

# NIGHT HORRORS WOLFSBANE



the World of Darkness

WEREWOLF  
THE FORSAKEN





*"This is the truth, boy.  
I can sit here on this rocky outcropping all day and all night and  
I can rattle off the names of all the horrors I've seen. The  
rats in men's bodies, the spirits with moon eyes,  
that fire-touched preacher down on Route 66.  
But that menu of awfulness won't even give you  
a glimpse of what's out there.  
I'm paraphrasing, here, but there's more hell-born evil  
under Heaven and Earth than you know, little Horatio."*

*—Corwin Sandstone, Bone Shadow*

*This book includes:*

- A whole hoary host of antagonists — 28, to be specific — to lend your stories and chronicles a dose of urban legend evil.
- A spread of werewolves, spirits, and other nasty creatures that can find a home in any **Werewolf: The Forsaken** game, many coming part and parcel with new rites and other abilities.
- Rules on creating the wretched idigam, the Moon-Banished spirits who one-by-one have been returning to earth, featuring six example idigam to drop into any game.

*For use with the  
World of Darkness Rulebook*



**WEREWOLF**  
THE FORSAKEN®

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# NIGHT HORRORS WOLFSBANE™

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# The

Confession of  
Darius to Aidan's Plea:

# Way

I broke his neck slowly. I felt every little crack and crunch of bone, and I knew the people watching heard it. I'd have put a microphone to his neck if I could have. I wanted them to know — this is slow, this is painful, this is the worst way to die. To know that it's coming, to flail desperately and to be unable to stop it. To have to watch yourself being murdered. It's intimate. I almost kissed him as he died.

This is how they learned my name. Or, at least, how they learned the name that came to be mine. My real name is lost, a mouthful of Polish-American alphabet soup. The name they took away that night was *Dar-Us*, "Slow Killer" in the tongue of spirits. Not all of us speak that language, of course, so they started calling me "Darius."

I think about that night sometimes. A lot, I guess. The guy I killed wasn't one of us. He wasn't *imru*, one of the People, so it was okay that I killed him. I mean, some of us argue that you shouldn't kill wolf-bloods, because, hey, if they're not People now, they might be tomorrow. But once I got my hands around his head, he was done. And that's what it takes to become a legend. One murder, slowed down. An entire life in the time it takes to break a greenwood stick.

Crack, crunch, snap.

•••

Story told to Aidan's Plea by Mani Seif of the Blood Talons:

I saw him fight, sure. I'd heard he was not the kind of werewolf you fucked with, but honestly, you hear that about everybody. Really, which one of us do you want to fight? I knew he was a New Moon, though, and that kind of gave me pause, because you only hear about those guys when there's really something to hear.

So when I found out he was in town and he was running a day ahead of his pack, I figured he was scouting. I hunted him down and figured I'd chat with him, figure out *why* he was in town, see if there was anything we needed to talk about. I brought my pack with me.

# Back

No, I wasn't scared. I didn't want my neck broken. There's a difference.

# Down

Anyway, I found him, but one of the local gangs had found him first. And watching him fight... I don't know. Maybe that's what we all look like, and I've just never noticed because I'm right down in it, you know? But he took punches, blades, bullets, and he just took his time with each of them. He'd grab an arm and twist, and listen for the bones to give. He stepped down on a guy's knee sideways, and hell, I do that sometimes, but I do it quick, to break a leg and throw the guy out of the fight. This dude, he takes what felt like a full minute to push the guy's leg-bone out of the skin. And it's not like he's enjoying it, not exactly, but he's got this look on his face like "Hey, you asked for this, and now you don't want it?"

When the banger fell down and started screaming, the other ones — the two who could still run — booked. And I walked out and said, "Hey, you're the Slow Killer, right?" And he says, "Yeah, they call me that." And from there out, it's just two *imru* talking. We left the guy with the broken leg screaming on the ground.

I have to admit, at the time, I did wonder if all that was necessary. But I'll say this for him: you couldn't watch him fight without thinking what a monster he was. In a good way.

•••

Story told to Aidan's Plea by Eli Marks, Ghost Wolf (deceased):

I don't have a lot of time here. Let's make this quick.





Oh, I understand what you're going through. I've lost people, too. But I only ever met the guy once. It was a year ago, and no one ever wants to hear what I've got to say about him. Darius, the big hero, the Slow Killer, right? By the time I met him, he had more nicknames. They'd added "Bone Grinder" and "Kul Thari." That's "Endless Moment of Death," which is probably my favorite. I wanted to add "Psycho" to the mix, but that one never caught on.

Anyway, I met him away from my pack. That happens a lot. I was always meeting other Uratha, and I found this guy walking down the sidewalk, glaring at people. And I didn't know if he was just spoiling for a fight, or if he was halfway to nuts, or if he was just having a bad day, but I figured I'd better get him off the streets before somebody responded the wrong way. So I walked up and said, "Hey, name's Eli, you new in town?"

And he said, "I'm Darius." And he pauses. Like I'm about to ask for his autograph. Oh, I knew right off who he was, but anybody who's trying to cash in on celebrity like that needs a reality check, in my humble opinion.

So I said, "Who? Don't know you. Come on, let's go take a walk and you can tell me all about yourself."

Now, I *said* that because I was hoping he'd jump off the ego trip a little, but damned if the fucker didn't grab me and throw me into an alley. I changed into a wolf, figuring to bug out, but he grabbed me by the legs and then wrapped his arm around my neck. And then he started twisting.

It was the scariest goddamn thing I'd ever felt. He was putting pressure on my neck, see, so if I tried to change, I'd wind up breaking my own spine. But meanwhile, he was twisting my hind leg around. And then I felt bone start to give, and I started thinking that it would heal soon enough, that it hurt,

MOHRBACHER 08



but I'd live, and if this guy needed to do this to keep up appearances, well, it wouldn't be the first time.

But then he actually broke my leg, and he held the bone in place for a minute. A minute. Fuck me, it seemed like hours. He was holding the splintered bone so that it couldn't reset, and I couldn't concentrate and hurry things along because I didn't want it to set wrong. There's no way to fight through that. I whined and yelped, and he turned me around and looked me in the eye and that's when I knew that he *would* kill me, if he thought he needed to. But looking at his eyes, I knew him.

And that's the creepy thing. This guy wanted his victims to know that he understood them. There wasn't any detachment. It wasn't that he didn't care. He cared, but he wanted me to hurt all the same.

Eventually, he let me up, and I healed up and he told me his pack was just passing through. I told him that was fine, I wasn't local either, and we parted ways.

I'm not sure he's the kind of monster you think he is, guys. I think he deserves what you give him, but I think he also deserves the stories we tell about him. I don't know what that really makes him, though. Good luck.

• • •

*Confession of Darius to Aidan's Plea:*

After a while, I didn't need to fight anymore. Not Uratha. They knew I'd make it hurt. And that's the thing about us — we're used to getting clawed up, bitten, ripped open, but not really *hurt*. Bones allow that pain. Bone fractures hurt worse than just about anything, and bone isn't flexible. It doesn't *give*. If you hold it the right way, we can't shift. We can't fight. All we can do is fight the Rage, because if it takes us, that's it, we're done, bones break. Yeah, it might not kill, but I've seen werewolves with broken spines take days to heal up, and they never walk right afterwards.

For us, that's the scariest thing, to be permanently injured. We don't get paper cuts or broken toes. That shit heals up right away, so it's pretty much inconceivable to us that we might have a lasting wound.

So I learned where to grab and how to twist. But I never did it to someone for no reason. I remember everybody I've hurt. Everybody I've killed. I'm not some psycho, killing for the hell of it. I'm not a Broken Soul. I'm not.

I'm Darius.

• • •

*Story told to Aidan's Plea by Christopher "Solo" Lowrie of the Storm Lords (under duress):*

Okay, fuck! Stop!

Jesus, I don't remember when this was. Eight months ago? A year? Six months?

Wait, okay, it was in July. I remember because it was right after I lost a drummer. No, I didn't kill him — some Pure fucker clawed him up. Anyway, we're trying out a new guy, and I see your dude walk by the window. I didn't know him, so I went outside to see if he was Pure.

Bait? No, fuck that, I could've taken him, and if things got hot, I can run! Look, I'm with BMX, and we don't need you —

*Fuck!* Stop! Just listen — you want to hear about Darius, right? I saw him that night. I followed him out and asked him what was up. He told me his name, and I said I'd heard he was a real badass. And he told me he'd heard of my pack and how we went after blood-suckers, so that was cool. I asked him if he wanted to be down with a hunt, because we had one going on that next night. Real nasty target, too: this guy would slink around churches and nursing homes —

Okay, okay! Never mind. Jesus. He said no, that he was running with his pack and they weren't in town long. And I said how that was funny, because I'd heard he didn't have a pack anymore, that they'd all gotten killed up by Salt Lake. And that was it. Wait! Don't fuck with the jacket. Okay, that wasn't *all*. When I said that, he got real quiet, and I could tell I'd fucked up. I said I was sorry, that I hadn't meant to rub salt in or anything. And he said something really weird. He said, "I thought they'd get better."

And that was strange, right? Like, if he's talking about his pack, he'd know if they were dead, because they had a totem, right? The stories all said that Darius' Pack — or whatever they were really called — had this fucked-up giant dog totem, something bigger than Urshul, right? But after that, I could see he didn't want to talk anymore, so I told him to have a good one, and I went back to the audition.

Turned out that drummer didn't last long, either. They never do.

• • •

*Story told to Aidan's Plea by Wendy Draper, wolf-blooded and state trooper:*

It was hands down the most horrible thing I've ever seen, and I've been a state trooper for 12 years. I've seen people burned to death and fused with their own cars. I saw the wreckage from when two trucks collided head on, and smashed a VW Bug with three people inside between them. But this...

It was outside Salt Lake City, on Route 65, heading up to the Little Dell Reservoir. I hadn't seen another



car in hours. What I did see, though, was buzzards, and I just got this weird feeling in the pit of my stomach. I pulled over and looked down into a ditch, and I saw three corpses. Well, I didn't know the number at the time, because the damn birds were all over them.

I called it in, and the medical examiners fished out the details. Three bodies, one woman and two men. Legs and arms all broken, twisted until they'd snapped. And huge paw prints all over the place, too big to be wolf. Looked more like a mastiff, anyway, they said, but they just...disappeared about 40 yards from the site. No car, no keys, no wallets, no IDs. Just the bodies. Eyes eaten out of their heads, stomachs torn up, but the cause of death, so far as the MEs could figure, was shock. Basically, they died of pain.

Look, you know I'm always happy to help out the family. But this one's not going to come back and bite me, right? I've heard of this guy. Hell, any cop has. And none of us wants to end up like that.

• • •

*Confession of Darius to Aidan's Plea:*

I did not kill my pack.

• • •

*Story told to Aidan's Plea by John Hardrick, wolf-blood:*

That son of a bitch killed my boy. He did it for no other reason than he wanted to. I know you have laws against this. I know you have rules. My mother explained it to me when I was a boy, when she had to go away with her pack. She explained that you have to respect the low and honor the high. I never liked the idea of being "low," but I understood what it meant, especially after watching my mother fight off those worm-things that came up, smelling after our blood, when Aidan was born.

I always hoped that Aidan would Change, too. I wanted him to be "high." I guess that's why I didn't object when he started hanging around with you people.

I heard he begged for his life before that bastard broke his neck. I heard he flailed around trying to get loose, and that monster just broke his neck slowly, letting everybody see what a big, strong brute he was. I heard he watched Aidan's eyes when he killed him. That's not respect. That's not honorable. That's horrible. That's what a monster does. My mother told me, when I was just a boy, she said, "We're not monsters. That's the way people see us, but they don't know about us. We have a language. We have laws and rules. They're not like the rules we have to follow as people, but they're just as important, because we have to police ourselves."

So who's policing him? When are those laws going to get enforced? When is my son's plea for justice going to get answered?

*Story told to Lisa Brant, recent initiate to the Bone Shadows tribe, by her mentor:*

This is the spot where he died.

I know what the Oath says, and good for you for remembering. *Imru nu fir Imru*. The People don't kill the People. But, see, here's the thing: sometimes there's nothing for it. Sometimes one of us does something so heinous that it makes him a monster, an abomination. A Broken Soul. And there's no measure of that kind of thing. You can't just ask a spirit, "Oh, is this guy irretrievably nuts?", because a spirit doesn't know from "nuts." All you can do is follow your gut.

*Dar-Us*, they called him. The Slow Killer. They say that he was blessed by a spirit of pain, that as long as he was hurting someone, he couldn't be harmed. They also say he killed his own pack because it got jealous of his gift and attacked him one night. On the other hand, the pack that killed him — yes, it was a pack — said he was a psychopath and no better than a serial killer, and he liked to torture people to death.

They killed him right here. They hunted him down and they ripped him to pieces, and then they walked away, in separate directions, never to speak to each other again. That's what a great Uratha *Dar-Us* was — he was tracked down and killed by the Lodge of the Hunt. That's a hell of a legacy to leave. Brethren packs don't form for just anyone.

Did he kill his old pack? I don't know. I'll tell you what I do know. Some folks are born great, some achieve greatness — yeah, good, you know your Shakespeare — some have greatness thrust upon them. To my way of thinking, *Dar-Us* was the last kind. I think he got pissed off one night in a fight with a wolf-blood, and instead of flipping out and ripping his head off, he took his time. And I'm sure he paid for that on some level, but I also think he recognized what was happening around him. Just because you have greatness thrust on you doesn't mean you don't have greatness. It doesn't mean you don't deserve the stories. To be a legend among the *imru*, you've got to be willing to get your claws wet, so to speak.

You want to know why *Dar-Us* was a legend? Watch a werewolf crack his neck or his knuckles sometime. A lot of us look over our shoulders when we do that, because the story is that the sound might attract his ghost. And some of us even whisper "*Imru nu fir Imru, Dar-Us*," just to remind him.

Even now that he's dead, we still remind him.



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# NIGHT HORRORS

# WOLFSBANE™

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE: THE WAY BACK DOWN 2

INTRODUCTION 7

CHAPTER ONE: THE WOLVES 12

CHAPTER TWO: THE SHADOWS 78

CHAPTER THREE: THE IDIGAM 128



# INTRODUCTION

UP UNTIL TODAY, YOU BELIEVED THERE WAS A LINE BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY.  
MAYBE A VERY FINE LINE SOMETIMES, BUT AT LEAST THERE WAS A LINE.  
THOSE THINGS OUT THERE ARE REAL. IF THEY'RE REAL, WHAT ELSE IS REAL?  
YOU KNOW WHAT LIVES IN THE SHADOWS NOW.  
YOU MAY NEVER GET ANOTHER NIGHT'S SLEEP AS LONG AS YOU LIVE.  
— MEGAN, "DOG SOLDIERS"

The stories are true.

In the World of Darkness, urban legends aren't just clever tales told from friend to friend. The stories whispered down the lane are often as real as they're not, with narratives whose details may be muddy but whose core truths are as real as blood drying on a kitchen floor. Somewhere out there, a man with a hook waits. A pale ghost haunts the highway. A message on a dorm room wall toys with its reader: *aren't you glad you didn't turn on the lights?*

Well, here, in this book, we're going to turn on the lights. We're illuminating the darkest corners of this bad, bad world, focusing on tales and monsters that chill the blood of even the most brutal of creatures. What you find within these pages are the bedtime stories and bogeyman tales passed around by those who are already monsters. What frightens a werewolf? What terrifies a creature who can turn into a nine-foot wall of muscle, fur, tooth and nail? Read on.

## TABOO

Urban legends are often about breaking taboos — reach into a coin return slot on a pay phone, and you'll get stuck by a needle tainted with disease (a taboo against greed). Or the hook man haunts teen lovers up on Makeout Bluff (taboo against lust). Urban myth is about confirming fears. A parent tells a bedtime story that exhorts the child to do no wrong, lest he be snatched up in the morning, or a false

email warning tells its recipients not to go to the mall or they might end up the victim of a holiday suicide bomber. Break the taboos, become victim to the fear. It's that easy.

Now, take a look at the werewolves of the Forsaken. They swear to the Oath of the Moon. Their tribes, just like human tribes, are given over to a number of social rules and taboos that are never to be broken.

In this book, much of what you find are creatures born as the result of those broken taboos, or who have come to reinforce those prohibitions. The Forsaken know not to dare mate with one another, and yet they do. They know they're not supposed to eat human meat, or kill humans wantonly, or go pissing on the spiritual harmony forged between this world and the spirit world. Don't kill one another. Pay respect. Watch out for everybody else's territory. And so on, and so forth.

Break those rules, and these enemies may come knocking.

## FAITH

Urban legends are, like any legend, about faith. You must believe the teller. You must believe in the potential of the story to be true, or the forbiddances against breaking the rules would have no merit.

"Faith" might then be a sub-theme to this book, a secondary point that finds a lot of room to breathe in these pages. Pure preachers, idigam "angels,"



wolf-born prophets — all are contained within these pages, asking that their flocks and cults and packs believe wholesale in the legends and myths they are spinning, or fully *participating* in.

Here, then, the faith behind these urban legends may not always be vindicated, but that doesn't make it any less dangerous, does it?

## A TASTE OF WOLFSBANE

Wolfsbane — also called aconitum, or monkshood — is a plant that is poisonous to consume, but it has long lived on in folklore as a plant with mystical properties that go beyond the fatal. If “brewed correctly” (no, don't try this at home; we said *folklore*, remember?), wolfsbane might cure lycanthropy, cause lycanthropy, soothe a fatal wound, or give one intense visions and premonitions.

Mystically, then, wolfsbane is an element with something of a “good news, bad news” situation going on. Sure, it can kill you. But if you use it *just right*, it can help you, too.

That's more than a little bit like this book. This book is filled with 10 tons of nightmare, a tome of monstrosity with sharp claws, deep shadows and hungry teeth. For the Forsaken or the other characters in the World of Darkness, that's bad news, indeed.

But for you — the Storytellers and players reading this book — it's all good news. This book contains a number of antagonists that can be picked up and dropped into your games with little effort. We've made every attempt to give you everything you need to make use of these so-called night horrors and, even better, many come replete with additional powers that could be used by players' own characters if need be.

Even better, the antagonists in this book are generally designed for use in **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, but are by no means restricted to stories told with that game. In fact, many of the horrors found in this book are explained in a self-contained manner, with rules that allow you to pick them up and drop them into any World of Darkness game.

## PARADE OF HORRORS

Below, you'll find an easy summation of the monsters that lurk in these pages. The book is separated into three sections. The first, **Wolves**, details antagonists who are werewolves, both Pure and Forsaken. The second, **Shadows**, is about the creatures and spirits that plague the World of Darkness, and

the Uratha in particular. The third is a threat unsurpassed — the vicious **idigam**.

## WOLVES

Haunted by a dark past, **Aldric Haven** devotes his life to helping those who cannot help themselves. He and his pack take in and care for the sick, the homeless, the weak and the wretched, and they ask for nothing in return. Why, then, does Haven wake soaked in the blood of the very people he shelters, with no memory of the night before?

A pitiable stranger comes to town, begging for help. **Bloody Mary** digs her claws into any pack that takes her in and slowly pulls them apart. By the time her family comes to call, the pack's trust is eroded to shambles.

Along with his twisted, degenerate family, **Brother Peyton** “protects” the town of St. Mark. Like the Wolf of Gubbio, he guards the town against demonic predation. Unlike that legendary beast, he demands a dreadful price for his services: a price that keeps his own demons at bay.

Taking as her inspiration the infamous Black Dog of myth and folklore, **Jessie Hell** ushers into damnation those whose misdeeds demand her unforfeiting standards of justice. Forsaken who agree with her methods, though, might want to think twice when they learn just how she punishes the wicked.

A Pure without a pack stalks the night. With silver hooks in hand, **Johnny Shadow** picks off members of the pack one by one and skins them. What he does with those skins is a horror to Uratha everywhere and profane enough to cloud the eyes of Luna.

Even werewolves have their bogeymen. **Darius**, known to some as the “Slow Killer,” is a legend among the Uratha, renowned and feared for his brutal approach to combat and his willingness to inflict pain and injury even on the People.

Luna has led the People astray with her lies and rewarded the Forsaken with her blasphemous gifts. Caught early, most werewolves can be led down the virtuous path, and for those who aren't, **Ewan Ogilvy** purifies sins and washes away Luna's stains in water or blood.

Kidnapping the young of his enemy and brainwashing them to become the soldiers of the Pure, **Gatherer Wolf** wounds his foes in a way no weapon can. A master of planning and stealth, he makes those from the Forsaken's lineage seemingly disappear into thin air. Those few who have gotten close to the truth have met more tangible, bloodier fates.

As much a predator in the boardroom as she is on the streets, **Kat Brokensoul** is more trouble than any three Pure. She can chase a pack out of its territory while convincing the city council to route the new highway through its locus. But how can any werewolf be in two places at once?

Haunting his neighborhood like a grim spirit, **Little Shadow** is a boy lost in the recesses of his own mind. Orphaned by a pack he barely knew, Changed at an age far younger than most Uratha, he protects his territory the best he knows how — but he doesn't know that much.

Pursuing his quarry by any means necessary, **Seething Brave** has turned obligation into obsession. Pushed beyond his limits, his quixotic hunt of a superior enemy has made a quiet stretch of highway into a death sentence for the innocent and guilty alike.

Spreading his faith like poison, **Tony Markov**, fanatical alpha of the Volki, uses an ergot-spirit to taint the totems of Luna's Uratha, causing entire packs to convulse with toxin-induced visions of Gurim-Ur. The blind must be made to see the truth, whatever the cost, and those unworthy or unable to do so are better off dead.

Living messiah to the Pure Tribes, or a monstrous aberration of Urfarah's bloodline? Only time will tell which of these **Urazakh-Angir** — the so-called Promised One — proves to be.

Werewolves are creatures of instinct and passion and must struggle against their baser instincts to maintain the balance between the material and spiritual halves of their souls. Sometimes they fail, and when they do, **Victor Lawrence** is there to remind them of their purpose. Some Uratha require more forceful reminders than others, and the Guilty Saint will show them.

Haunted by terrible memories and pursued by the beast within, **Wandering Jack** never knows where he's going to wake up next. All he wants is a cure, something that'll let him rest, but every morning he wakes up fearful of the night before. Only one thing's for certain when Johnny's in town: his alter ego brings hell to everyone he meets.

## SHADOWS

Lurking in the woods at the outskirts of human life, a shadowy pack of wild wolves waits to eat anything in its path. The **Adarusharu** want your fear and your flesh. What can the Uratha do against a wolf-host?

When the Uratha are involved, people die. Sometimes, however, they come back. **Harlan Walters** is one of the Returned, a werewolf victim returned from the dead, whose very existence hides an ancient secret — a secret involving the fungus that grew beneath Father Wolf's cooling carcass so many eons ago.

America is beautiful, bold and brave, but also violent and rapacious. **Irinam the Colossus** reflects all of this and more. An elder spirit of American expansionism, the Colossus has become magath and suffers a confusion of purpose that has dipped into madness. She stalks the back roads of America (and, if rumor's true, wherever America has interests) like some oversized vagrant, always looking for her reason to exist... and forever hungry for her next meal.

Some travelers chance across **Lonesome Forest**; others come to it after friends spread the good word. It's small-town America at its best — but soon the town sinks its hooks deep, and people are powerless to leave. It takes a brave soul to fight a whole town of *duguthim*, and the monstrously powerful magath lurking in the background.

Humans are such a fascinating lot, and the **Mockingbird** just can't get enough of them. Luring his victims out of their homes with the power of his voice, the spirit carries them away to his Shadow nest, never to be seen again.

Have you had sex with a werewolf who has had sex with anyone else since 1976? If so, you might be at risk for having contracted **Versipellitis**. Symptoms may include increased desire, excess hair and murder.

Nourishing itself upon the slow decay of the human soul, the bizarre Worm Host inhabiting the vicious mobster **Vincent Franco** has only just begun its reign of terror over the criminal underworld.

An ancient enemy walks the earth in the body of a man driven by hate for the People. **Wolf Foe** strikes like lightning from a clear sky with a unique arsenal, and possessed by a spirit that harbors a grudge dating back to Urfarah himself.

## LDIGAM

Left unquestioned, faith is eternal and immutable. **Gamugur** clings to the stability of faith in a sea of chaos like a drowning man cleaves to a life jacket. Those who come too close risk being caught up in the struggle and pulled under.

Since the 1970s, **Gifmalu Igizalag** has inspired numerous packs to take up its hunt in the wake of this explorer's brutal experiments. But how does



one entrap a creature with no fixed form? How does one track a spirit intent on traveling across nations without regard to territory? Most importantly, how can the People protect the ones they love from an entity that can enter their homes through the drain in the sink?

With a hunger that has consumed it since the dawn of time, **Mussughana**, the ravenous swarm, seeks to devour all that exists and return the world to a state of raw, primal emptiness. Aided by sinister cultists and alien locust-Hosts, it strips the land bare wherever it passes, bringing death and famine in its wake.

**Udu Luhai**, the idigam known to werewolves as “the Matchmaker,” searches for the spirit it believes will enable it to breed, creating a niche for itself

in the Shadow. Unfortunately, it believes that the *unihar*, the blasphemous product of the union of two werewolves, represents its best chance for success, and so it endlessly tries to arrange the conception of these Ghost Children.

The idigam **Umum Wabalu Damu**, the White Lady, collects the ghosts of the dead to build her army in the hopes of filling the void in herself, created by her millennia-long imprisonment on the moon.

Driven well beyond madness by the rejection of Mother Moon and Father Wolf, **Zul Sanak** now exists to prove its superiority over the half-breeds who were beloved while it was despised, and so justify its implacable hatred of the Uratha and their ancient progenitors.







# CHAPTER I

HE THAT MAKES HIMSELF A SHEEP  
SHALL BE EATEN BY THE WOLF.

— PROVERB

THE WOLVES

# THE CARETAKER: ALDRIC HAVEN

I THINK...I THINK MAYBE I DID SOMETHING LAST NIGHT. SOMETHING TERRIBLE. I DON'T KNOW, I DON'T REMEMBER. IT'S JUST...WHEN I WOKE THIS MORNING, THERE WAS BLOOD ALL OVER ME, AND IT WASN'T MINE.

**Aliases:** Aldric R. Gravier, Aldric Haven

**GUARDIAN ANGEL**

## BACKGROUND

When Aldric Haven smiles, and he does so easily and often, a person can't help but trust him. When he speaks, his voice is kind. Aldric possesses an uncommon, honest goodness, all the more apparent in his ceaseless endeavor to help and care for others who cannot help themselves — the impoverished, the sick, the lost. Only the most keenly observant, irrationally paranoid person would ever notice the faint, rust-red tinge of blood crusted beneath his meticulously manicured nails.

A few miles away, in a filthy, overlooked alleyway, the brutally mutilated remains of a vagrant woman, shredded by tooth and claw nearly beyond recognition, have only just begun to grow cold in the early morning chill.

No child should have to be the caretaker of his own parent, but from a very young age, Aldric Haven knew no other life.

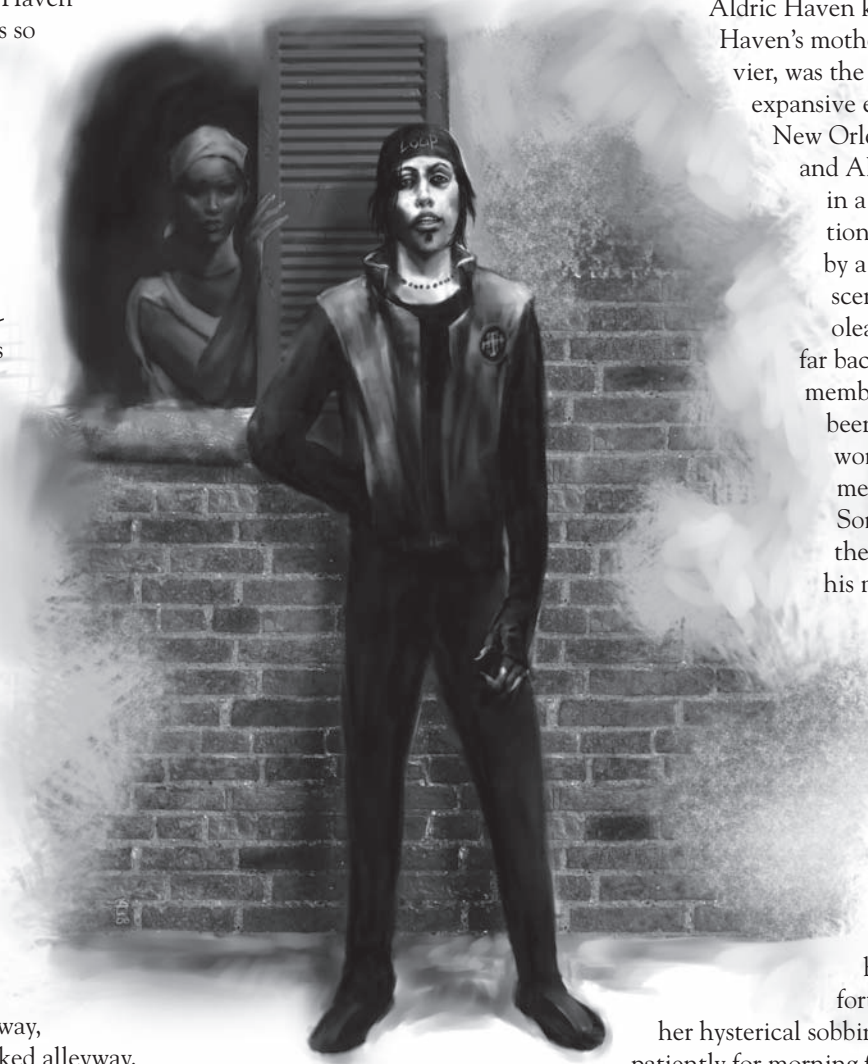
Haven's mother, Emeline Gravier, was the heir to a remote, expansive estate just outside New Orleans. There, she and Aldric lived alone

in a neglected plantation house, surrounded by a grove of sweetly scented, flowering oleander trees. For as far back as Haven can remember, his mother had been a frail and sickly woman, afflicted by mental disturbances. Some nights, when the madness overcame his mother, she would

rave about Aldric's father, claiming he had been a wolf in the skin of a man, and that she had

loved him, but he had deceived her. Haven cared for his mother as best he could, comforting her through

her hysterical sobbing and waiting patiently for morning for her return to lucidity. Aldric spent the best years of his childhood shouldering the mantle of responsibility when his mother could not bear its weight, for he loved her and he wanted to ease her torment.





As Aldric neared puberty, however, his mother's condition worsened. Severe delusions and paranoia began to plague her nightly. She grew fearful of Aldric, claiming she could smell the demon within him. Haven soothed his mother as best he could, and tried to reassure himself that her fear and anger had nothing to do with him — that it was merely a new symptom of her illness. But when he was alone, late at night, Haven heard the charged voices of a host of spirits whispering in his ear. He felt the primal, invisible tug of Mother Luna, and the First Change came to him.

Haven does not talk about what happened during the nights leading up to his mother's death. His packmates speculate that when his mother realized what Aldric had become — that all her fears had been realized — she shunned him. For all his compassion and patience, Aldric could not bear the thought of being loathed and turned away by his own mother. As a young werewolf, Haven barely understood what was happening to him, and in his anger and frustration, he fell into a Death Rage. When he woke, he was covered in blood, and his mother lay cold on the floor.

## DESCRIPTION

Most Uratha who meet the alpha of Servants of the Wretched like him immediately. A clean-cut man in his late 30s, Haven has a handsome, friendly face and is quick with a joke or a smile. Only those who catch him off guard notice the hint of sadness in his eyes, or the tiny, premature wrinkles that have begun to creep across his brow. Aldric Haven genuinely wishes to repent for the sins of his past, and goes out of his way to Respect the Low and Honor the High, with particular emphasis on the low.

Haven's pack took up residence in the Gravier Estate, transforming the neglected plantation house into a shelter where they offer protection and aid to orphaned children, battered women, abandoned animals and the sick and elderly. One night a month, however, Haven and his pack are subject to a terrible curse. On the night of the half moon, the Servants of the Wretched are consumed by madness, and Haven leads his pack through the moonlit alleys of New Orleans, preying upon the weak and leaving behind a trail of gore and mutilated corpses. When the pack members wake the following morning, soaked in the blood of the very people they wish to protect, they have no recollection of the night before, save the knowledge that they must have done something terrible. The entire pack attempts to repent by caring for even more people in need, desperately trying to maintain its Harmony, only to repeat the cycle the following month. With each half moon, the body count increases. Slowly, Aldric Haven and the Servants of the Wretched are being driven insane.

They know they're doing something horrible, but the totem often conspires to hide the bodies, so Haven and his pack don't know whom they're killing. New Orleans has no shortage of dead bodies and missing people, so the

Servants of the Wretched have so far found it impossible to uncover their own victims. That gap in information only contributes to their uncertain sanities.

## THE SERVANTS OF THE WRETCHED

The Servants of the Wretched are a ragtag bunch of Uratha. Each member of the pack is looking for salvation in one way or another, and they believe it lies with Aldric Haven and the Shelter.

- **Mama Vigil:** Mama Vigil was a night nurse at a local hospice before she found her place with the Servants of the Wretched. Several years ago, Mama Vigil's younger sister died after a long, painful struggle with a rare form of leukemia. Mama Vigil moved to New Orleans to care for her sister during her final days. Rather than succumb to her sorrow, Mama Vigil prefers to keep so busy helping others that she has no time to think about herself. But when the night falls, and nothing is left to do but watch the dying as they sleep and wonder if they will wake in morning, Mama Vigil has no one to care for but herself. Then, and only then, does she find herself wracked with silent sobs.

- **Found:** Found was a homeless Ghost Wolf taken in by the Servants of the Wretched. As a teenager, he was a troubled and angry youth who fell into a life of petty crime. After Found's First Change, Aldric Haven discovered the young werewolf half frozen and bleeding in the snow, apparently having chosen the wrong pack to mess with. Haven carried the youth back to the plantation and nursed him back to health. Found's near brush with death changed him, and he is barely recognizable from the ungrateful whelp he once was. Now in his late 20s, Found has a particular interest in aiding children, troubled teens and the homeless.

- **Big Bob:** Big Bob was lonely. He never had a pretty face, and his size seemed to intimidate most people. Despite his imposing height and broad, muscular shoulders, Big Bob is gentle and painfully shy. Ever since he was a kid, Big Bob has always seemed to get along better with animals than with people. Before meeting Aldric Haven and joining the Servants of the Wretched, Big Bob worked at a local animal shelter. Now, Big Bob still works with animals, but he has the companionship of others like him, too. Big Bob is not unintelligent, but he rarely speaks, as though he has been without human companionship for so long that he has nearly forgotten how.

*It was Chloe, my compassionate angel, who came to me the night I murdered my mother. As I lay weeping over my mother's cold body, covered in blood, she appeared before me. Chloe did not judge me for what I had done. She told me that she had been watching me, and that she knew my heart. I was good, she said, and I could redeem myself. Although I did not believe the words of the spirit, I wanted to.*

*Chloe dissolved my mother's body to ash, and her blood fell from me as dust. From that night forward, Chloe has been with me, my mentor and my guide to redemption. She led me to my tribe, and then, as the years went by, to each of my pack members. Nothing has happened by chance.*

## SECRETS

Chloe, the mentor of Aldric Haven and the totem spirit of the Servants of the Wretched, is not what Aldric believes her to be. The pack's totem is a stray Elunim, and although it is unknown to even the spirit herself, she is responsible for the curse of madness that falls upon the pack during the half-moon phase associated with the Lune. While instances in which spirits of the lunar choir serve as totems for a pack of werewolves are rare, it is nevertheless possible...although the unnatural bond inevitably drives the pack insane.

## RUMORS

"Yeah, people keep going missing around here. I'll tell you what I know, if you give me that nice leather coat you're wearing and 20 bucks. Anne used to stay under that stairwell by that Dumpster, right there. See that brown stain? That's her blood. And a lot more were killed by those things, too — I seen it. The weird thing is, I'm not the only one who did, but most everybody else seems to have forgotten, or else they get it all wrong. Barry, over there, keeps going on about rabid dogs, and old Gristle says he seen a gang of large, hairy men. Dogs? Hairy men? No way in hot hell. Those weren't no dogs, and they weren't no men, either — looked a lot more like big, and I mean big, wolves. There were four of 'em. Some of us ran, some of us hid, and some just sat there like they was stupid or something. Most of the ones who just sat there died like Anne. Anyway, when it was near morning, one of 'em stopped and

looked up from the body it was tearing apart. I saw it tilt its head like it were listening to something. Then it ran off, and the rest of 'em followed."

The attacks of Aldric Haven and his pack are not unnoticed by humans. Although many suffer from Lunacy, either forgetting or misremembering the details of the attacks, the hard fact remains: people are dying. Rumors bent by the effects of Lunacy circulate among the dregs of society. Most claim the attacks are caused by rapid dogs, gangs or even animals that have escaped from a local zoo. The few outcasts who have their facts right are written off as insane by unconcerned human authorities.

"Oh, I've met Aldric Haven, all right. And he's a good person — too good to be true, if you ask me. People like that are usually only so perfect on the surface. They have the same darkness as the rest of us — just keep it on the inside most of the time. And Aldric is a Half Moon, right? Dark and light? Good and evil? The two faces of the same Uratha. I don't trust him. He calls his pack the Servants of the Wretched? It's all just a front. Something else is going on there."

Rumors that Aldric Haven and the Servants of the Wretched are a front for a more sinister operation have circulated for years. These rumors are, for the most part, false. Despite the fact that Aldric Haven and his pack are responsible for the attacks, the Servants of the Wretched never deliberately set out to harm anyone, and the dark force that causes the pack's madness is unknown to them. The half moon may be related to the pack's behavior, but is linked to the pack's totem, a stray Lune of the half-moon choir, not Aldric Haven or members of his pack.

"I knew Aldric years ago, back when he was a whelp, and more than once I heard him talking to somebody or something named Chloe when he thought nobody was listening. Now, if you've lived in New Orleans your entire life, like I have, you've probably heard the story of Chloe and Myrtle's Plantation, right? No? Are you shittin' me?"

"Well, to make a long story short, back in the early 1800s, there was a slave girl named Chloe working at some plantation just outside New Orleans. At the time, the estate was the home of Sarah and Clark Woodruff and their two kids. Chloe loved the two children; practically raised them while the parents were off doing whatever. But Clark Woodruff was a violent man, and he abused Chloe for years, physically and sexually. I heard he cut off her ear. One night, when Chloe decided she'd had enough, she baked Mr. Woodruff a cake. In with the flour and sugar went a handful of crushed oleander flowers — poison, don't you know? Turns out the two kids found the cake and ate it before Chloe could give it to Clark



Woodruff. The children she loved and cared for died in a matter of hours.

"It's my personal theory that somehow the ghost of Chloe is influencing Aldric and his pack. I know it sounds pretty far-fetched, but here's the thing. Back when I knew Aldric, every now and then I'd catch this sweet fragrance clinging to him, which I just couldn't place. I took me years to figure it out, but eventually I realized it was the scent of oleander. So I did some research of my own — you know that plantation the pack has turned into a shelter? It's the very same that used to belong to the Woodruff family."

The plantation house where Haven grew up and his pack now resides did, in fact, formerly belong to the Woodruff family. While the ghost of Chloe is not responsible for the cyclical madness of Aldric and his pack, the Elunim who serves as the pack's totem watched over the Woodruff Estate for many years. The Lune was moved by Chloe's plight, and just as Mother Luna shows her light and dark side during the half moon, the Elunim, entranced, took on the dual nature of caregiver and murderer. Years later, the same spirit was drawn to Aldric Haven, the young werewolf who similarly murdered a person he loved and cared for under circumstances over which he had very little control.

### ALDRIC HAVEN

**Auspice:** Elodoth

**Tribe:** Bone Shadows

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

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

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 4 (3/4/1/4), Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Politics (Negotiation) 3, Occult 3, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl (Defensive) 4, Drive 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy (Human) 5, Expression 4, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 5, Socialize 5, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Inspiring, Resources 2, Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 9

**Harmony:** 5

**Virtue:** Charity. Haven genuinely cares for the downtrodden.

**Vice:** Wrath. Strange to say, but Haven's wrath is largely against himself. However, he also loathes a world that cannot abide those who cannot help themselves.

**Initiative:** 9 (9/10/11/11)

**Defense:** 4

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

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

**Primal Urge:** 5

**Renown:** Cunning 1, Honor 5, Purity 1, Wisdom 2

**Gifts:** (1) Death Sight, Sense Malice, Scent Beneath the Surface, The Right Words; (2) Scent of Taint; (3) Aura of Truce, True Leader; (4) Soul Read; (5) Vengeance of the Slain

## STORY HOOKS

- A character who was thought to have died returns to his pack. He claims that when he was badly injured, a kind local pack that called itself the Servants of the Wretched found the character and took him back to a plantation house where it nursed him back to health. One night the pack behaved strangely, the character claims, transforming and leaving the plantation without a word. The character witnessed the pack's return, each member covered in copious amounts of blood, just before dawn. The following day, the pack volunteered no information to explain the behavior. Why was the strange pack covered in blood? Were the kind strangers injured by some unknown enemy? Is something more sinister going on? What does the pack have to hide?

- Strange circumstance surrounds an old plantation house on the edge of town. Rumors circulate among the homeless population of people who have been lured to the house by a charismatic man offering a hot meal. Not everyone comes back from the house, they say. And late at night, when the oleander trees are in bloom, the restless ghost of a young slave can be seen wandering the grounds of the estate. Who is the charismatic man, and what is he after? Who is the strange woman? Is she really a ghost? What has become of the people who have not returned from the plantation house?

- On the night of the last half moon, there was a gruesome massacre at a small local women's shelter. The women were literally torn apart in their beds. There were no survivors. In the shelter, the stench of blood and gore mingles with a strange, sweet, flowery scent. This was the most recent in a string of brutal attacks that have all coincided with the night of the half moon. Who would commit such a crime? What will happen on the next full moon? Can the murderer be stopped before killing again? What is the strange, sweet scent left behind?

**Rituals:** 2; **Rites:** Any at levels 1 or 2 listed in Chapter Two of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**.

**Essence/per Turn:** 20/5

### TOTEM: CHLOE

Chloe is the pack totem of the Servants of the Wretched. She is a stray Elunim, and the source of the pack's madness during the night of the half moon. For the majority of the month, she is a kind, compassionate spirit, and she appears (to those who can see her) in the form of a beautiful African woman with pale, milky eyes, dressed

in white robes. On the night of the half moon, she appears as the same woman, but dressed in the threadbare rags of a plantation slave. Her face is no longer kind, and she shows the other half of herself, consumed with blind rage and a lust for vengeance — a red-eyed murderer. Chloe has no recollection of her own change during the half moon, or that she is the cause of the pack's murderous rampage. The spirit's presence is often accompanied by the sweet scent of flowering oleander.

The Lune's unusual behavior is traced back to the true-to-life legend of Chloe the slave. Like the ever-vigilant moon, the stray Elunim watched raptly over the plantation house each night, following along as Chloe's heart-wrenching story unfolded below. The Lune was moved by Chloe's plight, due to the duality that its own phase represents — as the half moon has a light and a dark side, both good and evil coexisted within Chloe. Captivated, the spirit may have unintentionally lost touch with its own nature, abandoning the heavens and its own kind to experience the duality of human nature for itself. The Elunim is so entwined in the story of Chloe's life that it no longer recalls it is a member of the lunar choir, believing itself to truly be the ghost of Chloe.

**Power:** 4  
**Finesse:** 3  
**Resistance:** 5  
**Willpower:** 9  
**Essence:** 15  
**Initiative:** 6  
**Defense:** 4  
**Speed:** 12  
**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 10

**Influences:** Compassion 1, Murder 1

**Numina:** Material Vision, Harrow, Materialize

**Bonuses:** Primal Form (Story), Father Wolf's Speed (Story), Fuel Rage (Story), Strength +1 (Pack); Empathy +2 (Given); Willpower (5); Essence (5)

**Ban:** *Serve the Wretched.* Chloe requires that her pack help all those who cannot help themselves. If a character fails to do so, all bonuses are rescinded until the offender performs the Rite of Contrition and escalates his efforts to help those in need to the best of his ability.

**Chloe's Vengeance:** As stated, Chloe causes her pack to change during the half moon. On the night of the half moon, the entire pack transforms into Gauru and seeks out the helpless (for example, the sick, injured, homeless, very young or old), literally tearing them to pieces. While under the Lune's influence, the pack behaves as though in an extended Death Rage, with the exception that its attacks specifically target the helpless. In the morning, neither the pack nor Chloe have any recollection of the previous night's events. That is not to say that Haven and his pack do not suspect something is amiss when they awaken in the morning, covered in blood. When the pack tracks the blood back to the victims, it realizes its crime, and the pack redoubles its efforts to help the helpless. The pack continues to search for the cause of the curse.

Chloe is not a starting-level totem, but one guiding a pack that has carefully and consistently given her power over the years. Additionally, it is extremely rare for a Lune to be a totem in the first place, which is why Chloe isn't meant to serve as an example of a normal Forsaken pack totem.





# BABE IN THE WOODS: BLOODY MARY

SHHH. DON'T TELL THE OTHERS.

**Aliases:** Bloody Mary; Typhoid Mary

## BACKGROUND

Out of the woods, or shambling barefoot down a garbage-strewn avenue, she stumbles into the territory. Shivering. Pitiably. Alone. Pedestrians gawk as she passes, not sure what to make of the guideless urchin. She doesn't look homeless, but then again, it takes all kinds. Any Uratha with eyes in his head or a nose on his face can sense the wolf in her, but the trouble she brings remains occulted behind wide eyes and quivering lip. Mary. *Bloody Mary.*

Mary's is a sad story. She comes from a once-proud family of Forsaken with generations of kin carrying their surname into the annals of legend. As time wears on, however, the family name has faded into distant memory. Withdrawn from the world, the current family has become a local myth told to keep young Uratha in step. Dwelling on the outskirts of civilization, they stick to the old family manse atop a powerful locus. Controlled and cut off for so long, the local Forsaken rarely count the spiritual crossroads among their assets. The fabled family becomes as plausible as Bigfoot to many in the area, at least until Mary stumbles into town.

Mary, the all-too-literal wolf in sheep's clothing. The waiflike Irraka delights in perennially running away, finding a new pack to shelter and protect her until the family comes for her or the pack implodes (whichever comes first). Invariably, this ends violently for those she convinces to take her in. Her ploy is only for the attention it brings from her family. The lives left in ruin in the interim are purely incidental.

## THE FAMILY

Mary grew up with only her family as a benchmark for what is "normal," and in many ways, she doesn't know any better. Her family is a violent backwater sort that keeps its own law and long ago disregarded the help or governance of outsiders. Well-armed and shored up in the historic family manse, they maintain absolute self-sufficiency. They grow and hunt their own food, maintain their own well water, run their own still and venture into civilization in small groups only as necessary.

The family compound calls to mind the plantations of old in its size and scope. The main house, once spacious and opulent, is now overgrown and fallen into disrepair under the care of its Uratha masters. The wolf-blooded kin live within the old servant quarters on the edge of the property. Despite

this clear separation of classes, the family comprises a tight-knit commune, with the Forsaken overseeing and partaking in all aspects of daily life. All the way up to the top dog: the irreverently named Father Wolf — Mary's daddy.

## THE FAMILY NAME

Mary's surname is intentionally left blank for better customization. They might share a surname with a player character who makes an unknowing branch in this twisted family tree, or Storytellers could use local area or street names to indicate how entrenched the family is to the setting. *Ex. "Forchaut? Like Governor Forchaut Boulevard?"*

This also allows Storytellers to tailor the family's surname to fit any setting in the world. Even First World cities are only an hour away from their own backwoods and unwashed country cousins. Mary can just as easily be Mi-Na to suit a game set in the outskirts of Seoul, for instance.

## YAWP

Mary didn't come up in the most progressive environment, but learned early that one of her greatest assets in manipulating the world to her liking waits between her thighs. Hard as it is to believe for those first meeting her, Mary is a clever seductress. She doesn't come off as the typical "vamp," bypassing the natural alarms of most men and women. *She's far too naïve to realize her skirt is ridden up, the poor thing.* Not likely. Mary is well aware of her assets and does her best to tempt the tightly wrapped bag of hormones that are the Uratha into getting everything she wants. It's a tactic that often leads to breaking the Oath; cleave with Mary and she has an instant ally should the pack get wise and try to root her out. Mary's not above laying multiple members of a pack, either. Whether this drives the packmates apart or makes multiple partners culpable in their shared sin, it serves Mary's ends just fine.

Beyond her more visceral manipulations, Mary is extremely talented at getting a little something on everyone within a pack. Growing up in her family microcosm, she has become quite adept at sussing out the little interpersonal dramas between pack

members, while still maintaining an air of innocence. She's just so sweet and guileless; the pack *wants* to believe she's as darling as she presents herself with practiced ease.

### DADDY'S GIRL

Eventually, the family will come for her and woe to any they find with her — or foolish enough to stand up for Mary and get in their way. The best a pack can hope for is that the family will come in and pull Mary out by her hair, barely regarding the company she's keeping. That's if they're lucky. Depending on how long she's been gone and how much of an example they want to make, they can come on like a storm. Putting the pack down in front of her or dragging it back to the family estate for "judgment" under family law are both unpleasant options.

No matter how innocent she may appear or how horrible she's made her life sound, she will not hesitate to throw the pack to the wolves, so to speak. She may play

her newfound friends off her family, but the truth is she only wanted to lead them on a merry chase, regardless of who gets hurt. All told, Mary suffers from severe and dangerous mental instabilities centered on her quest for her daddy's attention. Even — or especially — as punishment.

### DESCRIPTION

Mary is silent, meek and shy in a way that begs protecting. Her every action is designed to make men feel they need to scoop her up like a damsel in distress or appeal to women with a sympathy for the injustices she's been dealt. She chews on her hair and looks through her bangs with bright, wide eyes and an innate sense of helplessness that has been nurtured in her since she was born. She expresses interests in trivial luxuries and gushes over the world of possibilities she's clearly been denied.

She is quite helpful, in every domestic sense of the word: cooking, cleaning and mending clothes. Any pack that shows her a moment's kindness will find itself with a live-in helper by the following morning. Attempts to educate her or "free" her from her archaic role are met with willful resistance as she continues to fall back into the same behavior, no matter how clear the message.

Mary wants nothing more than to lure a strapping young Forsaken (or, indeed, an entire pack) to her defense, or even back to her homestead. She holds no personal ban on getting physical with other Forsaken and will use this among many other tricks to manipulate male members of the pack. She reportedly broke up at least one pack by driving wedges between its members before her family came for them in the night, making quick work of their engendered mistrust.

Mary is a slip of a thing: diminutive, frail and waif-like. She exudes a need to be protected in a way that is nigh irresistible, like a box of shivering, stray kittens. Only the most calloused heart is immune to her act. And it is largely an act. She feeds off the dotting attention and fuss over her, but no matter what, she will always return to her family, usually with a pack of fools in tow.

### SECRETS

- Mary has not one but two *unihar* children. The family at large only knows about one of them and keeps it as one of many skeletons hidden in their closet. The second was born prematurely on one of her excursions off the mountain. Where it is now is anyone's guess. The first of them lurks in the *Hisil* near the family compound.

- Mary has tried to elope multiple times with various kin to make her father angry or her cousin jealous. They have since had to stop executing the kin for this trespass, lest they eventually run out of kin. The family has come up with new punishments to let the non-blooded members of the family know that unauthorized rutting with the alpha's daughter is not an offense one wants to repeat.

- Mary has met with the family totem and it has foretold that she will bring about the destruction of the family. She faces this truth with a mix of horror and excitement.





## THE FAMILY

Mary's pack is composed of her direct kin, a stump of a family tree pruned over the years to guarantee as many full-blood Forsaken as possible, even if the gene pool is slightly worse for wear. Outside of the pack proper are over a dozen wolf-blooded acting as servants, brood mares and studs. Children born into the family with apparent defects or handicaps are killed or eaten to "strengthen" the wolf soul in the family.

- **Father Wolf:** The undisputed *paterfamilias* of Mary's clan ever since he killed his own father in ritual combat for the right. He's naked but for overalls and covered in a suit of body hair even in Hishu, but it's important to note, nothing is comical about the man. Father Wolf is tough as nails and as nasty as they come. His face doesn't soften for strangers, let alone folks who "kidnap" his daughter.

- **Grim Root:** Runt of the family, beta of the pack and uncle to Mary. Grim Root is a dark-haired, stocky terror with a knack for communicating with the natural world. Around the family compound, he oversees the agricultural side of things, pruning and shaping the gardens. Appropriately, he is crusted with mud to his elbows at any hour of the day. Grim Root comes off as more educated than the better portion of his kin, and endeavors to wear a full set of clothes, albeit without shoes.

- **Possum:** Second — "kissing" — cousin to Mary and devoted to the family hook, line and sinker, mostly out of loyalty and misguided love for Mary. Possum is father to one of Mary's *unihar* and unaware of the other. Mary plays him like a fiddle; nine times out of ten, he's the weak link in the fence that lets her escape. Fiercely protective and jealous of Mary, packs will have to worry about him first in most confrontations.

- **Birdcatcher:** Mary's aunt and omega of the pack. Constantly puts Mary down for not being good enough and is often physically abusive. Birdcatcher used to be the family pride before Mary came along, or so she's convinced herself. Everything that goes bad in her life or around the compound she blames on Mary. She has a few sympathetic ears within the family, but despite the aunt's best efforts, Mary is still a favored child.

## RUMORS

*"I heard that little hillbilly girl was knocked up by her brother or something, had one of those screaming ghost baby things. That's just one of the thousand reasons I don't go in the hills, man."*

Mostly true. It wasn't her brother, but her second cousin. Otherwise, the rest is 100% accurate. Mary gave birth to her first *unihar* when she was 15 years old.

*"Her whole family is cursed. Anyone who has dealt with them in the past generation and a half has caught some sort of spirit plague. Be careful, guys — burn everything she touches."*

False. While an argument could be made that the family is cursed, they've done a pretty good job of making their own bad luck. As seen above, they have occasionally rained misery down on other area packs, but not through anything so vaunted as plague. For the most part, they just murder trespassers or anyone they think has disrespected the family. Which is bad enough.

*"There's some inbred Pure family who roam the hills. They're up there, squatting on some powerful loci, worshipping some powerful old spirit. You'd need an army to clear those hills."*

False. At least the part about them being Pure. Bringing an army is advised, but hard to pull off on short notice. Local legend will tell of Sasquatchlike encounters with members of the legendary family, but these stories should be ultimately dismissible, always coming through the filter of "a friend of a friend of a packmate."

## BLOODY MARY

**Auspice:** Irraka

**Tribe:** Hunters in Darkness

## STORY HOOKS

- Mary stumbles into town alone, bleeding from the feet and begging to be cared for. She avoids her story as long as she can, ingratiating herself with as many pack members as she can. Slowly the game turns as Mary seduces and manipulates her way through the pack. How deep are her hooks by the time her family comes a-calling? Perhaps she disappears one night after telling a confidant about her terrible family and how assured she is they will come for her again.

- The pack encounters the spooky family from the hill out on a hunt. They seem strange but decent enough as the ranking members make peace. With them is a young girl who catches the eyes of the weakest male in the pack and mouths the words *help me*. Can he convince the other members of the pack to mount a rescue?

- One of the pack discovers he is a distant relative of the spooky old hill-folk that live in the area. Shortly thereafter, he begins to have dreams and visions of a stag bound in silver barbed wire, trying desperately to leave the woods, but dragged back in by unseen hands. As the vision ends, the viewer sees a young girl standing dangerously close to the creature; she turns and regards the viewer with a finger to her lips. The girl's sibilant shush is the last thing heard. The hill is calling him; his blood calls him home. What will he think once he discovers the truths of that blood?

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2  
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1 (2/4/3/1), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (4/5/5/4)  
**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3 (2/3/0/2), Composure 2  
**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1  
**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival 2  
**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2 (Lust), Expression 1, Persuasion 3 (Vulnerable), Socialize 1, Subterfuge 3 (Presumed Innocence)  
**Merits:** Direction Sense 1, Mentor 2, Natural Immunity 1, Striking Looks 2, Totem 2  
**Willpower:** 4  
**Harmony:** 4 (leaves blood in the woods as offering to totem)  
**Virtue:** Faith. Mary has led a remarkably charmed life for all the trouble she's put into it and trusts in the universe — and her father — to keep her safe.  
**Vice:** Lust. Mary isn't exploiting the weakness of others so much as feeding her own.  
**Initiative:** 4 (4/5/6/6)  
**Defense:** 2  
**Speed:** 9 (10/13/16/14)  
**Health:** 7 (8/9/9/8)  
**Primal Urge:** 1  
**Renown:** Cunning 2, Purity 1  
**Gifts:** (1) Feet of Mist, Loose Tongue, Sense Weakness; (2) Slip Away  
**Essence/per Turn:** 10/1

**TOTEM:** ~~HART-PROTECTS-THE-HERD~~

Mary's family totem — like the rest of the family — has gone around the bend, never to come back. A proud totem of the Stag was attracted to the family's strong sense of family, pack and mutual protection, and the spirit offered its aid over a century ago.

Two generations past, the family — slightly mad from inbreeding and broken Harmony — took the notion that totem or no, wolves shouldn't follow the whims of a prey animal. Father Wolf's great uncle lashed and bound the totem to the family, effectively enslaving the creature. For all intents and purposes, Hart-Protects-the-Herd still behaves as a normal totem, including having to mind the ban, but with less willing cooperation. Also, the totem remains fixed to the family locus and does not travel with the family off the mountain. Whether its influence has a maximum range has yet to be tested, but remains a likely drawback to the family abroad and further binds them to the family manse.

Hart-Protects-the-Herd, once proud spirit and member of the family, now lashed with barbed wire and forced to serve madmen, would be most grateful to any who would help free it from its miserable plight. It'll likely offer its service or beg for death. Packs might want to be careful not to trust everything the spirit has to offer, but its offers of power are tempting.

**Power:** 3

**Finesse:** 3  
**Resistance:** 5  
**Willpower:** 10  
**Essence:** 15  
**Initiative:** 6  
**Defense:** 5  
**Speed:** 9  
**Size:** 7  
**Corpus:** 12  
**Influences:** Endurance, Intimidation  
**Numina:** Material Vision, Reaching  
**Bonuses:** Strength +1 (Father Wolf); Stamina +1 (Pack); Survival +1 (Given); Willpower (5); Essence (5)

**Ban:** *Let no member of the pack run astray.* For every 24 hours that a member of the pack is unaccounted for, the Totem's benefits suffer a -1 penalty, eventually dwindling to nothing. It's yet another reason the family doesn't take well to Mary's bouts of wanderlust. When and if an eventual confrontation occurs between a pack and Mary's family, they can only hope she has been away long enough to weaken or lose the mad totem's blessing for the duration of the fight.

**MATCHMAKER, MATCHMAKER...**

Mary's Oath-breaking indiscretions make her a tempting subject for a particular *idigam* found later in this book: the Shame-Bringer, Udu Luhah (p. 151). Below are a couple of quick suggestions for how Storytellers can get two for one out of the antagonists in this book.

- Mary comes to town, looking to cleave with a member of the pack. While not entirely odd, this time it's not just her natural predilection. She is driven by the Matchmaker, who has become enamored with Mary as the perfect mother for his next specimen. Now he only needs a father.
- A member of the pack sees a raging fire high in the hills outside town. The next day, the local Shadow changes noticeably (local spirits disappear or the area is flooded with lust-spirits). Investigating the phenomenon leads the pack to the family compound where Mary and her family are held under Udu Luhah's spell. The house is burnt down and the family is forced to...service the *idigam's* rather specific desires. Can the pack drive off the Moon-Banished? Perhaps by freeing and enlisting the aid of Hart-Protects-the-Herd?
- Mary's *unihar* children roam the hillside outside the family compound (presumably kept at bay by Hart-Protects-the-Herd). This is a rare treat to the Oathbreaker, as a perfect mating pair of *unihar* is never found together. He makes his nest in the pack's backyard to better experiment with his fortuitous discovery.



# THE WOLF OF GUBBIO: BROTHER PEYTON

*THIS HERE IS MY TOWN. YOU BEST MOVE ALONG,  
YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU.*

**Aliases:** Peyton Raine, the Protector of St. Mark's, Brother Wolf

## BACKGROUND

Out in the middle of nowhere, on a single strand of road that winds through the forest and doesn't really go anywhere, sits a town called St. Mark. The town has been there since anyone can remember, maybe even since before the country was founded. It seems like a nice, normal town: maybe a little insular, maybe a little more religious than most of the rest of the country. If you stick to the seedy diner and the even seedier motel and don't stay more than a day or two, you might even leave with that impression. Linger too long, though, maybe attend a service at the Catholic church in the town square, and you won't. You might not even leave at all.

Peyton Raine came to St. Mark 50 years ago, along with his brothers and sisters, who were also his pack and congregation. The charismatic Ivory Claw and his pack had been ousted from their territory out west for "sins against the purity of the tribe," and had come looking for a place to seek shelter and reclaim a power base. He found in St. Mark a town living in fear — every winter, beginning promptly on the first of December and ending on New Year's Day, a strange illness would sweep the town, claiming the lives of anywhere from one to a dozen victims. The town's doctor was never able to explain why the disease took only pregnant women. No men, no children, no women not with child, not even the elderly or those with weakened immune systems were ever taken.

When science failed to find an answer, the townsfolk turned to their religion. They came to believe the town was beset by a demon, and that they were being tested by God, like Job of old. Peyton and his pack saw the truth in the holy man's words, at least from a certain perspective: a potent spirit must have laired somewhere within the town. Recognizing that the community was ripe for exploiting, Peyton and his pack launched a plan to usurp the town's worship and shape the Shadow to their own ends.

## THE ANGEL'S FIRST VISITATION

On a chilly November night, not long after Peyton and his kin had come to town, the Ivory Claw prophet

sent his pack's totem, a fiery Helion called Jophiel, to manifest before the town's priest. The "angel" said God had heard the town's pleas and had sent a protector to deliver them. As St. Francis had sent a wolf to protect the town of Gubbio, so the Lord had sent wolves to deliver the town of St. Mark, as long as the people honored the wolves and left offerings of food and certain sacred relics for them.

Meanwhile, Peyton and his family tracked down the disease-spirit that haunted the town and offered it a bargain. It could cease its predation upon the town and instead serve as the guardian of a new locus that would be born of the townsfolk's new faith, or it could be destroyed by the talons of the Anshega and the fires of their totem. The spirit, recognizing it had little real choice in the matter, agreed. That night, the people of St. Mark saw wolves skirting the fringes of the town, even though no wild packs were native to the area.

When December 1 came and none of the three pregnant women in town fell ill, the priest proclaimed it a miracle. Several local men went out hunting and brought back a buck, which was slaughtered in the churchyard and left on a rock at the edge of town for the village's "protectors." Peyton and his pack didn't care about the meat itself, of course, but the humans' faith generated veritable oceans of Essence, which pooled into loci and fed the Pure and their spirit allies. Over time, more of the local spirits fell under the sway of Peyton and his totem, until the Ivory Claws had claimed the entire valley in which St. Mark sat.

## THE DEMON'S RETURN

Three years later, the veneration of the wolves was a well-entrenched tradition in St. Mark, verging on outright worship. That winter, Peyton's past caught up with him. A spirit had followed Peyton from his home all the way across the country and had finally located him. This spirit was cruel and cunning, and bore a hatred for the Ivory Claw for reasons unknown. Rather than attack the Anshega directly, this spirit struck out at the town, taking children from their beds and leaving nothing but bloody handprints on the windowpanes.

The townsfolk began to panic, feeling certain that their protectors had failed them. The wellspring of

faith faltered, and Peyton's spirit allies began to go hungry. Desperate to avoid losing his power base (and because he knew what had followed him east), Peyton sent Jophiel to appear before the entire town and tell them that they were being tested once again, that God wanted to know they would pay any price to keep the demons at bay. To a town that had lived with a demonic curse for decades, there was no question. No price would be too high — and so, at the angel's instruction, the next time a "sinner" (that is, anyone not from St. Mark) passed through town, he was set upon, killed and offered up to the wolves right there in the churchyard.

The sacrifice of a human being created a massive upsurge of Essence, invigorating Peyton and his pack, and through their command of the local Shadow they drove the new "demon" away — but Peyton saw there had to be a constant threat, or else the people would begin to question their monstrous deeds. There had to be more so-called demons, coming just often enough to keep the people scared without thinking their "protectors" were failing them. As the years rolled on, Peyton and his pack played the people of St. Mark like a finely tuned piano, keeping them afraid and in awe of their lupine protectors.

Three generations have been born in St. Mark since they arrived, and the wolves of St. Mark are now venerated openly every Sunday, right alongside God, the Virgin Mary and all the saints. The sacrifices remain an open secret — nobody talks about them, but everybody knows about the nine old men who dress in wolfskins and drag travelers from their beds on a moonlit night.

## DESCRIPTION

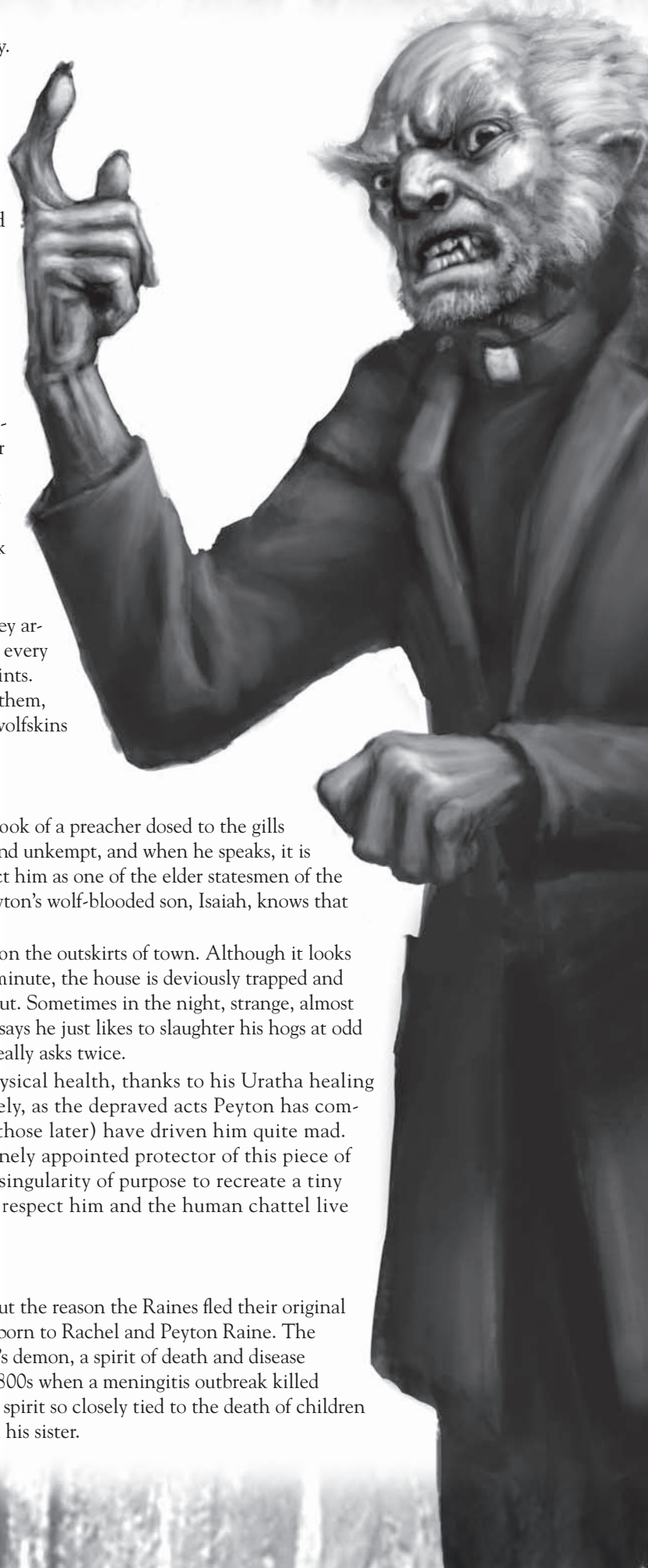
Peyton Raine is a wiry, wild-eyed man with the manic look of a preacher dosed to the gills on amphetamines and the Word of God. His hair is bushy and unkempt, and when he speaks, it is in the strident tones of a true believer. The townsfolk respect him as one of the elder statesmen of the community, but no one except the town's current priest, Peyton's wolf-blooded son, Isaiah, knows that the Raine family members are the wolves of St. Mark.

Peyton and his family live in a large, ramshackle cabin on the outskirts of town. Although it looks poorly maintained and seems it might tumble down at any minute, the house is deviously trapped and warded by powerful spirit magic to keep unwanted visitors out. Sometimes in the night, strange, almost inhuman wails are heard emanating from the place. Peyton says he just likes to slaughter his hogs at odd hours — and in a town with secrets like St. Mark, nobody really asks twice.

Despite being nearly 80, Peyton remains in good physical health, thanks to his Uratha healing factor. The same cannot be said of his mind, unfortunately, as the depraved acts Peyton has committed to keep himself and his pack in power (more on those later) have driven him quite mad. He has recently begun to think that he really is the divinely appointed protector of this piece of territory, and that Rabid Wolf has blessed him with the singularity of purpose to recreate a tiny piece of Pangaeon paradise, where the spirits honor and respect him and the human chattel live in awe and fear of him.

## SECRETS

Nobody — *nobody* — talks about it, even among kin, but the reason the Raines fled their original territory was because of a child. Specifically, a Ghost Child born to Rachel and Peyton Raine. The family settled in St. Mark because of the nature of the town's demon, a spirit of death and disease called Shadow of Empty Cradles that was born in the late 1800s when a meningitis outbreak killed several pregnant women in the town. The Raines felt sure a spirit so closely tied to the death of children would be able to devour a Ghost Child and protect him and his sister.





## THE MAD WOLVES OF ST. MARK

Apart from the brothers and sisters who first came to St. Mark, Peyton and his kin have interbred with the local populace and produced several Uratha offspring. Several of these younger wolves have joined the family pack, while a few of the original siblings have died over the past 50 years.

- **Rachel Abrams:** The oldest of Peyton's siblings, Rachel was a cunning warrior in her youth. Long years of battle and the wearing thin of her Harmony over the pack's time in St. Mark have robbed her of much of her vitality. She remains a cold, calculating strategist, and has trained many of her younger relatives to be formidable hunters and fighters.

- **Jedediah Raine:** Peyton's youngest brother, and the pack's ritemaster. Jed has retained by far the most of his sanity out of the first generation of Raines. A small, almost birdlike man, he spends most of his time in the Shadow with the pack's totem, or tending to the loci scattered around the territory.

- **Abraham Raine:** Rachel's eldest son is a massive bear of a man with a short temper and a history of making trouble. He owns the only garage in St. Mark, and thus is usually responsible for making sure that travelers passing through the town end up staying longer than they expect.

- **Lucy Abrams:** Abraham's niece and Rachel's granddaughter, Lucy is a young woman of 17. She has only recently undergone the First Change, and has learned exactly what that means for her. She is desperately planning to flee the town, but knows that if she simply bolts, her far more experienced relatives and their spirit allies will easily run her down.

Part of the bargain Peyton made with Shadow of Empty Cradles was that, in lieu of taking human children, it could take something far more unique: the child of two werewolves. Once a year, as part of its bargain, one of the unlucky Raine women who have bred true must conceive and bear a Ghost Child for the death-spirit to hunt down and consume. Some of the Ghost Children manage to escape. Some are still out there.

The sheer volume of human sacrifice, debased lusts and forced conception over the past half century has given birth to a Wound. So far, the cancer is small, confined to the Shadow of the local church, but each year it grows a little larger. The Wound subtly warps those who spend too much time within it (for

example, townsfolk who attend Sunday service every week), giving them a distinctive, vaguely primitive cast to their features.

Unbeknown to Peyton, Abraham or Rachel, Lucy Raine's Rite of Purity (the rite all Pure *nuzusul* must undergo to prevent them from gaining an auspice during the First Change) was unsuccessful. Lucy is a true rarity, an Irraka of the Ivory Claws. If her relatives discover this before she escapes St. Mark, she might well find herself next on the sacrificial altar.

## RUMORS

*"You remember that road trip Todd and Devon took over the summer? Well, I heard that their car broke down in some little podunk town out in the middle of nowhere that was, like, serious horror movie material. All the people kept eyeing them like they were trying to figure out how many steaks they could get off their haunches. They said there was this little church, right, but it was all covered with carvings of wolves and shit. Todd swore he actually saw a wolf just outside town, even. They almost had to stay the night in this little motel that was probably all wired up for making snuff flicks or something, but I guess they got their car started and got out of there. Good thing they fixed it themselves instead of trusting the local mechanic."*

With the exception of the motel being wired to make snuff films, this story is pretty much true. Whether the road trippers were actually earmarked for sacrifice and managed a lucky escape, or simply broke down and got spooked, is anybody's guess — the people of St. Mark don't sacrifice every stranger who comes through town.

*"Jesus, you didn't hear about Rex? Craziest damn thing, man. We're out patrolling the eastern edge of our territory, in Urhan 'cause, y'know, that's a long fuckin' stroll. Anyways, it's me and Rex and Laurie the Ghost, when we start seeing these weird glyphs carved into some of the trees. They look like somebody's border markers, and I for one don't think we got any new neighbors, so we get a little closer to check it out, and all of a sudden I can tell we're standing in a locus. We're all sniffing around, trying to figure out who the new neighbors are, when suddenly Rex lets out this yelp like I never heard before. I turn just in time to see some massive fuckin' thing spear him with these claws the size of Bowie knives and drag him through the locus. So of course me and Laurie claw through the boundary just as quick as we can, but by the time we get through, Rex is torn open from neck to nuts, and there's four of these things just chowin' down. Laurie didn't recognize 'em, but I sure as shit did: unihar. Ghost Children. Yeah, that's right, four of 'em. And let me tell ya, buddy, if those things are running in packs now, we are all fucked."*

Fortunately for the teller of the above tale, Ghost Children have not started running in packs. However, at least four *unihar* managed to escape Shadow of Empty

## STORY HOOKS

• **Car Trouble:** The classic take on this particular setup is to have the characters driving through the country, only to experience a “mysterious engine failure” (i.e., a Technology Gift courtesy of Abraham Raine) as they enter the town. Stranded until the car can be repaired — which, of course, will be well after they’ve been sacrificed — they must fight for their lives. This take is so classic, in fact, that as soon as you announce that the car has broken down in this little town, the players will probably start wondering when the cannibal mutants will show up. So, instead, change it up: maybe the players *aren’t* the targets, because there are too many of them. What if the town has decided to sacrifice that lone college student on his way home from break, and tell the players point-blank that if they leave, there will be no trouble? Will the players risk their lives to save a total stranger?

• **Paternity Suit:** This story works best with a group of werewolves, but with a little reworking, it could serve for mortal characters as well. The pack rolls into St. Mark (either because they’ve heard of the Raines, or they’re investigating some other disturbance). When the Raines learn who they have in their town, all subtlety is abandoned. The townsfolk are told the devil has sent wolves to deceive them, and they, along with the Pure, hit the pack with everything they have. In the pitched battle, Shadow of Empty Cradles is distracted (or maybe even destroyed), allowing the escaped Ghost Children to attack the town, bent on killing every werewolf they can find. Will the players’ characters and the Pure put aside their differences long enough to fight off this new threat, or will it dissolve into a three-way war?

• **The Wicked Angel:** Unknown to the Raines, their totem, Jophiel, has become tainted by the Wound in the church. The Helion has grown truly sick and has been carefully nudging Isaiah Raine into the creation of a cult within a cult. Jophiel hopes to widen the Wound sufficiently to allow Isaiah to summon one of the Maeljin (p. 259, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**) and offer the town, and anyone unfortunate enough to be in it, as a sacrifice to the blasphemous spirit.

Cradles, and they lurk on the fringes of the Raines’ territory, hunting what spirits they can and waiting until the day they are strong enough to destroy the spirit and devour their hated parents. In the meantime, the spiritual abominations are more than content to vent their rage on any Uratha who stumbles into their path.

### PEYTON RAINE

**Tribe:** Ivory Claw

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

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

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 4 (3/4/1/4), Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Religion) 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Spirits) 4, Politics (Small-Town) 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl (Dalu) 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Wolves) 3, Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 4, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Allies (St. Mark Wolf-Cult) 4, Direction Sense, Inspiring, Iron Stamina 3, Resources 2

**Willpower:** 7

**Harmony:** 2

**Virtue:** Faith. Peyton’s got a lot of faith to go around — in himself, in his newfound cult, in the Helion, in his tribe.

**Vice:** Greed. Peyton hungers for power and wealth these days, and will do anything to build up his resources in this town.

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

**Defense:** 2 (2/3/4/4)

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

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

**Primal Urge:** 4

**Renown:** Glory 3, Honor 2, Wisdom 4, Cunning 4

**Gifts:** (1) Call Water, Loose Tongue, Warning Growl; (2) Father Wolf’s Speed, Scent of Taint; (3) Command Fire, Primal Howl, Voice of Command; (4) Break the Defiant

**Rituals:** 3 **Rites:** Banish Human, Banish Spirit, Funeral Rite, Rite of Initiation, Rite of Purity

**Essence/per Turn:** 13/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Claw (Gauru)	1(L)	Melee	10	—
Bite (Gauru)	2(L)	Melee	11	—



# THE BLACK DOG: JESSIE HELL

IT'S YOUR TIME. PERDITION AWAITS.

**Aliases:** The Hound of Hades

## BACKGROUND

The MacCreedys have always been a Bone Shadow family, far back as anyone can remember. Those who didn't Change were always wolf-blooded, and Jessica Lee MacCreedy was destined for the former. Her Change came young, but not *too* young: she was 17 when Urfarah's lineage manifested in her. Her adoption into the Bone Shadows wasn't so much a choice as a matter of unbroken familial tradition, as was the revelation of the MacCreedys' deepest secret, that of the Black Dog, the Hound of Hades, whose fangs and claws usher the guilty unto hell.

But it wasn't enough merely to kill. The ghosts of the innocent, after all, are cursed to wander, as surely as are those of the most monstrous men and women ever to walk the face of the Earth. Long ago, however, old Uriah MacCreedy determined that something *more* was required to make the punishment truly fit the crime. In the darkest shadows, the Irraka searched, and gave ear to terrible spirits of merciless vengeance. After a fashion, he discovered how to throw wide the gates of hell and to feed into its ravenous maw the worst that humanity had to offer. Among the crumbling and overgrown grave markers of untold generations of her kin, Jessica Lee received this grim lore and gave herself over to the Black Dog, taking Jessie Hell as her deed name. On that night, Jessie accepted the hypocrisy of the MacCreedys as her own, punishing sin with sin.

Thereafter, the Hound of Hades went out on the Devil's business, harvesting the souls of the guilty and delivering them to their well-deserved judgment. Murderers, rapists, those who prospered by misery and other wretched examples of human filth screamed out their last and woke from the dream of life into an endless nightmare of death. And, each time, Jessie Hell, a keeper of the MacCreedy way, sacrificed a bit more of her Harmony to the path of retribution, until the voice within her that protested this horror grew faint, and then silent, and the last lingering echoes of it died away entirely.

## DESCRIPTION

Jessie Hell tends to be quiet and skulking in her demeanor and mannerisms, like she's always trying to avoid notice. Her attention is fixed as much upon the realm of the unquiet dead as upon the interactions of the living, and the first is just as real and significant to her as the second. She speaks softly and with a bit of a sepulchral, echoing quality to her voice, though it's not an affectation; long centuries of carrying the blessing of Death Wolf have left the MacCreedys as much creatures of the

afterworld as of the world of flesh, and Jessie is no exception. Those who don't know Jessie typically walk away with the impression that she's extremely shy and introverted, and that assessment isn't entirely off the mark.

Jessie is lean and long limbed (maybe even too skinny), and a little taller than average. As is the case with many of the MacCreedy women, her hair is ivory white in color and she tends to wear it long and wild, so that it covers her face much of the time. She's a little bit prettier than average, but not to the point that she'd stand out in a crowd. Normal folks who meet the gaze of her pale blue eyes, however, are apt to remember them with a shudder, even if they lose track of all the other details of Jessie's appearance. She tends to dress for utility, though she only favors especially dark clothing when on the business of the Black Dog; otherwise, blue jeans, work boots, a plain shirt and — when the weather calls for it — a sturdy jacket are the order of the day. Jessie doesn't wear makeup, she has no tattoos or piercings and she's never so much as painted her nails, but she wears tight-fitted bracelets and a choker, all of which are made of equal parts leather and bone. She doesn't like attention and often comes off as shy to those who don't know her well. Given the choice, she'd much rather find a small and inconspicuous seat in the back and let everyone else do the talking, while she just listens.

As might be expected, Jessie's wolfish shapes are unbroken, midnight black. Her build in all these forms is sleek and athletic, leaning more to nimbleness than power, in all save for the deadly Gauru shape. For the most part, however, Jessie prefers to use her Anybeast Gift to assume the seeming of an unnaturally large black mastiff (in Urshul form) when acting as the Black Dog. Jessie prefers to work by night, so she typically shows up as a lithe, four-legged shadow moving silently against the darkness.

## SECRETS

As the sole living Irraka of the Wolves of Gehinnom, Jessie alone — as is MacCreedy family tradition — holds the knowledge of Perdition's Price, having adopted the mantle of the Black Dog just after her 18th birthday, when her uncle, Micah, was killed in combat with a Bale Hound. She has enacted this rite a total of six times, until the burden of it has quelled any shreds of doubt within her soul. Jessie must carry this particular secret all on her own, until such a time as another New Moon arises within the clan, whereupon she can share her terrible obligation with another, just as Micah did with her.

The Black Dog and its activities, unsurprisingly, are secrets all their own. While the dreaded legend may be a fixture of local

## THE WOLVES OF GEHINNOM

The MacCreedys' family pack has carried the same name for generations, dating back to Uriah MacCreedy's creation of the Rite of Perdition's Price (see below). As many as 50 Uratha have come and gone from the pack throughout the years, bound to it from the moment of the Change and released from service only by the cold embrace of death. The pack's totem is known as Unrepentant Sorrows, manifesting in the form of a ghostly, deathly pale woman with lips like blood, shrouded both in ever-flowing hooded robes of black gossamer and in a crawling fog that often leaves the contours of the spirit's form hazy and indistinct.

Some of the more significant members of the pack's current lineup include:

- **Sarabeth MacCreedy:** The venerable alpha of the Wolves of Gehinnom and a daughter of Uriah himself, Sarabeth (which may or may not be her original name) is known simply as Momma MacCreedy to both family and those outsiders who still remember her, and she isn't long for this world. Now well over two centuries in age, the weathered old Elodoth has only just begun to notice that last winter's chill never left her bones with the spring thaw. Kamduis-Ur is coming for her, and she knows it. Accordingly, Sarabeth's hold over the pack is slipping, little by little, and she expects to be overthrown inside of a year by one of her two surviving grandsons.

- **Duncan MacCreedy; "Vernus":** The savage clawed fist of the MacCreedy clan, Duncan is also the frontrunner for its next alpha. Lean and wiry, the scarred, looming Rahu projects an aura of feral power, his sense of discipline badly degraded by the slow erosion of Harmony engendered by his sometimes needlessly violent ways. Taking for his deed name one of the rivers of the Underworld, Duncan has personally dragged over two dozen sinners before the three Black Dogs who have come and gone from the pack over the course of his life among the Forsaken, more than any other living member of the family — save for his grandmother, who has more than a century on him

- **Azrael MacCreedy:** Sarabeth's other surviving grandson, the pack's senior Ithaeur holds no deed name. He claims he's never really earned one, while his cousin, Duncan, continually takes jabs at him for the "fancy" name that obviated the need for a special moniker among the Forsaken. Azrael is, in many ways, the opposite of his tactless kinsman: he is a slight, soft-spoken man, deeply contemplative and incredibly patient. Azrael is also Jessie's grandfather and acted as a mentor to her in the months just after her Change. If he has his way, he will be the one to usurp Sarabeth for leadership of the pack, rather than Duncan, in whom he sees an especially dark future for the MacCreedys.

folklore, few so much as even *suspect* that the activities of this figure of myth have their origins in the MacCreedy family, and Jessie is obliged — like those who came before her — to keep things that way. As time goes on, however, and technologies improve, the duty of the Black Dog becomes harder and harder to execute while still remaining beyond the scrutiny of the herd. The last killing resulted in "inconclusive" DNA evidence at the site of the murder (the investigators reasoned that feral dogs or some such must've gotten at the body before testing could be done, given the obvious contamination of much of the genetic evidence), but Jessie knows she isn't going to be able to count on luck forever. For the first time in centuries, the MacCreedy family tradition may have hit a stumbling block that it can't overcome: how does one continue to conceal killings in the name of justice in an age that mercilessly uncovers even the deepest, darkest secrets? Eventually, if things carry on as they have been, *something* is going to point back to the isolated and overgrown sprawl the family calls home. Then, the "sacred mission" of the MacCreedys may become a problem for more Uratha than merely the Wolves of Gehinnom.

Perhaps the most interesting secret Jessie holds, though, is one that is unknown to her. Generations upon generations of the departed dead of the clan have as ghosts watched the Rite of Perdition's Price, handed down from Irraka to Irraka. In life, some were wolf-blooded and others weren't, and not all of them were pleased with their lot among the insular MacCreedys. Indeed, some might be willing to teach the lore of the Black Dog's proprietary magic, in exchange for freedom from the familial graveyard or even just the grim mercy of oblivion. For so many years, the MacCreedys have taken the services of the family's ghosts for granted that betrayal on the part of dead kin is inconceivable to them. An outsider who wants to steal the Black Dog's ritual may be able to do so by learning it from the lips of the restless dead, although doing so necessitates learning that the burial yard is the location wherein the rite is taught and then evading the clan's scrutiny for long enough to hear its secrets.

## RUMORS

*"Jessie Hell comes from a Lodge or something that ushers the wicked into damnation. I hear they've passed down some crazy Bone Shadow rituals for centuries and they can turn any cave, arch or doorway into a gate to someplace horrible; maybe it's in Shadow and maybe not. They say she arrives when someone's 'time has come' — whatever that means — and that she makes him pay for his crimes with his life. I don't know if the Lodge or whatever is only for Bone Shadows or Irraka or what, but one of the old-timers mentioned he's seen two others in his day who did the same thing and they were both just like Jessie."*

The MacCreedy New Moons (whether known or unknown specifically as such) make for a spooky fixture of local Uratha legend. It's certainly reasonable for outsiders to imagine that they are all members of some exclusive Lodge that deals with sin and retribution; they tend to make examples of the wicked, after all. That in mind, justice-oriented Uratha (or even just those looking for excuses to savagely murder people they consider to be "bad") could, conceivably, be interested in having a sit-down with Jessie and "earning the right" to join her family's alleged Lodge. Of course, Jessie has no such thing to offer and, being a bit socially awkward, probably won't be



very good at expressing as much in any way that an outsider is apt to believe. She'll almost certainly come off as "protesting too much," due to her desire simply to be left alone.

*"It was a big, black dog. No...a woman, with white hair. She hurt me. Said she was going to make me pay. Stabbed me through the heart. The dog howled. The woman spat in my face. I didn't mean to do those things to all of those kids. It just...happened. Why am I here? Am I in hell? She said I was going to hell. Please, save me."*

Sooner or later, a werewolf who knows enough to put two and two together is going to wander into the wrong part of the local Shadow Realm (a Wound) and realize that one of the spirits she's seeing there isn't a spirit at all, but a ghost. Since the shades of the dead have absolutely no place in *any* part of the Shadow — let alone one of its worst parts — she might be inclined to speak to this ghost and learn how it ended up in such a situation. Depending upon her ability to communicate with the ghost and to process what it tells her (as well as her ability to survive in such a hostile environment, of course), she could learn some very curious things about how the unfortunate shade ended up in its present circumstances, things that point back to Jessie and her kin. Needless to say, utilizing a Wound is, at best, an atrocity in the eyes of most Forsaken, and many of them will be quick to want to punish her for somehow trapping the Restless Dead in a terrible Wound. Of course, the people who are sacrificed to these private hells are some of the most awful specimens that humanity has to offer, and other werewolves may be inclined to see this whole thing as justice, the same as the MacCreedys do.

*"Black Dog's always haunted these parts. Far back as they've kept the written word hereabouts, you can read of it: old church records, journals, newspapers and all that. Claims the wicked, they say, and drags 'em off to hell. Grabbed Fred Miller back in '32, after he'd done all that awful shit to his wife — you ever heard of*

*what happened to Lilly Miller? — and it got Mae O'Connor in '67, when she drowned her kid, the one who was born simple. There's loads of other stories, too: the cops are keeping quiet about it, but the Dog got that drifter out by the highway, the one who cut up that truck-stop waitress. You mark my words...Black Dog took care of that son of a bitch."*

Not everyone has a problem with what the Black Dog does; when the cops can't — or won't — do anything about a bad person, the Black Dog makes him go away. And werewolves certainly aren't the only ones who might take an interest in its activities.

Ordinary occultists, folklorists and even federal investigators have reasons to research the Black Dog and its deeds. Likewise, vampires or other creatures that, of their natures, prey upon the weak and the innocent may have cause to fear Jessie Hell and the mantle she has inherited.

**JESSIE  
HELL**

**Auspice:** Irraka

**Tribe:** Bone Shadows

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence

3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

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

**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 2 (1/2/0/2), Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Folklore) 2, Crafts 2, Investigation 4, Medicine 4, Occult (Death) 5, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl (Bite) 3, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Wilderness) 3, Survival 3, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Empathy (Discerning Truth) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2



**Merits:** Allies (MacCreedy Family) 4, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fame 2 (local; only as the Black Dog), Fast Reflexes 2, Holistic Awareness, Language (First Tongue, Spanish), Meditative Mind, Mentor (River of Souls) 3, Resources 1, Totem 3

**Willpower:** 8

**Harmony:** 3 (Depression, Suspicion)

**Virtue:** Justice. Avenge those who have been wounded at the hands of sinners.

**Vice:** Wrath. The guilty deserve to suffer in hell for what they've done.

**Initiative:** 10 (10/11/12/12)

**Defense:** 4 (all forms)

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

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

**Gnosis:** 4

**Renown:** Cunning 4, Glory 1, Purity 1, Wisdom 3

**Gifts:** (1) Death Sight, Know Name, Partial Change, Sense Malice, Sense Weakness, Speak with Beasts; (2) Anybeast, Ghost Knife, Father Wolf's Speed, Sand in the Eyes, Scent of Taint, Slip Away; (3) Corpse Witness; (4) Word of Quiet

**Rituals:** 4; **Rites:** (1) Funeral Rite, Rite of the Spirit Brand; (2) Blessing of the Spirit Hunt, Call Human; (3) Sacred Hunt; (4) Rite of Perdition's Price

**Essence/per Turn:** 13/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Fist	0(B)	—	5	N/A
Light revolver	2(L)	20/40/80	7	N/A
Knife	1(L)	—	4	N/A

### RITE OF PERDITION'S PRICE (....)

The wicked must be punished. The ancient lore of the MacCreedy clan, handed down from New Moog to New Moon, teaches a secret means by which a human soul may be bound in torment within a Wound in Shadow, providing an eternal private hell for the sinner's ghost. (Note that nothing expressly prevents this rite from being taught to Uratha other than Bone Shadows, Irraka or MacCreedys, except for familial tradition.)

**Performing the Rite:** The subject (who need only be a "sinner" by the ritemaster's definition of such) must be somehow confined in the werewolf's presence for the rite's duration — within a physical location directly across the Gauntlet from a Wound — while she continually curses him in any language known to her, reciting a litany of his sins; the MacCreedys have always favored the First Tongue. At the rite's conclusion, the ritemaster stabs the victim through the heart with an iron dagger, condemning his soul to endless suffering.

The use of this rite is itself a sin, requiring any Uratha with three or more dots of Harmony to roll two dice against degeneration. This rite may or may not have any effect when used upon any creature other than a human being.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (successes equal to subject's Morality; each roll represents one minute)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The rite automatically fails and the ritemaster sustains Health points of aggravated damage equal to the victim's Morality trait. The Uratha will never again be able to successfully enact this rite upon the individual in question.

**Failure:** No successes are gathered. If the rite cannot be completed for some reason, the ritemaster may not attempt it again for the remainder of the scene.

**Success:** Successes are gathered. If the ritual is successfully completed and the victim appropriately sacrificed, the subject's ghost is thereafter forever confined to the desired Wound and will *always* return from destruction, with full Corpus, upon the occasion of the next new moon. If the Wound should ever be cleansed or otherwise destroyed, however, the sinner's ghost vanishes along with it.

**Exceptional Success:** No additional effect.

### STORY HOOKS

- Someone connected to one of the characters (a friend, ally or even wolf-blooded relative) is wrongfully targeted by the Black Dog. For reasons totally unrelated to the MacCreedys and their self-appointed task, he's been set up to seem guilty of something he didn't do and Jessie is now hunting him down, so that he can be sentenced to his own personal hell. If the pack doesn't stop her, one way or the other, an innocent man will suffer an eternity of torment.

- Jessie Hell recently sacrificed someone to a Wound, condemning the man's spirit to endless suffering. Unfortunately, he knew *something* the pack needs to find out. Initially, they're certain to figure that the knowledge is lost to them forever, until an allied spirit gives them a lead on the imprisoned ghost. Of course, provided that they can survive the Wound and learn what they need to know, they're still left with the question of what put his shade there in the first place.

- Maybe the characters already know what the MacCreedys are and how the local stories of the Black Dog got their start. Maybe they actually *support* the activities of the Hound of Hades. How might their feelings on the matter change, however, when they learn that Uriah MacCreedy was a Bale Hound and that the Rite of Perdition's Price is, effectively, a sacrament of the Maeljin?



# THE SILVER HOOK: JOHNNY SHADOW

*BIG FELLA, AREN'T YOU? WHAT ARE YOU...SIZE 44? 46? PERFECT!*

**Aliases:** The Skinner King (Regional variants: The Doppelganger, Jan Vardøgr)

## BACKGROUND

A rash of grotesque serial murders breaks out around the city — real “locked room” shit the cops can’t get their heads around. The savagery and power behind the killings implicate the Uratha; what’s really fucked up is all evidence points to Forsaken who have recently gone missing or been killed. Thus is the legacy of Johnny Shadow, the Skinner King, he who skins his enemies and, with those skins, steals their identities and power.

## BAD SEED

Born Jonathan Haine, Johnny was a troubled boy from the start, featuring all the charm and pathology of a future serial killer. Well before his First Change, he took an interest in torturing lesser creatures, starting with feeding insects to ant lions and working up to frogs, mice, squirrels, cats and, eventually, dogs and larger game. Noticing the boy’s predilection for coming home with fingers stained with blood, his father directed his attention to more productive means: specifically, taxidermy. While that was a more proper outlet, it only encouraged the boy. At eight years old, Johnny discovered a way to skin a rabbit without killing the creature until the last possible moment.

His violent and cathartic First Change came two weeks before his 14th birthday. When he awoke from his lycanthropic delirium to find both his parents dead, skinned and stuffed with old newspapers and the sofa pillows, Johnny knew his true purpose was finally calling. A month (living with their bodies) later, the Pure came for him.

## THE SLAUGHTER

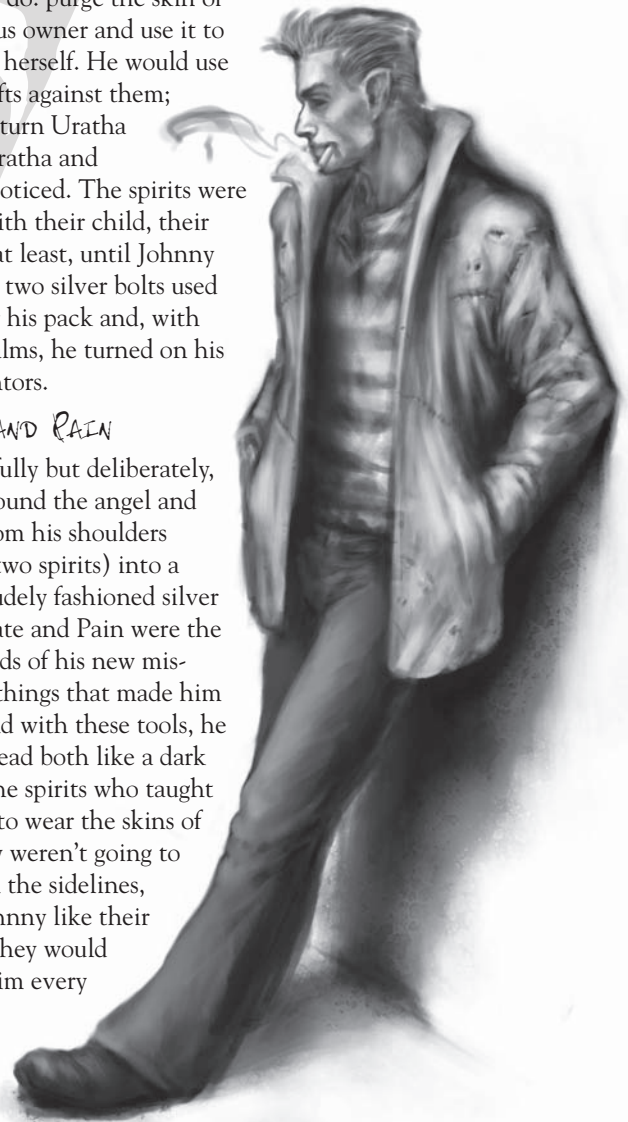
Johnny lost his pack shortly thereafter to marauding Forsaken. Thinking he was too young to be of any threat to the savages, they made one mistake: letting Johnny live. He was always a scrawny boy, half starved and scarred from his initiation; did they see him as too weak to bother with? Was it some twisted version of mercy that stayed their claws from killing someone so young? If it was mercy, it’s a mercy Johnny has dedicated his life to making sure all Forsaken pay for a hundredfold.

This is the first Johnny heard the spirits in his head or, more to the point, noticed them. He came to realize their voices had been with him his whole life, urging him forward, whispering how to serve them. He could be their hands exorcising the bad spirits that support the ancient enemy: the Uratha. The mongrels thought Johnny beneath notice? Well, he would be no more than a shadow to them, a nightmare at the edge of sight.

Twice baptized in murder and rage, half-mad from the agony of his purification, Johnny learned to do as the spirits do: purge the skin of its previous owner and use it to fool Luna herself. He would use Luna’s Gifts against them; he would turn Uratha against Uratha and leave unnoticed. The spirits were pleased with their child, their shadow...at least, until Johnny picked up two silver bolts used to murder his pack and, with sizzling palms, he turned on his spirit mentors.

## HATE AND PAIN

Painfully but deliberately, Johnny bound the angel and demon from his shoulders (i.e., the two spirits) into a pair of crudely fashioned silver hooks. Hate and Pain were the watchwords of his new mission, the things that made him strong, and with these tools, he would spread both like a dark gospel. The spirits who taught him how to wear the skins of his enemy weren’t going to sit idly on the sidelines, urging Johnny like their puppet. They would be with him every moment.



*The Silver Hook: Johnny Shadow*

As pure as his pain was, he would need to handle his new toys as both weapons and tools. For this, he soon hunted down those Forsaken that had assassinated his pack. He butchered them one by one, then cut into their flesh and removed their now-human skin.

The time spent tanning and healing his own wounds brought him to sharper and sharper focus. His mission couldn't lose its way to passionate outbursts. He would need to be smart, careful and silent. Uratha travel in packs and stay huddled together for protection, but they couldn't be together all the time. Johnny would have to wait for the opportunities to present themselves if he was going to survive.

Once the job was done, he took to the road, armed for his mission.

### MODUS OPERANDI

Johnny's M.O. consists of rolling into town and tracing the edge of Forsaken territory, etching boundaries into his mental map of the new area. This is a patient process; Johnny isn't in a hurry as he waits to catch an Uratha alone. One night they just don't come back to the pack. Once Johnny has his mark, he jumps him, bleeds him, hangs him and skins him alive. His ritual must be performed while the poor son of a bitch is living, in order to take the skin intact. Once complete, Johnny begins stalking the streets using stolen Gifts, scent and skin to begin his murder spree all over again.

Eventually he is going to shit where a pack eats, sowing confusion as they turn out to hunt their errant packmate or neighbors. One by one, he isolates the pack, killing them and taking their skin until he disappears just as randomly as he appeared. One or two might survive (usually women), but those lucky few often have no idea what they were up against in the end.

Johnny's reputation seldom precedes him. He is, as he promised, a shadow.

### DESCRIPTION

Johnny thinks himself in complete control of himself and any situation at hand. He's often disarmingly subdued, with a quiet intensity that belies a darker demeanor beneath the surface. The less control he has over a situation, the more frayed and erratic Johnny becomes (severe obsessive-compulsive disorder), the upshot of which is Johnny gets sloppier, which also means he also becomes more violent and directly confrontational...with silver hooks.

Johnny grew from an awkward boy into a handsome, charming devil. Part of Johnny's great trick is his ability to blend, tempt and charm his way out of being a suspect. He can play the wounded pup one minute and the all-out killer the next. Johnny hasn't made it this long at his mission without getting out of a bind or three.

While wearing the skin of his victims, Johnny would appear as a man wearing a loose-fitting costume, without his extra bit of needlework to pull the whole thing together. By making the extra effort to assure the skin is

functional enough to get around in, he looks like the Uratha in question from a distance. The closer one gets, the more apparent that something is "off" about the creature, and not just how or why it's walking around in Gauru: the awkward gait, the empty eyes, the open, tongue-less mouth. Normal humans are still affected by Lunacy from the skin, as they would be if Johnny were in true Gauru.

### CULTISTS OF PERSONALITY

Johnny doesn't have a pack, in the traditional sense. However, he has gathered something of a following, cultlike in its sycophancy. Various Pure have taken up Johnny's trail and desire to learn his rite and sow discord through the Forsaken. These characters can be used as copycats and red herrings, or simply to even the sides when it comes to a direct confrontation with Johnny.

- **Brother of Fire:** A Fire-Touched convert and proselyte to Johnny's cold religion of fear and pain. He met Johnny one night as his pack was hunting down the killer within its territory. Brother of Fire's alpha ordered Johnny to stop under threat of death and turn himself over to the nearest ranking Ivory Claw for discipline. Johnny calmly but decisively ended the bastard's life with a burning silver hook. His pack was stymied, but Brother of Fire knew at that moment, he had met the embodiment of the Pure's vengeance. Brother of Fire is largely responsible for gathering the rest of the so-called pack.

- **Joshua Proudblood:** Joshua Proudblood, by esoteric Ivory Claw birthright, ranks well above his local tribemates, despite being little more than a child. As the others looked to him for answers, he could only hem and haw, having none to give. When word reached him of Johnny Shadow, a prodigal son of sorts, Joshua was awestruck at the stories surrounding the young man, who was barely older than himself. He knew he had to see for himself this traveler held down by no pack, no law, no birthright. Now, like Johnny, Proudblood is a fugitive from his own kind.

- **Crack Tooth:** Predator Kings, as a rule, don't appreciate Johnny's methods. Skulking around with silver hooks? Too much "serial killer," not enough "predatory wolf." And yet, he still does good work, doesn't he? Crack Tooth, a Predator King, is less a sycophant and more a waiting watcher — does he want to kill Johnny, or anoint him as a saint?

### SECRETS

- For all of his Pure fan base, Johnny doesn't consider himself one of them anymore: he believes he has tran-



scended to a new level of purity even they can't understand. He's not averse to skinning one or two of his own kind as a red herring, or to bring the religion of fear to his erstwhile kin.

- Johnny suffers from the severe obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) common among his former Ivory Claw tribemates. Some are minor intrusions, such as being irked by odd numbers not ending in five; others become larger compulsions, such as cutting into his flesh to "drain out" unwanted doubts. Exploiting this potential weakness can drive Johnny to penalty-laden distraction. It may backfire, however, and send him into an uncontrollable rage. Rampaging might be more predictable, but it comes with too many downsides to be seen as a good idea.

- Women are off limits to Johnny. Not only does he avoid them specifically with his murderous behavior, but even incidentally, he won't target them in a fight or otherwise. He suffers from a severe repression that similarly activates his aforementioned OCD. Sexual thoughts and behavior cause Johnny to shut down and become withdrawn to the point of retreat. Johnny will then carve into his flesh, in a form of bloodletting he believes cures the unwanted thoughts. Whether he would fight a woman in a life-or-death situation has yet to be tested.

- Johnny keeps a stuffed bear. Not one that he's caught and killed through taxidermy, but a buttons-for-eyes teddy bear named Scissors. Threadbare, one-eyed and fur gnarled with mud and blood, Scissors travels from city to city with Johnny (though not always on his person). It can be naturally assumed that such an artifact of childhood means a great deal to Johnny.

## RUMORS

*"I heard tell about a werewolf who ain't a werewolf. He's kin who took to skinning his cousins until he stitched them up into a people suit. Lets him — no shitting — change shape same as us now. Heard he's even started his own tribe out there."*

False. Close enough to see how this sort of rumor gains legs, but Johnny was bred an Ivory Claw, even if his experience among the Pure was limited by tragedy. He certainly isn't interested in starting his own tribe, either. The cult of personality that follows him around, committing murders and skinning Uratha in his name, lends weight to an otherwise ridiculous urban myth.

*"Bare Claw — used to run with those wolves from the highway — told a story about patrolling down by that old rest stop. Said they used to always chase kids out of there, you know, smoking dope, putting their hand down each other's pants, the devil's business, et cetera. Well, one night he pulls in, sees a lot of cars but doesn't hear a lot of noise. He doesn't get within a hundred yards of the joint when he smells it. Like a charnel house, he says. He kicks in the door to the men's room, and finds upward of a dozen bodies, skinned alive and hanging from the ceiling."*

False. Johnny is by and large a solitary killer. This does, however, have all the signs of his curious group of hangers-on. Such rumors may indicate that Johnny is in the area, but are not conclusive.

## STORY HOOKS

- A neighboring pack has gone quiet recently — not altogether strange in and of itself — but when three skinless bodies show up in the characters' territory reeking of that pack's alpha, it's bound to force the issue.
- Johnny hits town and starts in with the pack's kinfolk. Can the pack get them and keep them safe from the menace straight out of a slasher movie? By racing to the rescue, are they falling into Johnny's trap?
- Johnny needs the pack's help. No, seriously. He enlists the characters as a stranger to rid himself of an Ivory Claws tribunal calling for his head, charged with corruption of the youth, of all things. Sounds good to them, right? The pack gets to rid themselves of a nasty hangnail in the bargain, but what will they do when Johnny reveals his true colors?

## JOHNNY SHADOW

**Tribes:** Ivory Claws

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Taxidermy) 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival 3 (Skinning), Weaponry (Hooks) 3

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fetish (Hate and Pain) 4, Fighting Style: Two Weapons 3 (Whirling Blades, Deflect and Thrust, Focused Attack)

**Willpower:** 5

**Harmony:** 5

**Virtue:** Fortitude. The path has been long, broken and filled with pain and turmoil, but Johnny perseveres. So does his grim purpose.

**Vice:** Wrath. For all his calm and measured practice, Johnny's mission stems from his hate and anger.

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

**Defense:** 2

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

**Health:** 8 (9/10/10/9)

**Primal Urge:** 4

**Renown:** Cunning 1, Glory 2, Purity 3

**Gifts:** (1) Sense the Impure, Stoicism, Warning Growl; (2) Barbed Arrow, Relentless Focus; (3) Pain of Anguish; (plus one associated Auspice gift from his skinned victims)

**Rites:** Skin of the Predator (below)

**Essence/per Turn:** 14/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Hate/Pain	2(L)	0	Strength + Weaponry	Silver (below)

**RITE: SKIN OF THE PREDATOR (••••)**

A particularly ghoulish and grotesque rite, Skin of the Predator allows a Pure to steal access to Luna the Deceiver's Gifts by binding and skinning Uratha. This rite isn't widely known in modern nights, and only Johnny Shadow is known to have access to its secrets. The Pure would very much like to learn this rite, but Johnny isn't telling.

**Performing the Rite:** In order to perform this rite, the actor will need to have the Uratha in Gauru and be docile or otherwise restrained. A near impossible task, to be sure; if not for Hate and Pain, Johnny might agree. The Pure, however, know a number of methods to restrain the war-form for their various scarification rituals, and this is no different on the surface, albeit a less willing recipient. Binding the victim cruciform with steel or silver is the most common method; however, choking the target with a fixed collar and agitating the creature to remain conscious is cheap and just as effective. With the Gauru incapacitated, the ritemaster must skin it alive to take the full Gauru pelt from the howling, gibbering thing. No easy task, but Johnny's got practice.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (3 x victim's Harmony score)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The victim dies, taking all his knowledge and gifts with him. Additionally, the ritemaster takes two additional levels of aggravated damage from

the silver, as Luna herself takes notice of the abominable bequest and rejects the ritemaster.

**Failure:** No progress is made. Two consecutive failures and the victim bleeds out, robbing the ritemaster of the opportunity to steal their gifts or scent.

**Success:** The performer of the ritual has skinned the victim intact. The stolen pelt retains the scent of the victim and allows the ritemaster access to one Auspice gift of the victim's while wearing the skin for one lunar month.

**Exceptional Success:** As a success above, and the skin-wearer gains the benefits of an additional Auspice gift.

**FETTER (KLAIVE): HATE (••) AND PAIN (••)**

Hate and Pain are Johnny's weapons of choice. Each is a silver hook, forged and shaped with his own hands and bound with spirits of malice and agony, respectively. To prevent the searing pain of carrying raw silver, he has wrapped the handles with the skin of his first Forsaken victims.

When Johnny successfully grapples and buries the hooks into his opponent's flesh, he activates Hate to force the victim to change to Gauru. Meanwhile, Pain saps the target's spiritual energy and, ultimately, his Willpower as it burrows deeper into Johnny's victim.

**Hate:** Hate forces Uratha to their Gauru war-form for a number of turns per success scored on the activation roll. If this keeps them in Gauru beyond the usual duration limit for the individual, the victim remains in Gauru but enters a comatose state until Hate is removed or they die.

**Pain:** While Pain is active, an Uratha feeling its effects has his will sapped for as many turns as successes on the activation roll. The victim bleeds out one Essence a turn; if he hits zero, he begins losing Willpower at one per turn instead.

**Action:** Instant





# THE SLOW KILLER: DAR-US

NO WEAPONS.

**Aliases:** Darius, Bone Grinder, *Kul Thari*

## BACKGROUND

Darius was born Steven Ostrowsky, son of a dentist and schoolteacher. His uncle, however, was a werewolf, Changed under the full moon and accepted into Fenris' ranks, and he watched Steven grow up. He watched as spirits tormented the poor boy, and he drove them away when he could, but his own pack kept him busy. He was gone, he and his fellow Blood Talons, hunting down some nameless horror from the Shadow, when every bone in Steven's young body wound up broken.

It was a car accident, not a spirit attack, that nearly killed him. Steven was riding in the passenger seat, age 13, when the truck hit the family car from the side. Steven felt his right arm and leg break, his ribs and his skull. He heard the cracking sounds, and then he heard nothing. He woke up in the hospital, hundreds of pins inserted into his body, unable to speak for all the metal piercing his mangled jaw.

The hospital was quiet as the grave. No moon shone that night, and very few patients came in. The staff was tired and lethargic, and they ignored Steven's frantic attacks on the call button. There was something in his room that night, something that sat on his chest and pushed, listening to the creaks and crunches of the bones beneath. And Steven fought back the only way he could — he Changed.

Seventeen people died that night. Patients, relatives, orderlies, doctors, nurses. The next day, the whole place was sealed off and officially, all those people died from a rare disease carried in by a Chinese tourist. But Steven and his uncle raced away into the dark, and that was his first night as a werewolf.

## THE CANIS PUGNAX

Steven did not join the Blood Talons, despite his uncle's blandishments. He spent the first five years of his career as a werewolf living between humanity and the People, completing his education as best he could. When he turned 18 and the human world recognized him as an adult, he joined a tribe — the Bone Shadows. Despite a growing proficiency with the First Tongue, he never referred to his tribe as *Hirfathra Hissu*. Often, he didn't bother saying "Shadows," either.

He developed a reputation early on for brutality and viciousness, at least in the area surrounding his home. His uncle helped him fight a pack that would appreciate his skills, and a year after joining the Bone Shadows, he joined the Canis Pugnax, the War Dogs. These Uratha belonged to a mixture of tribes, but were all deadly warriors, and they looked forward to teaching young Steven how to fight like a werewolf. And Steven learned, perhaps too well.

The totem of the Canis Pugnax was an immense black dog, a mastiff the size of a small car. It took a liking to Steven immediately and protected him as the pack traveled the land, searching for enemies to battle and new ways to fight. The pack was somewhere between crusader and mercenary, and its odd, doglike howls became known for wild, unrestrained combat. It would probably still be roaming, had Steven not murdered a wolf-blood named Aidan Hardrick.

## AIDAN

What was the dispute about? Why did Aidan feel the need to pick a fight with a werewolf? Aidan Hardrick's story is usually overlooked, except as a footnote to that of *Dar-Us*. By all accounts, though, Aidan was a wolf-blood who knew (and whose family knew) the truth about the Uratha. Aidan's grandmother was a werewolf, and both he and his father had been assured that the People did not kill wolf-blooded. And perhaps that was why Aidan thought it was safe for him to taunt and strike Steven Ostrowsky.

Steven changed to Dalu form and grabbed Aidan. He stepped on his ankle to immobilize him, and then twisted his head, slowly breaking his neck. He gazed into Aidan's eyes while he killed him, and as he did, he remembered the night his own bones had shattered, and the creature that had come to him in the dark, triggering his own Change.

Was Steven hoping for Aidan to Change, and thus save himself? Was he expecting someone to tell him to stop? No one did. His pack just watched, impressed by his brutality. His totem did not understand — all the dog-spirit knew was that its favorite pack member was in battle, but in no danger, and so it waited. Steven snapped the boy's neck, even as Aidan gasped out one last plea for

life, one tearful, desperate apology to Steven. And then a snap and crunch of bone, and the light in the wolf-blood's eyes died.

Within a week, Uratha in the area were calling Steven *Dar-Us*, the Slow Killer. Rumor has it that it was Aidan's father who first pronounced this name "Darius," refusing to honor him by using a First Tongue title, but this is doubtful. In any event, the exploits of the Canis Pugnax pack were, from that moment on, completely overshadowed. *Dar-Us* had become the center of the story.

### THE LEGEND GROWS

Canis Pugnax was a nomadic pack, and this only helped to foster the spread of *Dar-Us*' legend. Wherever they went, Darius made sure to pick a fight, and he perfected a signature style of combat against werewolves, in which he would shatter bones and hold them while the wounds reset themselves. He learned that pain didn't frighten the People, but injury did. As the pack roamed, the stories spread, and eventually *Dar-Us* didn't have to pick fights anymore. Uratha who wanted to prove themselves would challenge him; those who were secure in their own positions would defer. No honor, after all, in being beaten.

Along the way, he made enemies. He killed a scion of the Ivory Claws without changing out of Dalu form. He tore a sorcerer's arm from her socket when she tried to question him about his ability to change shape. He snapped the leg of a young Ghost Wolf for no better reason than that he didn't recognize the Slow Killer. And somewhere during these travels, the Canis Pugnax pack started to realize Darius was going mad.

### THE DEATH OF THE WAR DOGS PACK

It was on a lonely stretch of road in Utah that the War Dogs died. A state trooper was the first one to find their bodies, apart from the buzzard. As fate would have it, she was a wolf-blood, and realized that the immense paw prints around the bodies could not have been made by any normal coyote, dog or wolf. She suspected a werewolf, and she informed her family. She was wrong, as it happened.

A pack of Hunters in Darkness discovered the War Dogs' totem miles to the north, howling out a heartrending lament to the moonless sky. They attempted to speak with it, but it refused to communicate in First Tongue or any human language. It simply howled in sorrow, and as the sun rose, the pack watched as it melted away into nothing. That was the spirit's ban, or so the stories said — if ever the morning sun's rays touched it without the shadow of a packmate to stand in, it would be destroyed. The Hunters in Darkness pack thus concluded that the Canis Pugnax pack was dead, and they began spreading the word that *Dar-Us* had finally fallen. By that time, however, he was miles away, alone.

No one knows what happened to the Canis Pugnax pack, except Darius himself. He left Utah and headed south, stopping in Denver and other places heavily populated by werewolves, but he kept moving. The loss of his pack unhinged him even further, and when he picked fights with other werewolves, they often went to the death. Rumors spread that *Dar-Us* was an Oathbreaker, the most vile of betrayers, a werewolf who had murdered his own pack. Stories said that he was *Zi'ir*, a Broken Soul, but that he was still as vicious as ever.

Months wore on into years, and *Dar-Us* was seen less and less frequently. Sightings became the stuff of urban legend, and most werewolves assumed he had been killed. But his legend had irrevocably





shifted — now, instead of a brutal fighter, he was a vicious killer, and werewolves referred to him in tones usually reserved for Pure warriors and powerful spirits. The sound of cracking bone, it was said, could attract him, and when werewolves in some parts of the southwest United States crack their knuckles, they sometimes whisper “*Imru nu fir imru, Dar-Us*” (“the People don’t kill the People, Slow Killer”), lest he hear the sound and attack.

## DESCRIPTION

Darius stands just over six feet tall, and at first glance, he doesn’t appear abnormally strong or well built. But any attempt to move him, any attempt to *touch* him, makes the truth abundantly clear. Darius doesn’t move unless he wants to. He is as dense as rock, but moves fluidly and skillfully. His hands always seem to come down in exactly the right places, and he walks, fights and speaks in careful measure.

He keeps his hair closely buzzed, and tattoos depicting the tribal symbols of both Pure and Uratha cover his arms. Each one has a harsh, savage scar through it, demonstrating that he has fought and killed a member of that tribe. His own tribe is represented this way, as well.

Darius’ eyes are cold and blue, and he very rarely smiles. He cracks his knuckles absently and sometimes forgets to stop at cracking them, breaking bones and watching as they knit. He is fascinated by the sounds of bones breaking and joints popping, and he finds it impossible to speak to another werewolf without issuing a challenge.

## SECRETS

Darius maintains to this day that he did not kill his pack. And this is true. He did not have a direct hand in the murder of the Canis Pugnax pack, but he was, in fact, largely responsible. The seeds of this despicable act of violence were planted in a hospital room years ago.

As *Dar-Us*, then known as Steven Ostrowsky, lay on a hospital bed in terrible agony, a spirit appeared before him and sat on his chest. Even now *Dar-Us* can’t remember exactly what this spirit looked like. He remembers that it had a smile like sun-bleached bone and no visible eyes, but nothing about its body. It was a pain-spirit, he knew that, and as the unfortunate boy lay there, helpless, it told him he was going to Change. He would end this night as a werewolf, and if he could master the pain he was in, he would be the greatest warrior the People had known in generations. All he had to do was last until the sun rose before Changing.

And he could not. He lost control and entered Death Rage, and slaughtered everyone within reach. But the pain-spirit didn’t give up so easily. It followed him and told him he could still be great. All he had to do was agree to hurt his foes the way no one ever had.

It took years for Darius to live up to that bargain, but when he did (with the murder of Aidan Hardrick), the pain-spirit gave him a Gift the likes of which no living werewolf had ever seen. This Gift, called the Bone Bar-

gain, was what allowed *Dar-Us* to gain his fearsome reputation so quickly (though his already ingrained proclivity toward violence was what spurred him to do so).

## GIFT: THE BONE BARGAIN (.....)

This Gift is unique, in that no other werewolf besides *Dar-Us* has ever learned it. That doesn’t mean the pain-spirit wouldn’t teach it again, of course.

As long as the user is causing pain to an enemy, he cannot be harmed. Any damage he suffers is held in reserve somewhere in the werewolf’s mind or soul. As long as the werewolf keeps his soul in balance, the wounds effectively do not exist, but if he loses sight of his own Harmony, the debt comes due, and someone has to pay. The werewolf can suffer the damage, but if he belongs to a true pack, bonded by a totem, he can shunt the harm off to his packmates. This is, of course, a grievous violation of Harmony, but by that point, the werewolf might not care.

**System:** As long as the character has caused at least one point of damage to another character during a scene, he suffers no damage of any kind. However, the Storyteller should still keep track of this damage. If the werewolf’s Harmony falls two points (if it begins above 6) or one point (if it begins below 5), the Gift’s effects are broken, and either the werewolf or the members of his pack suffer the damage. All bashing damage comes due first, then lethal, then aggravated. The damage can be divided up between packmates in any combination, but in Darius’ case, it was enough to kill three werewolves in seconds.

The Bone Bargain (see sidebar) protected him from harm, but Darius never truly understood the terms of the Bargain. On that lonely morning in Utah, Darius’ debt was called due, but it was his pack that paid with their lives. Darius, having betrayed his pack even though he didn’t kill them, fled, leaving the totem that had loved and protected him to die with the rising sun.

Darius’ greatest secret, therefore, is the Gift that the pain-spirit gave him, and that continues to protect him. But this time, he has no one to take the damage for him, and he has already suffered enough to kill him several times over. If his Harmony falls again, he will die...unless he can find a pack to take him on.

## RUMORS

“*Dar-Us? There’s a pack of Brethren after him. You know, the Lodge of the Hunt? I hear the pack’s made up of two Bone Shadows, two Ivory Claws — yes, Ivory Claws! — and*

one Blood Talon. His uncle. My advice? Do not get in their way. They've each lost something to Dar-Us, something really personal, and that's why they've chosen the life they have."

The Lodge of the Hunt (detailed on pp. 203–204 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**) is made up of packs of Uratha who want to kill one enemy so badly they are willing to forsake everything else — family, pack, tribe, enemies, loyalty — to do so. If they succeed, they part ways, never to speak again. One of the more common rumors about *Dar-Us* is that a pack of these Uratha (called "Brethren") does indeed stalk him, and that just as they are willing to do anything to kill him, he is willing to do anything to avoid them.

*"Don't even say his name. He left, you know. Left the world, and now he's Shadow. He's a spirit, he's forsaken his body forever, and now he's just pain and sadism, hunting the spirit wilds."*

This rumor is not true, though there is something to it: *Dar-Us*, like many werewolves who lose their Harmony, has taken on spiritlike qualities. He literally *cannot* resist challenging werewolves to battle, and he cannot resist following the sound of cracking bones. He tends to wander the spirit wilds because he bleeds Essence in the physical world, and because he is less likely to see other werewolves in the Shadow.

*"You know that wolf-blood he murdered? He's still around. He's a ghost, and he's bound to his father. He doesn't let his father rest, and his father is out for blood because of it. I hear he's done appealing to the Uratha. Next, he's going to find other enemies of Dar-Us. Spellcasters. Hunters. People like that."*

John Hardrick, Aidan Hardrick's father, was well aware of the Uratha and what they could do from a fairly young age. He has called in every favor he has among the People to try to get justice for his dead son, and while his son did not leave a ghost behind, it is true that the elder Mr. Hardrick has despaired of finding help from the People. If he made contact with other supernatural beings, he might well ask for their help — and Darius has his share of enemies in these populations, too.

### DARIUS

**Auspice:** Irraka

**Tribe:** Bone Shadows

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 2, Medicine (Broken Bones) 1, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Brawl (Grappling) 5, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Stalking) 3, Survival (Spirit Wilds) 3, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Wolves) 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 5, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 2

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Fame 3 (werewolves only), Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style: The Slow Kill 4, Fleet of Foot 3, Iron Stamina 3, Language (First Tongue)

**Willpower:** 7

### STORY HOOKS

- The characters meet a pack of werewolves calling themselves the "Slow Killers," after *Dar-Us*. These Uratha are pledged to live by Darius' principles (as they understand them); namely, never showing mercy and making sure to guard their territory with ruthless and sadistic intensity. Can the characters show these werewolves the error of their ways before they kill someone and lose Harmony? Or is it already too late?

- A rash of murders of wolf-bloods in the area puts the name "*Dar-Us*" on everyone's lips: the wolf-bloods' necks are broken, twisted and mangled. Has Darius returned? And if so, why is he targeting wolf-bloods rather than werewolves? If this is a copycat, what does he hope to gain by mimicking the Slow Killer? Or is the killer trying to *attract Dar-Us*?

- The characters meet a man on the road who wears a bloody bandage over his eyes. The pack realizes he is a werewolf, and as soon as they reveal themselves, he tells them to get away before he kills them. He is *Dar-Us*, he claims, and if he lays eyes on them, he will have to attack, so they must flee before his eyes regrow. Is he lying? If not, should the characters kill him while they have the chance? *Can they?*

**Harmony:** 1 (compulsion: challenge werewolves to combat, follow sound of cracking bone)

**Virtue:** Temperance. Darius is measured and deliberate in everything he does — horribly so. One of the most terrifying things about him is that for all his brutality, it has *never* been from losing his temper.

**Vice:** Pride. Darius bought into his own hype long ago. He's a prisoner of his own legend.

**Initiative:** 8 (8/9/10/10) with Fast Reflexes

**Defense:** 3 (in all forms)

**Speed:** 17 (18/21/24/22)

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

**Primal Urge:** 6

**Renown:** Cunning 5, Glory 4, Wisdom 2

**Death, Insight, Warding, New Moon, Evasion, Stealth**

**Gifts:** (1) Death Sight, Partial Change, Sense Malice, Sense Weakness; (2) Father Wolf's Speed, Ghost Knife, Slip Away; (3) Corpse Witness, Primal Howl; (4) Savage Rendering, Word of Quiet; (5) The Bone Bargain, Vanish

**Rites:** Funeral Rite, Rite of Contrition, Rite of the Spirit Brand

**Essence/per Turn:** 15/3

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Grapple	Special	N/A	12	See sidebar



## NEW FIGHTING STYLE: THE SLOW KILL (. TO ....)

**Prerequisites:** Strength 5, Brawl 4

**Effects:** This Fighting Style is the sole province of *Dar-U*s, but it's possible he might have taught other werewolves the basics before disappearing. The Slow Kill is based on inflicting maximum pain on werewolves by shattering their limbs and other bones. It works on non-werewolves, too, but the effects tend to be more devastating.

The Slow Kill is progressive; your character can't have "Bone-Breaking Grip" until he has "Leg Lock-Out." Note that the Strength requirement for the Slow Kill means that many werewolves can only use this style in Dalu form. It's possible to use it in Gauru, but focusing enough to do so requires a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll each turn.

This Fighting Style makes heavy use of the grappling rules found on p. 157 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

• **Leg Lock-Out:** *Dar-U*s learned early on that the massive leg strength of the Dalu form could be used to immobilize a target. This requires a successful grapple roll. Once grappled, the victim suffers an additional penalty to break the grapple equal to the werewolf's Brawl rating.

•• **Bone-Breaking Grip:** By grabbing a limb, the werewolf can not only shatter the bone, but also hold it in place and grind the fragments together. Any damage from an overpower maneuver is considered lethal, and all wound penalties are doubled. In addition, healing times for any wounds thus inflicted are *tripled* (this does not apply to magical healing or regeneration).

••• **Shape-change Prevention:** This maneuver is most useful on werewolves, and requires that the character achieve a grapple while the target is in Hishu or Urhan form. Once the grapple is in place, the target applies the werewolf's Brawl rating as a penalty to escape, as described for Leg Lock-Out. But if the roll to escape the grapple *fails*, the target suffers lethal damage equal to the werewolf's Strength. This also occurs if the character attempts to shapeshift out of the grapple.

•••• **Neck Snap:** The maneuver that made Darius' reputation, this vicious technique allows the character to murder another person by twisting his neck until it breaks. Once the victim is grappled, any overpower damage is considered *aggravated*. **Drawback:** This is an extremely vicious way to fight. Any degeneration checks made as a result of this maneuver subtract one die.



# THE CLEANSING FLAME: REVEREND EWAN M. OGILVY

LET THE WATERS CLEANSE THE TAINT OF THE WHORE-BITCH LUNA.  
CAN I GET A HALLELUJAH? CAN I GET AN AMEN?

**Aliases:** The Revivalist, The False Prophet

## BACKGROUND

Ewan M. Ogilvy was born in America, son of a Scottish immigrant and an American mother. During his childhood, his family moved around a lot and, even at the tender age of five, Ewan got the idea his father was running away from something. Partially as a result of the constant relocation, Ewan had difficulty making friends with other children his own age and frequently got into fights. It was while his family was staying at a house owned by a cousin in Chicago that the thing Ewan's father was running from finally caught up with him. He remembers the howls that announced his *true* family's entrance and the blood that spattered on the walls as his parents were torn to pieces by the rampaging werewolves that burst through the doors and windows.

Traumatized by the violent deaths of his parents, Ewan doesn't remember much of the following month. The next thing he remembers is being deposited in a small town named Foothill in the care of a family named McEvers. With as much kindness as they could muster, the McEverses explained to Ewan that he was a special child, and now he was among his own kind. Eventually Ewan came to understand and embrace his unique heritage, accepting the role Father Wolf had for his life. His new family clothed him, educated him, and when the time came for his First Change, it would be among other werewolves ready to guide him.

Eventually Ewan yearned to see the outside world again and when he left Foothill, he did so with the McEverses' blessings and with other children of the clan. The new pack, called Children of the Father, wandered aimlessly for a time until they happened upon a Christian revival in the Deep South. Of course, the "healing" performed was a sham and the so-called Christians had set up the thing to milk the yokels out of their greenbacks, but all the same, Ewan was impressed with the scheme. He saw the potential of using a traveling revival as both a cover for the activities of the pack and for generating

money. A mail-in form later, and Ewan was now the Reverend Ewan M. Ogilvy.

The pack started out small, with little more than a shabby, secondhand tent and a couple of pickup trucks. As the popularity of their act (which is how they refer to the traveling show, in private) increased, more money made its way into the collection tins, and before too long, the pack became able to afford multiple high-quality tents, an impressive sound system and more comfortable accommodations in the form of recreational vehicles. Big-screen televisions project Ewan's image to give folks in the cheap seats a better view of the performance, complete with closed captioning for the hearing impaired. As the revival grew, it became necessary for the werewolves to hire help to assist them in running things. Not thrilled with the idea of roaming the country with a flock of sheep in tow, Ewan sent word back to Foothill and to other Pure communities, asking for wolf-blooded volunteers, and he was rewarded with more workers than he had a need for. Not every wolf-blooded human takes to life on the road, so the population of Ewan's workforce fluctuates. Those who remain, however, are absolutely dedicated to Ewan and, to a lesser extent, the pack as a whole. In return for their generosity, Ewan sometimes sends new wolf-blooded children he comes across (see below) to Pure communities that have sent their own children to him.

Not only is Ewan a brilliant and captivating speaker, but his sermons seem more interesting than the ordinary Christian spiel. His words appeal to people (humans included) on an almost instinctual level as he talks about the righteousness of the good son and the wickedness of those who betray their own kind. The way he describes the Crucifixion might lead some listeners to believe that the Romans hunted down Jesus and killed Him not because He was a rabble-rouser, but because they wanted to steal His powers for themselves. Ewan stresses duty, honor and purity and denounces the perfidy of treacherous, lying curs who seek to exalt themselves over their creator. He exhorts his congregations to watch their brothers and sisters for signs they've been touched by the twin evils of



disobedience and hubris. By the end of his particularly fiery performances, Ewan gets the crowd eyeing each other with suspicion, after which it's all too easy for him to direct that suspicion toward specific targets.

## DESCRIPTION

Ewan is tall, with black hair and a fair complexion. Interested members of both sexes find him interesting, handsome and well spoken. Though he's adopted the rolling speech patterns of a Pentecostal fire-and-brimstone orator, the early influences of his father's Scottish heritage flavor his words, here and there. Ewan has become so comfortable in his role as Reverend that he fits the collar just as well as any other religious man. For that matter, his own deep, personal beliefs in the Fire-Touched dogma taught to him as a child makes him something of an actual holy man among his own kind. When he takes the form of a wolf, Ewan has shaggy, black fur highlighted with hints of white.

## CHILDREN OF THE FATHER

The pack numbers seven werewolves. Below are those members with whom characters are likely to come in contact. Each pack member is listed first with their human name and then with their deed name in parenthesis.

- **Emily (Rabid Sister)** plays at being the secretary and personal assistant to Ewan when he's acting the part of traveling revivalist. Her mousy brown hair, plump figure and quiet demeanor have the effect of making most people underestimate her. In truth, no one is more dedicated to Ewan than she is, and she would gratefully lay down her life for him and Father Wolf.

- **George (Defies the Moon)** is even shorter than Emily and has a baby face that makes him look far younger than his actual age. George often plays the part of a sick man who is miraculously healed by Ewan as part of the performance. Outside the tent, George is good at getting into places unseen and acts as scout for the pack.

- **Landon (Walks with Fury)** acts as security for both aspects of the pack. He also helps with setup and vets the crowd for people of "special interest" (the rich, Uratha or wolf-blooded) to bring to Ewan after the general performance, for a little face time. Landon is large and brawny, with a shiny bald head and cold green eyes.

## SECRETS

Ewan believes that his abduction as a child was the best thing that ever happened to him, and part of his goal for the traveling revival show is to free other wolf-blooded children who are being held "captive" by their human



parents. Landon has the uncanny ability to pick out the wolf-blooded children who come to the show, and George has a proven track record of recovering the children from their homes. Of course the children are upset at first — as was Ewan — but he knows that the warm embrace of the Fire-Touched in Foothill (or other Pure communities) will soon make them forget their mundane life and embrace their future as one of Father Wolf's chosen people. He still has nightmares, though. In them, he sees his father's head bouncing across cheap linoleum and hears his mother's screams cut short. For this reason, he has forbidden the killing of parents of the wolf-blooded children, even when they get in the way. In actuality, this has become a ban for Ewan as a result of his lowered Harmony. He may not kill or assist in the killing of any human parent.

No member of the pack doubts that the Forsaken are descendants of murderous curs, but violence is their last resort when dealing with unfriendly visits from their kin. Ewan maintains a steadfast determination that all werewolves can be redeemed from their sinful past, and he aims to convert as many as possible. Forsaken that come to the pack with murder in their hearts are given one chance to turn away from their dark path, but only one. Those who come seeking redemption end up in front of Ewan to receive his blessing. With their sins forgiven, the pack escorts their new brother to the banks of the nearest river or stream, where Ewan performs the baptismal rite that washes away the marks of Bitch Luna to be reborn in the service of Father Wolf and Rabid Wolf. Ewan makes sure word of the pack's ceremonies doesn't spread too far. Nothing would piss off the illegitimate children of Father Wolf quite so much as the knowledge of how easily the whore Luna's stains can be washed clean.

As an adult, Ewan has done some digging into his parents' history. He found that he was the descendant of the bastard of an actual Anglican minister, and that his father hunted the People. As close as he can determine, his father met his mother after he rescued her from a pack that had sniffed out she was wolf-blooded. The surviving members of that pack were the ones who, in turn, rescued him from his birth parents and brought him back to Foothill to be raised. Ewan has also found a few hints that he's not the sole remaining scion of his family, and that the group his father belonged to is still around. The only reference he's been able to find to this mysterious group is a single mention of an "abbey" in one of his father's letters.

## RUMORS

*"You hear about the religious crazies that came through town? They set up in the boondocks next to the river and spent about a week healing the sick and preaching the Word. Also conned folks out of a good chunk of cash, from what I hear. That was the same week little Bobby Coltraine went missing."*

People, especially police, aren't always as dumb as we might be afraid they are. It doesn't take a whole lot of conjecture to come up with a connection between the pass-

ing revival show and missing children, especially when that pattern repeats itself. After a couple of visits by suspicious cops, and one by an even more suspicious FBI man, Ewan has learned to cover his tracks after a kidnapping. The children are only brought back to the tents for a short time before one of the pack locks them in a trunk and heads off for Foothill.

*"I hear the Fire-Touched have themselves a preacher-man. You find him, you make sure to kill him quick and don't let him put you in the water. He's got some deal with a river-spirit. Don't know what, but it's bad mojo for our kind."*

Even with their precautions, some rumor about Ewan's baptismal rites is bound to leak out sooner or later. A pack that learns that Ewan can, no shit, simply wash away spirit brands might just get angry enough to round up a hunt that could put an end to his preaching for good. Of course, a river-spirit has nothing to do with it, but that doesn't mean it won't end up as a false lead.

## STORY HOOKS

- Your sister is into religion in a big way. Every card she sends you has handwritten lines at the bottom quoting scripture or advising you to seek out Jesus. She took your nephew to a revival that passed through town, and the very next week, your nephew went missing. Now she's in a mental institution and under suspicion of murdering her boy. She told the police some story about how a man of God came to her and told her to give the child to his keeping, but they couldn't find any proof. You don't think your sister could kill anyone, least of all her own son. You believe her story, which means that not only did someone swipe your nephew, but you're pretty sure the boy is wolf-blooded as well.
- The local river-spirit's gone crazy. Drowning folks left and right, washing up over the banks with hungry, gurgling howls echoing through the Shadow. Pack investigates, but it turns out that something made that spirit crazy. In the Shadow, the werewolves can see strips of skin with Luna's spirit brands floating on the blood-slick surface. The river-spirit can tell them what happened, if they can calm it down long enough.
- You chased a lone wolf squatter out of your territory a few months back. Of course you felt sorry for the guy, but everyone has to play by the rules. He came back and attacked one of your packmates, nearly frothing at the mouth about the word of Father Wolf and how Rabid Wolf remembers his father with honor. So you tracked him down and had to kill him when he wouldn't surrender. His naked body had these odd splotches on it where you're pretty sure there used to be spirit brands. In his backpack, you found a brand new bible that listed the giver as a Rev. Ogilvy.



**REV. EWAN M. OGILLY****Tribe:** Fire-Touched**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2 (3/5/4/3), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 5 (4/5/2/5), Composure 2**Mental Skills:** Academics (Religion) 4, Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Occult (Uratha) 4**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Firearms (Shotgun) 4, Stealth 3**Social Skills:** Empathy (Cold Read) 3, Expression (Oration) 5, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Con) 4, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 4**Merits:** Danger Sense, Eidetic Memory, Fame 1, Inspiring, Resources 3**Willpower:** 6**Harmony:** 4**Virtue:** Faith. Ewan has a firm belief in the righteousness of his work and his cause.**Vice:** Greed. Of course, he also enjoys the creature comforts that come from an increased cash flow.**Initiative:** 4**Defense:** 2**Speed:** 9**Health:** 7**Primal Urge:** 4**Renown:** Cunning 3, Purity 5, Wisdom 3**Gifts:** (1) Know Name, Two-World Eyes; (2) Read Spirit; (3) Voice of Command; (4) Soul Read; (5) Communion with the Land**Rituals:** 3; **Rites:** (1) Funeral Rite, Rite of Dedication; (3) Rite of Initiation**Essence/Turn:** 13/2**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Shotgun	4(L)	20/40/80	11	9 again

**Supernatural Powers**

- **Baptismal Rite:** As part of his plan to reform his errant brothers, Ewan has discovered a way to wash away Luna's marks. The rite must be performed while the new dedicant lies at least partially submerged in the flow of a river or stream. Ewan believes the water washes away the stains of Luna and reflects her face, blinding her to the

rite with her own light. A wolf must be a *willing* participant in the ritual in order for it to work with no tricks or Gifts used to cloud their judgment. Ewan must succeed on an extended Resolve + Occult + Primal Urge roll, which must accumulate three successes for each spirit brand to be erased. Each roll is equal to five minutes.

- **Rabid:** There are times when an infection runs so deep it must be burned out to cleanse the whole body. Forsaken who cross the Children of the Father and live to tell the tale soon find that Ewan hasn't forgotten them when Rabid Wolf stalks their dreams and pestilence strikes down their pack. Using this Gift, Ewan can spend a point of Essence to infect a werewolf (and only a werewolf) with a virulent disease by simply touching them (which requires a Dexterity + Brawl roll, ignoring Armor but not Defense).

Each day a character is sick with the disease, he suffers a cumulative -1 penalty (maximum of -5) to any roll to resist Intimidation, Persuasion or Expression Skill rolls made to convince them of the righteousness of Rabid Wolf's cause. The disease also makes werewolves even more surly than usual, as it eats away at body and mind. The same penalty applies to any Social Skill roll (excepting Intimidation). As a blessing from Rabid Wolf, Fire-Touched are immune to the disease, and Ewan can end the sickness with a touch.

The sickness can eventually be overcome by gaining 20 successes on an extended Resolve + Stamina roll. Victims may check to overcome the sickness once each day.

- **Inspire Martyr:** Nothing riles up a crowd like a good speech. Ewan is a powerful, gifted speaker who can turn his talents toward inspiring both human and Uratha alike. By spending a point of Essence, Ewan can attempt to inspire his packmates to fight even when their bodies or minds should have acquiesced. Roll Presence + Persuasion + Primal Urge. For each success gained, the Children of the Father can ignore wound penalties for one turn and are immune to the flight aspect of Death Rage. Turned on a crowd of humans (like the ones he's just been preaching to), Ewan can incite a riot that targets enemies as the minions of Satan. Used in this manner, Ewan can turn up to 10 humans per success against any target he chooses for one scene. Humans controlled in this manner ignore the fear-inducing aspects of Lunacy.

# THE CHAT ROOM STALKER: GATHERER WOLF

**LUCKYBUDDY41:** HEY, DO YOU LIKE SCAVENGER HUNTS?  
I THINK YOU ARE GOING TO LIKE THIS :)

**Aliases:** Chat Room Stalker, Sam Patterson, Secret-friend55, Giftgiver80, Bestfriend88, Luckybuddy41, Treasure-Hunter91, Kal Stringham

## BACKGROUND

He finds them through careful and methodical research. He studies everything about them — where they live, where they go to school, the amount of family and neighbors around at any time of day, their bus routes and extracurricular activities. He promises them something they want, presenting it as a contest of sorts. Once they've taken the bait, the reward is...salvation.

Over 2,000 children are reported missing each day, and only half are ever recovered. Most times, they don't catch the kidnapers, which means they won't catch Kal Stringham or figure out the connection between the children he's abducted. While the media has attributed several of his kidnappings (and at least one that wasn't) to the so-called Chat Room Stalker, this is — in his opinion — an ugly and erroneous conclusion for them to draw, for there is no malicious or perverse or murderous intent at work. *These children are being saved!* To the Pure Tribes, Kal "Gatherer Wolf" Stringham is a werewolf who is going to great lengths to secure the future of the Pure, and he has earned more than just the respect of his own pack. These children he "rescues" are the wolf-blooded kin of the Forsaken, and they must be collected before they are corrupted by the lies of Luna.

Just outside the suburban boundaries of Salt Lake City exist towns where folks mostly keep to themselves. Collectives and large families are not uncommon, so a dozen children in one house rarely cause locals to bat an eye. This is where Kal keeps his abductees. Frightened and lonely, the children bond with the others quickly. Some of the kids are recent converts, while the others are the children of three of the four "aunts" there who are Gatherer Wolf's wolf-blooded mates. The wolf-blooded nannies and teachers (whose tempers around a brood of troubled kids can be a tad more patient) are fully aware that they serve werewolves. The fourth woman is a packmate who acts as the enforcer and disciplinarian of the bunch (not to mention a hunter who puts food on the table). Being out in the middle of nowhere, the group keeps a low profile, and all traces of the outside world, such as TV, are accessible only to the adults. Land ownership,

Internet auction income and Kal's family history and genealogy services provide enough income for them to get by.

Gatherer Wolf has acquired a stunning amount of Renown for his deeds; frequently, the many Pure who have heard of or benefitted from his great work ask the question *how does he manage to remain undetected from the eyes of lawmen and his enemy?* This is a trade secret, a machination he will take to his grave, because he knows it's impossible to follow a beast's tracks if they don't exist. He is careful, meticulous, a brand of cunning built on clockwork precision and savant attention to detail. His pack has made powerful allies with the Shadow, and his tribute to them overflows and spills out like a river on their insubstantial feet.

The ideal candidate is a wolf-blooded child eight years old or less living in a single parent or absentee parent situation — any older and they're more likely to try and find their way back. Plus, too much supervision causes further complication. Kal volunteers once a week at the Mormon Family History Library in Salt Lake, where he researches suspected bloodlines. He then consults with other werewolves in the know, or through supernatural favors, whether or not the child in question is a wolf-blood. When he's selected his target, his next step is contact. As it has to be inconspicuous, he uses anonymous means, such as chat rooms, social networking sites or online games, to contact them, often posing as another child. Once he's gained the child's trust, he offers them a prize of their request if they can follow his clues to a "treasure." When they do, Gatherer Wolf is waiting for them, and in a matter of seconds, he has pulled them into the other side. Unlike a man, Gatherer Wolf does not make his getaway with vehicles — he plans a careful escape back through the Shadow, using his Gifts so that no smell or trace of his presence is left at the spot of the abduction. It has proven successful.

Even given their lineage, most of the kids Gatherer Wolf brings back through the Shadow leave it in a state of shock. Something has happened to their parents, and this new family is going to take care of them, or so they're told. Thus begins a long process of brainwashing them to the cause of the Pure.

Kal raises them on biblical-themed stories, using subtle metaphors and parables about the Forsaken, tales of sinners and false idols that threaten to unmake the world with their wickedness. Once they are in their teens, it's not uncommon for Gatherer Wolf to present one of his children to another pack or establish them in one of the Pure's breeding colonies. These actions are



why the leaders of the Pure revere him, and why he balances his good work with a great weight of self-importance; Gatherer Wolf is securing the next generation of soldiers in the righteous war. Each abduction sends shivers down the spine of every parent, gifting the pack's totem with the great tribute promised. Kal knows that media frenzies will wane, just like the police investigations. As long as he's careful, he'll never be caught.

## DESCRIPTION

Kal enjoys the hunt...it's not so much the slaving, bare-fanged chase after a panting, terror-stricken quarry through the woods as the pursuit of information, the stalking of his prey under the noses of his enemy, and the knowledge that for every catch, he is wounding his enemies in ways the most gut-wrenching tortures cannot. And he is doing it all for the cause — all praise aside, his dedication is making a difference. For every wolf-blood he secures, he has a chance to indoctrinate them from a young age, investing them with a heightened sense of purpose. Gatherer Wolf does not bully the young converts into submission — he's even-tempered for a werewolf, and he treats his adopted children with the same affection he shows his genuine offspring. He knows he must instruct these children to go through the First Change prepared for the challenges and the glory that come with being Pure. Those children who do not grow up to become werewolves still serve their new extended family as breeding stock, encouraged to be fruitful and ever loyal to the cause. Instilling the values of the Pure is so much easier when they are still malleable, uncorrupted, *young*.

However brave he may be in entering his enemy's territory, he only does so because his totem helps him obfuscate his presence. Kal likes to be one step ahead of everyone — to be in control. He doesn't like surprises, and when he's nervous, he tends to run. Not only does he not enjoy being pressed, but when it comes to physical confrontations, he's quite cowardly. He prefers to use cunning over brutality, and because of his reliance on wits, he's surrounded himself with loyal packmates who aren't afraid to get their claws wet. His pack is strong, and he's also gained the favors of quite a few of the surrounding Pure werewolves, which keeps him overly confident.

Kal spends some of his time in the community and doing research in Salt Lake City. So that he blends in with the locals, he dresses conservatively, always keeping his face clean-shaven and his light brown hair trimmed and combed back neatly, like a politician. As with other members of his tribe, he keeps his rage in check, rarely raising his voice and keeping a humble smile on his face most of the time. One might think he's a missionary or a local representative of the National Small Business Association. He's uncomfortable in large groups of strangers — for example, he might wait for the next elevator if there's more than one person inside. In his wolf form, he sports a white ring of fur around his neck, which can be spotted on all but his Dalu and human form. When running with his pack, he keeps to the front unless facing a dangerous situation, where he's likely to "inspire" and "strategize" from the back.

## SECRETS

Kal's been kidnapping wolf-blooded children for over 10 years. It goes without saying that not only do quite a few Pure

leaders know who he is, but some Pure out there might have been raised by him. One or two may have figured out the truth and have harbored a grudge against him all these years. At least one werewolf out there is dealing with his or her anger over this, but at the same time feels conflicted or scared of the consequences for betraying the Pure. Then again, some might come back to him and worship him, thinking of Gatherer Wolf as a kind of father, or at least some twisted Svengali figure.

Additionally, spirits that have heard of or witnessed the abductions (Gatherer Wolf *does* move through the Shadow, after all) know how he's doing it. Now, most don't want anything to do with the Forsaken, but for a hefty boon or a lifetime of small favors, they may point a pack of werewolves in the right direction. Then again, smart spirits will figure out that after they find the Pure, they're most likely not going to get their favors, and the assistance may come back to bite them in the ass.



The Chat Room Stalker: Gatherer Wolf



## RUMORS

*"I heard that when the Chat Room Stalker contacts you, blood drips down your screen because he is a ghost, and if you agree to meet him, it leads to his grave and he pulls you in!"*

### PACK TOTEM: WHISPERING PANIC

Gatherer Wolf and his pack are allied with a Greater Jagglng, a spirit that embodies panic. Their totem is quite demanding in its upkeep, but offers great Gifts and even its own aid in return. Unnervingly, it manifests itself as a swarm of whispers and sets of eyes that only appear in the very periphery of one's vision. Feeding on the panic of human beings, it requires both short bursts of panic and longer-term mass hysteria as tribute to continue benefitting from its blessing. The pack manages this with everything from ambushing lone hitchhikers as a pack of wolves, to slaughtering livestock in bizarre and gut-wrenching ways that fuel rumors of satanic cults, giant bears and even aliens. Of course, nothing benefits it as much as the panic created by a kidnapping-turned-cable news story of the week, which has made it a very reliable ally. It also leaves a panic residue in places its followers have been — a slight sensation of passing worry, like the feeling you're being watched, which, while slight, could give an advantage in tracking a werewolf who has employed its gifts.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 10, Finesse 10, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 16

**Essence:** max 25

**Defense:** 10

**Speed:** 25

**Size:** 3

**Corpus:** 9

**Influences:** Fear 4

**Numina:** Blast, Chorus, Harrow

**Bonuses:** +5 Stealth (given), 10 Essence, 3 Willpower

**Ban:** The actual spilled blood of a wolf-blooded character repels and burns the totem.

The totem also possesses the following Numen, and will use it on behalf of the pack:

**Invoke Panic:** Roll the spirit's Power + Finesse and spend one point of Essence. Anyone within 100 yards of the totem must roll Resolve + Composure in a contested roll against the totem's successes. Failure indicates that the victim flees. Success means they can continue to remain in the area.

### PACK

- **Jesse "Bear Trap" Kern:** For those who get out of line, Kal lets his packmate, "Aunt Jesse," put the fear of disobedience into them. She earned the name "Bear Trap" for her deceptive ferocity. While most of the time, she is content to lie about the house, when it's time to fight, hunt or put some old-time fear into an unruly youngster, she becomes an engine of fury that no werewolf, wolf-blood or man would want visited upon them. She supplies the family with fresh meat from her nocturnal forays into the local wilderness, but offers little in the way of monetary assistance or rearing, painting her as lazy to human eyes. As for pack matters, she is the fiercest soldier of the bunch, and the other werewolves give her a wide berth when she's in a foul mood.

- **Clay "Gut Check" Larson:** When the occasional escape happens, Kal's pack goes on the hunt, and most of the folks in the area know better than to cross Kal Stringham and his friends, especially if Clay Larson comes knocking. Larson owns a local bar and truck stop that is notorious for shady dealings and unsavory-looking individuals. Of course, this is because the roughest of the bunch are Pure werewolves, and Clay's place has hosted everything from informal get-togethers to mediations between packs. Gut Check gained his name from an almost instinctive ability to know when there's something not quite right in his pack's territory, and his intuition is very rarely wrong.

This Internet urban legend is supernatural in nature, but is based on a misdirection tactic. Kal registers his screen names to people he has found in newspaper obituaries; he knows the police will follow up, and this tactic buys him some time. The Chat Room Stalker's legend has grown into that of a paranormal murderer on the message boards, which might buy into that. The rumors speak little truth, but the werewolves would be wise to find the chat logs or police info that will lead them to the abduction site. They should all feel a momentary sensation of "panic," and astute werewolves might even sense that the feeling is emanating from the other side of the Shadow, too. This rumor should also start to fuel the idea that the supernatural is involved, but not that a werewolf or the Pure are behind it. This fact should also make the pack consider the chance that the child has already met a grim fate, and therefore there is no hope in looking for them.

*"A pack of Uratha was passing through here, looking for a missing child a few years ago. They were headed toward Salt Lake; that I do remember. Our pack didn't think it was worth getting involved, so we wished them luck and escorted them to our border. A couple of days later, this box shows up near our locus, and inside was a big old "god's eye," but made from innards, not from yarn. Since then, we don't suggest anyone go in that direction anymore."*

This is not the first time a pack has gone in search of their missing child, and *they* didn't have all the pieces, either. Obviously, things did not end well. An unknown powerful force is involved — this might contradict evidence that a werewolf was responsible, but it definitely emphasizes the fact that danger is involved, even for a werewolf pack. Still, if the stakes are getting higher, the pack must be on the right path.

There may be myriad rumors about supernatural creatures in that region that could've been capable of destroying a pack, so this could be a good opportunity to throw in some new leads that might take them to interesting dead ends. Maybe there's an organized group of hunters in a nearby county, or a twisted mage who is rumored to use werewolf-blooded children in his rituals. At least one of these dead ends should have information on the other supernatural powers in the area, ultimately leading to the Pure.

*"I know who has your child... a leader with a pack a hundred strong, and I would gladly point you in his direction — they'll fucking destroy you."*

If the Forsaken should happen to get their hands on a Pure werewolf, some have heard stories related to Gatherer Wolf, but they've been a bit exaggerated. Some of them actually believe he's breeding werewolves by the thousands, and that he's got a small army raised, ready to bring the final end to the Forsaken. Gatherer Wolf does have a lot of contacts amongst the leaders of the Pure, but his pack consists of eight members. These odds are still stacked against the Forsaken, but now they know the Pure are involved and have a vague idea of where to find their child.

### GATHERER WOLF

**Tribe:** Ivory Claws

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

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

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3 (2/3/0/3), Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Research) 4, Computer (Internet Searches) 3, Crafts 2, Investigation (Police Procedure) 4, Politics 4, Occult (The Shadow) 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 2, Persuasion (Brainwashing) 4, Socialize 2, Subterfuge (Lying) 4

**Merits:** Allies (Pure Packs) 3, Common Sense, Direction Sense, Status (Pure) 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Harmony:** 6

**Virtue:** Charity. Gatherer Wolf has a lot to give both to the children and to the Pure. This is his gift.

**Vice:** Pride. And make no mistake, he thinks his gift is the most important any Pure has ever given.

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

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

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

**Health:** 6 (8/10/9/6)

**Primal Urge:** 2

**Renown:** Cunning 3, Glory 2, Purity 3, Wisdom 2

**Gifts:** (1) Wolf-Blood's Lure, Speak with Beasts, Feet of Mist; (2) Father Wolf's Speed, Blending; (3) Running Shadow

**Essence/per Turn:** 11/1

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Hunting Rifle	5	200/400/800	9
9MM Pistol	2	20/40/80	6

### STORY HOOKS

- A werewolf's temper is already bad to begin with, but when the werewolf's spouse or ex-spouse or the child's caretaker breaks the news that her child is missing? Can she control her temper? Does she blame them? Does this destroy that relationship or, worse, does the werewolf do something horrible in response? Once the werewolf decides to look for the child, how does the pack respond — are they willing to start calling in precious favors from neighboring packs, spirits and other contacts for a leave of absence that might take weeks or longer?

- A cat-spirit not only saw Gatherer Wolf escape with the werewolf's child, but followed it for some distance. Now that it has something the Forsaken wants, it is playfully flippant about the details, holding its knowledge ransom for favors from the pack, including fetching it fresh cream, sharing Essence with it and helping it become a greater spirit by weakening its enemies. After a while, other spirits come forward to offer up information for their own small favors. Some of these are obviously lying, and some might genuinely know something. How does the pack get what it wants without killing off or scaring away the helpful spirits? When the pack members do start hearing the stories of where the child was taken, how do they sort out the legit stories from the nonsense?

- The pack hears a rumor of police finding a van full of children on Route 80. All of them had weird markings of shit, blood and ash covering their bodies from head to toe. This seems to be connected to the Gatherer Wolf business, but for the pack to find out, they're going to have to talk to the children who have already been taken into police custody. This might be a false lead, or just possibly, the pack might run into a Pure who's investigating Gatherer Wolf's methods and doesn't know it isn't his handiwork.

# TWISTED MIRROR: KAT BROKENSOU

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, BUT IT ISN'T ME.

**Aliases:** Katherine Anne Blake, Anne Katherine Blake

## BACKGROUND

The worst monsters are the ones from which you cannot run. A werewolf attacks a man late at night, while her human side smiles for an audience of hundreds across town. Her prey slams and bolts a door only to see his hunter already standing on the other side of it. Some werewolves suspect trickery, while some turn to the Shadow for an answer, when it's staring them in the face all along: the old magician's trick of being in two places at once.

Katherine Anne Blake and her identical twin sister, Anne Katherine Blake, stopped being two people years ago. Now there's just one of them, sharing two bodies as the perfect hunter.

## HISTORY REVISED

As far as Katherine Blake remembers, she and her sister were born to an old-money family in Connecticut and treated to all that life had to offer them. Even at a young age, both twins were very close. They shared books, clothes and friends. On their eighth birthday, Katherine and Anne convinced their friends that each was the other. The two carried on pretending to live each other's lives. Though they fooled teachers and even their mother, on one occasion, their father always knew who was who. Her mother wanted Katherine and Anne to find nice husbands, but their father saw the potential in his daughters. He paid Katherine's way through law school and both twins had the chance to be one person in the system. One day she forgot her new boyfriend's face; another time she couldn't answer the same question the same way two days running. That didn't stop them graduating. Their father arranged a job for Katherine at the bottom of the pile in an old friend's firm.

The twins' father didn't hide his ambition: he saw his daughters working as one as the best way to prey on the weak, and they agreed wholeheartedly. He taught them to be a predator, and between them, they learned to think as just one person. Returning home in the evening, he would indoctrinate his daughters in the truth — that they were born to greatness, and that others would do anything to hold them back. Katherine's father did his best to prepare her for the family secret: that he bore the blood and spirit of the Tzumfin, the Ivory Claws. On their 25th birthday, Katherine and Anne saw their father twist and contort

into a monster before their eyes. Scared beyond belief, they ran. Their father brought the pair down like dogs. Falling to the floor, something flared within each twin's heart. They both changed that day, and saw how their father had helped them in a new light.

Indoctrinated by their father, the two werewolves who would be known as Kat Brokensoul never questioned their heritage: Uratha of the Ivory Claws, the true ruling class. They didn't give up their position in the law firm. Instead, each sister in turn put her sharpened senses and refined instincts to good use as tools to help her hunt her way to the top of the pack. While one worked in the office, the other could use her enhanced senses and spiritual connections to influence her rivals. Though neither sister killed anyone in the course of earning a promotion, three instances of Lunacy, two bound spirits and one moment of bloody violence over three years saw the twins rocket up the corporate ladder. Being a werewolf ultimately just expanded the range of tools she could use to further her own ends.

For those three years, the sisters ran without other packmates. In that time, they discovered a forbidden rite that allowed the pair to grow even closer. By sharing a fragment of their spirit, the twins could share their scent at any time, making them all the more one person in two bodies. At the end of those three years, the two had blurred into one. Kat had two bodies, but one mind. They stopped thinking of themselves as discrete entities, and became one. Knowing that their edge demanded incredible secrecy — something they had insisted on from the start — the twins would only refer to themselves in the singular, using only the name Kat Brokensoul.

## A PACK OF TWO

Three years after her First Change, Kat joined a pack with another werewolf. Her father, though instrumental in preparing her for her new life, had become a burden, and she yearned to escape his influence. Mitch Lanning soon became the only other werewolf to earn her trust. They took the Watching Eagle as their totem, and set about claiming and holding territory from packs of local Forsaken. Around this time, rumors spread among the Urdaga of an Ivory Claw who could spend a whole day hunting a pack of Forsaken, and yet still had time to approve the demolition of key buildings in the pack's territory.



The Bloody Forest pack tells of a time when Kat Brokensoul started hunting them from within her own territory, and yet was waiting for them on the other side of their hunting grounds, even though they'd used the secret paths to cross their protectorate faster than anyone should be able to. Other packs tried talking, and even managed to get a brief reprieve — though never a truce — with the Pure. Unfortunately, the deals never lasted. At some point, Kat would make her move. Sometimes, she'd hunt them. Other times, she bent spirits to her whim. Occasionally, she used her position or her packmate as a weapon. At least twice, she applied pressure by screwing the right man on the city council. Soon, the local Forsaken got the measure of her, and they were worried.

While Mitch could understand her strange personality shifts, other Ivory Claws couldn't abide Kat's secrecy. Her father's blessing could only last for so long; her tribe demanded an explanation. She didn't offer any, and that incensed the other Tzuumfin. They demanded the truth, and one night, she told them. On that same night, she bound them to secrecy. They swore an oath in front of powerful spirits that each werewolf would take her secret to their grave rather than let on what they knew. Those few captured by Forsaken werewolves have never told what they know, and even other Anshega have learned nothing about her secret. Those who know the truth are those bound in front of the spirits on that fateful night, and nobody else.

### THE NEW OLD FIRM

Sickened by what she saw as a lack of success against local packs of Forsaken, Kat realized her initial plan wasn't working.



While she'd formed a pack with Mitch Lanning out of convenience, they'd grown closer over time — in the end, as with many small packs, they shared everything with each other. Unfortunately, everything wasn't enough.

With her secret loose among the Tzuumfin, Kat reassessed her priorities. Her pack had to be more than a simple tool; it had to be a machine. With a good pack, she could strike at the Forsaken who dared hold territory close to her own. While eradicating those werewolves would be nice, it would also draw too much attention. Better, then, that she drive Luna's whelps away. That way, other packs of true werewolves — true Uratha — could take that territory for themselves. She could establish a broad area under the control of the Pure Tribes, and then forge them together to eradicate the local Forsaken.

Kat Brokensoul was never one to set small targets. She barely talked it over with Mitch. The twins knew what they were going to do, and they made sure he agreed. Nobody knows what Watching Eagle thought of their decision, but the spirit had no place in their new pack. Gathering not just Ivory Claws but other Pure besides, they set out to build a new pack, using all the lessons Kat had learned working in a law firm. Again, she was the pack's alpha — none of the others was mad enough to challenge her. She considered keeping her secret from everyone but Mitch again. In the end, she realized that an inner cabal, a pack within a pack,

would pose too much trouble. Instead, the twins bound the newcomers in the same manner as they had other Ivory Claws, making her packmates swear binding spirit oaths to protect her true identity.

This pack, the Old Firm, is only six months old. In that time, Kat Brokensoul has gone from a rumor, to an occasional thorn in the Forsaken's side, to an active threat to the Forsaken in the area. Already she's driven one pack from their territory. Every time Urdaga gather, they fret over who will become her next target. She's probing a number of local packs, checking out their weak points and making decisions as to whom she will eradicate next.

## DESCRIPTION

Kat Brokensoul is an ice queen. She doesn't let anyone get too close; even her own pack remains at arm's length. By remaining detached, she doesn't let anything get under her skin, and that keeps her Rage from clouding her vision. As a wolf in sheep's clothing, she can't let the power within get in the way of her judgment and disrupt her plans. In her offices at the law firm, she can't help but condescend to just about everyone. People who don't know better put it down to her family and upbringing, but they're only half right. It's her true nature shining through. She enjoys letting the monkeys think she's on the same level as them. They'll never know how superior she is, and that thrills her. She doesn't get the same feeling from tormenting Forsaken werewolves, given that the beasts know just how far she is above them. Other Anshega don't suffer her ire, but she expects them to bow to her superior knowledge. The only thing stopping them turning on her is how often she is right.

People who deal with her notice some oddities in her behavior. She occasionally forgets small details, especially incidental things that later become important. Some put her memory troubles down to stress, insomnia or drug abuse — even though she's passed every drug test with flying colors and honestly enjoys both her work and her hunt. A few werewolves believe she's afflicted by a spiritual ban, but again they have no evidence to back their claims. Currently, it's little more than a quirk of her personality. Were she to forget more in future, her pack would surely do something about it. (Of course, neither is really "forgetting" anything — each remains unaware of 100% of the details known or experienced by the other twin.)

Both of the twins who are Katherine Blake are beautiful women. They take great pains to look exactly the same in their Hishu form: her brown hair falls to her chin, framing a face so perfect it looks almost sculpted. Both women dress to accentuate her figure, though they must wear exactly the same clothes and jewelry as each other. Usually, she prefers a tailored suit, but her wardrobe has outfits for all occasions. She's in control of her body language at all times, normally presenting an icy demeanor — though she's well aware of how much she can do by letting that slip for just a moment. The twins really

let their hair down when they change form, allowing body and mind to work in perfect harmony. They're both exceptionally well-bred timber wolves in Urhan form, with charcoal-gray fur and dark eyes.

## SECRETS

Most people know Kat Brokensoul as Katherine Anne Blake. Thanks to her father's influence, her twin sister ceased to exist on paper. The only proof remaining is their original birth certificate, a document their father

### THE OLD FIRM

After her decision to re-evaluate what she got out of a pack, Kat Brokensoul chose to found the Old Firm with herself as alpha. Rather than sticking to a traditional structure, every member strives to be an expert in one field. While Kat is definitely the pack's alpha, the others are expected to cede authority to the situational expert; a merit-based approach rare amongst Pure packs. Only Mitch shares the alpha's power of veto, and he uses it only when he honestly believes he's right. The Old Firm takes the Black Dog as totem.

- **Mitch Lanning:** The pack beta, Mitch is an Ivory Claw through and through. Born to a distinguished family name with no real assets, he learned of his heritage from an otherwise distant uncle. He's the pack's face, a smooth bastard with an understanding of what makes people tick and a predator's instinct for exploiting any weakness he finds. Given his relationship with Kat, Mitch shares her veto — but he knows she'd win if they ever crossed paths. Fortunately, that hasn't happened yet.

- **Pastor Gray:** Nobody's sure of the Pastor's real name. The rest of the Old Firm is pretty sure he bargained it away to a powerful spirit in exchange for a favor at some point yet to come. Pastor Gray is a Fire-Touched werewolf, though he eschews the fanaticism displayed by others of his tribe for a quiet fervor. In conversation, he leaves people unsure of whether he's dangerously insane or just suffering from a lot of spirit bans. He's an expert at dealing with spirits, and always seems to get more than he gives.

- **Desolation Jess:** Jessica Morgan, another Ivory Claw, provides the Old Firm's muscle. Brought up in a military family with four brothers, Jess had to learn to fight at an early age. That served her well when she underwent her Change, and gave her something to focus on in an otherwise crazy life. Though she acts as the pack's expert on physical force, she shares Kat's aptitude for seeing all kinds of assets as weapons — though Jess is a lot more likely to force a fight if she can, just for the hell of it.

guards with his life. Without it, he'd have no means to control his daughter if his brainwashing should ever fail.

While stage magicians and con artists both have used identical twins to be in two places at once, Kat's father realized that werewolves would believe in spiritual trickery before accepting the mundane answer. Now, both Anne and Katherine are Kat Brokensoul. When one takes Hishu form, the other takes a nonhuman form — at least until she has a use for being in two places at once. Through the Rite of Twin Skins, they confound werewolves who would track them by scent or the taste of blood.

The twins spend an hour each night updating each other on their activities, using a shared language that only the two of them understand. Though they can't share every single detail, they do a fine job after years of practice.

Both the Old Firm and the local Ivory Claw elders know the truth behind the twins, but they're bound to secrecy by powerful spiritual wards. Both werewolves bounce ideas off each other when they meet, refining plans faster than most people can follow thanks to their slightly different perspectives. Kat comes across as a shrewd planner and tactical thinker who can run rings around even a prepared pack of Forsaken.

### THE SACRED TWIN

It's possible that the two werewolves living Kat Brokensoul's life aren't even biological twins. Several animistic cultures hold to the idea of an individual giving up his or her identity to take on a sacred role. What if the Brokensoul was such a sacred mantle?

Certainly, only two people could take on the role at once. When one dies, the other must seek out a willing replacement. She then performs a secret ritual that re-shapes the other's body to look identical to her own. The new member of the partnership then learns that rite, so that the Brokensoul will continue. The rite will even transfer the totem bond onto the new half of the partnership.

### RUMORS

*"Watching Eagle never truly got over being dumped by a high-and-mighty racist bitch who never bothered to find out just how powerful he is. Rather than sit on it, the spirit rebelled, and now there's a pack of Forsaken with Watching Eagle as their totem and revenge in their hearts."*

When Kat Brokensoul dissolved her original pack, she didn't exactly treat Watching Eagle with respect. Most Anshega treat denizens of the Shadow well, if only so they'll have more allies against the Forsaken. Kat's mistake was a simple one: her old totem didn't like her

treating it as just another tool. Rather than brooding, Watching Eagle turned right around and offered patronage to a local pack of Forsaken werewolves. Anyone dealing with the Old Firm could do a lot worse than to track down that pack to commune with its totem.

*"The Brokensoul has a secret. Sure, lots of people know that, but nobody knows what it is. One man might talk, but he's both madly in love with her, and part of her pack. It'd take a lot of work to get anything out of him."*

One thing that Kat's never bargained on is a gap in her preparations. Local Ivory Claws and her packmates have both sworn powerful and binding spirit oaths, but one person hasn't: Mitch Lanning, her original packmate. Mitch is devoted to Kat in every way, thinking of her as a cross between sister and lover, but that bond isn't perfect. Torture wouldn't work, but a canny werewolf could use trickery or Gifts to dig out a morsel of the truth. Just doing that would involve him getting Lanning on his own without the Old Firm knowing — not an easy prospect.

*"I know a guy who knows a guy says some hotshot lawyer started chasing after him when he complained about her fee. The way he talks about it, it's almost like she turned into a monster. Of course, before he knows it, he's in her building's parking lot with the monster right behind him — and the lawyer standing right in front of him."*

Kat allows herself one indulgence: every year, she hunts one of the pathetic monkeys who beg her to help them. She chases them around the city until eventually they tire and fall prey to her claws. While this happens, her sister takes her place in the office. This time, she fucked up. Her prey doubled back on himself and ran back to her law firm, hoping that someone had called the cops. Kat's victim saw the woman who'd turned into the monster and the monster both standing next to each other. That broke his mind, and now he's telling his story to anyone willing to buy a shot of cheap whisky.

### KAT BROKENSOU

**Tribe:** Ivory Claw

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Law) 3, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Occult 2, Politics 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms 2, Larceny (Pickpocket) 1, Stealth 2

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Negotiation) 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Contacts (Legal) 1, Resources 3, Striking Looks 4, Totem 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Harmony:** 5 (obsessive-compulsive disorder)

**Virtue:** Prudence. The twins will use anyone for their own ends, no matter what the cost — they cast off their old to-



tem, and would happily sacrifice packmates and loved ones if they thought it'd get them a little more power.

**Vice:** Pride. Years of self-reinforcement have left Kat with the overpowering belief that she's better than just about everyone — better than mere humans, better than Forsaken and, with her two bodies, better even than other Ivory Claws.

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

**Defense:** 2 (in all forms)

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

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

**Primal Urge:** 3

**Renown:** Cunning 2, Honor 1, Purity 3, Wisdom 2

**Gifts:** (1) Feet of Mist, Loose Tongue, The Right Words, Warning Growl; (2) Blending, Luna's Dictum, Sand in the Eyes; (3) True Leader, Voice of Command

**Rituals:** 3; **Rites:** Cleansed Blood, Rite of Dedication, Rite of the Spirit Brand, Rite of Twin Skins, Sacred Hunt, Shared Scent

**Essence/per Turn:** 12/1

**\*Note:** Both Katherine and Anne have identical traits. To all intents and purposes, they are the same person, and their constant use of the Rite of Twin Skins has completely eroded any differences in personality between the two.

### RITE OF TWIN SKINS (•••)

This ritual was a pact originally made with denizens of the Shadow so that a werewolf could pass on a sacred role, giving up her individuality in order to take a recognized position in society or gain a measure of spiritual power. That practice has long since fallen from grace, and only a handful of werewolves remember fragments of the original rite.

Joining as Twin Skins, two werewolves become as one. The participants must both be werewolves, but they don't have to be blood relatives. The pair exchanges a small portion of their spirit. Using that bond, they can exchange scent at any time, and even communicate without words. The twinning process takes its toll — using the Rite repeatedly can destroy a werewolf's sense of individuality, binding him to the sacred role.

**Performing the Rite:** The ritemaster must be one of the participants. He paints identical complex designs on both participants, using ochre mixed with a drop of each werewolf's blood. The two then drum individual rhythms, howl and plead to the spirits, splitting hunks of meat in two to act as chiminage. As the rite goes on, the drumming synchronizes, and the two become one when the ritual ends.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (30 successes; each roll represents an hour)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The designs on both participants shift until they are a mirror image of each other. The participants are destined to become antagonistic forces in each other's lives.

**Failure:** The bond between the participants grows no stronger.

**Success:** The participants are brought closer. For the duration of a lunar month, both participants share a fragment of spirit. Either participant can swap her scent with the other by succeeding on a roll of Resolve + Primal Urge as an instant action. If the other does not wish to share her scent, she reflexively contests with her own Resolve + Primal Urge. This sharing of scent includes the small spiritual markers that go along with the scent, including the enhanced tracking abilities used by a werewolf tasting blood.

By spending a point of Essence, either participant can send his twin a short message — no more than five seconds — without speaking, again as an instant action.

Every time the same pair of werewolves undergoes the Rite of Twin Skins, the borders between the two break down a little further. They start acting similarly, taking on each other's personality traits. After using the rite a number of times equal to the lowest Willpower in the partnership, the pair both take the Vice of the character with the lower Willpower and the Virtue of the character with the higher Willpower.

**Exceptional Success:** As a success, but both sharing scent and communicating become reflexive actions.

#### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	Participants are blood relatives

### STORY HOOKS

- The Old Firm is expanding, and they've started to muscle in on the pack's territory. They're not coming under direct physical assault, but everything else is going wrong: spirits the pack have allied with start turning against them, citizen's action groups have started to focus on gang crime and the pack's base has just been scheduled for demolition to build a new expressway. Similar tactics have driven off two other packs so far, and it looks like the characters are next.
- There's a new pack of Forsaken in town, and they've got one thing in mind: smashing Broken-soul and her Old Firm. Under the patronage of Watching Eagle, they're out for revenge — and they're using the characters' territory as their base, without asking permission. The characters have got to work something out before the militant newcomers draw down the wrath of the Pure.
- Some things are bigger than the gap between Pure and Forsaken. A terrible threat — an idigam, perhaps (see p. 130) — has woken up and threatens every werewolf in the state. Kat Broken-soul would be a highly useful ally, a tactical genius with a talent for being in two places at the same time. Anyone allying with the Old Firm must be careful, however, lest the Pure use what they learn against the characters' pack.

# A BOY AND HIS DOG: LITTLE SHADOW

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET MY DOG, MISTER? HIS NAME IS BARAG-LUGAL.

**Aliases:** Mark Lee, the Ghost of Crescent Street, the Bottle Boy.

## BACKGROUND

Most among the People experience the First Change sometime after puberty and sometime before the infirmity of old age sets in. Generally, that's for the best. Children can't handle the mental and emotional trauma of becoming a moon-mad, half-spirit beast, and even a werewolf's legendary physical vigor can only do so much with a body ravaged by a lifetime of human frailty. By choosing those in their physical and emotional prime, Mother Luna ensures that her children are capable of performing the job set before them.

On the other hand, any Elodoch who has tried to negotiate with a Lune can tell you that Mother Luna is a certifiably insane bitch goddess, and her spirit-children are no different. Sometimes, whether by whim or unknowable divine plan or sheer madness, Luna reaches down to "bless" a *nuzusul* far younger than the norm. Mark Lee was the unfortunate result of one such whim. Three weeks after his 10th birthday, Mark began complaining to his parents that monsters were lurking outside his window at night. His parents, thinking this was just typical childhood anxiety rearing its heads, assured him there were no such things as monsters and thought nothing more of it. As the month wore on, and the moon progressed toward its crescent phase, Mark's fears became more tangible and, ultimately, damaging. When the boy woke up one morning with dozens of apparently self-inflicted scratch marks all over his body, his parents admitted him to a psychiatric hospital.

## THE MADHOUSE

What Mark's parents couldn't possibly have known was that this asylum was just about the worst place they could have put their child. Spirits of madness, fear and loneliness swarmed about the place, and those alien entities recognized a werewolf on the cusp of the Change and tormented Mark ceaselessly. The staff was little better, infested with sadists and power-junkies, to say nothing of Ridden orderlies and doctors with their own ideas on "treatment," which amounted to little more than torture.

In all likelihood, Mark would have died in that hospital had the Crescent Street Shadows, a Hunter in Darkness pack whose territory butted up against the asylum, recognized the spiritual disruptions around the boy and

## ASYLUM AND ASYLUM

The name and specific details of the asylum Mark was confined to are left to you to flesh out, ideally to integrate his background into your chronicle. The asylum might be the site of some significant bit of backstory in your chronicle, or a major antagonist (perhaps a *Beshilu* Host or an ancient vampire) might lair in the hospital's basement.

Alternately, if you have access to **World of Darkness: Asylum**, Bishopsgate Hospital makes for a fine place to set Mark's backstory, and likewise, Mark himself might be a good hook to encourage your players to investigate the horrors of Bishopsgate.

staged a rescue shortly before Mark underwent the First Change. Thrown into a world he barely understood, and certainly was not mature enough to adjust to, Mark was forced to run with, and keep up with, the far older and more experienced *Meninna*. While the companionship of his pack brothers and sisters drew Mark (whom the pack dubbed "Little Shadow") out of the near-catatonia his prior traumas had inflicted on him, his immaturity made finding Harmony a difficult prospect for the child.

## ALL GOOD THINGS...

With time, the Crescent Street Shadows might have helped their youngest member find his balance, but time was not on their side. Just under a year after Mark was inducted into the Hunters in Darkness and became the newest member of the Shadows, the pack descended into the sewers below the city to clear out a *Beshilu* nest. The nest was far bigger than the pack had expected, and after a titanic battle, the entire pack, save for Mark and the pack's totem, was slain. Mark escaped by fleeing into the Shadow, guided by the wolf-totem Barag-Lugal.

Without a pack to lean on, and with only the barest understanding of Harmony and his duty to Father Wolf, Mark's spirit-side has nearly consumed his rational mind. Operating solely on instinct, he still patrols the Crescent

Street Shadows' old territory. Sightings of the strange, silent boy, accompanied by a massive, shaggy gray "dog," at various locations throughout the territory have given rise to legends of a ghostly boy and his spectral dog, faithful to its master even in death. Even the local Forsaken packs (none of whom has yet made an effort to reclaim the Crescent Street Shadows' territory) haven't connected the "ghost boy" to one of their own yet.

#### DESCRIPTION

There's a reason people who have seen Mark assume he's a ghost, and it's not just because Lunacy makes them forget when they see him Change. Small, pale and quiet, Mark has a haunted, almost insubstantial quality about him that comes from spending too much time in the Shadow. He knows the location of every locus, no matter how small, within his territory, and that, coupled with his knowledge of Stealth Gifts, allows him to appear and vanish in the blink of an eye. A regular nightly patrol pattern makes it easy for ghost spotters to predict where he might appear, further suggesting a ghostly origin.

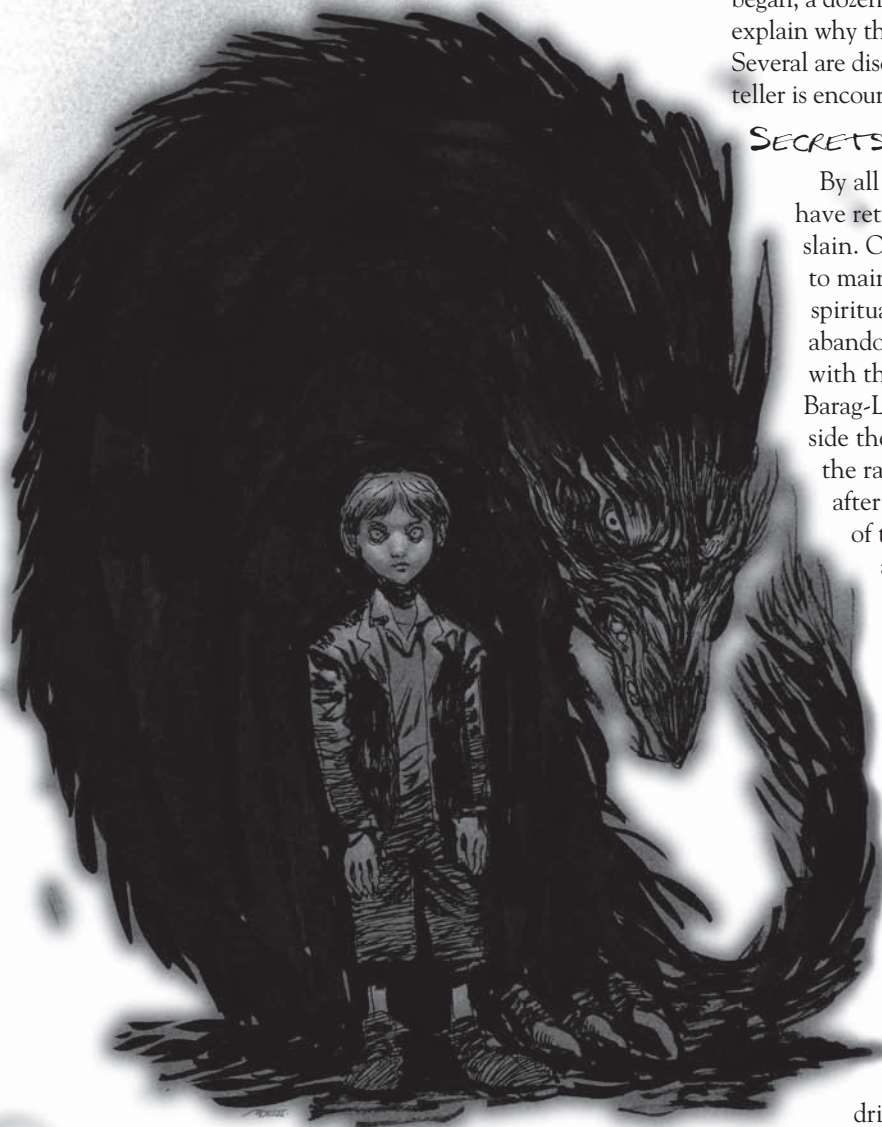
Mark never speaks to the humans who witness his appearance, and seldom even acknowledges their presence. Attempts to approach him or engage him elicit a dangerous warning growl from the manifested wolf-spirit that accompanies him, which is usually enough to scare off would-be ghost whisperers. Exactly why Barag-Lugal continues to accompany and protect the boy when the pack-bond must have been broken by the deaths of the rest of the pack remains a mystery.

Mark's behavior is unpredictable, to say the least — or rather, it is predictable by such an intricate web of pseudo-logic and spirit-bans that it is effectively unpredictable. Multiple derangements brought on by low Harmony, not to mention the attendant bans, have made Mark's thought processes nearly as alien as a spirit's. In his madness, he sees even innocuous behavior as evidence of spiritual compunction. Nearly any act might be enough to convince Mark that a person is Ridden or Claimed, eliciting a violent response. Conversely, Mark might interpret some acts as a sign of a bargain made with some spirit-court guaranteeing safe passage. In the months since sightings of the ghost-boy began, a dozen or more conflicting stories have sprung up to explain why these particular acts might draw the ghost's ire. Several are discussed under "Rumors," below; the Storyteller is encouraged to come up with more as needed.

#### SECRETS

By all rights, the totem-spirit Barag-Lugal should have returned to the Shadow after its pack was slain. One member left alive was not enough to maintain the totem bond, and without that spiritual connection, most spirits would have abandoned a lone Forsaken cub. During the battle with the *Beshilu* swarm that doomed the Shadows, Barag-Lugal manifested physically to fight alongside the Uratha, crushing and consuming many of the rat-shards. Something happened to the spirit after that battle; perhaps it consumed too many of the shards, or perhaps the swarm possessed an infectious Numen, but Barag-Lugal has been partially corrupted by the rat Host's Essence. Not quite a magath, but certainly no longer a pure wolf-spirit, Barag-Lugal stays with Mark because Mark does not recognize what is wrong with his former totem. Mark protects the spirit from its brethren and from other werewolves who would destroy the abomination.

Though he knows it is his duty to destroy the *Beshilu* swarm that still threatens his territory, Mark has developed an intense phobia of rats, so much so that even seeing an ordinary rat is enough to risk Death Rage. A werewolf pack with a rat-spirit as a totem would be seen as a nightmare beyond imagining, and might drive Mark to flee his territory for good.





## THE CRESCENT STREET SHADOWS

With the exception of Little Shadow and the pack's totem, all of the Crescent Street Shadows have been dead for six months. Mark still "sees" them from time to time, though, and so a brief description of their personalities is given here. Clever characters might be able to learn about the Shadows and use that knowledge to reach Mark.

- **Pretty Boy Don:** The pack's Cahalith and alpha. Contrary to his deed name, Don was a thick-limbed, ugly son of a bitch, with a nose that had been broken several times in several bar fights, and a puckered scar across his neck and down his chest that came courtesy of a Fire-Touched warrior's poisoned blade. He was the closest thing to a father Mark had after his Change, but his leadership was more alpha wolf than paternal figure. Mark respected Don, but was also afraid of him.

- **Liza the Bitch:** Liza was a diminutive woman of indeterminate Latin American origins. Before her First Change, she was a business major at a local college; after she Changed under the half moon, she joined the Shadows and earned her epithet thanks to a hard-nosed negotiating style and an unwillingness to back down over unfair terms. Mark reminded her of her little brother, and she frequently stepped in when she felt Don was pushing the boy too hard.

- **Alan Kensington:** The youngest member of the pack before Mark joined, Alan was a privileged 17-year-old kid from a few towns over before a homecoming party on the night of the full moon ended with his First Change and a bunch of dead teenagers. The police think someone supplied bad PCP for the party, leading to Alan going on a rampage with a garden trowel. Lacking enough evidence to arrest him, the local cops still keep a file on Alan — and the new friends he hooked up with after he ran away from home.

No other pack of Uratha has swept in to claim Mark's territory yet, and with good reason. The lone cub has caught the eye of a Predator King seer, who believes the boy's descent into feral madness is actually the blessing of Dire Wolf. This Predator King, Hunt's-Eye, and his pack keep other werewolves, Forsaken and Pure alike, from moving in on the territory. Hunt's-Eye believes that soon Mark will shed the last vestige of his humanity, at which point he plans to offer the young *Meninna* a new home.

Mark's parents believe their son ran away from the hospital in the midst of a psychotic break. They've hired

a private investigator, Ronnie Chen, to try to find their missing boy. Ronnie seems to have at least a working knowledge of werewolves, and suspects the ghost-boy he's been hearing about lately might be the boy he's looking for. Whether Ronnie is wolf-blooded himself or a hunter or something else altogether remains to be seen.

## RUMORS

*"The way I heard it, this kid back in, like, the 1950s or whatever, went to the hospital with a stomachache or something. This was back when they still kept medicine in those big glass bottles, with green- or brown-colored glass and whatever. Anyway, some stupid nurse on her first night, or maybe she's drunk or stoned or some shit, she gives him the wrong medicine. She should have given him the shit in the green bottle, but instead she hooked the brown bottle up to his IV, and the kid ended up dying. Now he haunts that old hospital over on Ward, and if you go there at night, and you've got a brown bottle in your hand, he'll think you've brought the wrong medicine and he'll kill your ass. But if you got a green bottle, and you show it to him, he'll go away and leave you alone. Moral of the story? Drink Heineken, man."*

As is the case with many rumors and urban legends, this one takes a nugget of truth and adds a backstory to it that's complete bullshit. Mark isn't a ghost from the 1950s, of course, but an abandoned hospital really does exist there (it used to be part of the same medical complex as the asylum Mark was held in, but the general hospital was shut down in 1976), and there remains an active locus in that building, so Mark can be found there sometimes. If he sees you there carrying a piece of brown glass — it doesn't have to be a whole bottle — he'll come after you, because he's convinced that brown glass is the token of a disease-spirit his pack bound into a fetish bottle at that very hospital. Carrying brown glass means you're there to try to free the spirit and must be stopped. Despite the story, green glass has no particular significance to Mark; he just ignores anyone who isn't carrying brown glass.

*"You know that Quick Shop store over on 14th? The one that's always got the boarded-up windows 'cause people keep smashing them? Did you know it's haunted? Yeah — well, the alley out back is, anyways. I worked there for a little while, a few months back, and one time when I was taking out the trash, I saw this kid, right? The kid just points at the manhole cover there in the alley, just staring at me, sorta shaking his head real slow, like he's trying to tell me there's something bad down there. I got kinda spooked, so I looked around to see if my manager was back in his office yet, and when I turned around again, the kid was gone. When I got home, I did a little digging on the Internet. Turns out some kid was abducted and killed, and the guy dumped the body in that sewer. You want to hear the kicker? The dead kid had a big Husky dog; two weeks after they found the kid, it got hit by a car. Yeah, I quit the next day."*

Something bad lurks under the manhole cover in the alley behind that convenience store: if you climb down

into the sewers there and follow the lines for a little while, you'll find the *Beshilu* nest that killed the Crescent City Shadows. Mark keeps a close eye on that spot, and warns unwary humans away from it — by force, if necessary. Ironically, the rest of the story is also true: a boy was abducted, held for over a week by his captor, then killed and dumped down the sewer. The killer was caught years ago, and anyone who has actually seen Mark can easily find a picture of the dead boy and realize he isn't the "ghost."

"Sometimes, if you walk along Meyers Road at night, you might hear someone whistling the first few bars of 'Farmer in the Dell.' If you want to make it home alive, you better whistle out the rest of the verse. Some kid died playing hide-and-seek out there, and if you don't finish the rest of the song, his ghost will take you away, and then you'll be lost too, forever and ever."

The Crescent Street Shadows kept a tight rein on their territory, and anyone wanting to pass through it had to be given a special pass phrase that he could use if one of the pack caught him within their borders. They changed the code every few months so they could spot people trying to cheat, but for most of the time Mark was with the pack, the old children's song "Farmer in the Dell" was used as the code. Now, when he spots someone he thinks is a werewolf interloper (whether that person is a werewolf or not), he challenges them to give the proper response. Those who don't are killed, their bodies dumped in the Shadow where they won't be found by human authorities.

### MARK "LITTLE SHADOW" LEE

**Auspice:** Ithaeur

**Tribe:** Hunters in Darkness

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Improvised Items) 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Spirits) 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl (Gauru) 2, Larceny (Lock-picking) 2, Stealth 4

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Dogs) 4, Intimidation (Unnerving Stare) 3, Streetwise 1

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Iron Stomach

**Willpower:** 4

**Harmony:** 2

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Sloth

**Initiative:** 4 (4/5/6/6 including Fast Reflexes)

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 11 (12/15/18/16 including Fleet of Foot)

**Health:** 6 (8/10/9/6; as a child, Mark's Size is 4 instead of 5)

**Primal Urge:** 3

**Renown:** Honor 1, Wisdom 2, Cunning 3

**Gifts:** (1) Call Water, Two-World Eyes, Warning Growl; (2) Father Wolf's Speed

**Rituals:** 1 **Rites:** Rite of Dedication, Rite of the Spirit Brand

**Essence/per Turn:** 12/1

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Claw (Gauru)	1(L)	Melee	8	—
Bite (Gauru)	2(L)	Melee	9	—

### STORY HOOKS

- While it might be easy to mistake him for one, Mark is not yet *Zi'ir*. He's very close, but if a pack managed to break through his psychoses and reach him, he might yet be pulled back from the brink. A group might seek him out, thinking they were going to lay a ghost to rest, only to discover that their intelligence was very much off base. Rehabilitating a feral boy who can fly into Death Rage at the drop of a hat isn't exactly an easy task, and especially for mortal or wolf-blooded characters, it might require arranging peaceful contact with a pack of werewolves.

- The *Beshilu* infection running rampant through Barag-Lugal has finally corrupted the spirit's mind. The wolf-spirit has begun gnawing at the Gauntlet around the loci in Mark's territory, wearing the wall down and allowing all manner of spirits to slip through. The spirit needs to be put down, but the boy will fight to the death to defend his "best friend." There might be a rite that would allow a more-experienced Ithaeur to purge the taint from the spirit — but even then, with the infection gone, Barag-Lugal would have no reason to stay with Mark.

- The players' pack has moved into the (supposedly) unoccupied former territory of the Crescent Street Shadows. Perhaps they were displaced from their old territory by a rival pack, or maybe they're looking to expand, or maybe they're just starting out and were offered this territory by more established packs. In any case, shortly after setting up shop, they begin to be harried by Pure ambushes and occasionally spot a kid tailing them around the loci in their territory. Is the kid a Predator King? Why are the Pure defending this territory when it's clear they haven't actually claimed it? And where did all these goddamn rats come from?

# OFFICER DEATH: SEETHING BRAVE

YOU DON'T KNOW WHY I PULLED YOU OVER...BUT SOMETHING INSIDE YOU DOES.

**Aliases:** The Grim Trooper, Route 98 Killer, Gruff Reese

## BACKGROUND

“And I was all like, dude, keep your eyes on my engine and off my tits, thanks...so I was walking behind the place looking for, gosh, even a Hardee’s, and I got this really weird feeling, like I was...something was whispering to me. Strange, right? And the next thing I know, the mechanic comes up a little too close behind me and is all like telling me my car is done and...oh, shit...shit, shit, shit, Val, I’m being pulled over...ugh...talk to you later.”

Except in this case, later would never come. The co-ed was Ridden, just like a good number of the ones Seething Brave had pulled over. The couple driving back from Orlando...it had complete control of their kid. It was heart-wrenching and bloody as fuck — he had no choice. Then the trucker — he was clean, but his Labrador wasn’t, and no man’s going to sit idle while you gut his dog. Who could forget the “ghost-hunters” — that was a clusterfuck of *Hithimu*, and it almost all got caught on tape until Gruff ripped off the cameraman’s arms. He was finding them nearly every night now...a Band-Aid on a sucking chest wound.

The spirits had shown up around...the middle of last month? They were barely able to make sense of why they had come. It had been quiet, then, the flood from deep within the Shadow, too many spirits to count from out of the locus, and before they knew it, they were up to their furry asses in twisted shit out of Cronenberg films and Dali paintings. The first wave had hit the trailer park — as if it had been bound, gagged and violated by the deeper recesses of the other side of the Gauntlet by things that not even werewolves wanted to talk about. The shock wore off by just about the time Gruff’s pack realized the Claimed had already overwhelmed Crow’s Wit, who was too young to know better. After the carnage, they found a few pieces of her to bury, all of them covered in a gooey film of saliva. The ensuing fights had left Gruff and his remaining pack weary and made all the days after blend together like a slow, throbbing head injury with talons. It hadn’t been much better since.

They were in over their heads. Their pack strength was at an all-time low, and for some unexplained reason, there were nasty spirits coming out by the busload from the locus near where that trailer park had been “hit by a tornado.” Now down to five members — Gruff himself being the only real warrior of the bunch — they were barely able to find and catch the things coming out, much less find a way to stop the influx of new spirits. The neighbors were sniffing around their borders

and even offering their “help,” but Gruff wasn’t going to make the rookie mistake of asking anyone for aid — it was a flare gun announcing weakness, and it had cost them a hundred acres the last time they had done so. Small as their pack was, they were not fond of outsiders, and were likely to leave scars (or worse) on any Uratha foolish enough to get into swiping distance.

As if spirits getting out into the sunny side of the Gauntlet wasn’t bad enough, they were on the move. If anything said that the werewolves one door over can’t take care of their territory, it was Ridden or Claimed folks marching into the neighbor’s yard. And that’s what the *Hithimu* want to do — flock en masse to some rally point known only to them. The Rally (as Gruff’s pack has come to call them) is strong and excels at attaching itself to hosts, like children who can’t dress in anything but costumes. The pack has begun to suspect everyone.

As a response to this massive exodus, Gruff has decided to throw caution to the wind and attack the spirits’ preferred method of travel — susceptible people with cars. Knowing it’s unlikely that anyone’s going to stop if he jumps onto the hood of their car, he has derived a more practical guise, in the form of a local cop. As these are difficult times, extreme methods for eradication of the hosts have been adopted. Seething Brave has been left taxed by his pursuit and, admittedly, mistakes have been made. Even if he’s not 100% (these days, he’s maybe at 50/50, though he won’t admit to that level of error), sometimes, to be safe, there’s little choice but to wipe out the whole car. Yes, it’s a bit gruesome, but it’s likely the spirit would’ve done in the rest sooner or later — at least he does it quick. It’s not an ideal method, but the situation’s not exactly peachy, either.

Lately, though, he claims to see spirits every night. The body count’s getting absurd and his actions haven’t gone unnoticed by the public, the state police or the local Uratha. This one highway speed trap of a town has become a massacre, and Seething Brave’s firmly stepped over the line of duty to dangerous obsession. The corpses (more and more of them lately) get thrown in the swamp, but he doesn’t always have time to get rid of the cars. At a local level, the town’s small enough to leave well enough alone when weird things happen — even the sheriff stays a little later at the bar rather than be out on the highway at night. The rumors, though, have been drawing more and more strangers to his pack’s territory — religious nuts hearing about angel sightings, “Satanic” cults hearing about demons, paranormal enthusiasts coming to town because of a clip they saw on YouTube — not



to mention gawkers drawn to the eerie rumor of a “phantom cop” who kills. Fresh bodies for the spirits to ride...it’s a fight they most likely won’t win, but it’s their fight, and Gruff and his pack will be damned before they give up or ask for help.

## DESCRIPTION

Gruff’s a hard man to like, but as a werewolf, he can beat a healthy sense of respect into you. He’s not often sensible and he’s prone to fits where sensible can’t even be used in the sentence, but when he’s putting some effort into it or facing off against poor odds, he can be as wily and deadly as Uratha of legend. But this doesn’t happen often. It’s when he turns off his brain and lets his instinct take over that he’s an excellent alpha, but

when he

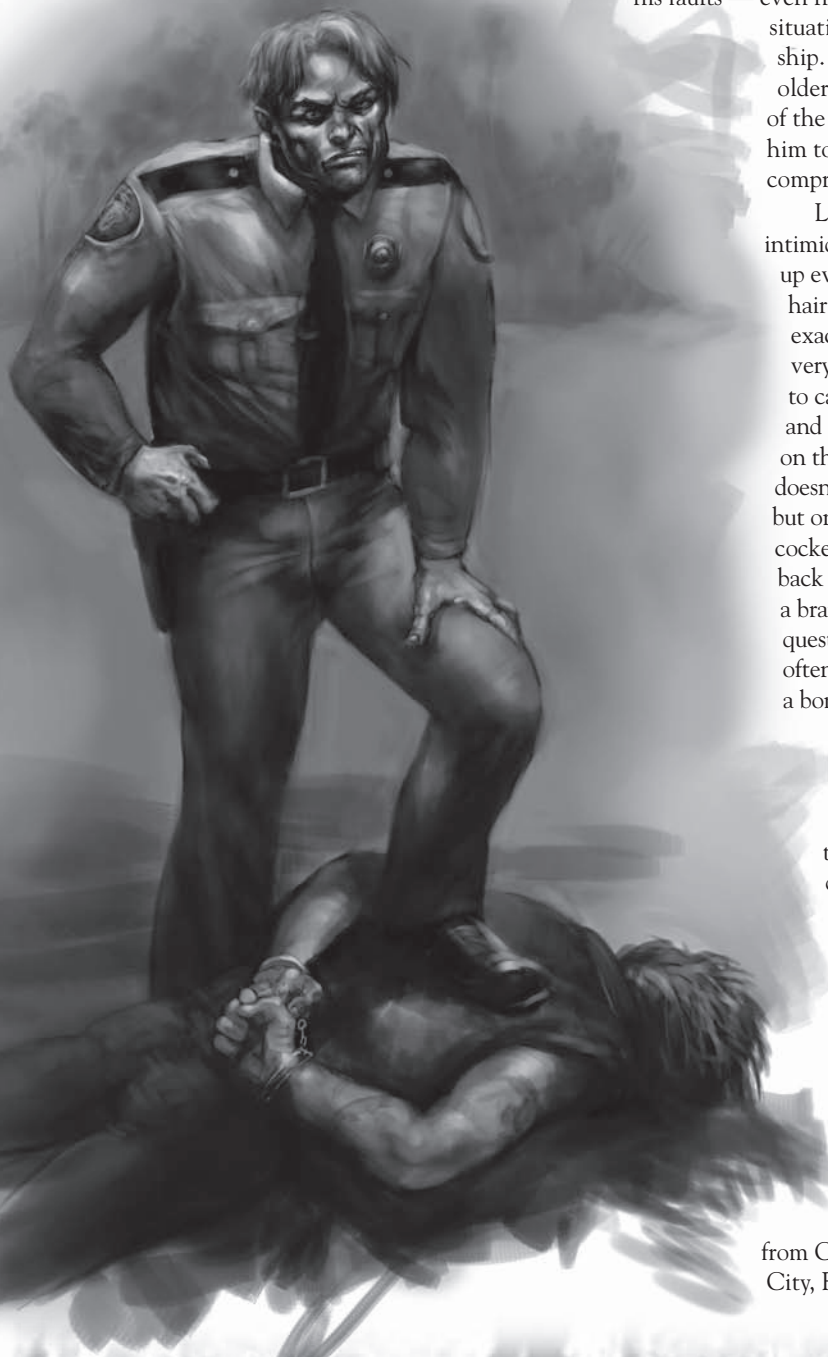
tries to employ strategy, it usually ends up in a lot of blood loss. Still, his pack members respect him, maybe even fear him a little — he’s charismatic despite his flaws, and maybe they’re all just a little glad that he’s on their side when talk isn’t going anywhere (and it frequently doesn’t). This time, however, he’s taken on more than he can handle, and he’s pushing himself farther than he can go. He doesn’t even seem to discriminate Ridden from human anymore, with fatigue and frustration causing him to make a lot of bad decisions at the expense of innocent lives.

Gruff and his pack fought hard for their territory, and their pride and fear of losing it makes them wary, even aggressive toward other werewolves. They are barely on speaking terms with their neighbors and very hesitantly show up for any gathering that will take them away from their territory for long. Gruff’s pack has come to rely on him despite his faults — even now when they’re sure this a hopeless situation, they don’t question his leadership. Most of his pack is inexperienced or older, leaving Seething Brave to do most of the fighting which, again, has caused him to become irrational and beyond compromise.

Large, burly and wild-eyed, Gruff intimidates others easily, and he can back up every menacing growl. Unkempt black hair and four-day-old beard growth don’t exactly make him look like a cop, but very few people would have the courage to call him on it. He does odd jobs here and there for cash, but mostly gets by on the charity of his allies. Normally, he doesn’t like to be the center of attention, but one can’t help but notice him — head cocked, surveying the room from the back booth of the bar like a leopard on a branch. He doesn’t like his authority questioned or his pack challenged, and he often takes on stupid odds if they are. He’s a born scrapper — hulking in his Dalu form, and a muscled mass of nightmarish, oily black fur in his Gauru form. He acquired the name Seething Brave due to his penchant for trying to do right despite his vicious disposition, and if it weren’t for his natural strength and battle prowess, his pack might have been wiped out a long time ago.

## SECRETS

Seething Brave’s demeanor is well known to his pack and any werewolf who’s set foot in their territory. Gruff came out of nowhere, seemingly, but the truth is, he was running with a pack from Chicago before he ended up in Cross City, Florida. There’s a reason he ended up



in the state's armpit, and that's because he was hiding himself out of shame.

Unknown to his pack, Gruff has committed a grave offense against his own kind — he killed the alpha of a rival pack during a petty squabble over a couple of feet of turf. That pack had been strong and the Uratha he murdered had been well respected by both werewolves and several other supernaturals in the area. Before vengeance could be taken, Seething Brave snuck out of the city, dooming his own friends and allies to an uncertain fate.

Constantly fearing retribution, Seething Brave tried to secure a stronger totem to defend his pack numerous times, but failed. Several nights after journeying solo into the Shadow in search of an edge, the Rally began escaping through the pack's loci. Spirits were less than cooperative, and Gruff threatened or made boasts to more than one. He fears he has exposed his pack's weakness and feels it is his responsibility to clean up the mess before more harm can come to his pack.

## RUMORS

*"I heard from this one guy that his girlfriend was on the phone with her roommate as she was driving Route 98, and all of a sudden she heard this weird whispering and then the line went dead. They found her car parked by the side of the road, but never found her body — true story!"*

It's not unusual now for people to be on the phone all the time, which means a couple of people that Gruff has pulled over may have said something to someone about their predicament before they were killed — something about a cop, or in this case, the weird muttering was the manifestation of a nervous spirit passenger within them. Just like the other rumors, nobody knows what to believe, but they know people are disappearing along Route 98, and a lot of folks think there's a killer loose on that stretch of highway.

Obviously, a killer is loose — Gruff has killed multiple people to keep the Ridden or Claimed from escaping. Lives have been lost to protect the greater good of both man and the secret of the Uratha's existence, but now the body count is getting attention. Over time, the killings have become more numerous and sloppier. Large-scale investigations haven't been launched yet, but it's only a matter of time.

*"I heard all those missing people are being abducted by aliens, that's why they only find the cars," or "This site I saw has a personal account from a ghost-chaser that went down there — he saw all kinds of freaky things, like a deer with glowing red eyes and a motel where a young woman in black stands in the parking lot in the wee hours of the morning," or "We saw angels come out of a grove in Cross City — this is truly the end times, and all these missing people are the prelude to the Rapture..."*

The unexplained always draws gawkers. If something seems unreal, desperate people can easily manipulate it to fit and justify whatever fringe belief they have. Something very real and supernatural is going on in this small Florida backwater, but these misguided tourists are going there for their own clueless reasons. That means a lot of strangers in the area — hard for such a small pack with a large territory to keep tabs on. Already stretched beyond its limits, the pack cannot fully patrol its borders anymore.

## Pack

- **Irene "Mother's Clutch" Gordowski:** Mother's Clutch is about as accurate a name as you could give to the pack's resident maternal figure. Stout and with arms made for both squeezing fear from the timid and life out of those who challenge her pack, Mother's Clutch is the morale booster and caregiver of Seething Brave's group. Irene works as a cook and waitress at the small diner on Main Street, and because most of the pack can barely keep a roof over their head, she frequently finds herself feeding them. Next to Gruff, she's the best at busting heads in the group, but she's been a bit morose since Crow's Wit was killed in battle. Despite her distress over Crow, she feels the need to be the stalwart one of the pack, and rallies them in the face of a losing battle.

- **Little Dee "Barking Sparrow" Kincaid:** Little Dee's a wisp of a thing — the youngest and the runt of the pack. Mystified by the Shadow and ever curious about the secrets of her kind (which can be hard to come by in her neck of the woods), she barely takes care of herself and spends her time listening to an MP3 player while writing down her theories on everything otherworldly, including the whispers of spirits, most of whom are probably having some fun with the wide-eyed young werewolf. Barking Sparrow joined the pack at the same time as her sister, Crow's Wit, who was the stronger of the two and more likely to do great things for the People. Since Crow's death, Barking Sparrow barely speaks and only moves when Gruff orders her to. If it wasn't for Mother's Clutch looking out for her (even feeding her), she'd probably have wandered into the Shadow, never to be seen again...

- **Emmet "Points Toward Sky" LeBeau:** In his younger days, Points Toward Sky was a deft hunter and a promising leader in a pack that was beginning to come into its own. Then the Pure attacked, wiping out or capturing everyone but him. Driven out of his territory and injured, he traveled the South in search of new allies. A misunderstanding with a pack in Georgia left him severely wounded, and Emmet slunk into northern Florida, finding Mother's Clutch and a scant few others, becoming the alpha of that new pack. About five years ago, Points Toward Sky lost leadership over the pack to Gruff in a battle that even his experience couldn't prepare him for. He's old now, and he feels it. He works nights as a janitor in a "boot camp" for troubled kids at the edge of their territory, mostly scouting for new recruits (like Sparrow and Crow). He's hoping that in their battle against the Ridden, he gets to go out fighting.

Additionally, these highly suggestible individuals just add fuel to the fire. While it isn't exactly convoys of believers motoring into town, enough warm bodies are, and a lot of them are becoming possessed by the Rally of spirits. These numbers make it increasingly difficult for the pack to hunt discreetly, and the more people they kill, the more attention they receive from media, state police and other werewolves and supernaturals.

*"The werewolves who own that territory are crazed loners and their alpha, Seething Brave, has become a feral monster. They have obviously made a deal with something from deep within the Shadow and are now reaping what they have sown. We have considered putting down that beast, but we believe it's only a matter of time before those things get the best of him and his pack, and then we will repair his damage. Of course, with another pack at our side, perhaps we could make a move now and divide up their territory once we have run them out..."*

Seething Brave isn't feral, but he's also not well liked by the Forsaken around his territory. While the pack isn't directly responsible for the Rally, word of a locus guarded by a weak pack has attracted powerful spirits. The neighbors are already suspicious of his pack and the spirit activity is the justification for them to move in. Two packs have repeatedly tried to take Gruff's territory, and both times were pushed out with more than a thwack to the nose. They believe — and rightly so — that Gruff's pack is losing strength, and a lot of them would be happy to take over his territory in the guise of cleaning up the pack's mess, but they are spreading untruths and lies to present their goals as just.

The truth is most other werewolves are scared of coming up against Seething Brave in battle. They'd love it if whatever powerful spirit he's riled up ripped him to pieces, because they know that Seething Brave is the pack. They think he's a murderer without morals — they're half right. Without having to deal with him in combat, his land would be easy pickings for the other packs.

Another truth of the whole matter is that Gruff and his pack really don't know what's happening on the other side of the Shadow and lack the skills to do anything to stem the flow of malevolent spirits. They have a treatment, but not a cure. It could be argued that they are unfit to handle their own territory, and that a stronger and more knowledgeable pack would be in the right to step in and take over. As Gruff is wary of his neighbors and his pack owes them its lives many times over, it is unlikely that reason will sway them to give up the locus or even accept help from well-meaning Uratha.

## SEETHING BRAVE

**Auspice:** Rahu

**Tribe:** Blood Talons

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 5 (6/8/8/5)

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 1 (0/1/0/1), Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Healing Wounds (Basic First Aid) 1

**Physical Skills:** Brawl (Street Fighting, Dirty Tricks) 5, Larceny (Burglary) 2, Weaponry (Improvised Weapons) 4

## STORY HOOKS

- A rumor leaks: a number of surrounding packs are all planning on making moves against Seething Brave's pack. Do the characters get in on the action? Do they actually aim to protect him? Take the territory first? Or watch it happen and see how it shakes out?

- Fate conspires to throw the pack into Seething Brave's way, or vice versa. They take him out. Problem is, while what he was doing was wrong by a country mile, it doesn't mean that he wasn't helping to stop the wave of Ridden coming down the highway. Now, their numbers are unparalleled. The characters are finding themselves fatigued and confused, and are having a hard time telling human from Ridden. Sound familiar?

- The Rally's a real problem, but thing is, Seething Brave's actions are only stemming the tide. And, as a result, he's stirring up *other* spirits — the highway-spirit is pissed, picked at by a series of crow-shaped carrion-spirits. Oh, and did we mention that his actions have *also* left a number of ghostly hitchhikers up and down the highway? The characters have a lot on their plate: spirits, ghosts and the man behind it all, Seething Brave.

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Physical Threats) 4, Streetwise (Avoiding Police) 3

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes, Iron Stamina 3, Quick Healer

**Willpower:** 4

**Harmony:** 5

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Wrath

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

**Defense:** 4 (4/5/5/5)

**Speed:** 14 (15/18/21/19)

**Health:** 10 (12/14/13/10)

**Primal Urge:** 5

**Renown:** Cunning 2, Wisdom 2

**Gifts:** Clarity, Ghost Knife, Luna's Fury, Playing Possum, Savage Rending, Warning Growl

**Essence/per Turn:** 14/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Homemade Knife	1(L)	n/a	9	n/a
Police Club	2(B)	n/a	9	n/a



# SAINT ANTHONY'S FIRE: TONY MARKOV

*GURIM-UR IS WITH US ALWAYS. IT IS OUR FAITH IN HIM ALONE THAT CLEANSSES OUR BODIES OF THE POISON OF SIN.*

**Aliases:** Nicolai Markov, Saint Anthony, Tony Markov

## BACKGROUND

Markov stood patiently, eyes locked steadily upon the alpha, waiting for the moment the poison would seep from totem to pack. It usually began with an almost imperceptible twitch. Then, one by one, the Uratha would drop to the ground, foaming and delirious — convulsing in the dirt like the worms they are. Made humble before Gurim-Ur, nerves and minds set ablaze by the toxin, the great Rabid Wolf himself would appear before those worthy of absolution, and consume the unworthy from within.

There. There was that twitch Markov was waiting for. The alpha's defiant eyes had jerked slightly to the left, just for a fraction of a second. It was over. Markov felt his own lips twist into a smile. The entire pack would succumb, and they didn't even know it yet. The next time Markov asked who among the pack would join the ranks of the faithful, he knew, through the grace of Gurim-Ur, what the answer would be.

## THE POISON OF FAITH

Tony Markov's fanatical desire to bring others to the folds of Gurim-Ur stems from a childhood of abuse and neglect. Markov grew up on a small rye farm in rural Soviet Russia, on the outskirts of a small village of former refugees. The people of the town, Insar, were strict Russian Orthodox, and they threw themselves entirely into reviving the old traditions of the Church. Periodic epidemics of ergot poisoning plagued the town, leading to mass hallucinations and delusions that many of the devout villagers believed were the result of divine or demonic origin.

Before his birth, Markov's mother, Maiya, came to the church after one such epidemic, claiming that she had been overpowered by a demon who took the shape of a wolf, and that her pregnancy was the result of a rape. Maiya was known among the refugees as a promiscuous woman, and the church council concluded that her vision of a wolf demon was punishment by God for her sins.

The church shunned both mother and child for their wickedness and, believing she had no other alternative, Maiya kept the baby. After a painful and difficult labor, Tony's mother died during childbirth, leaving him to be raised by his grandfather, Dedushka Gosha.

A God-fearing Christian, Markov's grandfather agreed to care for the child, but he did so grudgingly, believing him tainted by evil. Markov's grandfather blamed him for the death of his Maiya, and never let Markov forget that he was responsible and that he was the bastard son of a demon. As a child, Markov was repeatedly and brutally beaten by his grandfather within an inch of his life, but never beyond, as killing the child would be against God's great plan. Markov grew to hate both his grandfather and the church that turned a blind eye to the violence. It was clear to Markov that if God did exist, He, too, must loathe Markov, if He would not interfere.

During Markov's 15th year, another epidemic of ergot poisoning swept through Insar. Many villagers died, hallucinating as the toxin caused their hands to turn black with rot. Shortly before the epidemic, Markov's grandfather had locked him away in the farm's tiny shed for stealing a crust of bread. A Fire-Touched pack found Markov as a *nuzusul*, emaciated and filthy, in the fevered throes of his own hal-



lucinations. Markov claims that Gurim-Ur appeared before him that night, and it was His primal call that led the pack to where he was held captive. Years later, this life-altering experience would lead Markov to use ergot poisoning as a coercion tool for his faith-driven cause — under the firm belief that the toxin-induced visions caused by ergotism allow Gurim-Ur to enter the minds of the faithful.

### A FOND FAREWELL

Markov was initiated into Pure society, and he embraced his newfound identity and faith. All his life, he had been hated and feared by the sole member of his family, by the church and by the people of the village. He had been abused and humiliated for what he was. The Pure were his true family, and he had waited for them his entire life. Gurim-Ur had delivered him, and Markov owed him not only his eternal gratitude, but also his life. Now, as an Izidakh, Markov had more control over his own destiny than he had ever had under the cruel tyranny of his grandfather, and he reveled in the power with which he had been blessed.

Before leaving Insar, Markov sought out his grandfather. Dedushka Gosha had survived the ergot epidemic, but the poison had crippled him, and his feet and hands had rotted away to blackened stumps. Markov taunted the old man, falsely offering him hope of escape, then laughing as his grandfather pulled himself pathetically across the floor with his now-useless limbs. Gosha would never beat Markov again, and he would never again clasp his hands in prayer to his cruel, indifferent God. Markov brutally tortured his grandfather that night, until he renounced his faith. Then, Markov tore open the old man's stomach, allowing his insides to spill freely from the gaping wound. It killed him slowly, allowing Dedushka Gosha time to contemplate the hell to which he would be sent for abandoning his God.

Free of his past, Tony Markov devoted his life to spreading the poison of his own newfound faith. In the years since his childhood, Markov has swiftly gained power and renown, and established his pack, the Volki. Markov's interest in the properties of ergotism and poisons as instruments of faith persist. Under Markov's leadership, the Volki practice a rite that forms a bond between a poison spirit and werewolf, and the pack uses its influence over the spirits to proliferate the divine truth of Rabid Wolf.

### DESCRIPTION

Markov is a thin, wiry man in his mid-50s, with intense black eyes and a long mane of coarse, salt-and-pepper hair. His long, sharp nose is crooked and knotted, as though it has been broken several times. He speaks perfect English, but a slight Russian accent remains.

In addition to the usual scars of the Fire-Touched, Markov's angular features are carved with dozens of black-tinged markings. The disfiguration is a result of the painful rite, unique to the Volki, that gives the pack its ability to influence spirits of poison. Each member of the pack bears similar scars, and has sworn an oath to use his power to spread the faith, and to never use spirit-poisoning upon the Pure.

Under Markov's leadership, the Volki perfected their technique of utilizing wolf tooth-spirits to attack foes, and

## THE VOLKI

The Volki (sometimes known simply as "the Wolves" or "the Wolves' Teeth") believe that Gurim-Ur has charged them with the duty to sweep the Earth like a toxic plague, cleansing the world of the sinful Forsaken and making it fit for the Pure. The pack picks up new members in its travels, handpicked by Markov for the strength of their faith and devotion to the cause. Each member of the pack has a preference for a particular poison.

- **Tox-Never-Speaks, Master of Strychnine:**

Before Markov found Tox, he was a loud, angry Forsaken whelp who never knew when to shut his mouth. One night, Tox said too much in his anger, and he disclosed confidential information to the Pure, which led to the death of a pack-mate. Whether the disclosure was intentional or not, Tox can never say, because the pack alpha cut out his loose tongue as punishment. In his pain and humiliation, Tox sought vengeance upon his packmates, poisoning their food with strychnine. The toxin caused their muscles to convulse continuously and so violently that several hours later, every pack member had died of exhaustion or asphyxiation. Markov found Tox while he was on the run and, seeing the savage fury of Gurim-Ur in his eyes, Markov's pack offered him asylum.

- **Father Strict, Master of Hemotoxin:**

Father Strict is the beta of the Volki. Before his First Change and swift initiation into Pure society, he was a Catholic priest with a gift for inspiring his congregation and an unsettling sadistic streak. As one of the Fire-Touched, he has a new god, and the passion of his faith is infectious. Father Strict knows just what a person needs to hear in order to bring them home to the faith. And if words will not bring the Forsaken to the Gurim-Ur, he will find another, more painful way to convince the reluctant werewolf. Father Strict uses hemotoxin spirit-poisons to destroy the blood and organs of his victims, inflicting intense pain.

- **Doc, Master of Hemlock:**

Markov found Doc on the streets of Amsterdam as a nascent werewolf. Since then, Doc has grown up into a great, slow hulk of a werewolf. Doc isn't really a doctor; he just likes to pretend he is. Sometimes, Markov lets him use the hemlock-spirits. Then the living things won't move and he can cut them open and look at all the pretty, wet, pulsing parts inside. Doc doesn't really understand who the "Rabbit Wolf" is that his pack keeps talking about, but they say he likes Doc because Doc is mad. Doc doesn't understand that either, because he doesn't feel angry.

in recent years, the pack has greatly diversified its artillery of toxins. Today, Markov travels the world with his pack, never staying in one location very long. The Volki are often called to aid the Pure in their endeavors against Luna's Uratha, using the pack's formidable spirit-poisoning to directly attack the totems of Forsaken, and crippling the totem's pack in tandem.

Markov and his pack have their own reasons for aiding other Pure, however. The Volki will ally themselves with any of the Pure, under the condition that they be allowed to attempt to convert the Forsaken before resorting to murder. If one of Luna's Uratha chooses to accept the faith, the Volki will allow him to live, and the Pure pack that has accepted the Volki's assistance must allow the new convert to go free.

## SECRETS

Markov has broken his oath to never use spirit-poisoning upon the Pure, and he has done so on more than one occasion, often with deadly consequences.

Why any werewolf would deny himself the gift of faith is something that Markov cannot understand — perhaps he simply cannot see the truth? Markov took it upon himself to open the eyes of the non-believers. Tony Markov often recalls the night of his rescue when, in pain and his toxin-induced visions, Gurim-Ur appeared and led him to salvation. Surely Gurim-Ur would permit him to use spirit-poisoning if it was with the intent of swelling the numbers of the faithful?

Several times during his past travels, Markov has encountered Ivory Claws and Predator Kings vehemently opposed to the faith. Seeking to enlighten the misguided werewolves, Markov deliberately loosed a wolf tooth-spirit upon them in hopes that Gurim-Ur would appear in their suffering, just as the Rabid Wolf had appeared to Markov. Only when the werewolf claimed he had spoken to Gurim-Ur would Markov call off the spirit's attack. If the victim never saw Gurim-Ur, Markov trusted in the Rabid Wolf to use the wolf-tooth's touch to determine the poisoned werewolf's fate, often resulting in death.

## RUMORS

*"A whole pack was poisoned all at once after meeting up with the Volki. Markov's pack never even touched them, and they all dropped dead where they stood — all at the same time!"*

Markov and his pack are capable of crippling entire packs of Forsaken without having to resort to physical violence, and they do so by loosing their spirit-poison upon a pack's totem. Doing so harms the pack's totem, and causes damage to all of the pack's members, but killing an entire pack at once by poisoning its totem is incredibly unlikely. It might be possible to kill an entire pack by poisoning its totem repeatedly, but doing so would take days, maybe even weeks, and is not likely to go unnoticed.

*"You know the Volki? That Pure pack that uses poison on their victims? Well, a friend of mine says they ain't using any ordinary poison no more. My friend was called to help clean up after one of their attacks, and he says they're using some rare toxin that can make a man's guts burst right out of him! Says there was a guy at the site who was still barely alive, with his belly open and blood and chunks of organs everywhere. He didn't live very long, obviously, but he said it was some kind of poison that did it!"*

The Volki have been known to use the spirits of some fairly exotic poisons in their attacks, but the toxins they use all occur naturally. While there are some toxins that cause organ damage within a person's body, there is none that would cause a man's guts to burst from him. More likely, the unfortunate victim was one of Doc's "patients."

*"I heard there's a Pure pack out there that goes around poisoning its own kind to death! Not only that, their whacked-out faith allows it!"*

The Volki, as a rule, do not use spirit-poison upon the Pure, and their faith does not allow them to kill others of their kind. Markov, however, has used his faith to justify using the spirit-poison upon the Pure in the past, resulting in murder on more than one occasion. He has violated not only the oath of his pack, but also the Oath of Urfarah, "The Pure Do Not Murder the Pure," as well. If his pack or any other Pure discovered the truth, Markov's punishment would be death, or worse.

## STORY HOOKS

- The Pure are after the pack's territory, yet again. The brother of one of the characters belongs to a pack of Forsaken who were recently attacked by the Pure. Every member of the Forsaken pack died in the struggle, and aside from the usual battle wounds, each had been poisoned. Upon further inspection, it is revealed that the body of the character's brother was not found at the scene of the massacre. Is the brother really dead? Was he captured alive by the Pure because he knows something? Why were traces of poison found in the victims of the attack? Surely he'd never have abandoned his pack to save his own life.

- Something's affecting the town's water, or so the pack thinks. Lately, the entire pack has been feeling so tired it can hardly transform. It all started a few weeks ago. The weird thing is that if it was the waters, wouldn't the humans of the town be affected as well? A pack member peers across the Gauntlet to see that the pack's totem looks weaker than usual and is covered in strange, ethereal blisters. Is the pack's lethargy due to the totem's illness? What could cause such a thing to happen? How will the pack find a cure?

- Two powerful packs of Forsaken have been feuding for decades. For the first time in over a hundred years, the two packs are meeting at the tur to discuss peace. During the negotiations, one of the pack's alphas falls deathly ill, apparently poisoned. The situation is already tense, and if the pack leader dies, there will be no hope for peace. Who is responsible for poisoning the alpha? Will there be more attacks? Can an antidote be found before all chance of a peaceful resolution is lost?



## TONY MARKOV

**Tribe:** Fire-Touched**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 5**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 5 (6/7/7/6)**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 4 (3/4/1/4), Composure 5**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Politics (Pure) 4, Science 5 (Toxins)**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Drive 2, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Weaponry 1**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 3, Expression (Faith) 4, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2**Merits:** Iron Stamina 3, Language (English and Russian) 3, Toxic Familiar (see below), Toxin Resistance, Allies (Scattered Global Fire-Touched Alphas) 4**Willpower:** 10**Harmony:** 5**Virtue:** Faith**Vice:** Pride**Initiative:** 8 (8/9/10/10)**Defense:** 3**Speed:** 12 (13/16/19/17)**Health:** 10 (12/14/13/10)**Primal Urge:** 4**Renown:** Cunning 2, Glory 2, Honor 3, Purity 5, Wisdom 5**Gifts:** (1) Predator's Presence, Eyes of Gurim, Sense Malice, Sense the Impure, Stoicism, Warning Growl; (2) Gurim's Comfort; (3) Pangs of Anguish, Purify, Trust in Gurim, Voice of Command; (4) Gurim's Might; (5) Gurim's Bite**Rituals:** 3; **Rites:** (1) Rite of Penance; (2) Rite of Purgation, Rite of the Surrogate; (3) Rite of the Toxic Scar (see below)**Essence/per Turn:** 13/2

## RITE OF THE TOXIC SCAR (•••)

It is through the Rite of the Toxic Scar that the Volki form a bond with a spirit of poison. The rite is a secret carefully guarded by the pack and only performed on Fire-Touched who are deemed worthy by the pack alpha of the Volki. Before the rite, the initiate must swear an oath to take up the duty of cleansing the Earth of the sinful in Gurim-Ur's name, and he must vow never to use his ability on one of the Pure.

**Performing the Rite:** The dangerous Rite of the Toxic Scar must be performed upon the subject by the pack alpha of the Volki. The subject is stripped of any clothing by the pack, symbolizing his nakedness before the all-knowing wisdom of Gurim-Ur. The ritemaster slices open the skin of the subject, creating long, painful gashes across his entire body. Then the ritualist slowly infects each wound with a single poison, over which the subject will gain control. The poison enters the subject's bloodstream in high to deadly amounts, causing a spirit of the poison to form within the body of the werewolf. Then the subject is left alone to fight the toxin within his body, and it is only through the strength of his faith that the werewolf survives and gains the poison-spirit's respect. When

(and if) the subject returns to the Volki pack, waiting nearby, the pack alpha announces his new title as the master of the poison with which he was infected.

The subject may not be aware over which spirit of poison he will be given authority until this point in the ritual, when it is referred to by name. Eventually, the wounds inflicted during the rite heal over, taking on some hint of the poison (for example, scars left by mercury poisoning may take on a silvery hue, while scars left by ergot poisoning may appear tinged with black mold).

**Dice Pool:** Harmony**Action:** Extended (20 successes required; each roll represents one turn)**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The rite fails. The subject of the rite is permanently damaged as a result of the poisoning. For example, those infected by mercury may go insane, while ergot poisoning may make the subject's hand or foot rot off, crippling him for life.

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated and the rite fails.

**Success:** The rite succeeds. The werewolf achieves dominance and complete control over the spirit of the poison with which he was infected, gaining a Toxic Familiar (see below). Additionally, the werewolf is now immune to all effects of that poison.

**Exceptional Success:** The rite succeeds. The Toxic Familiar bonded to the werewolf during the rite may take one more Numina than is typically allowed at creation.

## TOXIC FAMILIAR

If the Rite of the Toxic Scar is successfully completed, the character forms a bond with a spirit of poison that lasts for one year. The familiar will aid his master and obey his commands for as long as the bond exists. After one year, the rite must be performed again if the werewolf wishes to maintain the bond with the same spirit. Toxic Familiars have no bodies: they are spirits existing in an ephemeral state (Twilight). See "Spirit Rules," on pp. 273–299 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, for rules concerning spirits.

A Toxic Familiar's master is considered its anchor to the material world, and it may travel a distance no more than 100 yards from its werewolf. If, for some reason, the familiar is separated from its master, it loses one Essence per round it is separated from its master. It does not lose Essence, however, for every hour it spends in the physical world or Twilight while near its master. The familiar must follow all the other rules concerning Essence, though, including spending one Essence per day. If it is reduced to zero Essence, it falls into slumber, but it is not transferred back into the Shadow Realm as long as the werewolf-familiar bond still exists. Like other spirits, it can gain Essence by being in proximity to something that it reflects, or its master can give his own Essence to the spirit at a rate of one per turn.

**Improvement:** Familiars may be improved with experience points (subject to the normal limitations and trait caps of Rank 1 spirits, unless otherwise noted). Trait Experience Point cost is new dots x 8 for an Attribute, and 25 for a new Numen (up to 4 Numina). Note that changes to a spirit's

Attributes may alter other characteristics, such as Health or Speed. Adjust those traits accordingly. Also note that the spirit's Attributes may not be raised above five. Influence cannot be raised with experience.

## TOXIC FAMILIAR

**Rank:** 1

**Power:** 3

**Finesse:** 2

**Resistance:** 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Essence:** 10 (10 max)

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 15 (species factor 10)

**Size:** 4

**Corpus:** 6

**Influence:** Poison 2

**Numina:** The player chooses two from the Numina listed below.

**Ban:** The ban of a Toxic Familiar is usually the antidote or treatment for the toxin it reflects.

### Numina:

The Numina of a Toxic Familiar varies based on the nature of the toxin it represents. A hemlock-spirit familiar might cause drowsiness and paralysis. A hemlock-spirit might take the Numina Sleep and Paralyze, but not Necrosis, as Necrosis is not a symptom typically associated with hemlock poisoning. Below are a few examples of possible Numina representing common symptoms of various poisons.

**Paralyze:** A Toxic Familiar may paralyze a victim, leaving him conscious but totally unable to move. Spend a point of Essence and roll the spirit's Power + Finesse, contested by the victim's Stamina + Resolve (or Power + Resistance when attacking another spirit). If the Toxic Familiar wins the contest, the target is paralyzed for a number of turns equal to the number of successes the spirit gained.

**Sleep:** A Toxic Familiar can send a victim into a deep sleep from which he cannot wake. Spend a point of Essence and roll the spirit's Power + Finesse, contested by the victim's Stamina + Resolve (or Power + Resistance when attacking

another spirit). If the Toxic Familiar wins the contest, the target loses consciousness for a number of rounds equal to the number of successes the spirit gained.

**Necrosis:** Many poisons cause the death of living tissue (or corpus, if Necrosis is used upon another spirit), painfully damaging the victim. The Toxic Familiar rolls Power + Finesse contested by the victim's Stamina + Resolve (or Power + Resistance when attacking another spirit). If the Toxic Familiar wins the contest, the target takes one level of lethal damage per success.

**Hallucinate:** While the Volki often use Hallucinate upon themselves to invoke visions of Rabid Wolf, Hallucinate can also be used as a means of distracting their foes by causing them to see, hear or smell things that do not actually exist. Spend a point of Essence and roll the spirit's Power + Finesse, contested by the victim's Resolve + Composure (or Power + Finesse when attacking another spirit). If the Toxic Familiar wins the contest, the target is distracted from his current task, taking a -2 penalty to all actions for a number of rounds equal to the number of successes the spirit gained.

**Madness:** Many toxins affect the brain, causing any number of derangements. Spend a point of Essence and roll the spirit's Power + Finesse, contested by the victim's Resolve + Composure (or Power + Finesse when attacking another spirit). If the Toxic Familiar wins the contest, the target is affected by a random mild derangement (see pp. 96–100, *World of Darkness Rulebook*) for a number of hours equal to the successes the spirit gained.

**Poison the Totem, Poison the Pack:** Once per day, a Toxic Familiar may use Poison Totem to inflict any one Numen on the totem of a pack, affecting its entire pack in the process. While a Toxic Familiar may attack a pack totem at any time as it could any other spirit, the effects of its attack are typically only applied the totem (and do not affect the pack) unless Poison the Totem, Poison the Pack is used. Before using this Numina, the character must state which Numen he wishes to inflict upon both totem and pack. Spend two points of Essence and roll the spirit's Power + Finesse, contested by the totem's Power + Finesse. If the Toxic Familiar wins the contest, the totem and its pack are all affected by the Numen simultaneously (for the Numen's typical described duration).

# THE WOLF-BORN: URAZAKH-ANGIR

SAA'AN KULZU NAWAKARA INSAI, URDAGA!  
(NO ONE CAN SAVE YOU NOW, FORSAKEN!)

**Aliases:** The Promised One, the Great Lie, the Enemy

## BACKGROUND

When the Pure found him, he was just a child, no older than six or seven. He was naked and dirty, his hair spilling over his wiry and already-scarred frame in tangles never groomed by a human hand. His chin and his long-nailed hands were stained with dried blood. In and of itself, this was strange — even exceptional — but not enough to warrant his survival. Certainly, they were curious as to what this boy was doing in the Shadow Realm, but they thought they could question the spirits when he was dead. When the alpha of the pack, a hulking Predator King, raised his axe, the child did not flinch. Instead, he stared the werewolf in the eye and addressed him in the First Tongue, “*I am the one who was promised, born of no woman. I am the son of the wolf.*”

Unable to speak, the alpha fell to his knees in awe.

Thereafter, the boy was taken in by the pack and educated in the ways of the Pure Tribes. Five years later, he underwent his First Change. While he reluctantly submitted to the custom of clothing himself, he refused to learn any human language and used only the speech of Pangaea. During his time among them, he spoke to the pack that had taken him in, recounting stories of the she-wolf he claimed had been mother to him. When she was dying, he said, she led him into a deep wilderness and there lay down upon the earth and breathed her last. Illuminating her silent form, however, was a light that he had never seen before, filtering from between the trees, and a wind filling his nostrils with scents old and primal. Following the light and the breeze, he wandered out of the world of flesh and into that of spirits, where he hunted to survive just as his mother had taught him.

They called him Urazakh-Angir: Wolf-Born-Foretold. After seizing the mantle of alpha from his pack (killing the alpha, who died with a prideful smile on his muzzle), he forbade the tongues of men and demanded that his packmates return to the ancient ways in all things, in honor of Urarah. Worshipful of his every word and deed, they obeyed. They carved out a vast territory and offered up many sacrifices to the spirits, earning the fealty of the weak and the favor of the strong. When the pack hungered, it hunted. When the cold came, it stripped the hides of its prey and clothed its members in them. When the Kuruth took hold, the pack maimed and killed with brutal abandon. And, through it all, Urazakh-Angir preached the word of Father Wolf, as though the long-dead progenitor of their ancient race spoke through him.

## DESCRIPTION

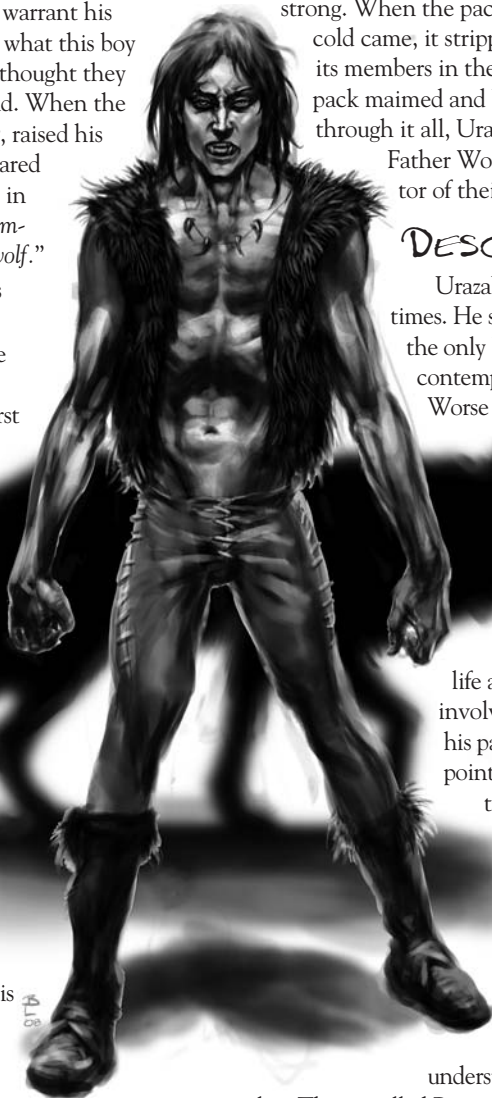
Urazakh-Angir exudes savage menace at all times. He speaks only in the First Tongue (it's the only language he knows) and holds great contempt for those werewolves who don't.

Worse still in his eyes are those who don't know the language at all. His facility with it is stunning and even spirits are taken aback to encounter a half breed so fluent in their alien speech.

He knows nothing of mercy or restraint, viewing

life as a series of instinctual responses involving violence and dominance. While his packmates can expect to be safe from pointless injury, no other living thing can take such for granted with respect to him. He's willing to talk with one of the Forsaken, but only if he honestly believes that she may prove capable of abandoning Luna, forswearing the Oath of the Moon and embracing the cause of the Pure Tribes. Otherwise, the only response that Urazakh-Angir understands or accepts is one of abject brutality.

The so-called Promised One engages in quintessentially lupine behavior at every possible opportunity: he marks his ter-





## NUSUZUTH SUR (THE ANCIENT LAW PACK)

As is often the case with Pure packs, the self-proclaimed “Ancient Law” is vast, boasting a grand total of 17 members: eight Predator Kings, five Fire-Touched and four Ivory Claws. These range in age and experience from a 40-year veteran of the endless war against the Forsaken, to one or two fresh Changes, not even a year into their lives among the Pure. They are purists and bigots in the extreme, even by the standards of their respective tribes, going so far as to completely reject all the customs of the herd (including human language, processed food and store-bought clothing). Their totem is the Greater Jagglings, Tammath-Mar: Beast-Who-Devours.

Some of the more prominent members of the pack are:

- **Gargahan Shulath (Bringer of Ruin):** The oldest surviving member of the pack, Bringer of Ruin is a grizzled old Predator King. The former alpha of the pack was his elder brother and he is now Urazakh-Angir’s most fervent worshipper and devoted servant. He would gladly lay down his life for the younger werewolf and serves as both the pack’s beta and something of a father figure to his new leader. He used to be known as “Greenstick” Jim Horner, before the tongue of the herd was forbidden to the Nusuzuth Sur.

- **Endammu (Flesh-Ripper):** The first thing that stands out about Flesh-Ripper is her height; she barely clears five feet. The Ivory Talon is broad-shouldered, however, and heavily scarred from years of combat against the Forsaken. She heartily approves of her young alpha’s rejection of the herd’s ways and is eager to see if he can produce progeny with wolves. Two other members of the pack are Endammu’s children — both Ivory Claws, like their mother — and she is far harder on them than she is on the rest of the Ancient Law.

- **Ka Hadar (Burning Whisper):** A Fire-Touched prophet and holy man, Ridden by such maniac zeal as to make many of his tribesmen look sane and reserved by comparison, Ka Hadar is sometimes a liability to his pack and, sometimes, a blessing. His ragged garments are stitched together out of the tanned skins of slain Forsaken, while his one good eye is forever wide and darting with awe and paranoia. He often babbles on in the First Tongue for hours, murmuring the will of the spirits, or perhaps merely voicing his own insanity.

- **Lahan-Aru (Prey-Render):** A Predator King like her alpha, Prey-Render believes that Urazakh-Angir represents an entirely new plateau in the timeless struggle of the Pure. In fact, she feels that his unprecedented lineage makes him a perfect bridge between the spirits and the Pure who serve them. Her dilemma now lies in finding a way to convince her alpha to sire a Ghost Child upon her — one she believes will serve faithfully, rather than violently rebelling — so that he will truly become the living vessel of Urfarah’s vengeance.

ritory by urinating; as alpha, he feeds before every other member of the pack; he will bite or claw a packmate who fails to display proper submission in his presence.

When wearing his Hishu form, Urazakh-Angir looks like a young man of 18 or 19, though everything about him radiates savage power and the unbending conviction of one who knows — not thinks, but *knows* — that he is a chosen one, sent to lead his people to victory. He is feral, amoral, uncompromising and seething with an implacable hate. He doesn’t act the part of some anti-hero; Urazakh-Angir has no use for such ethical quandaries. He doesn’t walk so much as stalk, stepping lightly on his lean runner’s legs. His long-fingered hands clench and unclench as he speaks and even while he listens. His eyes smolder with certainty and wrath. The matted black ropes of his hair slither over his broad shoulders and trail past his narrow waist. He is lithe under his coat of pelts and his hide breeches and leather boots, sewn together with gut and tendons, though his athletic frame conceals unnatural strength. Short, sparse whiskers trail along the line of his jaw and sprout from the tip of his chin. A lifetime of ceaseless combat has left his entire body a tapestry of scars.

The more wolfish forms of the young Predator King are pale gray and powerfully built. Nothing about him is majestic; rather, he inspires fear and submission through an aura of raw, elemental fury. His scars are, if anything, even more apparent in these forms. When wearing any of these shapes, Urazakh-Angir continually verges on the edge of violence,

until the moment that his profound hatred can, at long last, be unleashed. At such times, he appears to derive an overwhelming sense of release and, rather than the rancor they expect to behold, those who look into his eyes see reflected there a soul serene with the promise of slaughter.

## SECRETS

Urazakh-Angir really is what he claims to be: the child of a werewolf and the she-wolf who raised him. When he was a boy, he was quite certain that he was the messiah figure of whom the spirits told him, but now — older and, perhaps, a bit wiser and more cynical — he wonders. In the few hours of time alone that he manages to scrounge, the young Predator King contemplates the possibility that he’s nothing more than a fluke, an evolutionary aberration... the very monster that the Forsaken (and even some Pure) think he is. When the wrath of his ceaseless crusade flows through him, suffusing his limbs with savage power and enflaming his spirit with fury, Urazakh-Angir can silence those doubts, but even the most brutal war-leader must, occasionally, spend time alone with his thoughts, and those are the moments that none of his fellow Pure can ever be allowed to see.

Perhaps the questions wouldn’t nag at him so persistently if not for the three incongruities that chip away at the foundations of the godlike image the other Pure have built up. The first is the matter of Urazakh-Angir’s paternity. The spirits have always been quite clear to him on the matter of his father’s identity.

Somewhere, out in the wild places of the world, a deeply disturbed Hunter in Darkness — his Harmony eroded well beyond the human sanity — ruts again and again with bitches in heat: wolves, coyotes, even dogs. And out of the scores of them, one was somehow impregnated with this lunatic Uratha's seed, making the great savior of the Pure Tribes, ultimately, nothing more than the inexplicable progeny of an insane Forsaken.

The second secret that the “Promised One” keeps — and the one that will prove, by far, hardest to maintain as the years go on — is the fact that Urazakh-Angir is, to the best of his knowledge, sterile. Over the past four years, he has mated with nine different human women and coupled with at least that many she-wolves, all to no avail. Even his packmates know nothing of these attempts and he has, thus far, dodged their scrutiny by maintaining a tight focus on his “greater cause” of conversion and destruction. But how can he be the next step in the birthright of the Pure if he cannot even reproduce? Surely the cause won't be fulfilled within his lifetime, and who will carry it onward, after his inevitable death? Urazakh-Angir is aware of the intentions of both Endammu and Lahan-Aru, and he's almost willing to concede to the advances of the latter, if only in an attempt to understand if the creation of unihar is his true purpose, but he's not quite ready to deal with the fallout, should that union also prove utterly fruitless.

Lastly, Urazakh-Angir is continually confronted with a terrifying possibility, each and every time he uses his ability to “absolve” a werewolf of the sins of Harmony (see below). The rush he feels when he enacts this strange power is undeniable, as is the voice that he hears within, a demand that echoes within his soul: *divide the spirit from the flesh and keep separate the children of the two worlds*. Unable to conceive of any better answer to this unanswered question, Urazakh-Angir believes this voice is some final echo of Urfarah's will, somehow manifest in him, and never does it tell him anything in support of the Pure Tribes' murderous creed.

## RUMORS

*“Have you heard of the one that the Pure call Urazakh-Angir? They say he was actually whelped by a she-wolf. A nomad Ithaeur — Ghost Wolf, I think — told me about him when she was passing through about a month ago. Said he's being called the Great Lie. I mean, seriously, who actually believes any of that shit about the wolf-born? It's just a crazy, made-up story that the Pure tell to scare us. And sick, to boot. Screwing an animal? No thanks. Still, she said he's got a whole lot of Pure convinced that he's the real deal.”*

For the most part, Forsaken who hear the tale of Urazakh-Angir don't believe it — or, at least, they tell themselves they don't. After all, if he truly is what he claims to be, the spiritual implications to the long war between the Tribes of the Moon and the Pure would be staggering. How could such a creature be anything other than the unifying leader the Pure hold him to be? Many Forsaken who hear the story really do think it's bullshit, while others are afraid it might be the truth. Still others claim not to believe, but in reality wonder if this creature is the genuine article and, if so, what his coming means for their tribes, and for the Shadow Realm and the world of flesh.

*“No...I'm all that's left. My pack's dead. Don't bother with my wounds. No time for that. Please, you've got to listen: he's coming. He's almost here. Urazakh-Angir is coming. We just*

## STORY HOOKS

- Urazakh-Angir intends to make one more attempt to mate successfully with a human woman. Unfortunately, one of the characters has a wolf-blooded kinswoman who is particularly noteworthy as fruitful breeding stock, and the spirits have told the Enemy of her. While he can't afford to rouse undue suspicion among his disciples by trying to acquire her personally, Urazakh-Angir has cut a deal with some local Pure to kidnap this wolf-blooded woman. Whether or not these Pure succeed in the attempt, the pack may be able to learn of their bargain with the “Promised One,” inviting the question of what he needs with an especially fertile wolf-blooded when he surely has the strength necessary to sire children indiscriminately.

- The characters chance upon a dying Forsaken, overwhelmed by age, innumerable old wounds and the slow, crippling spiritual malaise of those who've long since spurned the path of Harmony. This aged Hunter in Darkness babbles to anyone who'll listen, telling them of his shameful years as a lone wolf, devoid of the comfort of the pack, and of the secret that he can only bring himself to confess in his final hours. The implacable foe whose war machine follows him, the sickly Forsaken asserts, is his son, somehow fathered upon an outcast she-wolf in the dead of winter. For reasons that he never understood, the Hunter in Darkness watched her grow gravid and then birth a child who looked human, but who could clearly be no such thing. When the Pure took the boy in, the old Forsaken fled, but always managed to keep an eye on his boy from a great distance, even while in the deepest throes of his insanity. Now, he tells the pack, the secret must be revealed and the Enemy shown for what he is: a child of sin and madness, whose birth was not providence but instead merely an inexplicable abomination of nature.

- Spirits known to and trusted by the characters tell them that Urazakh-Angir, whose army of Pure is moving inexorably across the land, is everything that Pure believe him to be. He is the son of the wolf, bringing with him a message of hate that has thus far proven absolutely unstoppable. While these spirits know nothing about the specifics of the Enemy's origins, they can sense the truth of his nature and they fear his coming tremendously. Confronted with the knowledge that this Predator King's claims are more than merely myth, what do the characters do? Do they attempt to stand against him or are they swayed by his legend, and by the tales of his ability to “absolve” Uratha of the ways of Harmony?

*happened to be in his way. Ten-Spot and Anya died quick. They were the lucky ones. I figure I'd run at least two miles before I stopped hearing Jay-Jay's screams. The last thing Anya said to me was that I had to get out. I had to spread the word. Whatever you think, you're not ready. You've got to rally every pack you can find. The Enemy is on his way and he's going to kill you all."*

Many of those Forsaken who've survived the wrath of Urazakh-Angir and his pack have come to believe the tales of his origin. In their terrified imaginations, any being so ferocious and primal, so devoid of any shred of higher reason, compassion or compromise, *must* be born of wolf, without a drop of human blood in him. These Forsaken call him simply the Enemy, out of the belief that he is some sort of nightmarish blight before the eyes of Luna. Surely, they imagine, such a monster cannot be what Father Wolf intended.

*"You think you've won, you whore-spawned Urdaga bastard? You have no idea what's coming for you now. The call has gone out and it's been heard. Urazakh-Angir is on his way, along with all of his pack and the other packs who've heard his gospel. Make peace with your lunatic mother, for the Promised One brings your death with him and the deaths of all your kind. Everywhere he walks, your traitor tribes are laid to waste. Your frail totems flee before his gaze and your wolf-blooded bitches become the slaves who birth his sons and daughters. Kill me if you wish; it will not save you."*

To an ever-increasing number of Pure, Urazakh-Angir is a messiah figure whose story has been told and retold so many times that his power and majesty continue to grow in the telling. To hear some Pure speak of him, one might think the so-called Promised One can annihilate Incarnae with nothing more than a disapproving glare. Those Forsaken familiar with the First Tongue, of course, will understand the meaning of his name and are apt to draw their own conclusions about its significance, given the persistent rumor among the Tribes of the Moon regarding wolf-born Pure. Indeed, this "urban legend" is perhaps the Enemy's greatest weapon, demoralizing the Forsaken before he ever sets foot in their territory. One nagging question is that it's claimed he's been "foretold," but who actually foretold such a thing? Is it more of a self-fulfilling prophecy?

## URAZAKH-ANGIR

**Tribe:** Predator Kings

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 5

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 6 (7/9/7/6), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 6 (7/8/8/7)

**Social Attributes:** Presence 6, Manipulation 4 (3/4/1/4), Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Medicine 1, Occult (Spirits) 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 5, Brawl (Claws, Fangs) 6, Survival (Hunting) 6, Stealth 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Wolves) 5, Expression (Howls) 4, Intimidation (Blatant Threats) 6, Persuasion (Oratory) 3

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Inspiring, Iron Stamina 3, Iron Stomach, Quick Healer, Strong Back, Totem 5, Toxin Resistance

**Willpower:** 9

**Harmony:** N/A (Urazakh-Angir somehow exists wholly outside the sins that govern the behavior of Pure and Forsaken, alike)

**Virtue:** Faith. The will of Urfarah's shall become clear, in time.

**Vice:** Pride. He's the wolf-born boy-king. His ego is fattened by this thought.

**Initiative:** 12 (12/13/14/14)

**Defense:** 5 (all forms)

**Speed:** 19 (20/23/26/24)

**Health:** 11 (13/15/14/11)

**Primal Urge:** 6

**Renown:** Cunning 2, Glory 5, Honor 2, Purity 5, Wisdom 1

**Gifts:** (The following Gifts are taken from **Werewolf: The Forsaken**; if you have **The Pure**, feel free to add appropriate Gifts from that book, as well) (1) Call Water, Partial Transformation, The Right Words, Warning Growl, Wolf Blood's Lure; (2) Camaraderie, Hone Rage, Luna's Dictum, Mighty Bound; (3) Command Fire, Primal Howl, Silver Jaws; (4) Break the Defiant, Rekindled Rage, Savage Rending, Spirit Skin; (5) Primal Form, Savage Might

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

**Essence/per Turn:** 15/3

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Punch	0(B)	12	N/A
Claw	1(L)	13	Partial Transformation
Bite	1(L)	13	Partial Transformation; requires grapple
Grapple	N/A	12	N/A

## ABSOLUTION

This ability is unique to Urazakh-Angir. By spending a point of Willpower while laying a hand on a werewolf — whether Pure or Forsaken — the young Predator King is capable of silencing the spiritual agonies that go hand in hand with actions that defy the tenets of Harmony, causing the recipient of this dubious blessing to feel truly at peace with *any* action she takes. For a number of days equal to Urazakh-Angir's Primal Urge, any werewolf so affected simply need not roll for degeneration, irrespective of her deeds. Even afterward, she thinks back upon the most heinous of acts with an eerie sense of inner calm. Of course, while she doesn't roll for actual degeneration, when all is said and done, if she committed truly abominable actions, she will gain one severe derangement (likely Fugue or Schizophrenia).

While the Pure who know of this power (and even some of the Forsaken who have experienced it) believe that it is a sure sign of Father Wolf's favor, Urazakh-Angir worries, deep within his heart, that it might be something else. The "Promised One" thinks that, just maybe, this "gift" is a monstrous aberration, a scar upon his soul that anesthetizes the guilt the Uratha should feel for the savage murder of Urfarah and for the many sins they have since committed in his name.



# THE GUILTY SAINT: VICTOR LAWRENCE

I'M HERE TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES I DID.

Aliases: Victor's Law, The Saint

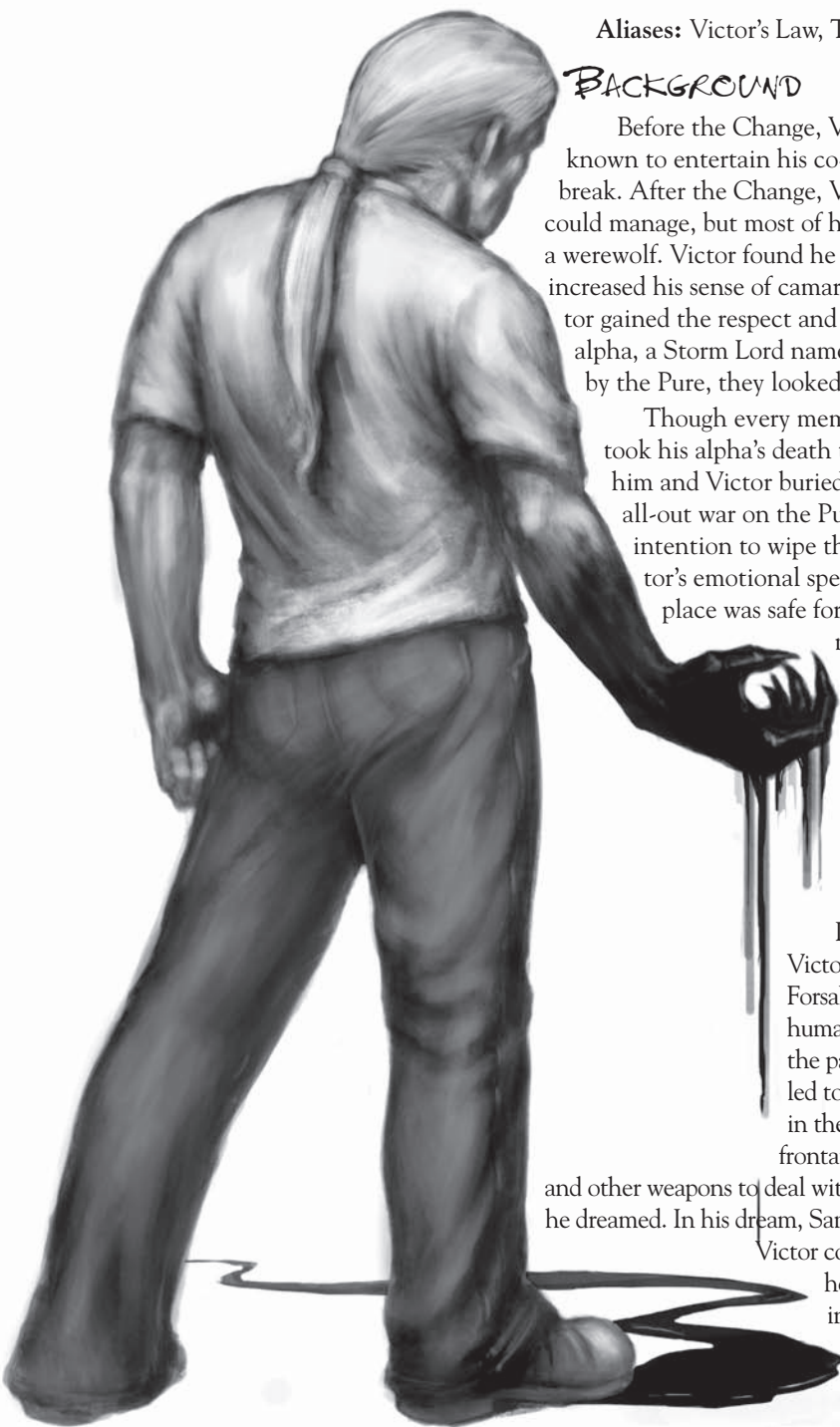
## BACKGROUND

Before the Change, Victor Lawrence was a construction worker who was known to entertain his co-workers with amusing stories during their lunch break. After the Change, Victor continued to work construction as much as he could manage, but most of his time was taken up with his pack and his new life as a werewolf. Victor found he fit in easily with his pack and his talents as a Cahalith increased his sense of camaraderie with his new family. As the years passed, Victor gained the respect and admiration of his packmates, and when the original alpha, a Storm Lord named Samuel, was captured, tortured, then burned alive by the Pure, they looked to Victor for leadership.

Though every member of the pack keenly felt the loss of Samuel, Victor took his alpha's death the hardest. Samuel had been like a big brother to him and Victor buried his grief in rage. His first act as alpha was to declare all-out war on the Pure. His words were impassioned as he declared his intention to wipe them from the city, and his pack, caught up in Victor's emotional speech, howled its consent. In the following weeks, no place was safe for the Pure. Victor's pack tracked down human family members of the Pure and burned down their homes or beat them and drove them from the city. Spirits that came to the aid of the Pure were destroyed, bound or tricked into abandoning them. One by one, Victor "purified" the homes or boltholes of the Pure with fire until, finally, the Pure were backed into a corner. Victor's pack surrounded the house the Pure had holed up in and, ignoring the warning twinges of his conscience, he set the place ablaze.

In the weeks following the destruction of the Pure, Victor's pack became more brutal. Their dealings with other Forsaken teetered on the edge of violence; they killed any humans who got in their way, and even spirits learned to fear the pack's approach. Eventually, a minor dispute over territory led to a full-out brawl between Victor's pack and another pack in the city. His pack was only too eager to escalate the confrontation and, after a night spent preparing Molotov cocktails and other weapons to deal with their rivals, Victor fell asleep in front of the TV, and he dreamed. In his dream, Samuel walked with him along the banks of a river of fire.

Victor could see the other members of the pack on the far bank, howling with glee as they threw men, women and children into the river. With each death, the faces of his packmates became wilder and more bestial until, with no one left to burn, the pack turned on each other. Victor looked around for Samuel and found he was all alone, left with the river of fire and his own rage and grief for company.



Upon awakening, Victor assembled the pack and, for the first time in a long time, saw them for what they were. Each member of the pack snapped at the others, their behavior erratic. In their faces and demeanor, he saw hints of impending madness that heralded the approach of *Zi'ir*, the endless Rage. He told them about his dream and the pack looked uneasy. Using his words to inspire, rather than enrage, Victor urged them to look within themselves. He owned up to his part in what they had become and asked for their forgiveness. He led the pack in a Funeral Rite for the Pure and made overtures of peace to the pack they'd been ready to fight to the death. As sanity slowly returned to the pack, they renamed themselves Conscience and, working with other werewolves in the city, created the Lodge of Saints to monitor both themselves and other werewolves for signs of the downward spiral that had almost consumed them.

## DESCRIPTION

Victor is short, stocky and lightly muscled, a leftover from his days of working construction. He keeps his long, blonde hair pulled back into a ponytail and favors jeans and t-shirts with sturdy work boots. Though quick to laugh and smile, there still lurks a bit of the old mania in his eyes when he becomes set on a course of action. When he takes the form of a wolf, his fur is a deep, silver gray, against which his spirit brands shine like birthmarks. Victor attempts to deal fairly with everyone, while maintaining his view of the greater picture. He realizes just how easily events can spiral out of control and how emotion can get the upper hand, especially in creatures for whom emotion runs high and hot. His patience has definite limits, however. If the actions of a werewolf or pack threaten to destabilize a territory, if an Uratha steps out of line or if he believes he's acting for the greater good, Victor becomes a relentless adversary.

## SECRETS

Victor's most poorly kept secret is that he's a multiple murderer of both humans and werewolves. While he doesn't make any serious effort to hide the details of his past, he also doesn't walk up to each person he meets and immediately launch into the story of how he came to be the person he is today. If questioned about his past, he will answer truthfully and, given his auspice, will reply in a manner that is bound to be insightful and educational. Victor is quick to absolve the rest of his pack of violating the Oath of the Moon, taking the lion's share of the burden of guilt and shame onto himself. Unasked, Victor is only likely to tell his tale to other Uratha he believes are walking down the same path he's already traveled, in hopes of showing them the pitfalls that lie ahead. For werewolves who prove unresponsive, Victor's story is often the last thing they ever hear.

Less well known is the more recent blood that stains his claws. To all appearances, the Lodge of Saints is all about redemption and balance, and about teaching werewolves

## CONSCIENCE

Though its numbers may rise and fall with fatalities or as a result of other complications, Conscience has never been a small pack. When he inherited leadership from Samuel, Victor stood as alpha over a pack of 10 Uratha, and that number has remained more or less consistent as time goes by. As part of fulfilling its duties as a Lodge, the pack is rarely found all in the same place at the same time. It scouts out other cities, looking for packs or lone wolves that seem to be teetering on the edge, and reports its findings to Victor. Storytellers who wish to use Victor and his pack as antagonists can modify the size of the pack to any number that seems appropriate for their campaign. Presented below are the core members of the pack and those most likely to be found accompanying Victor at any given time.

- **Georgia:** An Iron Master and the pack Ithaeur. Victor relies on her for guidance on how to treat new spirits or the totems of other packs Conscience has dealings. Georgia is tall and skinny, with short, bobbed red hair and a pale complexion. She dresses for comfort, preferring shorts and baby Ts when the weather permits, and is never seen without her iPhone. Friendly enough to deal with, Georgia has something of an unrequited crush on Victor. When the time comes for taking action against a wayward wolf, Georgia prefers the punch of her sawed-off shotgun to going head to head with larger opponents.

- **Murphy:** An Elodoth Storm Lord who acts as Victor's second in command. Murphy is tasked with keeping tabs on where each member of the pack is at any given time and with running the show when Victor isn't around. Of medium height and build, Murphy is about as unassuming as a Storm Lord can be, which isn't to say he doesn't have opinions he's willing to share. His usual dress is classy casual, and he's meticulous to the point of obsessive about personal grooming and cleanliness. In battle, Murphy harasses opponents, intentionally goading them into Death Rage, preferring to fight a mindless enemy rather than worrying about unexpected tricks.

- **Enrique:** A Blood Talon Rahu, with all the attitude one might expect from such a combination of tribe and auspice. Cocky and just a little bit arrogant, Enrique has appointed himself Victor's bodyguard and nothing Victor can say has dissuaded him from this notion. Enrique is covered in tattoos from his days as a *cholo* before the change. His style of dress is best described as ghetto chic and he always sports at least one ostentatious piece of diamond jewelry. Enrique verges on the edge of berserker wrath in combat, always closing with his enemies as quickly as possible to tear into them with tooth and claw.

on the brink how to regain their equilibrium. All too often, though, lone wolves who approach Zi'ir and come to Victor's attention tend to vanish — permanently. The same goes for Uratha who belong to packs, though Victor tends to be more circumspect, always arranging matters so it looks like the death was an accident. Alphas are given even less leeway. Victor knows exactly how much influence an alpha has over his pack and he moves decisively to snip the problem in the bud. Better one Uratha die than lead others into insanity. The Lodge of Saints calls this culling of dangerous werewolves “pruning,” and works hard to ensure other werewolves never suspect it is behind the attacks.

Worse, Victor's judgment has become muddled. Spotting Zi'ir used to be easy. But now, he sees the shadows of tainted Harmony everywhere, often mistakenly interpreting an odd compulsion or curious behavior as a clear marker of an Uratha's impending madness. His hands are red with the blood of werewolves who, by the laws of his own lodge, probably shouldn't have been targeted in the first place.

The last secret is known only to Victor. Every so often, the Lodge of Saints finds a whole pack that is beyond redemption and, worse, is so intimately tied to its territory that removing it is bound to arouse suspicion. In cases like these, where his hands must be seen to remain clean, Victor contacts the Pure, who are more than happy to cleanse Forsaken werewolves. He knows from his own past experiences just how thorough a job the Pure can do. The rest of his pack suspects something unusual is going on, especially when it is told to back off a potential target, but none of them have yet put two and two together. If they do, the Lodge of Saints may decide that Victor needs pruned.

## RUMORS

*“Harry was going off the deep end, man. I mean, he started butchering bums for sleeping in his territory because he believed they made the disease-spirits stronger. Figured it wasn't too long before either the cops caught up with him, or his pack had to do something drastic. Then these wolves called Saints showed up and had a word with him. Whatever they said must have done the trick, 'cause Harry's been on the straight and narrow since then. That might have something to do with the hole they ripped in his guts. Still aches in cold weather, he says.”*

Most Uratha aren't really sure how, exactly, Victor and the Lodge of Saints operate. To outside eyes, it looks like the pack simply shows up and has a sit-down with a wayward wolf and everything is hunky dory. What they don't see is the fear of God that Conscience puts into those who attract its attention. Werewolves heal rapidly and so Victor doesn't have much of a problem using force to back up his philosophy.

*“So there was this loner in town a while back. Name of Newton or something. Anyways, he got it in his head that another pack was trying to muscle in on his territory. ‘Territory,’ that's a laugh. He controlled two blocks around a 7-Eleven. So, Newton started hunting the hunters. Sneaking*

*up on Uratha when they were by themselves. Killed a couple, from what I heard. This guy named Victor, some out-of-town wolf, started asking questions about Newton, and next thing you know, no one can find the bastard.”*

It's impossible for Victor to completely cover his tracks when the situation calls for a little selective pruning. Suspicious packs with the time and capability to do a little digging could put together a string of missing person incidents that coincide with Victor's visits.

*“Ever since half of that Eastside pack was killed fighting a Beshilu, the rest seemed a little on edge. They took to burning down any pet store that carried rats, and I guess a few humans got caught up in the flames. Indiscriminate is the word that best describes them. All the other packs in town knew what was going on, but none of 'em felt it was their job to stop it. Someone stopped it, all right. Best I can figure is that something they burned down or one of the humans they killed belonged to the Pure, 'cause that pack is gone and now we have some crazy Predator Kings claiming their turf.”*

The Pure don't really need an invitation to kill Forsaken, but Victor gives them one anyway. In their eyes, he's doing them a favor by pointing out packs that are so weak internally it doesn't take much to knock them down. Of course, not every Pure pack rides in, cleans house, then rides back out again. Some decide to stay. This is a side effect that Victor has decided is preferable to having a pack of crazed Uratha on the prowl, but it's unlikely most Forsaken would agree with him.

## VICTOR LAWRENCE

**Auspice:** Cahalith

**Tribe:** Hunters in Darkness

**Lodge:** The Lodge of Saints

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3 (4/7/5/4), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)

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

**Mental Skills:** Computer 3, Crafts (Construction) 3, Investigation 4, Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Drive 1, Larceny (Breaking and Entering) 3, Stealth 4, Survival 2, Weaponry (Knife) 5

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Expression 3, Persuasion (Reason) 5, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Contacts (Lodge of Harmony, Fire-Touched) 2, Direction Sense, Fighting Finesse (Knife), Fighting Style: Two Weapons 4, Quick Draw, Resources 2

**Willpower:** 4

**Harmony:** 4

**Virtue:** Justice. No sin goes unpunished. Letting even one wrong stand opens the door for future violations and encourages other sinners.

**Vice:** Pride. Victor is right. Just ask him. No other point of view is relevant and might even be a symptom for future failings on the part of the questioner.

**Initiative:** 8



**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 7

**Primal Urge:** 4

**Renown:** Cunning 4, Glory 5, Purity 3

**Gifts:** (1) Feet of Mist, Know Name, Pack Awareness, Sense Malice, The Right Words; (2) Scent of Taint; (3) Command Fire, Sagacity, Unspoken Communication; (4) Shadow Flesh, Soul Read; (5) Vanish

**Rituals:** 3; **Rites:** (1) Funeral Rite, Rite of Dedication, Rite of the Spirit Brand; (2) Rite of Healing, Rite of Initiation

**Essence/Turn:** 13/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Knife	2(L)	13

## THE LODGE OF SAINTS

Every werewolf has her breaking point. Try as she might to hold to the Oath of the Moon, sometimes circumstances force her hand and she ends up doing something that degrades her nature. After that first misstep, the next is easier and the next even easier than that, until she begins to wonder why she ever believed all that claptrap about Harmony in the first place. For most Uratha, this is a one-way trip that ends in insanity or death. The Lodge of Saints offers another way.

The Saints believe in fighting fire with fire. A wolf who starts to like causing pain a little too much might just need a taste of it himself. It only takes a step for werewolves to cease being part-time monsters, and the Saints are there to put an end to wolves who cross that line. Not every sin calls for the death penalty, however. Sometimes a judicious beating gets the message across without the need for bloodshed. The Saints do act, on occasion, as mediators between warring packs and it's this role they are best known for. Some Uratha might have suspicions about the Lodge's other activities, but the Saints are scrupulous about covering their tracks, especially after a pruning.

"Pruning" is the euphemism the Lodge prefers. Sounds nicer than "murder," doesn't it? All the same, some wolves just need killing. If one mad dog needs to be put down for the good of the pack, the Lodge is there to do it when no one else will. It's a hard, difficult and thankless job that threatens the sanity of the Lodge members who see it through. Fortunately, they can turn to their fellows for help in overcoming the trauma, thus ensuring they don't become another problem for the Lodge to solve.

**Prerequisites:** Purity ●●●, Intimidation ●●●, Brawl or Firearms or Weaponry ●●●

**Membership:** The Lodge is open to any tribe or auspice that is willing to walk the hard road to protect the People from themselves. Not every Uratha is up to

## STORY HOOKS

- Some wolves have suggested the characters' pack is a little out of control. It's all lies, of course. Shit happens in the course of a hunt, after all. Just a few humans in a city full of them. The pack gets a message from some dude named Victor who wants to come for a visit. He says he can help them. Question is do they want his help? The tone of his voice suggests that ignoring his request could be dangerous.

- The characters know a Bone Shadow, name of Treadfoot. He's an odd duck, always has been, even since before his First Change. He's reclusive, and has an array of compulsions (has to line up loose objects, has to use iambic pentameter when he speaks, has to brush his teeth at least three times a day). Except he's dead now. Pack finds him shredded up on the side of a highway. Of course, Victor killed him, convinced that Treadfoot had gone *Zi'ir*. But the pack will have to discover that information somehow, track it back to the Lodge of Saints.

- One of the wolves in the pack, or maybe one of the Uratha the characters know, has gone off the reservation. The imbalance grows. Others know it, too. They receive a slip of paper with a phone number on it. If they call it, a girl with a small voice explains that "the Saint" will be in touch. What have they unleashed?

the challenge, and prospective member must submit to an evaluation by a more experienced member who tests their capabilities. Worthy candidates will be given a mission and are constantly monitored during the course of the mission. Candidates are usually given the toughest job the Lodge can find, usually one that will require pruning. Candidates who handle their duties with cool aplomb are admitted to the Lodge; those with substandard performances or who refuse to fulfill their obligations are denied.

**Benefits:** Full members are given training on how to control their own emotions, as well as on letting go of past events that could threaten their state of mind. Lodge of Saints members gain a +3 bonus to resist entering Death Rage. Additionally, Lodge members can sniff out corruption in other werewolves. Once per scene, a Saint can attempt to discern the current Harmony rating of a werewolf by rolling Wits + Empathy.

# THE MONSTER IN THE DARK: WANDERING JACK

*IT'S COMING WITH THE DARKNESS. RUN.*

**Aliases:** Jackson Louis Bodine, Bloody-Toothed Lou

## BACKGROUND

Nobody wants to be a monster. Nobody wants to wake up covered in blood, desperately wondering who or where or how or why, without a single concrete memory. That mystery's the worst part; it digs in deep and starts gnawing away until everything brings back some half-hidden memory, some clue to the hidden atrocities.

Wandering Jack doesn't want to be a monster, but he doesn't have a say in the matter.

## BLOODY-TOOTHED LOU

Jackson Louis Bodine started using his middle name after his Change. He joined the Talons of the Green River, and even back then, his packmates saw two sides to him. When it was just them, he was a nice enough guy, though wound pretty tight. When given an excuse to take on another form, he released all of his pent-up aggression on anyone and anything that got in his way. All too often, his bloodlust was an asset; as an average guy who'd never been in a bar fight, Jackson needed every edge he could get. Thing is, the pack didn't always have something for Jackson to sink his teeth into. His pack was happy to patrol its territory on four legs, but the strange senses of his Urshul form messed with Jackson's head. Feeling trapped, he took his Rage out on a random guy walking down the street. The guy hadn't done anything to Jackson, but that didn't stop the werewolf tearing into him, powerful jaws ripping bloody chunks of flesh out of an innocent victim.

His pack had doubled back when they realized Jackson wasn't with them. Interrupting his savage attack, they fought him back and held him for long enough that Jackson could take his human form again. Appalled at what he'd done, he called for an ambulance while his victim's blood still dripped from his jaws. From that day, the rest of his pack knew him as Bloody-Toothed Lou.

To some werewolves, having Bloody-Toothed Lou for a packmate would be a liability, a breach of the Oath of the Moon waiting to happen. The Talons of the Green River took the long view — Jackson was a savage creature, but that was to their benefit. A werewolf hadn't

changed within a hundred miles of their territory since Jackson, and as a pack that focused more on spiritual matters, he was their secret weapon. He met physical threats head on, giving the rest of the pack a chance to discover a weakness they could exploit. Just the threat of letting Bloody-Toothed Lou loose was enough to cow more than one wayward spirit.

Even though the Talons of the Green River found good use for him, Bloody-Toothed Lou still caused them problems. He learned to harness his Rage, but he was never really in control of it. And though he could take other forms without a repeat of the incident that gave him his name, Jackson in his Hishu form was a very different person from Bloody-Toothed Lou. Eventually, his pack found out why.

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Jackson Bodine never joined a tribe. His packmates didn't ask him why, but they found out after a time: he never accepted what he was; he never thought of himself as a werewolf. All the Tribes of the Moon require a werewolf to recognize he's not a man anymore: he's part man, part wolf and part spirit. Jackson never did that. He was still a man in his heart, and he resented the changing nature forced onto him by an accident of birth.

His packmates worried about his state of mind — most Ghost Wolves learn to accept what they are after a while, something Jackson stubbornly refused to do. Combined with the amount of time he was spending away from the pack, they started to worry. Finally, after knowing him for two years, Oathmaker Lyn — his alpha — followed Bloody-Toothed Lou when he thought he was alone. What she saw shocked her. He stopped off at the town's bus station to clean up and change into clothes he'd stashed in a locker. He then took his car and drove home to his wife and child.

Listening in without being seen, she realized why Bloody-Toothed Lou had such a divide in his personality — he'd been living a normal life, never telling his family what had happened to him. Jackson Bodine lied to his wife about getting a whole lot of overtime at the office, because bonding with his pack filled a hole in his soul

that she wouldn't recognize. Bloody-Toothed Lou lied to his pack about being a part of their family, because he had people on the outside who meant more to him than his pack.

The pack didn't know what to make of the sudden revelation. They'd always trusted each other — that was the point of having a pack, a group of werewolves who trust each other implicitly. For some, Bloody-Toothed Lou's betrayal, combined with his weird personality shifts, was the last straw. They wanted to wash their hands of the strange Ghost Wolf. Others saw him as a real challenge, a chance to really drive home what makes a werewolf part of a pack. The debate raged behind the scenes for three days. In the end, the Talons of the Green River decided they'd be better off without the Ghost Wolf.

Perhaps some of the blame for what happened next rests on their heads. On a moonless night after a long hunt, they told Bloody-Toothed Lou what they'd learned. Jackson can't remember what happened next, but nobody's heard from the Talons of the Green River since. He doesn't want to remember. He went home to his wife and his daughter, hoping to forget the chapter in his life when some freaks convinced him he was a werewolf.

### JACK'S FIRST STEPS

No werewolf can deny himself for long. The power of Rage burning deep within is a primal, spiritual anger that cannot be ignored. Though Jackson Bodine could try to suppress it and ignore what he was, it would come to consume him. One night, four months after leaving the Talons of the Green River, the world told Jackson what it thought about his choice.

He had it easy to start with, but then the dreams came: terrible nightmares of blood and pain, flashes of people he had once known, screaming in pain. Jackson first started cursing people out and snapping with-

out provocation. Forcing himself to ignore the cries of the spirits, to ignore his need to change forms and experience the world in the full range of his forms, he tried to live a normal life. He knew he couldn't keep control for long without other werewolves, but Jackson was sure he could hold it together. He didn't notice the imbalance in his life until it was too late.

Jackson doesn't remember what happened. That's a running theme in his life. One night, he kissed his daughter goodnight and went to bed with his wife. A week later, he woke up in a barn halfway across the state. He was wearing strange clothes a size too large, and his hair was matted and tangled. He knew the brown residue under his fingernails was dried blood.

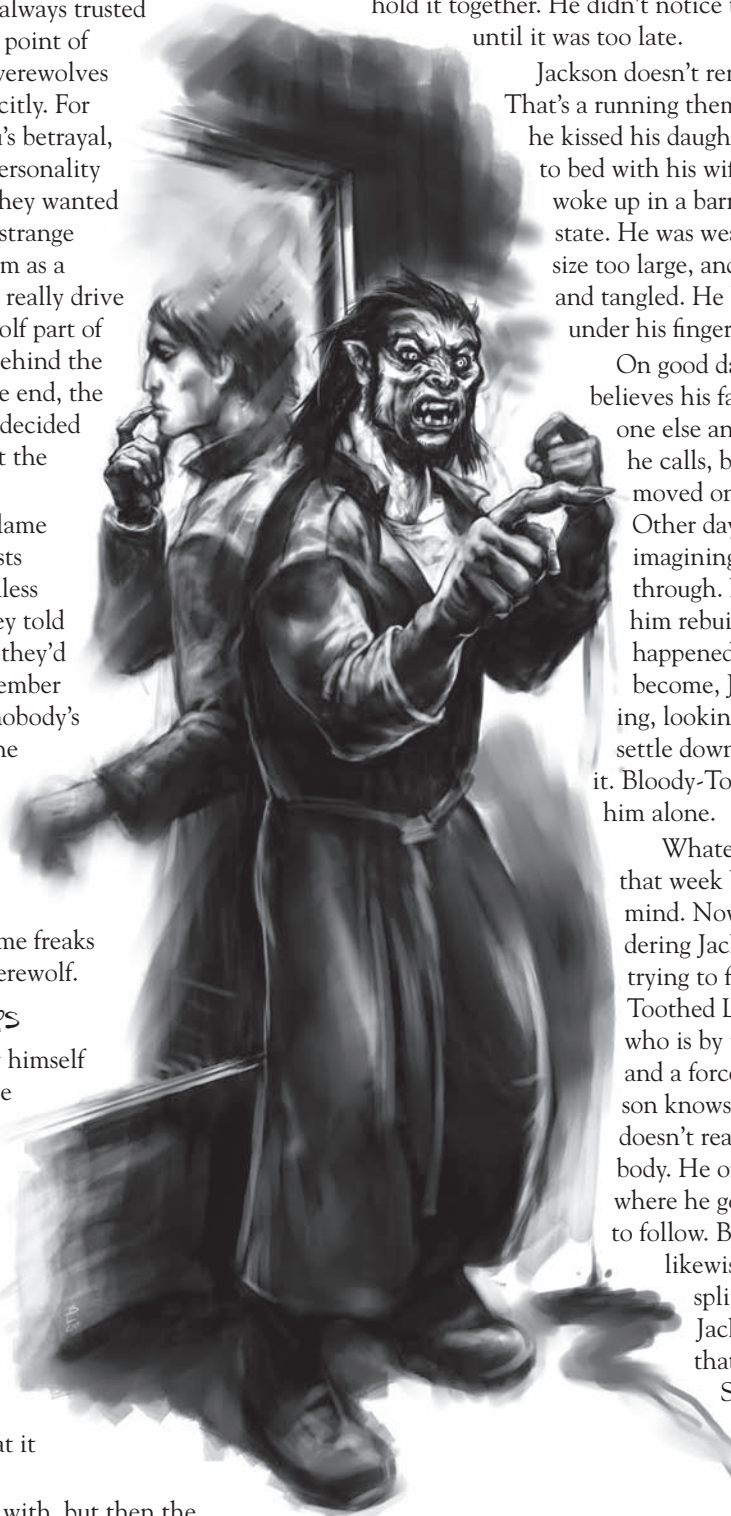
On good days, Jackson Bodine believes his family is safe. Sure, someone else answers the phone when he calls, but they must just have moved on when he vanished. Other days, he spends hours imagining the pain they went through. Nothing yet has helped him rebuild his memory of what happened. Fearing what he has become, Jackson started walking, looking for somewhere he can settle down. So far, he hasn't found it. Bloody-Toothed Lou won't leave him alone.

Whatever happened over that week broke Jackson Bodine's mind. Now, he's two in one: Wandering Jack, traveling the country trying to find peace; and Bloody-Toothed Lou, a vicious predator who is by turns a cunning hunter and a force of nature. While Jackson knows of Lou's existence, he doesn't realize that the two share a body. He only knows that everywhere he goes, the monster is soon to follow. Bloody-Toothed Lou

likewise has no idea about the split. To him, Wandering Jack is his prey, and beyond that, he couldn't care less.

Sure, the prey is a wily thing. Lou's never caught more than a glimpse of it, and every time he realizes

it has tricked him, he takes out his rage on anything — and anyone — close at hand.





## DESCRIPTION

After so long running from a constant tormentor, Wandering Jack is on edge. He doesn't look over his shoulder every time he hears sirens, but the howl of a wolf — even on television — makes him very jumpy. He won't spill his story to every stranger who starts a conversation; instead, he makes sure that people around him don't shun him by keeping quiet. When people do get past his twitchy façade, he's a good listener and can really hook in to other people's problems. He can be fine to talk to for an afternoon or a couple of days, but at some point, he changes. Snapping at people and cutting them off, he tries his best to drive away everyone who's got at all close. It's a futile gesture, but he hopes that Bloody-Toothed Lou won't have any new targets. He's working toward two goals. Part of him wants to be strong enough that he can go back home and find out what happened to his family. That's for the future, though. Right now, he wants Bloody-Toothed Lou to go away and stay away, taking his foul murders with him.

Bloody-Toothed Lou is a whole other animal, feeling the primal Rage of a werewolf burning inside his breast, so hot it feels like he's on fire. He had his outlet with the Talons of the Green River, but they always held him back; they never let him have any fun. Since being unleashed, he's reveled in his freedom. Unlike most werewolves, Lou actively enjoys hurting people. For him, the hunt only matters if his victim knows a beast is going to hurt him. He's still human enough to play psychological tricks, breaking into places his prey feels safe and trashing them, leaving disturbing messages in blood. He wants his victims scared, and he wants them to take a long time to die. Some hunts can take days or even weeks, though if he's moving around a lot, he'll sate his fury in an explosion of violence. Bloody-Toothed Lou doesn't care about holding himself in check unless he's tormenting his prey, but he can be manipulative enough when he feels the need.

Wandering Jack never shifts out of Hishu form. He stands maybe 5'10" tall, and he's obviously lost a fair bit of weight in a short span of time. Blue eyes look out from under a disorganized mop of brown hair, and his face is lined from traveling. While he used to favor cheap suits, he's taken instead to wearing worn jeans and a battered leather jacket, the better to blend in wherever he ends up. Bloody-Toothed Lou uses his Dalu form to deal with people. The addition of muscle and altered bone structure present a harder edge, and he's almost unrecognizably the same man — the tendons standing out, the bulk he gains, the gestures and facial tics: it's all different. His hair grows out to shoulder length, and his eyes gain a malicious gleam. In that form, he wears the same clothes as Wandering Jack, but he fills them out with powerful muscle. In his Urshul and Urhan forms, Lou is a powerful gray-furred wolf with jaws stained red, a trait that carries over into his Gauru form.

As a result of his deteriorating Harmony, Jackson's under a powerful spiritual compulsion. He's entirely unable to leave his human form during daylight, and dawn returns him to Hishu form. The compulsion has tied his personalities to his forms: Bloody-Toothed Lou is in charge whenever he shifts out of Hishu form, while in his human form, Wandering Jack is in control.

## SECRETS

Jackson Bodine ceased to exist on the last night he saw his family. Years of repressing his true nature finally unleashed themselves, and taken with the need for the hunt, he left his family behind and took off after the first human he saw. Stalking the man for five blocks, he tore his victim apart and feasted on the body. The pressure of living two lives was too much for him, and he responded to the mental stress by developing multiple personalities: Wandering Jack, the family man who doesn't care for the occult world, and Bloody-Toothed Lou, the vicious monster who lives for the hunt. Though they're aware of each other, neither has realized they share a body; Wandering Jack knows he's unable to shake Lou, and in return, the beast can only taunt his ultimate prey, rather than killing him.

Wandering Jack fears what's happened to his family, but he won't check on them while Lou's around. That's probably a wise idea, for more reasons than he knows. His family believed that the strange killer who murdered a man close to their home also killed Jackson, and when Lou showed up, he was in no mood to correct their misunderstanding. When Jackson next saw them, they begged him to end it. Jackson couldn't do that, so he gritted his teeth and howled to any spirits listening. He traded his family's lives to those spirits, leaving his loved ones alive but Claimed by inhuman entities. Then, he ran.

The Talons of the Green River faced a worse fate. He didn't just leave. Lou followed his alpha when she peeled off from the pack. Maybe she thought he was going to say goodbye, or maybe she wanted to give him another chance. Nobody will know. She let her guard down, and that was the end of her. When the rest of the Talons came running, they found her half-eaten corpse with Lou's scent all over. He'd left traps and warned spirits to be on their guard, and the pack walked into a slaughter.

## RUMORS

*"A serial killer's loose in Alaska. The cops have started calling him the Werewolf, because they say he rakes his victims with metal claws. Add to that, he only kills his victims at night and wild dogs eat his victims before anyone finds them."*

Desperate to be free of Wandering Jack's intervention, Bloody-Toothed Lou realized he would be free to indulge his urge for violence if he was away from daylight. With winter coming, he covered vast distances in his Urhan form and made it up to Alaska. He's got 30 days without Jackson bothering him, and he's going to make

the most of it. While the local packs have heard of the killer, they believe it's a wolf-spirit who has breached the Gauntlet. They're not looking for a lone werewolf on his way to becoming Zi'ir.

*"You heard about the Motel 6 out by Hardacre? Guy moved in there last week, and he's a weird fella. Half the time he just sits there in the bar, keeping himself to himself. Rest of the time, he's there with a bottle of whisky and two or three women in his lap. He's a strange one, and he's going to get run out of town if he ain't careful."*

Bloody-Toothed Lou's urges don't restrain themselves to mere violence. He wants a woman, and he's not being choosy. Worse, he leaves the women too dead to complain when he's done. Unfortunately, he's in a small town, and a stranger with one thing on his mind stands out like a sore thumb. Once more, Wandering Jack will feel the retribution for something he doesn't remember doing. What will happen when he wakes up with a strange woman's body in his bed and the law knocking on the door?

### WANDERING JACK

**Auspice:** Rahu

**Tribe:** Ghost Wolf

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

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

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Computer 1, Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Medicine (First Aid) 1, Occult (Werewolves) 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Stealth 3, Survival (Wilderness) 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Brawling Dodge, Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fresh Start

**Willpower:** 6

**Harmony:** 2 (Multiple Personality, Fugue)

**Virtue:** Fortitude. Jackson won't stop until he's escaped the monster, and Lou won't stop until he's eating Jackson's remains. Neither will let anything distract them for long.

**Vice:** Wrath. Lou lives for his vice, thinking up new and disturbing ways to vent his anger on anyone who pisses him off. Jackson tries to keep his negative feelings buried, but anyone who pushes him just that bit too far will realize why he tries to remain in control.

### STORY HOOKS

- A relative of one of the pack is vacationing in Alaska over the winter. She'd been enjoying it until her town became the focus of the "Werewolf Killer," and she's in fear for her own life. All the local werewolves want the killer's head, Pure and Forsaken alike. Tensions run high, too high for packs to work together. Foreign werewolves, like the characters' pack, are the locals' prime suspects.

- The pack has to deal with the Claimed that Jackson left behind — the Claimed that are, or were, his family. Can the pack cure his family? Does the family need to be "put down," being too far gone? Either way, does it somehow draw the attention of Bloody-Toothed Lou, thus revealing to the characters exactly how the family got that way to begin with?

- The characters might have held territory next to the Talons of the Green River, and heard about that pack's wayward member — and their eventual fate. Well, now he's back, and in the characters' territory. Unfortunately, he's not exactly discreet. He tried to take his anger out on a local pack of Pure, and got the shit kicked out of him for his trouble. Now they're on the warpath, and they assume the characters have something to do with it.

**Initiative:** 8 (10/12/11/8 including Fast Reflexes)

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

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

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

**Primal Urge:** 2

**Renown:** Cunning 2, Honor 1, Glory 2, Purity 1

**Gifts:** (1) Clarity, Crushing Blow, Feet of Mist, Mask of Rage, Warning Growl; (2) Father Wolf's Speed, Hone Rage, Traveler's Blessing.

**Rituals:** 1; **Rites:** Rite of Dedication, Rite of the Spirit Brand

**Essence/per Turn:** 11/1





# CHAPTER II

## THE SHADOWS

NO MATTER WHAT THE SOURCE,  
SOMETHING STRANGE IS ENGULFING OUR  
PLANET. IT DOES NOT MATTER  
IF THESE UNBELIEVABLES ARE COMING  
FROM SOME DISTANT STAR  
OR FROM THE FOURTH DIMENSION.  
THEY ARE HERE.

— JOHN KEEL,  
"THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO MYSTERIOUS BEINGS"

# ALL THE BETTER TO EAT YOU WITH: ADARUSHARU

THAT'S A GOOD LITTLE GIRL — YOU RUN. YOU LOOK LOVELY WHEN YOU RUN.  
LEAVE YOUR HUSBAND TO ME. HE'S BIGGER AND HE THINKS HE CAN FIGHT ME OFF.  
HIS TERROR WILL SAVE ME FOR DAYS.

**Aliases:** Hungry Teeth

## BACKGROUND

Imagine a planned community built 45 minutes from the city. Well-to-do, upper-middle-class families have their McMansions built in organized cul-de-sacs in front of a rustic backdrop, butted right up against old growth trees. The view increases the market value, which is great on resale. Terry, the trophy wife who lives at 68 Parkview, is walking her dog, a tiny, inbred puppy. Mopsy pulls out of her collar and runs into the brush along the manmade lake, after some pigeons. Terry curses and clacks her well-manicured heels after the dog. She follows it for a few yards into the tree line, but the eerie silence of the unfamiliar wild has silenced her shouts of “Mopsy, darling!” and she treads carefully.

Too carefully, in fact, as she surprises a pack of hungry wolves feasting on Mopsy. She screams when 16 hungry stares turn toward her. Before Terry dies, she sees only teeth, fur and those terrible yellow eyes. Some maintenance people find her eaten body two days later. The little dog is long gone (as in *long digested*).

Unlikely? Yes. Impossible? No. Zoologists would say that between Terry’s planned community encroaching on the wolves’ territory, Mopsy appearing so very preylike and Terry startling the wolves, the attack wasn’t that surprising.

Now, imagine Turk and his college buddy, Vince, drinking in a park. They’ve been at it for hours and they show no signs of stopping as the sun rises for morning. Vince sees something in the tree line and whistles, then points it out to Turk. They both spot a lone, lean, mangy dog shuffling toward the park benches. Turk, being less wise, gets up and starts to walk to the creature, saying something like, “Here, puppy, good dog.” Only, this is very much *not* a dog. It growls in warning before snapping at Turk and biting into his leg. He screams and hits the ground. The wolf bites again, and this time its teeth dig into Turk’s shoulder. Turk is down and the wolf runs back

into the woods. Vince drags Turk to a hospital, but he dies before he can be treated.

In this case, the zoologist would say what happened was just a case of rabies, and that Turk’s wounds would not have been fatal if he hadn’t been bitten so close to the head. His drinking likely didn’t help the situation.

So why is it, then, if wolf attacks are so rare and so easily explained, that even today humans are still terrified by the very idea of wild wolves and what they might do? The Adarusharu, a Host that feeds on fear, is one large part of the answer. Like many things in the World of Darkness, the story may have fed the fear as much as the fear fed the story. Either way, the Adarusharu are getting fed.

## DESCRIPTION

It’s right to fear the unknown something in the woods, especially when that something has a penchant for human flesh. Not all stories of monstrous wolves stealing babies and eating the infirm are untrue. Some small percentage is werewolves, sure. But that’s not the real problem. The problem is the Adarusharu.

By all appearances, the Hungry Teeth are a pack of semi-sentient wolves who linger near the boundaries between man and wild, waiting and watching for man to cross that line. When the Hungry Teeth find him, they don’t stop chasing. They harry him until he’s unconscious from fear or exhaustion, and then they rend him into little bits.

With slower or smaller prey, the catch is faster and easier, but less satisfying, and puts the pack back on the hunt just that much faster. Given the choice, the Adarusharu will always choose the larger, more dangerous prey, because the fear is so much more satisfying.

Being possessing spirits of fear, they know it better than anything else. They know how to elicit the most terror from prey and use the woods and their group dynamic to juice their target for every ounce of adrenaline. That said, the Hungry Teeth know fear, but they cannot experience it themselves.



## Lost in the Woods

Dear Editor,

I read your article last week saying that we should be “cautious” when hunting down the wolves that are attacking us. In short, are you insane?

Attacks on hikers are becoming more prevalent and have begun to stir local officials to action. A town hall meeting last night resulted in Mayor Matthews announcing a plan to offer bounty to any hunters who bring in wolf carcasses. Normally, this sort of announcement would have local conservationists in an uproar, but after reports from one surviving hiker last week, dissenters are silenced.

I got a chance to speak with said survivor yesterday, and she has consented to let me recount her story here.

Mary, we'll call her, and her fiancé, Frank, were enjoying the scenery near Thomas Creek. Frank was an unapologetic outdoorsman with a deep love of nature. He was also a large man of intimidating proportions. Mary whispers that might have been what killed him.

When the sun set, Mary and Frank sat down with a blanket and some candles for a pleasant dinner for two.

and Mary won't say any more about what physically happened to her husband when the pack of wolves actually took him down. She didn't see much, thankfully. She'll only whisper that she'd never heard Frank scared before in the years they'd known each other. He was scared to death, she said, and then started crying uncontrollably.

I have to say, without too much bias, after hearing Mary's account of these terrors, I side completely with Mayor Matthews: this menace needs to be put down. Permanently.

If a pack can be cornered, it will attack with twice the madness of a rabid animal, but none of the recklessness, as the pack's full intention is to escape back into the hidden places in the woods in order to return to the hunt unmolested. If a single member of the pack is captured, the Hungry Teeth will abandon its fellow in favor of the woods. A captured member of the pack will waste away and die in a matter of hours, further implicating rabies as the cause of the attacks, and not something supernatural.

Reports of hunting packs are scattered. Often, hunters or campers describe these wolves as impossibly black with eyes that glow yellow even when there is no light to reflect. Across the board, however, when the pack attacks, the descriptions prove dramatically different from mundane wolves. Sometimes they are as big as horses; sometimes they appear to move vast distances without running, or multiply in number. People near the area of attacks often report that the wolves' howls sound like the screams of tortured men, and they smell like rot and blood.

(Note that on you'll find two different stats for the Adarusharu, separated by slashes. The first is the “swarm form,” or stats for one of the individual wolves within the Hungry Teeth pack. The second is the “war form,” where the Adarusharu coalesce into a single, awful creature — a horse-sized, many-headed wolf-monstrosity.)

## SECRETS

The biggest secret is, of course, that these are not wolves. That's obvious to werewolves, perhaps, but not to everybody else — hence the news articles, the urban legends, the mayor's bounty on wolf pelts or paws.

The second secret, one not so clear to the Uratha, is that these are not wolf-spirits, either. They are wolf-Hosts, shards of some ancient wolf-creature that continue to find their ways into the hearts of actual wolves, or even dogs. These new *shartha* find their way toward other such creatures, forming packs and becoming Adarusharu. They do not eat the Gauntlet or strengthen it, instead finding that *fear* is their meal, their purpose. It is a powerful side effect, then, that their behavior only helps to bolster mankind's fear and distrust of wolf populations — or maybe, unbeknownst to them, that is their true purpose, and not a side effect at all.

The nature of a Host is one of the most logical reasons that a “pack” of this entity will so quickly abandon captured comrades. On an instinctual level, it is better to lose a toe than a leg, or a leg rather than one's whole body, and each part of the whole is merely that: a part. When cornered, the Adarusharu will fight only to distract their attackers and keep them busy long enough for at least one



I can't stop New Dawn from going alone after them. It was his cousin they ate last week, and our so-called alpha won't do anything. He says we can't go after the wolves because we aren't supposed to murder our kin. I told him he heard it all wrong, but he won't listen to me anymore.

New Dawn says the Oath can be damned, and it made me feel sick to my stomach to hear it. I think our Crescent Moon actually threw up when New Dawn said we needed to wipe them all out. What if it's rabies? What if the cousin provoked it? What if it's all some kind of mistake? I have seen wolves in the wild just a few times, and all before my First Change. They're so beautiful, so strong and so smart. Hell, they're shy around people.

None of it makes any sense, but no one wants to listen to me. Like I said, I can't stop New Dawn; all I can do is pray - I just wish I knew who for.

to get away. After all, it only takes one shard of the entire pack to survive in order for the whole to reform later.

If this were not enough of a problem in and of itself, like the Spiders and Rats, these wolves have a strange relationship with the Gauntlet. Maybe fed by some ancient and forgotten pact with Luna, when the Adarusharu can see the moon in the sky, they are able to move back and forth across the Gauntlet wantonly. These are the best nights for hunting, as it allows the monsters to seem to appear and teleport wherever is most convenient for terrifying their prey.

Whereas a formed Adarusharu can often exhibit dramatic and obvious otherworldly qualities in the material world, wolves carrying a shard that have not yet joined a Host are as yet indistinguishable from their brothers and sisters. That all changes once they join a pack of Hungry Teeth, of course. At that point, they become dark, mangy wolves, and their true nature awakens.

This has, in the past, led very desperate packs of Forsaken to commit egregious acts, up to and including wiping out local wolf populations in the hopes of ending any potential Host formation in the long run. The Pure

are not fond of this tactic, obviously. The Predator Kings find it aberrant and will move to stand in the way of such lupine genocide.

## RUMORS

*“You know, in the old days, these monsters were never a threat, right? Back then, you know, when people really lived with nature and had regular interaction with the wild, and the healthy fear of the wild they should have, you didn’t have the Adarusharu to worry about. Fact of the matter is, without the healthy, normal fear of the wolves in the woods, modern man has just about starved out the natural spirits of fear and forced them to take on these horrible forms. You get people out in the woods, scared, and these monsters will get back to natural activities and stop killing.”*

Not true, and in fact, this “solution” would only prove to make the Host stronger. There is all indication that the Adarusharu have been around as long as werewolves have, and there is no indication that people moving out of rural areas has increased their occurrences in the slightest. The Host feeds on the energy of fear from humans, and spirits only know how to get stronger, not how to maintain their own balance.

*“Well, sure, they look like monsters, but they aren’t malevolent spirits that should be destroyed on sight. The fact is, they’re the distant cousins of the Uratha, and are actually the true children of the father of all werewolves. They are true*

*spirits and therefore not bastards like the Uratha. Why else would the Pure and Forsaken alike risk the genocide of wolf populations rather than risk Adarusharu coming into power?”*

Probably not true, but then again...? Both the Forsaken and Pure have their own spin on the werewolf creation story, but neither side holds the cornerstone on what can be proven. Think about it. The Spinner-Hag and the Plague King are ancient spirits killed and blasted into tiny bits — the “shards” that continue to infect rat and spider swarms, becoming *shartha* infestations. Well, what about Father Wolf? What happened to his spirit? Could it be lurking within the shards of the Adarusharu? Or could it have been some relation or packmate of Urfarah’s? Even one of his own children?

*“You wanna know where they come from, or how to stop them? Well, hell, son, you can’t have one without the other. Humans did this, or at least, humans do this. Sometimes, some human will get it in his head to try ritual magic in order to join his soul to the soul of a wolf so that he can skin-change like in the old Native American myths. All he’s really doing is lowering the wall between the words and allowing some pretty nasty spirits to come through. These Adarusharu are just the right kind of crazy to cross over, and just the right kind of mean to go back on their deal with the human who summoned them by eating him and running off to cause trouble for the rest of mankind. You see someone talking about skin dancing and shaman bullshit,*





you shoot them first, and then forget about questions later, because you won't like the answer, anyway."

Not true. Their ability to move back and forth through the Gauntlet is an inherent ability and has been a puzzle to those aware of it. It is a common enough rumor connected to Hungry Teeth, however, which sometimes puts packs on a false trail leading toward very real "skin-changers." Some folks really *do* butcher animal skins and use shamanic magic to transform themselves into animals for a time, which is of certain concern to some Uratha... but it isn't the root cause of the Adarusharu.

### ADARUSHARU

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5/8, Dexterity 3/4, Stamina 3/6

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Running,) 4, Brawl (Pack Tactics) 4, Stealth 4

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Inciting Panic) 5, Animal Ken (Wolves) 4

**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 8/9

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 15/19

**Size:** 4 (each "animal" in swarm) / 7

**Health:** 7 (each "animal" in swarm) / 13

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Swarm Attack (Swarm Form)	1(L)	10	See Numina
Bite (War Form)	2(L)	14	—
Multiple Bite (War Form)	0(L)	12, 11, 11	See Numina

### Aspects:

- **Swarm Attack:** Adarusharu take the shape of a pack of wolves, despite being a single entity. In combat, this confers a number of bonuses. Harrying their prey from all angles, each part of the pack is considered an additional attacker for the purposes of determining Defense penalties.

- **Gauntlet Breach:** As per the Numina of the same name in *Werewolf: the Forsaken*, p. 277, except it can be used by the physical form of the Adarusharu and only when the moon is in sight.

- **Sense Fear:** By spending a turn evaluating a group of subjects, the Adarusharu can sense which of the group is potentially most fearful. No roll required; this ability lets the Adarusharu know which member of the group has the

## STORY HOOKS

- A wolf-spirit, acting on behalf of normal wolves, seeks out a pack looking for help. He's terrified and looks on the brink of blinking out of existence. If the pack responds well, they get the haunted message that he and the wolves are in terrible danger. He says "children of Father Wolf" have arrived in his territory and are slaughtering wolves. He says they won't explain what they are doing and that their Renown looks different from the Pack. It's probably some young pack of Forsaken executing wolves because they don't know what else to do, but maybe it's a pack of Pure doing this to lure out the characters — and, when they enter the scene to check it out, the Pure jump them.

- In a rural Forsaken territory, the number of wolf attacks shoots up drastically. While the pack scrambles to figure out what is going on, the mayor and sheriff invite Dwight Washington, a renowned big game hunter, to town. Washington and his entourage arrive in town in a cloud of self-importance and drama. He's currently taping for his show on the Adventure Channel and the network people are excited to record Washington taking out this "menace." The pack surely doesn't want this on television. Worse, it's possible that his whole crew will get killed, and put Washington on the crusader's path. The pack has to do something, but a lot of eyes are now on the area, potentially putting the characters in the crosshairs.

- Somehow, a pack of Hungry Teeth has gotten way out of control. Maybe it's up in Alaska, where wolves run in greater numbers, and where towns are all the more isolated. The pack attacked. The shards spread. Fear rose up in a small town, a town now dead and eaten by the Adarusharu. Worst of all, the pack is now huge. It's taken a number of wolves, and it now numbers in the several dozen. By the time word reaches a pack of Forsaken, it's too late to stop their meteoric rise... but something's got to be done.

lowest Resolve + Composure total, and which have derangements pertaining to fear such as paranoia or a phobia.

- **Stalking:** By spending an Essence, the Adarusharu invokes a -5 penalty to all rolls to notice it, including ambush rolls. This effect lasts for the scene, or until ended by drawing attention to itself.



# LOST PAWN OF THE FUNGAL HOSTS: HARLAN WALTERS

*"I WISH YOU HAD LET ME KNOW YOU WERE COMING...I WOULD HAVE WORN SOMETHING I DON'T MIND GETTING DIRTY."*

**Aliases:** The Rent-a-Cop, The Comeback Kid

## BACKGROUND

Harlan Walters won't stay dead. The Uratha who hunt him don't get it. They've torn him apart, burned him on the pyre, locked pieces of him in different rooms — sometimes across the city — but the bastard keeps coming back. He's become a local spook, a warning against bringing undue violence to bear against one's enemies. *"Sure, it seems like the quick and easy way in the short run, but when the guy keeps*

*coming back, hounding you incessantly, well, not exactly what you signed up for, huh?"*

Considered an acceptable loss when a local pack infiltrated a local medical lab it suspected served as a front for one or several Urged, the original Harlan Walters worked security for one of the most respected companies in the business. Hardly a remarkable man, Harlan called the city his home for his entire life. His friends and family mourned his untimely death, and the police were unable to find any



*Are you kidding me, Jones?  
We cant run this, not even on  
the last page ob the last section.  
We couldnt run this on the kids  
page. Send it obb to WVN if  
you want, but this isnt going in  
my paper.*

**Recorder**  
Newspapers, Inc.

## Local Woman Claims Neighbor Isn't Dead

**HOMWOOD.** Evelyn Malone, 68, tells anyone willing to listen that her neighbor, Harlan Walters, did not, in fact, die last month. Harlan was 38, she tells a trio of teenage boys on the front porch of her Homewood house, when Harlan was shot during a break-in at Esterheart Labs, where he worked as a security technician.

"Harlan is just the sweetest boy," she says. "He wouldn't want to cause a fuss." The fuss he's avoiding, Malone claims, would come if the still-alive Walters revealed himself to the public after having been buried.

When asked to explain the funeral, Malone elaborated: "I just don't think God was done with Harlan. I think He still has work for him to do."

Malone claims she has seen Walters on several occasions since his death, and that he visited her twice.

"He was as sweet as could be, like always. We had lemonade."

Other neighbors of the late Mr. Walters refused to comment.

hard leads. He seemed doomed to fall into obscurity — just another faceless casualty in the long war of the Forsaken.

But somehow, he came back. At first, he visited his old home, gathering a few needed belongings (including a hidden stash of money) and escaping to a makeshift home in an unused storage shed a few blocks away. He kept a low profile, used public transportation and checked the public library and Internet for information on those who had killed him. He watched their movements, spied on their meetings, gauged their strength. And when he had all the information he needed, he dropped off an envelope full of his findings to the police.

The local Forsaken were in an uproar. One of the city's preeminent packs had drawn police attention. The pack managed to wiggle out of any attempts to pin the break-in and murder on it, but each member's reputation among friends, families and coworkers was damaged. A few lost jobs. One lost his wife. The pack went on a rampage, bullying local spirits until it got a name: Harlan Walters, one spirit said, had become Namusiden, one of the Returned. The pack hunted him down in his shed, beat him, tortured him for information (he never broke), then killed him and burned the shed, body inside.

Then Harlan came back. He approached one of the *Azlu*, gave her information on the pack's friends and family. Three wolf-blooded, two loved ones and six family pets fell before the pack put the *Azarath* down. As it died, they managed to rip a name from its lips: Harlan Walters. Again they hunted him down, again they tortured him, again they ripped him apart. Again, he came back. The same drama has played out five times now, and the pack has lost two members to Harlan's schemes. The other Forsaken smell blood in the water and have begun to circle, coveting the once-proud pack's territory.

## THE FUNGAL HOSTS

Few Uratha recognize that the Fungal Hosts even exist. Unlike the more prevalent Rat and Spider Hosts, the Fungal Hosts

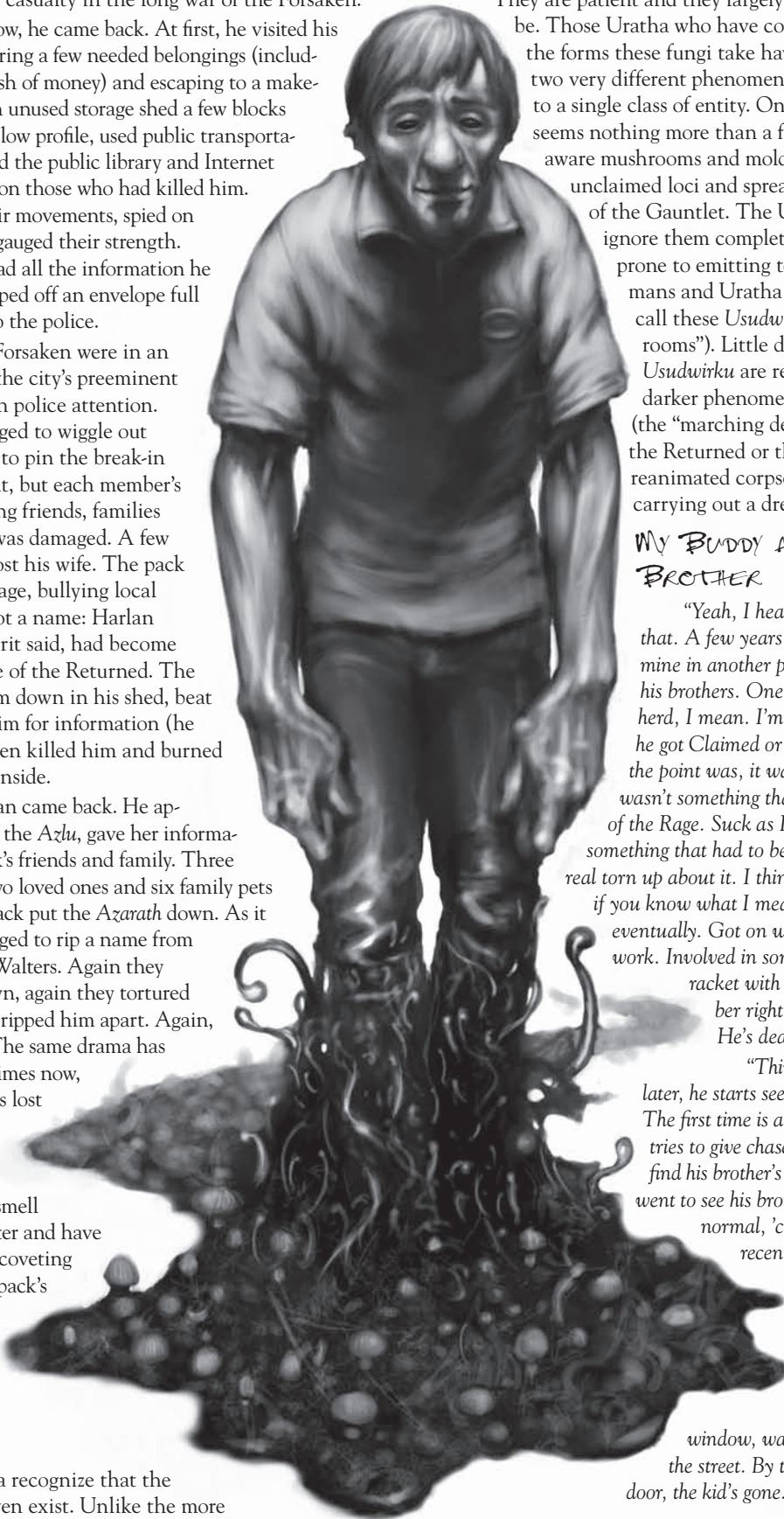
take care not to draw too much attention from the Uratha.

They are patient and they largely leave the Gauntlet be. Those Uratha who have come into contact with the forms these fungi take have yet to realize that two very different phenomena can be attributed to a single class of entity. One phenomenon seems nothing more than a family of spiritually aware mushrooms and molds, sprouting about unclaimed loci and spreading on both sides of the Gauntlet. The Uratha would likely ignore them completely were they not prone to emitting toxins deadly to humans and Uratha alike. The Forsaken call these *Usudwirku* (literally "mushrooms"). Little do they know that the *Usudwirku* are responsible for a far darker phenomenon: the *Namusiden* (the "marching dead"). Also called the Returned or the Reminders, these reanimated corpses haunt the living, carrying out a dread purpose.

### MY BUDDY AND HIS BROTHER

"Yeah, I heard of something like that. A few years back, a buddy of mine in another pack had to kill one of his brothers. One of his brothers in the herd, I mean. I'm not sure why. Think he got Claimed or something. Anyway, the point was, it wasn't an accident. It wasn't something that happened because of the Rage. Suck as I'm sure it did, it was something that had to be done. The guy was real torn up about it. I think it broke him a bit, if you know what I mean. But he got past it eventually. Got on with his life. With his work. Involved in some kind of real estate racket with the Reds, if I remember right. Not that it matters. He's dead now.

"Thing is, a few months later, he starts seeing his brother again. The first time is at night, in shadow. He tries to give chase, but he can't seem to find his brother's scent. Next day, he went to see his brother's grave. Looked normal, 'cept the dirt looked recently churned. And the footprints. The kid's footprints in the mud, leading away from the grave. That night he sees his brother through his window, watching him from across the street. By the time he makes the door, the kid's gone.





"Few nights later, there's a knock at my buddy's door. He opens up and, plain as day, it's his brother looking back at him. Tells him he's come to warn him. Tells him he has to stop whatever it was he was doing with the Reds — I don't know the details. What does my friend do? What would you do, man? I can tell you this: he had to bury his brother a second time. Few months later, he was dead, too. Bit blurry on the details — his people kept it quiet. But maybe, just maybe, he should've taken his brother's advice, you know?"

## THE RETURNED

Some call them the Returned and leave it at that. Others name them the Reminders or the Watchmen in the Dark, attributing to them a certain moral authority. These are beings that *haunt* you because you *fucked up*. Because you killed someone you shouldn't have or failed to save someone who depended on you. In a world as violent as the Uratha's, it can be said that collateral damage happens, that it can't be helped. But that's hard justification and cold comfort to cling to when the damaged return to look you in the eye.

And they *were* dead, no doubt about that. Many passed through a morgue, and a few even had proper funerals. There's paperwork, an autopsy report, a death certificate. There's no doubt, in short, that life had fled. That doesn't stop them from walking around. Others may have been dumped in the woods, their bodies torn apart by Uratha fangs until the blood stopped running. Perhaps one was half eaten. Perhaps one was torn apart, the pieces weighted with pig iron and tossed into the lake at the edge of town.

But they come back, often looking little worse for wear. Wounds have been mended, lost limbs retrieved. One may sport the long Y-shaped incision from her autopsy, while another's chest bears no mark at all. The werewolves would like to dismiss them as mere ghosts, but ghosts don't leave footprints. Ghosts don't eat and drink.

Ghosts don't usually have a mission, either. The restless dead seem to be mere echoes, lost spirits ceaselessly replaying a series of events or experiencing a set of emotions, forever tied to one or two locations. The Returned, on the other hand, seem *driven* to accomplish something. Apparently gifted with some divine knowledge, some shard of truth dragged back with them from the far side of death, they issue warnings, they gather information, they set events in motion. But they never say *why*. They respond to interrogation and even torture with obtuse non-answers and frustrating calmness.

Yet Namusiden seem to attract violence. They don't seem prone to violence themselves, usually, but they are often born of murder and have a tendency to involve themselves in events doomed to end in bloodshed. Perhaps this is merely self-fulfilling prophecy, passed from one loremaster to another; Bone Shadow elders sometimes label the Returned ill omens, practical guarantees that the pack graced by their presence will suffer loss and hardship in the very near future. A few Uratha point out that the life of a werewolf, by its nature, is filled with loss and hardship, but such reasoning rarely takes root in the animistic and often superstitious society of the People.

The Returned, for their part, often seem surprisingly calm, possessed of an acceptance of their lot that eludes so many denizens of the World of Darkness. Even those possessed of the

most violent angers in life can now be almost impossible to drive to anger, giving the impression that they have moved beyond the concerns of the living. They don't make friends (least of all with the Uratha), but they are always *friendly*. Their smiles lack the warmth of the living, however, and their easy aloofness and incessantly calm voices often become disquieting over time. A few Uratha even tell stories of a Returned who grinned as she drove a silver knife between the ribs of a former lover and kept smiling as his packmates tore her to gory ribbons.

## THE USUDWERKU

These fungal entities appear near unclaimed loci, places where the wall between the material world and the Shadow

### A SECOND CHANCE

The Uratha *know* that the Returned are bad news. In some regions, most newly changed werewolves hear at least one story about these tragic figures and the chaos they can cause. Sometimes the story is even firsthand, told by someone who was personally harmed by the actions of these creatures. So why not just kill a Namusiden when it shows up?

First, the Returned hardly advertise themselves as such. When asked what they are or how they returned from the grave, they answer as obliquely as they do any other questions: "I had work to do" or "I simply am — can you not accept that?" No werewolf has developed a Namusiden Identification Testing Kit, nor even a reliable set of traits for determining whether or not the dead man at your doorstep is one of the Reminders (though numerous folktales exist to just this effect).

Second, the Namusiden are so effective (from both their own perspective and that of the story) because they take on familiar faces. Their very appearance triggers feelings of regret, guilt and emotions stronger and more complex still. The Namusiden can be most effective if presented as an opportunity for a second chance, to set things right without resorting to murder.

If the Storyteller needs a mechanical representation of the feelings inspired by the Namusiden, use this: characters suffer a penalty of up to -3 to any rolls representing action against the Namusiden in which emotions might get in the way. When the Namusiden's true plan is unearthed or it is proven incontrovertibly to be a different entity from the host body, this penalty falls to -1. At the Storyteller's discretion, a character with a particularly low (3 or less) Harmony or other Morality score may be too callous to feel attachment to or responsibility for the Namusiden, ignoring the penalty altogether.



has worn thin — and, more important, places where the Uratha hold no influence over the locus. They may grow in exposed soil within an urban area such as a basement, a garden, or even in a compost pile. Some have been reported in landfills or even the occasional abandoned pantry, sprouting from rotting bags of potatoes and boxes of cereal. They are more common in large and old-growth forests, where one might remain unbothered for decades or longer. But always, a locus remains nearby. Uratha who recognize them upon discovering a new locus often regard them with trepidation.

The first and foremost problem with the *Usudwirku* is that they don't stop. They spread from one locus, growing to fill entire glades or, on rare occasions, buildings (often winding their way through ductwork or between the walls). An *Usudwirku* has no central body. Instead, it exists as a mass of twisting, rootlike tubes spread throughout the ground. Some of these tubes sprout above the surface, growing into small, white mushrooms. These mushrooms tend to appear in small colonies clumped together, but several such colonies may arise from a single *Usudwirku*. Unchecked, a single *Usudwirku* can spread initially throughout an area as large a football field, though if left for a long period of time (months, even years), they can grow to far larger proportions, making entire forests or city blocks uninhabitable to Uratha and deadly to humans.

The *Usudwirku* also grow in the *Hisil*, often attracting curious spirits (who recognize their presence as an indication the Uratha are nowhere around) that then utilize the loci to invade the material world.

The second major problem with the *Usudwirku* is that they are virulently poisonous. Like death cap mushrooms, they produce mycotoxins that can kill a human if ingested in even small quantities. No one has ever reported successfully treating a mortal who had consumed *Usudwirku*. Despite their usual resistance to environmental dangers, Uratha are no more immune to the toxins of the spirit-spores than humans are. Worse yet, *Usudwirku* seem to be able to sense the presence of Uratha and react by releasing a toxin into the air. Fortunately, the airborne vector tends to be significantly less virulent than the ingested, but it only affects werewolves.

Each *Usudwirku* produces two types of airborne Essence-laden spores. The first are a variant version of the *Usudwirku* that lives and thrives on a werewolf's skin. This fungus isn't deadly, but can cause severe discomfort in the unfortunate Uratha exposed to it.

The other type of spore, produced less often, results in a fungus that can take over and animate a corpse, returning to it a semblance of life. The Uratha know the result of these spores as the Returned. The Returned exist to spread the *Usudwirku* to other locations and aid their growth by distracting and destroying those who would interfere with them, namely the Uratha.

Unlike spirits, the *Usudwirku* do not seem to be sapient. No known attempts by the Uratha to communicate with them have come to fruition. They do not seem willing to accept any form of chiminage from the People. The fungi make no attempt to fight back when harmed, aside from the defense mechanisms mentioned above. Destroying them, however, can be more difficult to accomplish than simply

rooting up a few mushrooms. The caps of the *Usudwirku* are merely the visible part of the entity. The rest spreads like roots under the ground of the infected area (not to mention the way they cross over into the Shadow), and tearing it all up can be painstakingly difficult.

### FATHER'S HEADSTONE

Some werewolves, particularly among the Pure, claim that the *Usudwirku* came into existence after the death of Father Wolf. They say that the first of this bizarre breed of fungus grew on or beneath what remained of the ancient wolf god's corpse after his children had slain him. The werewolves, in anger at such desecration and filled with shame at their own actions, tore the fungus away and tossed the pieces into the darkness.

But it was too late. The fungus had already taken a measure of Father Wolf's dying power and been forever transformed. Having been torn from the breast of the father of all wolves, the *Usudwirku* easily crafted a poison deadly even to the staunchest of such creatures.

So began the spirit-spores. Those werewolves who believe this tale call the *Usudwirku* "Father's Headstone," and avoid it whenever they see it.

### A CAUTIONARY TALE

"What can I tell you about the Returned? I can tell you you can't trust them. Not a damn word out of their mouths, and don't let them fool you into thinking different, either. They may be a pretty face, a face you miss, a face you once bit off, and they may seem as kind as Gandhi himself, but I assure you, the whole lot of them are up to no good.

"Of course I sound bitter. One of them killed my fucking family, back in '98, way before you showed up. Got half my pack, too. We were called the River's White Howl back then — maybe you heard of us, heard of how we destroyed that nest of rats under the public library, how we hunted down that rite to patch up the damage, how we guarded those rat holes day and night until things were right again. Yeah, that was us. Good wolves every one.

"But that bastard. I guess you should know: it was my kid. My kid with Molly Page. You wouldn't have heard of her, but she was a sweetheart, with hair like the sun at dawn. So, with the rats, you had disease, but before we knew about the rats, we figured people were just getting sick because, shit, sometimes people get sick. I know. It was our territory, so we had an obligation, I get it. Justice came back to haunt me, because my kid caught the disease, the goddamn rat-sickness. Fuck. That was when we figured it out, figured this wasn't normal and we had to take care of it. I spent a lotta nights in that hospital room, second-guessing myself, hating myself for not jumping in there sooner. Shit.

"So the pretender showed up three, maybe four weeks after we buried my son. Molly saw him first, came home in hysterics, sure she'd seen him at the grocery store. Of course, we go and check it out, don't find anything. Or that's what we tell her. Me, I smelled him there. So the Howl digs up his grave and it's empty.

"The kid, or something that looks like my kid, he comes to me, maybe a week later, maybe a bit more. He seeks me out. He looks healthy and hale, has a heartbeat, smells just like my son. He wasn't, but I didn't know that at the time. I asked him to come home with us, he said he couldn't, that he had business to attend to, something to work out, I think is how he said it. He seemed really strong and mature, you know, like a man.

"And you know, I'm not stupid. I've always been...discerning. But this kid had me. He acted exactly like my son. Same voice, same mannerisms. He knew some of our old jokes, even. I bought it. I almost felt proud. How fucked up is that?

"Then he needs help. And that's how they get you; it's a nasty con job. And who am I to refuse the son I couldn't save? I was there with a chance to make it up to him, to set things right. He tells me of a place he can't go. Of something that he needs there, that he can't get to himself. I ask him why, and he...he seems real rushed, nervous, says he'll explain everything when I get back. So I round up the Howls and we go out to Westwood, and there's a trap waiting for us. Two packs of Pure, just waiting for us. Things got real bad. I ran. We ran, I guess, Fink, Erin and I, after Hangman, Wednesday and Santos fell. We didn't want to. God knows I didn't. But what choice did we have? And I had to know, right? I had to know why he did it.

"And when I get home — there was a lot of blood. I smelled it before I had the door open. She, Molly, was on the kitchen floor. He'd done it with a knife, one of our knives. And he was sitting at the dining room table, calm as he could be. I grabbed him by the throat, slammed him against the wall, and he doesn't flinch. I ask him why, and all he can say is that it needed to be done. I lose it, then; see red, and when I come out of it, pieces of him are strewn about the whole damn house. Thing is, on the inside, he was nothing but...slime. Brown, sticky slime.

"Still can't tell you to this day why he did it. It, I mean, not he. It. Was it punishment? I doubt it. Ain't no god to dole it out, is there? But I can tell you one thing: I learned my lesson. I haven't helped a person out since."

### GRUDGE MATCH

The *Usudwirku* are a largely alien threat, despite their mundane appearance. Like a poisonous plant or a disease, fungi cannot be reasoned or communicated with in any way. They seem to operate on sheer survival instinct. And yet the *Usudwirku* also seem to bear some grudge against the Uratha. If a human destroys an *Usudwirku*'s caps, they may not grow back at all. When a werewolf does it, however, the caps return the following day and in greater number. When one of the *Usudwirku* senses the arrival of a pack of Uratha, it poisons the air with a deceptively sweet scent, which gets on the skin and into the lungs and causes intense discomfort.

And then, of course, there are the Returned, seemingly custom designed to torture the Uratha. The *Usudwirku* create *Namusiden* to spread to other loci. They do this irregularly, as the spores that develop into *Namusiden* require carriers, and the *Usudwirku* tend to grow in isolated areas. They

always, however, produce these spores in the presence of the Uratha. Given their violent tendencies, werewolves make ideal carriers for the *Namusiden*. The likelihood of an Uratha coming into contact with (or creating) a corpse, after all, is extremely high. The spores live on the Uratha, causing irritation but nothing more. If the werewolf kills a human or even touches a freshly dead corpse, the spores can claim that body as an appropriate host. They spread through it and return it to life, developing into the Returned. The *Namusiden* then seeks out a locus, vomits up *Usudwirku* spores nearby, and then sets to protecting the immobile *Usudwirku*.

How do they protect it? They do so by *distracting* the Uratha, typically by causing them no end of tragedy and punishment. The *Namusiden* are master manipulators without any guiding moral code and a cruel measure of cunning. They choose the most efficient manner of keeping the werewolves busy, no matter how underhanded. This usually involves playing on the appearance of the corpse they inhabit. They seek out their host body's lovers, friends and enemies, twisting the emotions they inspire to their own ends. They dig up information, something the Returned seem particularly adept at, reading papers, checking the Internet, interrogating and bribing spirits, and spying on its charges, using the info they find to cause more trouble still. The Uratha are the most common recipients of *Namusiden* attention. Sometimes, however, the *Namusiden* involve themselves with other supernatural creatures or even mundane humans, manipulating them into interfering with the werewolves.

*Namusiden* typically choose to spread the *Usudwirku* into the locus of whatever pack it has made contact with; it vomits spores onto the area near the pack's locus, then works to distract the pack from the threat growing at the heart of its territory. Of course, this also serves to protect the *Usudwirku* that spawned it. If the Uratha busy themselves with chasing ghosts, they are less likely to return to that isolated locus to make sure the mushrooms they ripped up stayed dead.

Rarely, however, do Uratha make the connection between the very personal and emotional chaos caused by the Re-

### SLEIGHT OF HAND

The Pure tell of a Returned wolf-blood who sought out her brother's pack after being killed by one of the Forsaken. She found the Forsaken's home and provided the information to the pack, which fell on the Forsaken in righteous fury to avenge her loss. What the Pure don't know is that the Forsaken had been expanding their territory and threatening a locus home to an *Usudwirku*. The Returned's true goal was to stop the Forsaken; any advantage garnered by the Pure pack was incidental. Afterwards the wolf-blood returned to the dead pack's territory. She vomited near their locus, stood up and walked away. She was never seen again.

turned and the inanimate threat of the *Usudwirku*. The abuse the werewolves suffer at the hands of the *Namusiden* seems directly related to the person whose death the *Uratha* were somehow responsible for, not a pile of poisonous mushrooms growing several miles away. Of course, that's exactly how this approach is effective. The fungus remains safe to spread while the werewolves suffer at the hands of what they believe to be a haunting revenant, a moral crisis in a corpse's body.

## DESCRIPTION

*Namusiden* rarely seem very different from the living being they appear to be. They often seem a little more calm, a little more confident, but they share mannerisms, turns of phrase, even odd little predilections and peccadilloes. They wear the same clothes, move the same way, even smell the same. They do appear more aware of the world, more in tune with it, and their hunger for life and experience seems a bit greater. Their appetite, especially, grows with the return from death.

But they also possess a resolve that the living version may never have had. Those who interact with them describe them as "driven," singularly motivated to right some wrong in the world. They exist for a single purpose, and they pursue that purpose with a single-mindedness only available to those with no soul. They remain calm, even in the face of torture or death, not because they have stared death in the face, but because they were never truly alive. The body of the *Namusiden* is but a mask and a puppet, and those who created it care little if it gets a bit beaten up in the process. They can repair it. They can bring it back to life.

Harlan Walters, for example, looks like the same barrel-chested, baby-faced security guard he was in life, or he would had his hair not become utterly untamed and had he not taken to dressing in layers of soiled clothing. He stinks of garbage (from rummaging in Dumpsters for food) and body odor (due to the fetid rags that pass for his clothes). Most *Namusiden* manage to keep themselves together significantly better than Walters does, however. Walters has given up on posing as the man he once was.

For the most part, the *Namusiden* do not feature any obvious physical characteristics indicating fungal-possession. It is possible that, on a *Wits + Investigation* roll (suffering a -3 penalty), a character might notice something odd — a faint green moss underneath fingernails, a tiny toadstool growing out from between one's teeth, or even just a strange mossy *odor*.

The *Usudwirku* themselves appear to be nothing more than a widespread array of fungal blooms and displays: mushrooms, toadstools, greasy molds, verdant mosses, yeasty coatings, all living together happily (where normally only one type might dominate).

## SECRETS

It's hard to say whether the Fungal Hosts actually *hate* the *Uratha* or are just somehow programmed to bring them anguish. It probably doesn't matter, but it does create a question of whether or not the Fungal Hosts are actually sapient — they don't seem to be, and yet the Returned seem to have a lot going on upstairs for a creature without self-awareness.

Whatever the case, the Fungal Hosts see the werewolves as the festering corpse of Father Wolf; that corpse, with the

werewolves included, should be broken down, all Essence returned to the Shadow. The Border Marches no longer exist, so the *Uratha* no longer serve their intended purpose. Thus the *Usudwirku* work to keep werewolves from the Shadow, cutting them off from their birthright by growing unchecked about any locus they can. With time (and without the interference of the werewolves), the spiritual and material world may once again blend. The world will be rejuvenated, once again becoming *Pangaea*. In a roundabout way, the Fungal Hosts are just doing what fungus always does: forming a bridge between life and death, growing on dead things to break them down to bring all materials back together again. It's part of a cycle. Problem is, spirits aren't really part of a *natural* cycle, and neither are the Fungal Hosts, and nor are werewolves. It applies sane laws to a broken supernatural hierarchy (with the results being less than pleasant).

And what about the Returned? While the *Usudwirku* create the *Namusiden* as a means of reproduction, their hatred of the *Uratha* infests these revenants. These reanimated corpses exist primarily to spread and protect the *Usudwirku*, but when all other methods of doing so seem equal, they will *always* choose the method that causes the most physical or emotional pain to the *Uratha*.

Harlan Walters, on the other hand, has gone off the reservation. Maybe one of his injuries knocked his instinctual programming out of joint. Perhaps there's some shred of the

## ANATOMY OF A MEMORY

The *Namusiden* represent the hybrid form of the Fungal Hosts, a combination of human flesh and spiritually aware fungus. While they lack the physical and spiritual power of the *Azlu* and *Beshilu*, they make up for it by being far subtler. They manage this by taking advantage of their hosts' living parts. While the *Azlu* eat the brain and the *Beshilu* ignore it, the *Namusiden* grow into the fleshy matter, returning it to life and allowing it to function largely as it would otherwise: only with the spirit shard of the *Namusiden* behind the wheel.

The *Namusiden* initially use the decaying corpse of their host as fuel, consuming inner organs to power the physical shell. Once they manage to locate another source of food, however, the *Namusiden* regenerate the lost tissue. Indeed, once the spiritual fungus has fully infected the dead flesh, it can regenerate the entire body from almost nothing.

By traveling through the circulatory system, the fungus spreads throughout the body. This results in many bodily liquids becoming thicker than usual, taking on a brown hue and smelling of decay. The only usual visible sign of this is a slight darkening of the skin. *Uratha* who vent their wrath on one of the Returned, however, may quickly discover the reality of its noisome brown vitals.



real Harlan Walters somewhere deep in the Namusiden's mind, trying to reassert itself. Or maybe another spirit has decided to make use of the perfect hollow vehicle the Namusiden once inhabited. Whatever's happening, Harlan's no longer working toward the spread of the Fungal Hosts. Now he's sheer sadism and spite, a monster bent on killing each member of the pack that has wronged him. He won't let the final blow fall, however, until he has robbed them of everything they hold dear. Harlan's prolonging the killing blow because he's not sure what he will do once he consummates the vendetta driving his actions. Perhaps then he'll turn his attentions to another pack (such as that of the characters), or perhaps he'll seek some other outlet for his destructive impulses.

## RUMORS

*"Yeah, I heard the stories about Harlan Walters. I don't buy 'em, and I don't buy the Returned. You know what I think it is? Guilt. Just a little guilt, maybe a ghost or two over the centuries, and now we've got this legend of our prey coming back for a chat. I've killed my fair share of people, and I'm not proud of all of them. I'll admit, some of them keep me awake. But have any of them ever come knocking on my door? Hell no."*

Many Uratha who hear tell of the Returned dismiss them as urban legends or as mere ghosts. Such is not the case, of course, unless the Storyteller chooses to make it so to emphasize the very human need that even werewolves have to come to terms with their guilt. A life of violence takes its toll on the mind. Werewolves prove no exception to this.

*"The Namusiden are angels, avenging angels one and all, sent to us from God above to punish us for our sins. We must walk hand in hand with our savior. We see miracles every night, glories and horrors of a world plagued by Satan, but we must remember that it is He who grants us this vision and this power. Creatures like Mr. Walters are the reminders of who we are and whose purpose we serve."*

Despite the many tragic tales that surround Namusiden, they continue to be compared to angels or accorded some form of divinity. The Namusiden don't (usually) consciously play on this assumption, but their calm resolve tends to bolster the beliefs of those hungry for a faith-based answer to their questions.

*"You hear a lot of shit about eating food that grows near a locus, how it's poisonous or gives you cancer or whatever. Well, I can guarantee that any tainted food can be found out by a simple test. Take a piece of silver — yeah, yeah, I know, nobody wants to touch silver — a small piece of silver, and press it against whatever it is you want to munch on. If it discolors the silver, you've got a problem. Otherwise, you're golden."*

Strangely, this myth appears in human folklore as well, leading to numerous mushroom poisonings to those who take it seriously. The *Usudwirku*, on the other hand, do discolor silver they come into contact with, turning it a burnished bronze color. (They may be the source of the human folklore.) Unfortunately, the change isn't immediate, and few werewolves are comfortable with holding a piece of silver to a mushroom for the two to three minutes the test requires. Furthermore, while this method can sniff out one of the *Usudwirku*, it does not necessarily protect one from any other spirit-tainted foodstuffs.

## STORY HOOKS

- The characters kill someone in the course of the chronicle. This person, possibly a gang member, police officer, or other "random extra" type (such as Harlan Walters), would normally fade into the background without another mention. This time, however, he comes back, and he becomes a vengeful plague who dogs their every step. (That will teach them not to wantonly disregard human life.)

- Another pack in the region, perhaps allies or rivals of the characters, have found themselves plagued by a rogue Returned like Harlan Walters. With that pack falling from grace, the characters have a decision to make: do they try to arrest that pack's downfall, further it or remain uninvolved? If the characters allow Walters to destroy the other pack, what does he do after they're gone? Do the characters become his new focus?

- The pack hears tell of a potent locus about 70 miles north — and, as it turns out, they're on the hunt for new territory. Whatever the locus is, it's huge, a five-dot sucker that's spread far and wide (a huge lake, a small mountain community, a destroyed tenement). Problem is, the whole place is home to an invasive black mold — which is, of course, the *Usudwirku*. Worse, the locus isn't far from a local graveyard. Which means it has more than a few corpse bodies to puppet.

## HARLAN WALTERS, A VICTIM RETURNED

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts (Models) 3, Investigation 4, Occult 2, Politics 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Racquetball) 2, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Stealth (Moving in Darkness) 3, Survival 5

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Familiar Face) 4, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1

**Merits:** Contacts 2, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory, First Tongue, Iron Stamina 3, Resources 1, Unseen Sense (Werewolves)

**Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 8

**Virtue:** Fortitude. While Harlan's Virtue was Prudence (representing his carefulness both in everyday matters and his larger life goals), the thing that now wears his face, like most Namusiden, possesses an overwhelming drive to see its goals through to the end.

**Vice:** Wrath. Harlan may have been a bit of a Sloth, but as a Namusiden, he now nurses a constant instinctual drive to wipe out the Uratha. Harlan's animosity has been twisted into a virulent hatred, however, and it won't die until Harlan does.

**Initiative:** 8**Defense:** 3**Speed:** 10**Health:** 8**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Slow Punch	0(B)	—	3	—
Glock 9mm	2(L)	20/40/80	7	—

### PERSONAL INVESTMENT

Harlan might be most effective if the characters are personally responsible for his death (meaning you may want to introduce him prior to his transformation). Similarly, the Storyteller should feel free to use one of the characters' victims instead, especially if they've been forced to do in someone the characters feel particularly guilty about. Perhaps the returned isn't a victim, per se, but rather someone the characters weren't able to save. These creatures allow a beloved Storyteller character or fallen love interest to make a return, in a manner. Be careful, though: in the World of Darkness, death is permanent. These creatures aren't who they once were. They're mere puppets, and their use in this manner should seem not like a second chance at life, but a desecration.

### ASPECTS OF THE NAMUSIDEN:

All Namusiden gain the following Merits: Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory, First Tongue, Iron Stamina 3, Quick Healer and Unseen Sense (Werewolves). Each possesses a Resolve of 3 and a Composure of 5, regardless of the corpse's individual ratings in those traits. They gain the following Skills (or retain those of the copied individual, if hers were higher): Investigation 4, Persuasion 4, Stealth 3 and Survival 5. A Namusiden possesses a maximum Essence pool equal to her Health. Furthermore, each Returned gains the following powers:

- **Healing:** As below, under "Dread Powers of the *Usudwirku*." So long as even a thimbleful of the Namusiden remains and it has access to organic material to consume, the Namusiden can heal its body even if its Health is entirely lost to aggravated damage (though they lose this ability once they have spread the *Usudwirku* spore, as described in Duplication, below). In other words, it can regenerate its entire form. Namusiden cannot expedite the healing of aggravated damage through the use of Essence. Each point of aggravated damage is healed in four days. If a Namusiden loses *all* of its Health Levels to aggravated damage, assume that only then is the Returned revenant actually destroyed and unable to re-grow.

- **Animation:** This power allows the Namusiden to fuel the living functions of its host. Utilizing it requires the Namusiden to consume a number of pounds of organic material equal to her Health each day. On any day this quota is not met, the Namusiden suffers one aggravated damage as it consumes part of the body to continue animation. The Namusiden's food need not be something normally palatable to humans, but must have been organic (roadkill, garbage, wood chips). The Namusiden do not suffer from mundane diseases or toxins.

- **Duplication:** At a cost of 1 Essence, a Namusiden can vomit up spores that can grow into an identical version of the *Usudwirku* that birthed it. This second *Usudwirku* begins with no Essence and will quickly die unless it takes root near a locus from which it can draw Essence. Once a Namusiden has used this power, its biological purpose has been served. At this point, the individual can no longer heal *any* damage, though otherwise the purview of its Animation Aspect remain intact.

- **Essence Sense:** A Namusiden automatically knows whether it is within a locus' area of effect. It can determine the precise location of the locus with a roll of Wits + Investigation. Doing so is an instant action.

- **Inhuman Resilience:** A Namusiden remains conscious without a roll until it loses all of its Health to aggravated damage (at which point, it perishes).

- **Stepping Sideways:** Namusiden can cross between the material world and the Shadow at a locus, just as a werewolf (p. 250, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**), save that they roll Presence + Survival to do so. A Namusiden is incapable of dedicating items, however, and cannot take any material belongings with it into the Shadow.

### DREAD POWERS OF THE USUDWIRKU

An *Usudwirku* does not become a threat (capable of producing toxins) until it has grown to 10 square yards in area. Despite the large area it takes up, the *Usudwirku*'s physical structure resembles a netlike latticework of tubes and roots buried underground. As a result, it is considered Size 2. The *Usudwirku* are incredibly resilient, however, and a growth of this size possesses Health 7. For each additional five square yards it grows, its Size increases by 1.

While a Health rating is provided, actually inflicting such damage on the *Usudwirku* can be a difficult proposition. Digging up and destroying the creature requires an extended Strength + Survival (or Science, if one of the actors possesses an appropriate Specialty) roll. Each roll is an hour of effort. This can be performed as a teamwork action. Each success inflicts one point of Health damage, either lethal or bashing depending on the implements utilized by the diggers. Of course, the creature can also heal (see below, Healing), and will surely do so as it is destroyed. Worse, the spore release causes werewolves discomfort, which makes it difficult for them to persevere.

*Usudwirku* possess a Willpower rating of 5. Having no Virtue or Vice, these entities can only regain Will-

power through rest. *Usudwirku* are typically nocturnal, and regain a point of Willpower upon becoming active at sundown.

Each *Usudwirku* possesses a maximum Essence pool equal to its Health. *Usudwirku* garner sustenance from loci, consuming Essence as sprits do. They use this Essence in a variety of ways:

**Growth:** On any given day, an *Usudwirku* may grow outwards, spreading its form. It can grow to enlarge its total form by one square yard per day. This costs one Essence. Similarly, *Usudwirku* can grow *across* the Gauntlet. Creating a spiritual outgrowth of itself in this manner requires no roll, but costs an additional point of Essence. The spiritual reflection is the same size as the *Usudwirku* or 10 square yards, whichever is less. The *Usudwirku* can thereafter enlarge its size within the Shadow using this ability, but it must choose to either grow within the Shadow or the material world (it cannot do both in a single day).

Alternatively, an *Usudwirku* may spend one Essence to grow a mushroom cap above the surface. It may grow one such cap per square yard it has grown.

**Healing:** The *Usudwirku* may heal two bashing or one lethal damage through the expenditure of one Essence. It may spend only one Essence for this purpose per turn. Without Essence expenditure, the fungus heals at an accelerated rate (as per the Quick Healer Merit), though its powers of regeneration pale in comparison to that of the Uratha.

**Produce Namusiden:** The *Usudwirku* reproduce through the creation of Namusiden. First, they produce Namusiden spores. To do so, they must invest the spores with five Essence and expend one Willpower. The spores then affix themselves to everything in range at the time of their release. If any of these come into contact with a corpse (or someone who becomes a corpse within a week of contact with the spore), the spores can expend the Essence to animate and take control of the corpse.

**Mycotoxins:** Each *Usudwirku* can conjure two types of mycotoxins:

- The first is generally fatal. It is Toxicity 7, delivered via ingestion or injection. Werewolves suffer the effects of the toxin precisely as a human. The toxin inflicts damage once per day until the victim makes a successful resistance roll (or until the victim expires). Underhanded werewolves

have been known to render an *Usudwirku* cap into a poison for use against other werewolves. Using such deadly poison indicates intent to murder, and constitutes a sin against Harmony 4.

- The second is in response only to the presence of Forsaken or Pure werewolves. Upon sensing a werewolf presence on it or nearby, the Fungal Host exudes a greasy spore release on its surface, and also releases an invisible, sweet-smelling cloud of the same type of spore. Any Uratha breathing in or touching the *Usudwirku*'s spore suffers discomfort. The skin itches, but worse, lungs, throat and eyes *also* itch. This penalty is equivalent to the *Usudwirku*'s Size (which, as noted above, begins at Size 2). The penalty cannot grow beyond a -5 penalty. Once the werewolf leaves the area of the *Usudwirku*, the itching fades over the course of several hours (mechanically, that means penalty dice fade at the rate of one per hour).

### USUDWIRKU TOXIN AND THE SUPERNATURAL

The toxin produced within the *Usudwirku* can harm other supernatural creatures when ingested. Even changelings and vampires can suffer from it, though the latter must feed from an infected vessel (a rather unlikely occurrence, given the deadliness of the toxin). Damage caused to a vampire can render her torpid, but will not roll over into aggravated damage. When the vampire awakens again, the toxin no longer remains within her body. Changelings, on the other hand, are as defenseless as humans, though a Contract that flushes poisons from the changeling might save her. Strangely, taking an infected individual into the Hedge seems to destroy the toxin, but such a course rarely occurs to infected Lost. Prometheans remain immune to the toxin.

Mages, while affected by the toxin as any other human, are perhaps best suited for dealing with it. An Awakened with Life 1 and Spirit 1 can identify the toxin within the body of herself or others and can purge it from her own body. Life 2 and Spirit 2 are required to purge the toxin from others.



# AN AMERICAN MAGATH: IRINAM THE COLOSSUS

YOU CAN'T GIVE ME WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR?  
THEN I'LL HAVE TO TAKE IT.

**Aliases:** Columbia, The Big Bitch

## BACKGROUND

### A HISTORY

She used to be truly beautiful, they say, back when she first appeared. Some say she came into being in the dusty stretches of Middle America, watching over the constant train of settlers making their way west in search of a fortune. Others claim she was born in the Capitol, growing forth from the ideals and emotions inspired by politicians claiming the divine right of young America to control the whole of the continent. She was not so tall then, but a matronly figure dressed in a diaphanous gown that shone with red, white and blue when the light hit it just right. A conceptual spirit born of the power, glory and will of America in its idealistic youth, she strode forth across the heartland, bringing war and death to the heathen gods of the Natives and the imperialistic ideological spirits of the Spanish. She was liberty, freedom and revolution rolled into one, a nurse to a newborn nation.

Those days have long passed, but Irinam remains. Few would recognize her for what she once was. She seems but a rusted shell of her former glory, dressed in the detritus of two centuries of American growth and change. The nation has matured into something not entirely what its founders intended, and Irinam has been left behind. Enough of the old will to expansion remains, however, to keep the nation recognizable to the spirit birthed by Manifest Destiny.

While many conceptual spirits cease to be when the ideas or feelings that inspired them fade, Manifest Destiny has always been an amorphous enough ideology to allow Irinam flexibility in what she is and what she can consume. In the past, she was able to prey on spirits of slavery and liberty with equal aplomb (not to mention spirits of hypocrisy), and she was known to feast on fake angels and bloody-handed spirits of territorial war and murder without losing her own focus. Irinam grew fat and content on lesser spirits, wandering the wilds of America, from the Eastern seaboard to the shores of the Pacific.

That changed during the Civil War, however. What it meant to be American had suddenly shifted. Irinam failed to adapt quickly enough, and consumed a spirit of the Confederate armies. Had she done so a few months later,

after the South had capitulated, she might have remained unchanged. The damage was done, however, and Irinam had become magath.

Since then, Irinam has spiraled out of control, as so many magath do. She searches ceaselessly for some key to undoing her damaged spirit, consuming anything she feels will teach her what it now means to be "American." Yet each spirit she devours furthers her descent, twisting her form. She has become almost unrecognizable for what she once was, but those who have had the misfortune of encountering her can say with authority that whatever it is she has become, it's certainly *American*. Indeed, she has become the kind of mad jumble that so personifies the nation.

## DESCRIPTION

Irinam earns her sobriquet "the Colossus." Standing 50 feet in height, the spirit lumbers through the shadow, hunched over in an attempt to keep below the treetops. She moves only at night, terrified of the day for reasons unknown. Her voice is a low rumble of distant thunder or cannon fire, and her scent is a heady stench of gasoline, popcorn and apples. Irinam seems forever hungry, always eating. She sniffs about incessantly for her next meal. Even when conversing with a brave pack of Uratha, she may be chewing on a lamppost or dumping out trashcans and rooting through the debris.

Irinam retains only a few traces of her original appearance as Columbia, feminine personification of America, including a matronly frame and long, thick hair (though close examination reveals that her dark hair is now made up of dozens of yards of telegraph, telephone and electrical wire). Her face has taken on the hard, square jaw of World War II propaganda posters, and her pupils and irises have been replaced by an endlessly rotating series of dollar coins. The jutting crown of her helm and the greenish tint of her gowns recall the Statue of Liberty, but her arms and legs bear thick manacles, from which dangle broken chains. The magath's hands have long been stained crimson (though her fingertips are black with newspaper ink) and her mouth contains sharply pronounced eyeteeth.

Those who get close to Irinam will likely find dozens, if not hundreds, of small pieces of Americana branded into her skin or hanging from her clothing. Her gown

## Motorists killed after visiting ball of twine

**Darwin, MN**—Mark and Leslie Weston were killed Tuesday night in an automobile accident.

The couple was with their children, Jack and Diane, on Highway 12, just east

airlifted the two children to Children's Hospital in Minneapolis.

Police claim the accident seems to be a hit and run and urge anyone with information to come forward.

Darwin found the Westons and phoned the police. He described the car as "half gone."

"I have never seen anything like it," Jackson said Wednesday morning. "A big chunk just missing, like something bit it off."

## Sign discoloration resembles stars and stripes

**Hays, KS**—People don't normally check the back of the signs they pass when driving down the road. If they were to do so on I-70 between Ellis and Russell, Kansas, however, they might be in for a bit of a shock.

"Came as a surprise to me," reports Sheriff Ernest Holloway of Ellis when contacted for comment. "A few people called me about it about three

guess that's about when it appeared. They thought it was graffiti."

The concerned citizens saw odd discoloration on the back of street signs. The marks, which look like a dull gray rust, bear a remarkable resemblance to the American flag.

"With this stuff appearing all at one time, over this small area

natural could have done it. You look at it, and you know what it's supposed to be."

Local science teacher Meredith Crook agreed, but had a different interpretation.

"My guess is that it was something done when the signs were made," says Crook, 42, of Hays. "Some print

## Robot cowboy found hanging off of I-90

**Sioux Falls, SD**—Animatronic cattle wranglers are a common sight in Buffalo Ridge, South Dakota, home to Old West Town, a tourist destination featuring a small Wild West town populated entirely by robot cowpokes. One such cowboy recently gave Sioux Fall resident Patty Simmons quite the scare.

"At first, I thought it was a person. I thought somebody had been killed or killed themselves," says Simmons, who manages Fast and Friendly in downtown Sioux Falls. "I was driving and saw a body hanging from a

Simmons pulled over and called the police, but when responders arrived, they found only a mechanical cowboy. The robot had been hanged by a noose from a tree a half mile from the highway.

"We thought it might have been a stunt," says Sioux Falls police spokesperson Walter Olivier. "Something Jack Brenner, the guy that runs the place, might've done to drum up interest."

But according to Brenner, the robot had been missing for over a week. Police corroborated his claims that he had reported the robot stolen early last week.

Checked out the Sioux Falls sighting. Looks like she, it, whatever, was attracted specifically to the western town - the thing's located at the bottom of a hill behind a fireworks store off the interstate, and I haven't heard any odd sightings regarding fireworks. Speaking of fireworks, this little robo-town has an interesting take on the Chinese. You should check it out if you get the chance. Tell the Man with the Hat. He'd get a hell of a kick out of it. Animatronic Abe Lincoln or not, I don't think America ever looked like this.



often boasts a mail-like plating of road signs and car parts (both American-made and imports). Her skin can be as rough and hot as the interstate under the summer sun, or as chill as the frozen lakes of the Midwest in winter. American pop culture sometimes appears in the Colossus' features; one pack couldn't agree, for example, on whether Irinam's slippers were made of ruby or silver. Some witnesses claim that the Colossus is always limned with a slight glow; the color varies with the witness: some claim it is the pale orange of an urban streetlight, while others swear it's the baleful iridescence of an atomic bomb.

## SECRETS

Irinam marches across America, traversing the whole of the nation in an endlessly varying pattern, as if by trying one more way, she will uncover what she has been searching for. She occasionally ventures beyond the borders of America, slipping through Canada on her way to Alaska, or even arriving in Costa Rica. Rumor (accurately) has it that she can go anywhere to which America has strong ties. No reliable sightings have ever placed her in a nation in which America is engaged in war efforts, though that may merely be due to a lack of communication between Uratha from different nations. It would certainly make sense for her to show up in Iraq or even Vietnam. She does seem to avoid places with an antagonistic relationship with the US, such as Cuba and North Korea. Part of this mobility is a result of one of her Numina, which allows her to travel anywhere in the world where an American flag is being flown, a power she does not advertise.

The Colossus desperately seeks a return to spiritual purity, which will allow her to rejoin the choirs of the spirits. Unfortunately,

ly, she can only truly understand something by making it hers. Her desperation leads her to make unsound (and sometimes violent) decisions, but a clever werewolf could possibly use her anguish to manipulate her.

Irinam has had several violent run-ins with Helions over the years. The spiritual servants of the sun attack her whenever given the opportunity, for transgressions the Colossus doesn't understand. Only the profound power she has amassed over the centuries has kept her alive to this point. Now she avoids the daylight, becoming active only at night.

## RUMORS

*"My brother saw a spirit last spring up in Wilmington. Said it looked like the Statue of Liberty. As tall, too. She was out in the woods, rooting around in the dirt. I'm sure there's something out there, something special. I've always suspected that she took her ban and buried it out there in those woods. I can give you my brother's number, if you want."*

From the human (and werewolf) perspective, Irinam is utterly insane. Little that she does makes sense from a logical standpoint.

As a result, numerous stories about her involve her strange little rituals and peccadilloes. Often they associate with them an importance they simply don't have. One Uratha loremaster in Arkansas swears that the Colossus's ban involves keeping her still, for example, because Irinam rarely stays in one place (or even stands still) for long.

*"She's not America, man. She's a spirit of America's greed and lust, man. She's out there, like on the front lines. Like nobody ever sees her in wartime,*





because she's not here. She's there. Laying down stakes and raising flags and stuff."

Irinam is a spirit of America's mercenary tendencies, but she's also a spirit of its religiosity, its strength, its desire to serve the better good, its drive to be successful and its joy in the simple pleasures of the world. Irinam embodies almost everything America represents (and ever has) to its people. These contradictory motives vying for primacy are part of the reason for her current fractured persona.

### IRINAM THE COLOSSUS

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 10, Finesse 9, Resistance 12

**Willpower:** 22

**Essence:** 25

**Initiative:** 21

**Defense:** 10

### STORY HOOKS

- Some piece of Americana, whether the nation's largest frying pan or a Smithsonian exhibit, is coming to the characters' territory. Unbeknownst to all involved, Irinam has fettered herself to the item (or perhaps possessed one of its minders) in order to better understand the nation and its people. What havoc does Irinam cause in the characters' territory? Do they try to stop her, or simply try to run damage control until the exhibit inevitably moves on to the next town?

- Uratha refugees begin pouring in from a nearby town. They claim the Colossus arrived a month before and quickly dominated the town's spirit courts before forcing the Uratha out. Normally this problem would be outside the scope of the characters' concern, but the refugee werewolves are causing trouble in their backyard. Do they send the werewolves packing, or do they help them take back their own territories? Furthermore, what interest does the Colossus have in the small town?

- The characters need or want a rare Gift, and the local loremasters know of only one spirit that can teach it: Irinam. How do the characters hunt down the Colossus? What can they offer her in exchange for her tutelage? Can they cope with her madness, or will it draw them in?

**Speed:** 29

**Corpus:** 17

**Influences:** American Symbols ••, Greed ••. Irinam can alter phenomena that fall under these two areas of influence with a Power + Finesse roll as an instant action. For 1 Essence, she may strengthen one of the phenomena for 1 minute per success. For 2 Essence, she may manipulate one of the phenomena in minor ways that last for 10 minutes per success. A target of Irinam's attempts to strengthen or manipulate greed can reflexively resist with a Composure + Primal Urge roll.

**Numina:** In addition to Sea to Shining Sea (below), Irinam possesses Blast (typically, machine gun fire, though fireworks and a stream of bright stars have been reported as well), Fetter, Gauntlet Breach, Materialize, Material Vision, Possession, Reaching and Wilds Sense (p. 276–278, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**).

**Ban:** Irinam finds it profoundly difficult to harm a person bearing the symbols of the United States. All attempts to directly harm or affect (whether physically or through Numina) a character openly brandishing an accepted symbol of the US suffer a –5 penalty and lose the 10-Again rule. Symbols must represent the whole of the nation: an American flag patch or a bald eagle pin count, but a US Army sweatshirt does not. Furthermore, the character must be holding the symbol forward to ward off Irinam (this requires the use of one hand, but is a reflexive action). Simply wearing such items will not protect him.

### Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brutal Blow	o(B)	—	19	—
Blast	o(L)	100	19	+2 dice per Essence spent

### Aspects:

- **Rank:** 4. Characters suffer a four-dice penalty on any attempt to forcibly bind Irinam.

- **Sea to Shining Sea:** By expending 1 Essence and 1 Willpower, Irinam can travel to any location where an American flag is being flown at full mast (limiting this power significantly during periods of national crisis) as an instant action. Irinam can specify where she wants to go and the power will automatically transport her to the flagpole nearest her chosen destination. This power grants the Colossus no knowledge of what awaits her at journey's end, so she rarely uses it, save in the most dire of circumstances. She never uses this power to travel to a location where the sun is currently up (part of why she crisscrosses the whole of the country in her travels).

Welcome to Lonesome Forest

# THE ROAD TO STEPFORD: LONESOME FOREST

YOU'RE NOT FROM AROUND HERE. YOU WILL BE SOON.

Lonesome Forest isn't just a town — it's a way of life! Whether you're here to hike or fish or just get away from the pressures of the modern world, you'll find something that's just right for you.

If you like to hike, the beautiful forests that lend our town their name have trails for beginner and expert alike, and you're guaranteed stunning views and a wonderful atmosphere. Buck's the man to talk to — he knows the woods like the back of his hand and can help you plan your route. If you need any supplies, from backpacks to boots, he also runs the town's outdoor supply store.



If fishing's more your thing, the Lonesome River is full of trout and has plenty of spots where you won't be disturbed. Weekend and holiday permits are available from the Tackle Store, along with all the gear you might have left behind.

We aren't just interested in the outdoor life. We've nothing but good down-home stores, with no chains in sight. Lonesome Forest is proud to be Starbucks-free. We source everything we can locally, so you don't have to worry about what you're taking home — it's all from right here.



For folks who are interested in where this pretty little town came from, we've got our library in the same building as the local museum. The kids at Lonesome Forest Elementary School have set up displays of local history in the museum, and the library has a range of books for people wanting to read more of the full story.



## BACKGROUND

Sometimes, the true shape of the world lies hidden. Everything looks fine at a cursory glance, but under the surface, everything's going to Hell. The roads and paths leading into town all double back on each other, and only the most determined drivers can ever leave. The streetlights in a bad neighborhood blink a message in Morse code: "THIS PLACE WILL CONSUME YOU." Every night, the same people fight outside the same bar, but in the morning, nobody remembers, and nobody has any scars. Five people check in to a motel, but only three check out, and those three don't remember their companions.

If you aren't lucky and follow the wrong roads, you'll see a sign by the side of the road: *Lonesome Forest Welcomes Careful Drivers.*

## OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Lonesome Forest wasn't always a strange place. The first settlers built their homes in 1843, founding a town where they could be close to nature. Those settlers blazed a trail, and that soon became the only road leading into the town of Lonesome Forest. Everyone who walked down that road could plainly see the beautiful landscape, smell the clean air and feel the warm sunlight and the spray from the river. Something in the air convinced most people to stay. In that way, the town had grown from five homesteads to a small town by the turn of the 20th century.

In those 60 years, the town gained all the services it needed from people who just happened into town. A general store received deliveries every week, and the barber's shop did a decent trade. Three bars gave everyone a place to set their troubles aside, though it never felt like a frontier town. Everyone who moved to Lonesome Forest brought a work ethic with them — the local newspaper even remarked that a couple of local drunks had been run out of town by a swell of townspeople.

Even today, the local museum has plenty of details on the town's founding. Schoolchildren make dioramas of local history for the museum,



**From:** [[Redacted with a big black box]]@vigilsecurity.org

**To:** [[Redacted again]]@gmail.com

**Subject:** Ghost Towns?

**Date:** Sat. 2008-09-13 12:43:22

>>I'm telling you, it's all just too perfect. I mean, a row of houses where everyone mows the lawn at the same time? In the \*same pattern\*?

>You may think that's weird, but you grew up in an inner-city hellhole. You choke to death when the air's got more oxygen than bus exhausts.

And your attitude doesn't help matters. I've left the city on vacation before, and I've never seen anything this...synchronized before. Seriously. Same time, same pattern, like they were on rails in a Disney ride. I am not making this up. You look at the traffic lights, and it's like no one ever stops at a red light, because everybody gets a green - it's that perfectly in sync.

>>Most people work in the lumber mill in town. Thing is, there's no trucks taking any wood out of town, and they can't use everything that comes out of the mill.

>I'm sorry, but I don't follow. The lumber mill probably has its own private road linking it to an interstate or something.

I mean what I say. The town doesn't have any other roads. Not to the lumber mill, not to anywhere in town. The bridge is still fucked.

I'm not a fucking amateur.

>Anyway, if this lumber mill is a front for something, then what? You can't run a town on the income from a couple of hundred tourists.

No shit. Look, I know it seems like nothing, but I know there's something more going on there. Everyone files in at the same time every morning; everyone leaves at the same time every night. The secretaries, the working men, everyone shows up at 7:55 AM and leaves at 6:02 PM. They do everything short of marching in lockstep.

>>And there's no real crime. Only visitors steal anything. Nobody local's been arrested for more than accidentally shoplifting in 40 years.

>Bullshit.

Seriously. They've got an archive of the local paper. I spent an afternoon reading and chatting with people. No murder. No theft. No property damage. The only real crime comes from people visiting.

Oh, and I should point out: every time I asked two people the same question, they answered just the same. Same word choice. Same inflection. If it weren't for the differences in voice, I'd swear the whole thing was a computer program or something, giving the same output to the same input.

>>This is a town without a drinking problem. A bunch of big, burly guys who work in a lumber mill go get tanked, but they're drunks like the characters on \*Cheers\* are drunks. Not a one of them goes home and beats their wife or gives their kids five across the eyes.

>You know, not everyone's a violent psycho. Whatever your daddy did after a couple of beers is between you and him.

When I want to be patronized by someone I like, I'll teach my cat to talk.

A bunch of working men don't so much as get into drunken brawls on a Saturday night. Lone some Forest isn't in a dry county. People like a beer and a whiskey, but they don't ever seem to get really wasted. Even you have to agree that isn't normal.

>I know you're freaked, but so far, it does look like you're jumping at shadows. As far as our current consulting projects goes, this place isn't exactly a priority case.

No, you're right. This can't be a priority, at least not yet. But...I know you've got some vacation time due in the next couple of months. Feel like a working weekend? You can bring whoever you want and call it a holiday, but on full pay and expenses. The steaks are on me.



# BARREN

Black Noon, 12-12-08

What do you call a place that's only **half there**?

Not a ghostly place. Not a place where half of it has been wiped off the map. Nobody's going around at night with a silenced chainsaw, hacking parts off

Yesterday, upon the **stair** I met a **man who wasn't there**. He **wasn't there** again today. I wish I wish he'd go away.

If only he would, but he's **here to stay**. Get the milk and cookies ready.

still have no Shadow. No shit. Nothing hanging off the back of them, no evidence that they exist beyond the base physical.

It's all **here**.

Everything has a spirit, right? Rainclouds. Squirrels. Forests. The 1974 Cadillac Eldorado rusting on my front porch. That's the **point** of spirits.

Except when they **eat each other**.

This town. Lonesome Forest. This town has **eaten itself**. In one blast of cannibalism, the town's spirit

of normal everyday towns.

This world has places that are only half there. Some paranoids point to ghost towns, or to weird shit like Centralia, but they're still **wrong**.

Some places are full in the light but

ate everything — the rainclouds, the squirrels, the forest, the Cadillac Eldorados and all the other cars and buildings and animals and people. It ate them and now it's **hiding**.

The spirit of Lonesome Forest knows that it's time was due a **long while back**.

It's hiding. Waiting. There's nothing left. The people are already going **weird**. The spirit knows what it has done is wrong. It knows, but it doesn't care. It's too powerful now.

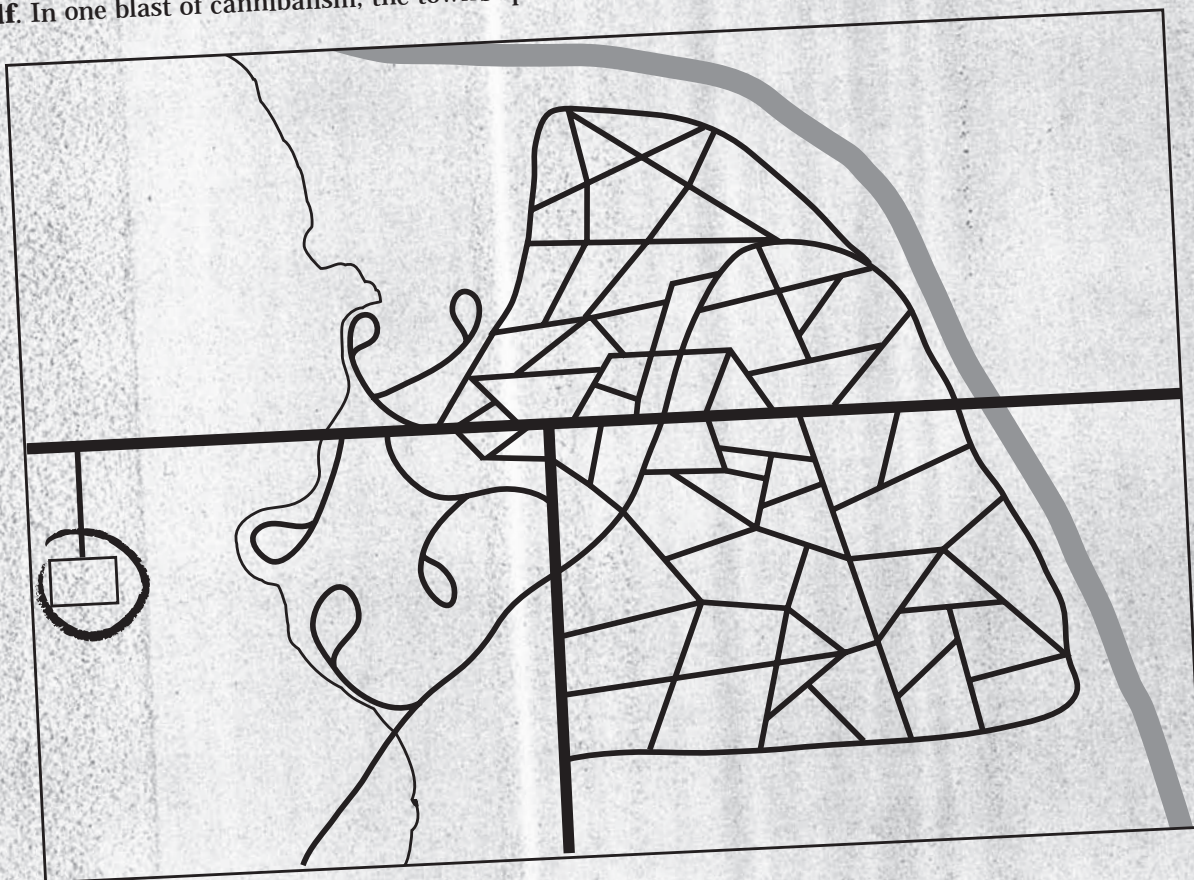
We have to do something. But nobody knows **what**. We can't justify killing a whole town. There's people living there, normal people. They're not a **cancerous limb**. It's not our job to excise the whole thing from the world. That would make us **no worse** than the Anshega.

We have to **do something**.

Un-altered **reproduction** and **dissemination** of this **important** information is **encouraged**.

No werewolf has gone into Lonesome Forest before us. We know, we checked. It was always just outside the territory of one pack or another — Claimed by the Predator Kings with no right.

This is **our mistake**. We fucked up bad. And now everything's dying slowly, waiting for the spirit to give up the ghost.





and volunteers keep the whole place neat and tidy. The same building houses the Lonesome Forest Library, and the archives hold a copy of every edition of the *Lonesome Forest Informer*, the local newspaper. As stores give way to homes, every lawn is mowed, every flowerbed is well tended and every car is parked in its driveway. Everything's just *perfect*. Doesn't matter who you pass on your way into town, they smile and say "hello." Even in the center of town, people leave their doors open and cars unlocked. Despite cell phone coverage and modern cars, the town feels like an idyllic utopia circa 1963.

Only one road leads in to Lonesome Forest. That wasn't always true. In 1954, the state paid for the Lonesome Bridge, an alternate route for heavy goods vehicles to come into town. The governor hoped to exploit the forests near town, and knew that the current road couldn't support a larger lumber mill than the town already had. The mayor's office strangled the idea in red tape for three years. When that finally looked like it was going to fail, the bridge collapsed. Five people died, but nobody was held responsible. Every attempt to rebuild the bridge has met with failure.

The residents of Lonesome Forest seem happy that way. The town wants to remain unspoiled, to draw in increasingly eco-conscious tourists. Most folks in town are employed by the lumber mill 10 miles downriver, a mill that welcomes new people in town looking for work. One tourist brochure claims that the only people who drive away from town are delivery drivers, because every visitor comes back to stay.

### THE MYTH OF SELF

Everyone in Lonesome Forest is just a little too normal. Anyone who walks through some of the residential streets on a Sunday evening will see all the townsfolk mowing their lawns at the same time. Everyone mows the same pattern at the same time, so precise and regular that they each finish when the clock strikes six. That air of precision permeates the town; it separates people who live in Lonesome Forest from tourists and new arrivals. Anyone who lives there long enough for the town to accept them starts to keep time to an alien clock. Not all at once, but over time, everyone becomes what the town considers normal.

People who like to go digging for the truth soon discover that the lawn-mowing is the least of the town's weird synchronicities. Everyone who works at the mill shows up at the same time. Nobody who doesn't work there gets to look around; the safety inspector receives hefty bribes and the doors are barred to anyone who isn't on the payroll. Whatever's really going on inside the mill is a mystery — certainly it doesn't bring in machinery or send out planks of wood, yet everyone still shows up in the morning, ready to work.

The sheriff's office doesn't offer open access to its paperwork. When questioned, whoever's on duty points

out that "folks in Lonesome Forest believe in little things like *decency* and *privacy*."

Anyone who wants to find out more has to go digging through the records of the *Lonesome Forest Informer*, in the library's basement. The paper's almost depressingly boring. Only a truly dedicated researcher would notice the same stories being repeated, always with a different byline. The stories are years apart, never appearing on the same date — an element of chaos introduced to stop people noticing the pattern — but they're pretty much identical, apart from the names. Worse, they're all inconsequential. Academic chaff to blank out the real story: Lonesome Forest has no serious crime. Sure, people get arrested for causing a disturbance after they have one too many drinks. Some of the tourists get locked up for theft or drug offences or beating the crap out of each other, but the only time the locals get involved is as victims.

### PICKING THROUGH THE DETAILS

Characters who want to do the legwork to discover Lonesome Forest's odd crime statistics will need to spend a lot of time in the library archives. All they have are paper copies of the *Lonesome Forest Informer*, not even on microfiche. The player rolls Intelligence + Academics as an extended action. Each roll takes two hours, and to discover the truth about the lack of crime requires 10 successes. After rolling five successes, the character learns that stories have been duplicated. On an exceptional success, she learns that none of the tourists charged with crimes ever seems to be prosecuted; or at least, there's never been a follow-up.

A few details stand in a character's way. The library's open nine through five every weekday, nine to one on Saturday and closed on Sundays. A character who spends more than one day in the archives will find the locals encouraging her to get out into the fresh air and partake in some of the wholesome activities on offer. While nobody will physically bar her from continuing her research, the social pressure brought to bear is great indeed.

A wary character might notice other details that set her on edge. Sometimes, people know things when they really shouldn't. If she mentions she's taking her family off on a hike along one of the forest trails, then her husband — who's been talking with Buck at the outdoor supply store — is told the best rest spots on the trail, without ever knowing why. Most people who first notice how nothing's really hidden in town just assume that information spreads fast in a gossipy small town. Occasionally, as with the example of Buck and the tourists, the residents in question have no way

of communicating, yet both people seem to be in on both conversations at once. It's almost like the whole town has lots of eyes and lots of ears, but only one memory.

### A STRANGE SHADOW

To werewolves, the Shadow of Lonesome Forest is a singularly disturbing place. Normally, the spirit world is teeming with inhabitants, though most slumber until something causes them to wake. Not so in this town. Lonesome Forest is *empty* in a way that no place on Earth has any right to be. The trees have no spirits, nor does the forest. The cars and homes and appliances of the townsfolk don't have spirits, either.

A werewolf looking at Lonesome Forest in the Shadow is in for a shock. There's nowhere quite like it. It's like a human going out one night and coming back to find his whole town just gone, with no real sign of what's happened. The very fabric of the land bears scars, as if a giant had dragged claws through the world.

The nearest spirit who remembers anything is Tzarum Kur, the spirit of the hill on the other side of the river valley. Tzarum Kur remembers when he was a powerful spirit, before time and tide wore him down to a mere hill. He remembers a fight in the spirit world, between a fledgling who wouldn't back down and a powerful creature of Shadow who had lain trapped below what would become Lonesome Forest. He doesn't know when it happened, or even who won. The spirit has long since stopped being a reliable witness.

For a while, a pack of Predator Kings claimed territory that included Lonesome Forest. Whether they ever bothered visiting the town is a mystery to other werewolves; certainly, nobody ever mentioned their presence, and nobody in town will admit to encountering so much as a large wolf that attacked people. Whenever the Ninna Farakh left, they did so without ever setting foot in the town. Likewise, the

Shadow has no sign they'd ever passed through. Only something major could scare off the Pure.

Since the Predator Kings left, no pack has claimed Lonesome Forest in anything but name. Those Forsaken close to the town always want to investigate, but have too much going wrong in their own territories to spare any time for the small town. As long as it remains harmless, they figure that leaving well enough alone is a good strategy.





## DESCRIPTION

The first thing everyone notices about folks in Lonesome Forest is how nice they are. Everyone's ready with an easy smile and a funny story about life in town. The whole place can feel like it's on a charm offensive at times, with people reaching just that little bit too far to convince people to stay. Nobody gets too pushy, but the idea that people should stay on is a running theme. On its own, it's nothing — people who live in Lonesome Forest are damn proud of it, and happy to have new faces around. Visitors who stray off the beaten track, or who stay long enough to see some of the weirder behavior, may realize just how creepy the suggestion really is.

Everyone who lives in the town is a little weird. That's the main thing that separates tourists from the locals. In addition to whole streets practicing synchronized lawn-mowing, people will sometimes respond to events that they seemingly don't notice. (If Bobby across town accidentally gets his foot caught in the mower, Carol manning the general store might suddenly act as if it had happened to her, crying out in pain and then forgetting it ever happened.) Nobody in town notices this happening, and anyone commenting on it faces blank stares, at best. Pressing the matter — indeed, pressing anything about the odd goings-on in town — is the one true way to earn the residents' ire.

While everyone in town looks different, some common threads tie people together. Everyone's healthy, even when they shouldn't be; a trick knee is more a conversation piece than a disability, and even the fattest people in town are portly or husky rather than outright obese. Lonesome Forest has more than its fair share of redheads, thanks to one of the founding families, widower Daniel Archer and his son, Jack.

This trend toward fitness carries over to those who move to Lonesome Forest later in life. George Buchanan, owner of the bar for the last 10 years, lost his right arm at the elbow in action in Iraq during the first Gulf War. Since he relocated, he's found his false arm easier to use.

## SECRETS

Everything's connected. In Lonesome Forest, those connections are just a little bit closer than anywhere else. A hundred years ago, the spirit of the town awoke. Nobody alive knows how or why, but Lonesome Forest wasn't content to lie back and absorb Essence. It wanted to grow. And so the spirit did what spirits do when they want to grow — it ate those spirits it considered to be inferior. The slumbering reflections of buildings, the ephemeral shimmers of roads, the spirits of fire that danced in every hearth and the spirit slumbering within every tree: everything fell to the one that werewolves know as Enzuk Umada.

Most magath never grow too powerful. Another spirit or a pack of werewolves puts them in their place. Somehow, Enzuk Umada avoided that fate. When another spirit found him, the two fought and the town won. Possibly alone

amongst magath, he retained his original drive. The spirit of Lonesome Forest wanted to be the *only* spirit of Lonesome Forest, and every single consumed spirit was a step on that journey. After nearly 70 years, Enzuk Umada had absorbed every spirit in the town, a truly incredible feat.

A few werewolves who discover the truth wonder if the spirit of Lonesome Forest was drunk with power, while others believe that what happened next was the only plausible next step for an unstable magath that had lived for so long without intervention. In either case, Enzuk Umada wanted to exert direct control over his physical reflection. He couldn't possess just one person or one building — by that point, his sheer power would have destroyed it. Instead, the spirit slowly infused its Essence into everyone and everything in town, Fettering the objects and Claiming the people until it had merged with everything. Lonesome Forest allows people to retain basic shards of their personality, but by this point, the whole thing's a bit of a sick joke — he only allows people to be individuals for as long as it takes for them to attract new people for the terrible spirit to have as his own.

## CRIST FOR THE MILL

So what's really going on in the lumber mill? Enzuk Umada knows of an ancient and powerful spirit bound in the earth below Lonesome Forest. Everyone in the mill is part of a very long-term ritual to allow the Spirit of Lonesome Forest to consume the ancient horror while it slumbers. Perhaps fortunately, the ritual isn't complete even after nearly a hundred years, but surely it will end soon.

Some Storytellers may prefer to have the lumber mill play a different role in the story of the town. These suggestions are intended as starting points to create a unique mystery behind the town.

**Thralls:** Inside the main building stand a series of massive furnaces. As Enzuk Umada continues to expand, symbols of his dominion are burned as chiminage. Every time it takes over another stretch of forest, the people burn one of the trees. A new resident has some of her personal ID sacrificed without her consent. A car or delivery truck loses its license plate to the spirit's mad quest for expansion.

**Freedom:** Destroying the bridge put a stop to Enzuk Umada's plans to expand beyond the town. The lumber mill, which would have been connected to that road, now acts as a place of sanctuary. Inside, people can loosen the spirit's hold over them for long enough to retain some personality — and sanity — before the spirit saps their will once they leave.

## RUMORS

*“Remember ol’ Doc Jennings? He moved on a few years back, out to a place called Lonesome Forest. Funny thing is, we ain’t heard from him almost since he moved, and him with so many friends here. His last letter was a bit weird, but we never thought much of it.”*

Lonesome Forest entices people to stay, partly through good old-fashioned charm and partly by less wholesome means. Most people notice something weird before the town Claims them, and many tell people back home, but few have enough friends that anyone would come investigate (and in fact, those who investigate sometimes come and stay). Finding out what actually happened to people who go to Lonesome Forest is one of the main things that drives werewolves to the town. Everyone stays friendly, at least for a while, but when the spirit works out what the Uratha are, they start feeling its displeasure. People stop talking to the pack, and someone vandalizes their vehicles, though nobody actually sees anything. People start watching the pack all the time, making it hard for them to change forms without provoking an outcry. The town remains passive-aggressive, though it will defend itself against any attack.

*“Enzuk Umada is too powerful to live, but as a spirit, it is young. When it Claimed the town, part of its Essence remained in the Shadow. Trapped forever between two worlds, only in the Hisil is it vulnerable. Only in the Shadow can it truly die.”*

As it is a vastly powerful spirit, no one person can contain the primal force of the monstrous entity. Hell, the whole town can’t hold the spirit’s power. Enzuk Umada had to leave part of itself in the spirit world, lest it destroy the very thing it sought to embody. Finding the shard is a tricky one — it’s hiding in a locus in the basement of the museum and library. Getting access to the locus in the physical world is no easy task, as it’s the one place in town to sport modern security systems and at least two people on watch all the time. In the *Hisil*, the locus is surrounded by thick concrete and brick walls molded into a cocoon around the spirit’s weak point.

*“We were hunting the spirit of an earthquake that was ready to level a whole chunk of forest. Just as the quake was about to flatten us, this twisted thing joined in. It looked like a town would look if it had legs and teeth. It saved our asses, but looked like it was about to turn on us if we followed it.”*

Enzuk Umada is concerned with one thing and one thing only: Lonesome Forest. Anything that threatens the town and the spirit’s host bodies threatens the spirit. Werewolves who hold territory near the town may find the spirit to be an unwitting ally against a powerful foe. Some packs may investigate their mysterious ally, leading them to the dead-zone in the Shadow around the town. Others may foolishly attempt to ally with the spirit, but Enzuk Umada can only think about things in terms of the town, and werewolves who pry too closely threaten its precious stability.

## STORY HOOKS

- A massive pack of Predator Kings wants to take Lonesome Forest as its territory, defeating the spirit in the process. The characters must decide: what’s healthier for the Shadow and the material world? To help these werewolves sacrifice this town and its people for the good of the balance? Or to help Enzuk Umada and its “residents” push back the massive pack of brutal Pure wolves?

- A friend of one of the pack members spends a couple of weeks in Lonesome Forest on vacation. Six months later, he goes back for another vacation. Three months after that, he’s finished arranging his move to town. His letters seem fine to start with, but they soon start to hint at a sinister side to the town, then they stop entirely. When the characters investigate, he’s not quite sure why he’s never written, but he sure does love living in Lonesome Forest.

- Enzuk Umada knows something. Maybe it’s the location of an ancient evil, trapped in the Shadow but too powerful to destroy, or one of the spirits it consumed is the last one to know a ritual that the pack needs to save their territory. In any case, the pack needs a favor from Lonesome Forest. Will the spirit let them off with a simple favor in return, or does it want them to bring him yet more warm bodies?

## LONESOME FOREST INHABITANT

Though every inhabitant of Lonesome Forest is theoretically unique, possession by Enzuk Umada has forged the people into a spiritual hive-mind. This template is the baseline for everyone in town. People with distinct roles, including cops, journalists and the local doctor, can add an extra two dots between two Skills relating to that job, and gain one extra Skill Specialty relating to that role. “General” Storyteller characters, including workers at the lumber mill and everyone in town without a strong iconic role, use the following traits unaltered.

Characters who come to Lonesome Forest often stay, as they feel Enzuk Umada surrounding their soul. After spending one week in town per dot of Willpower, the spirit can Claim the character as a host. First, she feels the urge to move to Lonesome Forest. Once there, she gains any Merits she did not have, one Attribute dot and two Skill dots each month until she has the Traits listed below. Each month, she also loses one dot from an Attribute that’s rated higher than those given here. Once she’s got no more points to gain (or lose), she’s a full host of Enzuk Umada and gains the supernatural powers listed.



Note that the town doesn't necessarily compel people supernaturally to stay — but it does extend a constant and gracious hand, offering the characters endless opportunity to make their stay permanent.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Wood) 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Hiking) 4, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Stealth 2, Survival 4

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Iron Stamina 3, Quick Healer

**Willpower:** 6

**Virtue:** Fortitude. The town is everything, and the people won't let anyone say boo against it. They stick to their guns here.

**Vice:** Pride. As above — the town is everything. They place so much of themselves in the town (by proxy of the spirit's Claiming them, of course) that it's impossible for them to see past this.

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 12

**Health:** 9

#### Aspects:

- **Forest Visage:** When Enzuk Umada's power flows through the townsfolk, their bodies twist to contain the unnatural energies coursing through them. Twisting into nightmarish visions, their skin gnarls and hardens like tree bark, giving them one point of armor against all attacks. Hands and arms sprout barbed branches and thorns that turn punches into 3(L) weapons (using Brawl to attack, though). These changes happen when the spirit deems it necessary. People of the town have no conscious control over the change and no memory of what happens when they're in their altered form.

- **Distribution:** Whenever an inhabitant of Lonesome Forest would take damage, they can instead give that damage to any other inhabitant (i.e., host) of Enzuk Umada as a reflexive action. This can be done without the inhabitant realizing it, actually.

- **Limited Movement:** If an inhabitant of Lonesome Forest moves outside the town's official limits, she loses access to the Forest Vistage and Distribution abilities, and suffers crippling pain (-5 to all actions). The only thing she can think of is getting back to Lonesome Forest. Stay-

ing out of town for a month is dangerous, and may cause the character to suffer some kind of debilitating disease (Parkinson's, cancer, rheumatoid arthritis), but treatment can soothe or sometimes eradicate such instances. This isn't universal and may necessitate an extended Stamina roll on the part of the character to determine if such a disease takes hold. The character gets one Stamina roll per week during the first month out of Lonesome Forest (not penalized), and she must achieve six total successes during that one-month time frame (four rolls). Failure to do so incurs the disease. Success means the character shakes free the spiritual and physical effects of withdrawing from the town-spirit's obsessive grip.

#### ENZUK UMADA, THE SPIRIT OF LONESOME FOREST

The Traits below reflect Enzuk Umada as it exists in the Shadow now. A hundred-plus years of painstakingly consuming every other spirit in the area has left it very powerful, and if the spirit were not Claiming so many hosts, it would likely be at least Rank 6.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 12, Finesse 9, Resistance 11

**Willpower:** 23

**Essence:** max 25

**Initiative:** 20

**Defense:** 12

**Speed:** 31

**Size:** 8

**Corpus:** 16

**Influence:** Community 4, Towns 3, Trees 3

**Numina:** Blast, Claim, Fetter, Material Vision

**Ban:** The Spirit of Lonesome Forest is limited by its very nature. It cannot move outside the town's official limits as enshrined in state law.

#### Supernatural Powers:

- **Mass Claim:** Enzuk Umada can attempt to Claim anyone who spends a number of weeks in Lonesome Forest equal to their Willpower. Roll Power + Finesse in an extended and contested roll against the victim's Resolve + Composure. Each roll represents an hour, and the spirit must gain 50 successes from one sunset to the next. If the Claim attempt is successful, the character starts to change as described above for Lonesome Forest Inhabitants. If the victim succeeds, then she is immune to further attempts at possession, and the entire town knows she's an outsider who mustn't stay for long.

# WOLF FOE: PETER STROHM

FEEL OUR HATE, MONGREL.

(ECHOED) ZIR HULU GAIK URIDAIM.

**Aliases:** Ur Khubharlu, The Adversary, The Hunter

## BACKGROUND

A grotesque mockery of a man with scalps on his belt and a jagged spear in his hand appears out of thin air and attacks. He is the Wolf Foe. He reeks of the Shadow but behaves like no Ridden the pack has ever encountered. Where he comes from, what he wants or how a lone figure is able to obliterate a werewolf pack in minutes are mysteries to the few survivors left in his wake. It barely matters what little is known about Wolf Foe; by the time a pack senses the stranger with his odd assortment of magical items, it's probably too late.

But who or what is he?

From the moment he was old enough to carry his father's spear, the man formerly known as Peter Strohm possessed a deep hatred of the Uratha. He hated them because that's what he was taught to do, the result of a legacy in his family dating back generations, a legacy beaten into him day in and day out by a stern father. It was a legacy legitimized when his father was murdered by the claws of a pack of bloodthirsty werewolves. His father's death cemented his hatred. It burned into his soul a certain mission.

## HUNTERS HUNTED

Despite his father's fate — or, indeed, because of it — Peter grew up to follow in his footsteps, joining the ancient brotherhood that boasted seven generations of Strohm men. It's a brotherhood that defies the brutality of werewolves and, by their own words, stands in defense of humanity. A few packs have encountered these so-called Guardians, attacked by individuals smelling of books, dust and blood, all using bizarre magical items and claiming to serve some ancient feud or another. This reported feud is news to the Uratha, and most who encounter them assume they're just an isolated handful of lunatics. They have no idea. The truth is more far reaching than they imagine.

Truth is, this group of mortal hunters that calls itself the "Guardians" maintains both an oral and written history that varies wildly from the history the rest of humankind has come to understand. They look as far back as the Garden of Eden, and believe that — more or less — the werewolves were a plague of beasts in the Garden, and their

very presence was what forced God to boot Adam and Eve beyond the gates. They don't know anything about any "Father Wolf," but certainly their origin story collides more than a little with Uratha mythology (Eden serving as a parallel for Pangaea, and the murder of Father Wolf standing in as a proxy for mankind's ejection from the Garden). However it happened, these two origin stories slammed together in a brutal syncretism. The Guardians have been telling that tale ever since, and have sold their youths and recruits on the story with both honey and lash.

Their only goal? To destroy the werewolf menace. To do so, they use unwholesome occult knowledge, coupled with fetishlike magical items to bring the war to bear against the Forsaken. It's effective because the werewolves never expect it. Humans are trouble from time to time, and a herd of cattle can crush those who aren't paying attention. But the cattle never pick up blessed saber or a Winchester repeater stocked with silver bullets, right? Wrong.

## WOLF FOE

Early on, even as a young man, Peter distinguished himself among his peers as singularly driven. Wearing his hatred on his sleeve, he pursued the werewolf menace with far deeper ardor than most of his esteemed colleagues. Often accusing his superiors of a lack of dedication, Peter stood on the brink of expulsion from the Guardians more than once. Try as they might to make Peter see the need for temperance and study, the angry young man pursued only leads on werewolves or relics rumored to be a thorn in the paw of his sworn enemy.

As much as his behavior rankled some within the organization, Peter excelled at his mission. He gained notoriety and was reluctantly granted the leeway to continue his work. Having collected the most impressive panoply of occult relics in his quest to erase werewolves from the planet, Peter still searched high and low for one final advantage over his prey. Rumors of just such an ultimate weapon trickled down to him from likeminded Guardians — mostly friends of his father who shared his predilection, if not his passion or youth — with all the caveats about staring too long into the abyss. The stories they told spoke of a device long since locked away by the Guardians for its immense power. A relic with the simple title *Wolf Foe*.



If this relic was the ultimate retort against his enemy, he knew he had to have it.

Finally, after years of tracking down rumor after rumor, Peter wound his way through a forgotten labyrinth beneath Prague and laid his eyes on the legendary Wolf Foe (or rather, the squat stone and bone cylinder that contained the weapon). Sneering at his colleagues who told him he couldn't — or shouldn't — pursue such powers, Peter pried open the ancient ossuary.

A mad bellowing filled his head, his flesh boiled one second and hardened the next, his soul went dark, and Peter was no longer alone.

### KINDRED SPIRIT

Ur Khubhar remembers Pangaea.

Ur Khubhar remembers the beauty of Iduth in the sky. Ur Khubhar remembers the Plague King and the Spinner-Hag. Ur Khubhar remembers the idigam with a shiver. Most of all, Ur Khubhar remembers Urfarah: Urfarah of the Border Marches, Urfarah the Jailer, Urfarah the Kin-Slayer.

Ur Khubhar began his journey as a minor spirit of adversity and challenge. His forays over the border of spirit and flesh always drew the attention of the Wolf Father, who would, in turn, return him to "his place." These chases turned the young spirit's heart to resentment and so Ur Khubhar bullied his kin, exerting will over them as Urfarah did to those who dared to defy him. Consuming lesser spirits, he grew stronger and vowed to challenge the keeper of spirit and flesh, and win. Ur Khubhar took his name (literally, "Wolf Foe") before venturing again to Urfarah's territory, only to discover his foil had nine more just like him now. All sniveling abominations shambling about on two legs or four as was their wont, with each a fitting shadow of the father.

Destroyer Wolf and Dire Wolf were the first of Urfarah's cursed get to chase Ur Khubhar back to the spirit

wilds, but soon it was a sport among the wretched pups. No matter how many spirits Ur Khubhar consumed, the wolf-men bested him and sent him scuttling back beyond the border marches. Each time, Ur Khubhar would stay longer, devouring and stealing the power of even more spirits so that the next time would be different.

Until the last time he crossed over into the world of flesh and man and no one gave chase at all. Ur Khubhar ventured far from his border and still no one came for him, not even Black Wolf, who always found him where he hid. Then, a terrible howl cut through the night and all that Ur Khubhar knew was pain. He tried to shut the noise out until it stopped suddenly and the spirit was able to move again. Iduth was not in the sky and his home felt further away than it had ever been. Ur Khubhar didn't know what had transpired that moonless night, but he knew he wasn't going to wait to find out.

### THE AGE OF MAN

After the Sundering, Ur Khubhar played a patient game on this side of the Gauntlet. The Tribes of the Moon were split by guilt and distracted by sorrow, which allowed the spirit a much larger range than ever before. He found bands of man-kin huddled together, and turned their hearts against the wolves that competed with them for food and came for their livestock.

Ur Khubhar ran across the Uratha, distant children of Urfarah's, and they proved much easier to rend and kill than the Firstborn. Ur Khubhar grew bolder, turning more of humankind against the wolf and slaying more of Urfarah's great grand-whelps. Many moons passed and Ur Khubhar remained a gleeful menace, giddily driving wolves to extinction in whole areas of the known world. It was not to last, however, and Ur Khubhar finally met his defeat. Much to his dismay, it came from the camps of Man, not wolf.



A band of humans tracked Ur Khubhar to his den and surrounded him with shield and spear. The spirit mocked the assembly: what could they do that Urfarah's children could not? The men stood their ground and stabbed at him to keep him at bay, while one of their number produced a stone cylinder lined with wolf bone.

In a rush of wind, Ur Khubhar remembers nothing save darkness and hate for many centuries. Until the fumbling fingers of a distant ancestor of those very Guardians of men freed him, many centuries later.

### INSEPARABLE

Peter now shares his skin with an ancient spirit who echoes and surpasses his hatred for the Uratha. That's the good news. The bad news is he's a cold mockery of himself and has become one of the monsters it was his mission to hunt. He's as much an enemy to his erstwhile brotherhood as he is to the People. Which begs the question: do these so-called Guardians make for unlikely allies for the pack, or another flank to guard?

As Wolf Foe, Peter and Ur Khubhar roam the world, homing in on werewolf territories and destroying their keepers. This poses an immediate threat to any pack he targets, but also leaves a vacuum in those territories, destabilizing the Shadow and providing an opportunity for other enemies of the People to move in.

### DESCRIPTION

Peter was always a man of few words, but possessed by Ur Khubhar, he is a nightmare who appears and attacks without warning. He never stops to negotiate or issue warnings or threats. He has all the tact of a hungry shark, which isn't to say he is without guile. As a man who hunted werewolves as his mission in life, Peter won't be caught flat-footed and has an excellent tactical mind for confronting superior forces with any advantage he can muster. Contrarily, for all of Ur Khubhar's power, the spirit is ultimately a bully and a coward. If he loses the advantage, he will make a swift retreat, lick his wounds and return another time — and he *will* return.

Their attack tactic is to come on like a lightning strike, crippling the strongest member of a pack first thing — whether that's the alpha or not. Then they attack the next strongest, then the next, in sequence. If a weakness exists in this methodology, it's that he spreads his attention around in a fight instead of dealing with threats one at a time. This is, however, very effective in crippling entire packs in short order, to put them out of their misery decisively. A handful of Uratha have survived Wolf Foe's onslaught to tell the tale, but they are few and far between.

Peter wishes to regain ownership of his body, which creates a conflict between the man and the spirit. One thing they are of one mind on, however, is werewolves and what they have coming. Packs hoping to appeal to the human nature of the host aren't likely to find a willing ear.

Peter revels in his condition, despite the horror of it. At the end of the day, Peter got what he wanted and has become a tremendous force to be reckoned with among the Uratha.

Peter was never a handsome man. Deep lines carve furrows in his brow and splotchy freckles speckle his body. Now he's positively hideous, like a man turned inside out. Dark varicose veins line his thick, hidelike and jaundiced skin. He wears concealing and bulky clothing and wide-brimmed hats to hide his countenance. His voice has a disorienting choral effect as Ur Khubhar and he speak in tandem in English and the First Tongue. Ur Khubhar itself appears as a horrible spirit amalgam of man and werewolf, not entirely unlike the Gauru war form of the Uratha. Here, though, Ur Khubhar is too thin, ropy, with patches of fur falling off and a jackal-like head and muzzle too large for the rest of the body. The mouth slavers. The tongue dances. His eyes are empty sockets.

### SECRETS

- Peter has a son of his own coming of age, who believes his father to be dead. At least, that's what the Guardians told him. If the son learns his father is still alive, it could make for an unexpected ally of the pack. The son might be a strong enough connection to bring Peter to the fore long enough to betray Ur Khubhar into giving up the spirit's ban, the location of the ossuary, or engage in a contest of wills for control of his body.

- Ur Khubhar is deadly afraid of the idigam and takes solace in the presumption they're imprisoned far away. To find out the Moon-Banished have returned or to confront them directly would change the creature's disposition considerably.

- The ossuary that formerly housed Ur Khubhar is in Peter's possession, locked away in his domicile. This relic still holds sway over the spirit and could be used to weaken or imprison Ur Khubhar again, if the pack were to figure out how to use it properly.

### RUMORS

*"They say there's some avenging spirit from before time; walks like a man, looks like a demon and it comes for Oath-breakers. Listen, we've all had our share of indiscretions, but I'd get thee to a Rite of Contrition just in case, if you know what I mean."*

Mostly true. Wolf Foe is coming, but he doesn't much care who broke the Oath or didn't. This is a fairly ordinary — if misplaced — fear straight from the "sin factor" of most urban legends and horror movies. Be good and the bogeyman won't come. Unfortunately, that isn't the case here: a virtuous life devoted to Harmony won't save one from the Wolf Foe.

*"Heads up, I keep hearing about some crazy group of, I don't know, Masons or something out there, and they hate the People. Call themselves the Guardians of the Spear or some shit, and apparently they can use fetishes against us. I don't know if I believe it, but, well, like I said, heads up."*



## THE GUARDIANS FOUR

The brotherhood Peter harkens from has a keen interest in reclaiming him. If that proves impossible, they want the irreplaceable relics he carries with him. These Guardians may appear as a precursor to Wolf Foe, or in his wake. They share Peter's ability to use fetishlike devices and his prejudice against the People if they're not all nearly as single-minded. Appropriate fetishes are provided below. Where needed, supplant Essence with Willpower and use Morality to replace Harmony.

- **Gregory Reed:** Guardian Reed is the oldest of the lot and closest to Peter. A lifelong friend of his father, he took it upon himself to see to Peter's upbringing as a young man and within the brotherhood. Guardian Reed shares (and is partly responsible for) Peter's bigotry against werewolves. As icy as he's likely to be in any encounters with Uratha, his primary concern is Peter's well-being and he is willing to entertain any idea that might return him to sanity. Packs shouldn't underestimate Guardian Reed due to his age, however, as he's a crafty combatant and didn't get to be an old man by being a pushover.

- **Darren Ryan:** Guardian Ryan never cared much for Peter or his acclaim despite constantly bucking the system. Darren likes systems: they necessarily precede order, and order keeps everyone safe. Guardian Reed has brought Darren into the hunt specifically for his distaste for Peter, to keep them honest about their hopes to save him. What Guardian Ryan doesn't have is a lot of experience, fighting werewolves or otherwise, and he's the most likely member to lose his head to Lunacy.

- **Anna Lucas:** Guardian Lucas is the most pragmatic of the Guardians searching for Peter. She was brought into the effort to track Peter down for her expertise in werewolf culture, an expertise she draws from her experiences as a wolf-blooded relative to the People. Her family was very involved in Uratha culture and Anna never begrudged them at all, until her sister was raped by one of her "cousins." When Anna complained, she was told in a threatening tone that she could be next and that it was her place to serve as breeding stock. Anna ran away and, years later, found the Guardians, who were more than willing to give her a place among their ranks. She has a unique vantage on the situation, and in any confrontation or negotiation will be able to bring to bear a wealth of knowledge on how the People do their business.

- **Jeremy Finch:** Peter saved Guardian Finch's life years ago from a werewolf attack, and he will go the ends of the earth to return the favor. He is more bookish than his companions and less able in a fight, but is nonetheless more dangerous than the average man. Jeremy's dirty secret is that he doesn't hate werewolves as much as his compatriots do, or at all, despite the encounter Peter saved him from. He sees the Guardians as just as culpable in baiting the creatures as werewolves are in being any sort of monsters.

## STORY HOOKS

- Something is killing the local wolf population. More than simple poaching, whatever is doing this leaves the bodies in obscene and grotesque displays. For added difficulty, a pack of Pure is investigating the same phenomena. Tempers flare and teeth are bared, but can either side face the truth that their traditional enemies aren't responsible before the real culprit descends on them all?

- The Guardians Four approach the pack and want to strike a fragile peace in order to reclaim their friend. They propose that the pack can handle the creature from the spirit world, after they separate the two on this side of the Gauntlet. Everybody wins, right? (Sure, if the pack can trust a brotherhood of open bigotry against their kind.)

- Who needs story hooks? Wolf Foe ambushes the pack boldly and suddenly. Without warning or mercy, he appears among them and attacks. When and if they repel the hideous creature, he won't disappear forever. They have gotten their first taste of Ur Khubhar, but can they track the creature before it licks its wounds and returns to finish the job?

True. Several of the facts are muddled beyond repair, but close enough. Peter was a member of a larger society that hunts down werewolves and brings to bear various powerful relics, largely indistinguishable from Uratha fetishes (examples below).

*"The way I heard it, the spirit of a bunch of dead wolves animated the corpse of this wolf poacher or something. And now they roam the woods, looking for revenge. But it's totally insane, because it's got the urges of the wolf-spirits warring with the urges of the poacher and it doesn't know whether it's coming or going. The fuller the moon, the more likely the wolves are in control and you're probably safe; but come the new moon, man, don't go out alone, if you know what's good for you."*

Total bunk. The teller is close enough to the truth, but this rumor has obviously been mangled by the barking chain. Any and all umbrage taken within this rumor is doomed to failure. Despite its distant relationship with the truth, this rumor does give the pack a lead to follow within the Shadow. Very little is going to hate wolves in an area more than Wolf Foe, and the local spirits might whisper about the coming or passage of Ur Khubhar.

## PETER STROM/UR KHUBHAR

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 5  
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5  
**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2  
**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 1, Investigation 3, Occult 3,  
**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Ambush) 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 3  
**Social Skills:** Intimidation 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1  
**Merits:** Disarm 2, Iron Stamina 3, Status (Guardians) 3, Strong Back 1  
**Willpower:** 7  
**Morality:** 2

**Virtue:** Justice. Peter cannot give up, cannot rest, until the monsters that took his father from him pay for what they've done.

**Vice:** Pride. Simply being the best isn't good enough. Peter must always be better.

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 14

**Health:** 10

**Armor:** 2 ("spirit's skin")

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Doru tou Lykou	1(L)	8	+1(L) per strike (see below)

### Aspects:

Wolf Foe's powers primarily come from a number of supernatural items he carries. Systemically, they are similar to fetishes; however, to activate them, Wolf Foe may spend a Willpower (instead of Essence) and, lacking a Harmony score, his activation dice pools are calculated below.

- **Doru tou Lykou (4 dice):** The *Doru tou Lykou* is a small spear (one yard long) with a barbed tip that grows in power as it draws werewolf blood. Every instance in which the spear draws blood (inflicts at least one lethal damage), the spear gains +1 lethal damage, to a maximum of +3 for the remainder of the scene.

- **Scentless Tracker (3 dice):** The Wolf Foe uses this item to render himself undetectable to the traditional five senses. Functionally, it appears as a long jacket with various fetish-sigils, beads and feathers sewn into it. Two World Eyes and other Gifts that allow Uratha a peek into the *Hisil* will still pick up the dark smudge that demarcates Ur Khubhar's taint, but otherwise, nothing. This is how Wolf Foe is able to appear out of nowhere and ambush packs from among their ranks. If the pack is actively looking for signs of his passing or know he is among them, they can succeed on a roll of Wits + Composure contested by Wolf Foe's Wits + Stealth + activation successes (maximum +5).

- **Ur Khubharlu:** Peter gains amazing strength and enhanced abilities from his merging with Wolf Foe. These bonuses are Wits +2, Resolve +2, Strength +2, Dexterity +1, Stamina +2, Presence -1 and Armor +2; his character sheet above already figures these bonuses in, but we note

them here in case the spirit merges with another human at some point down the line. In addition, Peter regenerates one bashing level of damage per turn, and one lethal per three turns, but aggravated damage takes the normal human amount of time to heal. If Wolf Foe and Peter are separated by any means, Peter's stats will return to their normal levels. Ur Khubhar's spirit stats are shown below.

## UR KHUBHAR

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 9, Finesse 6, Resistance 7

**Willpower:** 14

**Essence:** 20

**Initiative:** 13

**Defense:** 9

**Speed:** 17

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 13

**Influence:** Adversity ●●●, Hate ●●, Cowardice ●

**Numina:** Claim, Gauntlet Breach, Materialize, Sense Weakness (as the Gift)

**Ban:** Wolf bones can be fashioned as weapons against Ur Khubhar, ignoring armor bonuses and causing aggravated damage. Similarly, Ur Khubhar cannot cross lines of wolf bone, such as over a door or under a window.

### Supernatural Powers:

- **Sense Territory:** Since before the dawn of man, Ur Khubhar has developed a sense of when and where someone else's land begins. Any territory that was formerly marked by a pack to let rivals and other Uratha know it's theirs calls to Ur Khubhar. All such marks are like a dare to him, to step over that line in the sand. This is how he is able to track down the People wherever he goes. By succeeding on a reflexive Power + Finesse roll, Ur Khubhar can sense any territory within a number of miles equal to his successes.

## AEGIS KAI WHAT?

If you have **Hunter: The Vigil**, you may find that Peter and his Guardians serve as an approximate analog for the hunter conspiracy known as the Aegis Kai Doru, a group of humans who claim that both werewolves and "witches" are responsible for destroying mankind's exalted state.

The hunters of the Aegis Kai Doru (also called the Shield and Spear, or the Guardians of the Labyrinth) do use magical relics to combat the supernatural. Feel free to utilize the fetishes found in **Werewolf: The Forsaken** as templates for the relic weapons and artifacts these hunters use — in fact, it might throw werewolves for a much-needed loop if they find these mortals are actually able to use their fetishes.



# THE MOCKINGBIRD: SU UBH

PLEASE HELP...I'VE BEEN HURT. PLEASE HELP...I'VE BEEN HURT.

**Aliases:** The Recording Killer, Damsel in Distress, the Collector, the Crying Baby Killer, the Sympathy Card, He Who Gathers Up (The Collector)

## BACKGROUND

Urban legends, propagated by word of mouth and mass-forwarded email chains, abound with stories of psycho killers whose methods of victim selection and execution run toward the outlandish. From gang initiations, where anyone who flashes their headlights is killed, to burly men dressed as little old ladies to convince passersby to let them into a car where the stabbing can begin, these stories warn us not to play good Samaritan, lest we end up the victim of those we seek to help. In the World of Darkness, most of those stories are true, in some form or another. Some are the work of demented — but ultimately human — killers, while others are of a decidedly supernatural bent.

## THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

People feel safe at home. It's a fact: when you're inside your house, with the lights on and the door locked, you're less likely to be on your guard or suspect that you're in danger. Sure, maybe someone unexpectedly rattling the doorknob might spook you, and a home invasion can take away that feeling of security, but for the most part, once people get home, they tend to let their guard down and be less wary of danger. That can make you respond in ways you'd never even think of if you were, say, walking down an empty street in the middle of the night. And that makes you the perfect victim.

The emailed warnings call him by many names: the Damsel in Distress, the Crying Baby Killer, the Sympathy Card. They say he watches a house for days, figures out when someone (usually a young woman, in the emails) will be home alone, then plays a tape recording of some sound designed to elicit investigation. It might be the sound of a baby crying, or a woman saying she's been attacked or just had a bad car accident and needs some help. When the would-be Good Samaritan opens the door to investigate, the killer grabs her and drags her off into the night, leaving behind nothing but an open front door. Most of the time, they never even find the body.

The story has been told all over the world: as near as anyone can tell, it started in Louisiana in 2003, but versions of the story have been set in Australia, Britain, the Ukraine, and even Japan. That's the modern version, anyway. If you look back further, you can find a plethora of stories about goblins, demons and spirits that mimic human voices to lure the unwary into traps and carry them off to some unpleasant fate.

It's certainly possible that modern reports of killers using recordings to draw out their victims are the work of ordinary, deranged men and women armed with audio players — indeed, in this day and age of high-fidelity digital audio and easily portable playback devices, it's even more plausible than ever. Those who assume that's the entirety of the explanation have never had the misfortune of meeting Su Ubh face to face.

## THE MOCKINGBIRD

It flits through the Shadow, setting up its nests wherever it finds a particularly weak spot in the Gauntlet. Its favorite sites are places where the Gauntlet has worn itself so thin as to be practically nonexistent: places known as “verges.” It has plagued large cities and small, rural towns. It has been hunted by man and wolf alike, and by stranger things besides, but it has always managed to slip away to find a new hunting ground. Its name is Su Ubh, a First Tongue term that translates loosely as “He Who Gathers Up,” or more colloquially, “The Collector.”

It might have begun its existence as a simple bird-spirit, or as a conceptual spirit of traits associated with birds. Certainly, the Collector exhibits traits commonly attributed in folklore to a variety of avians; its mimicry, of course, comes from the mockingbird, while its intense curiosity and penchant for stealing away that which catches its interest seems to echo European stories about magpies — as does its cruel streak. Whatever its origins, Su Ubh has grown into a wily, powerful spirit, incorporating aspects of deceit, cunning and obsession into its nature.

Originally motivated by a birdlike curiosity, the fear generated by the creature's abductions (particularly in the age of instant, worldwide communication and the rapid spread of email “warnings”) have given Su Ubh a cruel, tormenting streak. It savors the first look of terror on its victims' faces when they open the door and see it waiting for them, all black-button eyes and wild, unkempt mass of feathers. It laps up the Essence generated by their fear as they are dragged through the Gauntlet into an alien, nightmare reflection of the world they thought they knew. It does not harm its charges, unless they try to escape, and in fact, it even brings them food and water gathered from the Shadow, like a mother bird bringing nourishment to her chicks. What it cannot understand is that humans cannot survive on the “food” found in the *Hisil*, and thus why its new toys stop moving after a few days remains a mystery.

Those taken by Su Ubh have only three real choices: starve to death in the creature's nest, wait for rescue (unlikely, unless the character has friends or relatives with knowledge of the Shadow), or try to escape while the creature is out hunting. The

last option might seem the most appealing, but for an ignorant human with no mystical powers, wandering in the hostile, alien landscape of the Shadow in the vain hope of finding a verge — especially given that the character likely has no idea what

a verge is — is a daunting task. Sometimes the creature takes more than one victim in a short span of time; a group escape might be more feasible, if only by the old axiom “I don’t have to outrun the hungry, angry spirit, I just have to outrun you.”

## PAST INDISCRETIONS

Clipping from the Baton Rouge Advocate, March 21, 2004

Police are still searching for Roweena Atkinson, the 19-year-old LSU sophomore missing since last Friday. According to Atkinson’s friend, Jill Hunter, the last person to speak to Atkinson before her disappearance, Atkinson claimed to have heard a baby crying outside her apartment door.

“She said she was going to go see if she could find the baby,” Hunter said. “I heard her open the door, and then she screamed. I think she must

have dropped the phone when he grabbed her, because I thought I heard birds singing for a minute before the line went dead.”

When police arrived six minutes later, they found the apartment door ajar, with no sign of a struggle. No cell phone was found at the scene, leading police to suspect the kidnapper took it with him. When asked about a popular Internet rumor that a serial killer is operating in

and around the Baton Rouge area, luring single women out of their apartments with an audio recording of a crying infant, police spokesman Jean DuBois had this to say: “We have no evidence of any sort of audio recording being used in the perpetration of this or any other abduction in Baton Rouge at this time. This rumor is just that: someone inventing a plausible explanation for this tragic, senseless crime. Nevertheless, we urge all citizens, especially

those living by themselves, to be cautious when opening their doors after dark. If, for any reason, you feel suspicious of someone or something outside your home at night, call the police and stay indoors.”

Police are questioning Atkinson’s boyfriend, 21-year-old LSU junior Ian McClane, as part of their investigation. Readers who believe they know the whereabouts of Roweena Atkinson are encouraged to call the Baton Rouge Police Department’s tip hotline at

Excerpted from the diary of Sarah Lane, died 5/14/07, included in case file by Dr. Andrew Riggs, MD PhD

May 9

I had the dream again last night. Thought moving to a new place might get rid of them — guess I was wrong. Doctor Riggs says I should write the dreams down whenever I have them, that it will help the healing process. Bullshit. He thinks the dreams are just my mind’s way of processing my abduction. He wasn’t there. He didn’t see it. I don’t care what he says, it wasn’t just some guy in a mask. Sometimes I catch a glimpse of my reflection in the window and I think I can see it looking back in at me. The meds help with that some. My hands are shaking just thinking about it. Going to go take some meds.

May 10

I used to want to be a mother more than anything. Now every time my neighbor’s daughter starts crying, I nearly have a panic attack. I can’t even leave the apartment after dark.

May 11

Oh God, maybe I am going crazy. I was walking home from work today, and I looked out into that little park on 17th. The sun was getting pretty low, but just for a second, underneath the big slide, I thought I saw that place. The place where it took me, where it was always dark and everything moved like it wanted to get me. It was sitting on a tree branch, just watching me. I ran the rest of the way home. It knows I got away. What if it comes back?

May 14

I haven’t slept in three days. There’s a baby crying outside my door only it’s not a baby and I know it’s not a baby and if I open the door it will be waiting for me and it will take me away again and I don’t want to go no no no no no no

To whoever reads this, I’m sorry. It knows where I am now. I can’t get away from it a second time. Tell my mom and dad. I love them, but I can’t go back there.



Now there exists, in that part of the country, a curious tale of a goblin or spook they call the "Magpie Man." According to the legend, this creature perches on a window ledge at night, and calls out in a voice like unto that of a babe in distress. When the goodwife of the house opens the shutters, this goblin spirits her away to the land of the trolls, where she is made to keep the creature's house for it until she dies. It is said that the only way to escape this fate is to harden one's heart against the piteous wailing and to spend the night in prayer to St. Simon of Trent, the patron of children and the victims of kidnapping. If a person can ignore the devil-child and pray until dawn, the goblin will be tricked into staying out all night and will be turned into a tree by sunrise.

Why such a cautionary tale, which runs so counter to the parables of Christ, should have come about in this region, I do not know. The elders of the town tell of a famine many years ago; perhaps the tale came out of a harsher time, when an abandoned babe meant another mouth to feed for his saviors, and it was deemed kinder to let the child die swiftly of exposure. Today the tale is told by women to frighten their children into behaving — "Be good, or the Magpie Man will get you!" — and yet during my time in the village, I noted that whenever a babe wailed within earshot, my hosts would cross themselves and murmur a prayer to St. Simon.



## DESCRIPTION

Standing roughly as tall as a man, Su Ubh moves with a hunched, twisting gait that belies its inhuman physique. Despite its warped body, the creature is capable of moving with surprising swiftness in the physical realm, and when not hampered by a corporeal form, it can easily fly faster than a car. Most of its body is covered with a wild, unkempt plumage that draws from at least half a dozen different birds. Elements of starling, mockingbird, crow, magpie and mynah bird run alongside the glossy black of a crow or raven. The overall impression is of an enormous bird, cruelly twisted into the shape of a man — save for its face, which sports a pair of shiny, button-black eyes and a cruel avian smile.

Su Ubh has never been known to speak in its own voice, assuming it even has one. On occasions when it attempts to communicate beyond luring victims out of their homes, it parrots the voices of human beings, sometimes switching voices three or four times within a single sentence. Sometimes it mimics the voice of the person to whom it's speaking; sometimes it mimics others in the area or its own previous victims; and most disturbingly, sometimes it speaks in the voice of friends or family members long dead. The Collector

can speak in any language known to the person whose voice it mimics, or the First Tongue (regardless of whether the mimicked person could).

Su Ubh's nests in the Shadow are usually easily located. They tend to be located near verges, to make bringing its victims back to the *Hisil* easier, which usually puts the nest in a high-traffic area. Depending on how long the spirit has used a particular nest, it might be littered with human remains (actual, human remains, not spiritual reflections of bones or gore), various trinkets from the mortal world, or even one or more malnourished and terrified human beings. The Collector sometimes ranges far in its hunting, though, and tracking it back to its lair might be a difficult task, especially if the trail leads through another pack's territory.

Because it knows it cannot hide, and it certainly cannot fight a pack of Uratha, Su Ubh readily abandons its nest and its treasures if confronted. More treasures can always be found elsewhere, after all, and the creature has an avian's short attention span in any case. Likewise, if the verge near its nest begins to close up, the creature will move on, abandoning its captives to their fate. This, ironically, becomes the

best and worst time to try to escape: best, because the Collector has gone and cannot stop the characters; worst, because if the verge closes, most ordinary humans will have no way to return from the Shadow.

Although the urban legends associated with Su Ubh's predations almost always name a young, single woman as the victim, in truth the Collector has no favorite prey. It watches the mortal world through the Gauntlet and picks out a victim it finds "interesting." What catches this alien intelligence's interest is anyone's guess, but it does seem to be drawn to those with a hint of the supernatural about them: the wolf-blooded, for instance, seem to make curious targets, as do any humans who have already been marked by or confronted with the supernatural (the Unseen Sense Merit is a good indicator).

Once a victim has been selected, Su Ubh follows it for several days, sometimes watching from the far side of the Gauntlet, other times watching from within the physical world. Once it has established a time to strike, it manifests and tries to lure its victim out of his home. The Collector's Numina are usually sufficient to overpower a mortal, but should the victim put up exceptional resistance, it will flee and seek equally interesting but less capable prey.

## SECRETS

Su Ubh is a spirit (or possibly a type of spirit, as even learned Uratha debate whether it is a unique creature or a brood in its own right) of greed and curiosity. As suggested by its hunting methods, its ban is an inability to enter any building unless a door or window is open. Unlike the vampire of folklore, it need not be invited in, but as long as all entrances

are closed, it cannot enter or affect anyone within. Moreover, it can only attempt to lure a single victim for a single night. Should a prospective victim (or group of prospective victims) resist its temptation until dawn, Su Ubh must depart and never pursue those individuals again.

Although it cannot attempt to take someone who

has resisted its lure once, Su Ubh has been known to take a horrific revenge on those who escape it. When the opportunity presents itself, ideally on a bitter winter night, the Collector steals an actual baby, which it leaves on the doorstep of the one who thwarted it. Many times, the survivor of the creature's hunt (including those lucky few who escaped its nest) has heard the plaintive wailing of an infant he assumed to be another lure, only to find the infant dead of exposure on his front step, a single black-and-white feather laid across its still breast.

Although few Forsaken packs would do so, Su Ubh can be bound as a pack totem. Due to the spirit's ban and its higher Rank, it is more likely to be bound to a Pure pack; depending on who you ask, this might be evidence that there are many Su Ubhs throughout the world, or it might suggest that a single, wily old spirit occasionally joins itself to a werewolf pack for

reasons of its own. As a totem, Su Ubh costs 23 Totem dots and has the Traits defined at the end of this section, with the additional totem-specific Traits:

**Bonuses:** Expression 2 (given), Expression Specialty — Mimicry (given), Essence (two points/story), Gift — Two-World Eyes (pack), Stealth 2 (given)

**Ban:** Su Ubh demands that once a month, a pack in its service must bring a human to the Shadow and strand him or her there, leaving the mortal to die of exposure.





## RUMORS

*“There’s a demon that can steal your voice and use it to trick your loved ones into following it to Hell. But there’s one thing that demon can’t steal, and that’s your true name, because that belongs to God. So if you ever hear your son or your daughter or your lover or your friend begging to be let in on a cold night and you ain’t sure it’s really them, tell ’em to sing out their true, full name. If they can’t do it, it’s the demon come a-calling, and don’t you dare open that door.”*

This rumor is true, although not for the reason the tale-teller thinks. A person’s true, full name doesn’t have any significance (at least, not to Su Ubh); it’s just that very few people routinely refer to each other by their full names, and the spirit isn’t omniscient. Friends usually call each other by first names or nicknames, lovers often have pet names, and parents, of course, are referred to as Mom and Dad. If the Collector never hears your full name, it won’t know it, so this can be an effective way to trip the spirit up. On the other hand, everyone remembers their parents being mad enough to call them by their full name, and sometimes that’s all it takes. This story also illustrates why Su Ubh frequently imitates a crying infant, whom no one expects to be capable of speech.

*“I lost kin to that damned Collector bird. It wasn’t long after my First Change, down in Jackson Parish. My sister had just moved out of Mom and Dad’s house, and that thing came and lured her out and carried her off into the Shadow. We didn’t know what happened at first; nobody’d heard of a spirit that drags mortals across the Gauntlet. We found what was left of her a week and a half later, after some of the scout-spirits we’d set out started talking about dead things in the Shadow. We never found the thing that took her — it had moved on a while before. We brought her back across the Gauntlet and gave her a proper burial, but she’s still there. Her soul is trapped in the Shadow — and damned if I know how to send her home.”*

While the event described above is extremely rare, it is possible for a human who dies in the Shadow to leave behind a ghost trapped in the Shadow. Such a ghost automatically possesses the Material Vision Numen, and may learn Numina that allow it to consume Essence like a spirit. A ghost in the Shadow cannot be exorcised, nor can it be banished by destroying its anchors — something about the Gauntlet prevents the ghost from moving on. Over time, it might well mutate into some sort of ghost-spirit magath, a blasphemy seldom seen since Father Wolf’s death. What effect that might have on the Shadow around such a creature is anyone’s guess.

*“Yeah, I’ve heard of the Collector Bird. I’ve seen it. It comes flapping out of the Hedge at night, calling to me in their voices. Nails, Josie the Doll, little Billy Skullgrin...all the ones I left behind. Sometimes it calls to me in my Keeper’s voice, telling me to come home. And God help me, sometimes I almost listen.”*

This story is false — although Su Ubh’s activities certainly resemble those of the True Fae or certain hobgoblins (as described in **Changeling: The Lost**), the Collector is a creature of the Shadow, not the Hedge. Such a creature might make a fine tormentor for a changeling (who are very interesting, after all), its alien nature making it even more of a mystery and a terror. Conversely, if you have access to

## STORY HOOKS

- Losing any loved one to the Collector would be a tragedy (and an excellent story hook), but that’s no reason not to pile on additional complications. Suppose the leader of a local pack (maybe the characters, maybe one of their allies) has entered into an arranged marriage with the wolf-blooded sister of a neighboring pack alpha (again, perhaps the players’ pack) to cement an alliance. Neither party was happy with the marriage, but both accepted it to strengthen the alliance. When the wolf-blood is taken by Su Ubh, not only must the characters find her before the clock runs out, but they must also convince her brother and his pack that she wasn’t disposed of to make room for another mate.

- One by one, over the course of a few nights, the characters have been snatched by the Collector and brought to its nest. All have a fragmented, nightmarish memory of the abduction, but each one remembers a feature of the place where they were taken to Hell: a plain of black glass, a river of golden light, a skyscraper made of human bone and tendon with windows of smoky obsidian glass. Escaping their captor will be hard enough, but can a band of ordinary human beings find its way through the hellscape of the *Hisil* before deprivation — or angry spirits — claim them? And what happens when an angry spirit begins to *Claim* one of them?

- The players’ characters are approached by a homeless vagrant whose eyes have been plucked out, as though by a bird. In a voice strangely resonant and articulate for a hobo dosed to the gills on cheap gin and cheaper meth, he tells them they can end the predations of Su Ubh — if they will help the *shartha* absorb the Collector’s Essence into itself. Is Su Ubh a shard of some lost bird-Host that somehow lost its link to the swarm? Who is the old vagrant, and who does he “represent”?

**Changeling: The Lost** and want to give your **Werewolf** troupe a nasty surprise, by all means rework the Collector into a fae beast who drags his victims off to the Hedge. The effects of the Thorns on a werewolf, coupled with the stress of being thrown into an uncomfortably alien environment, might make for a fine story.

### SU UBH (SPIRIT)

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 5; Finesse 12; Resistance 8

**Willpower:** 13

**Max Essence:** 20

**Initiative:** 20

**Defense:** 12

**Speed:** 27

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 13

**Influences:** Birds •, Greed •, Fear •

**Numina:** Abduct, Ensnare, Fearstruck, Materialize, Material Vision, Mimicry, Wilds Sense

**Ban:** If a human being resists Su Ubh's attempts to lure him out of the safety of his home until the following dawn, the Collector cannot attempt to steal that individual again. Any use of the Abduct or Mimicry Numina automatically fails against that character, but Su Ubh is not otherwise prohibited from tormenting the character. Likewise, supernatural creatures are not protected by this ban.

- **Abduct:** With this Numen, Su Ubh can literally drag a human being across the Gauntlet and into the Shadow. The spirit must first dwell on the material side of the Gauntlet (using Materialize). Once this is established and a target is identified, the Collector can literally grab a human and pull him across the Gauntlet. Spend a number of Essence equal to the human's Stamina, and then roll Su Ubh's Power + Finesse. The mortal can resist with a Resolve + Composure Roll. If the spirit is successful, the human crosses the Gauntlet and is dragged into the Shadow. If the human wins the contested roll, he remains on the material side of the Gauntlet. Note this Numen only works one way. If the human wins the roll, he remains on the material side of the Gauntlet. The Collector cannot use this ability to move a human back to the material world. For the human to exit the *Hisil*, he must find an alternate way out. The power does not work on supernatural targets, even if technically mortal (such as ghouls or magi). Abduct does work on the wolf-blooded, or those with lesser templates, such as thaumaturges and psychics.

- **Ensnare:** Su Ubh's powerful, talonlike hands can easily snare a mortal and hold him long enough to drag him across the Gauntlet with Abduct. To hit its target, the spirit makes a Finesse roll minus the target's Defense (armor

does not add to Defense in this instance). Subjects struck by the attack are automatically grappled (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 157). Each turn, the victim may roll Strength + Athletics minus the spirit's Power to escape; otherwise, she is immobilized. After a number of turns equal to the spirit's Resistance, begin reducing the effective Power of the snare by two each turn. This attack costs one point of Essence. Additional Essence may be spent to add to the snare; each point of Essence can either increase the penalty to the escape attempt (to a maximum of the spirit's Power + Rank) by one, or may increase the number of turns before the penalty to escape begins to fall.

- **Fearstruck:** This Numen allows Su Ubh to cause an opponent to become paralyzed by fear. The spirit spends a point of Essence and then rolls Power + Finesse; the targeted opponent contests the roll with Presence + Composure + Primal Urge (or the equivalent trait, e.g. Blood Potency, Gnosis, Azoth or Wyrld). Success renders the victim unable to move or speak (or even scream) for one turn. Exceptional success indicates that the victim freezes in place for three turns.

- **Materialize:** See **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 278.

- **Material Vision:** See **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 278.

- **Mimicry:** Su Ubh can flawlessly imitate any voice it has ever heard. Spend one point of Essence and roll Power + Finesse; success indicates that Su Ubh mimics the chosen voice perfectly to human ears. Those with a supernatural sense of hearing — such as a werewolf in Urshul or Urhan form, or a vampire using the *Auspex* Discipline — may roll Wits + Composure (or Wits + Empathy if the voice is one they know well) minus the spirit's Power to recognize the voice as a fake. Short of supernatural senses or advanced voiceprint-analysis hardware, listeners are unable to tell that the voice is being mimicked, though if Su Ubh says things that would be odd or out of character for the person being imitated, they might suspect something is amiss.

- **Wilds Sense:** See **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 278.



# IN HIS KISS: VERSIPPELLITIS

*INFECTED? BUT I DON'T FEEL SICK. I FEEL ALIVE —  
I FEEL MORE ALIVE THAN I'VE EVER FELT IN MY ENTIRE LIFE!*

**Aliases:** The Curse

## BACKGROUND

Fucking, to fuck, is an instinct in every species in nature that has the parts with which to fuck. It is the basest instinct that drives sentient beings together despite higher reasoning, wisdom and even education. It is arguable that fucking has gotten more people fucked than just about any other mistake people have ever imagined.

Sex, the physical interaction of procreation, is fraught with peril, from the potential to jealousy and the violation of social taboo to the creation of less-than-ideal offspring or unwanted physical difficulties. Worst of all is the potential to spread disease, and no disease is worse or more dangerous than the little known malady Versipellitis. This primitive and nearly mystical argument for safe sex is no doubt a large part of the human misconception that paints werewolves as murderous monsters with ravenous sexual appetites and a taste for human flesh.

Versipellitis, translated roughly as “changing skin,” transforms its host over time into a bloody, drooling horror that fornicates and feasts with equal abandon. After

infection, it waits in a victim, tweaking his brain chemistry until his thoughts and desires are hardly his own. When the infection reaches its most terrible state, the victim changes physically and hunts the night, often by full moon. He becomes a primitive mockery of modern man, with wild, tangled hair, teeth for ripping meat and clawlike fingers. In the dark, he looks every bit the horror movie werewolf. He'll take his pleasure by cunning and pheromones or by force. He'll eat his fill of red meat, the humanity of his meal notwithstanding. All the while, Versipellitis waits in his bloodstream to spread and endure from victim to victim.

The Curse, like any other bacterial or viral disease, has no origin and exists only to reproduce itself and spread. Supernatural or not, it has no sense of right or wrong, no sentience to speak of. In the most modern cities, there exists enough casual sex that it's easy for the disease to spread like wildfire through any given population. Luckily, however, at times where it is the most likely to spread, it is also at its most fatal. For this reason, outbreaks tend to look more like the bloodshed of a serial killer than the sickness it truly is, and if anyone were tracking it, it would far more likely be the FBI than the CDC.



## BUCKLEG

He wore his pants low with his belt undone, as if he was ready at any time and wouldn't let something like a buckle get in his way. He swaggered and leaned on the wall like he was posing, and he grinned full of teeth at anything female that passed under his nose. There wasn't much he'd turn down, cheap and easy or hard to get. He was a predator — or thought he was, anyway. Maybe he was, but tonight, things were different.

Nancy's stomach hurt again and she couldn't keep her eyes off of the tall, tight guy with his belt undone. He smelled a little different from the guys before, and she didn't know what it meant or why it mattered, but she also knew he was the one for tonight. She got up from the bar table and lurched to where he stood, looking strong and talking to a blonde she would have been jealous of a year ago.

"Excuse me."

He didn't answer, which wasn't a surprise. He didn't even notice her, all five foot three of her (a little hunched over from the pain in her stomach). Besides that, she was a dog and she knew it, and a year ago, he would have been out of her league.

Things were different this year. "Excuse me," she said again, and moved in between him and the bimbo. "You don't want to go home with her. You want to go home with me. I'm a better lay."

The bimbo snorted and objected. The man snorted too, and when he took in a deep breath, his expression changed entirely.

"Yeah," he said, "I bet you are."

She didn't know how it worked, or why it worked, but she knew when it worked. Twenty minutes later, naked and sweating, he was holding his entrails in with his hand, panting, and she was licking blood off her fingernails. She'd gotten sick a year ago and slept with someone she had a bad feeling about because she was lonely and he was paying attention to her. Now, once a month or so, she'd get these cramps and understood two things: she had to get laid, and she had to kill.

Only, this one, he wasn't dying.

"What the fuck are you?" he growled.

"I don't know, I could ask you the same question. You should be dead by now."

His skin kind of rippled, kind of shifted before her eyes. He looked different now. Ferocious or something.

"No way," she said, leaning back away from him. "You can't be a — you're nothing like me."

He seemed utterly perplexed for a moment. "And why not?" He was getting bigger, too, and she could see his gut closing up before her eyes.

"Because that's what I am, and that isn't how it works."

She jumped at him, unable to control the need to finish him off any longer. Martin snapped the woman's neck as easy as a thought, and looked down at her crumpled body. She wasn't Pure; she certainly wasn't Forsaken, no matter how strange she looked, with her thick yellow nails and pointed teeth. Her eyes were all yellow too, and caught the light, reflecting it, but only for a moment before death clouded them entirely.



## DESCRIPTION

Sexual contact is the only guaranteed way to transfer Versipellitis from one person to another. It does not last long in the open air, and so handling infected blood or other body fluids won't transmit the disease. In fact, wound-to-wound contact or blood-to-mouth contact would likely be necessary to spread that way. Medical science hasn't found evidence of it under the microscope, and so it can't be analyzed in any standard manner. (Mechanically, assume that contact has about a 30% chance of actually spreading. Roll a die; if it comes up a success on an 8, 9 or 10, the disease spreads.)

### STAGE 1 INFECTION

After infection, Versipellitis begins to gestate, working its way through the bloodstream. Eventually, it settles into the cerebellum, the home of both impulse control and aggression. At that point, the infected will find he is especially amorous. For the infected, the desire to copulate becomes a deeply pressing urge. While he may not yet seek it out actively, when presented with the opportunity, he will take it far more easily as the infection wears down his resolve.

#### Effects of Stage 1 Infection

At this time, the victim suffers  $-2$  to any rolls to resist seduction or compulsions toward sexual activity. An increase of libido is not necessarily noteworthy, of course, and during this stage of infection, nothing appears to be wrong. Worse, during this stage of heightened weakness, the infected is potentially spreading Versipellitis to each unprotected partner.

### STAGE 2 INFECTION

Hours, days, or maybe weeks after the initial infection, the victim gets proof positive something is wrong with him. Those who have been able to track the patterns find that outbreaks of the second active phase of Versipellitis are not tied to growth of the bacteria or virus that it might be, but instead follow a lunar cycle. Once a full moon comes, flashes of carnality fill a victim's thoughts. The blonde in the corner is just asking for it; it's the way she's dressed. The guy down the bar is begging for a fight. That group of bikers at the pool table all need to taught a lesson. Lust and rage become almost synonymous in the victim's mind, and once this stage flares, it becomes all consuming.

#### Effects of Stage 2 Infection

During every waking period of 12 hours, the player or Storyteller must roll the victim's Resolve + Composure; failure means the character must either successfully pursue sexual activity or cause lethal harm to a living being. In addition, it also infests the victim's endocrine system, pumping and producing what might well be human pheromones. While he grows sweatier and stronger smelling than normal, the pungent odor becomes compelling, making him seem more attractive and healthier than he

might actually be. Mechanically, this makes any rolls to resist seduction from the character a  $-3$  penalty.

The worst part of this stage of the infection comes in the form of body warping that can overcome them in endorphin-fueled situations. If the victim engages in physical pleasure or physical violence, his body is wracked with momentary Changes: his bones grind and warp, his skin sprouts new hair and his teeth and nails thicken and sharpen. In mind-numbing agony, his muscles twitch and grow, making him into a monster. Mechanically, this adds  $+1$  to Strength and Stamina, and "claw" attacks are at  $+1$  lethal. The urge to kill or mate is difficult to resist and the infected will do one or the other, unless he spends a Willpower point to curtail the changes.

Those suffering under this stage of the disease appear to have hypertrichosis, the "werewolf" disease that results in a condition of excessive hair on the face and body. The individual also exudes a beastlike musk during this time.

### STAGE 3 INFECTION: DORMANCY

After one such violent outbreak, Versipellitis often goes dormant for days, weeks or even years with no rhyme or reason. In addition, once pregnant, a female victim has no second-stage breakouts, but can still spread the disease. In everybody else, it occasionally reverts to the effects of Stage 2, resulting in grotesque reactions of lust and violence before once more tumbling into dormancy.

Perhaps most frustrating for any Forsaken confronted with an outbreak of the Curse is that they can contract it sexually like any mortal might, but show no other signs of having it. As a result, a werewolf might easily spread it to her mate and/or other wolf-blooded before she ever realizes she might be infected.

## SECRETS

*Aconitum porphura*: A rare species of wolfsbane characterized by its vivid purple flower, *porphura* referring to the coloration of the bloom. Being indistinguishable from cousin species except for the coloring, Purple Wolfsbane blooms for a shorter season than other strains, and therefore is even more difficult to identify. It tends to grow in thick woods with a temperate climate. It is found most commonly on mountain ranges like the Appalachians in North America and lower parts of the Alps in Europe. It is not a hardy plant and very sensitive to hot weather. It is a shade-only plant and cannot bloom under direct sunlight.

Being nearly chemically identical to other species, *porphura* draws no real interest or raised eyebrows from scientists. It is highly toxic, deadly if taken internally and still dangerous if the oil of the leaves touches bare skin.

Traditional folk medicine suggests that this, like all species of *aconitum*, can be purified and reduced to a useful cure-all for colds and flu, but that in unique situations, the berries of the plant can be processed into a paste that stops certain semi-mystical skin conditions. While there is no direct correlation, some occulted records in traditional

Indian and Chinese medicines list a disorder that may, in fact, have been Versipellitis. In those records, it suggests that a paste of *aconitum porphura* is an absolute cure.

Finding records of this cure and this plant would require contacts in or knowledge of these branches of folk practice. Additionally, creation of the paste would be a very difficult process, and one misstep would result in a deadly poison that looks exactly like the benevolent mix. A Storyteller should make the Intelligence + Medicine roll to construct the paste, with bonuses that might apply from Merits like Holistic Awareness (see **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 109) and a penalty of -3 dice. Failure indicates a poison of Toxicity 7, while dramatic failure means that the creator accidentally ingests some of that poison (it's on his fingers, and he licks one by mistake).

Either way, administering the paste will end the Curse, either by curing it or because the victim will be dead.

A Forsaken, being far more resistant to poison than a mortal, would be able to withstand the poison and rid himself of the Curse more easily, with a much higher survival rate. What is of concern with this rare species is its mystical relationship with the People. After ingestion of the poison or the cure, a werewolf will find that she is unable to shape change for a period of time. The werewolf's player rolls Stamina + Resolve, with a penalty equal to the successes on the initial creation roll. The base time is 10 days; each success reduces this time by one day. Note that this also eliminates the risk of Kuruth.

## RUMORS

*"The Curse isn't some disease. That's dumb. You remember Digging Claws, my old alpha? Yeah, well, he and his wife, they were swingers — well, she was, anyway, and Digging Claw sort of put up with it. Way I heard it, she had something on the side with some fucking wizard or something, and when she wouldn't leave my alpha, the wizard put a literal curse on her. No shit. Fucking wizards."*

The Forsaken spends most of his adult life fighting twisted and bizarre examples of the paranormal. Assuming that the paranormal must be the act of a conscious mind is perfectly logical. Certainly, malicious magic or hedge curses could explain the subtle shape-changing of the victims of this disease, but in this case, that's just a false lead a pack might chase. The truth is Versipellitis is just a disease that exists, like any other.

*"It's a spirit. I seen it once, hanging around some of those tranny club girls. It looks weird and behaves strangely, but as soon as it can, it hops in and claims them just as soon as it smells arousal in the air. It claims the first, and spreads and multiplies from partner to partner. You find that damn thing, snuff it and its little babies out, and it won't bedevil you anymore."*

False. It's easy to blame anything funny that happens in or around werewolves on spirits. They are behind a great deal of trouble, even on the flesh side. While there

may be a number of spirits that hang around infected, and may have mutated over time to be very specific death or disease spirits, there is no record of any of these being the root cause of an outbreak. The spirits follow the disease rather than the disease following the spirit.

## STORY HOOKS

- The pack members track an overenthusiastic lust-spirit that has been strongly influencing the mortals around a bar in their territory. When they corner the suspect spirit, it insists it hasn't been Urging anyone; that it simply came into existence at this bar and grew fast. What will the pack do when they find that the spirit was indeed telling the truth, and where they are is ground zero of a full outbreak of Versipellitis?

- An older wolf from a neighboring pack is dying. He's 66 and the years of fighting and chasing have caught up with him. He is willing to leave the pack a powerful fetish upon the moment of his death, if only they will swear to him they will do one thing. That is, they will save his nine-year-old grandson from an awful fate. His mother, the old wolf's daughter, died after contracting the Curse, but not before having this child. While the child has shown no sign of the illness, he's still prepubescent, but that won't last forever.

- A "bug chaser" (a person who, for whatever reason, seeks out unprotected sex with people infected by sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV) hears about a disease so virulent and dangerous that it actually turns its host into a monster. Seeing some sort of eroticism in such a dance with death, he or she goes immediately in search of infection. Worse still, because bug chasers often meet in clubs where they exchange disease, it could spread at dangerous levels from people willingly exchanging it as part of a fetish, to people unwillingly spreading it thanks to their weakening moral fiber.

## SANDRA LEE SCOTT: VICTIM OF THE DISEASE

Sandra is sick and she knows it. Someone gave her HIV three years ago on purpose, and she spent a long time trying to find a way to make "them" pay. In this case, "they" quickly became any man she ran into. She was responsible for a lot of men contracting HIV who didn't deserve it, and she stopped caring about all that right after she found out how sick she was. Of course, while running around having unprotected sex with anyone she could, Sandra exposed herself to other diseases. Eventually, she



contracted the Curse, as if part of some kind of cruel joke. What is crueler still, Sandra's T-cell count is good. She doesn't seem to be getting any sicker. It could be that the cocktail of drugs she's on is working, but she thinks that the more potent and less definable disease is really what's keeping her alive. And all she has to do in return is rip people limb from limb every once in a while.

### APPEARANCE AND ROLEPLAYING

Sandra was never a hot commodity. Average height and a little thick around the middle, her eyes are just a little too wide apart and her nose is too big for her otherwise small face. But she felt like the right clothes and makeup would make up for whatever she naturally lacked. She's hot from 20 feet, pretty from 10, and at five feet, it might be time to turn around. Early on, she decided the only way to validate her own vanity is to get men in bed with her. It makes her feel wanted and attractive, no matter what the reality is. She learned quickly how to say the right thing and make the right suggestions to get what she wants.

Before getting sick, a combination of provocative clothing and lewd conversation was all she needed, but after she started getting noticeably thin and apparently ill, her success rate went down. Now that she's contracted the Curse and its "benefits," her success rate is far better. She knows it, too, and swaggers with the confidence of a perfect hunter, an ideal predator despite her butter face and sickly frame. When she speaks to men, any and all conversation turns back to sex. If the man in question seems in any way pathetic or unable to normally get lucky, she'll brush him off in favor of Lotharios who are more predatory.

### USING SANDRA IN YOUR STORY

"You remind me of a guy I used to date."

Sandra knows what she does, and with her low moral standards, she's good at it. She's starting to enjoy the kill,

and is starting to look for bigger and more dangerous conquests. This could be married men, public figures, or even other monsters. If she finds out about them, it will include Forsaken.

She is a walking morality play with a tragic ending for just about anyone who crosses her path. On the surface, she appears to be just a mundane person with a mundane problem, but down deep, she's a dire warning to anyone not living carefully in this modern world. However, she can still mess a pack up, whether it's by violating its territory or killing off its friends and contacts, or getting knocked up by one of them.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts 1, Medicine (Pathology) 2, Occult 1, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Firearms 1, Drive 1, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Seduction) 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge (Little White Lies) 2

**Merits:** Barfly, Natural Immunity, Contacts (Bartenders) 1, Resources 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Morality:** 3

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Saturday Night Special	1	10/20/30	4

**Supernatural Powers:** Sandra is subject to all benefits and penalties of Versipellitis.

# THE UGLATHLU: VINCENT FRANCO

QUIT BEING SUCH A FUCKING BABY. THIS'LL ONLY HURT UNTIL YOU DIE...

**Aliases:** Angel Face Franco

## BACKGROUND

Growing up, Vincent Franco always knew about the things of which no one spoke. He knew why the same four men visited his father every Wednesday night and what they all discussed over games of poker, bottles of beer and pungent cigars. He knew why his grandfather was treated with such respect in the neighborhood, and why everyone lit candles in church for his Uncle Lou, who was stabbed to death in prison three years before Vincent was born, having never said a word about exactly whose heroin he was transporting over state lines. He grew into adolescence idolizing the criminals who sat at his family's table at dinner, visited for barbecues during the summer and sent cards around Christmastime.

Vincent got into the family business at the age of 17. His father, Joe, was proud of him, though his mother told Vincent he'd put her in an early grave. The handsome young man was soon dubbed "Angel Face" by one of his father's cohorts, and the nickname stuck. Vincent turned out to be a brutal thug, efficient and remorseless. He'd spent a lifetime lionizing the glamour of the mobster lifestyle and now he was living it. He had fast cars and fast women, and more money than he knew what to do with. Twenty years flew by. Joe died of a heart condition and his younger brother, Vincent's Uncle Mikey, took over, but everyone knew that Vincent's time was coming, that his star was still rising. Everything that goes up, however, must come down.

While walking to his car after a late-night tryst with a local stripper, Angel Face Franco was shot twice in the stomach by members of a rival family. Slowly dying of his wounds, he was stuffed into the trunk of a car and driven out to some rural land owned by a small consortium of "legitimate businessmen," where he was dropped in a compost heap and shot four more times in the gut, just for good measure. The two wiseguys had a good laugh over the whole thing, and one of them went so far as to flick the lit stub of a cigarette in Vincent's face. As his vision began to dim, Vincent vaguely heard the sound of the car driving away, leaving him alone in the night. Moments later, his sight went dark and all he knew was the feel of the cold, dismal early April rain, as the pain faded to a dull ache and he finally realized that he was truly going to die.

And Vincent Franco *did* die, after a fashion, but that didn't stop him from getting back up. Instead, as the last fleeting moments of life trickled down to nothing, something horrid crawled over Vincent's wounds, rising up out of the festering depths of the pile of decomposing vegetation beneath him. It wriggled its way into him, feeding upon a lifetime of viciousness, hatred and murder. In the dying hitman, the entity found something of a kindred spirit, a creature that thrived upon humanity's natural tendency toward depravity, and it fed upon the decrepit remains of his soul.

The monster that now inhabited Vincent's skin walked away from those backwoods and returned to the underworld with a vengeance. Perhaps, in its own odd way, the spirit-host did what it did next to honor the man whose shape it wore, for the feast he had unwittingly provided. Whatever the case, though, neither Cadillac Johnny nor Eddie T. were laughing the next time they beheld Vincent Franco's face. Both men took hours to die and, while they were the first casualties of the Terrazzo family, they certainly weren't the last. The particularly horrific nature of the killings inspired fear and awe in equal measures, and those who knew what was what wondered how it was that Angel Face had survived at all, let alone how he had managed to come back strong enough to wipe out a dozen guys in half as many days. Uncle Mikey called his nephew in for a little chat, hoping to rein in this new loose cannon. The next day, he was on a plane bound for the Tuscan countryside, along with his wife and two youngest kids. He never spoke of what had passed between Vincent and himself, save to say that the family belonged to his nephew now.

Next came the small fish. Only a few scattered accounts escaped the various scenes of slaughter, as the Worm Host tore through any cadre of small-time gang-bangers who dared to stand up to it. By a month or so after that, *everyone* in the business — from the most made of made men, right on down to the playground crack dealers — knew that Vincent Franco was the only game in town. Even as the brutal *capo* became more successful, however, he turned increasingly reclusive. Some said he had a gradually worsening "condition" on account of his near-death experience, but most were just happy to know he wouldn't be around quite so much anymore, and were content to let sleeping dogs lie.



Now, those within the local criminal underworld who dare to defy Angel Face Franco are dragged to his isolated estate on the outskirts of town, never to be seen again. Where they were once merely efficient in their inhumanities, the Franco family's soldiers have turned savagely cruel in their actions since the Worm Host assumed power, swiftly metamorphosing into a pack of psychotic thugs. Worse still, the numbers of these violent sociopaths seem to be slowly but steadily growing, as more and more of the criminal element falls in line with the Uglathlu's ambitions. The authorities speculate that the Franco mob's successes — which are well known but not, at this point, provable in a court of law — embolden petty criminals and facilitate their transition into sadistic killers, but those whose senses are attuned to the unseen world of Shadow may well see a far different picture of these events.

### THE NATURE OF THE WORM

Uglathlu are creatures of dissolution. Conceptually, Worm Hosts are linked to decay: not merely of the flesh, but also of the spirit. Specifically, they feed upon the moral centers of those nearby, slowly consuming what makes them human and facilitating a steady descent into monstrosity. Consequently, they contribute directly to the creation of dark spirits in the Shadow Realm and, eventually, to the manifestation of Wounds that, in turn, begin to bleed a spiritual influence through into the material realm. Effectively, they blight the souls of those around them and, thereby, everything else.

Rare as host-spirits go, Uglathlu mature slowly and reproduce only infrequently, a strategy believed by the few Uratha who know of them to cut down on competition for sustenance. Only after a Worm Host has so utterly decimated the spiritual landscape of its environment as to render the place virtually unlivable for any denizens of Shadow other than the most loathsome does it relinquish control of its current human skin, which has served as a sort of "egg sac" for nascent Uglathlu. These infant spirits then burrow through the Shadow Realm reflection of the surrounding earth after budding off from the whole, until they are far from their "parent" spirit, so the process can begin anew. The Worm Host that inhabited Vincent's body found a particularly robust environment in which to feed, and its predation is swiftly changing a group of otherwise extremely bad people into genuine psychopaths ruled by their most horrific impulses. Violent forms of insanity now run rampant through the Franco mob, as the Uglathlu gnaws upon the tarnished souls of its enforcers.

A few of the Franco soldiers are Urged by the unwholesome spirits that their actions have helped to create, and some will almost certainly become Ridden or even Claimed with time. For its part, the Uglathlu cares little, as long as it can continue to feast upon the spark of the human spirit, extinguishing that subtle light by degrees and creating a suitable habitat for its inevitable need to reproduce. Most of the weakest spirits in the Worm Host's immediate vicinity are easily cowed into submission and

turned into reluctant servants, but the Uglathlu is much more concerned, overall, with what it can accomplish on the material side of the Gauntlet.

### THE FACE OF THE FAMILY

Given its ever-worsening physical disfigurements (see below), the Worm Host doesn't do so well with the face-to-face dealings occasionally required of even the most reclusive mob boss. Fortunately, its feeding strategy tends to gradually overwhelm the better judgment of those humans with which it surrounds itself, as their reservations disintegrate under the urge to sate their darkest desires. Vincent's cousin, Jimmy, has stepped into the role of the family's face man, handing down the *capo's* orders to those not yet ready to accept what Angel Face has become. Jimmy is well aware that Vincent isn't what (or even who) he used to be, but the family's foremost lieutenant is rolling in cash now, and the voice of his conscience is all but gone. Jimmy's fundamentally avaricious nature secures his allegiance to the Uglathlu and its monstrous agenda, regardless of whatever it is that wears his cousin's skin.

Never a particularly upstanding human being to begin with — even by the mob's standards — Jimmy was easily subverted to the Worm Host's objectives. About the only thing that *might* get him to rethink his "loyalty" is a better offer, but anyone trying to buy him off also needs to overcome his fear of the creature that heads up the family. Jimmy may be covetous (now almost uncontrollably so, in fact), but he's not stupid. Even a chance to take over the family won't turn Jimmy against the thing that wears his cousin's face; he's far better off as Angel Face's voice than he ever would be as the guy actually calling the shots, and he *knows* it. Whatever else he may be, though, Jimmy is a scant judge of character, and he hasn't made more than a keen handful of mistakes in determining which of the family's new generation of soldiers are ready to meet the boss for the first time. These dregs of humanity who are, at best, fit for a lifetime of solitary confinement in a maximum-security facility quickly learn to be seen and not heard, and simply to do as Angel Face and Jimmy command; those who don't become the gruesome examples used to "motivate" the others to exercise discretion and keep their opinions to themselves.

Anyone who isn't a thug in the boss' entourage, no matter how highly placed, deals with Angel Face through Jimmy. While some of the old guard chafes at this sort of treatment, at least a few of them got an eyeful of Vincent's state before he went into isolation, and they're more than happy to keep their distance — all the more so given the stories about what became of those who dared to complain. Those who know what's good for them just do as Jimmy tells them and hope they're never invited to visit with the boss. Most of the family's dealings are carried out through these intermediaries, providing yet another layer of privacy and security for the thing that still calls itself Vincent Franco. At least a few of Vincent's blood relations who work in the family business (including Mikey's oldest

son, Joe) suspect that something is terribly wrong with him, but they've all held their tongues about it thus far.

## DESCRIPTION

The Uglathlu does a good enough job of faking its way through the motions of Vincent Franco's life. As it turns out, Angel Face wasn't a very complex person before his untimely demise. The whole process is made much easier by the reclusive tendencies of the Worm Host, as its body continues to transform into something terrifyingly alien. Those members of the family who interact directly with the Uglathlu at this point are monstrous and insane enough to almost accept the obviously inhuman creature wearing Vincent's skin and, regardless of their revulsion, they're all terrified enough of the thing to keep their mouths shut and do as they're told. Most orders are handed down through Jimmy Franco now, while "promising" recruits (particularly those afflicted by the Wounds slowly spreading around Angel Face's closest confidants) are eventually brought out to Angel Face's mansion, to meet the boss and enter his "inner circle." No one else gets to interact with the boss these days, unless Angel Face is in the mood to personally dispense some violence.

In terms of his looks, Angel Face Franco is no such thing, anymore. His frame sags with the weight of a couple of hundred pounds of writhing worms in place of muscle tissue, forever slithering audibly in a clumpy mass underneath his pale, yellowish-pink skin, which is now perpetually coated in a thin layer of slime. When he speaks in his phlegmy rasp, a worm or two invariably falls out of his mouth, to wriggle at his feet. His dark brown hair, once immaculately groomed, now hangs in long, wet, greasy strands around his shoulders and, perhaps somewhat mercifully, in

front of his face. His eyes are cloudy, faded to a pale gray underneath thick white cataracts, though he seems to have no trouble with his sense of sight. He smells of rotting flesh, decomposing vegetable matter, and rich dark topsoil, like a dug-up grave in the latter days of a rainy autumn. For a while, he used to at least attempt to conceal the scent with cologne; he's long since given up trying.

## SECRETS

Angel Face Franco's single most important secret is the truth of his nature. While quite a few members of the family now know that the boss is both more and less than human, the majority of the local criminal underworld only understands that the vicious *capo* is a potentially sickly recluse who values his privacy with a fervor bordering on psychosis. If any sort of reliable word were to somehow get out into the underworld as to the sort of *literal* monster Vincent Franco has become, chaos and panic would surely ensue, with most mobsters attempting to escape the area and at least a few of them gathering up implements decidedly deadlier than pitchforks and torches, in an attempt to put the creature down.

Since the Worm Host is aware that it lacks the strength, as yet, to win the full-scale gang war that would surely follow were it to be revealed as wholly inhuman, it bides its time and vigorously suppresses the rumor mill. Still, the rare horror story *does* occasionally leak out, only to be silenced within a matter of days by the Franco soldiers.

Strictly speaking, the operations of the Franco mob also constitute some interesting secrets of their own. Certainly, a number of important players in the criminal underworld, both locally and abroad, would pay handsomely (or kill remorselessly) to know the inner workings of Angel



Face's various rackets. Even those who put no stock in the bizarre rumors whispered around the ragged edges of the Franco family have an interest in seeing Angel Face take a fall. Some want to move in on his action, while others are more interested simply in seeing an unstable element — a relic of a sloppier, more brutish era — removed from the board. Likewise, a number of people in law enforcement (at various levels, ranging from local to federal) have taken an interest in Angel Face's doings. He's not yet an important enough figure to warrant a full-blown FBI investigation, but he could easily cross that line at any time with his murderous antics. While the boss of the Franco mob has just enough of the right people in his pocket to deflect most police scrutiny, his control over the boys in blue is far from perfect, and there are cops who'd give their eyeteeth to learn just enough to serve Angel Face with a warrant and make it stick.

## RUMORS

*"Look, you've got to understand, nobody talks about Angel Face anymore. He's a very...private...individual. Yeah, Cadillac and Eddie T. went to button him up a while back, but it didn't happen. They screwed it up. I really shouldn't be telling you this. If it gets back to Angel Face, it's my ass. They must've fucked him up but good, because he had to get some kind of surgery, maybe? I don't know, but I hear that he looks...wrong, you know? He keeps to himself now, in that place he's got on the edge of town. I heard something about him needing a sterile environment on account of an infection or something like that; fucked if I know. One thing that a couple of guys mentioned, though, is the smell. I heard that Cadillac and Eddie dropped him on a compost pile when they shot him, and the rumor is that he never stopped smelling like he just crawled out of it. But all that aside, he's the boss, and far be it from me to criticize his hygiene."*

Characters with ties to the criminal underworld are certain to hear of Angel Face Franco and his "miraculous" return from the dead. He's only been back for a few months now, but he's already begun a reign of terror that's making certain wiseguys talk a bit more than they should. People are scared, and with good reason: Vincent Franco's appetite for murder seems to be insatiable. Any character who actually *works* in crime will certainly get wind of the terrible whispers surrounding the mob's savage new boss. Those who merely have connections to such people might begin to wonder why some of their contacts are making themselves scarce and quietly looking for opportunities elsewhere, while many of the others gradually degenerate into dangerously unbalanced and hideously unpleasant people. Some write off Angel Face's behavior as the result of his near-death experience (or else don't think too much about it, on account of fear, success, or a bit of both), but others in the underworld have a feeling that something darker is at work.

*"Every day, it just gets worse. We keep trying to fix the neighborhood, but it's like shoveling shit against the tide. The*

*drugs are worse now than they've ever been and, just last week, Mrs. Bailey was killed in broad daylight when she didn't hand her purse over to a crackhead mugger fast enough. I don't know what went wrong. We had a local citizens' watch and the mayor had started that whole 'Clean Up Our Streets' initiative, and it all seemed to be working, for once. Then, it's like everything just went bad, all at once. The gangs got really bold really fast and everyone who was trying to set things right just...stopped. I don't know what to do. I mean, what can you do? Everything's already gone to hell and it just keeps going downhill."*

As the Worm Host feeds, it lays waste to the spiritual landscape, exacerbating human evil until the fabric of the Shadow Realm rots and gives rise to Wounds. Bad neighborhoods turn worse, and people already inclined toward antisocial behavior descend into actions almost inconceivable in their wickedness. Hand in hand with this overall degeneracy is a rising tide of insanity, as minds crack under the intense strain of withering humanity. Terrible spirits afflict the herd with vicious Urges and attempt to Ride or even Claim the worst of them. Those who can't get out either cave in or else become victims of the rising tide of horrors, unable to stand against the insidious influence exerted by a poisoned Shadow and the spirits it spawns.

*"It's some sort of host-spirit, I think. Never seen one like it. It's definitely not Azlu or Beshilu, I can tell you that. Looks like something's under its skin, slithering around like a few hundred snakes wearing a costume. It had a bad smell coming off it, like fresh, moist death. It was surrounded by a bunch of guys. Tough-looking guys. Nothing I couldn't handle, but wolfing out in front of a crowd of thugs just didn't seem like the best plan. I don't know what it wants, but it was poking around on the edge of your pack's territory and I figured I'd be a good neighbor and give you the heads-up."*

Of course, werewolves can hear about Vincent Franco in a more direct manner. Other Uratha may have spotted this strange creature and passed on word of its existence. While it is unlikely that the average Forsaken knows anything at all about a Worm-Host, some werewolves (especially learned Crescent Moons or studious Bone Shadows, for example) may have seen, or at least heard of, these loathsome and unusual entities. With some study and perhaps a bit of negotiation with various strange (and quite possibly unwholesome) spirits or similar beings, persistent werewolves might be able to gather more concrete information on Vincent's nature, or even just that of the Uglathlu in general.

## VINCENT FRANCO

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Computer 1, Crafts (Firearms) 3, Investigation (Counter-forensics) 2, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Politics (Organized Crime) 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl (Cheap Shots) 4, Drive 2, Firearms (Pistols, Rifles) 4, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry (Knives) 2



## STORY HOOKS

- For a character involved in (or directly opposed to) organized crime, Angel Face Franco presents a *serious* problem. The Worm Host is a monster that violates the Shadow Realm by its very nature, and it surely needs to be put down, but how? The Uglathlu rules the underworld more or less openly and surrounds itself with enough protection that even the strongest and cleverest pack will have a hard time keeping the herd ignorant of any move they make against the boss of the Franco family. For its part, this particular Uglathlu knows little of werewolves, and just considers the protection to be smart business, so it can be parted from its defenders (since it has yet to encounter anything that it considers a genuine threat). That may, however, prove to be a matter of far greater finesse than many Uratha are comfortable with or — in some cases — even capable of. Can the werewolves take down Angel Face Franco while simultaneously upholding the Oath of the Moon?

- Dark spirits are skulking around the fringes of the pack's territory, the result of an impending Wound. Some of Angel Face's thugs have set up shop in the area (to open a numbers racket, a drug-dealing operation, or something similar) and their degenerate ways have given rise to these new spirits. When the pack moves to drive out or destroy the invading entities, they find that the spirits are soon replaced by others, pointing to a deeper sickness in the invisible world. As the characters follow this infection back to its source, it soon becomes apparent to them that *something* is bringing out the worst aspects of human nature in a way that directly and progressively harms the Shadow Realm (which, in turn, negatively impacts the local herd, and so forth, in a vicious circle). While the Uratha can deal with the Franco family toughs, they're only addressing the symptom, rather than the sickness. To cut out the cancer, they have to go directly to the source.

- The pack is approached by a most unexpected visitor: a Spider Host. While the Uratha and the *Azlu* are ancient enemies, this particular Spider Host is willing to put aside old enmities for the sake of mutual benefit. It is aware of the growing influence of another sort of host-spirit, gradually despoiling the local Shadow Realm and making its task of calcifying the Gauntlet that much harder. While the *Azlu* recognizes that the werewolves aren't likely to honor any truce they make, it hopes that the Worm Host (which it only knows as a violent mobster with command over a small army of equally violent minions) and the Forsaken will wipe one another out, leaving it to its work.

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 4, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise (Black Market) 4, Subterfuge (Blatant Misdirection) 3

**Merits:** Allies (Labor) 2, Allies (Local Politics) 1, Allies (Police) 2, Allies (Street) 3, Brawling Dodge, Contacts (Organized Crime, Police) 2, Danger Sense, Fame (Criminal Underworld) 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Fresh Start, Gunslinger, Iron Stamina 2, Language (Italian), Quick Draw (Firearms), Resources 5, Retainer (many; ranging from 2 to 4 dots, each), Status (Organized Crime) 5

**Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** 4

**Morality:** 0

**Virtue:** Fortitude. Never back down and never give up.

**Vice:** Wrath. Slaughter anyone or anything that stands in your way.

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 3 (2 w/flak jacket)

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 9

**Numina:** Discorporation

**Armor:** 1/0 (reinforced clothing), 1/2 (bulletproof; Kevlar vest), or 2/3 (bulletproof; flak jacket)

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Fist	0(B)	—	9
Knife	1(L)	—	9
Heavy pistol	3(L)	30/60/120	11
Rifle	5(L)	200/400/800	13

**Supernatural Powers:**

- **Devour Morality:** Simply through proximity, a Worm Host can consume the Morality of a human being (the image of worms boring holes in dead flesh is appropriate, except here, the grubs chew through one's own moral barriers). This is an extended action, requiring a Presence + Intimidation roll. Each roll represents one hour of proximity (which need not encompass anything more elaborate than simply being in the same room), with a target number of successes equal to the individual's present Morality score. Should the Uglathlu accrue the necessary successes before the subject leaves its presence, then the victim automatically loses a *dot* of Morality and must roll to resist gaining a derangement for degeneration, with a two-die penalty to the roll (to a minimum of zero dice). The Worm Host may gain a point of either Essence or Willpower, out to its normal maximum in either category. A dramatic failure on this roll renders the subject immune to another Devour Morality attempt. Likewise, an individual successfully subjected to this power cannot be targeted more than once in a month.

For a number of days equal to 10 minus her new Morality score, a person successfully targeted by Devour Morality must successfully roll Resolve + Composure to pass up any reasonable opportunity to indulge her Vice. The lower the individual's Morality, the broader the definition of "reasonable;" while a relatively high Morality victim of Devour Morality with a Vice of Envy may attempt to

seduce her best friend's handsome husband, one with a much lower Morality might try to kidnap or even kill him ("If I can't have him, *no one* can...").

When the character reaches a Morality of 2 and is killed or dying, the Worm Host can take over, as it has with Angel Face.

Devour Morality does not work on a werewolf's Harmony.

- **Step Sideways:** While within a physical location corresponding to a Wound in the Shadow Realm, an Uglathlu may step sideways (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, pp. 250–251) by spending a point of Essence as an instant action.

### OTHER UGLATHLU

The spirit inhabiting Vincent Franco surely isn't the only Worm Host out there. Though they're certainly rare, it's not inconceivable that a pack of Uratha could run into another specimen of this revolting species of host-spirits. Maybe you'd like to have Angel Face create one or more progeny over the course of your chronicle, or maybe you'd just like to turn the Uglathlu into recurring antagonists for the player characters.

The ban common to all Uglathlu prevents such spirits from possessing any human being who fails to meet certain extremely specific criteria: a person must have a Morality of 2 or less and must be dying at the time of possession, as the Worm Host feeds on the decay of the body *and* the spirit alike (reducing Morality to zero in the process). Only normal people (including wolf-blooded and other, similarly semi-supernatural humans, but excluding, say, mages) can become hosts to Uglathlu, of course. Given the infrequency with which Worm Hosts spawn and the great distances the immature spirits usually wander before seeking to take on material form, multiple members of the same brood are almost never encountered together and, indeed, these host-spirits seem to regard one another as competitors for resources, rather than allies with whom they might cooperate.

Upon possession, the Worm Host still looks mostly human, though bears evidence of the injuries (if any) that brought the host body to the verge of death; these are usually visible as livid scars as the flesh knits to contain the spirit's form. Over the course of about six months, however, the Uglathlu slowly devours muscles and organs, leaving only skin, hair and bone. The skeleton serves as the frame to which tens or even hundreds of thousands of wriggling worms — the physical manifestation of the host-spirit's substance — cling, while the skin acts as a membrane to hold them together. Eventually, even the eyes are consumed (leaving writhing worms to lash around in empty sockets), as is the tongue (which is replaced by an organ rudely twisted together out of dozens of wriggling pinkish-gray bodies when the host-spirit wishes to speak). Over the course of this process, the Uglathlu begins to secrete a viscous slime from its pores. Initially, the skin simply looks jaundiced, but it eventually turns into a slick, gray-brown hide with no resemblance to human flesh. The smell that afflicts Vincent's body is inherent to Worm Hosts and only becomes worse with time.

All Uglathlu have the same powers and abilities as Angel Face Franco, though many tend to be significantly less potent; Vincent simply happens to have been an especially appealing host body for the spirit. Because of the nature of the possession process, even should the Uglathlu somehow be separated from the body, the human host perishes; those few Uratha who understand anything about these spirits believe that the human soul is utterly devoured in the course of the merger. The argument bears some weight, as no ghost of the person in question is ever left behind, either after the possession is complete or the Worm Host is killed.





# CHAPTER III

“IT TURNS OUT WHAT WE DID IN APOLLO WAS PROBABLY THE WORST WAY WE COULD HAVE HANDLED IT OPERATIONALLY.”

— KRISS KENNEDY, PROJECT LEADER FOR ARCHITECTURE, HABITABILITY AND INTEGRATION AT NASA'S JOHNSON SPACE CENTER, AS QUOTED IN NEW SCIENTIST SPACE

THE JIGGAM

This story is true.

They might have had a name in Pangaea, before their exile, before their time in cold nowhere made them even stranger and more powerful. But if they had a name, no one remembers it, not even the spirits. We know that Father Wolf saw them and saw the chaos they could wreak upon the world. And so he hunted them down, as was his sacred task.

He chased them down, and when they grew wings to escape, he leapt high in the air and caught them. They turned to water around his teeth, and he took them into his stomach to prevent their escape. They turned to worms to burrow their way out, but he ate the grasses and the herbs, and vomited them back up. And then they changed to birds again and tried to fly away, and Father Wolf realized that nowhere in Pangaea could these things be contained.

And so when he caught them, he flung them upwards, and he called to Mother Luna to catch them. And she did, and she placed them in a dark prison, a soundless and barren wasteland that never saw nor felt sunlight. And there they sat, unable to change themselves, for nothing around them changed. And so it was for some time.

Human beings looked to the moon over the years, and they saw Mother Luna looking down. And they looked to wolves howling at the moon, and they wondered at their songs. They never knew that they were merely doing what Father Wolf had taught their ancestors. Their howls remind Mother Luna of what lay in the darkest recesses of her domain, and that she must keep the gates securely locked. They knew Mother Luna might forget, if she couldn't see. The creatures were locked in an oubliette, forgotten by Helios, Luna, but never by the Uratha.

Human beings, of course, were the ones who freed them.

## THE MOON-BANISHED

On July 20, 1969, two men set foot on the moon. This achievement had far-reaching effects for the inhabitants of Earth, not least of which was a newfound appreciation for how small and fragile the planet truly was. But Armstrong and Aldrin (and their compatriot, Collins, orbiting above) brought something else back with them: the idigam.

According to the lore of the People (Pure and Forsaken), these spirits originated on Earth. Father Wolf caught them and flung them into space, where Mother Luna caught and imprisoned them. She was able to do so because of the nature of these creatures.

The idigam are spirits without clear analogs in the physical world. While a cat-spirit is emblematic of a cat, and a hate-spirit cannot be other than hateful, these spirits did not have natures. This should mean death for a spirit, and yet the idigam have been able to thrive. Moreover, they were able to take other spirits (or living creatures) and assume their traits, which made them impossible to contain or kill. The only way to rid Pangaea of them was to imprison them on the moon, in a place devoid of raw material. The idigam therefore entered stasis, unable to mimic anything around them.

And they waited.

Their time in exile wasn't entirely uneventful. Objects from other worlds struck the moon's surface, and the idigam used these objects to change themselves. But they still could not cross the blackness of space, empty spiritually as well as physically, to get back to their homeland. Not until men arrived and brought them a chariot.

The manned moon landings of the late 1960s and early 1970s presented the idigam with a comparative smorgasbord of spiritual raw materials. The astronauts brought spirits of technology, food, fuel, light and heat, in addition to conceptual spirits of joy, accomplishment, fear, faith (Buzz Aldrin, in fact, quietly took Communion on the moon's surface) and courage. The idigam fought among themselves for the privilege of riding the vehicle back to Earth. At least four of them did, letting go of the *Columbia* before or as it splashed down in the North Pacific. One of them is believed to have been Gurdilag, the idigam that would go on to inhabit Denver, Colorado, and led to Max Roman's organization of the werewolves of that area (see p.

290 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken** for more information). Over the next three years, more manned missions to the lunar surface brought back more of the Moon-Banished.

Some idigam attacked the Forsaken out of anger for the spiritual children of their jailor. Many werewolves had no recollection of the ancient story of Father Wolf's battles with the idigam. They assumed these spirits were merely *Hithim*, and though they were more powerful than most, they could still be bound and even destroyed. These weaker idigam were still deadly foes, but nothing like the sheer spiritual power of Gurdilag and its ilk.

Not all of the Moon-Banished were so impatient. They spread themselves over the world, and began



to remake the spirit wilds according to their own whims. The subsumed powerful loci, many of which were deep beneath the earth's surface, in the depths of the ocean, or otherwise unreachable to packs of Uratha. There, they became comfortable with the present state of the world and its Shadow. They reached into the depths of the spirit wilds and found servants. They called out to the stars, to the voices they had heard during their long imprisonment, and sometimes the stars responded. A meteor shower might contain a thousand spirits from alien worlds, and only a handful would survive the fall to Earth. Of those, only one might live long enough for an idigam to find and nourish it. But that one could grow powerful enough to challenge a pack of Uratha.

It is these patient, careful idigam that the Uratha fear. The Moon-Banished have always been versatile, able to alter themselves to adapt to whatever challenge they face. But upon returning from their lunar prison, the more intelligent and powerful of the idigam learned to alter the world around them. Essence was like sculptor's clay, and they warped spirits into whatever form they wished. Drawing on an eternity of darkness and nightmares, they reshaped spirits into weapons and servants. Even then, though, their servants were simply powerful spirits — deadly, certainly, but werewolves were long accustomed to horrors from the spirit world.

And then Gurdilag made a terrible discovery, and the idigam gained their most horrifying weapon.

### LIES WRITTEN BY THE VICTORS

*This story is true.*

*They've been here all along. We called them by their right name — idigam — but humanity called them Ladon, Chimera, Leviathan, Geryon, Samebito. They've taken forms as they've seen fit, and when heroes have risen up to kill them, they've dutifully died.*

*The moon landing, though, was when everything changed. That much is true. That was when the humans left their boundaries, and so boundaries ceased to mean anything. The idigam stopped respecting the bargains they made with Urfarah. They abandoned their forms, and they abandoned their agreement to die when human heroes rose to kill them.*

*We can still kill them, yes, but it's not the same. It was right and proper for humans to kill them, to make humanity think it could kill monsters. The truth is, the idigam were nothing more than distractions for humanity, so that we, the true predators, could hunt unnoticed.*

*But the humans fouled that up, and the Forsaken have bought into humanity's lies, just as they always do. And the idigam, now, are as great a threat to us as to the Forsaken.*

*As always, it falls to us to remain Pure. Let humanity handle their monsters. Let the Forsaken fight and die alongside them, if they wish. Only when the idigam threaten us directly should we take action.*

### THE SU'UR

All idigam are capable of shaping and manipulating Essence to one degree or another, but Gurdilag was a prodigy. It maintained the formless chaos of its pre-banishment, but over its years in the lunar prison developed a horrible and exacting sense of curiosity. It wanted to know how other spirits and “spirit derivatives” (such as souls) worked, and the best way to do that was to observe them without all that *meat* in the way. So Gurdilag learned to remove spirit from flesh. And then it learned to reattach them, and this permitted the idigam to swap out a human's soul for a spirit.

This created *duguthim*, and they were not too dissimilar from the Claimed that Uratha had seen for years. Perhaps less of the human host remained than usual, and perhaps the bonding looked different to the trained eyes of the Ithaeur, but by this time, the Brethren War was beginning and the Uratha had more important matters to worry about. It wasn't long after this, though, that Gurdilag learned werewolves had souls, too. They were half spirit, and their Essence could be removed from their flesh. This would normally kill the werewolf in question, but Gurdilag had learned enough about the functions of living creatures that it could keep the unfortunate werewolf alive, like a fly drowned in a glass of water, until it could replace its stolen soul with something else.

Thus began the idigam's greatest experiment — the *Su'ur*, or Empty Wolves. Gurdilag made an unknown number of these creatures during its reign of terror, and not all of them were found and killed. More information on the *Su'ur*, including game mechanics, can be found below.

If any other idigam ever learned to create these walking abominations, it never gained the notoriety that Gurdilag did. But all of the Moon-Banished possess an affinity for manipulating Essence, and all of them channel that affinity in different ways. As such, when the Uratha ran afoul of an idigam, they faced a foe that could attack not just their flesh, but their souls as well.

Packs of Uratha, bonded by totems and living in accordance with the Oath of the Moon (and thus maintaining their Harmony), could stand against the idigam long enough to escape. Lone wolves, Ghost Wolves, *Zi'ir* and Bale Hounds, however, stood little chance. The Pure, who were just as outraged as any werewolf by the *Su'ur*, rarely saw the Moon-Banished. Some philosophers among the Pure believe these horrors were *created* by Bitch Luna to bedevil the world, but that they were unable to approach the righteous children of Father Wolf. More realistic werewolves assert that because the Forsaken have a direct tie to Luna, the idigam bear a grudge from their imprisonment. Gurdilag, however, was just as happy to make *Su'ur* out of the Pure as any werewolf.

### FIGHTING THE IDIGAM

In Denver, any belief that Gurdilag would spare a given pack, tribe or faction of werewolves was quickly put to rest. Once the idigam discovered how to create *Su'ur*, it wasted no time in experimenting with as many different combinations as it could. Predator-spirits, conceptual spirits, human ghosts, even the strange spiritual Essence of the Hosts became fodder for the creation of Empty Wolves. The Pure and the Forsaken were working on the problem separately, though rumors from the time suggest that some packs crossed borders to pool knowledge. Even if this is true, the combined might and knowledge of the Uratha wasn't enough. Gurdilag was simply too powerful to combat directly.



And then, Max Roman returned to Denver from a long quest into the Shadow. He had discovered Gurdilag's ban, and what's more, that ban extended to all of the idigam's servants. Little by little, his massive coalition of werewolves was able to destroy Gurdilag's influence, and then the Moon-Banished spirit itself.

The War for Denver, of course, was just one incident of werewolves battling an idigam, though probably the best known, at least among the Uratha of North America. But it revealed something important: it was possible to battle and defeat even the most powerful of the Moon-Banished.

Idigam, like all spirits, have bans. The bans of the Moon-Banished, though, are as impermanent as everything else about these creatures. A given idigam's ban only becomes permanent if the spirit takes on a concrete form in a process called *coalescence*. Gurdilag did so, and this was what allowed Max Roman and his followers to destroy it (and even then, many Uratha died that day). Some of the other idigam have learned from that mistake, while others had already accepted bans by the time Gurdilag perished. The Moon-Banished do derive some benefits from taking on a set ban, granted, but in general, the Uratha find battling one without a ban almost futile.

An idigam does not select its own ban. Rather, when it coalesces, rooting itself in the Shadow, its ban solidifies and is related to whatever is physically (or metaphysically) nearby when this happened.

Consider, though, that this means an idigam's ban isn't necessarily related to its methodology, its motivations, its powers or its form. Gurdilag chose to coalesce in the world deep beneath the surface of the earth, near a pure, calm subterranean lake. The water in that lake thus became its ban. Max Roman, years later, would talk of the calming and purifying properties of this lake, and how it was this spiritual cleansing that defeated Gurdilag, and perhaps that's true, to a point. But the fact is that the idigam are creatures from before time, spirits that never quite caught up to the way that the Shadow and physical world divided. When an idigam chooses to become part of the world, it gains great power, but it must also accept the weaknesses that come with that power. In Gurdilag's case, it was the water of this lake.

### STORY HOOK: SUICIDE PILLS

Once the stories started to leak out about what Gurdilag did to its captors, it became common practice for every member of a pack to carry a talen fashioned from a small piece of silver. Swallowed, this pill would kill a werewolf in seconds, but this would spare the Uratha from a truly horrific fate.

An unknown number of these pills were created in Denver and the surrounding area during the war against Gurdilag, and comparatively few of them were ever used. Some must still exist. Carrying these pills constitutes a sin against Harmony 9 (roll five dice), but after more than a decade, it's just as likely that someone other than the Uratha has found at least a few of them.

## DISCOVERING THE BAN

For a pack of werewolves to fight one of the Moon-Banished, then, requires learning its ban, but that isn't as simple as using the Read Spirit Gift and asking a Lune (though that Gift can still be useful). The werewolves must discover the circumstances under which the idigam coalesced. That means they need to learn as much about it as possible. Below are three suggestions for how they might go about this:

- The Read Spirit Gift can be of some use. In addition to learning about the idigam's capabilities, the Gift user can learn about the idigam's history. By retracing its movements, the werewolf can eventually find the place in the Shadow where the idigam accepted a ban. The spirits in that area are usually inclined to be helpful to anyone attempting to destroy the Moon-Banished. Other Gifts, rites and techniques that can be used to gain information about spirits (including recruiting help from human sorcerers — not a tack that the Uratha would usually take, but idigam often make for exceptions to such rules) might lead to the same conclusion.

- Werewolves are hunters and trackers. Once they learn a target's modus operandi, they can follow a trail backwards. Tracking an idigam by scent is usually impossible, but tracking the spirit's creations and servants by scent is no more difficult than tracking any other quarry. Either by detective work or instinctual hunting, the pack can find the idigam's ban site. The danger here is that it requires close contact with the Moon-Banished, and some idigam are smart enough to set up false trails leading to traps or nests of servants.

- Since an idigam's servants share its ban, to a point, it's possible to dissect (or, better, vivisect) such a servant to learn about the master. Gifts like Read Spirit can be used on ephemeral servants, but for physical servants such as *Su'ur*, a more direct approach is necessary. The servant must be hunted down and torn apart, and at least some of its flesh consumed (with the usual Harmony risk). Following this act, any werewolves involved receive a prophetic dream, similar to the Cahalith auspice power (see p. 81 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**). This does not count against a Cahalith character's use of the ability for the story.

## USING THE BAN

Once an idigam's ban has been uncovered, the werewolves need to be able to employ it in battle. Fortunately, this is usually a simple matter, as the ban tends to be a substance or circumstance that hurts the Moon-Banished and its servants. Often, weapons (claws included) can be somehow treated with a material or blessed in such a way that they inflict aggravated damage to servants and Essence loss, as well as Corpus loss, to the idigam itself.

Sometimes, though, the ban is more complicated than that. Sometimes the idigam needs to be returned to its ban-site, and only there can it be defeated. Some idigam gain bans that require a certain type of spirit to enact, or at least a Gift taught by that spirit. Some bans take a simple, plentiful substance (water) and place complicated requirements upon it (water changed to steam, then back to water, then frozen — almost impossible to employ in a combat situation).

Examples of idigam bans can be found under "Mechanics," and of course in the sample idigam at the end of this chapter.

## MECHANICS

The idigam have the same traits as other spirits, but they have additional powers related to their ability to shape and

manipulate Essence. This section discusses the Moon-Banished from a game mechanics standpoint, providing Storytellers with everything they need to use idigam in their chronicles.

Refer to pp. 273–279 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken** for basic information on spirits and the traits referenced below.

## COALESCENCE

Not all idigam choose to coalesce, and fighting one that has is very different from fighting one that remains formless. An idigam that has not coalesced feels constant pressure to do so — the laws of the spirit wilds push it to choose a form. Without one, it causes a vacuum of sorts (a spirit with no physical analogy), and nature, of course, abhors a vacuum.

When an idigam coalesces, its Influences, ban and traits solidify. If it does not coalesce, it is harder to harm, but can do comparatively little damage (as its Essence-shaping powers don't fully appear without coalescence). The sections below discuss both coalesced and uncoalesced idigam.

## RANK

All idigam are at least Lesser Jaggings (Rank 3). Upon coalescence, the idigam gains a rank. This means, of course, that the minimum rank for a coalesced idigam is Greater Jaggling (Rank 4).

The upper limit on rank for idigam is unknown. Gurdilag was a Lesser God (Rank 6), but it was the most powerful idigam to make its existence known to date.

## ESSENCE

Idigam gain and spend Essence in the same way as other spirits, with two exceptions. First, their maximum Essence pools are *double* what would normally be indicated by their Rank, meaning a Rank 4 idigam can hold 50 Essence, not 25. Second, idigam do not lose Essence daily, as other spirits do. While in the physical world, uncoalesced idigam lose Essence at *twice* the usual rate, however. Coalesced idigam lose one point per point of Rank per hour, just as normal spirits do.

## INFLUENCES

Uncoalesced idigam do not have Influences, because they do not correspond to anything in the physical world. Coalesced idigam have Influences just as other spirits do, but their Influences don't necessarily reflect the idigam's physical representation. For example, a Gaffling bat-spirit probably only has one Influence: bats. If the spirit grows more powerful, becoming a Greater Jaggling, it might retain this single Influence, but it might also gain a second Influence such as Fear, Darkness, Flight or even Blood (depending on the type of bat and what kinds of spirits the bat consumes).

Idigam, however, do not have physical correspondences, and so when they coalesce, their Influences stem from one of two sources — the idigam itself, or the physical site of the coalescence. An idigam that coalesces in a forest fire might have Influences such as Fire, Destruction, Renewal, Smoke, Ash, Pain or Death. An idigam that wants revenge upon Luna and her Forsaken children (see Motivations, below) could have Influences such as Revenge, Spite or even Moonlight (from the memory of the prison).

## SHAPING TRAITS

When idigam coalesce, their traits become fixed (unless the spirit possesses the Reform Self Numen, below). Before this happens, however, the Moon-Banished is a mass of Essence, con-

## SWARMS

Animals of Size 1 or 2 are best reckoned in swarms, flocks and other groupings of the animals, as they are most effective in such groupings. This includes not just insects, but also most birds and smaller creatures, such as rats.

Swarms are measured by their radius in yards. A swarm inflicts one die of bashing damage to anyone within its radius. A swarm can inflict more damage by condensing. Every time the swarm condenses to cover half of its full area, it inflicts one additional die of damage per turn.

Therefore, a swarm of eight yards in radius inflicts two bashing damage per turn if it constricts down to a four-yard radius, three bashing if it halves that again to a two-yard radius, and four bashing damage per turn if it condenses itself down to a one-yard radius. Although condensing doesn't usually happen all that often in nature (save in the case of creatures such as killer bees), it is an easy enough thing for most supernatural powers that command animals to bid them to do so.

Armor is effective against a swarm only if it covers one's full body, but even then it provides only half its rating (round up). In addition, targets are distracted by the swarm, suffering –2 dice on perception and concentration rolls while within the radius, even if the swarm doesn't specifically attack them.

The swarm cannot be attacked with fists, clubs, swords or guns. Only area-affect attacks such as a torch affect it. Each point of damage inflicted by a flame or other applicable attack halves the swarm's size. Once the swarm is reduced below a one-yard radius, either all the animals are dead or the few remaining disperse.

stantly reforming itself in response to whatever threat is nearby. An uncoalesced idigam can take a reflexive action once per turn to change itself in some way. Possibilities include:

- Developing armor (rating equal to its Rank)
- Growing wings or fins (+10 to species factor for purposes of determining Speed)
- Break apart into a swarm of animals (see sidebar)
- Dissolve into liquid, enabling immediate escape from a grapple
- Shift dots from one trait to another (Power to Resistance, which raises Corpus, for instance). The idigam can shift a number of dots per turn equal to its Rank
- Change Numina (see below)

## BAN

As described above, an idigam's ban only becomes permanent after coalescence. An uncoalesced idigam has a ban, but it

changes every scene. Werewolf spirit scholars have tried to decipher a pattern in the shifts in a Moon-Banished spirit's ban, but it appears to be truly random. During one encounter, the idigam must flee if confronted with fresh garlic. The next time the pack meets it, garlic in hand, it suffers no ill effect from the herb but assumes corporeal form if splashed with the blood of a frightened man. In a third battle with the same idigam, in which the pack harries a terrified bystander close to it in order to sacrifice him to save their territory, the Moon-Banished doesn't care about blood, but is compelled to investigate anything whispered within earshot. Uncoalesced idigam have different weaknesses every time they are encountered, and studying them (to the extent that is even possible) doesn't help, because the bans have no common thread.

The bans of coalesced idigam, however, are much more stable. As mentioned above, though, they don't reflect much about the idigam itself, but rather its surroundings during the coalescence. The bans listed for the sample idigam at the end of the chapter discuss how the circumstances of their coalescences led to those bans, but in general, consider the following two points:

#### What is physically present?

During coalescence, the idigam becomes imprinted with whatever is nearby. Gurdilag coalesced near an underground lake, and that lake's water became its ban. Another idigam might coalesce hundreds of feet in the air in the midst of a thunderstorm, meaning that thunder, lightning or rain might be able to harm it. If the Moon-Banished coalesces near a flock of birds, the calls or feathers of those birds might comprise its ban. Note that the object or substance that becomes the idigam's ban doesn't necessarily attract the spirit's attention. Idigam do not always know their own bans.

#### What is metaphysically present?

Max Roman always assumed that the spiritual purity of the underground lake water was what made it inimical to Gurdilag, and maybe he was right, but not for the reasons he thought. The water was spiritually pure, yes, but it was simply because that purity was in proximity to Gurdilag when it coalesced, not because the idigam was somehow impure, that the water became the spirit's ban. Put another way, if the idigam coalesces near a strong source of emotion or conceptual resonance (loci, especially), then resonance of a similar kind might be able to harm it.

#### Examples

- An idigam coalesces near a pet shop. The hair from domesticated animals (regardless of species, but not including feral cats and dogs) causes it pain. When touched by such material, it suffers a -5 on all rolls.
- The coalescence point is a mountain, near a cave in which three hikers starved to death. Their bones, if turned into weapons, inflict aggravated damage upon the idigam.
- The Moon-Banished drives off a pack of werewolves that manage to damage its uncoalesced Corpus. It stabilizes over the now-human corpse of one of them. Werewolves in human form are immune to its Essence-shaping Numina (but not its direct attacks).
- The idigam coalesces in a cemetery, near a funeral. The sense of grief and loss nearby becomes part of its ban. It cannot perceive someone suffering from such emotions, meaning that a pack grieving for a lost member is invisible to it — at least until the werewolves' emotions change to righteous anger or triumph.
- During a séance, an idigam manifests, terrifying the witnesses and the charlatan trying to get their money. The spirit's ban is tied to this terror — it is bound to chase those who flee before it, no matter where they lead it.

- In a disused courtroom, the judge's chair has become a locus with a resonance of honesty. The idigam that chose this room in which to coalesce destroyed the locus, but it must answer any question asked of it to the best of its ability.

### NUMINA

Idigam, coalesced or not, can use any of the Numina listed in **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, or any other sourcebook the Storyteller wishes to employ (including the supernatural powers and Aspects in this book). Most idigam are capable of Materializing (see p. 278 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**), and very few can Possess or Claim living targets.

Uncoalesced idigam can change their Numina. This costs five points of Essence, and the change is considered permanent (that is, the idigam can change the Numen back to what it was, but it costs another five points of Essence). This requires an instant action.

### SERVANTS

Easily the most horrifying thing about Gurdilag was its propensity for altering living beings (werewolves especially) and changing them into its servants. Not all idigam possess Gurdilag's capabilities, fortunately, but most of the Moon-Banished have spiritual servants. They gather such followers in one of two ways.

First, spirits are attracted to whatever can grant them access to Essence. While many spirits are uncomfortable around idigam for the same reason they dislike werewolves (namely, they're *different* and they don't play by the rules), some spirits latch onto a particular facet of the idigam. This might be its motivation, its appearance or its ban (which means that a clever werewolf might gain a sense of how to beat an idigam by what sorts of spirits surround it). These spirits aren't initially bound to do what the idigam commands; as they consume more of the Essence that the Moon-Banished spirit makes available to them (or generates itself), they come to identify with it. This spiritual Stockholm syndrome eventually leads to the followers being unable to separate themselves from the idigam. Their identity is bound up in its, and they lose their own bans and adopt the same one as the idigam.

The second method has the same result, but is simply faster. The idigam uses its Essence-shaping powers to change the spirit directly (see below). This could be likened to a transfusion; the spirit's own Essence is removed and replaced with that of the Moon-Banished. The spirit retains its shape (approximately) and capabilities, but takes on the idigam's ban and probably some of its temperament.

Interestingly, an idigam that works by the first method probably doesn't gain much of a reputation among the local spirit courts, at least not until it starts doing something more overt. Spirits eat each other all the time, and lesser spirits follow greater ones around like remoras follow sharks. Moon-Banished that use the second method, of course, terrify other spirits, and it's not unknown for them to go running to Uratha for help.

As for living servants, the idigam can order its servants to Claim or possess human beings (or animals, or plants, or machines). It can also shove the spirit in question into a host using Essence shaping, if it has the power to do so. The result is much the same — such servants are, as far as game mechanics are concerned, *duguthim*, and can be simulated using the rules on p. 284 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**.

### ESSENCE SHAPING

All idigam, coalesced and not, have the capacity to reshape Essence. Uncoalesced idigam simply can't turn this ability on sources of Essence outside themselves. When an idigam



coalesces, something fundamental in its ability to perceive and interact with the world outside itself shifts, and it recognizes Essence flows all around it.

Returning to the example of Gurdilag, when Max Roman found the underground lake that led to the idigam's downfall, he saw the world from Gurdilag's perspective. He saw thousands of pinpricks of light, like stars in a clear night sky, some shining brighter than others. He realized with horror that the lights represented the world's Essence, and the brighter lights were loci, powerful spirits...and werewolves. The smaller lights were human beings, their souls calling out to the idigam in the same way that the vast expanse of space might intrigue a human philosopher, explorer or profiteer.

Whether or not every idigam perceives Essence in the same way as Gurdilag is unknown, but it is true that all coalesced idigam can change Essence flows in specific ways. Below are seven expressions of Essence shaping to help inspire your own idigam, some of which are used in the sample idigam at the end of this chapter. Not all idigam can use all of the Essence-shaping techniques listed. The ability to create *Su'ur*, in particular, is extremely rare. The Storyteller should select (or create) an expression of Essence shaping appropriate to the idigam in question.

Essence-shaping powers are not Numina; they are closer to Influences, in fact. Different Moon-Banished shape Essence in different ways, but as werewolves study the spirits, they have come to believe that the different expressions of Essence shaping stem from inclination, not ability. Put a different way, Gurdilag is the only known idigam to create *Su'ur*, but that might be because Gurdilag was the only one that had the idea to do so. If this is true, idigam are even more dangerous than previously believed, and if two should meet, they might well "trade notes" instinctively.

- **Locus Manipulation:** The Moon-Banished finds a locus and redirects its Essence, usually into itself. Typically, this means that the locus is bled dry within a day or so, possibly as long as a week for powerful sites, but sometimes the idigam has something more insidious in mind. The spirit might poison the locus with its own Essence (this requires the expenditure of three times the locus' rating from the idigam's Essence pool). Thereafter, any spirit (or, potentially, werewolf) that takes Essence from the locus becomes susceptible to the idigam's powers, granting the Moon-Banished a +5 modifier to any attempt to use Essence-shaping abilities or other Numina on it. Even if the idigam doesn't take a direct hand, the spirit is already well on its way to becoming a servant (see Servants, above).

Another possibility here is that the idigam creates a web of influence using loci it has poisoned. With a reflexive Finesse roll, it can check in on any locus it has tainted, and immediately know what is happening there. Servants of the idigam may use this power as well (spirits use Finesse; corporeal creatures use Wits + Composure; either must be within the locus' area of influence to do so: see p. 261 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**).

Finally, an idigam can extend a locus' area of influence. This requires a Power roll, and each success extends the radius by one effective dot (again, p. 261 of **Werewolf**), to a maximum of five. For example, an idigam targets a one-dot locus, centered on the cornerstone of the building. Normally, its area of influence extends only two yards. If the Power roll yields three successes, the area of influence now encompasses the entire building, or possibly the block. Extending the area of influence allows the idigam's servants greater mobility across the Gauntlet.

- **Essence Attack:** The idigam is adept at altering Essence flows in living beings. All idigam can make attacks in the same

manner as other spirits, but an idigam that chooses to target a foe's Essence can make particularly devastating attacks. If the idigam grapples a living target (which requires that the idigam Materialize, or use Gauntlet Breach or some other Numen that allows it to affect the physical world — assuming that the target isn't in the Shadow with it), it can convert one point of Essence per turn to an aggravated wound. This allows an idigam to kill a werewolf in less than a minute, if the werewolf can't escape the grapple. It might seem the werewolf could avoid this fate by spending his Essence, thus depriving the idigam of its ammunition but, horribly, the idigam can transfer Essence into the target and then convert it into a wound. The transfer is a reflexive action, and the idigam can transfer a number of Essence points up to its Rank in a turn (but can still only convert one point to aggravated damage).

The idigam can do the same thing to spirits. As usual, if the spirit runs out of Corpus before it runs out of Essence, it simply disincorporates and enters slumber. If it runs out of Essence first, the idigam can destroy it.

Another option, of course, is for the Moon-Banished to consume the target's Essence, rather than using it to harm him. This still requires a grapple, but the idigam can absorb Essence each turn equal to its Rank.

An idigam using this ability can also transfer Essence into a target that doesn't normally hold it (such as a human being, an animal or even a supernatural being like a vampire or mage). The idigam can use Essence attack by forcing Essence into the being and converting the Essence to wounds, though it's often faster to simply attack physically.

Being infused with tainted Essence, though, is sometimes enough of an attack by itself. It isn't bad for a werewolf or a spirit — such beings can bleed off the Essence by spending it, meaning that holding the Essence is painful and discomfiting, but ultimately only a serious problem if the subject can't get away from the idigam. But for a vampire, mage or human being, the Essence sits, growing rancid and stagnant with each passing day. Unless the character finds a way to get rid of this Essence, he runs the risk of growing gravely ill. Every day, the character's player rolls Stamina + Resolve – the number of tainted Essence points the idigam injected. If the roll fails, the character becomes sick. The symptoms vary based on the idigam in question, but skin might slough off, eyes might bleed (or change color), teeth grow continuously before falling out under their own weight, and so on. In addition, the victim suffers one point of lethal damage per day, and this damage can only be healed through supernatural means. The disease itself *cannot* be cured until some way of bleeding out the Essence is discovered. Some spirits can do this, but since the Essence is tainted, many won't risk consuming it. Rumors state that some mages can extract Essence through blood, but bleeding a sick person could easily kill him.

- **Spirit Manipulation:** Attacking spirits is simple enough, and idigam can consume spirits for their Essence just as ephemeral beings usually do. But the Moon-Banished are also sometimes capable of changing one spirit into another, removing aspects of their makeup and replacing them. Often, this is as concrete as shifting the spirit's traits (Power, Finesse, Resistance, Numina, Influences, etc.). This requires the expenditure of Essence equal to the target spirit's Rank and a roll of Power + Finesse, contested by the target spirit's Finesse + Resistance. If the idigam wins, it can shift dots in the spirit's Attributes or Influences equal to the idigam's rank, change one Numina into another, add or delete a Numen, or alter the spirit's ban. The idigam cannot change the target spirit's Rank in this manner,

though it can continually batten the spirit with Essence (see above) until its Rank increases. The Storyteller needs to adjudicate how long this takes and whether the target spirit resists.

The idigam can also alter less tangible aspects of the spirit. For instance, it might introduce reptilian facets into a location spirit. Consider: the idigam attacks the spirit of a beach, and merges its Essence with Essence stolen from a snake-spirit. The Shadow-beach changes first and most obviously; the crabs gain snake fangs, the birds grow long tails, and the beach itself changes from particles of sand to billions of snake scales. Even in the physical world, a beachcomber might pour the sand out of his shoe to find that it always curls into a serpentine pattern at his feet. If he steps on it, he might suffer a snakebite.

Ghosts, too, can be susceptible. Most idigam don't even notice the unquiet shades, but a Moon-Banished with a particular interest in death might display this power. Ghosts are not spirits, but they do use Essence, and this allows the idigam to change them. However, their Essence does not resonate with a particular aspect of the physical world. It resonates with the anchors that the ghost leaves behind, and with the memories and emotions that keep it fettered. The idigam can play merry Hell with these concepts, changing a ghost's anchors, allowing it to haunt whatever the idigam wishes. It can also change the ghost's memories and goals, making the specter an extremely versatile puppet. The idigam could probably even prevent the ghost's destruction by granting it Numina usually available only to spirits.

- **Manipulate Gauntlet:** Idigam are capable of using Numina such as Gauntlet Breach and Reaching to affect targets in the physical world. Some idigam, though, are capable of manipulating the Gauntlet itself. The simplest and most dramatic way of doing so is to tear it open, allowing its spirit servants to enter the physical world (or its corporeal servants to enter the Shadow). This simply requires a Power + Finesse roll, modified by the strength of the local Gauntlet (see p. 251 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**). The rift remains for as long as the idigam wishes, but it must expend one point of Essence per turn to keep it open.

A more subtle application is to weaken or strengthen the Gauntlet. This requires a Power + Finesse roll. Every success alters the Gauntlet's strength by one. So, in a dense urban environment (normally a -3 to all attempts to breach the Gauntlet), if the roll garners two successes, the idigam can reduce the penalty to -1 or increase it to -5. The idigam can use this application of Essence shaping before attempting to rend the Gauntlet, of course.

Finally, the Moon-Banished can reshape the Gauntlet. It can imprison targets, spirit or otherwise, in the Gauntlet by wrapping the barrier around them. This requires a Power + Finesse roll, contested against the target's Strength + Resolve + Primal Urge (for living targets) or Power + Resistance (for spirits). If the idigam wins, the target is trapped in the Gauntlet, and can only escape by forcing his way out. This is impossible for characters not normally capable of crossing the Gauntlet under their own power (normal human beings, for instance), but werewolves and spirits can make an extended action using the same dice pools as above to escape the prison. They must accumulate a number of successes equal to the successes rolled for the idigam to create the Gauntlet prison, and the modifiers to crossing the Gauntlet apply (meaning that the idigam can strengthen the Gauntlet, and then use it as a set of chains).

- **Reform:** The idigam can alter its own traits and capabilities. This uses the same system as described above for uncoalesced idigam, except that coalesced idigam don't have quite the same measure of versatility. The idigam can make any of the changes

described under Shifting Traits on p. 133, but doing so requires an *instant* action rather than a reflexive one, and the expenditure of three points of Essence (the usual cost to change Numina does not apply). Any such changes fade at the end of the scene.

- **Su'ur and Other Claimed:** The idigam's method of creating Spirit-Claimed servants is discussed above. The Moon-Banished simply removes the target's soul and inserts a spirit instead. These *duguthim* use the same game systems as discussed on p. 284 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**. Doing this requires that the target be incapacitated. The idigam might peel back the skin or slice the target open, or it might not alter the target's flesh at all. In either case, roll Power + Finesse. This is an extended action in which each roll requires one turn. The target number of successes is equal to the victim's Morality. Once the idigam reaches this target, the soul flies free (unless the Moon-Banished has another use for it; see below), and the idigam replaces it with a spirit or soul of its choice. It is possible for idigam to swap two humans' souls, resulting in both of them taking on a strange hybrid personality. The idigam might insert a ghost into the living body, enabling the restless soul some freedom of movement (and probably still allowing it to use its Numina, as the target becomes "ghost-Claimed," or *dug-ús-thim*, in First Tongue).

Idigam that indulge in this sort of activity can usually imprison spirits and souls. Creating a soul-prison involves the expenditure of Essence equal to the target spirit's Rank or the target person's Resolve + Composure + Primal Urge. The soul or spirit can then be contained for one day per point of Rank of the idigam, at which point the idigam can expend the Essence again to keep the target contained. The target cannot free itself, but can be freed if the prison is destroyed. The prison usually resembles a lightless patch, a small section of utter darkness and cold. It has substance, however, possessing a Durability rating equal to the idigam's Rank, and Size 3 (meaning a Structure rating of Rank + 3).

Creating *Su'ur*, should the Storyteller wish to create an idigam powerful enough to do so, uses the same game mechanics as making other Claimed, except that the werewolf is capable of resisting. The roll is extended and contested, with the idigam attempting to accumulate successes equal to the werewolf's Harmony, and the werewolf attempting to accumulate successes equal to the idigam's Power. The werewolf's dice pool is Resolve + Primal Urge. If the idigam wins, it strips the werewolf's soul and can insert something else, thus creating a *Su'ur*. If the werewolf wins, the idigam loses its grip on the werewolf's Essence, and the victim can attempt to flee. Alternatively, the werewolf can simply choose to die with her soul intact.

## STORYTELLING THE IDIGAM

The Moon-Banished inspire terror in the hearts of werewolves, and rightly so. They are powerful, unknowable and utterly alien, but they have a kind of familiarity to them. They did, after all, spend millennia imprisoned by the Forsaken's most powerful spiritual patron. No wonder, then, that they seem to be drawn to werewolves, whether out of revenge or curiosity. They want to know more about their spiritual brethren.

This section discusses how to make use of the idigam in a chronicle, including how to present them, what they want and some thoughts about what they are (or rather, what they might be).

### WHAT ARE THE IDIGAM?

Werewolves don't know much about idigam. In fact, although some clever Uratha have made the connection between the idigam's appearance in the 1969 and the moon landings,

most have not. The story of Father Wolf and his banishment of the idigam to Luna's prison is not a widely circulated one, and even when the notion does come up, werewolves tend to snicker. Idigam are from the *moon*? They're aliens? Shouldn't they be green, or at least gray, then?

But that misses an important fact about them — they *aren't* from the moon. They are terrestrial spirits; they were just banished to the moon. And that begs the question: what kind of spirits are they?

We aren't going to present a definitive answer, because the idigam aren't the sorts of foes that werewolf packs should be taking down left and right. A pack might make a career out of killing the Pure, or Bale Hounds, or Ridden, or vampires, or any other enemy that might strike it as dangerous (or fun) to hunt. But if a pack destroys an idigam, other werewolves tell the story for years to come. Max Roman is probably the single most famous werewolf in the world, certainly in North America, because his research allowed the Uratha to destroy one of the Moon-Banished. Other Uratha in other parts of the world have also achieved notoriety for their discoveries about the idigam. Indeed, a Latvian Hunter in Darkness named Juris became famous for his "battles" against the idigam, despite the fact that he never actually fought one. He did, however, lead servants of the idigam away from their master by training his pack in a dizzying blend of shapeshifting and free-running through the burned-out buildings of his home city, and thus enable other werewolves to attack the Moon-Banished successfully. An idigam is effectively a god, and killing one is an epic feat, usually requiring multiple packs.

As such, including one in your chronicle is a big decision, and you need to decide how much you want to let your players learn. That might include seeing from the idigam's perspective, and learning about the loneliness and anger of being locked away on the moon for so long. It might involve a quest into the spirit wilds and a meeting with a tribal totem (one of the Firstborn might remember when Father Wolf flung the idigam into space). It might even involve a personal visit from Mother Luna herself, but that would almost assuredly require that the characters do something to get the attention of the most powerful Lunes.

And if the characters are willing to go to such lengths to learn the nature of the idigam, they should take some knowledge away from the ordeal. Here, then, are some possibilities for the true nature of the idigam, as well as some thoughts on how werewolves might come to this theory.

#### **Spirits of the Primordial Ooze**

Idigam did once have a physical analog. It was the moment of creation, the first time life began. But once it did, once the first unicellular organism began its swim through the stew of the nascent world, that analog was no longer present. The idigam, though, did not vanish, because that moment, that trillion-to-one chance, was such a powerful occurrence that even the tiniest spirit born of it could survive its absence. And so the idigam continued on, devouring other spirits but never choosing to adopt a true nature.

The Moon-Banished, therefore, are chaotic because they encompass the possibility of creation. They are deadly because they *are* life. And it's just possible that, if they were all destroyed, the possibility of life would be, too. The world might wink out of existence, or all living things might lose the ability to reproduce, leaving the world to the doom of slow decay.

Werewolves might discover this through interaction with other, ancient spirits. A spirit of oceans, for instance, might remember its own formation and thus be able to explain the creation of the idigam. Spirits kicked up in the eruption of a volcano might, likewise, prove informative. For a more practical approach, what if characters present at the destruction of an idigam were rendered infertile, their ability to create life snuffed out? The pack might learn this through rumors about luminaries like Max Roman and Rachel Snow, both there when Gurdilag died, both now unable to sire or bear children of their own.

#### **Alien Beings**

Maybe the Moon-Banished *are* from another world. Consider: meteorites impact the Earth fairly often. Surely they carry spirits with them, but rock is rock. The only way an alien spirit could survive the fall to Earth, the loss of everything that defined it (other than the stone itself, which isn't really too different from terrestrial stone), is to lose all connections to everything physical. The idigam chose chaos to survive, but in so doing, they lost their memory. They could not remember a time when they were anything other than the formless masses that Father Wolf hunted down.

This begs the question, though: why have no new idigam arrived on Earth this way? After all, meteorites certainly haven't stopped striking the planet. One possibility is that it takes an object of significant size to bring an idigam here (which raises some questions about, for instance, the Tunguska Blast of 1908). Another possibility is that the creation of the Gauntlet prevented more of the spirits from arriving, acting as a "filter" around the planet's Shadow. And finally, it's just possible that the spirits *have* been arriving here, but have simply gone unnoticed — at least until their banished brethren returned from exile.

This theory is quite simple for a pack of werewolves to discover. They just need to be nearby when a meteorite hits Earth, bringing a new (possibly nascent) idigam with it. The characters can then spend some time looking into other such spirits, possibly using this information to destroy them more easily than would normally be possible. Of course, the next story in such a chronicle should begin with the pack hearing news of an upcoming meteor shower.

#### **Luna's Children**

A theory that might have some favor among the Pure, but probably not among the Forsaken (at least, not out loud), is that the idigam are children of Mother Luna. Mother Luna created (or bore) them long before Father Wolf, and unlike the fickle Lunes, the idigam are pure unbridled chaos. They do not have physical analogs on Earth not because they are alien, but because they are children of chaos. Therefore, the idigam are simply idigam, completely self-contained spirits. Of course, this also makes them solipsistic sociopaths. They are incapable of understanding that the world outside them *exists*, much less that it matters, and everything they perceive is assumed to be a figment of their imagination.

Getting Luna to remember the creation of the idigam, much less admit it, would be an especially heroic feat for a pack of werewolves. If she did, she might be able to recall them to her bosom, destroy them, or least grant them enough sanity to see what they are doing. Yes, some might choose to become destructive spirits — but at least, then, that's all they would be.

Discovering this origin for the idigam would require a pack to find a Lune or some other spirit that could identify the Moon-Banished as get of Luna. A totem for a Pure pack might be able



to help, as might one of the three *tribal* totems of the Pure, but under what circumstances would they speak with a pack of Forsaken Uratha? If the pack could take audience with Luna directly (and keep its sanity intact), it might learn the truth.

### DESIGNING THE MOON-BANISHED

The preceding sections discussed the game mechanics and theoretical underpinnings of the idigam. This section elaborates on how to create one for your chronicle.

#### Appearance

An uncoalesced idigam should not keep the same form from one turn to the next. Even if it doesn't change itself in any meaningful way, it should be constantly altering the color or texture of its skin, its scent, the sounds it makes and any other facet of its appearance.

Coalesced idigam have chosen a form, but that form rarely corresponds neatly to a terrestrial creature. It might be a mass of living rock or gas, but adorned with fleshy antennae or patches of fur. It might be a swarm of tiny motes of fire, but someone unlucky enough to get close realizes that the motes are attached by impossibly thin sinew. An idigam that takes a recognizable form is also possible, but if it does, it usually mirrors something in its immediate vicinity — such as one of the werewolves confronting it.

### HISTORICAL IDIGAM

This chapter posits that the idigam arrived on Earth only following the moon landing in 1969, but werewolves have stories about similar monsters that date back centuries. Two possibilities exist here: either those earlier creatures aren't idigam, or some of the spirits were present long before the Eagle landed.

If the creatures that werewolves fought before the Moon-Banished hitched a ride back to Earth are, in fact, idigam, the only thing that changes is that the Uratha have some historical records (or legends, at least) to consult when facing them. If a pack of Blood Talons faced off against such a spirit in Germany in the 1600s, perhaps the modern pack facing an idigam can travel to the Black Forest and read the pictographic representation of the battle, carved into ancient trees in the forest's center.

The moon landing presents a way to expand the cosmology of **Werewolf** beyond Earth and bring one of the greatest events in humankind's history into the World of Darkness, but it doesn't have to be the *first* time an idigam escaped. What other events might have allowed one to slip from its prison? A lunar eclipse? A comet storm? A ritual on Earth, performed by moon-worshipping cultists? The moon landing might simply have allowed the *weakest* of the Moon-Banished to come home. Where, then, are the strongest?

### Agenda

An idigam usually has a driving motivation, something that informs every move it makes. It's all very well to say these creatures are "alien," but that's no help to the Storyteller trying to use one in a chronicle (if the creature is utterly incomprehensible, how do you play it? It will just come off looking random, and that's not the same). Instead, remember that the idigam has no sense of other creatures being capable of feeling what it does — because they aren't. Werewolves can feel pain, and maybe the idigam can, but the Uratha don't reckon pain the same way. What causes excruciating agony to a werewolf is simply of interest to the Moon-Banished, because the spirit lacks the frame of reference to even *understand* the concept of physical pain the way a living creature does. Below are some possible motivations for the idigam.

- **Curiosity:** The idigam wants to know everything it can about this odd world around it, and it doesn't have any checks on the methods it uses. It proceeds in what might seem to be a scientific fashion, and can learn from its mistakes and past "experiments." Gifmalu Igizalag is motivated by curiosity.
- **Revenge:** The idigam remembers the endless night of the lunar prison, and it wants to make sure that Luna and anything remotely connected to her know that pain. This idigam might not understand how best to hurt the Uratha, but it is willing to try anything and everything in order to find out. Zul Sanak is motivated by revenge.
- **Hunger:** Chaos consumes everything. Everything in the universe must eventually break down. This is the "hunger" of the Moon-Banished: the ultimate expression of chaos. Such idigam might literally consume their foes, or they might alter spirits to do it for them. Mussughana is a hungry idigam.
- **Loneliness:** A billion years or more on the moon's surface, with nothing around except stillness and silence, is enough to drive anything mad. This idigam wanted company, but don't feel pity for it. It wanted raw material to alter and mimic, more than anything. This sort of Moon-Banished is likely to mimic werewolves at first, rather than attacking them, just because it enjoys being around other sentient creatures. Umum Wabalu Damu is motivated by loneliness.
- **Desire to mate:** Idigam cannot create more of their kind, and each one is effectively a race of one. The Moon-Banished might want to ensure that its legacy lives on, or it might think it is the superlative form of "life" and therefore it should reproduce and take over. Udu Luhai is motivated by its desire to mate.
- **Desire for stability:** It might seem strange, but some idigam want to be something other than what they are. They can coalesce and gain a measure of stability, but the idigam might look around at the living creatures and stable spirits of the world and long for that simplicity. Its activities are likely to focus on changing itself and then playing at being a werewolf, or a person, or an animal, or an ocean — whatever catches its attention. Gamugur is this sort of idigam.

### SAMPLE IDIGAM

The rest of this chapter describes six specific Moon-Banished, complete with their methods and preferences for Essence shaping, what sort of prey they prefer, and their driving motivations.

# THE UNHOLY HOST: GAMUGUR

CLING TO YOUR FAITH, FOR IT IS A FOUNDATION OF ROCK, STABLE AND SURE.

## BACKGROUND

For most idigam, change is the bottom line. Even those that coalesce are constantly seeking new ways to change the world around them. A very few, though, have rejected change. They've come to recognize that change for the sake of change leads to chaos. Gamugur is one of the rare idigam that values stability, and it has found that stability in the faith of humans.

## EXILE

At first, Gamugur raged against the confines of its lunar prison, just like the rest of the idigam. It constantly shifted from shape to shape in a vain attempt to win its way free of the chill, barren landscape to which it had been exiled. Eventually it grew weary of struggling against the nothingness of its prison and lapsed into a resigned stillness. It regarded the slowly turning Earth with a sense of detached longing, before finally turning its gaze to the stars. After an eon spent regarding the twinkling lights in the abyss, Gamugur's thoughts moved at a glacial pace. It shut the other idigam out of its senses and it simply existed, at one with the cosmos, in a trance. Time passed and Gamugur was content. The sound of rockets firing as the Apollo lander touched down on the moon was like a slamming door that jerked it back to consciousness.

Groggy from its long trance, Gamugur didn't take part in the first battles among the idigam to ride the lander back to Earth. With the shuttle's departure, the idigam, given new objects and spirits to mimic for the first time in millennia, exploded into activity. Try as it might, Gamugur couldn't find the hunger within it to muster up the energy required to change its form. A greater part of it missed the stability of form and tranquility of its existence prior to the landing. It spoke to the spirits carried to the moon by man and learned of the changes to the Earth during its long exile. Subsequent lunar landings brought more energy to Gamugur and the idigam in general, and by the time the Apollo 17 lander came to rest on the moon, it had decided to travel back to Earth to seek out a new form. On December 19, 1972, it returned to Earth, releasing its hold on the re-entry vehicle and descending to the ground in northern Michigan.

## RETURN

Gamugur was appalled by what it found. Its discussions with the spirits on the moon hadn't prepared it for the hustle and bustle of 1970s America, nor for the spiritual landscape it would encounter. Everywhere it looked, it saw change and relentless activity. While it would have welcomed these elements before its imprisonment, the endless years spent in silent contemplation of the universe had changed it. Gamugur found itself searching for stability in a world that was constantly changing. Eventually it traveled deep into both the material and spiritual wilds and buried itself in a darkened, quiet cave. It sealed itself away from

the distractions of change it had come to loathe and banished every spirit from its presence. Finding some degree of contentment at last, Gamugur returned to its trance, the light of the stars shining in the recesses of its mind. Once again, it was man, of course, who awoke it.

Instead of the blaring noise of rockets, this time Gamugur's meditation was broken by the sound of prayer. The prayer of one woman, to be exact. Rousing itself from its stupor, Gamugur looked into the material Realm and found a building had been erected over its resting place. The building was full of humans, all sitting quietly in rows with heads bowed. It could hear the jumble of their thoughts as a distant background buzz, but one voice stood out. A woman was praying with all her will and soul for her husband, who was sitting beside her, looking pale and unhealthy. Prepared to be angered by this unwanted intrusion, Gamugur was instead intrigued. These people weren't chasing phantom dreams while being hounded by spiritual gluttons; they were peaceful, and their minds echoed the calm of its own. What spirits that were present seemed old, even given the newness of the building, and they followed the inactivity of the humans with what might be deemed a reverent patience.

Interested now despite itself, Gamugur dipped into the mind of the woman, to find out her husband was dying of cancer. The presence of the disease revolted the idigam. Here was change in its worst possible aspect. Healthy cells and tissue were mutated into grotesque new forms dedicated to killing the living host and would, in turn, eventually kill the agent of change as well. While it was pondering the cancer of the husband, the humans began to move again. As one, they looked toward a man standing before them. The man lifted a goblet of wine and tore a loaf of bread. The wine and bread were then, in an orderly fashion, passed around to the seated humans. The woman was so devoted to her prayers that she didn't notice when the bread and wine were passed in her direction until her husband nudged her with his elbow. Without her prayers to distract it, Gamugur turned its attention to the other humans and found that each and every one of them suffered from change in some way. Cancer, old age and injury were all changes that were as unwelcome to them as this new Earth was to him.

## FAITH

Recognizing the respect paid by the humans to the man who had poured the wine and broken the bread, Gamugur scoured his mind, absorbing his knowledge. In it, Gamugur found the stability of faith. The human's belief that the entire world moved in a preordained, orderly procession comforted the idigam, and it settled on a course of action. While the last humans were drinking from the cup, Gamugur coalesced into a



figure of shining light with great, birdlike wings and, rending the Gauntlet asunder, appeared to the humans. "Be not afraid," it said and reached out a hand to the dying man. Gamugur's hand passed into the body of the human and stopped the progression of the cancer, freezing it in place. It passed among the other humans, stopping aging and isolating injuries so they could cause no more pain. Its work done, Gamugur retreated through the Gauntlet and returned to its cave, where it pondered the new course its existence had taken.

The congregation, meanwhile, was in an uproar. An angel of the Lord had appeared to them! Several elderly members collapsed from the excitement, and even the pastor took several shaky steps backward before sitting down hard on the carpet of his church floor. Voices were raised, some in celebration, some in question, and no few in fear. The orderly scene that Gamugur had witnessed collapsed into chaos. People pulled out cell phones and called their friends and families. In the following weeks, new vans from all over came to record images of the church and to interview the congregation. Gamugur, quite repelled by all this activity, continued to hide until the hubbub and tumult had died away, before revealing itself a second time to the pastor alone. It told the man the mercies of God were reliant on peace and serenity. Only when all the interlopers had been removed and the church returned to the humble place of worship it had been would Gamugur return to them.

The pastor closed his doors to the news crews and curiosity seekers, and banned cameras or recording devices of any kind, for good measure. The following Sunday, a full two months after Gamugur had breached the Gauntlet, the church was returned to a place of solemn worship and the idigam walked among the humans. No further mention of angelic visitations was ever made, and the church released a statement about a leaking gas line that might have prompted a mass hallucination. Now, each Sunday, the congregation meets in quiet reverence to hear the

Word of God spoken by an angel made flesh. The routine never changes and outsiders aren't welcome.

## DESCRIPTION

Contrary to modern iconography, angels weren't always described as humans with wings and halos. Always resistant to change, Gamugur has taken on the old-school appearance of an angel more in keeping with the descriptions found in the Old

Testament or Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Each of Gamugur's three heads bears 33 never-blinking eyes, and its three mouths speak with one voice. Its body is sexless and has six arms and nine legs. Gamugur is borne aloft by blindingly white wings that are set in three rows on its back, and it is surrounded at all times by a nimbus of golden light.

In its dealings with humans, it speaks in soft tones that carry an undercurrent of power, like high-tension electrical wires sparking in the background. Since it first revealed itself to the congrega-

tion, Gamugur has learned a great deal more about Christian doctrine, mainly from skimming the minds of the humans it deals with. For humans, one of the most startling aspects of speaking with Gamugur (other than the whole angel thing) is the frequency with which it answers questions they haven't asked yet. The minds of humans are like open books to the idigam, and it doesn't differentiate between verbal speech and mental communication. Gamugur is very like the angels of the Old Testament: mighty, alien and fearsome in appearance. It calls to mind the stories of angels burning whole towns to the ground and acting as instruments of God's wrath.

## SECRETS

Not long after Gamugur began its weekly visits to the church, one of the older members of the congregation passed away from a stroke. Initially, Gamugur was confused about the man's absence from the worship services, and only after it





## RECRUIT?

Does Gamugur, through the church, recruit new members?

On one hand, that goes against Gamugur's theme. Gamugur likes stability. Change is anathema to that. New members are just that — "new."

Alternatively, if Gamugur can find people outside the church's doors who allow it to spread its influence (and, by proxy, build a more stable "base"), it may do so.

Ultimately, it's what's best for your game. Recruitment may open up avenues to new story hooks (the idigam recruits a local wolf-blood, for instance), but if you don't need those story hooks, feel free to assume the cult remains wholly insular.

had absorbed the idea of natural death did it understand. Even though it had possessed some understanding of the frailty of human bodies, it hadn't reckoned on the humans it had bonded with dying. Death, though, was a change it could fix. Gamugur marked the souls of the rest of the congregation, altering their energies to bind them to it. When the next member of the congregation died, some months later as the result of a car accident, her soul was drawn to the Essence of the idigam like a moth to a flame. Gamugur imbued the soul with more of his Essence and returned it to her body, binding the soul to the human flesh it had left behind. Needless to say, the woman was horrified to find herself trapped in a mangled body and nearly went mad until Gamugur reshaped her flesh, mending most of her wounds. The congregation greeted the resurrection of their sister with joy, offering up thanks to the Lord and to Gamugur for returning her to them. The woman was never quite right after her experience, though. The idigam's Essence had altered her soul (not for the better), and humans aren't meant to live on after death. Gamugur has revived four more dead members of the congregation to date and all of them suffer from the same kinds of mental trauma (see the Ascended, below).

Gamugur hasn't limited its meddling to just humans; it has also altered the denizens of the Shadow around its cave home. Though immensely powerful, Gamugur realizes it can't be everywhere at once to watch over its humans. Picking up on the idea of guardian angels, it altered the spirits that lingered around the church. In place of their natural, mutable forms, the idigam shaped the spirits in its own likeness, filling them with its own Essence. It has set these reshaped spirits, which it calls Cherubs, to watching over the humans while they are away from the church. The Cherubs "protect" the congregation from unwelcome changes in their lives, such as accidental injury, a change in jobs or even moving from one home to another (see below). Operating from Twilight, the activities of the Cherubs go mainly unnoticed by the congregation, though a few more spiritually sensitive souls have become suspicious.

Gamugur has an active dislike of werewolves or shapeshifters of any kind. Not only are these creatures dangerous to it and descendants of Father Wolf, they change. Their shapes are con-

stantly shifting from one state to another. To the idigam's way of thinking, the turbulent emotions of a werewolf are a result of the chaos of change and are further proof that change is bad. Werewolf packs that enter Gamugur's territory are encouraged to move along, first by the congregation and then by its Cherubs. It avoids hostile confrontations if at all possible, as violence is one of the hallmarks of change, but it will kill werewolves that threaten the stability of its works.

## RUMORS

*"You read about that church? Papers are saying the congregation believes an honest-to-goodness angel came to visit them and heal their sick. A month later, they say it was all a mistake. 'Hallucinations caused by a gas leak,' they say. Have you ever heard any Christian willingly debunk their own miracle before? Sounds fishy to me."*

The media coverage of Gamugur's initial appearance to the congregation was spread far and wide. TV, newspapers and the Internet all carried stories about the event, and only a few of them bothered to carry the church's later retraction. Characters who seek out strange news shouldn't have much of a problem finding out information about the "visitation." Secondhand information, at least. The church now steadfastly denies anything unusual happened, and not a soul among the congregation is willing to talk to outsiders about the event.

*"The spirits are muttering something about an angel in the Shadow. Course, it ain't really an angel; it's just some kinda super-spirit working gullible humans. Odd, though. Usually you have to bribe a spirit to get it to pay any attention to you at all. The ones that told me about this angel spilled the beans all on their own."*

Gamugur's handling of the spirits around the church is bound to draw the attention of other spirits that worry the same thing could happen to them. The idigam is powerful enough that the spirits are afraid to oppose it directly, but a whispered word, here and there, in the right Uratha's ear might solve the problem for them.

*"There's a story in the Enquirer about some dude that was pronounced dead at the scene of a car crash. Story says that no more than 24 hours later, the same highway patrolman that responded to the call saw the guy walking into a gas station like nothing had ever happened. Yeah, it's on page three, right next to the story about the woolly mammoth sighted in Portsmouth."*

Even if the congregation keeps its collective mouth shut about its divine visitor, small leaks are bound to occur. All it takes is for one morgue attendant, ER doctor or policeman to see someone walking around that they *know* was dead for stories to spread.

## GAMUGUR

**Rank:** 5

**Attributes:** Power 12, Finesse 15, Resistance 10

**Willpower:** 22

**Essence:** 100

**Initiative:** 27

**Defense:** 12

**Speed:** 27

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 16

**Influences:** Faith ●●●, Stability ●●●●●

**Numina:** Gauntlet Breach, Harrow, Materialize, Material Vision

**Ban:** The blood of Christ (meaning communion wine). Note that not just any wine or grape juice will do the trick; it must have been properly blessed and sanctified. Wounds inflicted by weapons (or claws) that have been dipped in the sacrament bypass Gamugur's Defense. Gamugur is unaware of its own ban. Though it might seem strange that Gamugur's ban is communion wine, keep in mind that the idigam isn't *really* a holy creature. Some people might even say this particular ban is God's way of showing His displeasure.

**Aspects:**

- **Essence Shaping:** Gamugur is capable of shaping Essence, as described on p. 134 of this chapter.
- **The Resurrection:** Death is change and change is the enemy. By spending 10 points of Essence, Gamugur can catch a soul it has previously interacted with as it speeds free of its mortal shell. Soul in hand, the idigam can then return that body to life. Of course, there are consequences to this miracle for the human (see below).
- **The Light:** While injury and disease represent a kind of change, reversing those changes through healing also alters a body. Instead of lowering itself to commit changes, Gamugur simply places disease and injury in a kind of stasis where they no longer hinder the afflicted. Using this power costs Gamugur three Essence. Wounds (not diseases) still heal at the normal rate.
- **The Mind of God:** After communing with the stars, communicating with the minds of humans is child's play. Gamugur constantly hears the thoughts of humans as a kind of background murmur. By concentrating on a specific human, it can read that person's mind, down to their deepest, darkest secrets. Characters who would like to resist this kind of mental probing must first have some idea that Gamugur is reading their minds. Since the idigam often answers question before they are asked, however, this is pretty easy to guess at after a character has personally encountered the idigam at least once. Once a character knows (or guesses) that Gamugur is digging around in her head, she may roll Resolve + Composure (plus any supernatural resistance trait) vs. the idigam's Power + Finesse to resist.
- **Divine Clay:** Some injuries are either too debilitating or too awful to simply cover up. In these cases, Gamugur reshapes the flesh to the form it had before the injury. This requires the idigam to spend five Essence and succeed on a Power + Finesse roll. With success, the injury is repaired. Repaired, not healed. Gamugur's reluctance to alter even unhappy changes means the wound that caused the injury is downgraded to bashing damage.

### THE ASCENDED AND CHERUBS

The Ascended are the result of Gamugur's meddling with the natural order of things. They are humans who have died, only to be brought back and stuffed into their mortal shell. The trauma of their death and subsequent revival seriously screws with the mind of those whom Gamugur has resurrected. Every individual returned to life comes back with either a severe derangement or multiple minor derangements (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 96). Additionally, the reanimated bodies

### STORY HOOKS

- The pack Ithaeur was driving along some backwoods road when a car came hurtling around the bend. He says it should've been a head-on collision. No way either of them could have moved quick enough to avoid it, but somehow the two cars squeaked by each other without a scratch. He was just curious enough that he took a peek into Twilight, and he swears he saw some kind of angel riding shotgun in the other car.
- Ever since the heart attack, the character's uncle seems a little different. The doctors swear nothing happened that should have caused brain damage, but the man simply doesn't act the same way he used to. He also doesn't seem to need to sleep, eat or even take a piss. Something is definitely wrong. He's got a new bible, too. But he won't let anyone read it.
- A family member has died and it's the character's responsibility, as the nearest relative, to take care of the details. The family wants him to bring the body home, but they haven't said anything about a burial, and the character could swear he heard the words "Gamugur" and "resurrection" between sobs over the phone.

don't work like they used to. The Ascended can't sleep and gain no satisfaction from physical pleasures such as eating, drinking or sex. A poor man's Lazarus, these unfortunates wander around in a daze, behaving in a manner similar to those who suffer from autism. Each Ascended *must* serve the will of Gamugur, as a result of the mixing of its Essence into their soul. The Ascended ignore wound penalties and the effects of mental tampering. If Gamugur were ever destroyed, the chains that bind the Ascended to Earth would be severed and their souls would be freed from their bodies once more. It's possible that if all of Gamugur's Essence was separated from the soul of one of the Ascended, kind of like leeching bad blood, the soul might go free. To date, no one has attempted this cure.

Cherubs are spirits that have been infused with Gamugur's Essence and reflect his appearance. Smaller and less powerful than the idigam (Size 3, Rank 1 or 2), the spirits are forced to act as guardian angels to the congregation Gamugur has adopted. The spirits accomplish this feat by lurking in Twilight and using their Numina to reach out and tweak events so that nothing changes in their ward's life. Cherubs share the same ban as Gamugur as a result of being filled with Essence from the idigam, and they protect its cave in the Shadow from attack in addition to their other duties.

# THE EXPLORER: GIFMALU IGIZALAG

AND IF I PUT THIS HERE? SPIRIT AND FLESH?  
A FALSE DICHOTOMY. TURN YOUR EYES UPON IT  
AND KNOW IT AS A BEING DIVINE.

**Aliases:** The Shapeless, The Formless, The Blob, The Mad Scientist, The Intelligent Designer

## BACKGROUND

The so-called Mad Scientist is hardly a Victor Frankenstein, pattering away at a bolt-necked giant in a hidden castle at a distant remove. Instead, it hides in the nooks and crannies of the Uratha's territories, creating twisted monstrosities of spirit and flesh. And unlike the Intelligent Designer of human myth, the idigam seems to have no greater plan. Its work has all the forethought of child's play in a sandbox.

## DISCOVERY

Gifmalu Igizalag (roughly, "Perfect Dusk Watchman") came to the attention of the Uratha in the late 1970s. The first pack to identify the entity had lost one of its number to the idigam. They found her in her house, deep within the core of their territory, her body affixed to her kitchen table by way of lengths of rebar that were driven through her limbs and bent about the edges of the table like a twist-tie. She had been vivisected, and most of her internal organs had been placed in separate jars and set about the body. Her head, its features twisted in agony, was found in the sink.

The hunt began and, after following the destructive wake of the entity across seven states, the pack declared its quarry idigam, perhaps due to the fact that Gurdilag was menacing the Rockies at the same time. Uratha reaction to the pack's claims were mixed but never tepid: some swore to hunt down the monstrous threat before it could grow greater, while others derided the pack as fearmongers hiding a personal agenda of revenge in the guise of a universal threat.

The pack gathered several other Uratha about it, trailing Gifmalu Igizalag, studying its twisted leavings and trying to make sense of its travels. They drew up maps of its known routes, carefully examining them with oracles and scholars, seeking some larger pattern to the movements, some rationale behind the violence. They came up perpetually empty-handed. The sheer variety of the inhumane torments delivered upon the creature's victims suggested numerous unrelated psychopaths, but the details — victims found in buildings far from a locus, casualties isolated in rooms or homes locked from within — indicated a common modus operandi. Without reliable sightings or survivors of the entity's depredations, the hunters found themselves unable to come to a coherent consensus regarding the nature of the Shapeless.

The spirits were no more help, seemingly unable to provide a straight answer as to what it might be, what it hoped to accomplish through its violence or even what it looked like. Oracles communed with their dreams and called to Mother Luna in prayer, but learned

only that the threat was paradoxically both new and ancient. Meanwhile, people continued to die and spirits to be suborned.

The major break in the hunt came in the winter of 1982. A pack had come face to face with the entity and escaped to survive. The pack members described it as formless, an oozing mass of silver liquid that had lashed out at them with knife-like pseudopods. One of their packmates had, they claimed, been killed when the creature climbed up his body and, in the space of a few seconds, slithered through his mouth and nostrils and into his lungs.

Less than a year later, the group following the Shapeless — then made up of two packs and several unaffiliated hangers-on — suffered a schism. The core pack, those who originally discovered the Shapeless, reversed their original claim. The Shapeless was no idigam, merely a powerful spirit. It posed no threat to the Uratha as a whole, only to those it had harmed. In short, they claimed that their vendetta was personal. Others within the group, however, remained unconvinced, claiming vociferously that the creature was no mere spirit and must be stopped at any cost. The two groups worked tirelessly to spread their conflicting messages to anyone who would listen as they trailed the Shapeless from region to region. The disagreement between the two groups inevitably became violent, and the two groups abandoned their task to slaughter one another. One or two members of each faction may remain alive tonight, perhaps even keeping up the hunt, but the packs they were once part of are long dead.

For its part, the entity never manifested as a threat to the werewolves on a large scale. It has become a folktale spread among werewolves as a warning. The lessons of the tale vary with the teller: one's home can never be *too* secure or have too many wards (for Gifmalu Igizalag can come through any crack and slither up any pipe); packs don't work well together (and doing so leads to violence); *what* a threat is doesn't always matter when one knows it's a threat; there are things on the edges of the material and spirit worlds alike that aren't in any Cahalith's story, don't behave like spirits and can't simply be hunted down.

To an extent, familiarity with the story of the Shapeless has bred a form of contempt. Young werewolves hear the stories of their elders, the warnings about the threats that lurk on the chaotic edges of the world, and laugh. They label the entity with mocking names, joking about it as a mortal might a campy horror film. They mock those who take it seriously and ridicule those who name it idigam. Unfortunately for them, levity won't save them if they draw the Explorer's attentions.

## THE METHOD TO THE MADNESS

The entity known to the spirits as Gifmalu Igizalag first coalesced while a tenement burned over 30 years ago. It watched



as the destruction played out like clockwork. The spirits of flame congregated, consuming everything about them. The mortal firefighters followed carefully rehearsed plans as the dying pounded uselessly time and again against the hot floor. It chose its form then and took an obsessive interest in the way creatures and spirits interact with the world and respond to stimuli.

Since then it has kept constantly on the move, seeking out new locales and new subjects, twisting their flesh or ephemeral substance, combining spirit with material and hoping to fuse both into a cohesive, functioning whole. The results of its experiments litter the world, mad spirits locked in twisted human form set loose on the frayed edges of civilization and within its urban hearts and human souls set free to fester in Twilight.

It has determined that Father Wolf's false division between the material and the spirit has resulted in an imperfect world. By blending both realms into a place neither spirit nor mundane, it can birth a world of infinite possibilities, in which all things can and will be. Fortunately for the denizens of the World of Darkness, Gifmalu Igizalag's obsession with the new and fresh restrains it from making a more concerted effort to follow its plans to fruition. Each night spent working on a single plan of action, the idigam reasons, is another step away from utter chaos. Thus the entity's plans remain largely stunted.

While Gifmalu Igizalag possesses certain goals, it doesn't cling to any particular agenda or plan. It is capable of establishing a plan and following it through — over years, if necessary — but it doesn't particularly *enjoy* doing so. It would much rather poke and prod at the world until it comes to the revelation it knows exists. The Shapeless constantly seeks new information and experiences. It prefers to observe rather than to involve itself, and typically does so from the Shadow or through one of its minions. Too often, however, the objects of its observation are not willing to subject themselves to the harsh extremes that their studier finds most compelling. That's when it steps in.

Gifmalu Igizalag has made no attempts at control over a wide area or even lasting control over a specific area. The entity seems to appear in a region, causing numerous localized problems for a period of time determined by its own inscrutable mind, and then move on to another region, leaving broken and corrupted people and spirits in its wake (sometimes only one or the other, depending on its interests at the time). As a result, many of those werewolves who have come into contact with the entity give it the same consideration they might a natural disaster: something one might prepare for and clean up after, but cannot prevent. For these werewolves, the effort of following and destroying Gifmalu Igizalag after it has left their territory simply hasn't been justified by the amount of harm it does in a single locale.

Why the Shapeless behaves the way it does remains a mystery to the Uratha. Some who accept the stories about it as true dismiss the spirit as insane, a callous child of a monster that bounces about the world on a gleeful murder spree. The group that once hunted it across the country, on the other hand, claimed it must have been working to an esoteric plan, one that cannot be allowed to come to fruition.

## DESCRIPTION

Gifmalu Igizalag prefers to travel through the myriad hidden and subterranean roads created both naturally and through the work of humans. It flows through pipes, slides through caverns and emerges from storm drains. In form, it most resembles a mass of



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mercury, a reflective silver blob with an unusual surface tension that keeps it cohesive. Close examination reveals thousands of tiny white bristles across its surface, though one is unlikely to notice these without touching the entity.

Gifmalu Igizalag takes a profound joy in altering its own form. It may appear as a cylindrical column, an angular structure, a silver snake or even, on rare occasions, a humanoid figure. Its preferred form seems to be crablike; its body flattens into a rigid disk and it protrudes between six and 14 jointed legs that end in knifelike blades. This form always includes at least two arms with fine manipulators (such as fingers). Sometimes this form has recognizable perception organs, such as eye stalks or a human face, jutting from the front of the entity (if it can be said to have a front); other times, it may have no discernible eyes, instead sprouting silver tentacles or spines about the edges of its disklike body. In all forms, the idigam retains its monochrome silver color.

## SECRETS

A few believe that the Explorer craves new experiences and is only likely to settle in a location that offers new and interesting encounters on a nightly basis and, even then, exposure to the same roads, buildings and people eventually bother the entity, forcing it to move on.

The creature cannot abide the way humans react to being burned. While it finds both human pain and uncontrolled flame fascinating when separate, it finds combining them excruciating. A perceptive character who has the opportunity to study several of the Shapeless' grisly leftovers may notice that, despite everything else it seems willing to do, its victims are *never* burned.

Gifmalu Igizalag has learned a great deal of information over the years, especially about the way things work, whether in the material world or the spiritual. Its short attention span guarantees that the information it has on any given subject is limited, but the *breadth* of knowledge is intimidating. The Shapeless can be an unusual source of information for characters who encounter it, perhaps even without them asking. The Shapeless might know the location or fate of a missing friend or family member. It might be able to provide a specific spirit's ban. It may even know that one of the characters' spouses is cheating on her.

## RUMORS

*"The thing showed up in a town up north a few months ago. Slaughtered a pack called the Westerners and set up shop in their locus, the locals thought. Then it went around the city, killing one member of every pack. Thing is, it was always someone who had wronged the Westerners. Had people saying it was some spirit of vengeance or something. Me, I think they're seeing a connection where there ain't one."*

This idigam (usually) has no particular interest in the workings of werewolf society or the relationships between members of that society. A werewolf is most interesting not for whom he loves and hates, but how he reacts to stimuli. In this situation, however, Gifmalu Igizalag might have kept the Westerners alive, incapacitating them and experimenting on them, and drawing from their screams the names and locations of other candidates for study. Alternatively, it may have corrupted the pack's totem and gleaned the information from it.

*"You know how the song goes? 'He knows when you've been sleeping, he knows when you're awake.' Well, the Shapeless is fucking Santa Claus. It somehow knows everything about a town it puts down roots in. Maybe it interrogates the city spirit. Maybe it's just got some omniscience or something. But let me tell you, if that fucker*

*comes here, you can be damn sure we're going to have at least two pack members awake at any given time. It's not getting the jump on us. We won't let it."*

While omniscience does not rank among Gifmalu Igizalag's abilities (and one, given the entity's love for discovery, that it wouldn't want), the idigam does often seem particularly, if not preternaturally, well informed about what's going on around it. This is due largely to its voyeuristic tendencies, which it can exercise through the pawns it shapes from spirits. The Shapeless' subjects often provide information, as well, mistaking the idigam's ministrations as torture.

*"Yeah, yeah, we've all heard the Intelligent Designer jokes, and they're all well and good and understandable, but have you ever seen one of the...well, the things that this thing makes? I have. I've seen the mess it made of some of the spirits in St. Paul. And I'm telling you, there has to be a plan. This isn't just some fluke of nature, some twister that hits a place at random. This thing's making something, and we can't allow that to happen."*

This rumor remains particularly popular among those who hunt the Shapeless. They claim this and similar rumors hint of the entity's master plan. Ask a dozen such werewolves precisely what that plan is, and you'll likely get half a dozen different answers. In many ways, Gifmalu Igizalag represents the unknown and unknowable, the entity whose desires and actions seem to defy all logic. The key to using it, however, is to remember that its actions only seem random from the outside.

## GIFMALU IGIZALAG

**Rank:** 5

**Attributes:** Power 10, Finesse 15, Resistance 11

**Willpower:** 21

**Essence:** max 100

**Initiative:** 26

**Defense:** 15

**Speed:** 35

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 16

**Influence:** Envy ••, Flesh •••

**Numina:** Discorporation, Fetter, Gauntlet Breach, Materialize, Material Vision, Reaching, Wilds Sense

**Ban:** Gifmalu Igizalag suffers when exposed to the human reaction to being burned. During any turn in which the Shapeless is within 100 yards of a human (or a living humanoid entity, such as a werewolf or changeling) suffering lethal damage from flame, it cannot use any of its supernatural powers, including Numina, Influences and the powers listed below. Furthermore, its Defense during such a turn drops to 3. The human being burned must suffer at least one lethal Health Level of damage to fire in the turn for this ban to take effect. A character who chooses to burn himself may do so as an instant action at any point in the turn without regard to Initiative (similar to taking a Dodge action), allowing the character to act in this manner prior to the Shapeless.

Strangely, vampires, Prometheans and similar undead entities that are particularly weak to fire do not cause the same reaction in the Shapeless. Unfortunately for the idigam, it doesn't know this, as it has never risked putting flame to one of these creatures.



**Supernatural Powers:**

- **Essence Shaping:** Gifmalu Igizalag is capable of removing the souls of living beings and creating Claimed, altering its own form and altering the forms of spirits, as described on p. 135 of this chapter. It does not create *Su'ur*, though whether this is because it lacks the capability is unknown. It actively seeks the ability to manipulate material beings with the same ease it brings to reshaping spirits.

- **One Million Eyes:** This idigam can observe others through any servant it creates through Essence Shaping. Despite the name of this power, the Explorer gains access to all of its servants' senses. To align its senses with another in this manner requires an instant action, though returning its perception to its own form can be done reflexively. While observing through a servitor, Gifmalu Igizalag suffers a -3 to all Perception rolls relating to its own surroundings.

- **Liquefy:** Gifmalu Igizalag can give itself the physical properties of a liquid as an instant action (requiring no roll and 3 Essence). It seems to lose cohesion, immediately collapsing into a puddle (and, on more than one occasion, tricking an enemy into thinking it has been destroyed). Taking or abandoning this form requires an instant action. In this form, it can travel through drains, under doors and in any other medium through which water could travel. It retains its cognizance and all abilities of perception (as well as Numina), but has limited locomotive abilities. While in liquid form, Gifmalu Igizalag may travel up to half its Speed with a successful reflexive Power + Finesse roll; on a failed roll, it cannot voluntarily move at all (and instead acts in all ways as if it were water, flowing down hill, streaming through drains, etc.).

While in this form, Gifmalu Igizalag cannot attack normally. It *can* attempt to drown an enemy by sliding through her mouth and nostrils and into her lungs. This is handled as a grapple. Gifmalu Igizalag must first succeed at a Power + Finesse roll (penalized by the target's Defense). She may then perform an overpowering maneuver with a Power + Finesse roll penalized by the target's Strength (possessing the Strong Lungs Merit adds 1 to the target's effective Strength for the purpose of this roll). If successful, the idigam pours into the enemy's lungs. Each turn thereafter, the target makes a Stamina roll to avoid drowning. Upon failing the Stamina roll, she begins suffering one point of lethal damage per turn. She may make a Strength + Stamina roll (the Strong Lungs Merit grants a bonus of two dice to this roll) to eject the entity as an instant action, but must garner more successes on a single roll than Gifmalu Igizalag did on its attempt to drown her.

Obviously, creatures that do not require breath to live (such as vampires) cannot be drowned in this manner (though the experience is still far from pleasant). For more on drowning, see p. 49 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.




STORY HOOKS

- Gifmalu Igizalag has been in the characters' city for some time but has remained remarkably under the radar for an entity of its power, avoiding the notice of the werewolves. Instead, it has been menacing one of the other supernatural groups. Perhaps it has been attempting to fuse vampires with spirits or to vivisect changelings to see how they work. Whatever's happening, those being hounded by the idigam are particularly incapable of dealing with this spiritual threat. They seek out the werewolves, hoping they might come to their aid. Will the werewolves aid their erstwhile rivals in darkness? What compensation will they demand for doing so? Or are they willing to let one evil destroy another?

- An apparently spirit-Claimed individual has come to the characters, asking for their help on the behalf of its "patron." It represents one of the idigam, it claims, and it needs a particular service. This service is something despicable, possibly the delivery of one or more humans, werewolves or wolf-blooded to the entity. In exchange, the entity promises not to cause any trouble, instead moving on to another city once the deliveries have been made. Is this Claimed telling the truth? Can an idigam be trusted? Are the characters willing to sell out others for the apparent greater good? What does Gifmalu Igizalag plan to do with these people? Or are the characters the true subject of one of the Explorer's twisted experiments?

- Gifmalu Igizalag has stopped searching. Perhaps it has experienced everything under the moon. Perhaps it has finally found a preoccupation with the depth necessary to sustain its attention. Either way, it came to the characters' region recently and hasn't bothered to move on. Each night the werewolves turn their backs on its predation, sure that it will *eventually* leave. How long are the Uratha willing to turn a blind eye to the monster? What and who will they lose in doing so? Who will finally turn on it?





# THE RAVENOUS SWARM: MUSSUGHANA

(WORDLESS, WADDENING DRONING OF THE WINGS OF MILLIONS OF INSECTS)

**Aliases:** The Devourer, He-Who-Consumes, The Final Dis-solution, The Worm That Feasts

## BACKGROUND

In the beginning, there was only hunger. Before the world was born, it existed, howling madly for sustenance against the infinite void of pre-being. According to those who worship it, Mussughana was born before Creation itself, the very conceptual spirit of the emptiness of pure, unbridled entropy. It is older than Father Wolf, older than Mother Luna, perhaps even older than Helios. The Worm That Feasts was at peace only when it had nothing to devour — at the instant of creation, its serene existence was shattered, hurled into madness by the variety of forms and structures vomited forth from the heart of all existence. Only when all that is has been returned to the primordial chaos of all that was can Mussughana once more know peace.

## PANGAEA AND BANISHMENT

Whether the spirit's claim of existence since before the Big Bang is true or not, the Ravenous Swarm certainly existed in Pangaea. Tales told by the oldest spirits, painstakingly assembled by Uratha lorekeepers, say that it swept across the land in a great swarm, endlessly coalescing and splitting apart, devouring entire continent-sized regions of the world and leaving behind nothing but a formless gray sludge. No part of the world was safe, for its moon-mad nature allowed it to take a multitude of forms, from great clouds of locusts to vast schools of swarming fish to multitudes of writhing grubs burrowing through the soil. No warrior could stand against it, and according to at least one nearly forgotten tale, it even ravaged the outposts of the Awakened Empire of the humans.

Why Father Wolf allowed such a creature to rampage unchecked for so long before hunting it down remains unclear. The spirits claim that great Urfarah was afraid of He-Who-Consumes, a statement both the Forsaken and Pure deny vehemently. The Uratha — at least, those few who know the tale — say Father Wolf had to let the idigam roam free until the stars were right, for without the might of the Celestines in alignment, the mad, ephemeral spirits could not be flung across the gulf of space and imprisoned within Luna's distant body.

When Father Wolf finally faced the Worm That Feasts, the struggle nearly killed the great hunter. Only with all of his cunning and the aid of all the Firstborn was Urfarah able to catch the endlessly shifting swarm and hurl it, keening with the madness of its ancient hunger, into the cold void. Imprisoned on the cold, airless rock with the rest of its comrades, Mussughana raged impotently against its prison, a million hungry mouths shrieking to be fed.

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE LOCUST

Unable to reach the Earth physically, Mussughana sang across the void, calling to spirits and men alike who resonated with its nature. Whether its fellow prisoners ever considered

trying this, or whether Mussughana possessed some forgotten Numen that allowed its voice to reach the vast distance to the earth remains a mystery, but in 1678, its song reached the mind of one Hieronymus Gesell, a German occultist consigned to a sanitarium as consumption ravaged his body. Near death, in his delirium Gesell was able to comprehend at least some fragment of the idigam's desires — not enough to truly understand it, but enough to realize that the entity was trapped somewhere and desired its freedom.

Desperate for a cure for his disease, Gesell interpreted the idigam's message as an offered bargain: "Free me, and I will let you live." Gesell did not understand that He-Who-Consumes did not care about the human's life, and in fact would have preferred to devour the little man along with all else that existed, and promptly set about gathering the mystic lore he felt he would need to call his newfound master out of its prison.

Gesell accumulated a band of followers who dubbed themselves the Brotherhood of the Locust, a cult that, over time, grew in size and power. In 1681, as Gesell lay on his deathbed, the inner circle of the cult performed a great ritual working that summoned a spirit of famine and pestilence out of the Shadow and bound it into Gesell's body. The old man willingly allowed the spirit to Claim him, restoring him to some semblance of life, if not vigor.

The Brotherhood of the Locust has waxed and waned in influence over the centuries, but it still persists — led, supposedly, by the Claimed that was once Hieronymus Gesell. The cult maintains secretive chapters across North America, Europe and Africa, with a few inroads in Asia (mostly in regions that were colonies of European powers at one point). The majority of the Brotherhood's members are ordinary mortals, although most chapters are lead occultists and hedge magicians (if you have access to **World of Darkness: Second Sight**, you might build the cult's leaders as Apostles of the Dark One; otherwise, just choose a few Numina that can be used as spells, substituting Mental Attributes for Power, Finesse and Resistance as needed).

## RETURN AND COALESCING

On April 17, 1970, the command module of Apollo 13 splashed down in the Pacific Ocean after a near-catastrophic explosion caused by a fault in an oxygen tank. While the rest of the world celebrated the safe return of Jim Lovell, John Swigert and Fred Haise, Mussughana quietly detached itself from the command module it had ridden back to earth, drawn by the astronauts' ever-growing thirst. (There was a severe lack of potable water onboard the damaged spacecraft, which led to Haise developing a serious infection.)

Mussughana was weakened by its time in exile, its own hunger eating away at its once-terrifying power. As it fled to the Indian coast, consuming vast schools of fish and leaving a dead zone in the Pacific that would baffle scientists for decades, it allowed itself to coalesce, taking on a fixed form when it came onto land. Weak and uncertain of this strange new world, not to mention ignorant of the death of Father Wolf, the idigam retreated into the



deep jungle where, local Forsaken packs believe, it was the root cause of many famines that swept through the region.

Once it learned of the death of Urfarah, Mussughana spread its influence, following great plagues and famines that have scoured the world. It feeds on the vast rivers of Essence tinged with hunger, fear and desperation born of these tragedies, growing stronger and stronger until it can strip the very Shadow itself bare in an area the size of a large town. So far, the idigam's consumption has been unable to keep up with its debilitating hunger, but with the world's population increasing far more rapidly than its food supply, it's only a matter of time.

### DESCRIPTION

Although it coalesced into a fixed form decades ago, that fixed form is not a single, discrete entity. Mussughana takes the form of a vast swarm of crawling, writhing, buzzing things with an amalgamation of traits insectoid, piscine and even mammalian, along with creatures far stranger than any the earth has ever seen. The swarm varies in size, depending upon how well it has fed (see the Ravenous Hunger power at the end of this section): from a radius of five yards in its "normal" state, up to 15 miles in radius in the largest feeding frenzy recorded by the Forsaken.

Because it feeds on famine on a large scale, the idigam is most commonly found in Third World areas, particularly Africa and central Asia. Developed nations of the Western world generally have sufficient infrastructure that large-scale famines are rare or nonexistent, but as incidents like Hurricane Katrina have shown, even a large, industrialized nation can suffer breakdowns in the wake of a natural disaster. The Brotherhood of the Locust likewise remains active in the First World, and might conspire to bring about a plague or famine for its god; or cult activity in a pack's territory might draw it halfway around the globe to confront the Worm That Feasts on its home turf.

### SECRETS

Mussughana may have been banished to the moon countless millennia ago by Father Wolf, but some of its brood remained on Earth. Among the idigam's "children" are the Srizaku, the locust-Hosts that share his all-consuming hunger. The Srizaku are rare, and Mussughana has not encountered one since returning to the world, but the possibilities of a ravenous swarm of devouring monstrosities sweeping across Shadow and physical world alike are chilling, to say the least. The locust-Hosts are described in detail on p. 161 of *Predators*.



## THE SRIZAKU

Called the Hungry Children, the locust-Hosts are a rare variety of *shartha* descended from an ancient spirit that may be Mussughana, if their own legends are to be believed. Unlike the *Azlu* and *Beshilu*, the Srizaku are driven not by desire to build or destroy, but to *consume*. Spirits, crops, animals, even humans: when the locust-Host swarms, nothing is safe.

A full write-up of the Srizaku can be found in **Predators**, but if you'd like to use them in your game and do not have access to **Predators**, you can get a reasonable approximation by using the *Beshilu* Horde's Nest on p. 241 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken** (replacing the Rats Specialty for Animal Ken with Insects) and adding the following powers:

- **Swarm Discorporation:** This Aspect is the fabled power of the Hosts that allows them to survive the total destruction of their bodies. If the power is used voluntarily, the process is automatic and requires no roll. If the Srizaku has been killed and reduced to zero Health, its player must succeed in a Wits + Survival roll. Success means that the Srizaku's body instantly breaks down and dissolves into a swarm of hundreds of locusts, which scatter in all directions. As long as at least one of the locusts survives, the Host can, with time and difficulty, reform itself.

- **Sense Prey:** This Aspect allows the Srizaku to sense the location of the closest source of nourishment, be it in the form of a grove of fruit trees or a village of humans. Of course, the power can be vague, as the Srizaku are capable of eating almost anything. The Srizaku spends an Essence point and rolls Wits + Survival. Success reveals a vague direction and a promise of "food," but an exceptional success reveals accordingly more details about the nourishment on offer.

- **Wind Lord:** As the Elemental Gift: Invoke the Wind's Wrath.

The Brotherhood of the Locust has, in some parts of the world, become a major political influence — not in the sense of mad cultists brainwashing politicians and businessmen, but in much the same way as secret societies like the Skull & Bones have become extremely well-connected "old boys' networks." Particularly in Europe, the Brotherhood has a presence, albeit a secret one, on many college campuses and taps many promising students for membership. Most such members have no idea of the cult's true purpose, but every year, at least a few show enough promise to be initiated into the worship of He-Who-Consumes.

### RUMORS

*"This is the Earth-Mother's punishment. We have abused her for too long, used her up for our own ends and given nothing back,*

*and so she sends the Swarm to destroy the land we need to survive. It's scorched-earth warfare writ large — we can't keep fucking up the planet if we all starve to death, can we?"*

The theory that the entire world has a spiritual representation, called Gaia or Geb by some, is difficult to prove or disprove, and some Ithaeur argue over the possibility when they gather. Whether such a spirit does exist — and has any conception of the actions of the humans swarming across the planet — is unclear, but given Mussughana's urge to consume all of existence, it is debatable whether such an entity would willingly serve the spirit of the very thing it wishes to devour.

*"It's the Doomsday Scenario, man. Forget nuclear war, forget terrorists, forget big fuck-off comets hitting us. It's the Gray Goo: scientists build these swarms of tiny robots that are programmed to reproduce and reproduce — only there's no shutoff switch, so they just keep breaking down anything they can get ahold of and tear it apart for the raw materials. Now, somehow, it's gotten into the Shadow, and we're all fucked."*

While Mussughana is not a cloud of nanobots that was somehow loosed on the Shadow, its goals are certainly in line with the "Gray Goo" scenario mentioned above. Several wealthy members of the Brotherhood of the Locust have donated very generously to companies invested in nanotechnology research in the hopes of engendering such an outcome. Eventually, it's not implausible to suggest that the Worm That Feasts might find a place within its awful swarm for such artificial life-forms.

*"You cannot fight Him. He is the Worm That Feasts, the Devourer, the Ravenous Swarm. He will blot out the sun, drink dry the rivers and strip bare the land. You will die under His ten thousand jaws, and nothing you can do will thwart him. Mussughana shall rule!"*

While the rantings of deranged cultists are seldom reliable, in this case it is partially true. Fighting a swarm is difficult at the best of times, and once it has gorged itself to its greatest size, Mussughana is a force of nature that can no more be fought than a hurricane. Swarms larger than about 15 to 20 yards in radius are essentially plot devices; a swarm of such magnitude cannot really be fought, and a pack has few options other than trying to deprive the idigam of food or get the hell out of its way.

## MUSSUGHANA

**Rank:** 5

**Attributes:** Power 12, Finesse 15, Resistance 10

**Willpower:** 22

**Essence:** max 100

**Initiative:** 25

**Defense:** 15

**Speed:** 37

**Size:** See Ravenous Hunger, below

**Corpus:** 35

**Influence:** Hunger ••, Despair ••, Disease •

**Numina:** Drain, Fetter, Gauntlet Breach, Materialize, Material Vision, Reaching

**Ban:** Mussughana coalesced amid the squalor and starvation of the Third World, where even what little food and water there is tends to be spoiled or fouled by pollution. Pure food and drink, untainted and fresh, can halt its ravaging, at least for a time. Mussughana cannot cross a barrier of pure, potable water (including naturally occur-



### STORY HOOKS

- People are starving to death in the pack's territory. Depending on where the pack lives, that might not be unusual in and of itself, but what *is* unusual is that they seem to be dying over the course of at most a day or two, one after another, often after gorging themselves on massive quantities of food. In an attempt to sate its incessant hunger, Mussughana has attempted to Claim human hosts. It hopes that it can maintain its strength longer by sheltering in human flesh, until it is able to burst forth and consume an entire city — unless the pack recognizes what has come to its territory and can stop it.

- While patrolling its territory, the pack interrupts a ritual of the Brotherhood of the Locust, involving the ritual starvation to near-death of a sacrificial victim who is to be killed and devoured by the cultists. Assuming the pack leaves anyone alive to answer questions, it might learn that the cult has begun a systematic effort to defile the Shadow with Essence tainted by famine and suffering in the hopes of easing their "god's" passage into the physical world.

- Although the stories say Urfarah hurled the idigam to their lunar prison with naught but his own raw power, there exists a partially incomplete ritual of banishment that might be able to send one of the Moon-Banished back to its ancient tomb. According to lore passed down by Bone Shadow tribes of the Serengeti, the ritual was devised by the mightiest Ithaeur in the days shortly after the Fall, when it was feared that the spiritual upheaval might allow the idigam to return to earth, and handed down from teacher to student in an oral tradition for hundreds of years. When it became apparent that the ancient spirits would remain imprisoned, knowledge of the rite faded and would have been lost altogether had not a pack during the Roman Empire met a Nubian Uratha who claimed to be the last to know the ritual. The Roman wolves wrote the ritual down as best as they could understand it, and buried it in a sacred cave within their territory. That parchment is still there, waiting to be found.

ring ones), and if an offering of food is placed before it, the swarm stops all activity to devour it, even though physical sustenance provides it with no Essence.

#### Supernatural Powers:

- **Drain:** This Numen enables the spirit to steal Essence or Willpower from a material being, much as spirits can attempt to siphon Essence from one another (see p. 135). The spirit first decides which trait it is attempting to drain, then rolls Power + Finesse against the subject's Stamina + Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance. If the attacker wins, the victim loses one point of Essence or Willpower; these points are gained by the attacking spirit. If the target wins, the attacker loses a number of points of Essence or Willpower equal to the successes scored by the target. This spirit must "touch" the target to use this Numen, and must Manifest or Materialize to do so as normal.

- **Essence Shaping:** Mussughana is capable of manipulating loci and reforming itself, as described on p. 134 of this chapter.

- **Ravenous Hunger:** Mussughana does not lose Essence as other idigam do. The more it consumes, the more its hunger grows, and this hunger is represented by its Essence expenditure, and its consumption by its Size. As long as Mussughana has less than 15 Essence, it follows the standard rules for idigam as described on p. 132 of this book. At this level, the spirit is a swarm equal to five yards in radius. As the spirit's Essence pool grows, so, too, does its Size — but along with its greater power comes a greater hunger. Eventually, the spirit runs out of sustenance and collapses back to its smallest size. The following table shows its Size and Essence expenditure per day based on current Essence.

Essence Pool	Swarm Radius	Essence Per Day
1–15	5 yards	0
16–25	10 yards	1
26–35	20 yards	2
36–46	40 yards	3
37–55	80 yards	4
56–65	160 yards	5
66–75	320 yards	6
76–85	640 yards	7
86–95	1,280 yards	8
96–100	2,560 yards	9

# THE BREEDER: UDU LUHAL

MAYBE THIS TIME. LOOK AT HER. ISN'T SHE BEAUTIFUL?  
WOULDN'T SHE MAKE A BEAUTIFUL BABY? NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW.  
AND YOU'LL REMEMBER HIM FOREVER. DON'T DENY YOURSELF THAT.

**Aliases:** The Tempter, The Oathbreaker, The Matchmaker, Shame-Bringer.

## BACKGROUND

The Uratha shall cleave to the human. *Uratha Safal Thil Lu'u*. It's part of the Oath of the Moon for a reason. When werewolves breed with werewolves, they produce abominations called Ghost Children (or *unihar*, in the First Tongue). These creatures are terrifying and tenacious hunters, and their prey of choice is the mated pair of werewolves that spawned them. But even once their parents are dead, the *unihar* often wander the spirit world, searching for other werewolves to kill. They are hatred, rejection and blasphemy given form.

And one idigam sees in them kindred spirits, weapons and possible mates.

## APPEARANCE AND COALESCENCE

Udu Luhal (roughly, "Breeding-Beast Master") first appeared in 1980, following the death of an Iron Master werewolf at the hands of a pack of Ivory Claws. The Iron Master, named Vic Bellows, had been separated from his own pack and torn to shreds by the Pure. Rumors suggested that his pack had *allowed* him to die because he had brought shame upon them by fathering an *unihar* with an unknown werewolf, but no one was brave or impolitic enough to suggest this to the pack directly. Bellows died honorably, in battle with his enemies, and his friends sang his praises at his funeral with all the solemnity and love that would be expected at such an occasion.

The truth was, though, that Bellows had indeed broken the Oath and mated with a werewolf. What no one — not even his pack — knew was that the werewolf in question was an Ivory Claw named Esmeralda Ríos. They had met before Bellows was inducted into the Iron Masters, and shortly after Ríos had been forced to murder her own brother in Mexico (he had attempted to escape from the Ríos family territory). Esmeralda asked to be allowed to join a different pack, and this request was granted, but she harbored a great deal of hatred for her tribe and family in her heart. And so ignorance and bitterness came together, and a Ghost Child was born of that union.

The Ivory Claws killed Esmeralda immediately following the "birth," and tracked down Bellows to take his head as well. But they never managed to find the Ghost Child. Upon

Bellows' death, the Ivory Claws (and the Iron Masters, for that matter) assumed that the *unihar* would forever wander the spirit world, searching for its now-dead parents, and that someone might someday have to deal with it. What they didn't know was that the *unihar* had already found a surrogate parent.

Udu Luhal coalesced at the precise moment of the Ghost Child's birth. Seeing the result of the werewolves' union, pure spirit with only a gush of blood as its representative in the world of flesh, it had found something to emulate. It discovered, though, that the *unihar* was just like every other spirit. It possessed a singular, all-consuming focus: kill its parents. Disappointed, the idigam absorbed the Ghost Child and retreated deep into the Shadow to study it. It discovered that when the *unihar*'s parents were both dead, it lost this focus, but kept a murderous hatred for werewolves in general. Udu Luhal pulled the spirit apart until it had been completely destroyed, looking for some way to alter this desire. It could not find a way.

## QUEST FOR A MATE

The Breeder began hunting down other *unihar*, and this search took it all over the world. Ghost Children are few and far between, after all, and although the idigam could track them unerringly, it still had to expend the effort to find them. In some cases, it interrupted hunting packs of Uratha trying to clean up after the Ghost Children's parents, and rumors of a "Herder of the Ghost Children" spread. Udu Luhal finally discovered that the impetus to create these spirits lay not in the spirits themselves, but in the werewolves. Finally having learned the facts of life, as it were, the idigam began searching for werewolves that could give it a child, an *unihar* mate with which it could build its own spiritual race.

Udu Luhal usually begins its activities in a region by determining the temperaments of the local packs. It arranges battles, creates Claimed opponents and mouthpieces and observes their daily lives. It chooses two "breeding partners," both from different packs, and arranges for them to break the Oath somehow. The simplest way to do this is to drive the werewolves to Death Rage during a battle with other werewolves, but triggering a frenzy in a crowded place is also effective. Either way, the goal is to erode that werewolf's respect for the Oath of the Moon and his control over his own actions (in game terms, lowering Harmony). Once the Breeder is satisfied, it arranges a meeting between the two werewolves.

The Breeder tries to make the meeting memorable and romantic, but it doesn't have a good sense of what makes "romance" for living creatures. In the past, it has tried arranging the meeting on a battlefield, near other couples (human and animal) mating, near children and in the spirit world near a locus of appropriate resonance. It hasn't achieved consistent results, but once in a while it gets lucky, and the two werewolves feel attraction to one another. The idigam, while it doesn't understand emotion per se, is quite able to recognize sexual compatibility, and when it senses such feelings, it sends spirits of lust to influence the werewolves whenever they are together. Sooner or later, nature takes its course.

The father typically isn't long for the world. The idigam feels that its only chance for successfully breeding a mate is to nip the Ghost Child's murderous impulse in the bud. It kills the werewolf or, if possible, arranges for someone else to do it. It then decides what to do about the unborn *unihar*. Again, Udu Luhai hasn't reached its goal, so it is still experimenting with different approaches. It might remove the child from the womb and seal it within a locus or a living being. It might kill the mother, but keep her body animated, allowing the still-developing *unihar* to grow into her flesh as it matures. It might allow the werewolf to go into labor, but then yank her off into the spirit wilds and cut the Ghost Child from her body. What it does not do, at least not willingly, is allow the birth to proceed "naturally" (see Ban, below).

Of course, the idigam seldom succeeds in getting this far. More often, it fails to convince two Uratha to mate, or manages to arrange conception but loses the mother to zealous packmates or suicide. Udu Luhai is beginning to learn how Uratha society works, and its next course of action might be to try its strategy on newly Changed werewolves. Failing that, perhaps the union of a werewolf and a wolf-blood might produce something it can use. It wouldn't be a *unihar*, of course, but if it could kill the child *in utero* and force it to become a ghost somehow, that might be enough.

## DESCRIPTION

Udu Luhai typically keeps to the background. It takes the form of a layer of dirt, grime or blood and smears itself over a nearby surface. If it must fight, it rolls itself up into a blob of detritus, as much liquid as solid, using its ability to Reform its own Essence (p. 136). On occasion, it assumes the form of an idealized werewolf — Gauru form, but with pristine fur, clear eyes and savage, deadly fangs. This, perhaps, is

the werewolf it longs for, one strong enough to bear it a mate.

The Breeder prefers to work through influence, shaping the spirits around it into lust-

spirits and manipulating werewolves into breaking the Oath, to soften them up so that they won't think of mating as too great a sin. It loathes communication with living beings, preferring to send messages through spirit minions when forced to do so. It is pathologically afraid of pregnant human women, due to its ban, and flees to the Shadow if one is nearby.

## SECRETS

Werewolves trade rumors about "the Breeder" or "the Matchmaker," but they assume it is a powerful lust-spirit, not an idigam. Udu Luhai's true agenda is a mystery to the Uratha, and the idigam is quite willing to kill anyone it must in order to keep that secret. If word got out that it was trying to breed werewolves, its job would be that much harder.

Beyond that, though, it knows a great deal about werewolves the world over. It doesn't forget information, and it enjoys learning dirty secrets that it might one day use to force werewolves into mated pairs. Accessing this information would be difficult,

but Udu Luhai knows details about murders, rapes, acts of cannibalism, which werewolves are selling their packs out, stashes of secret fetishes and hideouts of Bale Hounds. Any of this information might become available at any moment, if the Breeder thinks it can leverage a werewolf.

## RUMORS

*"The Matchmaker is a Pure totem. The pack it's attached to is composed of mated pairs — it's basically a spiritual condom. It keeps them from getting pregnant, but everything in balance, you know? That's why it's trying to get us to fuck. Well, not us, but you know what I mean."*

Many similar rumors exist, tying the Matchmaker to Bale Hounds, Pure and Forsaken packs — whoever the enemy of the speaker happens to be. The spirit doesn't act much like idigam are believed to act, at least not on the surface, and so some other explanation is required.

*"It doesn't exist. It's the equivalent of 'the Devil made me do it' or 'she wouldn't dress that way if she didn't want it.' Wise up, stupid."*

Some Uratha prefer their fellows to take responsibility for their actions, rather than blaming them on a spirit. Such werewolves deny that the Matchmaker exists, or at least that it is any different from any other powerful lust-spirit. In any





## STORY HOOKS

- Whenever the characters are in battle, whether with another pack or a non-Uratha foe, they feel Death Rage pulling at them. Apply a -2 modifier to rolls to resist Death Rage; this isn't enough that it guarantees failure, but is enough that the characters notice the difference. At the same time, play up the availability of sexual partners when the pack is out and about. Udu Luhah is setting the stage, and he's doing it to another pack from the area. He's planning to entice the two packs into a battle royal, or an orgy: either will do. From there, a child conceived in blood and fury will arise. At least, the idigam hopes so.

- An obviously pregnant werewolf arrives in the pack's territory and begs sanctuary. She refuses to talk about the father, but the spirits following her are ominous — pain, death, lust and betrayal. And then, the next morning, those spirits are gone, along with any other baleful spirits in the area. Udu Luhah didn't arrange this pregnancy, but it is determined to protect this Uratha until her child is born. Is she pregnant by another werewolf? If so, the characters have the opportunity to destroy the idigam — if they learn what's happening in time.

- Every morning, one of the characters wakes up to find slight cosmetic changes in his appearance. Tattoos shift in location, eyes are a tiny bit darker, and so on. Investigation reveals some spiritual alteration, but very similar to extended periods spent in a non-human form. Maybe the werewolf is simply discovering a new way to shapeshift? He should be so lucky. Udu Luhah has captured a Ghost Child, but its father is already dead. It thinks it can mate with the child if it can harness its desire to murder its parents, and so the idigam is slowly changing the character's Essence (which, as the target is a werewolf, impacts his physical form) to make him resemble the *unihar's* father.

event, it certainly doesn't *force* werewolves to mate. This rumor denies the existence of a spirit or being behind werewolves mating, and therefore misses the point — Udu Luhah does want werewolves to mate, but not for the sake of it.

*"It's building up an army of unihar. It's trying to get them to breed, or at least, to spawn the way other spirits do. And if that happens, we're fucked."*

This isn't far off the truth, but in fact, Udu Luhah hasn't tried putting two Ghost Children together. It might, though, if it hears this rumor.

### UDU LUHAL

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 8, Finesse 12, Resistance 8

**Willpower:** 16

**Essence:** max 50

**Initiative:** 20

**Defense:** 12

**Speed:** 30

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 13

**Influence:** Lust ••, Rage •, Blood •

**Numina:** Fetter, Gauntlet Breach, Materialize, Material Vision, Reaching

**Ban:** The blood resulting from the "birth" of an unihar is deadly poison to Udu Luhah. Any werewolf whose claws or fangs have been anointed with this blood ignores the idigam's Defense, and a handprint of such blood on its Corpus reduces its effective Rank to 1 for purposes of resisting Gifts and rites.

#### Supernatural Powers:

- **Essence Shaping:** Udu Luhah is capable of removing the souls of living beings and creating Claimed, as described under "Su'ur and Other Claimed," on p. 136 of this chapter. It cannot create *Su'ur* — at least, not so far.

- **Innocuous:** The idigam is difficult to spot, even for other spirits. Subtract three dice from all attempts to detect it when it wishes to remain hidden.

- **Filth Form:** Udu Luhah can flatten itself across a wide area, remaining motionless and appearing to be nothing more than a long smear of dirt. It can reform itself as a reflexive action, or it can lash out with a pseudopod-like appendage from its hiding place, making a surprise attack (see Reaction to Surprise on p. 54 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*).

# MOTHER WANTS A FAMILY: UMUM WABALU DAMU

THERE'S PAIN IN YOU. SHE'S BEEN LOST A LONG TIME.  
SHE'S HERE NOW, WITH ME. JOIN ME, BE ME, AND BE WITH HER FOREVER.

Aliases: The White Lady, The Dead's Keeper, Mistress

## FROM OTHER PLACES

If anyone thought to ask Umum Wabalu Damu, or the ghosts who have joined with her, she would tell them she is from the stars. As far as she can remember, she was somewhere else before Pangaea, though she would be the first to say that her memory is spotty at best. She would say in that time before she fell on a star and landed in Pangaea, she did not need memory, because memory limits the senses and cannot describe sensation. Of course, she's mad, so it would be difficult for any sane mind to take her at her word.

Furthermore, the entity Mistress by her "family" would say that her imprisonment on the Moon was not merely unjust, but an act of outright cruelty. She was, according to her memory, not one idigam, but a part of two united in perfect harmony. Then, she was Umum'Abum and she/he was perfect in every way. In those days, she/he followed a balanced nature, which was to have no nature at all, and formed and unformed in perfect harmony. She/he bred and birthed and lived and killed, playing fairly by the unknowable mad laws that governed wherever she/he was from. It was not due to her/his strange nature that she/he was banished by Father Wolf. The telling is more a tragic love story: she/he lived in such perfect wholeness due to its union that Luna grew jealous and demanded that Father Wolf put a stop to it, so that no love was greater or more important than that of the fickle Goddess and her mate.

Whatever the truth as to Father Wolf's motivations, he did put a stop to Umum'Abum's union, rending the idigam in half down the middle before casting the two up to the cold prison of the moon, where, of course, Luna separated them forever.

Though "forever" ended up being shorter than the Mistress ever suspected. Her memory grows spotty, but Umum Wabalu Damu does remember tumbling from the heavens and coalescing for the first time in a place of the dead, a place of sickness. There, she found a horde of ghosts mildly and quietly going about their restless existence. Curious and mad with grief from the emptiness she felt in being without him, her other half, she reached out to these ghosts. The first she called out to she destroyed while exploring its pale and sad existence. Eventually, she discovered they were something like spirits and something like humans, but not either thing entirely. Their weakness and the apparent incompleteness they exhibited intrigued her. They were no replacement for the half of her sundered unjustly from her side, but she hoped they might soothe the agony, and so she

took many of them into herself. Like a prosthetic hand, these lost souls serve their purpose, but still leave the Mistress with phantom pain from her missing part.

She cannot fathom that these strange little souls have their own purposes and reasons. She cannot understand that in taking and using the dead as filler, she is interrupting the static nature of their existence. She is different and lonely, they are different and lonely, and so it follows that they are a logical choice as to be an extension of her. From her point of view, or what of it that is comprehensible, she is doing these ghosts a favor by making them a part of her family. In joining with her and being a part of her, they are freed of their mortal fetters and find a greater purpose. In fact, the fully "converted" sentient ghosts in her retinue approach their situation with a sort of cultish devotion.

## DESCRIPTION

In her current coalescence, Umum Wabalu Damu could be mistaken, at first glance, for some kind of horrible and awesome apparition. She is a strange amalgam, like a ghost surrounded by a cloud of her spectral companions, making it easy to confuse her amongst them. When she chooses to separate herself from the cloud, she appears as four or more naked female bodies, ghostly translucent and attached to each other at the back or elbows. Each head, four or maybe more, speaks at the same time, giving an odd harmony to each word that Umum Wabalu Damu speaks. Her words are soothing, low and lonesome.

Even when she's terribly angry, her singsong timbre is sad and disappointed rather than hurt or enraged. That is not to say she actually understands sadness — at least, not in any human way. The pathos she projects is simply in mimicry of the emotion as she has observed it in mortals. She has discovered she can gather more family by appearing despondent and needy than any other way, and gathering family is what she wants.

If approached directly, Umum Wabalu Damu will not hesitate to talk ghosts or mortals into wanting to "help" her (meaning, to join her).

If conversation isn't working as well as she would like, or if the Forsaken approach in a particular manner, she won't hesitate to use the Emotional Aura Numen in order to set the mood more in her favor, pulling on their heart strings to get the most beneficial response.

If she can get them to talk, she will ask them about the nature of spirits. She is curious about herself, and while she won't say as much, she will try to get them to hypothesize about

Where my father went

It gets hot and wet in Savannah in the summer. That don't come as much of a surprise to most folks, but what out-of-town people ain't never prepared for is how that hot wetness makes you wanna lay down and not move until fall comes and cools it off a good bit. Summer makes me think of sleeping, and of my father. He died in the heat one year on account of his health. Lord have mercy on me if I was lying, but I tell you that wasn't the last I ever saw of him.

Fact was, once he died, he came around sometimes on hot hot nights, to do little things like turn on a fan in the babies' room if I forgot, or make some kinda cool breeze pass through a room when we was reading from the Bible. He was a good man, even in death.

Then they started passing around stories of a dead woman haunting the cemetery that nobody could account for. She weren't nobody's kin. Around that time, my father started coming around less. When I did catch me a sight of him, in a mirror or around the corner, he was different. He looked longer and all stretched out. His fingers looked pulled out, like maybe claws instead of nails, and he seemed hungrier than I'd ever seen him. He didn't look right, and though it still felt like my father's presence, it didn't feel at all like it anymore. He'd changed, or something changed him.

This summer he didn't come around at all, but I just know he ain't at peace yet. I'm his baby, and I know. I also know I gotta find him. I gotta go down to that cemetery and find that White Lady and ask her what in hell's name she did with my daddy.

I'd do anything to have him back.

what she is. If they grow too suspicious, she may say she's asking about some spirit she saw once in a remote place elsewhere, to reduce suspicions, or to send them off to take care of a spirit that is giving her problems.

## SECRETS

The White Lady's true secret lies in what she is and how to stop her, assuming that a Storyteller understands not to label her "the idigam you have to fight" from the get-go; the process of realizing she does not play by spirit rules is half the danger she presents. It would be very easy for a pack of werewolves or a group of mortal characters to see her and think her some kind of ghostly queen, and that's exactly the type of misdirection that serves her needs.

What's also interesting and troubling is that she is connected to the minds of a hoary host of the dead and so she possesses, somewhere, the stories of hundreds of people and all the information they have held on to against the ravages of death on the mind. While all of her family are largely unapproachable by mediums and spiritualists alike, if someone had to know what it was that the late Agatha Murphy knew, for example, they could find out through Umum. She doesn't seem to want much in return — just the stars.

Umum does not like being incomplete, and this is why she does what she does. She has been insane for a long time, even before her imprisonment thousands of years ago. She reaches out to werewolves because she wants to find something, anything, to fill the hole. Forsaken have a great deal of knowledge about all sorts of entities, and while she is rather certain that neither a Forsaken nor even an entire pack of them will complete her, their knowledge of cosmology might be of use for her to find other entities from the stars, idigam like herself. Maybe she could even find her literal other half.

## RUMORS

"You're chasing a ghost story, son, because that's no spirit. Truth is, the White Lady is just the ghost of some long-dead witch going through the motions. In life, she controlled ghosts and had some kind of cult. Now she's just harmlessly repeating the process over and over. I mean, they're just ghosts — what harm could they do?"

It might be that kind of sloppy reasoning that allows Umum to flourish in the way that she has. While the Bone Shadows might scoff at the sentiment, many werewolves dismiss ghosts as "somebody else's problem." Additionally, ghosts are so rarely a threat that many young packs have never encountered a normal ghost so as to see that Umum's ghosts are behaving strangely.



“Look, I know you want everything to fit together really neatly, but this one isn’t that straightforward. The reason she doesn’t behave like a normal spirit is because she isn’t a spirit in the strictest sense. She’s a god. I know that sounds silly, but if Luna is real, why can’t other gods be real? The Mistress is just what’s left of an old, loving god of the dead. All she wants to do is help. You should really come hear what she has to say.”

It is true that the dead and living who have come to her have taken to worshipping her, and it is hard to say what the real definition of a god is in the World of Darkness. To her family, it is completely true. The question is whether the average Forsaken has the right to interfere with that relationship. A hardliner might say she’s breached the Gauntlet, and that makes her fair game. Someone standing in the center of her worship, surrounded by her faithful, feeling the full power of her loneliness, might be a little more hard pressed to renounce her, let alone try to destroy her.

UMUM WABALU DAMU

**Rank:** 4  
**Attributes:** Power 12, Finesse 8, Resistance 12  
**Willpower:** 24  
**Essence:** 50  
**Initiative:** 20  
**Defense:** 12  
**Speed:** 32  
**Size:** 8  
**Corpus:** 20  
**Influence:** Death •, Loneliness •••  
**Numina:** Gauntlet Breach, Materialize, Material Vision, Reaching, Harrow, Fetter, Emotional Aura

**Ban:** The White Lady, in her most recent incarnation, coalesced in the midst of the catacombs underneath Colonial Park Cemetery in Savannah, Georgia. The place is arguably well haunted, a place full of old dead who died thanks to the ravages of yellow fever in 1820. Yellow fever is still alive and well, lying dormant in those tombs, and it irritated the idigam as she took a form from nothing. As a result, Umum Wabalu Damu takes aggravated damage from physical attacks made to her by someone suffering from the disease, and the attacker can ignore Umum’s Defense. It is worth noting that due to the Forsaken’s supernatural immunity, they cannot contract any disease under normal circumstances. It is also worth noting that yellow fever is a terrible way to die.

**Aspects:**

- **Essence Shaping:** Umum Wabalu Damu is capable of removing the souls of humans and replacing them with ghosts

of her choosing, as described earlier in this section. She can also manipulate the traits of ghosts, described under “Ghost Manipulation,” below.

- **Emotional Aura:** The spirit spends one Essence to activate the aura of emotion, which then lasts for a scene. Anyone within five yards of the spirit, or who later comes within five yards of the spirit, must make a Resolve + Composure + Primal Urge roll contested by the spirit’s Power + Finesse. If the spirit wins, the subject suffers a –3 dice penalty to all rolls for the duration of the scene, or until the spirit stops using this Numen, powerfully distracted by the broadcast emotion. The victim is herself overwhelmed by the emotion — she may abstractly recognize it as false and forced, but that doesn’t stop it from dragging her down. If the subject wins, she is immune to this Numen for the duration of the scene.



ESSENCE SHAPING:

GHOST MANIPULATION

When Umum Wabalu Damu first found the half-spirits that humans sometimes leave behind when they die, she was drawn to the clouds of thin, lonely Essence they produced and how they lingered by their graves, as if someone had tethered them to the ground. As she reached out to communicate, it was thrilling to know that they were sometimes semi-sentient, and most of them were eager to communicate. They were like water to her. Like water, with a little effort and a little time, she could mold them like ice, or change them like steam. Once she freed them from their mundane attachments, the sky was the limit to her capabilities. (You’ll find more information on how an idigam manipulates ghosts under “Spirit Manipulation,” p. 135.)

- Thanks to her nature, this “mother” who wants a family can commune with any ghost in her family with terrifying intimacy. Any ghost she has manipulated by nature or fetter is now a part of her, and she absorbs their memories and thoughts. These ghosts become part of the collective and she instinctively has whatever memories they still had left. This is not to say that she *understands* these memories. Often a ghost has left only strong emotional attachments, and because Umum is so very alien and only understands things as they directly relate to her, she could very easily misunderstand what she now “knows” of the ghost in question. If the ghost had a lingering memory of his killer, for instance, and the pain inflicted on him in his final moments, the White Lady might misinterpret those memories as a threat to herself, as it was a threat at one time to her family. She might therefore send her loving family or manipulate some mortals to go out after this killer so that she might torture him as punish-

## STORY HOOKS

- *Don't pick at it.* What's left of another young pack seeks out help from the characters. His whole pack was killed by an army of incorporeal dead they found in a remote suburb about an hour outside of town. He says they were there investigating a disturbance they had heard about. His descriptions are confused and terrified, as if what he saw actually drove him mad. Twisted ghosts using ivory cannons made of screaming souls and swords that begged for destruction formed the mouths on their pommels. He says the dead in that suburb were taking over and mutilating each other. If the pack goes to investigate, they may eventually find that the White Lady has nested there, and her family has spread through most of the population. They may also find that they are in way over their head.

- *If you keep making that face, it'll stick that way.* A character with connections in the occult world or with ties to the church hears rumors of a preacher who claims to be tormented by the dead, with the ability to exorcize lost souls. The thing is, this guy is the genuine article, and when he returns from the graveyard unsuccessful, he will be desperate for answers. He'll beg anyone who will listen to help him with ghosts who can't be expelled.

- *You can pick your friends, but you can't pick your family.* A distant cousin, maybe wolf-blooded, calls on a member of the pack. She says she wouldn't have bothered him, but she felt like she had to. She says she's having terrible dreams about their mutual grandfather. She says in the dreams he's screaming in agony and suffering terrible torture, but she doesn't know what's hurting him. The grandfather in question has been dead for some time, and when the cousin went to the cemetery to visit his grave, she saw something; she can't describe it well, but her description sounds like a ghostly Gauru form. The grandfather was not a werewolf, to the best of the characters' knowledge. The werewolf or his pack's Gibbous might start having similar dreams about the grandfather. In fact, the White Lady has added the grandfather's thin ghost to her family. When she gains faint memories of the grandfather possibly having a werewolf for a descendant, she manipulates the family in order to get the werewolves to come out and talk to her, and possibly join her in her quest for fulfillment.

ment for hurting her. As some memories that linger in a ghost can be confused, Umum has destroyed more than a few innocent people, thinking them to be killers when they weren't.

- In most cases, Umum's first efforts revolve around exploring the ghost's anchor. For an Essence point, she can remove or change its anchor to anything from another place, another person or even herself, making it able to haunt anything she deems appropriate. Further, with this, she can unnaturally extend the ghost's existence. For example, if a ghost lingers here only long enough to see his daughter's first birthday, Umum can change that attachment so that when the daughter's birthday comes and passes, the ghost will not move on to whatever ultimate fate it has in store.

- A ghost's similarity to a spirit is limited. Though they both possess Numina, a ghost's access to Numina is very limited under normal circumstances. (See **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 208, for more information on ghosts.) The White Lady realized quickly that most ghosts can be changed, forced to defy their simple natures by becoming a hybrid entity. By expending three Essence, Umum can add any Numina she has available to a ghost, regardless of whether or not it's normal for the ghost to have it. This is rarely a simple matter for the ghost, however, as the addition — which, in effect, changes the ghost's nature — changes its corpus in drastic, often agonizing ways. This ability completely objectifies some ghosts, turning them into vessels for the Numina they now possess, while other changes are more subtle. For instance, were the White Lady to give Numina to a ghost that was normally under the purview of a river-spirit, the ghost might look as if it were drowning, spewing out an endless gush of water, maybe becoming unapproachable to any family or loved ones who might try to contact her. It is not uncommon for the White Lady to force an offensive power on a ghost, like Blast, and morph and warp these tortured souls into little more than weapons at her disposal or the disposal of other ghosts she enables to use them.

- It is possible that given enough time, Umum could twist these ghosts into hybrids so complex that they would have choirs and Influences, even Rank, but have no ban other than whatever fetter she chose for them. (This hasn't happened yet, but a Storyteller should note it as a point of plot development.)

- By investing three Essence into a ghost, no matter how mutilated, she can force them to materialize out of Twilight permanently.

- The White Lady has found that the soul, the ghost, is not as closely tied to the human shell as most humans would like. By spending five points of Essence, she can reach into a still-living human and yank the soul out of him. More horrible still, the body remains alive for a very short period of time, allowing Umum to force another ghost into the shell, giving him a sort of second life. In this way, she can more easily pull others into her family by hollowing out a human body, transposing a fully converted and faithful ghost into the flesh and sending it out to recruit in the mortal world. The new ghost, created prematurely, is often an easy thing to absorb into the collective as it is in terrible shock from this experience. This second life rarely lasts any great length of time for the long dead, as Umum prefers her family fleshless like herself, and so as soon as the shell is no longer useful, the White Lady will strip it away and let it rot. Umum does not know if she can remove the ghost from a werewolf or a vampire, as they are more strangely attached to their flesh. If she were able to do so in time, however, she would become a truly unstoppable force.

# THE NEMESIS: ZUL SANAK

SO SMALL. SO WEAK. SO...STAGNANT.  
WHAT STUPID CREATURES YOUR ANCESTORS WERE,  
TO CHOOSE YOUR KIND OVER ME.

**Aliases:** The Formless Hate

## BACKGROUND

Even the simplest beast understands the desire to lash out at a thing that causes it pain. Kick a dog, and it will bite. Poke a cornered rat, and it will lunge. Make a werewolf bleed, and she'll tear you to shreds. Spirits, too, understand that primal need, the longing for revenge. But some kinds of vengeance go far deeper than the mere desire to answer physical pain with physical pain. An abused child learns a lifetime of ruinous lessons, his heart becoming more and more poisoned every day. Eventually, his fear and torment turn to self-loathing, which in turn becomes rage. When the idigam were banished and bound within the substance of Luna, Zul Sanak was such a child. Everything that it could have been within the world was denied to it, locked away within the flesh of a distant goddess, cold and unyielding. Like Zul Sanak, Luna was ever changing. Unlike her, however, the idigam's transformations were limitless. Why, the spirit reasoned, should something of endless potential be bounded by the finite? Zul Sanak wondered what it had done, what was wrong with it, that it should be treated this way. Over the millennia, the spirit's critical eye turned outward as it realized the true motivation behind Urfarah's act of incarceration: fear. Fear of that which could, in time, be far greater than Father Wolf himself.

## APPEARANCE AND COALESCENCE

Eons passed in Zul Sanak's otherworldly prison and hatred metamorphosed into madness. The idigam fantasized about revenge against Urfarah and against Amahan Iduth. Powerful though it was, however, it could take no meaningful action against its prison-jailor. For all of the idigam's rage, Luna took no notice whatsoever of any of Zul Sanak's actions. Like an angry little boy striking a brick wall with his fist, the idigam succeeded only in exhausting itself and, at times, actually harming itself upon Mother Moon's profound substance. This impotence served only to increase the fury of the Moon-Banished monstrosity. From a seemingly infinite distance, the creature watched Earth rise and set a billion times and more. Finally, though, tiny creatures set foot on the service of the hated Mother Moon, and Zul Sanak, along with a number of its brethren, latched onto the strange conveyance that brought them. While none of them could be certain that this device would lead to anything other than destruction, the thought of freedom outweighed the instinct for self-preservation.

So it was that Zul Sanak returned to the world from which it had been banished, only to learn of the heirs to those that banished it: wretched hybrids, without any proper place — and yet *given* a place by Father Wolf and Mother Moon. Enraged

beyond measure by this perceived hypocrisy and unable to strike at those who had truly done it harm, the idigam resolved to destroy these half-breeds. But destruction alone was insufficient to sate the spirit's wrath: to truly find closure, Zul Sanak needed to hear that its jailors had made a terrible mistake in choosing these bastard creatures as their instruments. As such an admission could not be forced from Urfarah and Amahan Iduth, the Uratha would have to speak in their stead.

Interestingly, the first werewolves the idigam beheld at close range were members of rival packs, forging a tentative peace treaty with one another. Infuriated at the very sight of nine of the hated half-breeds, Zul Sanak coalesced and vented its rage upon the objects of its rancor. In so doing, however, the spirit laid the foundations of its own undoing and formed the ban that could destroy it.

## DESCRIPTION

Zul Sanak takes on a form of fragmented ridges of scale and chitin, continually cracking and peeling, revealing raw, tortured flesh beneath. The self-image of the idigam unveils itself in the savage ugliness of the spirit's shape. Long, razor-edged limbs seem to flow out of its continually twisting body as needed and are absorbed back into its mass when they are no longer necessary. Fangs, claws, spurs of bonelike material and such sprout from the surface of almost every hard armored plate on Zul Sanak's body, as well as from within the brutalized flesh between them, with new ones occasionally erupting out in a trickle of clotted ichor. The idigam's body is anatomically impossible, of course, and nothing about its composition makes sense from one moment to the next.

When the spirit wishes to speak, several of its armored plates slide apart, opening a fleshy orifice, out of which emerges a serene, androgynous human face, almost painfully beautiful and made up of what appears to be a translucent gray-white substance, within which the very faint interplay of rhythmically throbbing black veins can be seen. Its eyes are a pus yellow at the center, gradually changing to the red of freshly spilled blood at the corners. For the most part, Zul Sanak's voice is calm and measured; some have gone so far as to say that its timbre is soothing. Even when the spirit's anger is obvious (which is often), it almost invariably appears to remain logical and composed.

Zul Sanak makes a habit of changing shape (see "Reform," p. 136) whenever it wishes to intimidate a werewolf or illustrate the point of its evolutionary superiority. It changes into whatever form seems most likely to impress, demoralize or just drive home the perspective that the idigam is the worthier form of life. Always, these shapes are colored by Zul Sanak's self-loathing and its all-consuming hatred for the world, which — to its thinking



— betrayed it to unimaginable eons of isolation and torment. These manifestations are subtle, though astute observers are apt to pick up on the theme as the spirit moves through multiple manifestations within a single conversation. In the end, it is just as important for the Uratha to acknowledge Zul Sanak's superior standing as it is for the spirit to prove that reality (to itself, as much as to anyone or anything else).

## SECRETS

Zul Sanak's single most important secret is, unsurprisingly, to be found in its ban. Hatred divides and the lust for vengeance tears apart that which is meant to be whole. The idigam's overwhelming hatred for Father Wolf and Mother Moon is so great that its downfall is to be found in those who descend from their bloodline. Blood that is turned against blood must be united in common cause. Werewolves from violently, implacably opposed causes must stand together and shed blood together to lay Zul Sanak low. Pure and Forsaken might, for example, forge a pact to stand as one against the idigam, or even members of packs on a single side of the conflict that are and have been dire, uncompromising enemies. The only requirement is that werewolves, whose every instinct calls out for blood, must willingly put aside their enmity and act with a single

purpose; easier said than done, given the dangers of the Death Rage and the otherwise naturally volatile temperaments of their kind.

In order to evoke the spirit's ban, werewolves of opposing factions — typically, packs — must, in the course of combat with Zul Sanak, willingly suffer wounds at one another's hands and successfully resist Death Rage from the insult and the pain. A werewolf who accepts at least one wound point of lethal damage from an enemy werewolf (and who manages not to succumb to Kuruth) during the course of combat with the idigam gains the ability to ignore Zul Sanak's Defense and any armor that it may possess, as well as immunity to all of its supernatural powers, for a number of turns equal to her Primal Urge. Zul Sanak may still physically attack the Uratha, but it cannot supplement such an assault with any of its more dangerous abilities.

Also, a significant flaw in Zul Sanak's design, a growing stress fracture in the mechanisms of its quixotic vengeance, is its all-consuming self-loathing. In many ways, the idigam longs to die; it subconsciously hopes in the deepest parts of its twisted psyche to finally meet a foe that can end the endless misery of an existence as a cast-off thing, unvalued and without purpose. In the absence of a place in this world, it can do only one of two things: destroy everything that comes within reach, until all else is as meaningless as itself, or find in obliteration the closure that it so desperately craves. Thus, the spirit occasionally undertakes ill-advised risks or otherwise unconsciously acts to undermine its own long-term schemes, allowing flaws to creep into its plans. A werewolf with a particularly refined understanding of spirits might be able to make the leap of logic necessary to realize — and exploit — this profound vulnerability.

## RUMORS

*"Yeah, I've heard about the idigam. Seen it, actually. It was far off, but I knew it for what it was. Stink of the Moon-Banished was on it, to be sure. It was in the earthly realm when I got an eyeful of it, ever changing and looking like something made out of wadded-up nightmares, running like hot wax. Like I said, I saw that fucker. Steered well clear of it, too, which wasn't as hard as I thought it'd be. Why? Because it had another werewolf there — fucked if I know whether she was Pure, Forsaken, Bale Hound or what — and it was doing something that I didn't expect: it was talking to her."*

Zul Sanak is unusual — even among its own bizarre kind — in that it requires a certain sense of validation from the Uratha. In order to have that, however, it *must* converse with them, rather than simply indulging its murderous appetites at every available opportunity. It hates them and is, paradoxically, drawn to them, desirous of a frank admission of its manifest superiority. It wants the Uratha to know, understand and (most importantly) admit that it is the worthier being, and that Urfarah and Amahan Iduth were fools not to have valued the idigam above their half-breed spawn. For the most part, it destroys those with whom it speaks (either after they have given it what it craves or out of frustration at being denied that satisfaction), but some few are permitted to escape, for reasons that might not make sense even to Zul Sanak. If the werewolf agrees to carry the idigam's message to other werewolves, that is one reason the individual may be allowed to live. For now.

*"Zul Sanak is here, among you. Don't you hear it? Its song infects the wind and poisons the land. It made me what I've become. The song is in me and it sings inside my bones. I can't shut it out; there will never be silence in me, ever again. I'm so lost and hurt. The pain never ceases. The screaming reverberates beneath my skin. I just want to tear out my eyes and be blind. But it comes. It comes for you and, when Zul Sanak is done, you will see and hear and know. You will be one with its vision. You will be emptied and filled, never*



*again to know peace or harmony. I can't stop the words from coming. I can't even want them to stop. It makes me feel like I should laugh, but my spirit is broken and I have nothing left. Please, I've told you all I can. I don't want to start to like being this way. Please, kill me before I don't want to die anymore...*"

Like the dreaded Gurdilag, Zul Sanak can create *Su'ur*, though it does so only rarely, and primarily to demonstrate to werewolves the extent of their insufficiencies. Perhaps the spirit does so out of an unconscious desire to create werewolves as powerful and adaptable as itself, either to demonstrate the value of its existence or to manufacture beings truly capable of destroying it. Most of these *Su'ur* Zul Sanak allows to wander freely, so that they might harm and demoralize the Uratha simply by acting according to their mutilated natures. The idigam hates Forsaken and Pure with equal abandon, as all are the spawn of Urfarah and Amahan Iduth, and it makes no distinction between them in its hideous experimentations. In many cases, Zul Sanak delights in using different sorts of werewolves simultaneously for this purpose — Pure and Forsaken, or Bale Hound and Ghost Wolf.

*"They call it the Formless Hate, Forsaken. It is one of the accursed Moon-Banished, from the ancient times. Where it wanders, werewolves die. Pure, Forsaken...none of that matters to Zul Sanak. It despises our kind and yours alike. Our mystics tell us that we require a truce of sorts to be rid of the thing. I don't mind telling you that I'd much rather be gutting you now than speaking to you, but my pack and I cannot stand alone against this thing. The idigam has already destroyed two other packs of Pure; some of the members of those packs were friends of mine. So, what do you say? Will you hear us out?"*

The characters' initial exposure to Zul Sanak may come from an entirely unexpected angle. Perhaps an enemy approaches the pack directly, offering a temporary peace in the name of destroying a common enemy. Not all foes are so enlightened (or even possessed of the capacity for enlightened self-interest);

even if a faction of rival werewolves is willing to bury the hatchet — whether permanently or even just for a little while — those who count those enemies as allies might not. A pack of Pure that approaches under a flag of truce could easily be ambushed by other Pure for the crime of consorting with Forsaken. Will the character fight to preserve the lives of those who hate them for the sake of destroying a threat that *requires* harmony between implacable enemies?

## ZUL SANAK

**Rank:** 5

**Attributes:** Power 15, Finesse 11, Resistance 14

**Willpower:** 29

**Essence:** max 100

**Initiative:** 25

**Defense:** 15

**Speed:** 36

**Size:** 9

**Corpus:** 23

**Influences:** Hatred •••••

**Numina:** Blast, Gauntlet Breach, Harrow, Materialize, Material Vision, Reaching

### Supernatural Powers:

- **Essence Shaping:** Zul Sanak is capable of removing the souls of living beings and creating Claimed and *Su'ur*, as described on p. 136 of this chapter.

- **Infinite Forms:** Even while coalesced, Zul Sanak is a master of shape-changing. When using its Reform ability (see Essence Manipulation, on p. 136 of this chapter), Zul Sanak need not spend Essence, though its changes still require instant actions and return to normal at the end of a scene. Most of the time, the idigam uses this ability to effect purely cosmetic alterations, though it can create more significant changes should it wish to do so.

## STORY HOOKS

- Zul Sanak seeks out the pack members...to make them an offer. The idigam, in its desire to understand the object of its vengeful spite, wishes to test the adaptability of werewolves. The spirit will hunt down and experiment upon any pack of werewolves that the characters choose — whether Pure, Forsaken or whatever else — but they must unanimously select such an enemy within one turning of the moon, or else Zul Sanak will return with the intention of "modifying" *them*. Particularly brutal or amoral Forsaken may see this as an easy opportunity to be rid of hated foes; perhaps they can eliminate those troublesome Fire-Touched or conveniently dispose of some Iron Masters with a prized piece of territory. But does the idigam intend to keep its word? And even if it does, what says it won't simply come back to toy with the characters themselves later (or else unleash its new creations upon them)? Of course, upright Forsaken won't take the spirit up on its offer, but this means they have one month to formulate a strategy for combating the entity. Is that enough time to discover some means of killing Zul Sanak, or at least driving it off?

- The vicious idigam has captured an individual — werewolf, wolf-blooded, or otherwise — important to a member of the pack, intending to use him as a subject of its monstrous flesh- and spirit-warping games. Zul Sanak, in its cruelty, gives the character the opportunity to put someone else in his place, but it must be someone equally important to the werewolf...or even the werewolf herself. The idigam doesn't really care whom it gets, so long as the choice will hurt, and hurt badly. It is quite willing to exercise patience in the choosing, reasoning that the process is all the more painful for being drawn out. A cunning werewolf might use this opportunity to dangle a more attractive prize in front of Zul Sanak, however, and so distract it for long enough to extricate her loved one. Similarly, selectively appealing to the spirit's various psychoses could confuse it enough to enable one or more other Uratha to sneak in and extract the prisoner. Conversely, a truly noble Uratha may decide to accept this grim fate as her own (though her pack almost certainly has something to say about such a choice). Regardless, the idigam has no intention of honoring any arrangement and hopes instead to acquire as many test subjects as possible in the bargain.

- One of the Pure approaches the pack under a flag of truce. The Ivory Claw claims to have a lead on the ban of a powerful idigam, but it requires the aid of a pack of Forsaken. If the characters have heard rumblings in the spirit world, they may well know that such a being is coming their way, but can they truly trust the Pure to aid them in averting catastrophe? Even if this one individual Pure is telling the truth, how does the *rest* of her pack feel about this venture? Naturally, the Pure act as servants to the Shadow; might this be a ruse, intended to draw the characters into a trap set by Zul Sanak itself — the Ivory Claw's new master? And even if the Pure pack in question actually wants Zul Sanak destroyed, what's to prevent the pack from simply turning on and killing the Forsaken when their usefulness is at an end?



