing.

## *Likely Encounters*

Glass Walkers (and possibly Virtual Adepts) are among the characters most likely to be interested in combating Tellus' insidious blight. Of course, they are also the most likely to have Kinfolk or allies who are addicted to Tellus products as well.

## *Typhoon Games*

Tellus ensures high-quality games for its 128-bit, DVD, backwardly compatible Typhoon game system. (Tellus doesn't want to turn anyone away.) Of course, the occasional game does include a Bane Gaffling or Jaggling whose sole intent is to bring the gamer back for more.

## *Terminus*

An online game set in a world of "dark modern fantasy," *Terminus* is a game where players face a blasted cityscape populated with Hell-spawned demons, mutants, vampires, zombies, cyborgs, cultists and each other. Players get ahead by stealing, assassination, stockpiling contraband, cybernetic modifications, forbidden magics and other exotica. Eschewing the traditional fantasy work of other online games, *Terminus* is drawn from the urban dystopias of programmers who, though Bane-touched, share a common world not much different than that of the cyberpunk genre of the 1980s... or the Utopia of Pentex's Omega Plan.

*Terminus* fulfills another function, however. Tellus cross-indexes a player's credit background and their history of taking desperate actions. If the player seems likely to do *anything* to win, they become a likely candidate for "special work" for Pentex. More than one future fomor identified herself by her willingness to put in just one extra hour on *Terminus*.





## *Black Dog Game Factory*

Located in Atlanta, Georgia, the notorious yet successful Black Dog Game Factory is one of Pentex's stranger subsidiaries. Attempting to fight the same apathy and disaffection that Pentex inflicts on the world, the developers and staff of the game company struggle against their own monthly apocalypses of marketing, line meetings, prime distribution, new properties, publishing schedules and other cataclysms of the marginal roleplaying game industry.

Although its origins are shrouded in mystery, this small but successful Pentex subsidiary was originally started by a merger of a struggling game magazine publisher in Atlanta and a game studio from a backwoods town in Alabama that was adjacent to the US Army Chemical School of the now-closed Fort McClellan (which had been leaking Wyrms-tainted toxins into the surrounding communities throughout the 20th century). Riding the Anne Rice-inspired Goth-and-angst craze of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Black Dog gained prominence with its flagship **Zombie: The Putrescence**.

### *Publish and Perish*

Like much of Pentex, Black Dog works not-so-subtly toward the alienation and desensitization of its consumers, whom company officials call "the Masses." By making deviance, violence and rebellion sexy and glamorous, Black Dog's Talespinner games attract both pre-adolescent wannabes and aging hipsters. Although the employees are only marginally inhuman, with nominal exceptions for the Accounting staff, the office does include oddities ranging from a clean refrigerator to the occasional manager's dog (which may take up week-long residency at times, and often seems more intelligent than customer, client or freelance writer).

### *Likely Encounters*

Black Dog may seem like the quintessential Pentex company but is in fact not that Bane-infested. It doesn't need to be. Feeding the Masses' alienation is a trade and hobby that has been normalized over the past two centuries, and it barely even seems Wyrms-tainted to most Westerners. The homes of its developers, managers and production and administrative staff are more likely to contain free-ranging Banes and fomori, such as the Thing Beneath the Stairs, than the actual offices (where they even try to keep reading material out of the restrooms).

### *Goblins*

Quasi-fomori created by long-term contact with the tainted ink of Black Dog's more "mature" publications, these fallen gamers possess an amazing array of strange and obnoxious powers after their change. Woe betide the aspiring Silver Fang who runs afoul of a pack of crazed, violent, gamers with poor hygiene and a strange sense of joy at finally being able die in a real-life scene from **Lycanthrope: The Rapture**.



## McLaren Formula

Bribing appropriate officials of both countries, Black Dog actually sends its books to the cold wastes of Quebec for printing, where a deranged Canadian print manager has devised the ultimate Bane lure — the ink in each product. Acting as beacons for Banes, these publications lure the Wyrmspirits to the game books, usually located near a gamer's bed or study. Once there, the Banes begin their work of corruption on the poor soul.

## Conventions

Having fallen to the addictions of their own products, a few Black Dog employees find themselves wandering from SF convention to gamer convention. They may be found crowded behind a small table along with the first-available bit of female booth-bait, spiritlessly flogging Black Dog product.

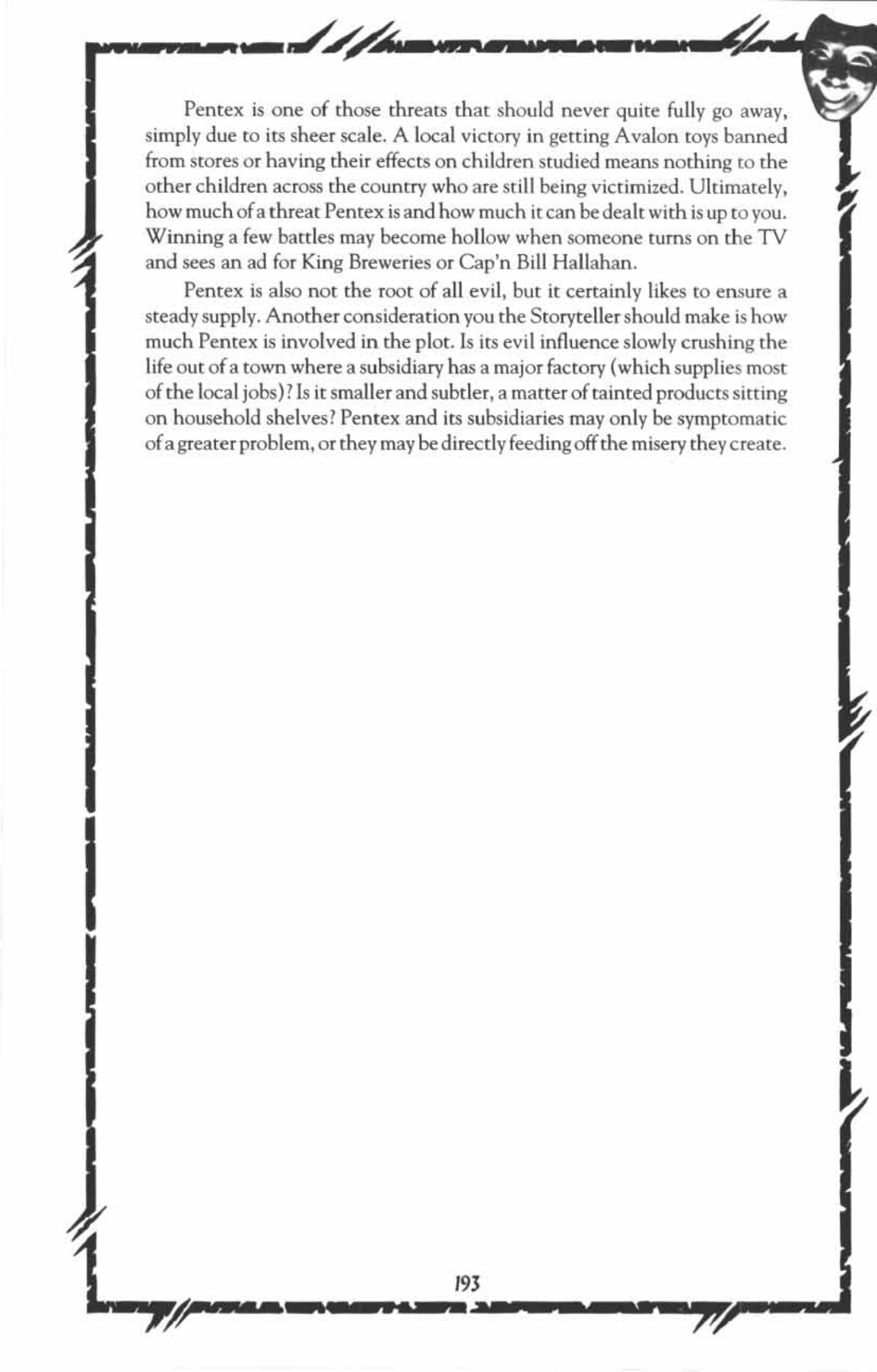
## Resources

What's been presented here is only the tip of the iceberg. More in-depth information about Pentex and its subsidiaries can be found in **Subsidiaries: A Guide to Pentex**.

For information about real-world business news and practices, the Internet is a fine place to look for expositions on dirty-dealing companies. The business section of your local bookstore also carries a variety of accounts on businesses who didn't play fair. To learn more about the day's noteworthy news in the world of finance and the global marketplace, visit the newsstand for perennial favorites such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *Barron's*, or even your local newspaper for potential setting material. Magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek* also carry business sections, which may or may not be layman friendly. And of course, one cannot forget "Dilbert," which has come to expose the interior hijinx and general foolishness of corporate life (with a few more warts, Catbert could easily become a Toad.) Dilbert's creator, Scott Adams, has also written a couple of prose works describing his own adventures in Cubicleland that sparked the cartoon. Lastly, National Public Radio carries a daily radio show called *Marketplace* that reconsiders the day's news in a financial light and occasionally runs features on the American public's perceptions of money and business.

## In Summation

Battling Pentex may be one of the greatest fights the Garou can take on, and also one of the most disheartening. It's one thing to destroy the Pet Pal kit a young neighbor is using on a stray cat; it's quite another to see shelves loaded with them at the local toy store. Walk down the street, and in a block, you see a Herrick's, an O'Tolley's and an Endron-supplied gas station selling Circinus cigarettes and King Breweries beer. Pentex has done its work quite well. It is so firmly entrenched in the consciousness of the modern public that its products are on shelves in households and its name is part of the lingo. It is this pervasiveness that makes the Garou's fight seem so hopeless.



Pentex is one of those threats that should never quite fully go away, simply due to its sheer scale. A local victory in getting Avalon toys banned from stores or having their effects on children studied means nothing to the other children across the country who are still being victimized. Ultimately, how much of a threat Pentex is and how much it can be dealt with is up to you. Winning a few battles may become hollow when someone turns on the TV and sees an ad for King Breweries or Cap'n Bill Hallahan.

Pentex is also not the root of all evil, but it certainly likes to ensure a steady supply. Another consideration you the Storyteller should make is how much Pentex is involved in the plot. Is its evil influence slowly crushing the life out of a town where a subsidiary has a major factory (which supplies most of the local jobs)? Is it smaller and subtler, a matter of tainted products sitting on household shelves? Pentex and its subsidiaries may only be symptomatic of a greater problem, or they may be directly feeding off the misery they create.





# Appendix: The Wyrms' Arsenal

Although the servants of the Wyrms enjoy many awesome powers that are “natural” to their forms or else come from Gifts learned from Wyrmspirits, a number of useful items — both supernatural and mundane in nature — exist to make doing the Wyrms’ work easier. This section describes some common fetishes, talens, toxins and other trinkets available to those who work to bring about the triumph of the Wyrms.

## *Fetishes*

Fallen shapeshifters have their own peculiar fetishes, which they treasure and use in the service of the Wyrms (or for their own purposes). Known as Bane fetishes, these items do not always contain Banes. Sometimes, the Fallen Ones compel other spirits to inhabit and empower these items, thereby reducing the power of their enemies — the Garou and other Changing Breeds — to acquire spirits for their own fetishes. Even if the spirit or Bane cooperates, the process of empowering a Bane fetish is an involved and excruciatingly complex one that twists and corrupts the spirit chosen for the task.

## *Bauble*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 1    **Gnosis:** 1    **Spirit Affinity:** Attraction, Greed

Buzzards typically create this “pretty-shiny” for the sole purpose of distracting true Corax. A Bauble consists of a piece of glass or metal or any other reflective object. Empowered by a spirit, the Bauble glows with an unnatural shine bright enough to be seen for as far away as a mile, under most conditions. Since most Corax cannot resist investigating (and perhaps claiming) shiny objects, they feel compelled to approach



the Bauble. Not only do Baubles serve to draw Corax away from other, more important business, they also provide fallen creatures with the perfect means of luring a hapless Corax into an ambush. And if that Corax happens to be guarding a spirit egg...

Unfortunately, Buzzards have problems tearing themselves away from Baubles, too, so these fetishes often defeat their purpose. Corax coming upon an activated Bauble must win a Willpower Challenge in order to avoid focusing on the Bauble. Failure to do so means that the character pays attention to the Bauble, ignoring other events around her, until someone else forces her attention away from the Bauble, removes the item from the character (who will not want to part with it) or destroys the fetish.

### *Brush of the Ancients*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 1    **Gnosis:** 8    **Spirit Affinity:** Divination, Art, Enigmas

Created by Black Spiral Dancers, this small paintbrush (also known as an Omen Brush) enables the user to paint complex and realistic scenes, drawing upon the power of her ancestors. These scenes depict past or future events. In order to interpret the painting correctly, the character must spend a Gnosis Trait and win a Static Mental Challenge (difficulty of seven Traits, retest with *Enigmas*). If she succeeds, the Storyteller may give the character hints regarding the meaning of the symbolism, and whether it's a past or future event. If the player fails, the character may "misinterpret" the symbolism or even fail to grasp it altogether.

### *Stolen Eye*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 1    **Gnosis:** 2    **Spirit Affinity:** Sight, Visions

Buzzards occasionally acquire these gruesome fetishes and use them to find true Corax. Made from the plucked eye of a still-living creature or person, the Stolen Eye orients itself so that it "looks" in the direction of the nearest true Corax. To activate it, the Buzzard must dip the Eye in salt water and place it on a flat surface. In less than a minute, the Eye turns and faces in the direction of the nearest Corax. Stolen Eyes last for a month or until the death of the creature it originally belonged to, whichever comes first. These items tend to give off a noxious odor as they decay, and, unless they are cared for scrupulously by the Buzzard, they have a tendency to get crushed.

### *Umbraphone*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 1    **Gnosis:** 3    **Spirit Affinity:** Communication

This fetish resembles a black cellular phone, but in the hands of Black Spiral Dancers (particularly those among the Consultants camp), it allows communication with those in the Umbra. Special numerical codes make it difficult for anyone untrained in its use to use it. Black Spiral characters who receive an Umbraphone as a gift or who force the secrets of its use from its former owner must succeed in a Gnosis Test in order to use it successfully. Characters who acquire such a fetish without knowing anything about it may attempt to use it by winning a Static Mental Challenge (difficulty is seven Traits, retest with *Enigmas*) in order to decipher its codes. Even if successful, the unfamiliar user has no control



over who her phone call reaches, which might have unpleasant repercussions for the hapless caller. (Storyteller discretion is advised whenever a character unfamiliar with an Umbraphone attempts to use it.)

### *Bane Lantern*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 2    **Gnosis:** 5    **Spirit Affinity:** Illumination, Attraction

A steel lantern decorated with painted eldritch glyphs and obscene runes, the Bane Lantern provides an unnatural purplish light that illuminates all spirits struck by its glow, forcing them to become fully visible regardless of whether they are in the mortal world or in the Umbra. Fomori or Kami, while they appear the same visibly, manifest a spirit-shadow that unmistakably reveals their dual nature. The beam acts as an attractor to spirits, drawing spirit-creatures in the area to its eerie luminescence. To activate it, the user must command the Bane Lantern to ignite, using either the Pictish language Black Spiral Dancers or the secret tongue of the Wyrms. No test is required, but it is up to the Storyteller to determine whether or not any spirits lurk near enough to the Bane Lantern to respond to its compelling gleam.

### *Delirium Mask*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 2    **Gnosis:** 7    **Spirit Affinity:** Fear

This fetish consists of a stone helmet bearing a face plate carved in the likeness of some demon or other grotesque creature. Anyone who wears the mask, even non-Garou, invoke the Delirium in a targeted individual by the activation of this fetish. The victim reacts just as if the wearer were a werewolf in full Crinos form, regardless of his normal nature. Since Black Spiral Dancers have little use for this fetish, they usually give them as gifts to individuals that have found favor with them. Members of other fallen Changing Breeds occasionally find Delirium Masks useful as disguises. Many of these fetishes require the expenditure of a Willpower Trait, rather than Gnosis, to activate since they are geared toward use by non-Garou. The user must spend the appropriate Trait to activate the fetish.

### *Devilwhip*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 2    **Gnosis:** 6    **Spirit Affinity:** Pain, Domination

A thorny, black, 15-foot lash made from the severed tentacle of a Bane, receives special treatment so that it remains permanently in the material world. The handle, sewn over the torn end of the tentacle, remains slightly sticky to the touch. A lesser Bane powers the Devilwhip, and it can animate the fetish on command, wielding the whip as if the Black Spiral Dancer commanding the whip were using it. A Devilwhip inflicts two health levels of aggravated damage. Each time it draws blood, it produces a sound like manic laughter. The user of the whip must spend a Gnosis Trait to activate the whip, and she may attack with the whip in addition to or instead of her normal attacks. In addition, the wielder of the Devilwhip may choose to activate the whip and crack it in the face of an opponent. If the victim fails a Social Challenge,



she feels compelled by the whip to prostrate herself on the floor in front of the wielder. The target may spend a Willpower Trait to resist this effect.

### *Power Goggles*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 2    **Gnosis:** 3    **Spirit Affinity:** Insight, Perception

Originated by Pentex and intended for distribution among that organization's First Teams, this fetish has become available in installations throughout the world. As fetishes usable by fomori (who attune to them through a Willpower Test), Power Goggles allow the wearer to see Garou who are in the process of crossing the Gauntlet from the Penumbra to the material world. The wearer must win a Mental Challenge to receive warning of the impending arrival of a Garou from the Umbra. Such a warning allows the fomor wearing the Goggles the ability to act before the Garou.

### *Tambertail's Heart*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 2    **Gnosis:** 7    **Spirit Affinity:** Danger, Alertness

The prototype of this fetish, for which all subsequent examples are named, was the preserved heart of a Fianna Theurge. Whenever danger threatens the individual attuned to the Heart, the fetish beats spasmodically. The owner of the Heart may also command it to drive off hostile spirits. It does so by casting a baleful crimson glow and emitting a noise similar to electronic feedback. The user must activate the fetish's warning capability by spending a Gnosis Trait. To use the Heart to drive off spirits, the user must win a Willpower Challenge. Unfriendly spirits in the area must win a Mental Challenge versus the user or else flee the area for one hour.

### *Umbrascope*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 2    **Gnosis:** 4    **Spirit Affinity:** Sight, Scrying

Appearing as either a rusty spyglass, a battered pair of opera glasses or a much-used set of binoculars, the Umbrascope contains a Scryer Bane bound within its material form. The Umbrascope gives its user the ability to peek across the Gauntlet and look into the Umbra from the material world. The user, therefore, does not have to step sideways to see what is going on in the Umbra. To activate the fetish, the user must win a Static Mental Challenge versus the Gauntlet rating of the area that she wishes to examine.

### *Gut Bonds*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 2    **Gnosis:** 5    **Spirit Affinity:** Bondage, Harm

This macabre fetish consists of strands of extremely strong gut that can only take damage from magic, resisting attempts to cut or burn it by normal means. Anyone who struggles against the bonds succumbs to severe nausea unless she succeeds in a Static Physical Challenge (difficulty is five Traits, retest with *Brawl*). Even if successful, the bound character may not escape normally, even if she possesses Traits that would otherwise allow her to do so. The only way to escape the bonds is by undergoing an elaborate series of physical contortions while changing





forms in a precise order. The character must first assume Crinos form to stretch the Gut Bonds. Next, the bound individual must assume either Hispo or Lupus in order to slip her head out from the loops of the binding. Glabro or Homid form then allows the character to maneuver her lower body through the bindings. Finally, Lupus form enables the character to pull her paws loose and free herself. For each step, the character must not only assume the necessary form (including the expenditure of any appropriate Traits) but also succeed in a Physical Challenge. The character takes one health level of aggravated damage for each loss (as her bones break against the tight bonds), but she may continue making challenges until she either succeeds in freeing herself or becomes incapacitated from too many failures.

### *Frater Vermii's The Pretanic Keys*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 3   **Gnosis** 5   **Spirit Affinity:** Corruption, Temptation

*The Pretanic Keys* is a 19th-century book purporting to contain lore concerning the forces of the Wyrm, including all its legions of servitors. Written by an individual styling himself "Frater Vermii" (Brother of the Wyrm), this massive tome claims to provide instructions on how to channel the unseen powers of the "Black Labyrinth." The gruesome death of the alleged author (in 1892) not only made the book notorious in certain circles but also lent credence to the pages' contents. Only 92 copies of the book ever existed, and some of those have perished since it was written. While the chants, incantations, formulae and other rituals bear little resemblance to any real mastery of dark powers, the book itself exercises a miasmic lure of corruption over any student of the occult unfortunate enough to find and read a copy. For every hour she spends reading the book, a character loses one Willpower Trait. She must make a Mental Challenge versus the Storyteller or find herself possessed by some Malfean or other Wyrm-tainted spirit for the duration of a scene. Black Spiral Dancers occasionally "gift" occultists they have targeted for use with a copy of this book. If a character manages to read the entire book (a process which takes up an entire session of play), she must make a Gnosis Challenge to resist going insane. If she succeeds, the player may add two Traits of *Occult* to her character's Abilities, but the character becomes susceptible to domination by the Wyrm.

(*The Pretanic Keys* text may be found in **The Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth**.)

### *Deathrattler*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 3   **Gnosis:** 6   **Spirit Affinity:** Terror

Formed from a dried rattle taken from a creature resembling a rattlesnake (but found in certain primitive realms of the Umbra), the Deathrattler can frighten away all animals or humans within the range of its sound. The fetish's effect on normal humans and animals is irresistible, but Garou, members of other Changing Breeds or any other sort of supernatural creature must succeed in a Gnosis (or Willpower) Test in order to remain in the vicinity of the rattle. Anyone who fails such a test must flee the area for 15 minutes or until the scene ends.

### *Warshirt of the Wyrm*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 3   **Gnosis:** 6   **Spirit Affinity:** Protection



This leather tunic, decorated with beads and feathers to form eldritch runes of protection, gives the wearer three extra health levels which absorb damage before the wearer begins to lose her own health levels. The shirt changes form along with the wearer, so it is usable in all of a shapeshifter's forms. After combat, the user may recharge the fetish by giving it a point of Gnosis, which restores the fetish to its full ability to protect its wearer. If the Warshirt loses all its health levels, it screams in agony and blood runs down the outside of the shirt.

### *Magic Spewer*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 4    **Gnosis:** 5            **Spirit Affinity:** Disease, Fire, Toxins

Fashioned from the skull of a human, homid shapeshifter, young vampire, mage or other supernatural "human," this fetish has a handle atop the skull's cranium allowing for ease of portability. The lower jaw remains attached to the skull by leather bands that act as hinges. When commanded to do so by the person carrying it, the Magic Spewer vomits forth a stream of noxious, viscous slime consisting of toxic waste and other foul and poisonous substances. Anyone standing within 15 feet of the fetish's face (with the exception of the user), must succeed in a Physical Challenge or take two health levels of aggravated damage. The fetish's eyes glow red when it is active, and its lower jaw moves on its own as if conversing with some unseen companion. Anyone hit by the slime also manifests a wasting disease that comes to a crisis several weeks later. Even vampires, Garou and other disease-resistant creatures are affected by this ailment and only *Mother's Touch*, *Resist Toxin* or some other form of magical healing (such as the Discipline of *Obeah*) can remove the taint of the disease.

### *Baneklaive*

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 5    **Gnosis:** 7            **Spirit Affinity:** Combat, War  
**Melee Bonus Traits:** 4            **Negative Traits:** *Heavy* (for Homid form only)

The Black Spiral Dancers' equivalent of the grand klaive of the Garou, the Baneklaive appears as an intricately tooled sword-length weapon engraved with contorted runes and gleaming with pale green balefire whenever activated. For purposes of inflicting damage, the Baneklaive counts as a silver weapon and also gives off the emanation of the Wyrms. (An opponent must spend a Willpower Trait in order to face an opponent wielding a Baneklaive unless he is equipped with a grand klaive or its equivalent.) Besides containing a spirit of war or combat, a Baneklaive usually contains a second spirit which empowers the fetish weapon with a Charm of some sort (usually one typical of Bane spirits). The Black Spiral Dancer who possesses such a fetish can also use it to siphon Gnosis from spirits for his own use. If the user of a Baneklaive injures a spirit in Umbral combat, causing at least one health level of damage or draining even one point of Power from the spirit, he may make a Gnosis Test. Success gives the user an additional point of Gnosis taken from the wounded spirit. This power may only be used once during a single scene.



## Churjuroc's Tusk

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 5   **Gnosis:** 9   **Spirit Affinity:** Nexus Crawlers, Sacrifice

A blackish-purple tusk that once belonged to a gigantic tusked wormlike minion of the Wyrms. Legends say that the Black Spiral Dancers once fought gladly alongside Churjuroc until the mindless creature turned on them to assuage its uncontrollable hunger. After a long, hard battle, the Black Spiral Dancers destroyed their former ally and took the tusks from its four mouths. Only seven of these fetishes remain in existence. The tusk is about two feet long, and it bears a platinum ballcap on one end. Intricate carvings of an especially perverse nature decorate its length. Once every full moon, the tusk, when activated, summons a Nexus Crawler. This creature needs a sacrifice (usually of a Garou) in order to resist taking the life of the summoner. Once provided with its payment, the Nexus Crawler carries out one task for its summoner, as long as that task can be completed within 24 hours.

## Soul Ruby

**Fetish Trait Cost:** 5   **Gnosis:** 7   **Spirit Affinity:** Prophecy, Knowledge

Cut from the veins of rock at the heart of the Black Spiral Dancers' subterranean Pits, this ruby, the size of a woman's fist, possesses intrinsic value for its size alone. Its true worth—and what makes it a fetish—lies in the fact that the Soul Ruby contains the captive spirit of a fallen Black Spiral Dancer. When activated, the Soul Ruby speaks telepathically to its user, providing her with whatever *Lore* Traits the spirit possessed in life. The spirit may also provide the user with visitations in dreams, providing shadowy glimpses of the future. The user spends a point of Gnosis to activate the Soul Ruby. The information it receives is up to the Storyteller, but it should be comparable in importance and value to the cost of the fetish.

## Talens

Similar to fetishes, talens differ in that they are single-use items that do not survive activation. See **Laws of the Wild** for rules on using talens.

### *Pretanic Talisman (3 uses per Fetish Trait spent)*

**Gnosis:** 4   **Spirit Affinity:** The Wyrms

This talisman is a physical key that contains one of the 99 names of the Wyrms' minions. Black Spiral Dancers possessing such a talen may open a gate one of the Malfean realms, allowing a creature to come through from beyond. In order to activate the talen, the user must meditate on the name of the key, spend a Gnosis Trait and succeed in a Gnosis Test. The user may spend additional Gnosis Traits to increase the power of the creature summoned, but the attending risk increases the likelihood that the creature will not regard the summoner with favor. When the creature appears, the summoner must succeed in a Mental Challenge against the summoned spirit. Failure means that the spirit either attacks the summoner or returns to its home. When the summoner has exhausted the key's uses, it disappears through



a rift in the Gauntlet, to appear somewhere else for someone else to find and attune himself to.

### *Bean-Bane*

**Gnosis:** 7    **Spirit Affinity:** Bane spirits

Appearing as a small dried bean of any kind, this talen contains a dormant Bane. To activate it, the owner of the talen must plant it in soil, mud or clay. This action destroys the talen and frees the Bane, which usually agrees to provide one service for the one who gave it the ability to manifest in the physical world. The Bane's ability to do so lasts for one scene per point of Gnosis given it by the one who planted the Bean. After that time, the Bane returns to the Umbra.

### *Dragon's Ichor*

**Gnosis:** 5    **Spirit Affinity:** Warding

Black blood taken from some powerful Wyrn-creature and preserved in a dark-colored, specially treated glass jar or vial, Dragon's Ichor affords strong protection to a creature who rubs the gelatinous blood over his entire body. Doing so renders the user invulnerable to all attacks from spirits for the duration of one trip into the Umbra (or one scene, whichever is most appropriate). Each vial or jar of Dragon's Ichor contains enough for only two uses.

### *Goblin Ale*

**Gnosis:** 4    **Spirit Affinity:** Hallucinations, Drunkenness

An alcoholic beverage acquired by trading with the Shadow Court's goblin brewers, one quaff of this potent brew inflicts violent hallucinations upon the imbibor, occasionally shifting a Garou into the Umbra involuntarily. The Garou must succeed in a Gnosis Test to avoid crossing the Gauntlet unexpectedly after drinking goblin ale. The slightest slip of goblin ale renders the drinker totally drunk, though he may spend a Willpower Trait to resist for one minute (long enough to lie down or move away from a potentially dangerous situation). Garou under the influence of Goblin Ale are also more likely to frenzy, so they must spend a Willpower Trait to resist doing so at the slightest provocation. The effects of Goblin Ale last for one scene (which may be an entire moot). Goblin Ale is a favorite beverage at Black Spiral Dancer moots and at gatherings of other fallen Changing Breeds.

### *Storm in a Bottle*

**Gnosis:** 6    **Spirit Affinity:** Fury, Storm

An opaque bottle, sometimes made of wave-patterned milky glass, this talen contains an entire Wyrn-tainted storm within it. Once unleashed by opening the bottle (and running away), the storm lashes across both the material world and the Penumbra. Although it lasts for only one scene before dissipating as suddenly as it began, the storm delivers a lightning strike to any of the Wyrn's enemies in its vicinity unless they manage to reach shelter within one combat turn. The victim may make a Physical Test to see if she can avoid the lightning strike, which does three health levels of aggravated damage. Only one lightning bolt will strike any given victim.



## Wurm-Wood

**Gnosis:** 3    **Spirit Affinity:** Protection

This blackened, unnatural-looking vine grows in caverns deep below the surface of the earth, absorbing the light of balefires that glow underground. If enough of this substance is collected to form a bonfire-size pyre, its noxious smell, when ignited, will protect all within the range of its odor from attacks by all sorts of spirits, regardless of their power.

## Balefire

Few substances reek of the Wurm like this foul material. Some Pentex scientists believe it to be the corrupted material of the spirit world. It appears to be greenish flames with the consistency of molten wax, bubbling and roiling and glowing with an internal incandescence.

The name is believed to come from the fae's word for their Beltaine beacon fires, a word that the White Howlers surely knew and took with them after their fall. Black Spiral Dancers today may sit before a balefire's glow, staring into its depths in the hope of gaining mystical insights. What they usually get instead are brain tumors, but even these are considered a form of corrupt enlightenment.

Balefire burns like regular fire. Because of its substance, it can be used like napalm, although handling it is extremely dangerous. Any damage balefire inflicts is always aggravated, it takes twice as long to heal, and it is twice as likely to leave a battle scar. If a werewolf wants to avoid the damage, *Resist Toxin* should be used.

## Toxins

In addition to Gnosis-powered devices such as fetishes and talens, creatures of the Wurm often use poisons to carry out their master's purposes or to protect themselves from their myriad enemies. Toxins are not usually part of a character's beginning equipment, though they may be acquired during play according to the discretion of the Storyteller. Most often, characters will need to resist these substances when used against them.

### *Jonone Gas*

**Rank** One

**Vector:** Inhaled

**Effects:** Extracted from violets, ionone works extremely well against Garou and other creatures with a highly developed sense of smell. This gas short-circuits the odor-sensing abilities of anyone who inhales it. The effects last for one hour, and it can prevent the use of Gifts that rely on scent-related sensory input, such as *Heightened Senses*, *Scent of the True Form* and similar Gifts. This gas does not block the *Sense Wurm* Gift, however, since the Gift does not actually rely on physical odors. Anyone caught in the vicinity of this gas when it is released must succeed at a Physical Test or succumb to its effects for one hour of game time.

**Protection:** Don't inhale it.



## *Kiss of the Wyrn*

Rank Four

**Vector:** Injected

**Effects:** A yellowish liquid used with a dart pistol or rifle, this experimental toxin heightens feelings of bloodlust and paranoia, causing anyone hit with it to frenzy without provocation. Pentex is still in the process of studying the optimally effective dose that will drive a Garou to uncontrollable frenzy without killing it outright. Placed in a capsule attached to weapons that propel darts, the capsule releases the serum upon contact, poisoning the target's blood or muscle tissue. Shapeshifters, vampires and other creatures capable of frenzying will do so if struck with the Kiss of the Wyrn. A victim may make a Physical Challenge in an attempt to dodge the dart. If struck, a Garou may spend a Willpower Trait to resist the toxin for a scene while she attempts to receive some sort of healing, such as *Resist Toxin*. Other supernatural creatures may also spend Willpower Traits to resist the effects, but they may need to find some other appropriate form of supernatural purification to rid themselves of the effects of the Kiss of the Wyrn.

**Protection:** Armor, *Resist Toxin*

## *Tear Gas*

Rank Two

**Vector:** Contact/Inhaled

**Effects:** This colorless gas has a distinct, sour odor. When inhaled, it causes coughing, gagging and irritation of the mucous membranes. When it makes contact with delicate parts of the body, such as eyes, it causes extreme discomfort and temporary blindness from stimulation of tear ducts. Victims caught in the area of this gas lose the use of all combat-related Physical Traits, and they can only attempt a Physical Challenge to escape the vicinity.

**Protection:** A gas-mask gives full protection. Other masks, such as scuba masks, protect the eyes. Breathing through a wet cloth protects the lungs. *Resist Toxin* and similar Gifts provide full protection.

## *Mustard Gas*

Rank Three

**Vector:** Contact/Inhaled

**Effects:** This caustic, faintly yellowish gas exudes a distinctive odor reminiscent of mustard. If an individual inhales the gas, she suffers blisters in her lungs and takes two health levels of damage. Contact with the skin delivers one health level of damage from blistering. In humans and creatures without recourse to magical healing, damage to the lungs is permanent and, if enough damage is accumulated, fatal. Skin blisters heal normally over time. Magical healing can eliminate all the damage, even to the lungs. Mustard gas has been outlawed as a weapon by international treaties, and its use might provoke attention from a number of interested, and powerful, parties.



**Protection:** Full-skin coverage and a gas mask provide full protection. Ordinary clothing protects for one turn only. *Resist Toxin* also provides full protection.

### *Nerve Agent (Sarin)*

Rank Five

**Vector:** Contact/Inhaled

**Effects:** This colorless, odorless gas inflicts one health level of aggravated damage per turn. It causes nausea and disorientation, followed by seizures and death. Only immediate hospitalization, the use of healing Gifts or other types of magical healing can prevent the inexorable spread of the effects. Sarin is so dangerous that even Pentex issues it only under extreme circumstances.

**Protection:** Sealed NBC suit; remaining in a totally sealed, locked room away from the release of the gas.

**Antidote:** Atropine Injection Kit. Note that atropine taken without the presence of sarin is itself a potentially fatal toxin. Rumors circulate that Pentex has engineered a form of nerve gas that atropine only partly works against, providing only a few hours of life for the victim.

### *Fomorol*

Rank Three

**Vector:** Injected

**Effects:** Constituted from the bodies of recycled fomorach, fomorol temporarily boosts the powers of fomori injected by it. After injection, a fomor must make a Willpower Test to access the drug. If successful, the fomor finds all his Traits doubled for the length of time the drug is in his system. One use creates an immediate and powerful addiction, thus ensuring that the fomor never leaves the service of his supplier.

**Protection:** none

### *Arsenal*

Weapons and armor available to most characters (and their antagonists) are detailed in other **Mind's Eye Theatre** books. Here are a few specially tailored items for servitors of the Wyrn. These are usually found in the hands of First Teams, not street gangs. Pentex takes very good care of its toys, and news of a gang with a balefire flame-thrower will ensure that werewolves are the least of the gang's worries.

### *Sub-Dermal Radio*

Pentex operatives sometimes receive implants in the base of their skulls consisting of a miniaturized radio transmitter and receiver. These subdermal radios allow members of Pentex teams to communicate among themselves discreetly within a 25-mile radius. The radio frequency shunts up and down the available bands, making unauthorized reception nearly impossible. Operatives may shut the radio off at will, but Pentex can, of course, reactivate the radio without the knowledge of their operative, thus affording the ability to monitor the actions of its agents in the field.



A very few of these devices have fallen into the hands of monkeywrencher Garou, causing Pentex to step up its efforts to refine these items. Individuals outfitted with Sub-Dermal Radios can speak with each other without being overheard by those around them, even if an individual is standing within arm's length of the speaker.

### *Pus Armor*

This armor functions as Kevlar in that it soaks one health level of damage. When the outer part, however, is punctured or pierced by claws, teeth or bullets, the armor oozes a highly infectious pus that sprays out in an arc that extends six feet from the puncture. The pus causes one health level of aggravated damage to unprotected skin it touches. The victim may attempt a Physical Challenge to dodge the pus. Only magical healing can remove the damage, which increases by one health level per day as the pus eats deeper into the skin, eventually killing the victim unless treated. Cutting out the ulceration is possible, but the affected creature cannot repair the damage done (which may include loss of body parts), and she takes as much damage again as she received from the pus.

**Health Level:** One

**Negative Traits:** *Clumsy*

**Availability:** Pentex 4

### *Silver Nitrate Hollow-points*

Hollow-point bullets filled with silver nitrate, this form of ammunition not only explodes inside the wound when it impacts, it also releases its deadly contents into the system of the victim. While harmful to any creature, these bullets cause extra damage to Garou who are not in their breed form (or to metis who are in their breed form), causing one health level of aggravated damage per turn for three turns as it courses through the system of the affected creature. The wounds only respond to magical healing such as *Mother's Touch* or *Resist Toxin* (the latter destroys the poison but does not heal damage already taken).

**Availability:** Pentex 5 (need-to-have only), Hunters 5

### *Balefire Flame-thrower*

Resembling a conventional flame-thrower, this device emits a stream of semi-liquid balefire to a range of 30 feet. The shooter must spend a Willpower Trait to focus the weapon properly and succeed in a standard Physical Test to strike his target. The victim may attempt a Physical Challenge to dodge the liquid. Failure to do so means that the victim receives a coating of the balefire and takes two health levels of aggravated damage. *Resist Toxin* protects a target from the effects. Each unit may be used six times before it needs to be refilled.

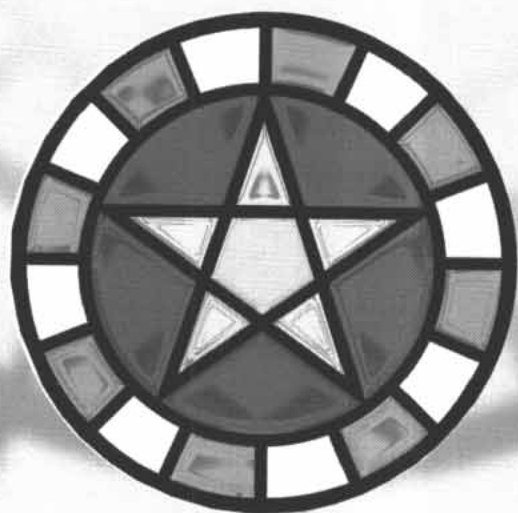
**Negative Traits:** *Heavy, Clumsy*

**Availability:** Black Spiral Dancers 3, Pentex 4, Hunters 5



also available

for



Also  
Available



Tribe Novels 1:  
Shadowlords  
& Get of Fenris



Tribe Novels 2:  
Silent Striders  
& Black Furies



Tribe Novels 3:  
Red Talons  
& Fianna



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# THE RAGE CONTINUES...

## Tribe Novels 4: Bone Gnawers & Stargazers



### BONE GNAWERS

Valiant Garou warriors return to Eastern Europe to eradicate the growing evil that has confounded their efforts thus far. Where the mighty and noble have failed, hope now rests with humble werewolves who make their homes in filth.

### STARGAZERS

Antonine Teardrop may hold the key to Garou victory against the evil of Eastern Europe, but his tribe's withdrawal from the Garou Nation may have damaged his credibility beyond repair. Even if it has not, servants of the Wurm want him dead.



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# WEREWOLF THE APOCALYPSE