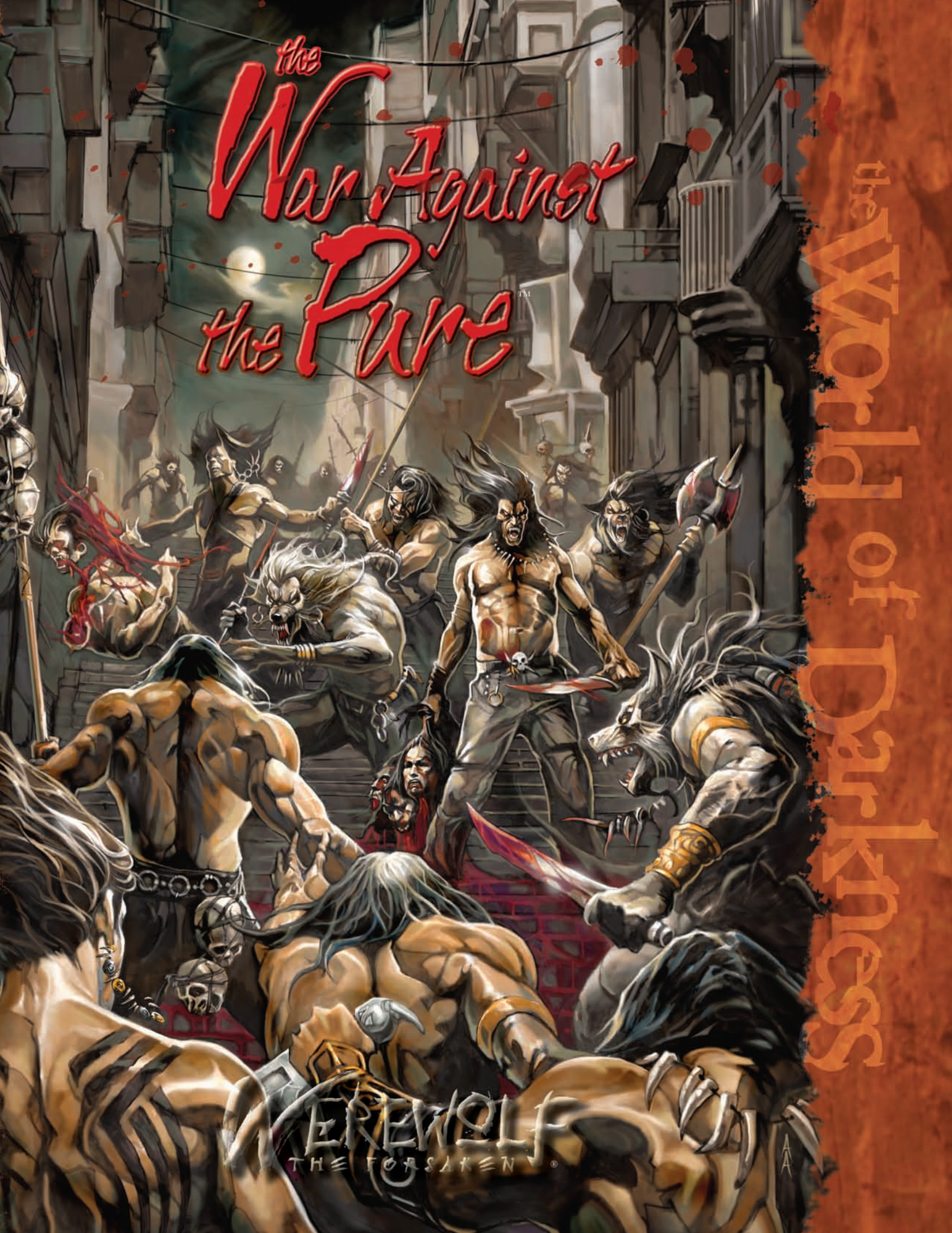


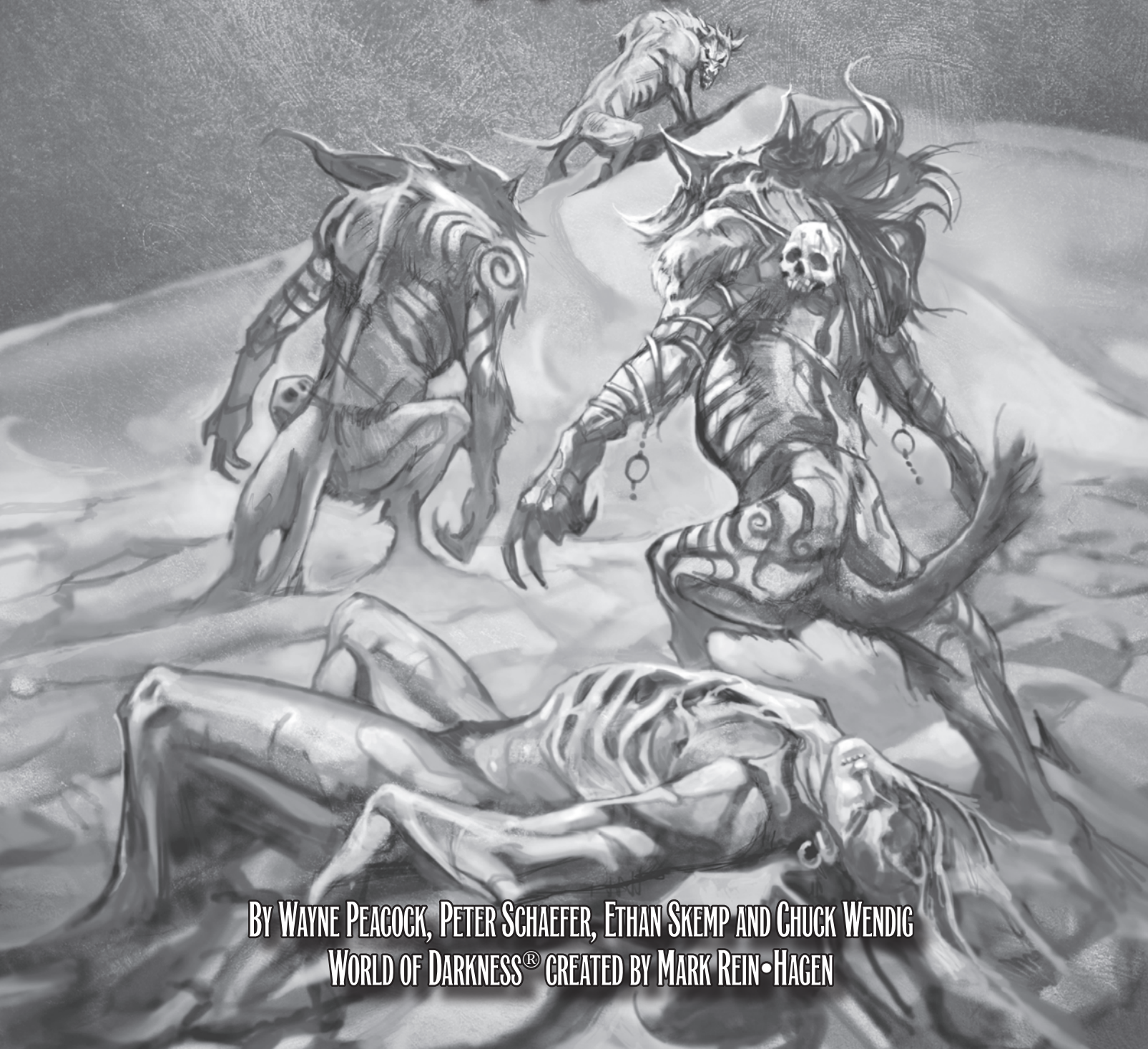
*the*  
**War Against**  
*the Pure*

the  
**World of Darkness**



**REBELL**  
THE FORSAKEN

# the War Against the Pure™



By WAYNE PEACOCK, PETER SCHAEFER, ETHAN SKEMP AND CHUCK WENDIG  
WORLD OF DARKNESS® CREATED BY MARK REIN•HAGEN

# PROLOGUE

Colt Mesa looked like the corpse of a giant, long dead and turned to brown stone.

That was how Henry Thornpaw saw it, sitting cross-legged on the dusty hills and watching it. There would be another attack soon, he knew, because the locus was too rich a prize not to. After the last year fighting with the damn Pure Tribes all over the flats and canyons of Utah, he had seen an attack every month. The dead giant felt like an apt metaphor for the body of the long war, tired, laid down to sleep and petrified.

In the first month of Lee Godspeaker's war for territory, Thornpaw's pack had taken part in four raids and fought alongside seven different Forsaken packs. Once, as many as 24 of the People Raged against their enemies in a two-day hunt up and down Pipe Springs Canyon. Seven of the Pure died that day; Thornpaw personally killed two of them. He still woke up sweating, seeing the Predator King fall down the scree-covered slope and go howling over a cliff.

Two months after that, Thornpaw's ritemaster had given the Funeral Rite to their two other packmates. "Killed in action," the military called it, and Godspeaker used the same vague term. Thornpaw supposed that fighting frantically to survive was active, but the Fall of Night should never have been left behind to guard that locus in the first place. It was just the first in a week of losses that returned Godspeaker's war to the uncomfortable balance that had started it in the first place.

After that, the war had stalled out. It turned into the sitting and waiting that turned men into bodies and bodies into stone mesas. Four battles a month, two thrusts from each side at utterly predictable assets, always blunted by the swarm of defending packs that would appear to chase off the attackers. Thornpaw didn't know about the enemy's leader, but Godspeaker acted surprised.

He growled, and flicked his sight into the Shadow Realm. The Shadow version of Colt Mesa was there, lumpy stone and chimney-like rocks exaggerated. It radiated puffed-up importance, like a peacock or one of those inflatable fish. Colt Mesa had changed over the course of the war. Before the locus up top became contested ground, the mesa had looked like the smallest of the giants — a big table of stone, dwarfed by its neighbors. Not anymore.

Thornpaw looked across the rest of the spirit wilds. Nothing he saw surprised him: a coyote-spirit chasing down a hare-spirit, while the spirit of a stunted tree sat nearby. The spiritscape had constantly darkened while

the war progressed. The spiritscape's high, clear sky still looked oppressively hot and the sands looked especially grainy and harsh, but it had lost the feeling of threat. Thornpaw stared over it blandly, absent the gut feeling that he could get lost among the stone, beaten down by the sun and die thirsty on the sand.

Colt Mesa's environs hadn't made him feel that for at least six months, and he didn't think it was he that had changed. A long breath later, Thornpaw's eyes were back in the material world. There was a woman sitting next to him, also cross-legged, straight black hair cut short. Thornpaw grunted.

"North face clear, Thornpaw," she said. "You sure something's going down tonight?"

"It's the full moon tonight, Marcy," Thornpaw told his packmate, "Even *they* know it's a night for violence." He gave Shadowthief a moment to mull on that, then added, "Besides, my little birds tell me the Spine Eater pack have left their place to the east."

Shadowthief Marcy gave him a little grimace when he mentioned his spies, but she didn't say anything. They'd had this argument often enough in the past, and he was still alpha. She crossed her arms and leveled her smug, I-know-something gaze at him. Thornpaw almost wanted to ignore her, but he rolled his eyes and looked her in the eyes. "Out with it."

"Kid Changed in Provo last month. Godspeaker thought we could use some help out here. Without a real alpha, he's yours 'til he gets a pack." Her mouth twisted like she was sucking on something sour, and Thornpaw took a moment to figure out what that meant. They didn't really need any help, not until the attack came, and Godspeaker knew that Henry Thornpaw was no friend of his.

"You think he's a plant?"

"He's more rat than wolf, boss."

Thornpaw grunted again. Godspeaker spent more time worrying about politics and staying on top than he did hunting the enemy. Thornpaw raised an eyebrow to ask a question when his ears tried to twitch. He looked over his shoulder to see a tall young man, sleeves torn from a jacket to show a mess of tanned muscles. The alpha followed the werewolf with his eyes until the newcomer was standing in front of him.

Just a little too handsome for Thornpaw to like him, the boy flashed a bright smile and held out his hand. "Hi, I'm Miller —"

“— Rahu, Blood Talon, had a crow for lunch, a little more tired than you want me to know, no deed name yet.” He could see Marcy’s smile growing as Miller’s faded. Thornpaw hadn’t taken Miller’s hand. “Well,” he said, finally smiling and putting some false encouragement in his voice, “we’ve been needing another hand here for a while, so it’s about time Godspeaker saw fit to send one over. Besides, could always do with another Blood Talon. Being alone with my Bone Shadow over there gets a little old.”

The boy had relaxed again, and Marcy knew Thornpaw’s leadership routine well enough not to get angry. Thornpaw gestured down the hill with his head, and Miller obediently fell into step beside him.

After a few minutes in silence, Thornpaw took the next step. “Now, kid, this is a dangerous place, and it’s gonna get worse tonight. I know how you feel. Your moon’s in the sky, and you want to show it you been blooded. You’re not in my pack, but —”

“Lee Godspeaker told me to treat you like my alpha.”

“Fuck Lee Godspeaker. Godspeaker’s a weasel and the Shadow’s whore. He don’t cleave to man, you know. Godspeaker finds more to do with the spirit courts than just speak.” While Miller stared at Thornpaw with wide eyes and a gaping mouth, the alpha had a hard time not laughing. “Listen, Miller. Leader of this war or not, Godspeaker spends more time in the *Hisil* with his Shadow buddies than with us. And he seems to think we can organize like a spirit court, taking orders and getting in line.

“We’re not spirits,” Thornpaw said, looking Miller straight in the eyes, “we’re the People. I’m not your alpha and you’re not in my pack, and Godspeaker can’t make it so. You don’t *smell* like my pack, so don’t pretend you are.” He poked the boy in the sternum. “Know thyself. Somebody famous said something important about that once, I think.” He turned around and gazed at the mesa.

Angry as Miller was, Thornpaw almost thought he could feel the glare on his back. He *could* hear the deep, slow breaths Miller was taking, and the sound of grinding enamel and tight, rubbing skin. After about a minute, it stopped. Shorter, arrhythmic breaths preceded a hesitant voice. “Th —” Another breath. “Thornpaw? You’re... probably right. I almost went crazy right there. Almost —” An embarrassed laugh. “— almost tore your head right off. I, uh...” He trailed off.

“That’s the Rage,” Thornpaw sounded fatherly, now. “That’s why we’re not pack and alpha ’til there’s trust. If we ever trust each other.” He let a little hope creep into his voice at the last, but he had to clench a fist behind his back to keep from growling at what he was doing. “C’mon. Let’s get back to the hill while there’s still light.”

Night came fast. Before long, the sun was a sliver on the horizon, and Mother Luna turned her full face on the hills, and on the Shadow Realm. Thornpaw sent Shadowthief Marcy off to tell Godspeaker about the attack, and the alpha’s glare kept Miller from wondering aloud

about what attack that might be. Then Thornpaw showed the young Uratha where he’d be waiting.

Miller was whining in the exact same way Thornpaw couldn’t stand with his own kids, until he’d just stopped going around. “Why’ve I gotta wait all the way out here? It’s gotta be a couple miles to the locus from here! There’ll be nothing to do but watch, and *I’m* not a watcher, *you’re* the fucking watcher...”

And it went on. Thornpaw stared off toward the locus, a bit farther north on Colt Mesa. That was how they’d come up. There were a dozen trails that required a bit of climbing but weren’t too hard, especially for a wolf. This side of the mesa was too difficult to scale, at least pre-assault, but could make for excellent escape routes. He cut off Miller’s ranting, using what he liked to call the “butter knife through a hot tank” method. His voice was almost too quiet to hear, and so, of course, Miller shut right up to hear it.

“I *need* you here, Miller.” Thornpaw spoke so softly that the emphasis was almost imperceptible, but the alpha knew that a werewolf’s ears would notice. Especially when it involved an admission. “I’ve been worn too thin for too long,” he continued, still quiet and staring at nothing down the mesa’s slopes. “Usually, I cover the entire south face while the battle goes on, but I’m tired. I just... oh, Jesus. Help me, okay?”

Miller could hardly say no to that. Confidence from a pack alpha a couple of decades his elder wasn’t something he expected, and his body gave away the youth’s excitement. Standing taut, quivering like something was supposed to happen — the boy wanted to fight for dominance, even if he was too young to know it yet.

“So here it is. You watch the east side. Center your surveillance about three miles east from here. I’ll be around here watching the other side. Marcy will be guiding the defense on my behalf. And if I leave my post, you have to take the entire south face.” Thornpaw looked over to see Marcy pushing through the brush, so he finished up. “I’ll be depending on you if I have to go take care of something.”

The look on his packmate’s face, the slight twitch of the head and her sidelong glance at Miller told them both that she didn’t want to talk in front of him. Thornpaw overrode her. “Out with it, Marcy, let the kid hear.”

She chewed the inside of her cheek for a second before she started speaking. Her voice was flat as she said, “Godspeaker has ‘other priorities’ right now. He doesn’t think the locus is in ‘appreciable danger’ and believes we can handle it with the little pup he sent us. The *bastard*,” she hissed, “made it perfectly clear that if we lose the locus, he’ll be condemning us tonight. He wants us *gone*, Thornpaw, and I think we should oblige him.” Marcy spoke directly to her alpha and ignored Miller completely. Such disdain — showing it, at least — was very unlike her, but Thornpaw didn’t give it more than a second’s thought.

"We're alone," he muttered. "See why I need you right here, Miller? Marcy, get your Winchester and find a spot downwind of the locus you can set up." His packmate didn't flinch when she knew he was staying, she just nodded. "Make sure not to actually settle there —"

"You're going to use a *gun*?" Miller coughed out the last word as if it had stuck in his throat.

"Lesson one, Arguing Miller: Use what you have, and what I have is Marcy and a fine rifle that can blow your head off at three hundred yards. Lesson two, Arguing Miller: Don't settle for a crappy deed name. I'm sure after tonight we'll have something better for you. Now go off, watch your side and shut up."

Marcy waved as she walked away for her rifle. Thornpaw smiled weakly, gave Miller a blank look as the youth shifted into Urhan, heading for his own section of the mesa. Thornpaw watched them go in silence. Then he went behind a tree a few yards away and reached under one of its twisted roots and pulled out something wrapped in cheesecloth. Before he tucked it away in his waistband, the rising moon betrayed a glint of silver.

In the form of a wolf, Thornpaw moved silently and quickly back and forth in the area he'd assigned himself. Occasionally, he'd stop and talk to nothing at all. When the spirit Nuhahim told him exactly where the Spine Eaters were, Thornpaw paid for it with a surprising bounty of Essence. The spirit's surprise showed in its dust-pile face, and Thornpaw told it, "Because we're not all bad." Then it was gone.

The first rifle shot rolled across the mesa like thunder and echoed off the nearby canyons. Ten seconds later, there was another one, and 10 seconds later another. Then, three howls rose from the area of the locus. Thornpaw leapt from his perch in a short tree and hit the ground as the near-wolf, already running. Howling meant they'd found Marcy's trail, and three howls meant she'd killed one, or at least put a bullet through his throat. She needed her alpha now.

Dirt and stone, root and wildflower all flew under his paws as he raced, his feet like mist. A howl was growing somewhere within him, an urgent message to tell the pack he was coming, and he quashed it. All he wanted to do was run.

He passed the hunting Spine Eaters a mile to their west. They were still on Marcy's trail, but she had the lead. Thornpaw knew where she would lead them, and how she might escape. He circled around to the locus, then took Urhan form for stealth.

Creeping up to the locus, he could feel its resonance in his bones. *Freedom*, it seemed to say, *free and happy is the mesa*. He could wish it wouldn't be tainted with blood, but he knew a bullet had already done that tonight. Concealed at the locus's center behind a tree, he closed his eyes and watched the scene with his ears.

Four feet, moving together: Marcy, running to the locus' strongest point. Crashing and panting from beyond marked her three pursuers, who arrive and fan out around her in Urshul form. Crunching pebbles but no real movement: Marcy's Hishu again, because she likes making mock.

"Goodbye, fuckers." Thornpaw could almost hear Marcy's smile. "Good luck putting his brain back — haahh." She ended her farewell speech with her last breath and her alpha's silver in her back. His quick twist halved her heart and ended the pain of Luna's curse, then Thornpaw let both the woman and the knife fall to the ground. He hit his knees at the same time.

"I know you won't kill me," he addressed to the three monster-wolves facing him. His voice quivered with emotion. "You can't kill me because I hate them... *so much*. I can't die before *they* do," he growled, heavy with hate.

Then the beating began. A kick to the face came first, and everything else was only worse. But none of them took Gauru form, so they had decided not to kill him yet. Through it all, he was smiling, crying and laughing. Even when he was curled up like a ball, the tears flowed and his laughter kept it up. He even thought the sport of pain might have distracted the Pure from noticing Miller as the youth ran away into the night.

The next night, Lee Godspeaker swept down on the Colt Mesa locus with three full packs, but only Shad-owthief Marcy was waiting. Miller ran Godspeaker's errands and fetched alphas of all the packs who had sworn to the war, and they convened over the locus. Marcy's Funeral Rite was touching, and two Cahaliths began composing howls to commemorate her bravery.

Godspeaker's speech that evening was full of the same passion that had driven other packs to follow him into the war so long ago. He roused in his audience a fury that matched each Uratha's inner Rage, and the war burst into flame all over again. A dozen packs launched a dozen attacks in the next week, and within a month Utah was clean of the Pure Tribes, at least for the time.

When Miller confronted Thornpaw again, it was at the mouth of a canyon with a dozen other Forsaken arrayed behind him. Rocks, skin, teeth and blood flew everywhere in the most climactic battle of the war. Strengthened by his Rage, Miller made sure to square off against Thornpaw. Miller's fellow warriors were all busy, and Miller had the bastard traitor to himself. He intended to enjoy it.

Thornpaw had only one thing to say before Miller's inch-long claws shredded him and great arms tore him limb from limb. Thornpaw's very red eyes bored into Miller. "Lesson three, pup: Sometimes, there is only one way to win." Then he grew into Gauru form and died quickly. Miller kept his head.



In an emotional gathering over Marcy's grave, Godspeaker and the other alphas declared the war ended, the Pure defeated. Their oaths complete, the packs began carving new and expanded territories out of the rubble.

The People had their own lives and began to forget the war's specific events — but they always remember Thornpaw the Traitor and Shadowthief Marcy.



## CREDITS

**Authors:** Wayne Peacock, Peter Schaefer, Ethan Skemp and Chuck Wendig

**Developer:** Ethan Skemp

**Editor:** Scribendi.com

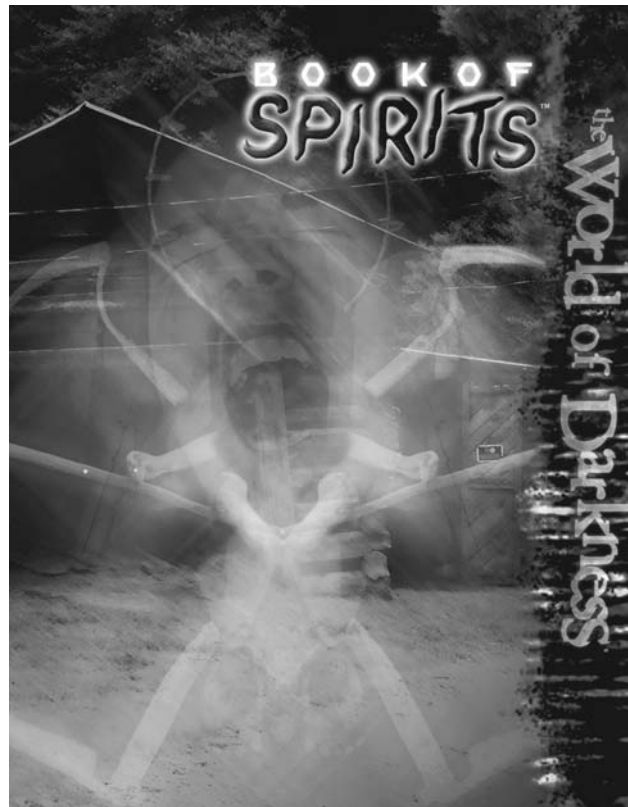
**Art Director:** Aileen E. Miles

**Interior Art:** Abrar Ajmal, Jeff Holt, Brian LeBlanc, James Stowe

**Front Cover Art:** Abrar Ajmal

**Book Design:** Aileen E. Miles

## COMING NEXT:



1554 LITTON DR.  
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA  
30083  
USA

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PRINTED IN CHINA.

# the War Against the Pure™

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE	2
INTRODUCTION	8
CHAPTER ONE: DOGS OF WAR	10
CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL CONFLICTS	78
CHAPTER THREE: THE SILVER CRUSADE	114
CHAPTER FOUR: WAYWARD SONS	154



# INTRODUCTION

*"WE ARE NOW UP AGAINST LEVEL 1 HOSTILE TARGETS. SO IF LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD SHOULD SHOW UP WITH A BAZOOKA AND A BAD ATTITUDE, I EXPECT YOU TO CALM THE BITCH."*

— SGT. WELLS, DOG SOLDIERS

**Werewolf: The Forsaken** plays out by design on an intimate scale. The typical werewolf pack controls a limited territory, large enough for the werewolves to have some elbow room but small enough that they can know everyone within their borders. This is the ideal scale for the hunt. The enemy is few enough that they can hide from the Uratha, and each conflict plays out on an intimate scale.

**The War Against the Pure** aims to change that.

If most supplements are toolboxes, this is a weapons locker of sorts. The tools to be found here are implements of large-scale destruction, designed to help put together a chronicle that plays out on a considerably larger scale. Entire territories may burn. Werewolves will die.

It's probably not going to be a typical **Werewolf** game if you use all the tools found here. Of course, war has a knack for changing the landscape, and it's no different in a chronicle.

## WAY WAR STORIES?

The World of Darkness is a setting where much of the horror and violence remains hidden where only an unlucky few will ever see it. It may seem odd to describe the horrors of a **Werewolf** game as "subtle," but they are to some extent, at least from the wider perspective of humanity. Most men and women are blind to the Shadow, and never see the misshapen forms that leak out from behind their mirrors. There is savage fury, yes, and quite a lot of it. But it plays out much as in the movies, with isolated people being torn apart in desolate, lonely places, be those dirt roads or squalid cellars.

War brings that fury out, and raises the intensity. When a pack fights a pack, it's one thing. When those two packs are but part of an overall struggle between several packs on each side, the increased scale promises more violence yet to come, and not just in the sense of "more action and adventure!" It entails fighting for your homes, more frequently and more viciously than you may ever have had to before.

And yet the increased scale of a conflict doesn't take away the personal and intimate aspects of roleplaying. It's true that with more enemies to fight, it's more likely that characters will rip and tear at foes that will always remain nameless. Some of their rivals will be ciphers — which can be alarming and demoralizing in itself but does detract from the nature of the relationship between a werewolf and its prey. But every good war story is about

the personal and intimate relationships that often see a tragic turn in the midst of larger events. Wars don't care that they tear apart families — only the soldiers care. The bonds that develop among a small circle of warriors who defend one another can be torn apart by a stray bullet. And wars have to be fought somewhere. What of the people who are caught in the middle? Will anyone stop to pay attention to them, to treat them with kindness or mercy or even to mourn them?

## THE WAR AGAINST THE PURE... AND OTHERS

Yes, admittedly this book isn't just about fighting the Pure. There are all manner of war chronicles that would fit nicely into the world of **Werewolf: The Forsaken** as written, and there are others that expand the world and were too good not to include. The Pure are certainly the most obvious target, and the majority of the book deals with premises of a war between the two factions of Uratha. But there are also possibilities for fighting against the denizens of the spirit world, mortal foes and other supernatural entities of all sorts.

Why are the Pure ideal enemies for this sort of scenario? Leaving aside the "dark mirror" aspect that provides a bit of urgency, the Pure are very social animals, much like the Forsaken. You can't have a war where only one side shows up, and thus both sides must be able to organize in sufficient numbers to provide a running series of battles. Naturally, werewolves have some issues in organizing in these numbers, at least instinctually. It usually takes a very clear urgency to unite the People in larger numbers, and it can only last for a limited amount of time. But a war triggers both these stimuli, for both Forsaken and Pure. It's perfect, in a fiery, bloody way.

The other antagonists depicted in this book typically have the same sort of ability to organize in large numbers. This is harder for some. Spirits, for instance, have difficulty organizing without the presence of a unifying choir coal or a particularly powerful Shadow overlord. The Hosts are virtually inappropriate; if you gather a few hundred Beshilu or Azlu in one location, the first thing to happen will almost certainly be a cannibalistic feeding frenzy.

Another common feature in "the other side," at least from the purpose of this book, is the ability to fight the Forsaken without outing the supernatural to the entire world. This book focuses on scenarios where the war can be held outside of human awareness, due to supernatural powers of secrecy, location or even time period. Though

there's a lot of dramatic potential in a world where the werewolves' existence has been discovered by humanity, **The War Against the Pure** is mostly concerned with how to pull off war stories that fit into existing chronicles, and that can allow the chronicle to continue in recognizable form once the war is done. That doesn't mean a war should change nothing, mind! But it may prove useful to have wars that don't necessarily overturn the core tenet of the World of Darkness: that it is a world like ours, at least at first glance.

### TURNING UP THE POWER

Some of the options found in this book obviously raise the ambient power level of a **Werewolf** game. The characters become stronger, which in turn is matched by the increasingly stacked odds that they must overcome. This is particularly true of the Silver Crusade, which turns up a chronicle from a shadowy series of bloody hunts to a full-bore war, practically epic in scope.

This may not be for you, and that's fine. Maybe throwing around larger pools of dice and becoming more of a razor-jawed juggernaut is to your taste — and that's fine, too. The options are presented solely as options, so that it's easier for a troupe to fool around and decide if the new rule set is to their taste or not. If not, it's an easy matter to revoke the crusade or even kill off all the characters (though in the latter case, it's preferable to make sure the players agree before instituting any no-win, zero-survival situations), returning to the more subtle level of **Werewolf** play with the next story or chronicle.

Do be careful: some of these power increases will damage the Forsaken's abilities to play well with others. Crossovers won't be quite as equitable for the outsiders. A pack of werewolves using all the optional rules from the Silver Crusade is much stronger than a group of Kindred or a cabal of mages under most circumstances. If you want to power the chronicle into a more epic war, be sure that nobody's fun is going to be spoiled by that.

But if it's all good for everyone involved, then there you go.

### MARCHING ORDERS

**Chapter One: Dogs of War** maps out what it's like to go to war as a werewolf. From the opening shots that might set a war in motion to the logistics of organizing the fractious People into an army, this chapter goes into heavy detail on the various considerations that can make a war chronicle vital and gripping. Although the greater portion of the chapter is devoted to these simple considerations, here also are found new Gifts, rites and fetishes of particular use on the battlefield (even if some are likely Harmony violations in the making). The chapter rounds out with a pair of war scenarios that can be extrapolated into the makings of epic chronicles of war. "Reunion"

is "The War Against the Pure," with the focus on the alpha pack leading the struggle — the players' pack. Then there's "The Endless Shadow War," a chronicle of war in a world that should make the players grateful for just how good they have it.

**Chapter Two: Historical Conflicts** opens up the past for use and abuse. This chapter deals with setting war stories, or even entire chronicles, against the backdrop of a historical setting. Here we discuss the logistics of historical wars, the means of getting werewolves involved, the possibility of linking historical chronicles to modern **Werewolf** stories and other such questions. The chapter also includes the framework for three historical war stories: a border conflict set among a backdrop of Roman legions fighting for the Fertile Crescent, a secret menace cloaking itself in the Yellow Scarves Rebellion of the Han dynasty and a feud between two Forsaken households in Viking Iceland.

**Chapter Three: The Silver Crusade** introduces a new kind of war, and a new supernatural cause. This is the lunar crusade, or the Silver Road — a war that binds together many packs of Forsaken under the guiding influence of the Lunes themselves. As a chronicle-defining event, this religious war is even a step above other wars. The wrath is more focused, the bloodshed is more widespread and the cause seems more righteous. It may not be. The details of a Silver Crusade are laid out here, from the potential triggers and mustering practices to organization and the strange new lunar totems that oversee this kind of conflict.

The chapter also presents a number of optional new powers for raising the stakes of the crusade, granting those who walk the Silver Road a previously unseen measure of strength — for better or worse. This includes potential upgrades to auspice ability, a newfound sense of focus, new rites and a new Gift list, new powers for pack totems and a few legendary relics that could change the face of a war. Finally, this chapter offers the skeleton of a potential crusade chronicle, mapping out the events that might follow a seemingly ordinary pack along the road to champions, generals and perhaps martyrs.

**Chapter Four: Wayward Sons** tells the story of a different kind of war, and a different kind of chronicle. This is the story of war against other shapeshifters, things that are part animal and part human and yet very different from the Forsaken. The chapter provides advice on how such a war might play out — how the other shifters might be discovered, how long they may have been around, the flashpoints that might trigger the war. And for optimal use, we provide both a system for designing the shapeshifter of your choice, and five sample shapeshifting races to bedevil your players... or entice them.



# CHAPTER 1

Again the dream came. At least, she hoped she was dreaming. That was the aspect of the gibbous moon's light that she hated the most – to see with eyes so clear, even when you were asleep, that you could barely tell the difference between the sleeping and the waking.

A carpet of corpses, torn and mangled. Blood shining bright in the moonlight. Ashes drifting on the wind, still lit with little worm-crawls of embers.

She walked among the fallen, as carefully as she could. She tried to find footholds between the bodies, but there were none. Not even a scrap of earth could be found, only more flesh.

The dream was even clearer now, as she'd feared. When it had first come to her, she couldn't make out any faces. Then the faces began to materialize, one night after the next. They were even recognizable now, where they hadn't been torn away from the skull. The ashes formed patterns in the wind now; the blood seemed almost silver.

With a twinge of sickness, she realized she could smell. It hadn't happened before. But there it was, a faint twisting rope of scents, of fire and fresh blood and sweat and metal and clean bone. No rot, no filth – the smell was almost like a butcher shop. Her stomach twisted slightly at the thought.

Fresh. So fresh. It's coming soon.

She sat down on the chest of a fallen near-giant and waited to wake up.

She hoped she would.

DOGS OF WAR

WITHOUT HARMONY IN THE STATE, NO MILITARY EXPEDITION CAN BE UNDERTAKEN;  
WITHOUT HARMONY IN THE ARMY, NO BATTLE ARRAY CAN BE FORMED.

— SUN TZU, *THE ART OF WAR*

The history of the People stretches back a long time. Their howls remind young werewolves that there have been battles, blood enemies, feuds, skirmishes, protracted conflicts and long-term standoffs without number. But they have almost always been small in one of two ways: they have been brief, or upheld by only by a few. This is not unexpected — the Uratha are individualistic, and a pack-centric society, and it is difficult for more than a few packs to join together for a single purpose for more than a short time.

**Werewolf: The Forsaken** supports this structure. As the core book, it lays the foundation for a game that fits the number of people likely to be sitting around a gaming table. Their characters are the main focus of the game, so it makes the most sense for Uratha society to focus on the pack. The core book focuses on the smaller things, so that the characters can handle the game while remaining in a relatively believable setting. The entire world doesn't *actually* revolve around them, just the parts that they consider important.

One thing war is *not* is small. Five people fighting five other people, no matter how long or ferociously they fight, is not a war. Get 500 people on both sides, on the other hand, and you have something different, something the People haven't tried to organize in at least a generation.

The Brethren War, still fresh in many werewolves' memories, was the last event that took place on a war's scale. But it wasn't the People girding for battle and marching off to face the enemy. No, the Pure took full advantage of surprise, and the Forsaken were too confused, too disorganized to effectively take the fight back to their aggressors. The Brethren War ended up being a huge collection of small skirmishes with no overlying sense of order — at least for the Tribes of the Moon.

So, this chapter is going to talk about what it means and takes for werewolves to make war. What happens when 100, 500, 1,000 werewolves all get together on one side of an escalating conflict? Werewolves have organizational difficulties, arguments

over chain-of-command and other issues just as human militaries. When the People are almost never unified enough to focus on a single enemy, what does it take to change that? And how do you keep humans from finding out?

Most importantly, what happens to your characters when they get caught up in a war? It can be a different sort of game. That may not be for everyone, so be sure to think about the ramifications before you and your friends sit down and decide to bring war to the People. Luckily, some of these ramifications are thought-out for you. Just look ahead.

The chapter covers what *starts* a war later on. The potential targets of such a war are so plentiful that each instigation needs to be related to the enemy. Instead, the chapter starts with those qualities of the Uratha at war that are fairly consistent, and will address the vagaries of the “who” and “why” later on.

## WAR DEMONSTRATIONS

Throughout the text, there will be references to two specific examples of history. Together, they are the most recent examples of mass werewolf aggression and comprise the only major warlike actions in living memory.

The first is, unsurprisingly, the Brethren Wars of the mid-'90s. When the Forsaken were squabbling and vulnerable, the Pure Tribes took advantage and attacked. What's unusual is the degree of coordination: the Pure came out of many territories across North America to oust their perpetual enemies and kill many of them. One notable aspect (of many) about the Brethren Wars is that there were fewer than 100 attacks in total. Though the number is far from certain, there were probably no more than 25 to 40 Pure packs involved and a similar number on the Forsaken side. (If the number is uncertain, it is because many of the Forsaken packs are no longer around to be counted, and the Pure are difficult to census.) That was devastating enough — imagine 100 packs on a side.

The second of the two exemplary wars is one that goes unnamed but remembered. During the early 1940s, active imagination

or accidental revelation caused great trouble in Spain. Tens of thousands of humans, lost in the backdrop of the nation's post-Civil War reconstruction and oppression, armed themselves against a werewolf threat. In the region framed by Pamplona, Logroño and Zaragoza, many citizens launched pogroms against the suspected monsters within their communities. The Uratha had no choice but to fight back. Despite their natural advantages, the Forsaken were sorely outnumbered. After three months, the human motivators of the inquisition were all dead (or fled) and almost 20 Funeral Rites had been performed.

## GIVE THE PACK CHARACTER

War stories are never about the war. They're about the people in the war and, more specifically, about a few protagonists who have to deal with what the war means to them. Very important in war stories is the *unit*, the small group that includes all protagonists and helps define them. Movies such as *Platoon* and *Band of Brothers* feature the unit, and even in *Catch-22* Yossarian has a small group of friends.

In **Werewolf**, that unit is already defined: the pack. It is the collection of the most important people in a werewolf's life. They are his brothers and sisters, and together they are strong. They are inseparable. Tear them all apart, and they remain a pack. It cannot be denied.

This section describes a tweak to the **Werewolf: The Forsaken** rules that you can use to give the pack more character and screen time. The game as written already lays a lot of emphasis on the pack concept, but this makes the pack stronger and more important to the characters and players. It has both mechanical and story-based impact.

This system is not incompatible with pack totems, but this is designed in part to make it easier to remove pack totems from the game. Characters gain a benefit from being part of the pack that makes the bonuses provided by pack totems less necessary, and the pack taboo overlaps a bit with the totem ban. You are free to include both in your game — you might like the idea of a more meaningful pack structure and the idea of binding pack totems — but be aware that their bonuses will overlap to strengthen the characters a bit more than you might expect.

Alternately, you can use this system as an alternate method to *represent* the pack totem. There is no need to completely write out a spirit's boons: the Traits and Goal represent the totem's bestowments, and the Virtue/Vice and Taboos represent its influence and strictures on the pack. This provides a less concrete pack totem with a (potentially) more pack-driving benefit.

### Step One: Traits

Prioritize either Power, Finesse and Resistance as the pack's primary trait. You should decide it based on how the members of the pack prefer to deal with things. Imagine the packmembers trying to find an object while their enemy taunts them with a riddle about where the thing is hidden. A pack that favors Resistance ignores the riddle while the packmembers search, one that Finesses its problems solves the riddle or poses another one back and a Power-focused pack punches the riddler in the face.

Now prioritize Physical, Social and Mental for the pack. In the same situation, a Mental pack figures out likely hiding places and might second-guess the enemy. The Social pack reads the enemy's face or threatens him into telling. And the Physical pack tears the rooms to tatters too small to hide the object — or punches the riddler.

Primary traits determine not just how the pack is *likely* to act in a given situation, but also how the pack encourages its members to act. Living in a Power/Mental pack levies a social pressure on the werewolves to think things through, carefully and completely. A Resistance/Social pack, on the other hand, has members who feel it necessary to be themselves, no matter what the social pressures are.

A pack's traits should be chosen by the players, and should almost never go against what the players want. Werewolves make the pack, after all, and three Rahu Blood Talons *probably* aren't going to forge a Finesse/Mental pack together. Because characters are rarely so aligned, players should vote on each prioritization based on their characters' natures. When the members of a pack change, the pack's orientation might naturally change as well. In effect, any player can call for a vote at any time.

Only when a pack has a long and established history should there be pressure that doesn't naturally form. Say four werewolves join the 30-year-old Running River pack, with its emphasis on never giving in to physical hardship (Resistance/Physical), and then the elder packmates die or move on. Those who

remain feel the enormous weight of trying to fill their predecessors' shoes, keeping the pack Resistance/Physical until they manage to make it their own.

When a pack member takes an action based on an Attribute supported by one of the pack's traits, she gains a +1 bonus to the roll. When her action follows both traits, she adds two dice.

#### Step Two: Nature

Packs develop reputations. Some earn renown for being brutal in battle, soft to prisoners or slow to respond to danger. These reputations develop and change over time, but once people know about them they stick. More, the packmembers themselves end up driven by these tendencies. A werewolf becomes more likely to bash a prisoner's face in after years of running with angry packmates, or more devoted to spiritual advancement after experiencing a pack-sister's devotion to God and Father Wolf.

Choose a Virtue and a Vice for the pack. Because these color the way other werewolves see the pack and how the pack tends to act, each player should have a say in this. If possible, let the players reach a consensus; if necessary, let them vote. Remember that the pack's Virtue and Vice are essentially one-word summaries of how the pack acts *naturally*. It would be silly for five werewolves who all have Charity as their Virtue and Wrath as their Vice to form a pack focused on any other Virtue or Vice.

When a werewolf follows the pack's Virtue (instead of his own) for a full chapter, he receives validation and laudation from his pack. His packmates know how difficult it is to do, especially in these difficult times, and they tell him so. Their response allows him to regain three Willpower points — it's not as intensely rewarding as obeying one's personal Virtue, but it feels good.

If the pack's Virtue and the character's Virtue are the same, the werewolf regains all lost Willpower points plus one. That extra point of Willpower is a temporary high, lasting for one day or until the character uses it.

Succumbing to the pack's Vice is sad, but the werewolf's packmates have experienced the same urges and done the same things. They support the character, absolving him of blame because it's what they want done to them. Through commiseration and acceptance, the werewolf regains one point of Willpower. When the werewolf's Vice is the same as the pack's Vice, he regains two Willpower points.

Even though they depend in part on the attitudes and actions of packmates, these regained points occur

instantly. The pack's stance on its Virtue and Vices are implicit, and understanding the sort of reception a werewolf will receive allows him to benefit from them immediately.

Virtues and Vices can change, just as the pack's focus on overcoming obstacles through Mental means can shift into Social. One pack may carefully moderate its violence until it feels more peaceful and less tempted to give in to Wrath, for example. Through in-character effort or revelation and player decision, both Virtues and Vices may change. When players cannot agree, there should probably be no change.

#### Step Three: Goal

Every pack has a goal. It's the sort of thing that causes a pack to form and keeps it together through the hard times. Pack goals are the sort of things that develop and grow more refined over time. When elders bring together four werewolves fresh from the Change and make them into a pack, they won't have a unifying goal. They won't have anything more solid than "claim a territory and protect it."

As time passes, the new pack finds its feet and figures out what it wants to do. All packs eventually develop specific goals for themselves. Some are only more specific than the vague goals of old: "keep *this* territory and give it peaceful resonance." Others become specialized away from the basic werewolf ideal: "put ghosts to rest wherever they are" or "prove ourselves the toughest damn Uratha in Ohio." That doesn't mean the pack won't keep or care about territory, just that territory is a little less important than the pack's goal. Even those packs that keep their focus on territory choose particular aspects important to them: possessing every locus, shaping the local Shadow or even just making the territory a place of safety for raising a family.

Goals are typically things that cannot just be completed. They are long-term instead of immediate. "Kill the corrupt Sheriff Joe," is not a pack's goal; "rid this town of corruption" is. Goals, just as a pack's traits, can change. If the players agree that their characters no longer focus on something as a goal, then that goal fades and is replaced by something else that the characters *do* care about.

When a werewolf is performing an action that *directly* helps the pack achieve or progress along its goal, he feels an extra push to get it right. He may spend a point of Willpower to add *four* dice to the roll instead of just three.

#### Step Four: Taboo

The pack taboo is something that the members of the pack find abhorrent, consider in a negative light, look down upon or just think is plain wrong. As a result, they just don't do it. Maybe not every member holds the act in the same regard — the alpha might have some sympathy, but a packmate condemns the act utterly — but they all think it's pretty bad. The taboo is effectively a social contract that binds the pack together.

It's rarely stated, usually just implied. If everyone in the pack thinks it would be downright awful to ever abandon a packmate in a fight, that can be the taboo even if they never need to talk about it. Taboos can be related to packs' goals. Taboos often are, because both goals and taboos depend on what the pack and its members consider important, but they don't have to be.

The pack that wants to put ghosts to rest might consider it foul to slay a ghost rather than giving it peace, or the pack might feel very strongly about keeping secrets from other packmates and forbid that. It all depends on the players and their characters.

A werewolf who breaks his pack's taboo separates himself from the pack. Even if none of his packmates know, *he* still knows, and he feels divided from the pack. Because the taboo is something important not just to the pack, but to all members of the pack, the taboo is typically an obvious guilt — any attempt to cover it up suffers a -2 dice penalty.

Having broken the taboo, a werewolf feels too distant from his pack to gain any benefit from the pack's above qualities. Any action that would normally take advantage of such a benefit reminds him too much of his transgression; his guilt negates any bonus he might have gotten.

Werewolves reunite themselves with their packs through confession and by performing some form of penance. In some cases, there can be no forgiveness. Some packs feel too strongly about a taboo to ever let the offender back into the pack, or the specific instance calls for irrevocable condemnation. The pack might forgive breaking the taboo of "always back up a packmate," but not if the werewolf's negligence resulted in the packmate's death.

Once any agreed-upon penance or punishment is complete, the werewolf returns to full status in the pack. He may not have the full trust of his packmates for a while, but he is absolved. The werewolf again enjoys the full benefits of being part of the pack.

#### QUICK SILVER PACK

All of a pack's qualities are up to the players. The pack's qualities can change just like that, although instantaneous changes are usually just the formalization of a slow shift in focus. With this flexibility, and the bonuses afforded from certain aspects of the pack, players have the potential to mistreat the game by changing the pack's traits purely for the mechanical benefits.

If this happens (assuming you don't enjoy it), and you can't talk your friends out of doing it, you should probably look for other folks to game with. Since that's not always a tenable option, you should feel absolutely free to require the player who calls for a consensus or vote to alter the pack's qualities to expend an experience point for the change.

#### LIGHTING THE FIRE (STARTING A WAR)

Fractious as the People are, if even a large chunk of the People are to join each other in war, there had better be a damn good reason for it. Understand that werewolves are a passionate people, for whom passion often goes far beyond reason. When the Uratha feel something, they feel it strongly, and then they *do* something about it. And they will steadfastly *refuse* to go to war for anything less than that.

This is one of the reasons werewolves' wars are so very rare, and even then usually defensive. Survival is easy. Survival is instinct. When 1,000 humans are marching with pitchforks, or when a horde of the Pure are on the hunt, it brings out the same very strong urge in almost every werewolf: defend yourself. It's easy for the Forsaken to band together in self-defense. It even applies to their most base senses of logic. If *they* go down, they won't be able to help when the Pure/magath/whatever come for *me*. Fewer Forsaken means more work for any who survive them, and this job is hard enough already.

It's much harder to get the Forsaken on the offensive. On a limited scale, sure, there's no trouble: help me hunt down this *duguthim* and I'll owe you one. Simple. But trying to rouse the 50 werewolves near your territory to methodically hunt down and fight one enemy? Not even the most skilled inspirational speaker could convince that many werewolves to take a single position



on a single issue. Different tribes, different auspices, different callings and different packs all get in the way.

War must come from a prevailing attitude. A zeitgeist of dissatisfaction and the need to correct it. There is no governing body that can send a werewolf to war despite his wishes. The People respect hierarchy, but no one gets to do *that*. Every werewolf makes a personal decision whether or not a given problem is worth going to war. When enough of the People think it is, eventually they will march.

It functions mostly on population density. Too few war hawks in a given area, and they will make noise but accomplish nothing. Throw a few more into the local gathering, and they might shed enough sparks to spontaneously start the fire. Soon, a half-dozen packs are talking about stopping whatever-it-is, and they spread the news to other local gatherings. The next step is for everyone interested in the war to meet at their own gathering, not tribe- or location-based, but based on interest and the desire to do something about it. That's when they become an army.

Then, you don't want to get in their way. Whatever else the Uratha do when they go to war, they go *all out*. Something that gets that many werewolves working together is probably something that pissed them all off royally.

### EXAMPLES

Both the Brethren War and the incident in Spain had a common root in survival. The enemies, places and times were different, but in both cases outside forces instigated the war. Humans threatened to expose and kill the Uratha, or the Pure simply tried to murder them all right there. In the '40s, the defense coalesced when two packs ran into each other and learned that both had been picking up the same very disturbing rumors. They used their combined reputation to call a gathering, where many packs learned that it wasn't just a local problem. The Forsaken threw their lots together just as the hunt crashed down on them.

In the '90s, the People were not so fortunate, perhaps because the enemy knew so much more about their habits and weaknesses. Packs across North America found themselves harried and without rest. Many didn't know the extent of the attack until frantic messenger-spirits, bribed with an excess of Essence, came carrying requests for aid. Pack remnants coordinated as best they could to organize a defense.

### CHOOSING A LEADER

In general, werewolf society has a few guidelines, a few suggestions on how things should work and nothing more. Packs should act *this* way, the Uratha shouldn't kill each other or shed too much blood at a gathering and tribes are more like philosophies than they are political parties. Really, the only strict rules the People follow are the Oaths of the Moon, the rules of Harmony and their tribal and pack bans, and even those are kind of fluid. When meeting a Blood Talon in the dark woods, all a werewolf knows for sure is that he probably won't offer to surrender, and little more.

So it's quite a feat for groups of werewolves to join together for a war. War isn't the sort of thing that can be left to the rank-and-file to decide (not that any werewolf is mere infantry). A war needs direction, or one pack will hare off to sabotage the enemy's loci while another two decide that the most important thing is to muck up the opponents' territories and start to rile up spirits. If, in the meantime, the enemy is acting in a more concerted manner (as the Pure did during the Brethren War), they can wipe the People out. War requires planning.

Instinct and emotion, two things that the Uratha have in spades, generally prevents any werewolf from taking orders from anyone other than his alpha. Pack hierarchy is ingrained, and someone who tries to subvert that natural order can expect to be met with anger and strong resistance.

The solution that werewolves fall into when acting on larger scales is to apply the pack instincts on a similarly large scale. Each pack counts as a werewolf, a member of the larger "pack" that makes up the entire war effort. From here springs the concept of the "alpha pack," the one pack that proves itself most qualified to lead the war, just as a pack's alpha is the one best able to lead a pack to prosperity.

It always takes time to sort out which pack is actually the alpha. Some packs involved in the war know that they are destined for lesser things. A pack of Blood Talons with great physical prowess but little foresight might understand that they are better front-line fighters than generals, and a pack that deals mostly with restless ghosts could recognize that its talents are specialized and volunteer its services as a specialty unit. Other packs insist on exercising their right to challenge the alpha pack for the top position.

Usually, the pack that is best able to conceive of *and* execute good battle tactics emerges as the victor. At best, it takes a day and a night of competition and a few wounds that are easily healed. In the worst case sce-

nario, the challenge for the top spot lasts much longer, delaying the war, or a stubborn pack needs to be thoroughly beaten to make the members get in line. Because taking too long can be stupidly dangerous, a pack not in the running might begin preliminary steps such as scouting out certain areas or securing certain assets.

There is occasionally some resentment toward the alpha pack, especially if its members are not the ones who originally discovered the threat or convened the werewolves to organize. In most cases, the cause is too important for such petty emotions to get too much in the way. Most werewolves usually understand that there would have been no war if the need were not felt by so many. Even the werewolves who catalyzed the war cannot properly *claim* it.

Normal pack instincts apply toward the alpha pack. It is perfectly legitimate to challenge and try to topple an alpha pack, because a better leader leads a better war — but it is unacceptable during sensitive crises and periods that require stable leadership. One does not weaken the war effort when the enemy is close. (This is the mistake that the werewolves made in the Brethren War, and many times before. The only difference is that the People were not on an organized “war footing” at the time.) At other times, especially during long, drag-out wars, the leadership is prone to change unless it is quite strong.

### EXAMPLES

The Brethren War came as a complete surprise at a time of incredible disorganization. Individual packs did their level best to defend themselves and fight back, but the Pure’s coordination allowed the aggressors to pick their battles and steal entire territories from the Tribes of the Moon. The Forsaken’s response was hindered because they were constantly under attack and confused — not to mention that they had just been interrupted in the process of replacing their elders. There was no clear choice for alpha pack, and the Pure’s targets weren’t near enough for them to easily rally. It took so long to name an alpha pack that the Forsaken took many casualties before they managed to fight back.

In Spain, the targeted werewolves caught the scents on the wind before the guillotine fell. After a very tense gathering of packs in the area, several packs tried to take the lead. One managed to convince the others, with words and bared teeth, to call it the alpha pack. Concentrated leadership alone did a great deal to help limit the carnage that followed.

*Never forget: When your weapons are dulled, your ardor dampened, your strength exhausted, and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity.*

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Despite the term, the alpha pack does not (necessarily) lead by committee. That pack’s alpha leads as she usually does, directing her own packmates’ actions and leading them to success. It’s just that she leads other packs, as well, and in the same fashion. Generally, it is not her right to give direct orders to werewolves in the subordinate packs. Instead, she addresses the *packs*, and the alphas of those packs determine how to execute those orders within the war leader’s parameters.

A good leader understands how to direct the packs in a manner that elicits the most effective response, dependent on the nature and skill of each pack’s alpha. For every alpha who’s easygoing and understanding, there are three who want to challenge the war leader each time she speaks directly to a member of his pack.

Just as wise alphas, a wise alpha pack keeps other packs aware of where the war is going, and defers to them in their areas of expertise. An alpha pack that does not, even if it earned the top position, rarely keeps it long before someone better able to direct and use the other packs replaces it.

In a large war, when there are a dozen or more packs fighting for a single cause, it is common for the alpha pack to designate a number of packs (one or two for up to 15 packs and a proportionate number for larger armies) as “lieutenants.” These are those packs that the alphas trust to guide the war effort in the alpha pack’s absence, making tactical decisions while effectively following the war leader’s overall strategy. These are inevitably also the packs most able (and usually likely) to try to steal the alpha position during an opportune moment. Keeping the stiffest competition so close forces the alpha pack to appear strong at all times. This appearance of strength either results in persistent *actual* strength, to the war’s benefit, or to the leader’s exhaustion and eventual replacement — also to the war’s benefit.

### OATH TO WAR

Once the alpha pack has established its dominance, its ritemaster (or one designated by the pack) performs the Rite of the Avowed Soldier for any werewolf who wants to join the war. The rite is an official entrance into a second brotherhood, one differ-

ent from pack or tribe, and an oath that the werewolf puts accomplishment of the war's goal ahead of nearly all else until the war's conclusion. The rite does not need to be performed again when the alpha pack changes mid-war; werewolves expect such evolution if it is necessary. For this reason, the alpha pack must also be subject to the Rite of the Avowed Soldier in case it loses its pre-eminence and ends up under another's command.

At any time, the war leader can perform (or call upon another to perform) the Rite of Condemnation to denounce a betrayer or incompetent. Doing so also denies him any blessing the totem provides. See "Rites of War," below, for more information on these rituals. On the soldiers' parts, there is a variant on the Rite of Renunciation that excuses one from the war, either because the ideal or the individual has changed. Similar to renouncing a tribe, leaving a war can make enemies, but it is less likely to be so if done well. Performing the Rite of Renunciation in this way does not cause a loss of Renown.

War leaders and individuals both exercise care with regards to any ritual that would end another's (or their own) participation in the war. An alpha pack might have ample reason to coldly dismiss one of the People, but that werewolf belongs to an entire pack of warriors. Unless the individual's pack feels just as strongly as the war leader, casting out one bad wolf might lose an entire, very desirable pack.

Likewise, the disaffected individual who no longer believes in the war might be part of a pack that still believes passionately. Closer than family, a packmate might well take severe offense at being abandoned, as it appears. Werewolves have been cast out from packs for less. Either way, some werewolves remain with the war because of their pack. And in the end, it's not the hardest thing they've done in the name of the pack, either.

## DIVISION OF LABOR

*The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals. He takes individual talent into account, and uses each man according to his capabilities. He does not demand perfection from the untalented.*

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

When each werewolf is an effective squad all by himself, there can be no true "soldiers." None of the Uratha is an expendable grunt, in place to hold a gun and fire on the enemy. Instead, each the equivalent of a specialty unit in a modern army. One is a master of silent

stalking and the silent kill; another calms the locals and appears entirely unmemorable with no trouble at all.

One skill necessary for the war leader is the ability to recognize the strengths and weaknesses in her army and apply individuals accordingly. This is not always as easy as it would appear: most would send a Rahu into a battle to fight, but a wise leader recalls that the Rahu is local and an Iron Master to boot, and could effectively crush the enemy to a pulp if they try to retreat through the nearby city. Considering all of a werewolf's capabilities is important.

Werewolves can often operate without any back-up. They are hardy creatures, and rightly self-reliant, and each can perform many tasks without *needing* help. The problem is that, in war, the enemy wants to catch one of you alone as much as you want to catch one of them alone. This is one reason the alpha pack is usually tempted to send an entire pack, even when one could do the job. Having packmates around to watch your back can make the difference.

The other reason werewolves remain in packs is because it's their nature, it's their most important social unit, and trying to break it up would be the surest way for any war leader to trigger a revolt. Even more importantly (because a dedicated war leader considers any advantage, including breaking up a pack), werewolf packs *work well* together. They have worked together in the past and expect to work together in the future. Many packs choose a purpose and hone themselves to better serve that purpose. The pack becomes a weapon best left assembled.

Here are a few of the special tasks individual packs can be assigned during war. These are all fairly flexible. One never knows when the shit will hit the fan and everyone will have to fight for their lives.

### Alpha Pack

There is and can be only one. Once everyone accepts the alpha pack as top dog, everyone looks to it for direction. The alpha pack doesn't have to do everything, but it is the war's brain. Communications bring them information from scouts and analyses from tacticians, results of pinpoint assaults and estimates of the enemy's strength here or there. Members of the alpha pack, led by its alpha, make the decisions necessary to win the war.

The alpha pack directs its subordinate packs directly, telling them what it needs done and expecting them to do it. When a war is too large, there's not enough time in the day for every pack to have a personal talk with the alpha pack. Delegation becomes key.

### Communications

Armies have invented many methods for communication over the years: from drums and bright flags for sending messages long ago to handsets and satellite broadcasts today. Through all those, the only way to send truly secure communication was to send it with a person. So some werewolves become communications personnel, running messages and information back and forth across potentially huge battlefields.

Communications sounds like a place to put people with no other use, but it really isn't. A good courier must be *fast*, to get the info there while it's still fresh; *tough*, because running 100 miles won't be out of the question; and *quiet*, so that the enemy doesn't notice. Being good in a scrap never hurts, but trading stealth for combat ability will always slow the courier down more than is preferable.

### Scouts

If communications personnel are the army's nervous system, scouts are the army's eyes and ears. Scouting packs remain closer to a certain segment of the army. They may be tied to the alpha pack or to one of its trusted packs. When the army is stationary, the scouts circle the defensive position so that no enemy may come close without them knowing. When the army is on the move, scouts look ahead, to the sides and behind, so that they do not stumble upon the enemy unawares.

Scouts also go out on more specific missions. They might be sent to a city so that the alpha pack might know whether the city is safe, neutral or a bastion of the enemy. The scouts discover and pinpoint important resources for the enemy.

### Spies

Spies and scouts serve the same purpose through different avenues. Where the scout uses his eyes and ears to detect solid things — how many of the enemy and where, when the locus is unguarded and so on — the spy pays attention to other sources of information. The spy is the one who walks behind the opponent commander, talks with the barista he just left behind, makes contacts among the enemy's allies or associates and uses them all for information. The spy finds information that is not publicly available and figure out what it means to the war.

### Tacticians

Only the alpha pack truly holds command during a war. But it is unwise to divide the pack that deserves to lead, and one pack cannot be everywhere. This is why,

in a war with enough members, the alpha pack may appoint some other packs to devise battle plans in its absence. Tactical packs do everything the alpha pack does, sending out and listening to scouts, assigning targets for strike teams and drawing up general attack plans. Sometime, tactical packs even do it better, so an alpha pack might rely on them for tactical genius. Why isn't this tactical pack the alpha pack, then? It generally has to do with leadership. Packs that focus on tactics tend to be those (or led by those) with a knack for anticipating and manipulating the enemy — and don't have a stiff honor system that prevents them from doing it.

In some cases, this may be a second-in-command. When the alpha pack is unavailable, the second-in-command takes care of things. When the war is broad enough, this becomes more common. It's like a war with many fronts: one pack receives command of the "South Canadian theater," another commands the "Pacific Northwest" and so on. These packs are the ones that the alpha pack trusts to make reasonable decisions without damning the effort.

### Strike Teams

Almost every werewolf pack is a strike team on the level of the world's best-trained soldiers. Some are just better still, so they get the label. They are rarely the packs that go in and lay down the most carnage with the most collateral. No, these packs are *precision*. When someone or something simply *must* be torn to pieces, they go in, do it and leave without a drop of blood out of place.

A strike team pack usually has an assortment of skills amongst its members. Some members get the pack in, some members get the pack around and some members get the pack out. But they all fight. Tom Clancy has become an incredible success popularizing this sort of team. The werewolf equivalent is even more lethal.

### Negotiators

There will *always* be someone who is discontented with the war. Werewolves who didn't join up will be angry when those who did pass through their territory. They might try to do something about it. It's the negotiators' jobs to talk them down. Send someone ahead to request passage, meet on neutral territory. Explain that the army has to get there somehow, and the best way is through this spot. Maybe point out the consequences of arriving late and put them on the angry pack's heads. If all else fails, point out that there are five packs within a short distance and they're all on your side.

Somehow, negotiators make this sound reasonable and convincing. If they do it right, they leave without any hard feelings, too. Negotiators also end up with some tangential work: No, officer, I don't believe in giant killer wolves either. It's just what they get for being the most socially adept.

### Specialists

With so many different kinds of spirits, lists of Gifts and various tasks to be done, there is no end to the variation of focus packs display. One cultivates its understanding and mastery over ghosts. Another knows almost every spirit in the city personally. Even when they fall under other categories above, these are specialists. They can leverage their unique skills and experiences into advantage for the war. Ghosts might make good spies, and having city-spirits on your side doesn't sound all that bad, does it? Wise alpha packs use the right tools in the right places.

## WAR TOTEMS

Each tribe has a totem, each pack has a totem (or nearly so) and wars have totems, too. When the Forsaken marshal for war, they seek patrons from the *Hisil* that are willing to be the spirit of the war. Either the alpha pack, as the highest authority for the movement, treats with the spirits or the most renowned and honored werewolves participating (the werewolves with the highest effective Rank), since their impressive status can help attract an impressive patron.

A war totem is by no means necessary. If the People are seeking a totem, they have already dedicated themselves to the war. Whether they have support from the Shadow Realm or not, their enemies' blood will spill.

Negotiations with potential spirit patrons are very sensitive. The denizens of the *Hisil* don't much care for the Forsaken, and few see any reason to support and aid the Uratha in dealing with their enemies. Many take pleasure knowing that the werewolves will be less confident without a totem and may even all die in battle. So the war leader (or her chosen negotiators) must be selective in whom she approaches.

The ideal spirit for the job meets several criteria. Least of all, the spirit should bear the Forsaken no ill will. Such spirits are rare enough that they are very hard to find, so most war leaders settle for a spirit with little enough resentment that the benefits of the war outweigh irritation at the Uratha.

Second, the spirit has enough power to aid the war, and of the right sort. Some spirits are simply not suited to war, such as peace-spirits or wheat-spirits, and others don't have the puissance of self to assist an entire army. (The spirit should be no less than Rank 3, and preferably Rank 4, 5 or higher.) Werewolf wars are rare and powerful things, and the best way for an interested Incarna to get some use out of it is by becoming its patron.

There are exceptions to this rule. On occasion, the alpha pack might accept multiple war totems. These are inevitably the weakest of potential war totems, because the greater spirits are rarely interested in sharing influence over "their" war. Some reasons to accept an alliance of totem spirits are actually good ones. In the worst case, no spirits with enough individual power to bless the entire war are interested.

Luckily, there are better reasons. Patronage by multiple spirits of different provenance offers flexibility: being backed by an owl-spirit, a road-spirit and wrath-spirit could provide blessings that grant (say) wisdom, speed and fury in battle. Multiple totems means (as gruesome as it sounds) redundancy, and the loss of one is not as grievous as it might be otherwise. And weaker totems can join the People in battle, unlike the greater spirits werewolves are reluctant to loose on the physical world.

Finally, the spirit should have a personal interest in seeing the People victorious over their enemies. A spirit that doesn't can offer the war leader little guarantee that it isn't taking part only to play with the werewolves, or that it won't cut and run when things get tough. Spirits agree to become war totems out of various motivations. Spirits of war, pain, famine or other results of war support the werewolves because the war will benefit them directly. Other spirits might become totems because they have something against the Forsaken's enemies (i.e., the Pure offended them, or a mage summoned them, etc.), or because of politics within the spirit courts. There are still more inscrutable interests a spirit might have in a war. Hopefully, whatever reason the spirit expresses is one that the war leader can understand. Otherwise, it can be hard to feel secure about one's war totem.

War totems do not connect themselves directly to any pack, even the alpha pack. To do so would offend the pack's personal totem, something that any pack would (or should) be loath to do, and that would hinder the war effort. Instead, the war totem binds

itself to the ideal of the war. The totem's gifts to the movement are available to any werewolf participating in it, though the alpha pack sometimes gets to take what it needs first. Qualification for these benefits depends on the alpha pack's approval; once a ritemaster has welcomed a werewolf to the war with the Rite of the Avowed Soldier, the war totem can lend direct aid to a pack or werewolf. Once a werewolf renounces the war in ritual, or is subject of the Rite of Condemnation, that individual no longer benefits from the war totem's blessings.

Only the most powerful gods could provide benefits to an entire war as a lesser spirit grants a pack that binds it. Since few such powerful spirits choose to become war totems, there are no *given* traits as fortunate packs receive. It would take more power than even a Rank 5 spirit could provide (probably) to give every werewolf in a war effort a dot of Composure, Father Wolf's Speed (a Gift) or a dot in Stealth! Of course, that may not always be the case — Chapter 3 offers you a setting in which Mother Luna herself is the patron of a war, giving all the Forsaken powerful blessings for her ordained crusade.

Instead, war totems tend to provide these things to the *story* (just as in **Werewolf: The Forsaken**) or to the *war*. Giving Attributes or what-not to the war is much like giving them to the pack, but the war leader alone controls their dispensation. (War leaders may delegate control of certain such resources to trusted packmates or other packs; it is simply a matter of informing the spirit.) Because only one werewolf can benefit from the totem bonus at any given time, the war leader must use the bonuses carefully. He may give three dots of Stealth to a spy on a very important mission, or distribute one dot to each of three werewolves embarking on an ambush.

Just as with pack totems, some pacts between warriors and war totem include few totem bonuses, or none. In those cases, there are other services a war totem can provide. One can make the war process much smoother by agreeing to teach Gifts (as opposed to granting them) at reduced chiminage or with easier (or at least *faster*) trials. This doesn't always sit well with spirits — it's the equiva-



lent of giving things away for free (more like putting them “on sale,” but it *feels* like giving them away), so a war totem may consider the werewolves who learn its Gifts indebted to it in the future. Whether or not they think they are.

Attractive as it sounds, werewolves do not bring their totem into battle to decimate their opponents (as they likely would). The People are responsible for keeping spirits as powerful as a war totem *out* of the physical world, not let them into it. It is an unspoken agreement between the warring Uratha and the spirit: they will further its designs as it furthers theirs, but it does not get to Materialize in the physical world. Instead, the war totem directly serves the war effort as an emissary and negotiator to other spirits. Spirits that are taking sides on the war may be hard to influence one way or the other, but unaligned spirits may be more likely to listen to one of their kind than to the Forsaken.

### BANS

The war totem wants the werewolves to succeed, lends them power and takes actions on their behalf. But not for free. There are 100 reasons why a spirit might not want or be able to give werewolves power without something in return. Because the ban significantly affects more werewolves than most spirits get to influence, the war leader (or a representative) negotiates the ban with the spirit.

Most direct (and undeniable) of these reasons is that the spirit’s ban might forbid it. The spirit may not be able to give *anything* without something in return, or it could be forbidden from aiding any who do not follow certain strictures. Spirits of the magnitude that “sponsor” the really sizeable wars never advertise their bans, so it would likely disguise the reason as something else that’s common. On the other hand, spirits that want to impose a ban on the war and do away with that pesky, inevitable negotiation might declare the restriction imposed by its ban — take it or leave it.

Other reasons are more flexible, but no less enforced. One spirit might simply refuse to give anything to an army that cannot prove itself willing to bend over for the aid. Another is concerned about *Hisil* politics; giving in too easily would lower the spirit’s status. Or perhaps the ban is the spirit’s main goal in the war: 100 werewolves ripping dandelions up by the roots on sight could do a number on the Dandelion Descant, given long enough.

Bans can be just about anything, and they range in severity just as pack bans do. The only certainty about a war totem’s ban is that it will not (or should not) conflict with the army’s ability to make war. A ban that prohibits spilt blood will only be worth it if the spirit gives everyone the strength and skill to squeeze all their foes to death, and maybe not even then. On the other hand, many werewolves fight with tooth, claw and klaive, so a ban forbidding firearms would be less damaging.

Negotiation over the ban is the final step in securing the spirit as war totem. Usually, the negotiator figures out what the spirit would like, combines it with what the war leader insists is necessary for the war and arranges the final compromise.

Pack bans occasionally come into conflict with the war totem’s ban. It would be nice to ensure that the new ban didn’t conflict with any old ones, but there are usually so many packs involved that it would take far too long — and none of those packs want to divulge their bans anyway. Some packs end up leaving the war because of the totem’s ban (though even that is a little too suggestive about their bans). Others manage to convince their totem to relax or alter the ban for the war’s duration, on the condition that it be made temporarily more strict once the war ends. After all, few packs would be in the war if their pack totems didn’t at least implicitly approve.

### CHANGING WAR TOTEMS

The bigger the war, the more interested spirits there are. It’s possible that, even after a totem has been chosen and war is underway, there will still be spirits interested in the job. Some make extravagant offers of power for no greater reason than to tease the alpha pack; others actually want the position. In some cases, the war takes a new direction that captures a new spirit’s attention. The prospect of 100 werewolves Raging throughout Rome might cause the city’s spirit enough concern to offer itself as totem, just so the spirit can impose a ban that eases its nerves.

Accepting such an offer is generally considered a sign of extraordinarily bad faith. Just as packs and their totems are expected to develop a strong bond, so it is with war totems. To turn away from one mid-war suggests that its blessings were insignificant or that the People were unwilling to maintain its ban. Or just that they had a better offer. All of those are bad form.

Unless the “replacement” totem is particularly eager for the job, the werewolves are at a severe disadvantage during negotiation: they will almost certainly end up with fewer blessings and a stricter ban. The change is rarely worth it: only if the previous totem was somehow scheming against the werewolves or if the new blessings are particularly valuable to the war might the change actually be a good move.

Also, a war previously not worth a great spirit’s time and energy might change. Say 70 Uratha warring their way across Brazil set off a wildfire in the hearts of their fellow Uratha. When their numbers grow to 300 overnight, new and more powerful spirits approach the alpha pack (or prospective challengers for the new alpha pack) with offers. Few war leaders can resist the idea of a new, more powerful war totem, especially when the old one can be spread thin trying to aid so many. War totems that truly believe in the cause might step aside without resentment, knowing that their boons are not enough for such a large war.

### EXAMPLES

Though they had no real organization and no one to speak for them, a small delegation entered the *Hisil* to represent the suffering Forsaken of the Brethren War. How they managed it is anyone’s guess, but they returned from the Shadow Realm with a freedom-spirit. It fought on the Forsaken’s behalf, helped them with minor boons and laid no ban. It instead claimed a secret debt, which some werewolves may still be repaying.

In Spain, the process was a little more standard. The alpha pack stepped through at their locus and tracked down a mighty spirit. Approaching it respectfully, the pack convinced the spirit that the werewolves’ extermination should not be, and the spirit agreed to help them. During the three-month war, the alpha pack had the power to lend combat skills where needed in the fray, and explosions occasionally laid their enemies low. In exchange, the werewolves promised to bow twice before using any machine.

Unlike a pack totem, a war totem does not need much detail. War totems are more powerful, but they are also more abstract and distant, unlikely to be seen in person by any packs but the most important. Since the war totem could have a Rank anywhere from 4 on up to the very frightening numbers, its Attributes could be absolutely breathtaking (or indefinable).

Because war totems implicitly agree to never step into the physical world in a material form, these numbers never really need to be known.

Yes, a pack of brave werewolves could dive into the *Hisil* to find and fight something on the level of a war totem, or the war totem itself, so these numbers might one day be relevant. At that time, the Storyteller should make them up based on what else is known about the war totem. This thing is bigger than the players’ pack, so they don’t get to have all the information.

To construct a war totem, follow these steps.

**Step One:** How many werewolves are involved?

More werewolves means bigger, badder spirits are going to be interested in the outcome. Fifty Uratha is a small war, enough to attract the notice of a Greater Jaggling. Five hundred werewolves girding for war on a single side should probably attract a minor god. When 10,000 Forsaken gather, the world is on the verge of a major holocaust, and mighty spirits are going to want to be involved. The number of werewolves involved provides a bonus to final negotiation for a totem.

**Step Two:** Define the war totem in terms of spirit type and personality. Rank is an optional decision at this point; it’s entirely possible that the werewolves will be unsure exactly how scary their new ally is. You may want to choose multiple, weaker spirits, in which case their Ranks should be evident and you may even want to give them full statistics. Spirits that share the burden and bounty of being war totems are never greater than Rank 4.

**Step Three:** There is a dice roll for the war leader or chosen emissary to the Shadow Realm. The dice pool is her Presence + Persuasion, though a negotiator who focuses on cunning may substitute Manipulation. Apply the below modifiers to the roll.

Getting a large number of successes indicates that the negotiator managed to find a spirit willing and able to give the war an effective blessing, a flexible ban or both.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+4	10,000+ werewolves in the war
+3	1,000–9,999 werewolves
+2	100–999 werewolves
+1	50–100 werewolves in the war
+1	Every Rank by which the negotiator outranks the spirit
-1	Every Rank by which the spirit outranks the negotiator



**Step Four:** Distribute successes on blessings and the ban. The ban defaults to severity five (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, pp. 191–192 for ban severities), and each success spent on the ban reduces it by one. If the negotiator doesn't spend time arguing down the ban, it will hobble the war.

Here are the boons a war totem can provide:

- **Attributes (war):** Three successes per dot.
- **Attributes (story):** Two successes per dot. Active for one scene.
- **Gift (war):** Two successes per dot.
- **Gift (story):** One success per dot.
- **Essence:** One success per four points of Essence, distributable by the war leader at will.
- **Skills (war):** Two successes per dot.
- **Skills (story):** One success per dot. Active for one scene.
- **Specialties (war):** One success per two Specialties.
- **Willpower (story):** One success per two points.

These bonuses are mostly as defined in **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, pp. 190–191, and on p. 21 of this book. Negotiators, if players' characters, are mostly free to choose where to spend their successes on the roll. This should be a joint effort with the Storyteller. It is the negotiator's ability to find a spirit able to provide the sorts of boons the alpha pack wants, but not to pick and choose completely. Each success spent shapes the spirit — picking a dot of Persuasion suggests a spirit not focused on battle, so next choosing a Weaponry Specialty: Brutality might be out of the question.

## FIGHTING THE WAR (TACTICS)

*All men can see the individual tactics necessary to conquer, but almost no one can see the strategy out of which total victory is evolved. Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downward. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak.*

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Wars have natural progression, from the opening volleys to the last-ditch efforts to escape defeat. Once the organizational efforts are complete — the alpha pack has established its dominance, the participants have sworn their loyalty to the cause and there is a spirit patron behind the conflict — it is time to get down to the business of war.

Before all else, the alpha pack must know the goal they seek. War boils down to achieving a goal through violent means, so the goal is what the People war to accomplish. When they are under persistent and deadly attack, this can be easy: they only want to survive. Other goals are more varied and complex. Werewolves might be moved to stop mages from entering the *Hisil*, to evict the Pure from an entire large region or to end a human political movement that threatens the Uratha.

For werewolves, war is a form of pack dominance writ large (occasionally, *very* large). The aim is for the werewolves to enforce a behavior (effectively establishing limited dominance) over a population designated “the enemy.” Once the war is finished, the werewolves who marched will be in one of two positions. They will be victorious, positioned to police certain behaviors of the other population (though the werewolves see it not as government, but as the natural order) and retain that position for a very long time. Or they will be defeated, having forced themselves into a situation in which they have no choice but to allow the other population its freedom until such time as the defeated werewolves can try to reassert dominance.

Knowing one's own goals is the first step in knowing how to accomplish them.

Second, the war leader must know the enemy. There are two aspects to this: the enemy's *nature* and the enemy's *goals*.

Knowing the enemy's nature is a matter of knowing who and what they are. When fighting other werewolves, the war leader must consider that the only defeated foe is one slain, because any other will heal and be ready to fight the next day. Against spirits, the army must be aware that only by reducing one's Essence to zero can it be killed; otherwise, the even the enemy's least soldiers will re-form and refill the enemy's ranks. Fighting the enemy without a clear understanding of its nature is a disadvantage.

The enemy's goals are not always clear. In fact, the more transparent they are, the harder they often become to counter. One very simple goal is to wipe out the Forsaken. Such a goal imposes very few tactical strictures on the enemy. They will have tactical preferences, but they will be able to fight and potentially kill Forsaken (working toward their goal) regardless of battlefield.

On the other end of the spectrum, the enemy's goal might be very specific. A collective of mages

seeking to steal power from the Shadow Realm might attempt to occupy five specific loci that they think will give them that power. Such a precise goal makes the war leader's job easier — which is why the enemy will attempt to keep its goals secret. Even an opponent with as straightforward a goal as werewolf death benefits from concealing his aims.

Assuming they are not already known, discovering the enemy's nature and goals becomes the foremost priority. Primary tools for this purpose are logic and spies. Logic allows the war leader to observe the enemy's actions, recognize a pattern and deduce a singular cause for those actions. She must be able to discern true needs from ploys, because a clever enemy will try to fool her. Spies infiltrate the enemy's strongholds, eavesdrop on conversations and rummage through garbage to find meaningful clues, then report them to the alpha pack. Through these two tools, the war leader must come to understand the enemy. Neutral spirits make superb spies, and even just observing what *sort* of spirits flock to the enemy can reveal valuable information.

When the war has begun, the alpha pack must guide a holding action, attempting to lose as little as possible in the way of territory, resources and lives,

while the information becomes clear. Until the enemy's nature and goals are known to the werewolves, they cannot hope to do more than minimize losses. There are exceptions: a fool enemy might mass all his forces in a single place where they will be wiped out in a single battle, and in this way lose the war. But it is not to be expected. Slow, cautious, exploratory — this is the way it happens when the werewolves gather in response to a war.

When the werewolves choose to start the war, to strike before they are ready is the foolish choice of hot-headed Uratha. The alpha pack must find uses for every sworn soldier to simultaneously build up an advantage and keep the passionate werewolves busy. During that period, the war leader must make sure she knows the enemy's nature and mind. In defense, the enemy's goal is survival, but how the enemy will strive for that goal is at a question. The leader should try to know this before she attacks.

Once the alpha pack knows both itself and the enemy, the war may begin in earnest.

## RESOURCES

To fight a war, the People must have the necessary tools. Certainly, a werewolf is a potent tool all



by himself. His body is fit and shaped to its purpose. It can recover from incredible injury. He has other forms whose senses exceed his already generous hearing and smell. In his war form, he becomes a fearsome engine of destruction. His Gifts are powerful and varied. And he has the instincts to use them all effectively. Each werewolf is an incredible resource to have on one's side in the war.

That doesn't mean you can't want more.

Securing resources is what the alpha pack does in the very beginning of the war. Before the fighting begins if possible, afterward if playing catch up. It's not enough to know that you have a pile of weapons stashed somewhere. You need to know they're still there, know you can get to them and preferably have them near enough that you can get at them now. They must be guarded to prevent the enemy from stealing them away or destroying them. Hopefully, they are also kept secret.

Many werewolves are skilled at evading detection, especially in their home territories. So when it is necessary to keep a cache of tools or a stronghold's location secret (and it is always at least *desirable*), the alpha pack often calls upon the werewolves who live nearest to visit it. Only the most mundane enemies have no special means of detecting a hidden resource, so keeping them hidden may be relegated to a status of secondary importance.

Then, it becomes paramount to conceal a location's *importance*, and that through misdirection. Multiple visits to a tertiary location can focus an enemy's attention there and remove it from other, more valuable secrets.

## LOCI

The locus is a vastly important resource. If this is true of individual packs living and acting on their own, it is 10 times so when packs pool what they have to gain advantage for a war. Essence fuels the Forsaken's Gifts, accelerates their healing to keep them in a fight, gives them the power to change form in a wink and lets them slip into the spirit world effortlessly. Essence also serves as a very effective unit of currency between supernatural beings, especially werewolves and spirits.

Keeping loci secret is more important than keeping secret most other resources. A cache of fetishes can be moved and warriors can leave their secret redoubt for another, but a locus is hard to move. Werewolves should use their greatest techniques to approach loci subtly and without detection. Even while the locus

remains secret (or they think it does), the werewolves should construct safeguards against assault in their absence, something more likely during war. Placing physical traps around the locus is a good first step. Packs should also ask their pack totems to watch over the loci on the packs' behalf, or make a deal with another spirit to guard it while they are gone.

Using loci effectively requires them to be consistently tapped for Essence. That Essence should travel from the locus to werewolves who need it, and be quickly consumed in military matters. Essence can only be hoarded so far before the cup is full. An army that is not using its Essence is operating at reduced functionality. As a temporary deceit, this may be good, but it will not win the war.

## FETISHES

These versatile tools give the Uratha advantages in various situations, from combat to spying. Fetishes are not so common that there are often unused stores of them, but it can happen. When it does, it is usually the action of a single ambitious (or greedy) pack. Fetishes are so much more useful in the hands of at-war werewolves than they are cached somewhere that almost any war leader who finds out about such a collection is sure to confiscate and distribute them where they would best serve. It is much better to have a valuable tool where it can be simultaneously used and protected by a mighty werewolf than sitting in place, useless and requiring guard.

Klaives, when available, belong in the hands of the warriors most likely to put them to good use. Most klaives have long histories, passing from one werewolf to a son to a tribemate to a packmate and so on. Their current owners consider them so fondly and with such pomp that letting another wield the sacred weapons is unthinkable. Few war leaders (and fewer successful war leaders) would mess with this bond, wisely leaving favored klaives in their owners' hands.

Should a weapon with no such claim surface, the alpha pack quickly grabs it for the war and assigns it where needed, when needed. By the end of the war, one warrior or another has so distinguished himself with the weapon that the alpha pack bestows it on him. Such heroics are usually widely recognized, so any others who might have coveted the klaive cannot feasibly object.

Fetishes and klaives are so useful in war that almost all alpha packs wish they had more of them. They can. Ritemasters of appropriate skill are occasionally put to work creating fetish tools and weap-

ons. Occasionally, they work in groups, aiding each other by performing the separate calling, binding and fetish rites to complete the fetish quickly. When there are few appropriate spirits in the area, or they are all hostile, two ritualists might work together to create a spirit of the right type with Wake Spirit and then quickly bind the spirit into the fetish.

Fetishes can serve as weapons another way. Some Uratha prepare fetishes of a deliberately uncomfortable nature for the spirits within. Leaving these fetishes for the enemy to use, these traps release furious spirits when used or function but cause the bound spirit pain and aggravation. The latter sort attracts the attention and ire of free spirits in the vicinity. Should they learn who designed the fetish to work this way, they may refocus their anger. Other trap-fetishes simply work less well than normal examples of their kind, or activate undesirable side-effects along with their normal purpose. This encourages the enemy to continue using them — one nasty trick is for each use of the fetish to alert the ritualist to the tool's location.

This practice tends to go in bursts. The ritemasters work quickly to replenish the war's stockpiles before they are needed elsewhere and before they deplete their available Essence and what little goodwill they have with local spirits. Fetishes burn through both rather quickly, especially once the local spirit courts catch wind of the werewolves' practice. Allies among the spirits evaporate faster than normal when this goes on. Luckily, if the war moves to a new location, the ritemasters can begin again until word spreads. It does nothing for the general reputation of the Forsaken.

### Food

Food is plentiful enough that few enough humans starve (in First World countries, anyway), but werewolves require a lot of fuel to keep going day after day. Though the packs at war remain reasonably spread out, they are in closer proximity than they usually are. This presents some problems.

In the countryside, 100 werewolves hunting for their own food across a 50-mile radius quickly reduce the number of potential prey. Larger prey animals soon flee the influx of predators. Smaller prey can't run as far, but they are harder to find and significantly less filling. Acquiring food from other sources is easier, but it's a solution dissatisfying to some werewolves' Harmony. Even in rural areas, there should be a supermarket able to handle enough food close enough to take care of feeding.

Getting that much more business in a single day (or over a few days) might rouse suspicion, but most shopkeepers could write it off. It must be travel season, or there's a tour group or damn bikers! If the war stays on the same battleground for weeks, the trend becomes noticeable. It behooves the alpha pack to find either an excellent excuse for the curious humans or an alternative source of food. Or to move on, if possible.

City wars move more quickly to the stage where the werewolves have to purchase food. Rats and other vermin take a lot of hunting to fill a belly, and people react poorly when their pets begin to disappear. Luckily, there are many, many more places to get food in a city. One might notice a big rush in business, but spreading the purchases out over 20 shops greatly dulls the effect. Some alpha packs go so far as to assign each pack to a specific shop for getting its own food.

One problem: not every werewolf has money. While it shouldn't be hard for a werewolf to make money in *some* fashion, the People tend to end up not needing to do it. When they *do*, money can be hard to find. There might be a werewolf or pack in the war effort that has significant liquid financial holdings; though rare, they exist. Donation of funds for the purpose is expected. When the war is not so fortunate, there are other ways.

Theft is the most common solution. Werewolves don't, after all, have a great deal of care for human laws or morals. But it may create more problems than the one it solves. Rural storekeepers get the personal attention of their local lawmen, and may sit out with a rifle themselves — they can rarely be targeted more than once.

In the cities, theft is less surprising, but therefore more expected. There are video cameras and larger police forces just waiting for a werewolf to slip up. When werewolves are forced to stay in the area for extended periods of time, the strange robberies where food disappeared instead of money become a freakish trend. Detectives in various precincts focus on the string of burglaries, bringing even more unwanted attention to the Forsaken and their war.

The only "perfect" solution to the food problem is to make good friends with a strong spirit of sustenance. Bartering and paying for use of Influence ●●●● mass-created sustenance might solve the issue — but no one *actually* has a Rank 5 spirit on hand. There is no real way to easily feed all the werewolves, which is why the alpha pack tries to keep the war on the move. But as a last-ditch effort, werewolves can

and do passably eating out of Dumpsters. At least Uratha stomachs are tough.

## REFUGES

Every army needs to rest sometime, even an army populated and run by shapechanging supersoldiers. When the packs go to ground, they need a den of some sort, a safe place for their rest. With a war on, it's fatally stupid to take a nap without making sure you're secure first.

In a defensive war, or any time the war remains long in one place, the first thing any pack does is establish a home base, replete with early warning systems, defensive measures and escape routes. Methods for knowing someone is coming before that person reaches and kills you vary widely. In a wilderness setting, good survivalists can usually depend on the local prey creatures — when the predators stalk, prey doesn't talk. Silence itself is a warning. The vast danger of being unprepared warrants further measures. Knowing its own territory, a pack can construct slopes covered with scree, eager to slip under unwary intruders' feet and clatter downhill. Tripwires connected to noisemakers are less natural, but still effective.

The same methods function in more urban locations, more or less. Tripwires can be harder to conceal but otherwise useful. Several tin cans piled on the inside of a door make an alarm that is impossible to disarm from the outside. Intentional breakaways are more difficult to effectively build and conceal within modern construction. There are few birds and the like, but people are animals, too. Living near humans is dangerous for the Uratha in several ways, but humans can serve as good early warning by suddenly hushing, screaming or coughing out death rattles.

Contemporary security systems can provide good defense against intrusion. Depending on the enemy, a simple local alarm going off might scare them away like a common burglar. Alarm systems can be set to go off when anyone enters the house, or within a minute of anyone entering the house (unless deactivated by the resident's code), through any door or window.

Inside, various systems can detect intruders. Motion sensors might be laser beams, vibration detectors or low-frequency sound waves. Breaking a laser sets off an alarm, making too much vibration sets off an alarm, and any solid object within several feet of a sound wave emitter sets off an alarm.

All these would be enough to detect and deter almost any human criminal. Determined to find a way,

someone could potentially cut the power to kill high-tech defensive measures, cut the phone line for good measure and then break in the good old-fashioned way. Which is why it's always wise to back up modern security with some of the basics, such as tripwires and piled cans.

Good Stealth Gifts can make many of these measures ineffective. Since few machines detect scent and most focus on movement, Feet of Mist and Blending won't defeat most electronic detectors. Running Shadow might beat a sound detector. Shadow Flesh and Vanish are the real kickers of the Stealth Gift list. Vanish renders a werewolf immune to any light-based detectors, such as lasers. Shadow Flesh completely flattens a character against the walls and floor, ensuring that she doesn't set off any real vibration or sound-wave detectors. She won't even knock over tin cans or trip wires, making Shadow Flesh one of the best intrusion counter-countermeasures.

Technology Gifts are another effective way to bypass high-tech security. Left-Handed Spanner can shut off alarms or detectors, but only if the werewolf can touch them before they go off. Nightfall will instantly shut off laser-based detectors. Most such tools are not actively being used, so Iron Treachery does little. Maschinegeist is not an effective sabotage tool, but it can be used to determine how a security measure works and how to avoid or shut it off manually. Create Technology isn't so hot unless you know how to manufacture some kind of alarm dampener and have the materials with you.

The best way for a werewolf aware of these Gifts to nullify them is to use non-light-based detectors in a room that an intruder must pass through, and to light that room so entirely that Shadow Flesh does not function. Nightfall or power shut-off will kill that, though; the other option is to shroud this room in so much darkness that shadows cannot exist.

Making a base defensive includes more than just early warning. Especially against enemies such as werewolves, walls and doors must be sturdy (preferably steel-reinforced) with good locks and strong hinges. There should be a ready supply of weapons near the door, where defenders but not invaders can easily reach them. Chokepoints aren't necessary, but are valuable. If one werewolf can get in the way of five, or if five werewolves can all get a bead down the one hallway the intruders must enter, the defenders have a serious advantage.

If there are other entrances, for example, through windows, secondary doors or basements, make sure the room where the pack sleeps is set apart from all

these avenues of attack. Preferably, there is only one passage that connects the core sanctum from the rest of the location, rather than four doors to the kitchen, living room, upstairs and basement.

Beyond defensive layout, a pack can construct traps within or around their home. Most urban areas are densely enough populated that those traps must be within the pack's home. Some city's low-income areas have enough abandoned warehouses, shops and parking lots for the pack to set a number of traps without actually making the pack's home area too dangerous. Pitfalls and toppling objects are both reasonable traps, the former especially in abandoned buildings with multiple floors. Werewolves unafraid of guns may integrate them into traps, making even more deadly homes.

Finally, there should always be a way out. Packs that forget about an escape route regret it when their choke-points are filled with bodies and still filling with more. A hidden entrance into the sewer or a series of walls that look solid but actually give to a good kick can make all the difference when you just need to get the hell out. Concealment is doubly important for escape routes, because you never want the enemy coming in that way (though they can be designed to be easy one direction and insanely difficult in the other) and you also never want them to be guarding it.

Werewolves never forget that they have a way out their enemies may not: stepping through the Gauntlet into the *Hisil*. While the Pure Tribes can follow the Forsaken right through or invade from the other side, not all enemies have that power. Humans certainly don't, and neither do vampires or most mages. Of course, this escape route relies on having a nearby locus, a potent rite or some other edge. Having a weakened Gauntlet in one's base can be dangerous, just as any open window, but a weakened Gauntlet can also be a lifesaver.

On the move, armies cannot rely on their home bases. Packs must make do finding their own locations to rest, but it would be foolish to bed down in a field, abandoned barn, unfrequented basement or paid-for hotel room without securing the area first. Two things get in the way of making a camp totally secure. First, you don't own it, so you can't go about renovating everything you consider unsecured. Second, you won't be there for long. It would take too much of your time to make it totally safe — time that you would otherwise spend hunting and killing the enemy before moving on.

Secrecy and concealment, therefore, become primary defenses. The enemy cannot hurt you if he

doesn't know where you are. When choosing where to camp, a pack focusing on this tactic moves every night or every other night. The pack's members sleep with minimal other security measures, since the effort would just draw more attention. The packmembers just find a different unfrequented grove, break into a different house's basement or rent a new hotel room each night they need to hide out. This method also helps keep the Oath of the Moon, preventing humans from getting any clue that something weird's going on.

There are other options. When the pack's going to be in an area for more than just a few days, including more defensive measures makes sense. Moving from one place to another is reasonable for a short period of time, but takes time and effort and leaves a trail. If the enemy can figure out where you've been, there's a chance he'll figure out where you'll be next, and that's trouble.

While secrecy and concealment remain important, the pack begins instituting some of the other standard defensive measures. Over the centuries, armies have entrenched themselves into many millions of temporary encampments. Even out in a field, unprotected by walls or trees, members of a pack can dig a few trenches and give themselves an edge in the event of attack. No matter where they are, these measures are inevitably more hasty and less refined than their counterparts in permanent residences. That cannot be helped.

Mechanically, having early-warning systems or defensive advantages (as long as they aren't bypassed) provides a bonus to initiative, from +1 to +3 depending on how effective they are. Having trenches dug around an open-air encampment might add +1, and having an alarm shriek minutes before anyone gets close to your secret room could lend a +3 to the preparations.

Despite all the static, unmanned security measures available, most packs will also set at least one person on watch. Watches can be divided up into two or three shifts over the course of a night, so everyone gets some sleep and remains relatively sharp. Werewolves usually stand guard in Urhan form to take advantage of its sharper ears and nose and its less-noticeable stature.

### STRATEGY

Any good general's goal is to have sufficient necessary resources while denying the enemy those same things. Naturally, it becomes most efficient to do both things at once. The general strategy that an alpha pack practices is to take what it needs, when possible, from the enemy.

Essence is a rare resource, which only werewolves and spirits really use. In a war against either, raiding a locus, chasing away any guardians and taking as much Essence as possible become common practice. The Hallow Touchstone rite is a good way to cart away Essence for later use, if there's time to perform it. When fighting spirits, subjecting a powerful spirit to the Sacred Hunt rite provides valuable Essence while depriving the spirit of same. Even better, the spirit is likely to consume lesser spirits for sustenance after the hunt, further hindering the spirits' war effort.

Assuming the enemy requires food in some way, the People try to take the food they need from their enemy. Most potential enemies require comestibles for some reason. Even vampires sometimes use food to maintain the appearance of life. Only spirits and the unknown really fall outside of this category.

Enemy strongholds are rarely safe to use for long. Humans aren't going to set dangerous traps in their own homes because the traps might kill them. Supernatural enemies, on the other hand, could have the ability to set traps that recognize them. One never knows.

Still, occupying enemy refuges can be temporarily useful. When there is an attack at hand, one can use any advantage to be had. Some packs even occupy enemy strongholds and use them to fool the enemy into poor choices. Thinking a location is secure when it is not leads to a potentially deadly overconfidence. When a place is of strategic importance — if it commands the best access to certain loci, other battlefields or transportation, for example — it should be kept.

When you occupy an enemy's fortress for too long, the enemy either abandons all hope of reclaiming it or marshals a force you cannot fight. Either way, the werewolves can no longer occupy their enemy's fortress and should abandon and ruin it. In the first case, the enemy will avoid the stronghold and make sure it is no longer important to the war. In the second case, the enemy will get it back anyway. Make sure it is no longer useful to the enemy before relinquishing it and using the troops to better effect elsewhere.

## ALLIES

*We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.*

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Uratha don't have a reputation for being diplomatic or very socially conscious. And they aren't. But there are times when a werewolf, pack or alpha pack

has friends who are willing to lend a hand. Other allies are considered less personal, instead helping out because of arrangements advantageous to both parties.

## WOLF-BLOODED/HUMANS

With absolutely no exceptions, the largest and most ready population of allies out there is the humans. Werewolves often have a difficult time getting along with normal people, but some manage to find like minds among them. With contacts in the right places, a werewolf can get just about anything. Calling in a big favor from an old friend among the police force or the National Guard could give the werewolves the firepower — or even just the threat — needed to end an engagement in their favor. Giving a reporter friend a tip might shut enemy werewolves down from fear of exposure.

The most dedicated allies actually fight alongside the werewolves out of friendship or payment. Of necessity, these are strong-willed humans who are able to hold their own in a fight. They may be devoted monster-hunters willing to side with one beast to take out another, vengeful survivors looking to put down the monsters who killed their families or people with other motivations. Because of their unique dispositions, it never quite makes sense to consider them disposable.

Wolf-blooded, on the other hand, could be. While no werewolf wants to lose his family or his good breeding stock, wolf-blooded humans are able to resist Lunacy without being such exceptional examples of humanity. Although wolf-blooded don't have quite the drive that other human allies might have, werewolves could put guns in a few wolf-blooded hands to even things out against the enemy. For packs that already "keep" wolf-blooded to some degree, this is an easy thing to put into action. Other packs maintain relationships with wolf-blooded enclaves, and they can probably work out a deal for their help.

All of this hinges on one necessary question: Are the werewolves willing to be responsible for so many human deaths, just by bringing them to the battlefield?

## OTHER FORSAKEN

Not all members of the Tribes of the Moon join the war. Every pack or werewolf gets to decide for himself, and not all will choose to fight. Such divisions can create high tension between packs that join and those that don't, but it also provides the opportunity to use werewolves as allies. They are not aligned with the war, but they may be willing to help out.

It largely depends on the reason they aren't joining the war in the first place. One completely op-

posed to the cause lends a warrior no help whatsoever. A werewolf who considers the war impractical but empathizes with the ideas behind it may occasionally provide assistance.

Aid from Forsaken allies ranges from the simple to the implicit. The least involving help is in the form of indifference: the pack lets you run through its territory to reach a hot spot, flee a devastating loss or carry important news to the alpha pack. Rather than impeding you, the packmembers ignore you.

Implicit help is anything that would cause the enemy to condemn your allies as... well, your allies. When the pack chooses not to fight but conceals you within its territory, provisions you from the pack's own resources, keeps something safe for you, holds messages for you or other warriors or refuses the enemy aid, that is aid that implies alliance. Against an enemy without compunction, the pack is in danger of being attacked and given no mercy.

### SECRETS

Werewolves already commonly make allies out of spirits. Tribal and pack totems are specific and devoted examples of this, but any werewolf with the

right mastery of Shadow etiquette can make at least a few friends in the *Hisil*.

Many of the reasons for a spirit allying itself with the war are covered under the "War Totem" section, but it almost exclusively considers higher Rank spirits. No spirit of lower Rank supports a war, but such a spirit could offer itself as an ally. Certain spirits do so because they naturally benefit from the consequences of a war. Some emotions (hope, despair, grief, frustration, resignation) are more common among warriors, and the spirits that represent these emotions might help with a war. Werewolves are wary about such allies, though, because they are best served by a *prolonged* war, and their alliance is therefore fickle.

Though most spirits have selfish motivations, some such motivations can also benefit others, or are at least neutral. Innovation-spirits might just want to be near the inventiveness that war spawns, and a mud-spirits know that battles churn up dirt and blood. Other spirits trade their assistance for later favors, since the Forsaken are powerful creatures who can exert a lot of leverage in the Shadow Realm. A little help now by adding the spirit's powers to those of the Uratha, and





later maybe a pack helps give the spirit a little boost up — or a spirit might just require a regular payment of Essence. Some are part of no court, have no spirit allies and are in constant danger of being devoured by a greater spirit; these spirits might ally themselves with the Forsaken just for some temporary protection.

Many spirits desire to enter the physical world and play there, though the werewolves usually forbid it — desperate wars and all that. So a pack allows spirits to enter and experience the physical world for the duration of the war, in exchange for the spirits' assistance. Spirits can enter battle for the werewolves, using the Blast Numen to make account of themselves. Those that can Materialize do so and lay into their foes directly.

Spirits entering the physical world for the war usually bind themselves to an object through the Fetter Numen. Their werewolf allies then carry these objects with them (or plant them in strategic locations) so that the spirits can use their powers in the right places or times. A spirit fettered to an inconspicuous object in an important place can go unnoticed by some enemies, and then report on the incursions later on. Particularly devious Uratha (or spirits with initiative) might pick out a fetter someone is likely to pick up, then let the spirit travel with it back to spy on the enemy. In this way, spirits make excellent sources of intelligence.

Not all spirits must enter the physical world to contribute. Spirits can peer through the Gauntlet with Material Vision without being spied in return. Taking what they learn, the spirits bring this information back to their allies. Since Material Vision requires no Essence to use, this is one of the easiest and cheapest uses for allied spirits. Spirits that also have the Reaching Numen can sabotage enemy efforts from near-complete safety. They either use their Influence to subtly affect the enemy or use offensive Numina to attack without warning; deploying an entire pack of spirits with this capability can be devastating.

Werewolves are usually reluctant to allow spirits to become *duguthim* as part of their bargain, but it still happens. Some give in because spirits with a solid host can be very, very effective warriors, others because they need the help and negotiations were difficult and the last few Uratha might just not care about the humans that much.

### THE PURE TRIBES

Pure Tribes and the Forsaken working together? It's unlikely, but far from impossible. Any event that

threatens the Uratha as a whole, regardless of affiliation, could throw werewolves from both groups together.

The benefit Forsaken would derive from allying themselves with the Pure is dubious, though. Both groups are werewolves. Both groups have mostly the same natural powers, rites and Gifts. The only real difference between them is that they have different ideas of right and wrong, different tribal patrons and curses of different strengths.

When the Forsaken are unwilling to do something, it can be useful (if emotionally and morally difficult) to let one of the Pure do it without remorse. Tribal patrons lend their followers different strengths, and the Pure surely focus on Gift lists different from the Forsaken's Gift lists, giving them other areas of use. There may not be much benefit from the Pure having stronger reactions to silver, but the Forsaken are always glad of it when they look at their tentative allies and wonder when they'll have to put the Pure down.

Forsaken war leaders who make deals with the Pure are always sharply aware of the difference between standing together as proud allies and agreeing to put aside rivalries for mutual survival. The most common of these alliances are simple agreements to be in different places. Some tricks, manipulating the Pure into a certain action, make them a useful *tool*, but not allies.

### THE HOSTS

Single-minded as they are, the greater of the Spider and Rat Host entities can occasionally appreciate the utility of a temporary alliance. Uratha are often less forgiving, since they know that the Hosts will inevitably betray them once the two groups' goals no longer coincide.

Such alliances are short, usually lasting only long enough for both groups to accomplish a specific purpose before the suspicion and natural drives of the Hosts and the Forsaken to overcome the selfish spirit of cooperation. Forsaken usually use the Hosts for purposes the Forsaken consider regretfully necessary. In a war where access to the *Hisil* is of strategic importance, a pack might cut a deal with the Azlu to seal up the enemy's loci, depriving them of Essence and entrances into the spirit world. That same pack might employ some Rat Hosts to weaken the Gauntlet near their homes, providing more avenues for attack and escape.

Even when the “mission” is something the Hosts strongly desire to do anyway, Hosts haggle with the People. Most Hosts are canny enough to know that when the werewolves make a request, they are already over a barrel. While this isn’t always the case, most Hosts bargain for (and often get) a period free of interference.

### VAMPIRES

The Uratha have varying amounts of knowledge about the vampires. Werewolves know that vampires are uncommon, have strange powers that the People often cannot mimic or understand and that vampires have trouble respecting packs’ territories. Vampires often seem to think they own the world they walk, but at least they only come out at night.

There are many reasons a vampire might choose to ally himself to the Forsaken in one of their wars. A vampire might have need of an obedient, well-muscled bully (or a pack of them), and consider acting in the war as nothing more than a mercenary venture. Assuming the vampire can find a volunteer, his services are the wars whenever he can provide them. Another vampire decides to work within the werewolf army in order to manipulate it, for the vampire’s own benefit or maybe just to protect his home. Sometimes, the werewolves and vampires just have the same enemy.

Vampires can offer many things to the war. They have great physical potential and many magical tricks, yes, but so do the werewolves. Instead, vampires bring their incredible social leverage to a war. Vampires have the ability to use their influence within cities and societies on a fundamental level — something werewolves have trouble doing, especially as they become increasingly estranged from humankind.

When the werewolves really need to shift humanity on a significant scale or in a subtle fashion, some who know vampires may actually seek out those acquaintances.

### MAGES

Mages might be even more inscrutable to werewolves than vampires are. Mages’ powers seem to have no real limitations and are almost never consistent from one mage to the next. What you don’t know is frightening, even to the Uratha, and mages make the Uratha nervous. Worse, mages look just like humans — at least vampires are cold to the touch and smell kind of off.

A mage might ally herself with the war effort for any number of reasons. Mages are constantly looking for new sources of knowledge, especially with respect to the mystical. Werewolves are certainly mystical, and some mages choose out the “theriomorphs” as specific subjects or research. When the Uratha rise up in war, such mages want to examine the phenomenon. The best way to do that is to march with the Uratha, and the only way the werewolves would let a mage come along is if she pulls her own weight, or at least pays for the passage.

Forsaken might agree to temporarily act as guides, translators or emissaries for a trip through the *Hisil* in exchange for a mage’s valuable help. Other mages join for less selfish reasons. As with any other ally, the Forsaken and the mages could have a common enemy and agree to fight it together. In a rare turn, a mage and werewolf might both have been friends before each stepped onto the one-way street of a different supernatural life.

Werewolves have many uses for mages’ various skills. Of all their various powers, the mages are masters of knowledge and information. They can look at a person or thing and figure out what it is, where it’s been, where it’s going and just about anything else they want to know. The right mage can watch enemies from far away with nothing more than a tuft of fur or drop of blood, of which werewolves leave behind plenty. And even with all of this, mages can make effective supernatural warriors.

Because of the ability some mages have to interact with and influence the spirit world, some Forsaken look upon mages as nothing more than transgressors and threats. They are these things, true, but it is better to benefit from the mages while keeping them close enough to watch.

### OTHERS

There are other, stranger things in the night and the Shadow than vampires and spirits. These things defy definition, and usually cannot be bargained with, but their very nature insists that there must be exceptions. The house that devours souls, if the People can figure out how to talk to it, might make some packs a *very* safe hideout as long as they bring it a single learned person for its weekly sacrifice. A patch-face man who wanders down by the docks may fight for the werewolves if they promise it will get some new faces out of the deal.

Every case is unique, and no pack can depend on one of these entities for long. But sometimes it's storming, and any port will do.

### STRATEGY

Use them, because they are using you. It will not do to always maneuver your allies into the most dangerous positions and yourself into positions of safety, because your allies will abandon you. Do not allow them to abuse your trust, because then they will conquer you. Be fair to your allies and make sure your allies are fair to you. Ensure that success in the war benefits both you and your ally. Then neither will have a reason to betray the other, and both will prosper.

Likewise, deny your enemy the opportunity to make allies. Where possible, sabotage the enemy's negotiations for treaties. Do not threaten potential allies, because it will make them more resolute to guard against you. Instead, appear strong and unsailable without looking at your enemy's allies. The ally will fear earning your wrath without thinking it is too late to avoid. Your spies should be placed to disrupt negotiations. Failing that, your spies should tell you whom the enemy courts so you know where to appear strong.

### BATTLE

Every battle is unique. The ability to react to changing conditions, to improvise without panicking, is tactical genius. Knowing what must be done in given situations is not genius, but it is the tactical foundation that genius must build upon.

### ATTACK WEAKNESS

Where the enemy is weak, you should attack. This is the simplest principle of warfare. If your opponent is strong in an area, to attack would be costly to you in terms of men and resources. Such an attack weakens you more than it does your enemy. It worsens your army's morale and bolsters that of your enemy. When your opponent is easy to scatter, strike there. Doing so undermines your enemy and encourages your troops.

Putting this principle into practice requires a general to know her army and her enemy's. She must know where she keeps her strength, where her enemy is weak and whether or not she can swing her sword fast enough for it to keep its edge. Once the general has accurately judged the enemy's strength, she can place the right amount of leverage against it to shatter it into a million pieces.



Ancient armies required a train for baggage and food. Modern armies carry much more with them and need much less. Uratha armies feed as they go, so they cannot be deprived of their food. In a secret war, the only weak locations are the ones that your enemy need not or cannot guard, and those they believe you do not know. Know the enemy, and you will strike these places.

*Examples: A Hollow thought secret. The locus that the Pure didn't have the manpower to guard. The nightclub that vampires could not guard during the daytime.*

### DEFEND IN STRENGTH

Where the enemy attacks, you must be strong. This is the principle of attacking weakness mirrored. If you are strong when your enemy attacks, your armor will break his teeth. He will lose more men than you do, his morale drops; your advantage in numbers increases, and your resolve stiffens. Should the enemy strike where you are weak, your troops will scatter or die.

To follow this principle, the general must know where her enemy intends to strike. Before the blow lands, she must install her troops there to be her shield. This way, your troops are free and not tied down until the enemy strikes. To take advantage of this, the wise general sees where the attack leaves her opponent weak and strikes there, following the first principle.

When the Uratha make war, they require food, Essence and refuge. All of these things must be guarded, but there are too many to guard. The solution is to know before the enemy attacks which of these they will attack. A location is only strong if it is well guarded or completely secret, and a general never trusts that a place is truly secret.

*Examples: A secret meeting place whose shifting location is never spoken. The locus set with a bound spirit guardian. The wolf-blooded family on whom you always have a guard.*

### CONSIDER YOUR GROUND

Allow the battlefield to dictate your tactic; allow your tactics to choose your battlefield. On neutral ground, only meet the enemy in strength because you have nothing else. With the high ground, meet the enemy at the top for he will be weary. When on lower ground, maneuver the enemy to surrender his advantage. When the ground is constricting, you must hold the ground because you cannot escape.

If you match your tactics to the ground, you will do well given your ground. If you find a ground to match your tactics, you will do well given your tactics. Find the tactic and ground that fit each other, and you will surpass both.

The Uratha are maneuverable troops. They can move quickly, giving them great advantage in getting the best ground for a battle. The countryside is home to them, making it easy to find hilltops and closed ground for battles. Cities are more difficult battlefields, but the Uratha's speed, combined with the great strength they wield, makes it easier for them to choose advantageous ground.

*Examples: The locus is at a low point in a forest; the Uratha allow their enemy to occupy it without resistance, taking the high ground and constricting their enemy in the woods. In a warehouse stronghold, vampires have high ground but cannot escape; waiting them out, the Uratha force the vampires to meet on the neutral streets where they must attack in greater numbers.*

### PRACTICE DECEPTION, CONTROL IMPRESSION

The enemy should never see your actions; endeavor that the enemy should see what are not your actions. Where you are strong, appear weak. Where you are weak, look strong. He should not know that you see his weakness or realize his attacks. Look as though you cannot control your troops, then surprise your enemy.

When the enemy expects one thing, you should give him another. The enemy who thinks he is safe is weakest; strike him then. You may retreat to lure him out or give courage to his troops and weaken their discipline.

The battlefield should always appear to have an escape route, but it never should. When you are losing, escape offers your soldiers life, and they will run. Appearance of no escape heartens your enemies. When you press your advantage, seeing no escape emboldens your enemies. Appearance of escape weakens their courage.

Be wary of your enemy. He considers all these tactics for use against you. Always be ready to use the right tactic, not a prepared one. Do not anticipate actions; perform them.

*Examples: The mages attack one night after a quarrel among packs; they were unaware that the fight was staged, and are surrounded. When the bull-spirits run from the field, the Uratha see the ruse and move to take the high ground rather than take the bait.*

### KNOW THE ENEMY

All other tactics are learned wisdom. This is common sense. Know your enemy, where your enemy is and what your enemy is doing. Use whatever resources you can to see more than your enemy sees,

and more than he thinks you see. See “Fighting the War” on p. 24 for more detail.

### THE “HUMAN” SIDE OF WAR

*When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, the men's weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be dampened.*

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

When humans go to war, governments train their soldiers in taking orders, hurting people and not going mad from either one. The Forsaken don't get the benefit of dehumanization training — there's no one with enough authority to provide it, and it would absolutely disgust them anyway. Besides, a werewolf has *much* further to fall when she gazes into the depths of her own soul and realizes there's no bottom. The Oaths of the Moon are there, in part, to help the Uratha remain sane and in Harmony, but they aren't all feasible in wartime.

### THE WOLF MUST HUNT

War is, in fact, the ultimate expression of this portion of the Oath. What could be more devoted to the spiritual necessity of hunting the enemies of the People than gathering to destroy them? When the war drums beat and the wolves lope to war, they are beginning one of the most epic hunts of all. There has never been a war that is not memorialized in howls. They might not all describe paragons of the werewolves' way, but the ones people remember are.

Contention on this portion of the Oath comes from the stance that werewolves should concern themselves with the personal. The werewolves' instinct to form packs and claim territories, not to march to enemy strongholds and wipe them out. Werewolves who disapprove of war consider it abandoning the pack's prey for an enemy that is not rightfully their prey at all. A werewolf who simply disagrees with the war's purpose might take the same position in debate, even if he doesn't really feel that way.

### THE PEOPLE DO NOT MURDER THE PEOPLE

Yes, they do. War is not catch-and-release sport, ladies and gentlemen, and eventually somebody is going to die. War may not be werewolf-on-werewolf, but it is likely: the Pure are the maybe most likely targets of a werewolf war, and even a crusade against the Maeljin might reveal a Bale Hound in the warriors' midst.

This portion of the Oath is the first forsaken when the People mass for war against their brethren. If there were any way other than to kill their enemies,

the werewolves wouldn't call it a war, and they know it. They accept that other children of Father Wolf are going to fall, probably beneath their claws, and they move on. The act will diminish them and weaken them, but they will move on.

Even more than they carefully weigh each death in combat, the Uratha consider the expediency of war. They do not always have the convenience to leave a fallen foeman alive to regenerate and fight another day. The alpha pack must think long and hard about how easy it might be to set a bomb in the right place instead of sending in three packs that might not return — and the alpha must think about finding a pack that would set that bomb. All werewolves resign themselves to killing a cousin in war, but not all take the next step along that dark road to poison and knives in the dark.

Even so, there is a difference between accepting the pain and disharmony of a necessary slaying and being indifferent to it. Werewolves are careful never to forget their Oath, even when the blood is still hot, and never to revel in a werewolf's death. Some go so far as to increase their diligence with regards to other parts of the Oath in an effort to balance out their terrible acts. They are even more careful to watch their comrades, at least those they don't know. Wars attract the Zi'ir.

### THE LOW HONOR THE HIGH; THE HIGH RESPECT THE LOW

There can be trouble relating to this law when it comes to war. War requires its generals to be clever and wise. An alpha who effectively leads his pack and governs his territory may be renowned among the Uratha without possessing the necessary ability to lead a war. There are times when the alpha pack may be a younger pack, simply better suited to command, and give instructions to an older pack with greater Renown. The war leader may also set younger packs, if they are right for the job, above older packs.

Elders resent having to follow the directions of a pack that hasn't earned its reputation. Some elders cause difficulties, refusing to obey certain orders or arguing constantly with those who run the war. A pack that has made its reputation with Wisdom is less likely that one whose Renown focuses on Glory or Purity, and an Honor-based pack can be the most difficult of all. The young occasionally abuse their temporary positions of authority, but they are then poor appointments for authority, or they will soon be replaced as alpha pack.

## RESPECT YOUR PREY

When you and 100 other werewolves have all sworn to see a particular enemy destroyed, it becomes harder to respect them. The necessary repetition of ending one life after another, all condemned by their classification as “enemy,” makes it all too easy to see them as unworthy of honor. A member of the pack who falls in the war deserves respect. The deer that feeds the warriors deserves respect. A human who dies to give the Forsaken a tactical advantage deserves respect. The fifth enemy to die on a werewolf’s claws will often seem like just another dead enemy.

It can be especially hard to honor the dead when there is a reason good enough to launch a full war against them. Killing the Pure is nothing less than a joy for some of the Forsaken, especially those who have lived through the murder of their brethren and wolf-blooded loved ones. Spirits usually hold nothing but disdain for werewolves, so why should the People be any kinder when they shatter the corpus of an Essence-less spirit? When the passions run hot and werewolves mass for war, the moderation encouraged by “Respect Your Prey” often fades from the warriors’ minds.

## THE URATHA SHALL CLEAVE TO THE HUMAN

Some werewolves flow directly from the battle lust to another kind of lust, once the fighting is over. Not all do, but there are enough who feel strong erotic desires after danger has passed. Since another law makes it unlikely that the werewolves are fighting near humans, it can be very hard to find an appropriate mate. This is where the trouble starts. One amorous werewolf can be smacked down by the object of his desire, but multiple werewolves feeling the same urges make for trouble.

Depending on the nature of the war, this might be one of the more ignored tenets. Few Forsaken are going to let lust overcome their Rage when fighting against the Pure, and only after the enemies are dead and gone do the Forsaken seek forbidden release with their packmates or other werewolves. In a crusade against the spirit realm, the Uratha are going to be much less flexible about this law: no one wants to create an *unihar*, but especially not when it would strengthen the enemy directly.

This part of the Oath isn’t always a problem in war, even when there are many lusty werewolves. Some wars may be fought with wolf-blooded allies,

generally excellent mates (as long as they’re willing). In other cases, humans may not be too far away.

## DIRTY SUBJECT: RAPE

Rape has always been a facet of war. When Army A conquers City B, women were usually considered part of the loot. Luckily, this doesn’t have to be an inherent part of a war-based game: contemporary wars involve less conquering and more guerilla warfare. Werewolves have always engaged in something very similar to modern guerilla warfare — marching in ranks was never really their thing — and while they’re all about the territory, mates rarely count as “loot.” (Attractive mates *are* a resource werewolves fight over, but mates aren’t exactly what werewolves look to do after securing new territory. Not necessarily, anyway.)

But it might come up. If werewolves can lose control and start eating the flesh of their enemies, werewolves can also lose control and end up forcing themselves on nearby wolf-blooded, humans or even other werewolves. The important thing, if you’re considering making this a part of the game either as a Storyteller or a player, is making sure that everyone involved is comfortable with the subject. Few people enjoy talking about rape (and those who do bear some watching). It’s a sensitive subject because it’s an absolutely abhorrent thing to do. And not everyone wants that sort of thing in his game.

It’s not exactly a chocolate-in-my-peanut-butter thing, people. Figure it out *first*.

## DO NOT EAT THE FLESH OF MAN OR WOLF

It’s hard to do. Not only do the urges sometimes overwhelm werewolves, resisting becomes harder when there’s a *reason* for it. When a werewolf is trapped with a few humans and bereft of Essence, and a horde of the enemy is howling at the gates, it comes down to this: eat the bodies and survive or refrain, let them lie and die like a dog.

The choice even comes with varying degrees, though few other Uratha would say so. A nibble of flesh might provide enough Essence for the werewolf to come out of the situation alive. If she makes a feast of it, the warrior might be able to actually pull a worthwhile victory out of this catastrophe. Besides, the only real way to hold off the enemy is in Gauru

form, and the humans would then have to die anyway. Right?

Rationalization is common when a werewolf makes the terrible choice to consume her cousins' flesh. She almost certainly faces condemnation if her peers find out, but it may have been the only real way out. Even the sternest war leader may feel a twinge of regret at casting out a fine warrior who accepted the degradation of her own soul for the benefit of the war.

Committing this sin is more common among werewolves committed to a war; occasionally, entire packs swear themselves to silence. For some, it is the first step on a downward spiral with no end. For others, it is more akin to "experimentation" in college — something they do until the war ends, then they return to their normal lives. The latter sort tend to increase the attention they pay to other sins to protect their Harmony.

### THE HERD MUST NOT KNOW

How difficult this tenet is to uphold depends mostly on the war's battlegrounds. In the fields of Iowa, the jungles of Brazil or the steppes of Russia, several packs could run out and fight with very little concern for who'd see. The worst-case scenario is that a few farmers see something and black out, usually. For big battles, concerned werewolves sometimes designate a single werewolf (or a group of wolf-blooded) to constantly circumnavigate the battleground and get rid of unwanted spectators.

In Seattle, London or Cairo, that's just not enough. There, werewolves must become secret warriors on par with the Viet Cong in Vietnam. They are innocent when seen, deadly when unobserved. The natural disguises of the Uratha become all-important when fighting in cities, and it is a serious disadvantage not to understand or use modern human tools. When unable to use Gifts and war-ready forms, a werewolf must be able to replace them with cell phones and guns. There is more on how werewolves fight in cities in the "Tactics" section of the chapter.

It should suffice here to say that the Forsaken almost always at least *try* to hold to this portion of the Oath. Being at war, they are often less hesitant to end the life of a troublesome human. After all, the People are certainly already taking casualties. What are a few human lives (or a few dozen) if their deaths mean that one more pack might live?

### TRIBAL VOWS

Most of the Forsaken swear to various vows as part of joining a tribe. Each vow has its own effect on the way those tribes do battle.

#### Blood Talons:

**Offer No Surrender That You Would Not Accept**

Adherence to this vow makes Blood Talons some of the most dangerous Forsaken to take to war. Their ardor in battle and hard-line attitude ensures that they rack up the highest body count in any war. It also gives them the most casualties. The driving passions behind a werewolf war give the Blood Talons little cause to ever surrender, so they become known as ferocious opponents. Their enemies target them because of that.

#### Bone Shadows: Pay Each Spirit in Kind

The vow of the Bone Shadows makes them ready dealers with spirits. Bone Shadows only join a war against the spirits when the werewolves feel the spirits deserve such violent restitution. Bone Shadows know to offer *chiminage* when spirits do them favors in war, and they make certain that neutral spirits are treated neutrally.

#### Hunters in Darkness:

**Let No Sacred Place in Your Territory Be Violated**

Upholding this vow is hard when the war is large enough to take a werewolf away from her home. She must endeavor to make arrangements with local spirits and people before she leaves. To do otherwise is clear abandonment of her principles, and even with these precautions her sacred places might be lost to her. One of the *Meninna* who commits herself to a war is devoted to its cause, because she is already prepared to perform many penances when her normal duties resume. When Hunters' territories are threatened by the war, they are implacable warriors with few boundaries they will not cross.

#### Iron Masters:

**Honor Your Territory in All Things**

The "modern" werewolves, as stereotype has them, make constant trouble for the alpha pack. No matter where the war is being fought, it is or could one day be *somebody's* territory and therefore must be treated with respect. Iron Masters exercise their influences to minimize damage on local ecology and economies, and especially on the humans who might get in the way. Though Iron Masters might worry about their territories while away, they aren't concerned for their vows (unlike the Hunters in Darkness) — leaving it to develop on its own is a form of respect.

#### Storm Lords:

**Allow No One to Witness or to Tend Your Weakness**

Storm Lords tend to approve heartily of whichever pack claims alpha, even though they certainly

wanted the position themselves. Even when one fails to earn the position, it was because he excelled at testing the proper war leader. Anything otherwise would admit that they had failed.

### PACK BANS

Every pack totem dictates its own bans. War leaders allow packs involved to follow their bans, even if they inconvenience the war effort. There isn't much choice: it would be a much greater inconvenience if the pack's totems left them *en masse*. Thus weakened, the werewolves would have to rely on the war totem to do all that work for them, which it simply cannot manage. So, all but the bans most contrary to war (such as "spend no Essence after dusk" or "spill no blood") are left alone.

Some of the most stringent bans are nearly impossible to maintain during wartime. To avoid estranging their totems, some packs renegotiate their agreements. The pack agrees to lessen the strain put on their totem, asking fewer boons, and the totem agrees to lighten the ban. Both usually understand that this is a temporary arrangement, valid only until the war officially ends. When a pack joins the war against its totem's wishes, the spirit may be unwilling to reconsider its ban, usually depending on how much respect the werewolves have earned over their association.

### BREAKING VOWS

During times of war, it falls to the alpha pack to decide and arrange punishments for transgressions against the Oath of the Moon — but only if the pack finds out. A single werewolf who shows disregard for the enemy might be protected by her packmates. They stay quiet about her violation to protect her (and their) honor, but seek to apply a proper punishment. When the offense involves another pack that desires restitution, the situation escalates directly to the alpha pack for judgment.

War leaders are inclined to be lenient. While no werewolf wants to contravene the People's conventions, the war needs every able body it can get. The most typical response, as balanced by the alpha pack's Elodith (and woe to the alpha pack without one!), is a moderate immediate punishment or restitution combined with the promise of more once the war ends. Most werewolves understand that the importance of the war requires some sacrifices, including satisfaction of honor. This issue might drive some werewolves from the war, but a far greater number are willing to submerge their anger for the purpose that gathered them all in the first place.

Blood feuds, as common but divisive elements of werewolf justice, are forbidden between packs engaged in the war. Packs are expected to temporarily forget about any baggage they carry with them into the war, and to put new ones off until the war is over. Feuds that they hold with Forsaken not taking part in the war are also given up for the duration, at least by the pack that has sworn itself to the ideal. For werewolves not in the war, getting back at a pack busy with the war is a bad idea. A pack that tries soon finds several packs giving it ample cause to back off — at least for now.

Tribal vows, on the other hand, are left to the tribe to adjudicate and punish. Tribal elders not associated with or opposed to the war may be biased. One might proscribe a penance far greater than necessary out of spite, or to prevent the punished from participating. For that reason, alpha packs typically choose a ranking member of the offender's tribe (assuming the alpha pack does not contain one) and asks her to pass judgment. Reconciliation with tribal elders who disapprove can come after the war. Punishments for breaking pack bans are likewise left to the pack.

### HARMONY

Though the Oath of the Moon helps keep the People in line, not just with their society but with their own dual natures, the Oath doesn't cover everything. Any sin not mentioned has probably already been covered with the Oath of the Moon, starting on p. 36. Beyond their personal honor and the reactions of spirits, the People attempt to keep their Harmony ratings high in order to keep their fetishes attuned and functioning.

For a game based around war, it's a good idea to consider changing the rules of Harmony a bit. Though the notes below discuss Harmony sins as they are, it can be rough on players to roll degeneration at least once each chapter (and probably more often). There are two ways to go with this: leave it alone (or make it stricter), to emphasize how the brutality of war can decimate a person, or lighten the load.

Left as written in the core book, Harmony can tear characters apart. War is a series of pre-forgiven killings, and there're some things written about murder and respect in the Oath of the Moon somewhere. As the story progresses, the characters are going to grow weary of the war.

### Regular Shapeshifting

To keep the human and wolf within perfectly balanced, the Uratha must shapechange regularly.



Because werewolves with this level of Harmony are rare, and *especially* rare in wartime, this isn't often a problem. Still, many Forsaken strive for greater balance in the face of the sins they *must* commit. Out in the wilderness, it's no big deal, but a city war makes things harder. It's not feasible to change regularly when the entire war is in New York City and half the army is concentrated there — eventually, *somebody's* going to notice that Urhan isn't a dog or Dalu isn't quite human.

#### Hunting for Food

Many werewolves don't mind eating food from a market or coffee shop. They are not in great balance with their own natures. Because many werewolves involved in war will naturally be at or reach mid-low Harmony, there

may not be much call (besides personal preference) to avoid this sin. Still, high-Harmony werewolves possess respect and can bring a great deal of legitimacy to a gathering army; the wise war leader makes an effort to appease those who try to keep in good balance with their souls.

In such cases, it's necessary to consider the prey's source and how to hunt privately. Far from civilization, it might not be a big deal. Animals are plentiful and human eyes scarce. Werewolves might be reduced to digging out voles and other small game once the more satisfying

prey run away, but that's a small price to pay for a war's ideals.

City wars require more care. Neither a human clubbing a cat nor a wolf chasing down rats are common sights in urban areas. Too many werewolves trying to stay at Harmony 9 might end up taking beloved pets or diminishing the stray/vermin population enough that people take notice. Maybe the SPCA starts trying to find missing animals, or the FDA launches an investigation of meatpacking plants. Either one could be trouble.

#### Bearing Silver Weapons

When the foes are also werewolves, the breaking of this sin becomes almost ubiquitous. When fighting the Pure Tribes, even more Uratha take up silver, because they've all heard that the dangerous metal is worse on *them* than it is on *us*. Should a Bale Hound become the enemy,



very few werewolves will hesitate to take up damning arms. All werewolves will all want to hurt Bale Hounds.

Some werewolves try to skirt the issue: they might construct traps that use silver without actually bearing the weapon, but this is only a rationalization.

In the end, this is one of the sins that werewolves — especially werewolves at war — must deal with.

### Proffering Disrespect

Tempers grow short in times of need, and war is one of those times. Under many stressors at once, it is not surprising when werewolves neglect to be properly respectful to their superiors. In a war against spirits, the Uratha might easily end up treating another spirit foe, even one of greater rank, as just another enemy soldier to be cut down by a strong pack. This is failing to respect one's prey. When warring against werewolves, the same issue may arise. Likewise, there are often issues with younger werewolves commanding their elders. See the discussion on "The Low Honor the High; the High Respect the Low" on p. 36.

### Too Much Time Alone

Because it better fits their natures (and because they would otherwise revolt), most werewolves are asked to perform tasks alongside their packs. In that way, it is as easy for a werewolf to avoid this sin as it is normally.

On occasion, it becomes necessary to send a single werewolf out alone. The mission may be so secret that only the war leader and the operative know about it, or it might require such stealth that a werewolf could only succeed alone. Spending weeks without Uratha company on important reconnaissance is enough to unbalance most werewolves just a little.

Werewolves might also suffer this sin when undercover. Sent to blend in with enemy Uratha, a werewolf might still feel so separated from those around her that she suffers from the effective lack of social contact.

### Killing Human or Wolf Without Need

Werewolves are already violent creatures, and the experience of war only enhances and encourages their tendencies to inflict bodily harm on others. With so many werewolves dying, why shouldn't a few humans die also? Killing a human is one of the easiest ways to keep the Oath of the Moon intact. And with all the pain and stress of war, some werewolves lash out at humans just to take the edge off.

Collateral damage is another concern. Wolves are rarely foolish enough to get in the way when blood is being spilled and Rage fills the air, but humans can be stupidly curious. Curious enough to get in the way of a Raging werewolf, even. Werewolves in Gauru, being less than discerning, are liable to tear the innocent human apart. Raging Uratha who take their fury out on buildings may kill humans by bring-

ing the place down on their heads. When werewolves are in Death Rage, humans who stick their heads out are in even more danger.

### Wielding Silver Against a Werewolf

Even worse than carrying it is using it — even though one almost ensures the werewolf's will to do the other. He might be a hero when he cuts swathes through the enemy Uratha, but his peers are unlikely to cheer him for it once they know his secret. Despite the great damage this act wreaks on a werewolf's soul and reputation, it is still fairly common: there are fetishes and talens that invoke the power of silver against werewolves.

### Torture

With great purpose comes great price. That price is paid with effort, because staging a war is no small feat, and with the soul. There will be times when an enemy has information that the alpha pack needs. Some Gifts might have the information out of him, or certain leverage could cause him to talk, but haste is all too common in times of battle. Torture can be a quick way to get the information.

Physical torture isn't the only way to commit this sin. Carving up the flesh of an enemy and sticking bamboo shoots under his claws are terrible acts, it's true, but at least they're direct. The subject can rationalize them. Other forms of torture, which may not even involve physical contact, can be worse. Humiliation, threats and worse are all equal parts of this sin.

For some Uratha, even capture is a form of torture. Having defeated the enemy, binding it is a humiliation, keeping it imprisoned is disrespect. Unable to run free or redeem himself in his eyes or the eyes of his peers, the prisoner suffers endless shame. This may be torture, depending on who it is. Spirits are less honor-bound and more direct; they are usually unharmed by captivity, as fetishes suggest. Werewolves depend more on Renown and on dominance/submission patterns that, once set, are not constantly tested: though it depends on the individual, a werewolf is more likely to chafe significantly when captured.

### Murder of a Werewolf

This is another tough issue. The People might be in a war just to prove that they can defeat the enemy, but it's far more likely that their objective also requires the death of a significant fraction of the enemy. Against some opponents, this sin won't arise. Fighting other werewolves, as is very likely in **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, it won't be enough to beat a foe down and let her get back up. After all, she's a were-

wolf: she'll be up again in a day (unless the wounds were made with silver) and fully charged for battle in a week, if she can find a locus.

To really progress in a war against other werewolves, some of them need to die. And not every killing blow can fortuitously come before the enemy lies down and stops fighting. Just because an opponent stops fighting and bares her throat (symbolically or not) doesn't make her proof against a finishing blow, at least in war, and that is a sin.

It can't be helped, but it can be contained to prevent *too* much Harmony degradation. When possible, werewolves make it a point only to kill the helpless when they are the war's greatest enemies. Packs trying to maintain their Harmony take lesser foes captive or release them and try to kill them in battle later. Sometimes, there's no choice: a Raging werewolf might break an unconscious enemy over her knee, only suffering for it once the enormity of it seeps into her dulled mind.

### Betraying the Pack

One might imagine that this sin is unchanged in war: the pack remains the werewolf's fundamental social unit. Most werewolves swear to the war as a pack, and they take the oath very seriously. Because they all believe so strongly, betraying the war is betrayal to the werewolf's pack. Until the werewolf performs the Rite of Renunciation to remove himself from the war or is cast out with the Rite of Condemnation, betraying the war is a sin on par with betraying his pack.

For some, the war is even more important than the pack. Uratha whose packs do not believe in the war may join alone. This may or may not count as betrayal of the pack in the first place. These werewolves, and any who run alone normally but join the war, have no greater family than the other soldiers sworn to the same great cause. Betraying them is a sin equivalent to betraying the pack they do not have.

## WHO AND WHY

The problem with just listing some triggers that might send a bunch of werewolves off on the same sort of crusade is that each one must involve a specific sort of enemy. A charge against the spirit-traveling mages of America isn't going to have the same impact as a guerrilla war against a collection of Azlu who have completely infested a city.

## AGAINST THE PURE

The Forsaken have every reason in the world to launch an all-out war against the Pure Tribes. Pure werewolves hate the Forsaken, worry them at every opportunity and often don't hesitate to spill their life's blood on the ground. War might be the only real defensive option (even if the Forsaken go on the offensive). See "Reunion" on p. 57 for a scenario about the Forsaken hunting the Pure for a change, all across America.

In a war against the Pure, one thing is a certainty: the enemy must die, and the Forsaken are going to fall out of Harmony. This is probably *the* reason that no all-out war has taken place so far. Too many werewolves consider it against the Oath of the Moon and recognize that, Oath or no, it would send too many Uratha spiraling down the path toward becoming *Z'ir*.

At least the Forsaken have a couple of specific advantages against their cousins. Though the werewolves are pretty evenly matched in most respects, the Forsaken have weapons that the Pure do not. Each auspice has a specific ability granted by its choir of Lunes, and proprietary Gifts that only followers of that auspice can learn. (With **Lore of the Forsaken**, each auspice has *two* proprietary Gift lists.) These are powerful weapons, and a significant advantage against their enemies.

## AGAINST THE FORSAKEN

There's no reason to assume that the Tribes of the Moon can never war against each other. They already get into tussles over their tribal vows. One of the simplest scenarios is one in which one tribe decides the rest (or just one) are breaking fundamental rules, and must be "purged." Of course, that's a great way to start a *huge* fight, and that's what follows. Keep in mind that, in any war whose goal is the eradication of a tribe, tribal totems are quite real, and they might have a problem with losing all their children.

## AGAINST BALE HOUNDS: THE INQUISITION

Not exactly a war scenario, but no one would argue that the Spanish Inquisition wasn't bloody. When trying to fight the Bale Hounds, no one's sure who's friend or foe, but everyone's sure the Bale Hounds are around the next corner. Suspicion is rampant while everyone gears up to war footings, making misunderstandings and massacres inevitable.

## AGAINST THE HUMANS

Most Uratha agree that an attack on humanity, beyond being a sin against Harmony, would be a slaughter. And while one werewolf can account for himself well against a whole bunch of humans, there are 50 “whole bunches” for every werewolf. That spells trouble, if they ever get mobilized. They have in the past, and it can happen again.

The basic idea is that humans start believing in the monsters among them, and try to put them down. Werewolves fight the defensive war until it all blows over or the real agitators are dead. The People have to be very careful to misdirect their enemy and only to attack when victory is assured. Humans have so many soldiers on their part that any loss can be absorbed, and even one dead werewolf is a win for them.

Werewolves could start a war against the humans for various reasons. A large group of humans might be willing followers of the Pure Tribes, too rabid to be deprogrammed/brainwashed. They'd have to be put down. Or a rapidly moving disease could be devastating the herd, and only violent culling can save them. Beyond that sort of “helpful” motivation, only the most nihilistic, self-destructive Uratha would try to wipe out humankind.

## SPIRITS

Off the top of your head, spirits don't seem like the most likely enemy. They make excellent antagonists and constant troubles for the Forsaken, but there's nothing cohesive enough about them to make “the enemy.” Check out “The Endless Shadow War,” p. 66, for a scenario in which the spirits try to wipe out the werewolves. Though the scenario gives several reasons the spirits could have done it, there's one obvious motivation. The werewolves are the Gestapo to the spirits' Germany.

In the other direction, it seems fairly inconceivable that the Forsaken could begin a war against the spirits. Spirits are necessary for the world to remain healthy. As troublesome as they are, they keep the *Hisil* flowing. Spirits provide Gifts and information and are part of the system. Annoying as they are, the world wouldn't work without them. Only a crazy Uratha would try to kill them all. Although it might be worth trying to wipe the spirits all out and let a new batch, unbiased against the Forsaken, take their places...

## MAGES

The most obvious targets for a war against the mages are the Thyrsus, the mages who specialize in mastery over the spirit world. When mages' intrusions into the *Hisil* and their irresponsible acts with spirits causes large amounts of trouble across a series of territories (imagine the fallout from a mage's *big* mistake), the werewolves might just march to put a stop to it. Escalation suggests that trying to kill the Thyrsus mages would bring in mages of other sorts, which means the war would only get bigger.

Another war could begin if the mages started beginning to research “theriomorphs” in a more dedicated, *harmful* fashion, or if any mages began negatively affecting werewolves' territories on large scales. These are all really wars of retribution.

## VAMPIRES

What if wolf-blooded tasted better than normal humans, and maybe provided more energy for vampires? There's a great way to trigger a war: one vampire discovers the new delicacy, and soon all the bloodsuckers are rushing to claim their own “herd.” This immediate conflict with the werewolves could easily start a war.

Otherwise, the two supernatural groups have little to bring them in conflict with one another. Vampires live on humans, which the werewolves can't possibly exterminate, and mostly ignore matters of the Shadow, which is the main concern of the Forsaken. The “core concerns” of neither will bring them to fighting — which leaves it to worldly concerns over territory to do the job.

## WEAPONS OF THE FORSAKEN

The packs of the Forsaken tribes have been fighting the Pure for a very, very long time. What's more, the Forsaken recognize that the slow war of attrition isn't likely to end, at least not peacefully. Some foresaw the large degree of coordination exhibited in the '90s; still foresee out-and-out war or are just plain paranoid. So, they followed the Boy Scouts' credo and got prepared. Rites, fetishes and other special tools for fighting their Pure brethren all came from this effort, as did some of the People's few allies.

## MERITS

Supernatural powers are undeniably useful, but mundane knacks can also make an immense difference when push comes to shove.

### FIGHTING STYLE:

#### WOLFPACK (• TO ••••)

**Prerequisites:** Primal Urge •, Dexterity •••, Stamina •• and Brawl •••

**Effect:** Your character has learned the art of fighting as a wolf in a pack, with an emphasis in wearing down the prey, tripping and setting up your packmates to deliver decisive strikes.

The Uratha developed this style of fighting Uratha long ago. It is based upon the principles of pack fighting and surges in popularity at times when packs must take on mightier foes. (The reclamation of the Rocky Mountain region saw some packs practicing this fighting style.) Not surprisingly, this fighting style grows more potent based on the number of packmembers who practice it.

Dots purchased in this Merit allow access to special combat maneuvers. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the next. So, your character can't have Bite the Hand until he has Slow the Prey. The maneuvers and their effects are described below, most of which are based on the Brawl Skill.

**Fighting Style: Wolfpack** can be used in Urshul and Urhan forms. Untrained Uratha can attempt some of these maneuvers at the Storyteller's option, but only when in Urhan or Urshul forms, and they suffer a -2 dice penalty to all dice pools.

**Worry (•):** Wolves are experts at distracting foes. This combat maneuver may take the form of feints, extremely loud yelps or false retreats to allow one's packmates to maneuver into better positions for attack. This counts as an attack action. The effect of Worrying is that a single Uratha counts as two opponents when figuring a target's Defense. For example, a magath with a Defense of 4 is being attacked by two Uratha. One

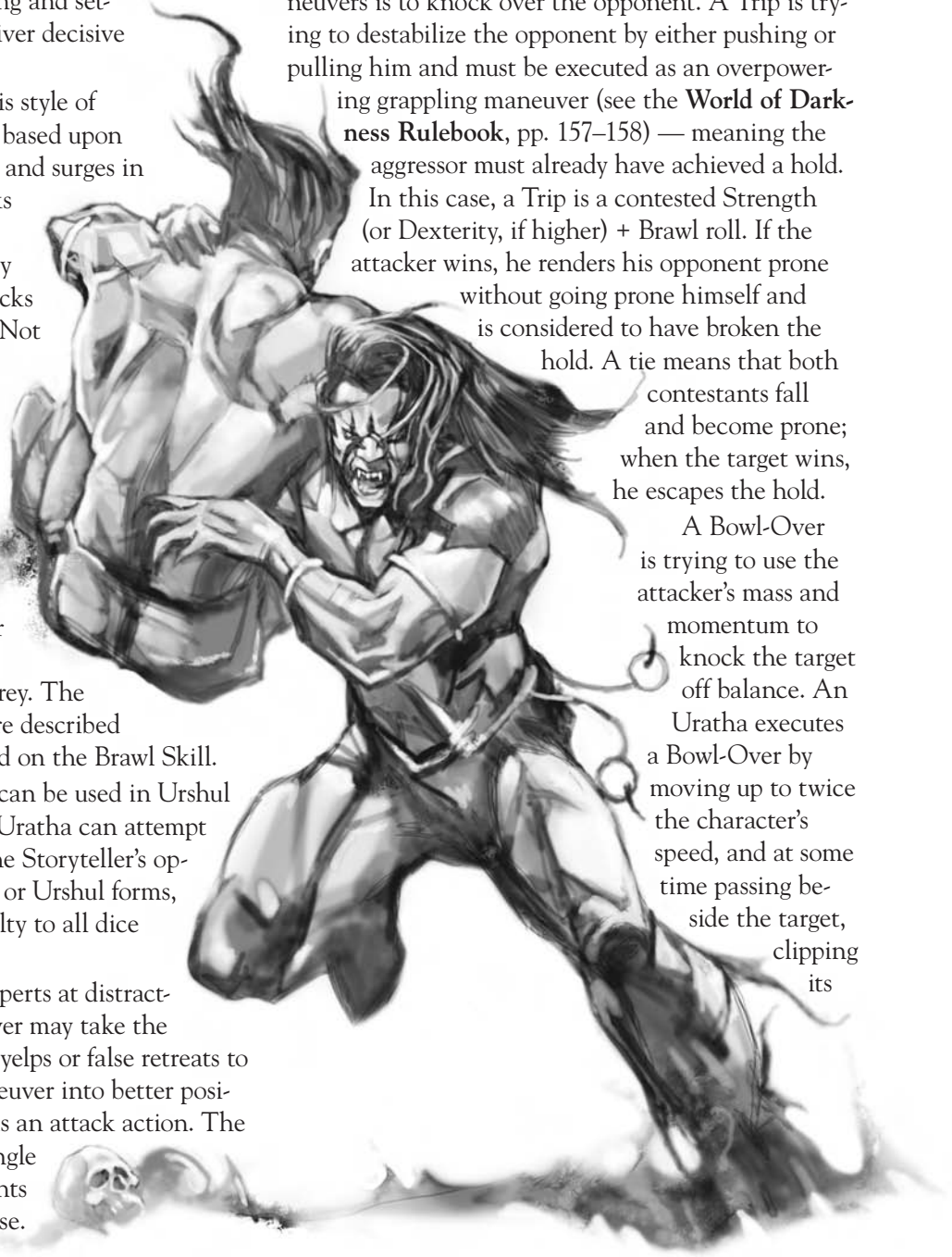
Worries the target. When calculating the monster's Defense for the second attacker, the Storyteller applies a -2 dice penalty instead of -1.

Experienced Uratha (those with this Merit) can often see through this ruse and may reflexively make a Primal Urge roll. Each success cancels the extra benefits of Worrying for a single attacker, on a one-to-one basis. Note: It does not change the base modifier for fighting multiple foes, just the advantage of Worrying.

**Trip/Bowl-Over (••):** The object of these maneuvers is to knock over the opponent. A Trip is trying to destabilize the opponent by either pushing or pulling him and must be executed as an overpowering grappling maneuver (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 157-158) — meaning the aggressor must already have achieved a hold. In this case, a Trip is a contested Strength (or Dexterity, if higher) + Brawl roll. If the attacker wins, he renders his opponent prone without going prone himself and is considered to have broken the hold. A tie means that both

contestants fall and become prone; when the target wins, he escapes the hold.

A Bowl-Over is trying to use the attacker's mass and momentum to knock the target off balance. An Uratha executes a Bowl-Over by moving up to twice the character's speed, and at some time passing beside the target, clipping its



legs. This maneuver is a full action and requires a Strength + Brawl roll; the difference between the attacker's and the target's Sizes becomes a bonus or penalty to the roll. For each point by which the attacker is larger or smaller, add or subtract one die.

Four-footed animals add two dice to resist Trip or Bowl-Over maneuvers. Should the maneuver succeed, remember that an attacker gets a +2 dice bonus to hit a prone target in close combat.

**Slow the Prey (●●●):** The werewolf targets an opponent's legs rather than his vitals — especially the juicy hamstrings. She suffers a -2 dice penalty to her attack roll, but every point of damage done also lowers the opponent's speed by 1. Prey suffering these effects may spend a Willpower point to ignore the movement penalty for a round. Hindrance from Slow the Prey disappears once the damage done by this maneuver heals.

**Joint Attack (●●●●):** Your character can take advantage of the distraction and effort inherent in fending off someone else's attack to slip through the target's defenses. By delaying his initiative to one when an ally is making an attack (regardless of who actually acts first based on compared Dexterity + Composure and roll-offs), your character can make a Joint Attack. Each ally attacking the same target on the same initiative reduces the combined penalty the character suffers from Defense and Armor by one. Only a character with Joint Attack gains this benefit, but an entire pack of werewolves all with Joint Attack can all benefit from mobbing a single target. **Drawback:** At least one werewolf with Joint Attack must spend one Willpower point so that all characters with the Merit may benefit from the tactic. Note that this Willpower expenditure does not add three dice to the attack.

## GIFTS

Gifts are some of the most potent and useful tools in a werewolf's arsenal. This section describes uses for Gifts from **Werewolf: The Forsaken** that are particularly advantageous in wartime. Gifts that allow one werewolf advantage over another in direct combat, though undeniably plentiful and suited to war, are not included out of preference for those that can have a wider bearing on strategy. Also included is a new War Gift list.

### Gifts in War

Death Sight (Death, ●) is an invaluable skill for a scout to have. With the Uratha and their potential enemies so skilled at ambushes and so deadly, Death

Sight can sometimes be the only way to even get a hint that a pack devoted to the war died here.

Corpse Witness (Death, ●●●) gives a secure hideout a number of guards who cannot be corrupted or killed. The biggest problem is that it's a common enough tactic that most enemies will see through it, and all someone needs to do to disrupt it is destroy the jaw. Using the corpses of small animals can be more subtle, but the tactic remains expensive in terms of Essence expenditure. In a war with a high number of casualties, Corpse Witness is a good way to get information out of dead scouts, as long as the enemy doesn't know enough not to leave the head.

Higher-level Elemental Gifts (●●●●+) can rival entire packs in destructive force.

Playing Possum (Evasion, ●●●) can give werewolves the opportunity to gather sensitive information. After all, you don't need to be careful what you say when your foes are dead. Sending out an entire pack (or part of one) to fight and then "die" can reveal a bounty of operational intelligence.

Father Wolf's Speed (Father Wolf's, ●●) endows the Forsaken with great speed, enough to quickly carry news and military commands quickly, and as securely as only a werewolf can.

Spirit Pack (Father Wolf's, ●●●●●) is notable because five high-Glory Forsaken, all summoning a pack of wolf-brothers, can turn a losing battle *completely* around or change a tie into an utter rout.

Aura of Truce (Half Moon, ●●●) allows the Elodith to arrange for temporary POWs between sides of the war. Although this Gift's protection is far from absolute, the Gift allows negotiating parties to gather peacefully, at least at first.

Sense Malice (Insight, ●) is the right choice for giving werewolves advance warning of an ambush. Any party planning to jump out and assault the pack is going to give off healthy wafts to someone using this Gift.

Omen Gazing (Insight, ●●●●●) gives a werewolf the potential to be the war leader's most valuable advisor. The foresight it offers, while plagued with uncertainty, can still be worth the potential mistakes it causes.

Inspiration Gifts are *all* excellent choices for a werewolf going to war. True Leader and Victor's Song are particularly potent, applying as they do to *all* allies (or allied werewolves) and not just packmates, as many other Gifts.

Know the Path (Knowledge, ●●●●) provides knowledge that any war leader or pack alpha at war should not be without. Knowing how to reach an opponent's stronghold or locus, with the possibility of learning the safest path, is an important part of any werewolves' war. All that is required to find a hidden locus is to meet someone who knows where it is. Prisoners are useful for this purpose; when unable to take captives, a person with Know the Path can try to gather this most-valuable intelligence on the battlefield.

Anybeast and Skin-Stealing (Mother Luna's, ●● and ●●●●) are both excellent Gifts for spies and other subtle gatherers of knowledge to know. A war leader whose army yields neither skill is at a marked disadvantage when reconnoitering the enemy.

Speak with Beasts, Forest Communion and Beast Ride (Nature, ●, ●●● and ●●●●) are all superior Gifts for gathering information about one's enemies. All of them give a werewolf the ability to gather significant amounts of intelligence by questioning beasts, feeling the surrounding woods or pointing an animal at an animal camp and watching through its eyes.

Maschinegeist (Technology, ●●●●) can be an excellent source of information, which is just about what keeps a war functioning. In the modern world of increasingly ubiquitous surveillance, it's possible for a werewolf with this Gift to find or track just about any target by communing with traffic- and security-camera systems — at least in urban warfare.

All the Warding Gifts are useful on a tactical scale, though for different reasons in different sorts of wars. Warding against predators generally has little purpose unless the enemy is using animals as agents, but the fact that supernatural entities can sense the Gift's boundary means that it can be used to demarcate no-man's-lands or other areas otherwise off-limits to one party or both (medical zones, "Switzerland," etc.). Blocking an area against humans is extremely useful when they are the enemy; otherwise, Uratha use wards to protect humans from becoming collateral damage. Shadow Ward specifically is very useful in wars against werewolves or spirits, forcing the enemy to come at them in the physical world. Finally, Ward of Spirit Slumber is almost obscenely useful when the enemy has spirit allies — or when spirits *are* the enemy.

Some Gifts from **Lore of the Forsaken**, especially the City Gifts and some of the Judge's and Stalker's Moon Gifts, are also especially useful in war.

## WAR GIFTS

These Gifts focus on the most important commodity in war: information. Skill in battle and powerful weapons are valuable, but knowledge is king. Because so many spirits operate on a personal, local level, it can be exceedingly difficult to find those that teach War Gifts. Moreover, because large-scale, organized war is so faint in werewolves' memories, few know these Gifts exist or think to seek them out.

Most commonly, a werewolf can learn these Gifts from the military-spirits that hover about military bases. Regimented creatures, usually insects such as army ants or wasp colonies, also have a nature that would allow their spirits to teach a War Gift or two. Some famous battle-sites, such as Gettysburg, Waterloo or Normandy Beach have powerful spirits that linger still and might share their secrets. Finally, hot combat zones spawn hundreds of the active (but short-lived) war- and battle-spirits that know these Gifts, if a werewolf can only get close before they dissipate.

### FIND CONFLICT (◡)

In the middle of a massive battle, a general can easily lose track of his troops. With this Gift, a war leader can instantly locate the hottest fighting and focus his efforts there, or he can detect incoming enemy action before the scouts reach him.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Investigation + Cunning

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The power fails, and the werewolf cannot activate any War Gifts for one hour.

**Failure:** The werewolf does not learn the location of any battles.

**Success:** The werewolf becomes aware of the fiercest and most escalated conflict within one mile, plus one mile per success. In calm areas, this Gift can pick up something as innocent as a heated argument. When there are multiple conflicts underway within the Gift's range, the werewolf always pinpoints the more dangerous. A conflict with weapons bared always trumps one that is not, and open violence always has precedence over a situation without exchanged blows. If two battles are at about the same level of escalation, the one with more participants wins.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to learning the location of the most violent conflict, the werewolf gains a rough estimate of how many are fighting on each side.

### NOTICE DEFEAT (••)

When several groups of Forsaken soldiers are fighting the enemy, knowing when one requires reinforcements or other assistance is important. Using this Gift allows a war leader to know when any werewolf or pack under her command is losing a battle.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Empathy + Wisdom

**Action:** Reflexive

Once she has learned this Gift, a character never activates it consciously. Instead, any time a soldier or company (usually a werewolf or pack) under the werewolf's effective command is in battle against the joint enemy and in need of support, something tickles at the back of her mind. By reflexively spending a Willpower point, the werewolf turns that irritation into solid information on which she can act.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The werewolf misinterprets the information, making it dangerously nonsensical and contradictory. She becomes temporarily dizzy, losing one die from all physical actions. She also becomes unable to use any War Gifts for one hour.

**Failure:** Despite the werewolf's attention, the vague unease fades without revealing anything.

**Success:** The werewolf learns which of her units is in trouble, based on its most common appellation (the name of the werewolf or pack, the title of her special task force, etc.). More successes reveal more information: three successes means the leader learns approximately where the subjects are (within about one square mile). With five successes, the werewolf also knows what sort of the support the troubled unit most desires (which is not always the best support to give).

**Exceptional Success:** Increased knowledge (as described above) becomes known to the werewolf.

#### Suggested Modifiers

##### Modifier Situation

-1	More than 1 mile away
-2	More than 10 miles away
-3	More than 100 miles away

### WHISPERS ON THE WIND (•••)

Possessing good intelligence is not the same as being able to use it. Before knowledge can become action, a general must command his troops. Using this Gift allows a werewolf to direct the action from afar, remaining central to an engagement while ensuring that his subordinates hear his instructions.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** No roll is necessary.

**Action:** Instant

Activating this Gift lets the werewolf speak directly into the wind, which carries his words as much as three miles to people he commands. He can convey as much as three short or two longer sentences before the effect ends, and the werewolf can target an individual, select group or indiscriminately let the words reach all who serve under him. Targets of the Gift hear the statements about one minute later. They all recognize the source of the commands as their superior, but they are in no way compelled to obey any instructions given.

### ECHOES OF OPPOSING BRILLIANCE (••••)

Every military commander in history has wanted to know what her enemy counterparts are doing. This Gift steals the words of opposing commanders and carries them to the werewolf. Being able to hear their orders gives the war leader a definite edge.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Wisdom  
– highest Resolve

**Action:** Instant

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Unable to discern useful from dross, the wind-spirits whisper hundreds of babbled words in the werewolf's ear. She suffers a -2 dice penalty to all Perception rolls relating to hearing and a -1 die penalty to anything that requires concentration for the scene.

**Failure:** The werewolf fails to eavesdrop on her enemies.

**Success:** The werewolf hears words spoken by her enemy commanders, carried to her by fleet spirits. She does not hear everything they say, but she usually gets enough to construct an overall picture of the tactics they employ. In most cases, the Storyteller should give the werewolf an idea of what her opponents plan and allow her to counter their strategies. When a battle is being played out more abstractly with dice rolls, the werewolf gains a +2 bonus on all tactical rolls.

**Exceptional Success:** Wind-spirits are particularly thorough. Nearly every word the opposing commanders utter, the werewolf hears. With this much information, she should be able to construct a nearly unbeatable counter-tactic. In dice terms, she gets a +3 dice bonus to relevant rolls.



### SHARED BATTLE MIND (•••••)

Many wars suffer because the general is too far removed from his rank-and-file soldiers. They cannot see the plans he has made because they're too close to the action. This Gift gives a small portion of the war leader's awareness to all his werewolf allies, keeping a battle moving in the right direction.

**Cost:** 2 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Socialize + Purity

**Action:** Extended (five successes + one success per werewolf affected; each roll represents one minute)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The werewolf's attempt to infuse his allies with a portion of his strategy ends catastrophically. Instead of receiving a subconscious understanding of the battle, they develop false ideas about what they should do. For 10 minutes until the confusion clears, all werewolves targeted with the Gift suffer a -1 die penalty to all actions as they charge enemies who are somewhere else and expect reinforcements that are miles away.

**Failure:** No successes accumulate.

**Success:** Successes accumulate. When the werewolf achieves a number of successes equal to the number of targeted werewolves plus five, he manages to imbue those allies with a small piece of his knowledge. It manifests as a subtle instinct to head in a certain direction, stand fast, recover the wounded or other broad and immediate tactics. These instincts depend on the Gift-user's tactics, so a war leader with out-of-date information can still lead his soldiers astray.

Shared Battle Mind conveys no *clear* information. This Gift does not replace Whispers on the Wind or having runners in battle to carry orders and information back and forth. There is only an itch in the back of the head, a gut feeling that this is the right thing to do at the moment, and nothing compels a werewolf to obey. It is often hard for werewolves to obey, since it is a quieter instinct than *chase* and *kill!* and less stirring; war leaders must keep their urges under control to wisely manage a battle.

Battles commanded with the help of this Gift typically run much more smoothly, as the war leader's followers know better what he needs them to do and do it. The Storyteller should help make this happen when a player's character is running the war. Mechanically, werewolves affected by the Gift may make Composure + Empathy to sense what the Gift-user

desires. Penalties on the roll come from distraction or competing instincts. Success indicates that the werewolf gets a general idea ("stay where you are," "rout them!" "help another pack"); exceptional success provides somewhat more detailed information ("stay in place to protect supplies," "finish off that Hallowed Jungle pack," "be reinforcements to your west").

**Exceptional Success:** More successes accumulate. If the werewolf ends the Gift exceeding the necessary number of successes by five or more, the subconscious directions become stronger. Werewolves roll Composure + Empathy + Primal Urge to feel out their Gift-given instincts.

### WOLFSLAYER GIFTS

The Wolfslayer Gifts are powers only effective against werewolves and, unlike some Rage or auspice-related Gifts, Wolfslayer Gifts are almost always harmful or negative. Some Uratha disapprove of these Gifts because there is only one real reason to learn them: to fight other werewolves. Spirits are often reluctant to teach these to the Forsaken, less than eager to reveal their arsenal of anti-werewolf powers. Other spirits are happy to share the knowledge, considering it a warning of their capabilities or hoping that the People will use them to tear itself apart. Rebellious and warlike spirits teach these Gifts, the ones that the Forsaken consider most likely to rise up in arms against the continued policing of the werewolves. Greed-spirits, envy-spirits and panther-spirits can be teachers, among others.

### FORM LOCK (•)

Shifting shape is instinctive to the People. It's as completely natural as clenching a fist or flipping off the guy who's tailing you. So, when shapeshifting is denied a werewolf, it is very frustrating. Some even panic, unaware that hostile magic is affecting their change.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Charisma + Science + Purity vs. Resolve + Primal Urge

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Gift not only fails to affect the target, its residue hinders the shapeshifting of the werewolf who invoked it. The character suffers a -2 dice penalty to all shapeshifting rolls.

**Failure:** The Gift fails to reduce the target's shapeshifting pool.

**Success:** Each success on the roll reduces the target werewolf's shapeshifting pool for one minute by the character's Purity. Any successful, voluntary change on the target's part eliminates the penalty.

**Exceptional Success:** The target's shapeshifting pool remains penalized for one *hour*; each successful change reduces the remaining duration by five minutes.

### PATRONLESS PACK (••)

Nearly every werewolf pack has a personal and specific totem, which lends them a portion of its power in exchange for children among the Uratha. Werewolves with this Gift can temporarily sever the bond between pack and totem, eliminating some of the advantages her enemies have.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Cunning – totem's Resistance

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Offended by the attempt, the spirits instead separate the werewolf from her totem for one day. Werewolves without totems are unaffected and fail simply.

**Failure:** The werewolf is unable to remove her opponents' totem's influence.

**Success:** The werewolf targets a pack and temporarily drives a wedge between them and their totem. They lose any and all totem benefits for the rest of the scene. She affects all werewolves she can see that belong to the same pack; she need not know the pack's name to target it — looking at an enemy werewolf and concentrating on *that* pack is enough. Members of the affected pack not present are unaffected by the Gift and remain blessed by the totem. (This may mean that one lone werewolf is the only one available use pack Attributes or Skills, or the only one who can call upon story bonuses.) Some werewolves consider being under the effect of this Gift to free them from the constraints of their totem's ban until the Gift ends, but few totem spirits see it that way.

**Exceptional Success:** Even members of the pack who are not present are cut off from the totem spirit. The pack is sure to have a few words about why their totem is so susceptible to enemy Gifts later on.

### RETURN TO BIRTH (•••)

Hishu, while the best form for hiding among the six billion sheep on Earth, is one of the least combat-effective and everyone knows it. This Gift forces a

werewolf back into human form, though it can't keep her there.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Charisma + Science + Purity vs. Resolve + Primal Urge

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The attempt fails, and the werewolf cannot use this Gift again for 24 hours.

**Failure:** The werewolf fails to force his target into her human shape.

**Success:** The target reverts immediately to Hishu form and cannot use her next action to change shape. For werewolves already suffering from Form Lock, this forced change does not end that effect. A werewolf currently suffering *Kuruth* is immune to this Gift.

**Exceptional Success:** The target's system is so shocked by being forced into Hishu form that she cannot attempt to change into another shape for five turns.

### HUMAN HEALTH (••••)

One of the Uratha's most serious advantages in battle is their ability to bounce back from nearly any wound, and quickly. Take that away, and a werewolf goes down that much faster. Even worse, a werewolf in Gauru knows he has to release the form soon or go berserk, and if he's taken so many wounds that he would die by shifting back to human, he's in a very bad place.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Medicine + Purity vs. Composure + Primal Urge

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Rather than shutting down, the target's enhanced healing blurs into action. As if the werewolf spent a point of Essence on her target's behalf, the target immediately heals a point of lethal damage.

**Failure:** The target continues to heal as normal (for a werewolf).

**Success:** For the next hour, the target heals as a human does. See p. 175 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for full details on human rates of healing. He cannot spend Essence to heal lethal wounds instantly, though it will heal bashing wounds.

**Exceptional Success:** The effect lasts a full day, and the target werewolf cannot even spend Essence to heal bashing damage.

### OBJECT OF PIERCING CLARITY (•••••)

One of the People's greatest defenses is Lunacy. Against mortals, it is usually effective enough to end a fight. When the fight is with other supernaturals, Lunacy can blank the minds of those annoying witnesses. It may be hard to deal with in personal life, but it's a great blessing when worrying about "the herd," especially when a war spills into the streets. This frightening Gift frees a werewolf from the curse of Lunacy for a time. While it may seem like a boon for those Uratha who still try to live a human life, it is definitely a double-edged sword.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Expression + Glory vs. Composure + Primal Urge

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

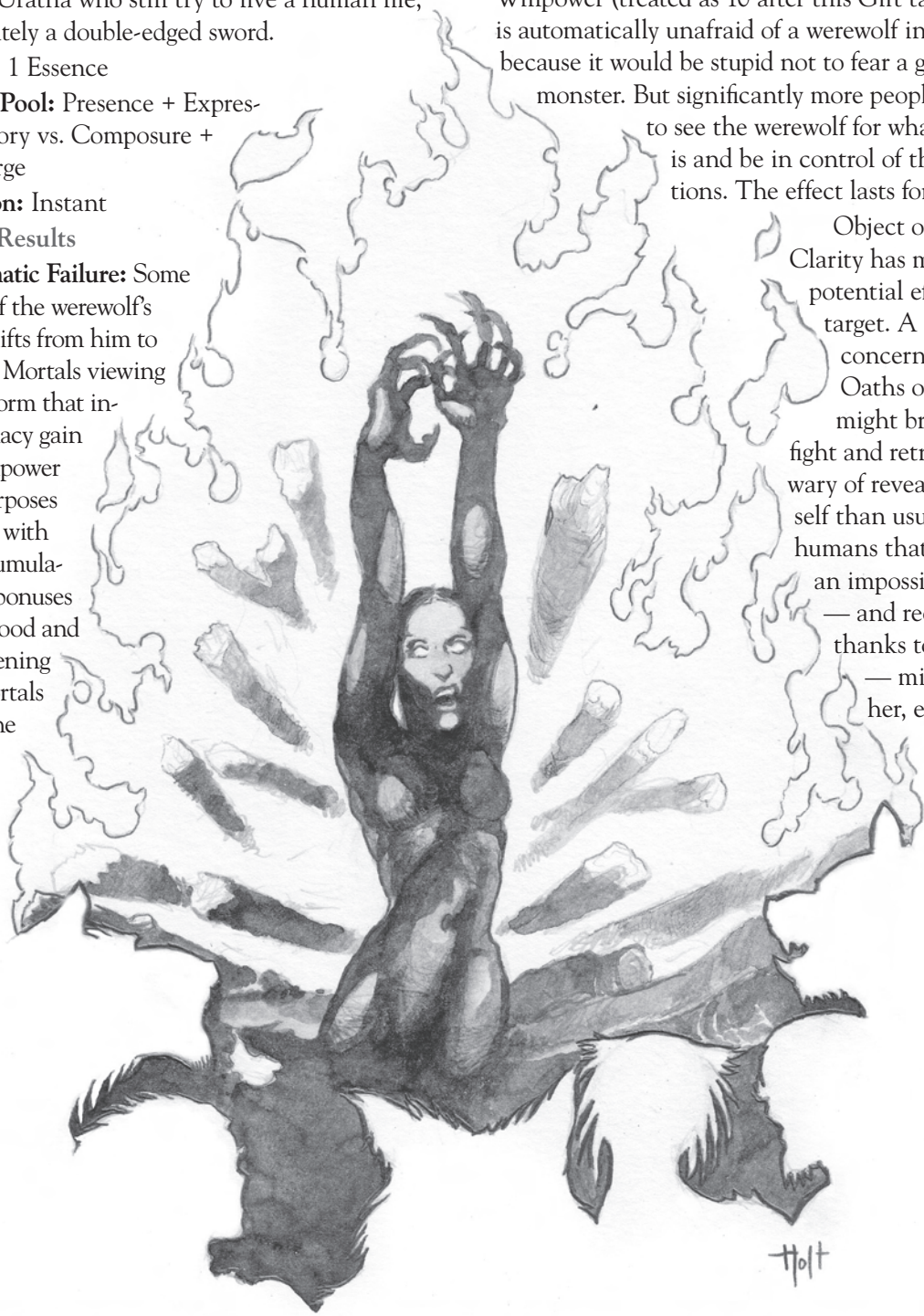
**Dramatic Failure:** Some measure of the werewolf's Lunacy shifts from him to his target. Mortals viewing him in a form that induces Lunacy gain +2 to Willpower for the purposes of dealing with Lunacy, cumulative with bonuses for wolf blood and less-frightening forms. Mortals viewing the target lose -2 from

Willpower for the same purpose. Both effects last a half-hour.

**Failure:** The Gift fails to dampen the target's cloak of Lunacy.

**Success:** The werewolf temporarily subdues his target's Lunacy; the target senses this diminishment. Treat all onlookers as if they have +4 Willpower for the purposes of dealing with the target's Lunacy. This bonus is cumulative with others. Successful use of the Gift does not mean that a person with six dots of Willpower (treated as 10 after this Gift takes effect) is automatically unafraid of a werewolf in Gauru, because it would be stupid not to fear a giant wolf-monster. But significantly more people are going to see the werewolf for what she truly is and be in control of their own actions. The effect lasts for a half-hour.

Object of Piercing Clarity has multiple potential effects on the target. A werewolf concerned with the Oaths of the Moon might break off the fight and retreat, more wary of revealing herself than usual. Or the humans that see her in an impossible shape — and recognize it, thanks to the Gift — might assault her, especially if



her opponent looks like nothing more than a fellow mortal.

Use of this Gift can be very tactically effective, but many Uratha do not approve. It is a few hairs-breadths short of actively revealing the People to humanity, which no sane werewolf desires.

**Exceptional Success:** The werewolf completely subdues his target's Lunacy for a full hour. Even the weakest-willed mortals are unaffected (at least supernaturally), even by the terrifying Gauru form.

## RITES OF WAR

A ceremonial people, the Uratha have rites for most things in life. Battle is one of the most unpredictable things that are certain to crop up in a werewolf's future, so it would be surprising were there not many rituals dealing with the People's frequent (and frequently deadly) skirmishes.

### RITE OF THE AVOWED SOLDIER (◐)

When the Forsaken go to war, they must know for certain who is with them and who against. Of the packs that join for battle, one becomes alpha, and the rest must be willing to remain dedicated to the war's ideal even while someone not their pack alpha gives them directions. It can be hard, but this rite helps. The Rite of the Avowed Soldier is an oath, conducted by the ritemaster, that promises devoted service in the war until the enemy's defeat. This helps assuage werewolves' egos, as they are sworn to the war and not to the war leader. Even members of the alpha pack are subject to the rite, since they may well be ousted from their positions of leadership before the war is done.

**Performing the Rite:** Before a semicircle of her peers, with her back to a bonfire, the ritual's subject proudly declares her dedication to the war. The ritualist conducts the subject, asking her name and the name of her pack. After those, she describes her commitment to the goal of the war, and the ritemaster turns her statements into eloquent poetry. After he has howled the subject's affirmation loudly, the ritemaster guides her in a formal oath swearing her dedication to the war.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (12 successes; each roll represents three minutes of effort)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Peers are unconvinced by the ritemaster's representation of the soldier's feelings. She may join the war if she still desires, but her

heroism does not inspire tales. The ritemaster and the subject both suffer a -1 die penalty to Social rolls involving members of the war for the next month.

**Failure:** No successes accumulate.

**Success:** Successes accumulate. If the rite is finished, the subject becomes an official supporter of the war. She may benefit from the war totem's blessings and is the peer (apart from Renown) of any other werewolf participating in the war.

**Exceptional Success:** Successes accumulate. Gaining 17+ successes by the end of the rite means that her words were moving, or her ritemaster was particularly gifted in his speech. Both gain a one-die bonus to Social rolls with other members of the war for one month.

### RITE OF CONDEMNATION (◐)

One werewolf does not always approve of another. To some perspectives, the People seem so fractious that it's remarkable that any two packs ever get along, but werewolves understand each other on levels that are difficult for a human to appreciate. Even if they don't agree, they are all bound together by their common fates and experiences. When one of the Uratha feels that another has disgraced himself and his race, he may perform this ritual to declare that shame to Forsaken society. This is also the rite used when a werewolf who has participated in the Rite of the Avowed Soldier must be removed from the war, usually because of betrayal or great ineptitude.

**Performing the Rite:** The werewolf who wishes to condemn another must perform this rite herself; a war leader may designate another to end the Rite of the Avowed Soldier if she wishes. Bearing a token that represents the target of the ritual diatribe and another that represents the disgrace or betrayal, the ritualist rails against the shameful actions of the rite's subject. At the end of the speech, she uses the token of disgrace to break the other token.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (20 successes; each roll represents five minutes of effort)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** All successes are lost. The character has poorly represented her opinion of the rite's subject and made her audience think her inconsiderate, judgmental and rash. She suffers a -1 die penalty to all Social rolls among her audience for the next month. Other members of the war do not believe the condemnation and consider the rite's target still an honorable participant in the effort.

**Failure:** No successes accumulate.

**Success:** Successes accumulate. If the character has the required number of successes, she completes her condemnation. Her audience (and people to whom the words spread) think poorly her rant's target. He suffers a -1 die penalty to all Social rolls among the audience (and people at the meeting) for two months. He is no longer part of the war and can gain no benefit from the war's totem.

**Exceptional Success:** Successes accumulate.

If the character achieves 25+ successes at the rite's completion, she has made a particularly moving case. Her tale spreads quickly throughout Forsaken society (and among any allies in the war), and the rite's subject suffers a -1 die penalty to Social rolls with those entities for three months.

### RITE OF ANTICIPATED FORGIVENESS (••)

As common as combat is, it is impossible that no claw ever slips or tooth tears too deep. And when fighting the Pure, many werewolves would rather spill all their opponents' blood than give their hateful brethren the opportunity to return and return the favor. It's hard not to "murder the People" sometimes, whatever the elders say, and some werewolves have a method for dealing with the guilt — or the lack of it. This rite assures the Forsaken that she will receive some measure of forgiveness should she accidentally (or not) kill a werewolf. Like being pardoned for a crime not yet committed, the rite often makes it easier to actually do the deed, but werewolves who do often do it with tears streaming down their cheeks, contrite and glad of the absolution.

**Performing the Rite:** In Hishu form, the subject of the rite goes to her knees before the ritemaster, who must actually be willing to forgive the transgression. The ritemaster proceeds to lead the subject through a formulaic series of inquiries (on the master's part) and confessions (on the subject's part) in the First Tongue. The ritual ends with an extended invocation of Mother Luna, the spirit of Father Wolf and the subject's tribal totem. When it is over, the subject rises, feeling in touch with her ancestors and already regretful of the act she may perform.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (15 successes; each roll represents five minutes)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The ritual fails to reaffirm the subject's reluctance to murder another werewolf. Instead, the meaningless confessions and prayers she hears only

make her feel like the act is equally of little import. She loses one die from the degeneration rolls she must make if she kills any werewolves during the next day.

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated.

**Success:** Successes accumulate. If the ritemaster reaches 15+ successes, the ritual ends and the subject feels strongly her connection with all her werewolf brethren. She believes that she would truly regret the act of killing another werewolf, however necessary or unavoidable it might be. She gains one die to any degeneration rolls she must make for killing werewolves during the next hour.

This rite only has (positive) effect if the character subjected to it actually wants to repent for any werewolf deaths she may cause. A werewolf who undergoes the ritual with no actual intent to feel contrite or desire to change her ways afterward suffers penalties to the degeneration rolls as though the rite had ended in dramatic failure.

**Exceptional Success:** Successes accumulate.

There are no special bonuses.

### WEALTH OF HEROES' HEALTH (••••)

War may be rare for the Forsaken, but combat is a foregone conclusion. This rite is an old one, said to be created by Father Wolf after he first ran with the pack of his children. Before entering battle, a pack's ritemaster may use this ritual to bless them all with long life and fortune in war. Then, at the ritual's climax, the entire pack runs into the fray with confidence and flair, relatively certain that the spirits of their ancestors are watching over them.

**Performing the Rite:** Wealth of Heroes' Health is quieter than most rites, and faster, probably because it was designed to be activated in the short, tense minutes before an impending battle or ambush. The ritemaster arranges his packmates around him in an evenly-spaced circle and goes from one to the next, giving each a token of the pack and taking from each a token of the individual. He concludes it with a few words in the First Tongue thanking the ancestors for their protection.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (10 successes needed; each roll represents one minute)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** All accumulated successes are lost; the ritemaster must begin again.

**Failure:** No successes are added.

**Success:** Successes accumulate. Once the total number is reached, the ritemaster and each involved

packmate spends a minimum of one Essence. These points of Essence become part of a phantom, communal Essence pool that all packmates may draw upon *only* for the purpose of self-healing. Each point of Essence spent into the pool becomes two points of Essence in the phantom pool. Over the next scene, each werewolf involved in the rite can draw upon this pool as a reflexive action to heal a point of lethal damage. This counts toward the maximum amount of Essence spent in a turn for the individual, though there is no limit to the amount that can be drawn from the communal pool in a single turn. At the end of the scene, any phantom Essence left unused disappears.

**Exceptional Success:** The ritemaster achieves many successes. If 15+ successes are gathered on the same roll that ends the rite, the amount of phantom Essence in the group pool increases by two.

## WAR-FETISHES AND TALENS

The People have had ages upon ages to innovate and create many talens and fetishes. Because of their nature, there are many and more dedicated to battle or war. Here is a sampling.

### BLAST ROD (TALEN)

Made from a dried pea pod or seed husk, this talen is infused with a spark- or flame-spirit. When thrown, it burst into a small flame that lights its target on fire. Blast pods are good for starting instant conflagrations as distractions, or as part of a battle tactic — cutting off either escape or pursuit, for example. Objects that are inflammable or too wet to light typically do not catch fire, but two burst pods thrown in succession might dry out and then light something that is only moderately damp.

**Action:** Instant

### KEEP-YOUR-DISTANCE (TALEN)

The keep-your-distance is a sealed-up sack about the size of a tangerine. They fit nicely in the palm, are made of cloth or leather and are generally filled only with the spirit that empowers them. A werewolf uses one as part of any Brawl attack, striking with an open, keep-your-distance-filled palm. Ignore armor, because the attack only needs to make contact. The small pouch bursts open in a howl of wind and force, knocking the target backward three yards for every success on the attack. A Dexterity + Athletics roll is necessary for the target to keep from falling prone, penalized one die for every success on the attack.

Being hurled backwards into a solid object inflicts one point of bashing damage on the target

but stops the traveling; at the Storyteller's discretion, striking something sharp might inflict lethal damage. Werewolves use these when they are surrounded or really need a moment of breathing time.

**Action:** Instant

### SILVER DUST (TALEN)

Usually kept in a small leather pouch, this talen looks just like its name suggests: dust of ground silver. Closer inspection reveals that it has been cut with something else. There is a mixture of powdered wolfsbane, lead filings and iron dust mixed in. When the mixture is sprinkled on a weapon, the weapon becomes silver for the next three turns. Spirits of the Earth Choir or various weapon descants empower this talen. Carrying this talen is frowned upon by many Forsaken but is not technically a sin. Wielding the altered weapon is

**Action:** Reflexive

### TELL-TALE (TALEN)

Werewolves make the tell-tale out of leaves, twigs and nuts, shaping them into a small bird and securing the whole thing with drips of sap. Activating the talen is a matter of naming a specific individual and whispering up to five words to the bird-doll. There is a -1 die penalty on the Harmony roll for every mile of distance to the target; if the bird fails to activate, it may be reused later (but not more than one attempt per scene). Otherwise, the bird animates and flies to the designated target. There, the tell-tale hovers beside the target's ear and whispers the five words before falling to the ground in its constituent pieces.

In war, these talens are produced by the handful and handed out to pack alphas. The alpha pack keeps a horde of them for running battles or passing secure messages. Spies also find them very useful. Hummingbird-spirits power this talen.

**Action:** Simple

### WOUND-BINDERS (TALEN)

This talen comes as a collection of potent herbs wrapped tightly in several layers of gauze bandage. With activation, a werewolf slaps it on a lethal wound she has received while it's still fresh. The wound-binder sticks and, temporarily, makes the wound completely ignorable. It is just as though the werewolf had spent a point of Essence to heal the wound — the player erases the rightmost lethal wound on her wound track, but keeps track of it. At the end of the scene, any wounds treated with wound-binders reappear, making them potentially dangerous to use. She cannot choose to end the talen's effect early or

heal the lethal wound with regeneration until the effect does end. There is no limit to the number of wound-binders a werewolf can use on herself at once.

**Action:** Reflexive

### ALERT-ME (•)

The alert-me is a short rod of something with a little bit of flexibility. Nature-oriented Uratha make them out of vegetation or stiff leather while more modern werewolves might use rubber or plastic. Once attuned to the object, a werewolf activates and wears it while putting off sleep. The alert-me strengthens the character against fatigue, adding a +2 bonus to four Stamina + Resolve rolls to stay awake. During this time, the fetish visibly wilts more and more until it's no stiffer than a wet noodle.

Werewolves recharge this fetish by sleeping an additional hour past a full night's rest. With each hour, the alert-me regains the ability to aid one Stamina + Resolve roll and a little more stiffness. Alert-mes are powered by spirits of nocturnal animals.

**Action:** Reflexive

### MOTHER BOG'S NET (•)

This is a small net woven of vine, swamp grasses and light-gauge wire for strength. When activated, it hurls a web of "slow Essence" out over the werewolf's enemies. Up to three enemies, all within the same general direction and about 20 feet, can be targeted at once. They resist the activation roll with Resolve + Primal Urge. Those who achieve successes equal to or fewer than the Harmony roll their Speed as half normal on their next actions. This can only be used once per scene, and requires a point of Essence to charge. The spirits that empower this fetish, commonly of spiders, swamps or mud, turn that point of Essence into the effect.

**Action:** Instant

### STONETHROWER (•)

The stonethrower is a smooth jade ring engraved with a single line, constantly looping the band, that eventually connects with itself. Bull-spirits and feather-spirits both empower this fetish. When activated, it reduces the effective Size of a stone (or mostly stone) object by one for the purpose of throwing it. This can be activated twice per scene.

**Action:** Reflexive

### SUNSHIELD (•)

Sunshields are small, circular patches of black silk with a short fringe. Silver thread makes the faint shape of a crescent moon on the black circle. Invoking the sunshield requires a werewolf to hold it tightly

in one hand. One who really needs its benefit presses it against her heart. Once activated, the sunshield negates any penalty to stepping or looking across the Gauntlet caused by daytime. Lunes and Shadow-spirits power this fetish, which works for the next three turns and only once per day.

**Action:** Reflexive

### BLUNTER (••)

Thick leather armbands, blunters often have flat bits of metal or wood tied to them. When struck by an attack that inflicts lethal damage, the werewolf can activate a blunter to change one point of damage per success from lethal into bashing. This only works once per scene. Spirits of geckos, as well as more modern spirits such as those of tires and Kevlar, power this fetish, which requires a point of Essence to use.

**Action:** Reflexive

### SKINSHEATH (•• OR •••)

The skinsheath is always a scar fetish. The rite-master who creates it makes it in the rough form of a weapon. A couple orthogonal slashes are enough to make a knife or a sword and other patterns represent other weapons. Once completed, the fetish can be used to contain and conceal a single weapon of the type represented by the scar. The werewolf makes an instant activation roll to absorb the weapon into the scar, at which point the weapon fades into nothingness. It requires a reflexive activation roll to draw the weapon out of the skinsheath, which looks as strange as it sounds.

Two-dot skinsheathes hold small weapons, such as knives, brass knuckles, small hammers and the like. Three-dot skinsheathes are for larger weapons such as swords, battle axes and large hammers or a grouping of smaller weapons, for example, a brace of knives. Other than when specifically designed for it, skinsheathes can only hold one weapon at a time. When a skinsheath contains multiple weapons, they can be withdrawn individually or all at once.

Shadow-spirits and spirits of truce and treaties power these fetishes.

**Action:** Instant to sheathe; reflexive to draw

### OFF-SWITCH (•••)

There is no reasonable werewolf who doesn't at least somewhat fear what humanity would do to the Uratha if they learned too much. Since battles in a war are often unpredictable, there will be times when witnesses are unavoidable — especially with modern electronics. The off-switch, which looks like a wall-mounted light switch with runes traced in it and a wood-iron backing, can at

least take care of those. Flipping it one way, with the accompanying Harmony roll, causes all visual and audio recording devices within a 100-yard radius to register only static. This lasts for a half-hour, long enough for most battles to end, or until the switch is flipped back into the “on” position.

Spirits of electricity, photography and chameleons take part in these fetishes, which are popular among Iron Masters.

**Action:** Instant

### SOULSOOTHER (●●●)

In times of war, it is difficult for the People to keep high Harmonies. Apart from representing the very degradation of their souls, it also reduces their functionality: a low-Harmony army has more trouble attuning and activating its fetishes, and Essence is often too dear to spend on the purpose. Soulsoothers are thin membranes of skin stretched tightly across a hardwood frame, decorated with calming patterns that help a werewolf ground herself. For the rest of the scene after activating a soulsoother, treat the werewolf's Harmony as 8 when attuning or activating a fetish. Typically, a werewolf uses the soulsoother just before battle, making it easier for her to activate her other fetishes when every second counts.

Wolf-spirits help create this fetish, which can only be activated once per scene.

**Action:** Instant

### LESSER KLAIVE: LUCKY'S BROTHER (●●●)

Lucky's Brother is a well-balanced throwing knife made of good steel. Horsehair is wound up within the weapon's hilt. It adds a +1 die bonus to the Dexterity + Athletics roll to attack. The weapon's special quality is that it can almost never be lost (though it can be left behind). If its wielder loses track of it in combat (generally by throwing it at someone or sticking it into an enemy and letting go), a successful Harmony roll means that the knife slips out of the wound somehow. Others overlook the weapon, so it remains to be reclaimed by its owner.

An exceptional success on the activation means that Lucky's Brother finds some way to leave the battlefield with its owner, no matter what. Someone steps on it without noticing, flipping it into a backpack that the weapon's wielder later grabs as she

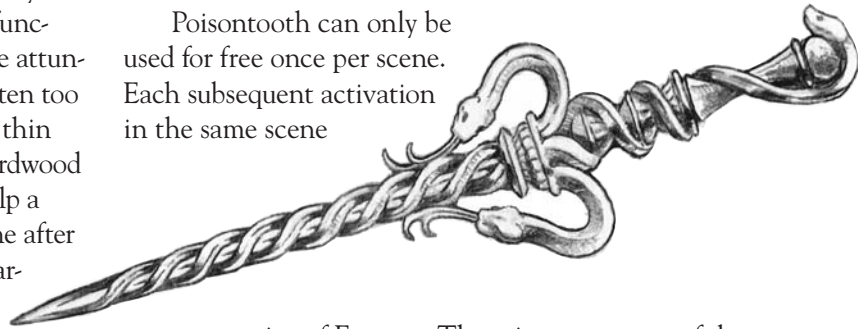
leaves, or something even more improbable may happen. Dog-spirits empower this fetish.

**Action:** Reflexive

### LESSER KLAIVE: POISONTOOTH (●●●)

A Poisontooth blade can come in any form that is expected to pierce the skin but not slash it, from stiletto daggers to rapiers. The snake-spirits that help create the klaive infuse it with a poison designed to slowly wear down an enemy. When activated, the next attack made with the weapon causes the victim to suffer three points of lethal damage. An immediate Stamina + Resolve roll that produces more than three successes can alleviate this damage.

Poisontooth can only be used for free once per scene. Each subsequent activation in the same scene



costs one point of Essence. There is a more powerful, unique version of the Poisontooth called Moonless Night that inflicts aggravated damage.

**Action:** Reflexive

### LESSER KLAIVE: TEARER-OF-SILK (●●●)

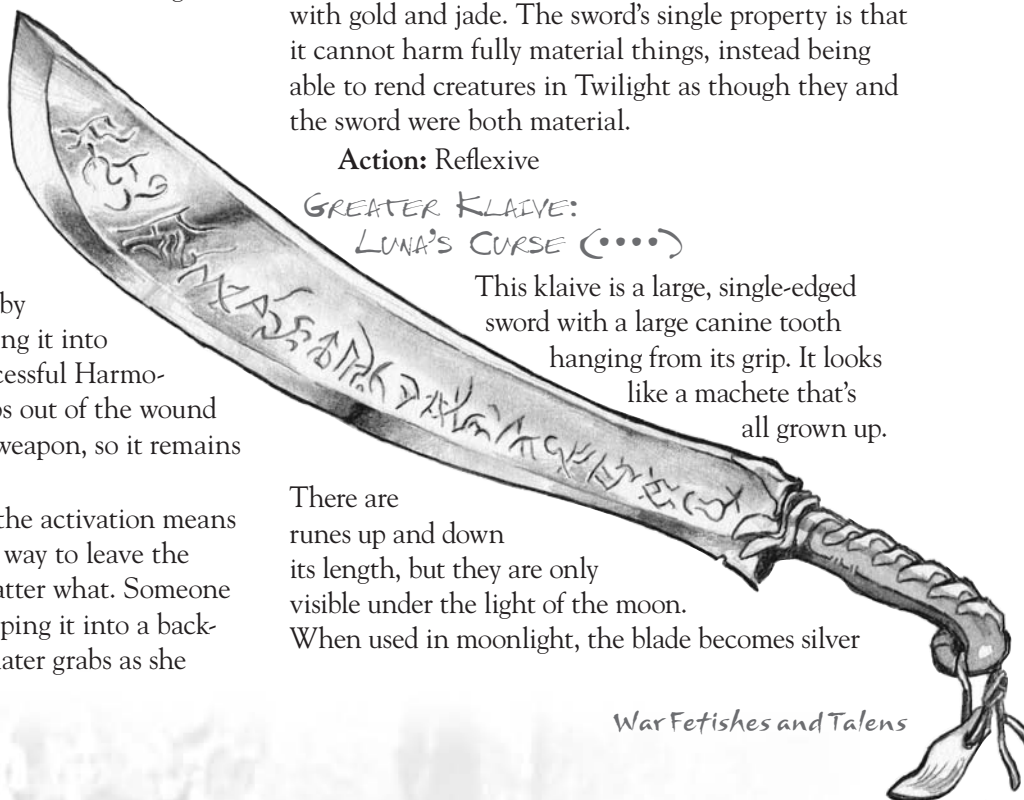
Though this sword is stiff as steel, it looks like a cut of golden cloth that flutters through the air when swung. Tearer-of-Silk is partly transparent and laced with gold and jade. The sword's single property is that it cannot harm fully material things, instead being able to rend creatures in Twilight as though they and the sword were both material.

**Action:** Reflexive

### GREATER KLAIVE: LUNA'S CURSE (●●●●)

This klaive is a large, single-edged sword with a large canine tooth hanging from its grip. It looks like a machete that's all grown up.

There are runes up and down its length, but they are only visible under the light of the moon. When used in moonlight, the blade becomes silver





the instant it bites into the flesh of a werewolf. Blood on the blade boils away after a second or two, at which point the blade becomes simple steel once more.

This blade inflicts aggravated damage against werewolves when the moon shines. Using Luna's Curse counts as fighting with a silver weapon. Lunes power this weapon.

**Action:** Reflexive

**GREATER KLAIVE:**

**MAGICIAN'S EDGE (••••)**

A slim, curving knife with a rough wooden handle, Magician's Edge is the tool for any werewolf who wants to play lots of tricks during battle. Any strike with the knife that inflicts at least one point of damage also transfers one point of Essence from the target's store to the wielder's. For the most part, only werewolves or spirits are valid targets for this effect, since most other creatures (even other supernatural creatures) don't have an Essence score. If receiving the point of Essence puts the wielder over his maximum Essence, he must use it on his next action or lose it. It bleeds off into the spirit world, where it is almost certain to be lapped up by some Lesser Gaffling.

Mosquito-spirits and spirits of some parasites can help power this weapon.

**Action:** Reflexive

**GREATER KLAIVE:**

**HEARTSEEKER (••••)**

Heartseekers appear to be little more than thin poles of sturdy wood about human-height. Their tops are sharpened, true, but it looks like the sort of thing a woodsman would make as part of a lean-to. In combat, treat the Heartseeker as a spear that inflicts bashing damage.

When activated and used specifically to target the heart, this weapon ignores *all* penalties to the attack and inflicts lethal damage. Heartseeker can only be used in this fashion once per scene; few werewolves mind, because they tend to leave Heartseekers behind once they pierce a heart. In the event of war with vampires, the Uratha probably seek many allies among the laser-spirits and other spirits of precision that empower these weapons.

Heartseekers are light and balanced to be thrown, if necessary, and may be thrown by characters with as little as Strength 3.

**Action:** Reflexive

**GREATER KLAIVE:**

**THE HAND THAT WOUNDS (••••)**

Though commonly made as a mace of bone or iron, the Hand That Wounds can be any weapon. Other common incarnations make it a greatsword or a great ax. When the weapon lands a blow that onlookers would expect to shatter bone, its victim sometimes feels only a light graze, followed after a moment by soul-searing pain. Any time an attack with this weapon inflicts at least three points of damage, the player may make a reflexive Harmony roll to turn three of those points into one point of aggravated damage.

Venomous spirits whose size belies their danger power this klaive, such as small spiders and snakes.

**Action:** Reflexive

**LONGSEEKER'S EYE (•••••)**

Strange as it may seem, this is really a glass eye. Its iris is the golden color of a wolf's and may actually be colored with real gold. The pupil itself is of obsidian, and the rear side is marked with a word in the First Tongue: sight. The story of its creation was that of Longseeker Douglass, a werewolf who constantly traveled in search of... something. If his eye is in someone else's hands, then he probably never found it.

Only a werewolf who has lost an eye can attune this tool, and using it involves setting the eye into the missing socket. Longseeker's Eye then provides vision to the werewolf as though it were a real eye. Longseeker's Eye also reveals faint auras around people corresponding to their natures: a haze of violent red floats around someone whose Vice is Wrath, while the Virtue of Fortitude lends a resolute air to the aura. Supernatural creatures also register. Vampires seem laden with death, and mages look noble, for example.

Effects that conceal these auras roll an appropriate base effectiveness against the werewolf's Primal Urge to determine if they remain hidden or are revealed. The spirit of glass that resides within this fetish is powerful and silent, but it has its own agenda for living in Longseeker's Eye.

**Action:** Reflexive

**GRAND KLAIVE: RAGE WARDEN (•••••)**

Ancient and legendary, this massive club is adorned with strips of dried skin, assorted teeth and small metal trinkets. A Blood Talon Elodoth labored

many months to create Rage Warden, and many more to entice the proper spirit — an ancestor of his who has supposedly mastered his Rage. When the ritual was complete, Rage Warden stood ready.

Its damage rating is four bashing damage, and its Size is 3. A werewolf wielding the weapon when she dons the wolf-man form causes a reflexive Harmony roll: success doubles the number of turns she can Rage. The weapon contains and channels her Rage for her.

**Action:** Reflexive

GRAND KLAIYE:  
BANE OF POWER (•••••)

This massive, double-headed hammer is as tall as a werewolf in Dalu form and carved entirely from very rough stone. Bane of Power cannot be lifted by anyone with less than Strength of 6 and certainly cannot be wielded. Once a werewolf attunes to the hammer, for her it becomes a manageable weapon a damage rating of four bashing damage. She can feel energy in its long haft, and hate. Bane of Power gives her the subtle urge to attack certain targets over others, though it may take some time before she understands why. Once activated for the scene, the hammer doubles its damage rating against creatures with a supernatural power statistic, such as Blood Potency, Primal Urge, Gnosis or another.

Bane of Power has a final, less-known purpose: it destroys sources of power as well. When the Bane of Power kills one of the creatures it is designed to harm within a fount of power, such as a locus, the flow of power diminishes to nothing. It becomes a normal place. The spirit bound within this weapon is affined with some sort of flame, but is otherwise a mystery. The spirit sometimes speaks to the weapon's bearer.

**Action:** Reflexive

## REUNION

Enough is enough. For years — centuries — the Tribes of the Moon have suffered the Pure Tribe's

hate and vitriol. Many saw the Pure as just another trial for the Uratha, Forsaken, forgiven, but still doomed to live a life without peace.

No more. Since the Brethren Wars of the 1990s, the Forsaken have seen increasing numbers of attacks by the Pure. The Pure seem even more eager and more energetic, and they are much more willing to kill. They seem to have forgotten one thing about the werewolves they consider prey: don't back a wounded wolf into a corner.

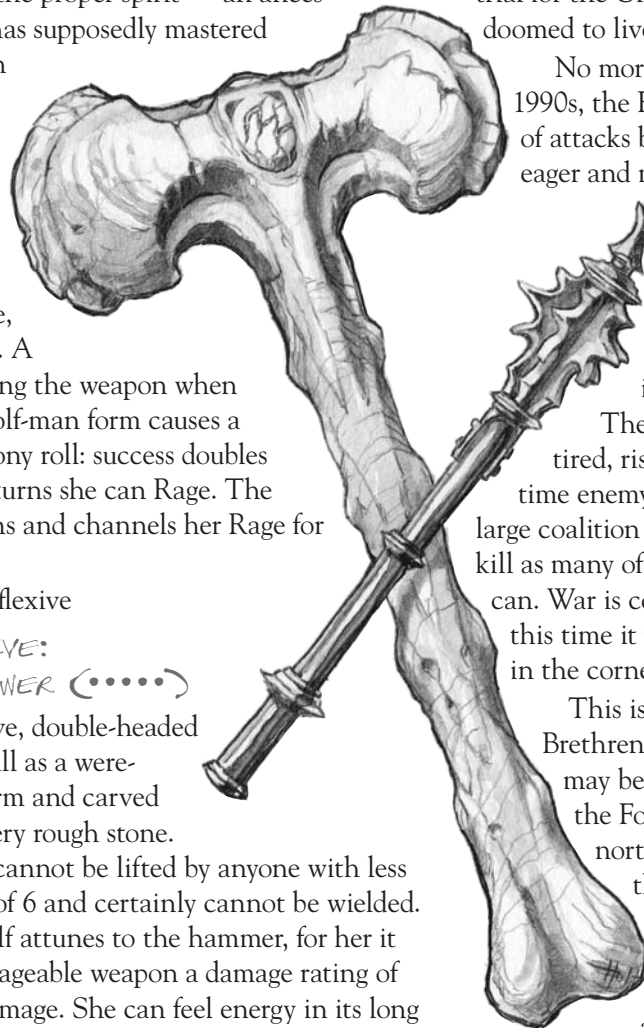
So, the Pure's attacks continue to increase in aggression and frequency.

The North American Forsaken, angry and tired, rise up as a body to face down their long-time enemy. Finally roused to serious action, a large coalition of packs gathers together to hunt and kill as many of the damned Pure Tribe packs as they can. War is come between the brothers again, and this time it won't end until one of them whimpers in the corner.

This is a war on the scale of the original Brethren Wars, perhaps even larger. There may be as many as 50 packs fighting with the Forsaken. Roaming the continent from northern Mexico to southern Canada, their intent is to sniff out and destroy as many Pure packs as possible. The hunters don't run as one enormous pack. That would be too obvious, and too destructive to the landscape and to their spirit of cooperation. Instead, they run in groups of three or four packs, They leave their own territories behind, true, but they leave the best guardians they can and hope that when they return, they'll have a better world.

The Forsaken's strategy for this war — roam and kill those Pure they find — gives the Forsaken one major advantage. They have no home ground to garrison, no territory to perpetually defend. They forage for food and Essence on the move, leaving as little trace as possible while wiping out the Fire-Touched, Ivory Claws and Predator Kings on their path. This gives them the benefit of having the simple goal, easy to understand but difficult to counter.

Of course, it poses immediate difficulties. On the march, the Forsaken have only as much as they can carry. When they need food, water or especially Essence, their familiar hunts and loci are far behind them. The Sacred Hunt ritual becomes exceptionally useful and fairly common. As many packs as possible



use it to replenish their Essence reserves when the army has a day to rest.

Werewolves also use any loci owned by the Pure they kill to recover Essence. Some Forsaken make the attempt to drain the locus dry, since there is no one around to guard against spirit incursion. Thankfully, the army keeps on the move. It is less likely to wear out its welcome in an area (by angering the spirit population, over-hunting or buying/stealing too much from the local stores), because it never rests for long.

Allies are not much use. They're probably just out of touch, unless they're reachable by phone. Some werewolves have devoted Retainers, often in the form of wolf-blooded family. These might come on the march with them (as "support personnel"), or they offer long-distance support. It can't hurt to have someone at home with a computer checking your routes online.

All of this means that some Merits are of significantly limited utility. Territory-based Merits and some others become much less desirable when a character won't be anywhere near home for most of the chronicle. Allies, Contacts, local Fame, Status and potentially Retainer (if he doesn't come with you) all become less useful.

Players are encouraged to take these Merits anyway. This is an energetic war story for characters who have left their homes behind. They are on foreign soil, in territories they know others claim and they are in constant danger. And they're doing it all for home. Everything makes more sense, fits better, if the characters have something that they clearly couldn't bring with them. They miss their home, their weekly bull sessions with the guys in the bar, that sort of thing. It lends the characters depth.

Character background doesn't need to be a waste of Merit dots. In play, each "local" Merit becomes a memory or an inspiration — one of the reasons the character is fighting. Mechanically, once per local Merit per story, the player can create or use a scene that resonates with that Merit for the character. The character gains a benefit similar to what he might have gotten at home, or a bonus to a single roll equal to the dots in the Merit.

*Example: Haley's character, Granite Stu, is looking for signs of the Ivory Claws in Starr Valley, Nevada, and wants to look up some county records. With Contacts (City Hall), Haley knows that Stu could find what he needs back home. She comes up with the following idea, which the Storyteller approves: Frustrated with the search, Granite Stu sits on the steps of the courthouse*

*and mopes, missing good ol' home. He looks so down that one of the county clerks, on a smoke break, decides to say hi. With an appropriate roll, Granite Stu might be able to find out what he wants to know.*

This scenario kicks off when the players' characters decide they've had enough with the Pure Tribes. The characters just suffered an attack, losing a packmate, and it's time to put an end to it. Their home was an area ferociously fought over during the Brethren Wars, and everyone who lives there remembers them in some fashion.

Attacking the characters' pack at the beginning is a good way to start the war off on a personal note. You shouldn't pick one of the player's characters for a fated death, of course — the casualty is a Storyteller character. To make the doomed personality more real to the players, connect them to him. Let them define him.

Each player could give a few details of how her character interacts with the Storyteller character, personal likes or dislikes about him and so on. The players might fill out his character sheet together for some detail. Then, you kill him. Don't surprise the players with this — just see if they want to run through the exercise. If they go all the way, give them the option to draw on their dead comrade for motivation. When a character has reason to remember the packmate, such as a pet peeve that he's no longer around to aggravate or a situation in which he would have excelled, the character may regain one point of Willpower.

It isn't necessary to attack the players' pack off the bat. If they come up with a long-term pack concept that makes perfect sense but doesn't have room for a soon-to-be-murdered packmate, no problem. The Pure can kill an ally of theirs, disfigure their territory or even inflict this crime on another pack instead — as long as the characters are still ready to rise up in anger.

The players' characters should all have reason to remember the Brethren War. They might have lived through it, in which case they are probably more experienced werewolves and potential candidates for alpha pack. It's possible they were around back then, but survived only by being small game and looking smaller. Or the characters' pack inherited their territory because of the trouble in the '90s. The land they have now was vacant because of Brethren War casualties, or the characters have taken on the responsibility for a territory that belonged to their onetime mentors.

All the characters should feel strongly about retaliation against the Pure Tribes. Murdering a comrade is a good place to start, but it's easy to find additional motivation. Those hate-mongers have been persecuting the Forsaken for centuries, and this time they stepped out of line! They tore up my territory with their damned little war 10 years ago, and it's time to take it out of their hides! Heck, there might even be some *They killed my parents!* in there, because that wouldn't be too surprising either.

Once a raid, murder or other last straw triggers the war, the characters (and players) get to start it off with a bang. A whole bunch of the People gather together, most of them are mad as hell, and a couple of them know where some local Pure packs hunker down. And that's it. Rage being Rage, that's 20 or so werewolves running off and howling for blood. You may even want to jumpstart the game by starting moments before the first fight. Get the players' blood moving — the first chapter in this game becomes tearing the Pure some new ones and then getting all the werewolves back together to gloat about it afterward.

This first victory should be all ups. **Werewolf: The Forsaken** is a game about depth of fury, the meaning of the hunt and being a monster that rides the wave of her self-control — but the first night of this chronicle is about the high and the satisfaction that Rage and the hunt provide. And it's about getting back at anyone who thinks he's better than you, from bullies in middle school to the suck-up in the office. This is for you, Don.

Remember that checks for Harmony degeneration give a lot of color to a game. How the Storyteller decides that a given human's death is "needless," and thus a sin, affects the decisions players make. The session's theme is jubilation and pride, not suffering regret. Today: no Harmony checks. Not one. The day is too grand for morals.

After the first, bloody victory, enabled in great part by 2-or-3/1 advantages, the participating werewolves gather. There is a lot of self-congratulation over the exhilarating annihilation of the Pure packs. Then talk moves on to doing more. If we can wipe the floor with our local packs in one night, imagine what we could do elsewhere! Pure Tribes are a problem *everywhere*. With just a little help (ours), other Forsaken could rid themselves of this plague just as well! The idea spreads like wildfire, packs get their accounts in order and very soon they head off along

roughly parallel paths to seek and destroy the Pure across the country.

### EXISTING CHRONICLES

While it can often be best to start a chronicle like this with all-new characters, fully aware that the game isn't going to be the standard territory-centric game of **Werewolf**, it's not necessary. As long as all the players are interested in bringing their old characters into a war story, having history can be a great boon to the game. With old Pure rivals in the area to get obliterated with the war's advent, the players can feel the same exhilaration as the characters, especially if the Pure have been recurring opponents.

Having played a series of chapters based around the characters' home territory, the players will have a much clearer idea of what their characters will miss and think back to while on the march.

Although the standard scenario recommends jumping straight into the war and the action, you can also start this game more slowly. Letting the players and their characters settle into and explore their territory gives them a chance to *really* build those connections instead of imagining them for their characters. It also makes it easier to purchase local-effect Merits at character creation.

With the werewolves on the road, the red-blooded packs begin to solidify into a war party. And war isn't easy or simple. Set the second chapter around choosing an alpha pack to lead the war. For players who love a good social game, the entire game session can focus on the politics and physical competitions involved with claiming the prize of leadership, but it needs a backdrop.

This minor crusade is clearly a venture with little forethought behind it. So, one reasonable set piece for the "elections" is for the war effort, yet leaderless, to marshal its resources now that it is away from home. What happens when the first couple of werewolves start running low on Essence and don't know where to find a locus? Where's the food coming from, how do all the packs stay in touch and did some werewolves just remember that they abandoned paying jobs for the thrill and glory of the hunt?

The challenge to become alpha pack might even center around it. Designed challenges could be

to provision as many packs as possible with as little human fuss as possible, or to locate the best useable loci. It might not even be official. If one pack ends up organizing everything far better than everyone else could, the other werewolves might just concede the honor.

Some packs and players enjoy a good, rousing fight a bit more than the basics of sustenance. In that case, you can skip the whole mess about figuring out how to keep the war moving (or, better, push it back a session or two to make it one of the alpha pack's first problems). Instead, the excited werewolves rush on toward their next conquest even as they bicker and worry at each other over which pack gets to be alpha. The challenge merges with the hunt.

Split into groups of two or three packs, each hunting party strives to kill more Pure over the course of a set period of time — probably a week, to give them a chance to hunt and fight at least two Pure packs. The victorious group's packs become the contenders for the final honor, to be decided in some other manner. Mock battle, perhaps, or some other form of trial. Play up the interaction between packs for the characters' groups, to help the players decide if they're interested in being alpha or if they would rather have less responsibility for the overall war.

Did the players' characters become alpha pack? This is something of a turning point for this war game, and it should be a question answered at least in part by the players themselves. Which aspects of war are they more interested in playing? Do they want to see the trials of generals, having to deal with the soldiers, the logistics, the minutiae and being held responsible for failure? Or the journey of soldiers, fighting the war, following the alpha pack's directions and being unaware of the entire plan?

One focuses on the larger aspects of the engagement — for the alpha pack, individual battles are notes in the symphony of the war. Battles are no more important than the effort required to keep the army supplied with food and Essence. The other focuses on smaller aspects. For soldiers (a term here used loosely), the battle is the greatest conflict. It is why they are there, to serve the war and fight when necessary. Abundance or scarcity of food and Essence affect the tone of the game — the characters might be forced to raid a home to eat or teach a local, uncooperative pack a lesson to get some Essence — but they never have to make official decisions on the matter.

But both have very personal aspects. George Washington wrote home to Martha just as the revolutionaries wrote home to their wives and families. On the subject, soldiers' letters home are excellent inspirational material for most war games, this one in particular. Many of them have been collected in books or can be read online, especially from the American Civil War.

Also, the second session is a good place to begin slowly reintroducing the Harmony sin of killing another werewolf. Make no more than one roll per character for the entire night, not one per kill. The war has been on for a little while now, and the original high is wearing off.

Once there is an alpha pack, the army on the move needs to find a spirit patron for the war. This can easily be the subject of the third chapter. Involve the players' characters, if they are not the alpha pack, by giving them the responsibility to negotiate with the interested spirits. The characters might be the wise choice, or it might be an indication that there *are* no skilled spirit emissaries among the packs at war. Or the war leader just doesn't know what to do with your pack.

In this session, explore some of the ramifications of 50 (or so) werewolves rising up and going off to inflict some real damage. One of the results most evident in the plot will be the dozen spirits of varying Rank and Influence that have been following the Forsaken's trail through the spirit wilds. One is a spirit of vengeance that perked up its figurative ears during the first night's slaughter and has been watching ever since; as a boon, the spirit offers effective means to greater violence. Another is a river-spirit; the blessings it would provide do not relate to battle, but its ban would prevent them from soiling rivers with blood. At least its unknown purpose is not bluntly to lengthen the bloody revenge.

Some spirits offer information, and one or two have secret fetishes to "donate" to the war. A potential totem has some subservient spirits that it would direct to perform minor chores or serve in fetishes, but it already has enemies among some spirits that favor the Pure Tribes. One more claims it can provide fantastic boons to the war, but its ban requires one spirit be freed from a fetish each week that the war continues.

Each spirit wants something, and there's almost always something a spirit wants that it isn't saying. The last spirit wants to free spirits from fetishes so that it might demand favors from them, construct a

spirit-army and usurp the throne of its court. It is up to the players' characters to wade into this shoal of hungry creatures and find one that offers the most and asks the least, if that's possible.

## GETTING INTO THE FLOW

These three preliminary tasks done — the first gathering and bloodbath, choosing an alpha pack and negotiating for a war totem — the war stories reach a temporary plateau. Here is where you have room for a group of stories about the war. Now that the initial escalation is complete, it's time to explore how the characters and their pack deal with war. At this point, Harmony sins should be up at full strength.

Here are some war-themed stories you can tell when the werewolves are on the march. You can explore each one of these during the course of a few sessions, cover them in one night apiece or vary it depending on what your group considers more interesting.

- **They Are Human, Too:** After a fierce battle and an effective slaughter, the packs find their enemies have left behind dependents. Most likely, they are wolf-blooded humans kept by the Pure as second-class citizens, the Ivory Claws' purest bloodlines. These noncombatants are lost without the Pure Tribes that guided and governed them.

What becomes of them? Leaving them alive means they could be repossessed by another Pure pack, but leaving the dependents master-less could also result in their deaths. For a personal chapter, the pack may be the only ones who find them and have to make the decision. To impose a more frightening theme on the story, the packs that know about these humans make their own choice — and the characters have to live with it. This works if the characters are alpha pack and must decide whether or not to punish the transgressors, or if the alpha pack makes the hard decision and the characters are dissatisfied.

- **My Friend, My Brother:** With several chapters of the chronicle behind you, the players' characters have become familiar and comfortable with some of the recurring Storyteller characters. War is, inevitably, about death, and now is when someone dies. Either the Storyteller character takes an unlucky wound that ends her, or the entire war party (or at least part of it) suffers a blow, taking several casualties.

Burying a friend of the pack evokes different emotions in different werewolves. Members of the decedent's pack surely grieve more strongly than you,

and they can both resent and welcome your characters' sorrow. Other packs that lost members or friends snarl at you, too angry right now to have any sympathy. An alpha pack needs to be careful how it deals with casualties — treating them too lightly generates anger at disrespect, but too much grief earns only contempt.

Especially, dying so far from one's territory is a cause of sorrow and regret. Some werewolves worry that they will never see their home again; worse, they will be unable to repair the damage done by their absence, and the territory will never achieve the idyllic vision they had for it. It makes packs question the war, and some think about leaving. Later in the arc, some packs *do* leave, reciting the Rite of Renunciation and spreading yet more discontent among those they leave behind.

One pack's emotions run hot. The recent loss causes grieving packmates to give in to their anger, and they run off into the wilderness to kill some Pure. The players' pack has the opportunity to stay behind or hunt with the bereft pack. It is likely that more of the other pack will die, given how upset the packmates are. When they return still more wounded, spent of resources and perhaps fewer, they deserve a reprimand from the alpha pack for weakening the war. How does that sit with the torn-apart pack?

- **Mother Luna Wants You!:** As the war contingent travels from territory to territory, resident Forsaken greet the packs in many ways and with many names. So long as the packs are respectful, which the alpha pack is careful to make them, they are usually allowed a spot of rest and hunting. Sometimes they are berated as kinslayers, as bad as the Pure, disgraces to Luna, abandoners of their territories and duties. More often, they are hailed as heroes.

This chapter sees other packs, inspired by stories of the war and eyes big with Glory, volunteer to march behind the alpha pack. These are mostly younger packs; their elders and mentors (and sometimes a parent) see them off with varied blessings. Some disown the young packs; others wish them great adventures. Some show up to convince them to stay; others refuse to show up at all. The ranks swell by two or three packs, just enough to offset losses or give the war a temporary advantage over the enemy before things once again reach an equilibrium.

Using a montage, the Storyteller and players can cross a longer period of time to show both losses taken by the Uratha army and the varied emotions of new volunteers. With a broader window, you can

see packs sent off to the war to satisfy another pack's ulterior motives, werewolves eager but completely unaware of what comes next and a pack that those already in the war nearly conscript.

It is a time for the players to explore different reactions to leaving, as well. One pack might have disdain for the elders who refused to come, but another is earnestly torn between the swelling urge to tear apart the Pure and the ways of their forebears. The war might even tear a pack apart, especially if an older werewolf is alpha to a pack of more idealistic youths.

The newcomers should make the players and their characters think back to the elders they knew near their territories, who condemned the war as foolishness and dereliction of duty. The players should also discover what their characters say to newcomers and how they deal with them. Do the characters comfort the ill at ease or harden them up? Are their words to the Glory-hounds encouraging or colored with regret over lost friends?

• **This Is Not Our Way:** Also known as "Get Off My Lawn," this is the chapter where the army, its members and its leaders get nothing but disrespect from their fellow Forsaken. Although this can and does happen in other stories, it should be the focus of this one. A particularly brutal battle finally ends in the heroes' favor. All the Pure in a given region or

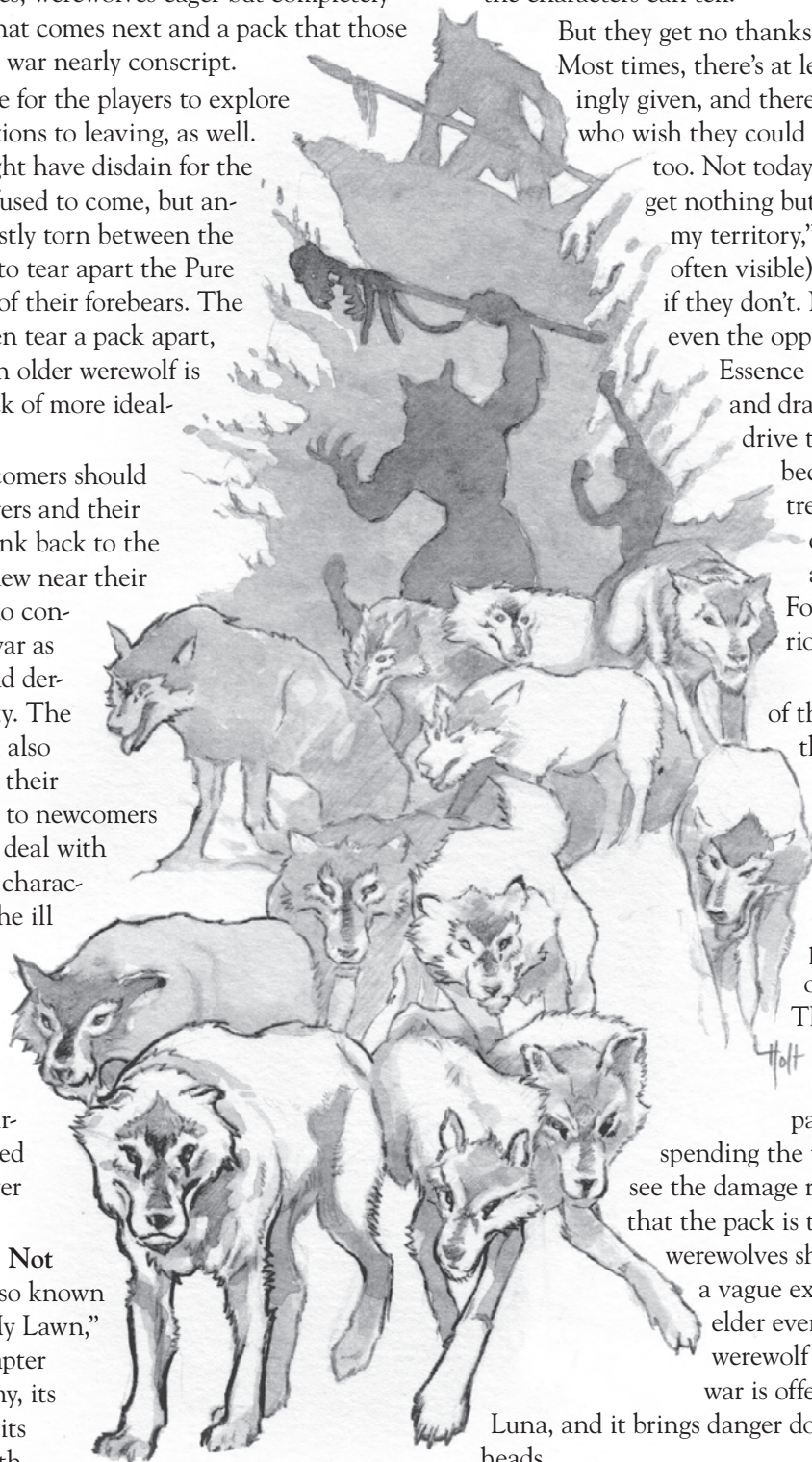
significant size have been eradicated, at least as far as the characters can tell.

But they get no thanks from the local Uratha. Most times, there's at least some credit grudgingly given, and there are some werewolves who wish they could have been out there, too. Not today. Today, the warriors get nothing but a "Get the *hell* out of my territory," and the silent (but often visible) promise of violence if they don't. No chance to rest, not even the opportunity to fill up on Essence at the end of a long and draining fight. To really drive the point home, this becomes a trend. The war treads through a strongly conservative region, and none of the local Forsaken want the warriors there.

It's against the Oath of the Moon, sure, but there are other reasons that werewolves who should be allies react so strongly. Pure Tribes launch fierce counterattacks against packs uninvolved with or opposed to the war. The warriors, as much as they try not to, despoil the territories they pass through without spending the time respect dictates to see the damage repaired. Instinct insists that the pack is the largest unit that werewolves should form; tribes are a vague exception, and no tribal elder ever tries to *command* a werewolf not of his pack. The war is offensive to nature and

Luna, and it brings danger down on everyone's heads.

What do the characters think about this response? Disdain and resentment are forgivable emotions, considering that they are putting their lives on the line to make the Tribes of the Moon safer. Bewilderment is common. Most werewolves know



why their brethren disapprove, but would the naysayers really go ahead and attack? The army's mood likely drops a notch or two, affecting its performance and potentially causing a couple packs to disappear in the night. And how do the characters deal with other werewolves' emotions, especially with newer recruits?

- **Time to Move On:** The Pure Tribes respond faster and more effectively to the Forsaken menace — the Pure have probably completed the trials for their own alpha pack and found themselves a war totem. This means that the war parties can no longer simply “hit and run” and expect it to work. Everything slows down. So the warriors suddenly spend much more time in the same area than they ever expected.

Results: They become a much heavier burden on the local economy and ecology. It becomes harder to locate enough food for everyone, and harder for the warriors to avoid sins against Harmony. Local Forsaken who don't support the war but were content to let it pass through now have to watch as several packs drag their territories through the mud. These Forsaken might still appreciate being rid of the Pure, but it's not nearly as easy to be friendly now that other packs are leeching off your resources for as much as a week (or more).

Local werewolves refuse the warriors hospitality, even the reward of Essence from a locus after the big battles. So tired werewolves move on. Fights break out between participants in the war and “civilians,” slowing the war even more; orders to ignore provocation are largely ignored.

This is a point when the alpha pack has to step up to the challenge. The war leader finds a way to speed up the process and spend less time aggravating other Forsaken, figures out how to provision the war without taking too much from the locals or gets off the pot. An upset in leadership at this point might harm the war effort more than it strengthens it, but it can be hard to tell before a challenge is made, and the alpha pack that pulls through earns itself some significant Renown.

- **See What You Work:** There are consequences to war — every war. Often, one cannot see these consequences in advance. Here, one of them becomes evident as spirits that the war's packs meet become increasingly hostile. Even as they are less friendly to the Forsaken, something that *could* be written off as coincidence, they become the more frequent allies and aids of the Pure. As if this weren't suggestive enough, somebody comes right out and

says it: Your stupid war is pissing us off, so we're helping the Pure Tribes fight you.

This has immediate and long-term effects on the war. Battles get harder — fights last longer, there are more casualties among the Forsaken and more escapes among the Pure. It's hard to chase down a fleeing werewolf when there are five or six spirits willing to trip you up, and it's easy for a spirit to be kamikaze when it knows that, as long as it has some Essence left, it's not actually dead. Spirits can sit on a locus, ready to suck it dry before the Tribes of the Moon have the chance to refuel there.

Demoralization spreads among the troops, if it hadn't already begun to infect the army because of disapproving elders. At least everybody knew that older and more conservative Forsaken would condemn the war; they might never have considered that the spirits would turn on it, too. Discussions proceed about how to appease the spirits and return things to their normal state (where the Forsaken were clearly winning the war, for one thing). The alpha pack might even lose its standing if it cannot turn this state around.

Over time, the spirits' rejection of the war has further effects. Chiminage and trials to earn Gifts from various spirits become significantly more expensive than before (*masses* of Essence, long and difficult trials and other unreasonable demands), and some spirits simply refuse to impart Gifts to the Forsaken. Pack totems and the war totem remain true to their pacts unless specifically insulted, but relations even with them may become strained. And wherever the war parties pass, the spirits act likewise, giving local Forsaken yet another reason to resent the warriors and speak out against the war. Spirits might even counterattack against Forsaken not on the march, out of simple hostility or with the intent to increase the internal opposition to the war.

Dealing with the spirits' addition to the Pure's ranks requires the development of special tactics. There are ways to keep the spirits out of the war. Gifts, rites and fetishes can re-level the playing field, but many of these options may not be available. Is finding them worth the time such a detour requires?

What actually offends the spirits is up in the air. It should remain something of a mystery (to the characters, at least) until they work out a reasonable way to figure it out. Discussing the matter earnestly with the war totem is one way to search, though it may not know — it might even resent that its association



with the war has kept it out of the loop. Pack totems likewise. Werewolves could forcibly interrogate spirits, which wouldn't improve the situation, or find one who ban requires that it answer certain questions. Once known, the alpha pack can try to reverse the effect.

But what if the alpha pack changes nothing? The werewolves continue onward as before, either content to anger the *Hisil's* inhabitants or convinced that regaining the spirits' favor would be too costly to the war. Other packs (and their totems) would rather not be completely ostracized by all the spirits they meet. Someone challenges the alpha pack. How does the army deal with the change in leadership, or lack thereof, especially if the new pack can't repair the breach between spirits and Forsaken, either?

The potential offenses are many. As the spirits favor the Pure Tribes somewhat, the spirits are angry at the massacre. Seeing the Forsaken finally band together to destroy that which opposes them, spirits everywhere on the Forsaken's trail fear that the intransigently unhelpful spirit world is next on the list. With the Pure gone, the Forsaken would be able to focus on their self-appointed police duties; the spirits would rather keep the current balance, which is more favorable to them. Several powerful spirits with extensive courts have bans that force them to oppose the extermination of either group, or just of the Pure. There are other possibilities.

This is one of the more drastic chapters, and should probably be saved for later when the chronicle is gearing up for the end game.

- **Personal Issues:** Always take time to play a session or two focused on the characters' individual personalities, the territory they left behind, Merits they've been unable to use "abroad" and other in-character issues with the war that surface in other chapters. An event in the war highlights the problems a character has with the current leadership, or a local werewolf who opposes the war reminds the character very much of herself.

These sessions best focus on a single character, unless the pack as a whole has a problem that includes all the players' characters. Because such sessions often center around one character, they are better left as one-night sessions instead of small arcs. Never think that you can't work these character explorations into other chapters with other themes, because they are often better played out over longer stretches of time, and not every emotion or idea

needs time in the spotlight. But this sort of game represents a culmination of those scenes, a deeper look into the psyche.

Territory, as a personal and important facet of a pack's life, is a good subject for this sort of game. Passing through a territory similar to one's own brings back memories, especially when the territory looks well-cared for. It might bring a shock to learn that the pack that hunts that territory holds the war in contempt. Even stranger might be the experience of the territory's young pack trying to join the crusade — a character might surprise herself by talking them out of it.

It can be good to talk about characters' pasts and paint the pack's abandoned territory in more detail before running a full session like this. Also a good idea is to let players create their histories and territory through references in the earlier game. Keep notes on what they have their characters say about "back home" and "before the war." Just bring attention to contradictions before they become problems, and you'll have lots of little details to bring the pack emotionally low before long.

## WRAPPING IT UP

Before you get through more than one or two of the above scenarios, think about how many of these war portraits you want to play through. The right number varies from group to group. Some people are less interested in how their characters react to war than they are in seeing who wins. Other players might really want to get the feeling that the war isn't over quickly, or they want to see more about their characters.

With an approximate number of "plateau" chapters in mind, cut that number in half. After that many sessions, begin inserting hints that the tenor of the war is changing. Instead of victories, battles resolve as stalemates or losses. More werewolves come away with disfigurements that take longer to heal, slowing the war's original mad rush to a reasonable crawl. Some Forsaken call it quits, tired or scared of letting their Rage rule them so often, or wanting to see how things are at home. The war takes its toll.

Just as importantly, the Pure Tribes are responding. With consistently greater frequency, there is more than one pack waiting when the Forsaken "ambush" them, or the Pure counterattack. The war becomes less one-sided. Tactics must advance from "find the Pure and crush them with superior num-

bers.” Strategy moves on to locating the local Pure packs, learning their comings and goings and reducing them to nothing, often by taking their loci away or fouling their human/spirit contacts before launching the final assault.

As a result, the mood of the war changes from high-energy mayhem to slogging uncertainty punctuated by heavy fights and deaths. You may want to step up the frequency of Harmony degeneration rolls, pointing out that the war is taking a significant toll on mind, body and soul, and this is a good time to do that. Every attack made with a silver weapon causes a check, rather than just one check per scene. Laying a werewolf low causes a check as if the character killed him, even if he could still regenerate up to full health.

It’s time for the last few sessions of the war. All the battles up to this point have been with groups of packs. Though they have grown more and more coordinated and effective, they haven’t shown much overarching leadership. Now, a mass of Pure packs only a few short of the Forsaken’s numbers meets them on neutral ground. With upwards of 20 packs on a side, the Pure Tribes finally have their act together and have a leader.

Neither side may think anything will come of it, but there is a discussion under a flag of truce. Either the war totems arranged it, or somebody in the alpha pack on either side decided that a lot of the People were going to die, and maybe it could be avoided. Nothing can come of parley, not really. Even the most hopeful war leader loses her last hope when confronted with her Fire-Touched opposite. There is really no common ground on which they could meet.

One or both of them may even lose control. Confronted with a werewolf whom each hates so much, it would be easy to succumb to *Kuruth* or even leap to the attack by choice. The Pure war leader does not die here. If necessary, his packmates drag him off. The Forsaken war leader may die, though. She probably shouldn’t if she is a player’s character — let the final battle decide that.

But when the war leader is a Storyteller character, her death could catapult a player’s character into the leadership position. An inexperienced character in over her head is a near-ubiquitous theme in fiction, and this is an opportunity for a player interested in that aspect of the story to seize. (It’s equally possible to have played out this story at the beginning of



the war, and for the character to now be a capable general.)

Finally, the last battle. With a group interested by tactics and the like, now is the time to play it out. It may take several sessions to finish and several days of game-time as packs clash, part, heal and clash again with different enemies. Because the two sides should be evenly matched, the key to winning lies in tactical maneuvering. Clever use of the territory (including claiming loci around the battlefield), calling in favors, knowing the enemy (through spies, logic and intuition) and knowing one's own army can all give the Forsaken an edge.

Just as important as those, if not more so, is what each individual *character* does in the last battle. One might rally fleeing troops and rout several packs of Pure while another heroically enters the Shadow Realm to convince the spirits to keep out of it. Heroic sacrifice can really turn the tide — one man holding off 10 while other packs retreat or recuperate, or shoving the brilliant war leader out of the way of a hurled bus.

Letting a character die can be a difficult choice for a player. Some might plan on it through the entire campaign; others may have never considered it. The Storyteller should not create situations where the “right answer” is a character's sacrifice unless the player is game. (In general, there shouldn't be a “right answer” to roleplaying situations anyway. What the characters do is “right” in that it leads to what happens next.) Respect the decisions of a player who does not want to make a heroic sacrifice.

You may want to let the players *decide* the war's outcome, just like that. Victory and defeat both offer unique roleplaying opportunities for the players to explore. Knowing the end result isn't the same as knowing how you get there, and the final battle can be just as exciting for knowing who'll still be standing at the end.

And the war ends. Just like that. After months (probably, at least) of campaigning, the war is over. Either there aren't enough of the Pure left in North America to be more than a nuisance for a long, *long* while, or there aren't enough war-bound Forsaken left to take the Pure Tribes on. Whichever, the decimated battlefield is cleared of bodies. Someone performs Funeral Rites; a Forsaken victor may even command rites for their fallen foes. The end.

But not quite.

Tolkien doesn't get a lot of mention around these parts, because his stories didn't have much to do with

shapechanging man-wolves cursed by the moon. But he remembered something that's easily forgotten: the denouement. In *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, both of which included war stories and tales of personal growth through them, he never forgot to detail what happened to the main characters afterward. Afterward, they went home. And things were different.

Now, the players' characters get to finally go home. You might not want to play these out as a normal game session, but it's probably worth a full night. Discuss and narrate as a group what happens to the characters on their trip home. Call back to previous places and characters met on the way out. The Forsaken may be glad the war's over, pleasantly surprised the characters won or disgusted that they lost. At times, you can all fall back into Storyteller/player mode, having in-character discussions when you need to examine a moment or an emotion more clearly.

It's possible that not every member of the pack made it through the last battle. For the survivors, the trip home is a time to reminisce about their fallen packmates. The living recall the actions and goals of the dead and regret their loss. Through this, they find a way to move on — or they find themselves caught in the past, and they stagnate.

And then they arrive home. The pack's territory is probably in disarray. Players should narrate how they, possessed with a new pride and confidence from the war, right wrongs and repair the territory. For their packmates, buried on the field of battle, the characters include in the repairs an individual's pet projects. Or, how the emotionally defeated survivors settle back into their territory and never really manage, despite trying, to improve it. Another pack eventually claims it from them — it might even be Pure.

## THE ENDLESS SHADOW WAR

Firstly, be warned: this is not the **Werewolf: The Forsaken** you know. This is a different, darker setting. Here, spirits constantly try to break through into the physical world and take it over. They hunt the Forsaken and try to kill them on sight. This is their war.

Here is how it happened. Forget the last century of official history, because that's when this splits off. The year was 1901. Back then, at the turn of the century, the spirits did not hate the Uratha. The spirits just didn't like them. After all, would you like

someone who constantly stands between you and your ambition, and won't even let you have a little bit of fun? Relationships between the two kinds were tense, but not the end of the world. When the year ticked over and Dick Clark was somewhere, waiting with his weathered face for the technology to drop a big shining ball in Times Square, all that changed.

Responding to an unknown slight or some unheard signal, all the inhabitants of the spirit world declared a complete and unending war against the Uratha. Spirits girded for war stormed out through every available locus and began a no-holds-barred assault on the People, with the clear intent of wiping them off the face of the Earth and giving themselves a clear path toward rule over the physical realm. Whether or not the spirits also attacked the Pure was then unknown, but today it is clear that the Forsaken's ancient enemies were as targeted as the Forsaken themselves.

The Cahalith say that only pack totems and the Lunes remained friendly, but that was years ago. There are no pack totems, now, and the Lunes are missing.

The initial attack was the first sign of hostilities. The Blast Numen, crackling or whizzing out of hiding, was the only warning, followed by a swarm of Spirit-Urged and -Claimed, goaded or supported by Materialized spirits. Some packs died immediately in the onslaught, taken entirely by surprise, but clearly some managed to account for themselves well.

Survivors banded together. After the first, massive wave, the spirit world launched periodic attacks on the People, forcing them to band together for strength. Things occasionally quieted down for a while, but it is clear that the spirits never returned to normal. Werewolves who went out alone were cornered, assaulted and usually killed, and *duguthim* immediately began their practice of spying on the various packs. Within a few months, again without warning or apparent communication, fetishes turned against their wielders or completely ceased to function.

As spirits now refused any manner of civil interaction with werewolves whatsoever, there was also no way for the Uratha to learn new Gifts. After the 100 years since the initial assault, only the Uratha's natural capabilities remain, and their understandings of mystical rituals.

More than 100 years ago, the *Hisil* declared war. Since that time, the Forsaken have been meeting it with equal force simply in order not to perish.

In order to survive, the packs had to organize themselves. Differences in opinion resulted in too many fights; internal conflict would tear the Forsaken apart and expose them to the waiting, watching spirits. Over a few decades, the werewolves settled into a semi-formalized power structure. Werewolves with fewer successes to their name receive less influence than a werewolf widely recognized as a hero. Alpha packs run the war effort locally, communicating with each other on intermittent bases.

Most packs in a given area watch over a super-territory, trying to protect it from spiritual depredations. They keep an all-pack commune where packs come to sleep and guard the territory's most important resources. Packs still function best on their own, so they tend to run out on missions with one other pack as the maximum backup.

This is an ambitious war story, a rebellion of the spirits on a scale the world of **Werewolf** has never seen. It explores what the People would be if they did not balance the physical and the spirit worlds, but had to fight one side completely. Nearly every spirit has turned on the race of the Uratha. Where the spirits once wore disdain and contempt for the werewolves openly, they now brandish Numina and give no quarter. It is a different world.

A different world, indeed, because the werewolves' predicate many aspects of their lives on things borrowed, received or stolen from spirits. First, all fetishes cease to work, at least in their intended manner. How the spirits imbedded in the fetishes received the cue to revolt is unknown, but they did. Spirits broke free of the fetishes and left, often inflicting damage as they went. Those that could not escape their bindings remained, but the fetishes are twisted.

Fetishes rarely do what their "masters" desire anymore, when they work at all. Ritemasters make new fetishes, reinforcing the bonds to ensure that the spirits cannot leave, but they never work entirely as intended. From the initial moment of the revolt onward, the Fetish Rite requires an additional five successes per dot of the fetish to be completed; otherwise, the subject spirit simply strains against the binding until it escapes. Only fetishes whose rituals were completed with an exceptional success from before the revolt continue to hold their spirits.

Furthermore, established fetishes might perform as advertised, but usually not. Instead, they do something different, something that subverts the fetishes' intended purpose. This different power almost universally brings some harm, direct or indirect, to the werewolf using it. Only an exceptional success on the Harmony roll to activate the fetish can force the spirit to perform as advertised. Finally, spirits consider the fetish a form of bondage. Once they recognize an object as a fetish, they will attempt to break it to free their trapped kin.

Fetishes aren't the only things that become dangerous to use. Loci, usually crowded with spirits in the Shadow Realm waiting to sup or slip through, are now teeming with them. Not only will the spirits there bombard any werewolf who attempts to drink Essence from the locus, they will assault one that tries to step through or otherwise enter the *Hisil*.

Gifts are another important connection that the werewolves once shared with spirits. Although a Gift, once learned, becomes innate to the Uratha, the Forsaken still need spirits in order to learn new ones. After the spirits turned near-universally hostile, there were few to no sources for new Gifts. As packs that were alive during the first assault slowly died out during the war, the number of werewolves who actually knew an Uratha with any Gifts at all dwindled. Today, werewolves have heard of Gifts but consider them legendary.

Characters in this setting begin with no Gifts, and can't spend experience points to purchase new Gifts or receive free Gifts when they increase Renown. But Renown still has a use when dealing with spirits. Though the spirit world is in revolt, confidence varies from spirit to spirit. Weaker shadow-creatures have less life expectancy in spirit wars, and they have less force of will in general. Whatever it is that has roused the spirits as one also makes the lesser spirits afraid.

Finally, there will be no spirit patrons. Since the war didn't begin until the spirits almost universally turned on the Uratha, there's no chance for any alpha pack to find and bind a spirit as the war totem. Then, after pack totems or their packs die off, there are no replacements. None whatsoever.

As an optional rule, you can allow packs to have acquire totems through object submission to the spirits' demands. In any war, there are traitors. In short, increase the severity of the pack ban by two degrees. Because bans of severity 6 either do not exist or do

not work, no pack can have a totem worth more than 15 Totem points. Using this rule makes the world less harsh, which is why it is not recommended.

Instead of allowing pack totems despite the core assumption of this setting, consider using the "Give the Pack Character" rules on p. 13. It offers bonuses to the characters based on their pack, increasing their lot somewhat, without breaking the complete condemnation of Uratha by the spirit world suggested in this scenario.

Because the spirit brands used to mark Renown are perfectly visible to spirits, using them at all clearly marked werewolves as targets to the enemy. And more valuable targets were marked more clearly. Over time, the ritualists created a variation on the Rite of the Spirit Brand. The major difference is that the brands fade after the initial scene, even from the sight of spirits and even when in the Shadow Realm.

A werewolf can make her brands shine silver (to anyone who can see spirits) with a successful Presence + Occult + highest Renown roll.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The werewolf does not manage to flash her brands, and she looks foolish trying. She suffers a -1 die penalty to Social rolls for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** She fails to make her spirit brands visible.

**Success:** The werewolf makes her spirit brands apparent for the rest of the scene. Spirits may become afraid of her, and other Uratha are forced to recognize her importance.

**Exceptional Success:** She activates her spirit brands with such a fine measure of control that she may be able to douse them if necessary. An unmodified Manipulation + Subterfuge roll stops the brands from shining.

When up against a werewolf of greater effective Rank than the spirit (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 272), the spirit suffers a -1 die penalty to all attacks for each difference in Rank. For example, a Rank 1 spirit attacking a Rank 3 werewolf loses two dice from all rolls to strike him. From the stories of before the war, Forsaken believe that this is not normal. Spirits used to be equally able to attack any werewolf or creature, but now it is more difficult for a spirit to attack a werewolf of greater Rank.

The restriction does not function in reverse. Werewolves have no such respect for superior spirits,

and have no difficulty fighting spirits with higher Ranks than theirs, nor do they get any bonus when attacking spirits with lower Ranks.

Werewolves do receive penalties when disagreeing with other Uratha of greater Renown. They also get bonuses to giving directions to werewolves with lesser Renown. When two werewolves are debating something, the difference in their effective Ranks applies as a bonus to the one with greater Renown and a penalty to the one with lesser. In a case when the matter under discussion is clearly related to only one of the five types of Renown (say, a debate about the Oath of the Moon being Honor), the penalty is instead based on the difference between the number of dots each has in that type.

*Example: Janna Fireleaf and Roger the Hound argue about the best way to attack an infestation of fettered spirits. Janna's method might earn her Cunning, Roger's is clearly centered on Glory, so they use effective Rank to apply the penalty. If their argument were about where to go to learn a mighty spirit's ban, the discussion is all about Wisdom. The difference between their dots in Wisdom would be used to calculate the penalty.*

That spirits have broken out of all fetishes makes dots placed in the Merit: Fetish useless for players' characters. Instead of simply removing the Fetish Merit from the game, give those Merit dots another use. Introduce the Merit: Legend.

### LEGEND (• TO •••••)

Legends abound among the Forsaken, especially about what the world was like before the spirits went mad. They say that, then, the People could bind spirits into their tools. These fetishes were objects of utility and power, and helped keep the world a safe and right place. Likewise, the People could hunt down spirits and force boons out of them, increasing the werewolves' powers and enabling them to better protect the world.

For any given purchase of the Merit: Legend, the character remembers one particular tale with crystal clarity. It resonates with him somehow, and he longs for the age when it was true. The player chooses one fetish or Gift of equal value (three-dot legend for a three-dot fetish or Gift) that inspired his character, though it's still just a legend. Once per story, when the character's remembered fetish or Gift would have come in handy (but, of course, is now gone), the character feels a flash of inspiration. Learning innovation to overcome her difficulties, she finds a way to do whatever she would have used the fetish to do.

Mechanically, the character gains one bonus die per dot of the lost fetish or Gift (and correspondingly, the legend) in an attempt to do something similar to the lost power. A werewolf lamenting the loss of a flash fire might decide to kick sand into her enemy's face instead for a similar result; that attempt gains a one-die bonus because it was a one-dot fetish. One who listened, bright-eyed, to stories of creating water from nothing might gain a one-die bonus to the Survival roll for finding water in an unexpected place.

That said, fetishes do still exist. They are just rare and hard to control. Not every player will want to give up the fetish for mundane inspiration. For any permanent fetish, there remains the possibility that the bound spirit was unable to escape. Make sure that any player who wants to keep a fetish is aware that using one properly will be very, very difficult, and that using one without an exceptional success on the activation roll will be dangerous.

That said, having and using a misbehaving fetish can be an interesting source of plot advancement. Besides attracting spiritual freedom fighters, misbehaving fetishes rarely work the way they are supposed to. A fetish compass designed to locate the nearest locus might instead point toward the nearest encampment of Beshilu or *duguthim*, sending the pack into fight after fight instead of toward the Gauntlet, as the pack desires. A fetish fork that makes lies undetectable could force the werewolf to speak truth, creating awkward situations and furthering the story.

### THE GENERATIONAL GAME

For players used to the standard **Werewolf: The Forsaken** setting, this can be quite a change of pace. Instead of just letting them read the above rundown and throwing them into it (assuming they're interested in a world of Uratha constantly at war and denied most of their magical tricks), the generational game is a method of working up to the state of constant war — and of powering down from the familiar werewolves.

New players may have no issue with the difference in setting, though when they go ahead and read the core book they'll look at your game and wonder about the differences. Playing a generational game can help them see the path from the book to your chronicle.

And the generational game can be used simply to highlight the decline of Forsaken society into the constant war they now fight. It's an opportunity for

players to run multiple characters in a series of packs that all experience the deterioration of the People — and potentially save it.

Plan out the approximate number of sessions you're going to play with groups in each time period. Three sessions are enough for only a quick introduction to the “utopia” before the turn of the century and a brief glimpse of the terror brought on by the first attack. If you want to reveal more about the nature of the burgeoning war or establish some history for players to use with their later characters, five or six sessions may be more appropriate.

You also want to and consider how that story might end. Knowing that the first pack is going to die horribly beforehand makes for a different sort of game than one in which everyone knows that the pack will found the first secure Uratha compound. Instead of just choosing one, you may want to line up a few options. If you all think that dying in the discovery of an occult secret, forging the first alliance with the mages or creating the new Rite of the Spirit Brand would be fun endings for the first pack, you can leave it up in the air and see which one you end up with.

This scenario uses the progression of generations to slowly build the sense of decline and oppression in the game. Over three generations, the first two with three to six chapters each, this sense of oppression empowers the setting and de-powers the werewolves, making the last generation

either the first winners or the final losers in the century-long war.

The generational game is very flexible. The default scenario describes a three-tier game, but you can play with five separate groups separated by 20 years each (just about spanning the full century); you can use a dozen or as few as three. Each pack could get the same air time, telling the story equally over the course of many werewolves' lives, or the last pack could build on the foundation laid by its predecessors for a story focused on them.



Also, there's no reason to assume that, once you move on to a new/more recent pack, the last one cannot be revisited. Although it takes planning, you can bounce back and forth between packs. In this case, the story is shared among all of them, with various aspects of the chronicle's focus being highlighted by the different featured packs. The videogame *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem* and the book *Cryptonomicon* did this particularly well.

### THE BEGINNING: THE BOILING POT

Begin the game with a brief rundown of the characters and their situations. This is who they are, this is where they live, these are their friends and enemies and this is what they've been doing. Pull it all out of the core **Werewolf** book, because this is before everything's gone to shit. To go a little bit further, emphasize the good aspects of it: loci are easier for werewolves to use, they have fetishes and Gifts to ease life a bit and fighting a spirit is something that doesn't happen all the time. Don't spend too long on backgrounds here — you're going to be moving on to new characters after a while.

Then ask the players where they want their characters to be when the Shadow Revolution, as it comes to be called, begins. Spirits strike like a lightning bolt, devastatingly without warning. This is the sort of event that the Forsaken will remember, much as Americans remember where they were when JFK was shot or they first heard about 9/11. Are the characters simply on the prowl around their territory? A werewolf might be boasting about his exploits, having sex, hunting for food, practicing a rite, playing videogames, dealing with a local gang or siphoning Essence from the pack's locus.

That's when the spirits attack. They surge out of the *Hisil* like a tsunami. Most force their way through at loci, but as many as can simply pop into existence across the pack's territory and other nearby territories. Then, communicating perfectly even without words, the spirits hunt those who have made them prey for so long.

The players' characters, of course, need to survive this hunt. Otherwise, there's no story — just an object lesson. For some players, the assurance of survival removes the danger and the fun from a game. Instead, the players should be aware that though their characters will survive, their advantages may not.

When the spirits attack, the characters' choices may doom their friends and allies, their wolf-blooded families, their tools and hideouts, even their locus.

Make sure the characters have things to worry about, then make sure they worry about 'em. Those Beshilu the pack was stalking can get scared off by the influx of spirits, then they won't surface again for weeks, if not months. One deputy that the pack is leaning on for a favor is in severe danger of becoming Ridden. Then, not only would the lawman not be helpful, the spirit would figure out where to hit the packmembers to hurt them.

Players shouldn't take advantage of their characters' "invulnerability" to derail the story. One werewolf holding off a horde of spirits because the player knows his character won't die isn't good gaming. Players: Don't do it. Storytellers: Don't stand for it. A player who makes his character do something that annoying is asking for the spirits to win.

### ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

While you're playing multiple characters to cover a long-lasting story arc, it's also a good time to play around with multiple characters/packs within the same time period. To make the first wave seem more deadly without actually killing off the players' characters, you can play it out twice. The second time, take a different perspective. Make up a different pack for the players, this time with the knowledge that the pack will be killed. They may not all bite it in the initial assault, but the spirits will break the pack during the session.

This can be your first session if you'd rather begin the chronicle on a more frightening note. It works better as the second if you'd rather run a "this is what could have happened" story. Play out how the spirits burst through the pack's locus and begin terrorizing the packmembers. The spirits almost seem to be having fun, and their numbers are unbelievable. At least they're low-Rank spirits, because otherwise they would be impossible to escape. And that's when the Greater Jagglings show around the corner, fade to black.

You can also run this sort of session later in the generational game. Even with the losses inflicted by the enemy, there are enough Forsaken to spare a pack or two for story purposes. As well as emphasizing the deadliness of the enemy, this session serves as an interlude for the chronicle's protagonists. Use it when the players' characters have some downtime, or when they've just found something new that you think could benefit from some suspense. Don't let these run longer than one session, or more often than one session out of every four or five. Players made *their*



characters because those are the characters they want to play.

Tie these extra sessions into the main plot. Playing the death of a pack in the very beginning of the game can be fun and reinforce that the enemy is dangerous, but it's still unrelated to the main characters and story. Survivors from that first pack become allies or rivals in the third session, as the characters are trying desperately to organize a defense. Giving the players a new pack to ratchet up the suspense is fine, but don't just watch them die. Watch them die before the same threat that the players' characters are about to face, and reveal a weakness or introduce one surviving character when you get back to the main pack.

### INTO THE NEW WORLD

After the survival-horror-type first (and potentially second) session, the spirits retreat. Their first assault is over. Give the characters a chance to recuperate, evaluate the damage done and gather with other Forsaken to figure out what the hell just went on. This session is all about the *aftermath*. No one knows why the spirits just rampaged, but everyone can see the consequences: There are dozens of *du-guthim* in one territory alone, from where rampaging spirits couldn't resist. Slain werewolves who've not yet received the Funeral Rite lie here and there, awaiting a ritemaster. Lone survivors of pack massacres weep quietly or stand apart, silent, brooding and angry.

This chapter is one of confusion. Questions are posed but not answered. The why and the what are all up in the air. The Forsaken may take time to realize that they are at war. Though they prepare themselves for battle against spirits hordes, they should not yet realize that the spirits intend to wipe the Forsaken out. There are probably many arguments about that very question at this very moment.

If you like fight scenes, there is space for a small one when the characters are away from the main gathering. Silent but fanatical, a small group of minor spirits encounter the pack at random, attack the packmembers fanatically and, most likely, are put down. That attack only reminds the werewolves that they really do not understand what is happening.

End the session without any real resolution on the matter. Think of it as a serial comic or television show that ends on no up note whatsoever. You should all be clear that, though everything appears bleak, there are things to do. Goals for the characters include creating a defensible Uratha redoubt, seeking

out other werewolves and entering the *Hisil* in order to figure out what's happening.

In a generational game that will return to these characters and this time, here is a good point to take the narrative into a later time. Because everything looks hopeless here, a cut to the future in which werewolves have managed to survive answers that most important question. Return to these forebears when it's time to play out their exploration of the Shadow Realm, where they learn something that's important to their descendants.

You may not be comfortable ending the chapter without any sense of potential redemption. No matter how appropriate it might be, it's not for every group and makes some players and Storytellers less than eager for the follow-up. In that case, the spirits attack again at the end of the session. This wave is just as fearsome as the first, but the packs are now convened and manage to turn the thrust. Though it does little real damage, it serves to reassure the werewolves present that the first attack was not a solitary event. This realization that they are at war for their lives catalyzes their response, and they begin preparations.

### MR. FUSION

Here is where you cut away from this group of characters. Whether or not you return to them depends on what you're going for. Skip ahead an indeterminate period into the future. Because all you're aiming for is a point of time between 1901 and 2001 (or the present day), you have a range of prevailing socio-political climates to choose as backdrop for the game.

Just as the existence of all the other supernatural groups, the spirits' increased aggression doesn't particularly shift the course of world history. Only the Invisible World changes much, and the Uratha most of all. Because the intention in using the generational game is to highlight changes for the characters or the Uratha over *time*, it is best to keep the game in the same location.

The year is 1951. Allied nations are still coasting from their victory in World War II. Nuclear bombs "won the war." The cold war is on at the same time that the American economy is picking up. For the most part, things are looking good.

But not for the Forsaken. Now, the players' pack is part of a tight Uratha community. Packs continue to be independent, but close quarters requires the existence of an alpha pack. That pack runs the People's local stronghold. Defenses are sufficient to hold off

spirit incursions as long as they are manned and regularly serviced. In other words, the best they can do is hold their enemies off. More than an occasional counterattack or raid for Essence is out of the question.

- **See What Has Changed:** In this chapter, after a brief introduction of the dramatis personae, it is time to explore the world. For the characters, this is just the way things are. For the players, everything has changed. It's time to reconcile those two perspectives.

The pack departs from the stronghold on a standard mission, whatever particularly suits them. Stealthy packs are more likely to scout out enemy movements. Combative packs are well-suited to hit-and-run missions. Most packs have a mix of talents, and any pack with a worthwhile ritemaster can be sent out to perform the Spirit Hunt for Essence or to siphon some unguarded Essence into a touchstone. Because there are never enough eyes, the pack most likely goes out to scout out the surroundings, see if the spirit armies are planning anything and hopefully locate some resources to keep the werewolves going.

Players find a world that is frighteningly different. Local towns are mostly normal, but just a little bit off. The change is subtle, because the *Hithimu* take time to leave their marks, but people acting strangely and obsessively is more common than it should be. Not everyone is Ridden, not by a long shot, but those who are leave their mark on the land around them.

Taking the time to use their ability to see spirits reveals an astounding number of spirits in the area. Most are fettered to hosts, some control humans completely and some have attached themselves to objects. The last group is most worrying, because they vigilantly watch for anyone who can see them — because most people who look directly at a spirit are Forsaken. Players shouldn't need the Merit: Common Sense for the Storyteller to warn them about this. Not everyone has the dots in Subterfuge necessary to conceal her attention, which is why some werewolves just keep their attentions on the physical world.

While this chapter can just be an introduction to “the way things are,” you may want to end it with an event to keep the game from feeling stagnant. You're playing in this time period to establish a foundation for the contemporary chapters, but that doesn't mean the chapters have to be mere tours of the period. In short, something about the game has to change.

Before the chapter ends, the packmembers return to the safety of their stronghold. Their brethren are

running around like ants, which is never a good sign. Someone or something killed half of the alpha pack, including the war leader. She was a ferocious monster in battle and a brilliant tactical mind, and now she's irrevocably gone. One of her most important qualities is that she was an elder. She had actually survived from before the Shadow Revolution. Most miraculously, she had *Gifts*. Highlight this, because the players' characters *do not*.

Last note for this chapter: Evidence suggests that werewolves killed her. There are traitors in the stronghold. Nobody can be trusted — except for members of the players' pack, since they were gone all day. With that damning recommendation of their character, the pack has little choice but to become alpha. Any other pack that tries will be torn down by all the others out of suspicion — no doubt what the assassin wanted.

- **Can We Hold On?:** With the very upsetting events of the last chapter, the players' pack has to figure out how — or if! — it can lead a host of 10 packs. Unfortunately, the last alpha pack's deaths and dissolution is not a secret, and the spirits immediately mass for an assault. It is up to the characters to turn their soldiers, who no longer seem to trust anyone outside their own packs, into an army before the spirits crush them.

This is the opportunity to introduce the players to tactics in this new world. Playing a pack thrust into the position of responsibility, the players and their characters are the similar boat of trying to make everything work. It is best to create your own tactics for both sides in this attack, so that they seem most natural to you, but here are some suggestions.

When the spirits attack, some come from the nearby loci and others drive *duguthim* to the assault. Since spirits in Twilight may use Numina on material targets, they open with volleys of their various Blast abilities. With their enemy weakened, the Ridden try to force their way into the compound to kill the werewolves. During the attack, Host-less spirits with the Materialize Numen try to simply appear within the stronghold to inflict as much damage as possible from surprise.

The stronghold, wherever it is, is fully fortified in the physical world. Strong walls, good locks, defensive-minded layout, caches of weapons, the works. The People use the Fortify the Border Marches rite to keep spirits from just appearing. Responding to many spirits using Blast, werewolves dodge to increase their

Defense and survive until the enemy depletes its Essence reserves. Uratha who take too much damage retreat or are hauled out of the way so they can heal. Fresh packs replace them on the front lines to keep the foot soldiers out. Death Rage is a significant danger, especially in this close space, so the Forsaken are careful to get wounded werewolves out of the threatened space before they mark a wound in one of the last three Health boxes.

Once the attack becomes more grounded in the physical plane, werewolves are usually able to hold their own. One pack guards the wounded at all times. Another pack typically roams the stronghold as troubleshooters, on the alert for spirits that might attempt to Materialize into the battle and attack from behind. Anyone else is on the front lines, keeping the enemy out. Many use Gauru form but never all at the same time, and all are very wary of *Kuruth*.

Most of these spirits will be from the same choirs for two reasons. Locus resonance determines which can most easily slip through from the *Hisil*, so the flavors of the nearest loci pre-select the most common local enemies. Also, when one spirit learns of the stronghold's weakness, it probably broadcasts the joyous news with the Chorus Numen, reaching only spirits of the same choir.

It goes like this: A spirit, of a choir common in the area because of local resonance, learns that the alpha pack is broken. The pack then uses Chorus to tell all the spirits of its choir, who are the same spirits best able to enter the physical world for the impending attack.

Under the pack's inexpert guidance, the stronghold may or may not manage to repel the assault. This narrative assumes that the werewolves do; if they fail, you will have to tie the characters to another Uratha stronghold or tell the story as they wander the World of Darkness alone. Or, this may be the last chapter in this stage of the narrative. After this dark middle, move on to the conclusive act of the story.

The enemy, though turned away, still manages to destroy several valuable improvements to the camp. They might even kill a werewolf, or put one in critical condition, and every single Uratha matters in this situation. This should highlight how fragile the werewolves' lives are in this changed world. Even a single upset can nearly topple the tenuous balance between the spirits and their half-spirit cousins.

What follows is recovery from the assault. Enough is damaged that another similar assault might wipe the enclave out completely. It's a small blessing

that injured werewolves will be up and able to work in less than three hours. Part of the recovery is a search for something better. Without the guidance of the old alpha pack, the stronghold needs an edge to survive.

• **We Are Not Alone:** The theme of this chapter is that not only the Forsaken suffer. Here is where the players' pack learns of the travails of others.

Although history as you know it has not been unhinged by the spirit invasion, the supernatural inhabitants feel the spirits' presence more strongly. Mages, much more so than vampires, notice the difference. This chapter offers the opportunity to introduce one of the other major supernatural entities to this alternate-setting game, or even both.

You may not want mages or vampires in your game. This is the chapter where the players find a thin ray of hope, where they secure an ally in the eternal war. Because of the connection both have to spirits, the ally could reasonably be the Pure or mages — though it doesn't even have to be one of the major supernaturals. The ally could be any of those mentioned under "Allies" on p. 30, from other Forsaken to those mentioned in Chapter Four: *Wayward Sons* to some weird other thing entirely.

The only real difference is in feel. Using other Uratha makes the game more about the werewolves than anyone else — more importantly, it ties into one of the central schisms in the setting. Specifically giving the pack an opportunity to treat civilly and ally with an enclave of the Pure provides the theme: Has the war made allies of otherwise irrevocable enemies? Bringing in a mage suggests some larger community that may be willing to help, which you might prefer. Letting the pack ally with an entirely unknown force, such as a cat that spirits mysteriously cannot harm, offers a feeling of strong uncertainty. What are the characters getting into?

Seeking an advantage against the spirits, the characters' pack needs to explore what is to be had. Connect them first to another werewolf enclave. An emissary arrives from the nearest stronghold to speak, ostensibly, with the pack's now deceased predecessors. The other enclave desires advice or assistance from this enclave, both of which the players' characters are now ill-positioned to provide. The pack is encouraged to return with the emissary to his stronghold to see if there is anything the two of them can do for each other.

There probably isn't. Without major concessions on the characters' parts, they can wheedle nothing

out of their older, more experienced counterparts at the four-days-distant enclave. The other alpha pack doesn't consider any deal that isn't a great bargain for them, partially because they need help almost or just as much as the players' enclave. The only deal that could be made for overall protection is for the players to accept the other pack as their alpha and integrate the two enclaves under the other pack's guidance. It's almost an insult to the characters' capabilities.

On the trip home, the pack encounters a stranger. A traveler, alone in the dark and — apparently in ignorance — about to be set upon by several preying spirits. The pack performs a timely rescue, and the stranger turns out to be a werewolf. (Some packs would not intercede. In such a case, their very nearness may scare off the spirits.) Even one of the Uratha would have been in danger from so many spirits alone. Even one of the Pure, as the stranger turns out to be.

Or it is a mage, who probably spots them first and tries to eavesdrop on them. Her focus as one of the Awakened is on the spirit world. Recognizing the turmoil it's in, she's trying to figure out why — and her senses tell her that these people might know something about it.

Cue the introduction, which is most likely tense at first. It comes out, perhaps for the first time since 1901, that the Pure are in exactly the same boat and also struggling to survive. The Pure have been too busy not dying out to maintain their rabid indoctrination procedures — while this werewolf certainly knows that the Tribes of the Moon are the cause of all bad things, the passion isn't as deep in him. Swallowing his pride, he discusses helping each other.

Or the mage admits that her cabal no longer has the spirit-companions they called familiars. Once things cool down, the negotiations begin. The mage wants to know more, and she would absolutely love to study the Uratha and learn their lore. Of course, she can't do that if their enclave is wiped out. She offers the aid of her cabal in protecting the enclave, assuming the bargaining doesn't go quite poorly.

Conclude the chapter with an exploration of what the alliance brings to the party. The Pure werewolf they meet has the influence in his community to swing an alliance, at least for a short while, and the advantage of nearly doubling the warriors in the stronghold is obvious.

For a mage, you may not know much about the Awakened and their Supernal magic, but you don't particularly have to. If you do not have **Mage: The**

**Awakened** and don't care to pick it up, just make up a few neat spells that don't have the same natural, animistic feel as werewolf Gifts. In fact, spells are quite like spirits' Influence ratings, with an extra focus on acquiring knowledge.

Let the cabal assist in fortifying the werewolves' stronghold. There may be some dissatisfaction with this depending on these unknown factors. This is the time for the characters to show that, "elected" to the alpha position or not, they intend to keep it.

At the end of this chapter, you should all have a feel for the way things work in this changed setting. After ending the session on a hopeful note, you might feel that the werewolves could pull it off and hold out for another 50 years. Good.

### 'TIL DEATH DO US

One alternative to planning out each arc for each of the characters' packs is to simply stay with one pack until its members are all dead or the pack dissolves. Only then do you move on to the next pack, 20 or 50 years down the road. This style of play has two major impacts on your game.

First, you must have sufficient stories to tell in each milieu. If the first pack to experience the Shadow Revolution lives for more than two or three chapters, you need to have something for the packmembers to do until they happen to bite it. Otherwise, you're apt to flounder a bit while the chronicle meanders without much apparent aim.

(You can always make *sure* they die. Just make sure everyone's on the same page about that. In fact, everyone should work together to come up with a meaningful death — meaningful to the story if not to the characters — when you go this route.)

Second, it lays another shadow across an already dark game. This style sends the message that the only escape from this war is death. It's an interesting message, to be sure, and one laden with meaning to exploit for your games, but you want to be sure that's something you want before you go for it.

### LOST, OUR CHILDREN

That was the beginning, and this is the end. Here is where you build on the foundation of the previous arcs to wrap everything up. It is 2001. American citizens are pitching fits about strange electoral

issues, everyone's laughing about Y2K and the rest of the world is just *beginning* to get annoyed with American politics and policies. As the digital age, handheld electronics are everywhere. Cameras take pictures of just about everything, everywhere, and the web is only minutes away to make it all public.

It's a bad time for werewolves.

Fifty more years of the Shadow Revolution have taken their toll. No more elder Uratha survive from before that attack 100 years ago. There is no one to tell hopeful tales, to paint stories about how it was and no werewolf wields Gifts. Only the Cahalith remember the old days and the old ways.

Your pack's enclave, at least, is doing better than many of the others nearby. The reason for this is simple: your enclave has potent and devoted allies. Even though those allies have occasionally died and been replaced, the relationship between your two groups remains close. Maybe your enclave helps the local Consilium and the Consilium returns the favor, or between your Forsaken and your Pure allies, you've just held on better than the others.

Even so, the forces of the spirit world push and push harder, and they're slowly closing in on both your and your allies. Essence grows dearer all the time as spirits ratchet up the occupation of loci near your stronghold. Even with some mages able to provide Essence through their magic, supplies are coming up short.

- **A Gift of Substance:** This chapter introduces the reason that this generation of werewolves is the one you've been building up to play. Something special happens to suggest that, just perhaps, your characters' pack might be able to end the century-long Shadow Revolution. What it is depends on what caused the spirits to join together in the first place.

Introducing the monster: One of the fearsome idigam rose from the depths of where Father Wolf bound it ages ago. Instead of tearing into the material plane as most of its ilk, the unknowable Hetdraag carved out its kingdom of absolute reign in the *Hisil* before the idigam ever considered stepping through the Gauntlet. Hetdraag's only command before achieving complete power over the spirit world was to act as normal; but once Hetdraag ruled the Shadow, the spirit unleashed its minions to take care of the Uratha. Now, attracted to the resistance of the characters' enclave, Hetdraag is within reach for a decisive strike — if the pack only knew how to hurt it.



### CHOICE 1: NONE OF THE ABOVE


Laying all this commotion at the feet of a great idigam fits the **Werewolf** setting, but it may not be what you want to do. Here are a few other ideas.

**The Test:** Mother Luna turned the spirit world against her children in order to unite the Forsaken and Pure Tribes as one. Now that they have been allied for 50 years, the long-lost Lunes return to tell the Uratha they must undergo a test of Purity to prove they again deserve her support.

**The Uprising:** Powerful spirits across the Shadow Realm decided that they had just had enough. Ordered by their feudal lords, spirits across the world rose up in defiance of the Uratha police and began the Shadow Revolution. The only way to end the war is to completely and utterly break the spirits' backbones — which no doubt means tearing apart some very powerful spirit lords.

**The Wildfire:** What the spirits are doing isn't attacking — they're fleeing. There is a greater threat deep in the spirit wilds, something that consumes all in its path and leaves no Essence at all to sustain the spirits. Angry and confused, the spirits are acting as any wild animal: trying to escape and biting anyone who stands in their way. Get to the bottom of the mysterious threat, and the spirits might give it a rest.

**The Impostors:** At the command of their strange masters, the Bale Hounds have been very busy for a very long time. In 1901, they incidentally started the war by murdering or stealing from several powerful lords of influential spirit courts. Since the offenders were Uratha, the spirit lords condemned the entire irksome race and began the war. Whether or not this is what the Maeljin wanted in the first place is unknown, but the thefts and murders continued throughout the war — ensuring that the Shadow Revolution continued apace. End the war by revealing and condemning the Bale Hound threat.



Thus begins the story of how the players' characters ended the war through their heroic action. They seek out and discover the idigam's ban. With that advantage, they begin to drive back the offensive spirits and, in a surprise attack, shatter the idigam with their knowledge and the force of a dozen packs.

But that might not happen.

No matter what really causes the Shadow Revolution, the players' pack may not succeed. They could fail in any respect, and their failure sends a shock through the Uratha resistance, barely holding on as it is. Dead, the pack escapes the worst of the coming years as the packmembers' kin are hunted down and slain. Alive, they get to experience it and watch the terrors that follow as the spirits overtake the material world as they've been trying to do since the time of Father Wolf.

- **Fade to Black:** Either way, don't play it out. Unlike the end of the last scenario, this one ends on one of two notes. The Shadow Revolution ends, and the Uratha are on their way back to what they now consider a "silver age." It is positive, and the future is bright. Or the future looks dim and gets only darker. With the People's last avenue of hope exhausted, they soon disappear into the eternal night.





# CHAPTER II

## HISTORICAL CONFLICTS

Down in Shade Holler, they knew there was a war going on between South and North. They just didn't care much. It would have taken a brave, brave man to go up past the stand of trees all marked like a bear had been at them, knock on the doors of the cabins up there and say, "We need your sons to fight for us." Nobody in the county was that brave. They preferred to think of themselves as smart.

But the war was a big thing, and it eventually came to them. It came in the person of a solitary soldier, wearing a gray uniform that was sized for some other man and stained around the collar. He leaned on one of the clawed-up tree trunks and waited a bit, and eventually one of Them came out of Shade Holler to meet him.

"The armies came round our place," the stranger said. "We can't live there no more. So we're comin' round here." Then he touched the brim of his cap and left. Fair warning had been given.

The soldiers never reached up in Shade Holler. But they had a war there all the same.



“YOU CAN’T SAY CIVILIZATION DON’T ADVANCE, HOWEVER,  
FOR IN EVERY WAR THEY KILL YOU IN A NEW WAY.”

— WILL ROGERS

It’s impossible to have a serious discussion of war without discussing the wars of the past. Even the battles fought at the very dawn of history have defined some of the ways we think about fighting. Sun Tzu and Miyamoto Musashi’s writings are still studied as relevant hundreds or thousands of years after their deaths. We still refer to a Pyrrhic victory, and we’re still inspired by the legend of the 300 Spartans who held off an army at Thermopylae. So, examining the wars of the Uratha calls to mind what lessons they, too, might have learned — what sort of scenarios unfolded in the past that are now remembered only in their howls.

But why stop there? The war stories of long ago can be repeated, but they can also be relived.

Running a game set in the World of Darkness’s past can be a daunting proposition. Historical settings are always a little intimidating for a Storyteller, particularly one who isn’t already a history buff. It’s hard to be as comfortable running a game when the culture isn’t the one you grew up in. But the allure is unmistakable. There are so many images that sing to us — blood and sand on the wheels of an Egyptian chariot, the crack of matchlock rifles, the roar of cannons splintering a ship of the line’s hull. The first step to crafting an excellent historical story is to let your enthusiasm for the inspiring elements of the period take hold. Not that we’re saying that enthusiasm alone can carry a game and that research is overrated, mind — but it’s important not to be intimidated.

Another potential obstacle is innocuous at first, and that’s the overall feeling of mystery that pervades the World of Darkness. When starting a historical story, it’s natural to want to flesh out as much as you can — the general status and population of all the supernatural groups, who the major players of the age might be, whether or not the local historical figures have had any brushes with the supernatural and so on. In trying to provide complete details about the setting so that everyone feels comfortable, you may find that everyone feels a bit *too* comfortable: there’s not as much dread of the unknown, not as much horror. Treat the historical story exactly as you would a modern-day story. Maintain the feeling of ignorance and isolation to the same degree that you and your troupe are already used to. In this way, even though the characters didn’t grow up in the same culture that the players did, the setting remains familiar. It still feels like the World of Darkness. It still feels like **Werewolf**.

Don’t feel that you have to treat a historical game like a graduate thesis. Unless your group is made up of

die-hard history buffs, or one of your players has a strong penchant to correct everyone else whenever there’s even a small historical inconsistency, less-than-perfect attention to detail isn’t all that distracting. Learn enough about the time period to provide little details about immersion. Instead of making sure that everyone knows how the economics of Viking-era Scandinavia work, drop in a tidbit here and there in play. Describe the meal of salted fish, bread and butter and fruit, or mention that the Blood Talon proudly wears his hacksilver jewelry as if defying anyone to frighten him with silver. A few details gleaned from a History Channel program, a good book or even 15 minutes of searching the Internet is often good enough to immerse the troupe in the setting.

And therein lies one of the secrets to any good story — the trick of pacing. The more time spent on exposition, the slower the game progresses and the less momentum is generated. A few accurate historical details, artfully applied, can improve the sense of immersion in ways that a half-hour lecture on the culture of the times could never accomplish. If you feel that your troupe would be better off with an intensive amount of information, consider distributing said information well before the game as a handout, so people can read it at their leisure.

This isn’t just advice for Storytellers, mind. As a player, you can also help the rest of the group feel at home in a historical story. Try working a sample colorful cultural tidbit of the appropriate era into your character’s background or description, then explain it to your fellow players if they don’t catch the reference. It doesn’t have to be elaborate or too obscure to be interesting. Just a little bit of color can make the experience more entertaining and immersive for everyone involved.

## PLANNING THE HISTORICAL WAR

So where do you start when planning a historical war story? Odds are, your group already has some sort of idea of which historical periods are of interest to them. If several of you are fans of the Three Kingdoms story, then a game set just after the fall of the Han is likely to be appealing. But it doesn’t hurt to think about some of the game’s other goals while settling on a place and time. Certain settings might lend themselves particularly well to a given flavor of antagonist, and others could be quite readily linked to an already existing modern chronicle. By considering

these matters, you can add even more narrative value to your historical war (as well as ensuring it's more fun for all involved).

## SETTING THE PACE

Clearly the historical story isn't the default setting for the World of Darkness, and it's not what players initially expect. Do you dip your toes in the past with a single story that may or may not have anything to do with the other stories you've been telling, or do you immerse yourself for a full chronicle's worth?

## THE ONE-SHOT STORY

As a one-shot, a historical story has plenty to offer. Like all one-shots, it can be an interesting change of pace, a chance to try something new — a new tribe, a new auspice, a new philosophy — and a chance for a more lethal game, since the players aren't really intending to return to their historical characters anyway. (Though they might enjoy themselves so much, one shouldn't rule out the possibility!) But more than just simple entertainment, it's also a chance to scratch the players' itch for discovery, allowing them to find out more things about the World of Darkness as it was, and how that influenced what came to be.

The story can be completely stand-alone, of course. Plenty of gaming groups dabble with themed one-shots, such as running a Halloween horror game with an expected dismal character survival rate, or a lighter-hearted change of pace. (For instance, roleplaying the Black Moon Extreme pack from the Denver Rockies setting for a one-shot story, with every intention of playing a disastrous campaign against the vampires loaded with black humor and lots of fire.) There aren't any connections to the present-day chronicle, and it might even change the course of history — if the pack butchers Julius Caesar at the battle of Alesia and thus prevents him from transforming Rome, things are going to be different.

Alternately, with a little extra work to plant the hooks, a one-shot historical story can actually be part of an ongoing chronicle set in modern times. In effect, it becomes a flashback story, much as might be seen in a television show or other serial medium. The purpose of a flashback story is always twofold: to extrapolate on some event in the overall narrative's past and thus add more depth and context to present events or characters, and to have an entertaining story with a clear change of pace. This is true both of passive media and of roleplaying. Different setting, the same continuity — and probably a stronger continuity, now that the players have seen how events long ago have shaped the present state of affairs.

The hooks that tie a historical war story to the present are numerous. One of the most common ways to connect the two is to have the historical story star one or more ancestors of the modern chronicle's protagonists. This can be tricky, though, as the farther back you go the less plausible it is that all of the protagonists' ancestors

knew one another, and thus it may seem as if you're focusing more on one or two characters. An interesting variant on the ancestral chronicle might be revealing that the entire pack is descended, however loosely, from the same ancestor. This goes well with chronicles that have more of a sense of predestination than random chance, and the reveal that the pack is made up of quite distant cousins may further reinforce their feelings of brotherhood.

The ties might also be more narrative in nature, essentially providing a greater context for the situation the modern packmates find themselves in. A long-running feud (between Pure and Forsaken, or between Forsaken and Forsaken) is finally explained as the players get to enact the incendiary events firsthand. The events that opened a Wound a century ago are laid bare, perhaps guiding the players to a means of somehow healing it. The historical conflict might even be a simple mirror of the present-day situation the pack is facing, with few links other than the old axiom of history repeating itself.

And of course the World of Darkness is not without its share of functionally immortal entities that might have taken part in the historical story and still be players in the modern-day chronicle. Vampires are a natural fit for stories about malice that endures the march of time, tied as they are to the concept of immortality and eternal youth. Hosts do not die of old age; they simply move on to a new skin when the old one starts coming apart. And spirits are themselves immune to the ravages of age. The idigam are a prime example of spirits that have been the focus of great wars and tragedies in the distant past and again in recent years. Any spirit of power around the pack's territory has probably been in place for a long time itself, gradually growing its power. And for an intimate connection, perhaps the pack's own totem was witness to the events of the historical story, which may have shaped its willingness to bond itself to its current children. Playing two packs separated by centuries but bound by a common totem can be quite the experience. Just think of the possibilities that open up when your pack totem manifests itself, looks over your brothers, your sisters and you with fathomless eyes, and says, "Let me tell you a story...."

## NEW RITE:

### RITE OF RECOLLECTION (••••)

The Bone Shadows are the primary custodians of this uncommon rite, and claim it was learned by a shaman at the feet of Death Wolf herself. This rite is usually learned in pursuit of a particular goal of knowledge; most Ithaeur see a danger in seeking out a rite of this nature casually. It isn't something to be learned "just in case" you find a use for it later — one who plans to open those doors must do so with the will that comes only from a serious need.

The rite uses a personal item from a dead subject as a focus to allow the participants to witness significant events from that subject's life. Over the course of an hour, the participants undergo a series of visions that may

detail entire days in the subject's life. The characters have no control over which events they view; generally the *memento mori* is charged with the events most important to the deceased's life. The participants in the rite are unaware of the outside world while viewing the vision of recollection, and as such the rite is typically performed in as safe a location as can be arranged.

**Performing the Rite:** The participants gather in a circle around the *memento mori* that is the focus of the rite. The focus must be some item that once belonged to the deceased in question, optimally an item that has had no other owners since the subject of the rite died. The more direct and clear a connection between the *memento mori* and the rite's subject, the better the odds of success.

The ritemaster names the fallen as accurately as possible, by human given name and by Uratha deed-name. The ritemaster then takes a bowl of purified water and drinks from it, spitting a portion of the water on the focus. The offering of Essence occurs with the touch of water to the focus; the water is a bridge between the object and the ritemaster. As the ritemaster chants a litany in the First Tongue, each participant takes the bowl of water in turn and emulates the ritemaster: drinking, spitting and making an offering of Essence as she asks for the spirit of the fallen to show her the tale of his life. When the bowl has made a full circle, the ritemaster sprinkles the rest in a circle around the focus and strengthens his invocation until the vision comes.

This rite cannot be used to gain memories from more than 3,000 years ago. Some werewolves have attempted to find ways to empower the rite and reach back further, but for now the memories of Pangaea remain lost. The rite also works only if the subject is well and truly dead — it cannot be used on a subject such as a vampire. The rite *does* work if the deceased has left behind a ghost, as the ghost lacks any higher consciousness.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Actions:** Extended (25 successes; each roll represents one minute)

**Cost:** 1 Essence per participant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** All successes are lost. The rite fails, and cannot be attempted again using this particular object as a focus.

**Failure:** No successes are gained.

**Success:** Successes are added to the total. If 25+ successes are gained, the vision takes hold. The participants' senses effectively black out. The vision usually begins subtly at first, with voices echoing in the darkness or a faint light seen through gray fog.

The participants view the events of the vision without any control over their perspective, which may vary. Most experience a detached perspective, as if viewing the events from above or from a short distance, their perception moving with the rite's target. Some have reported

seeing events from the direct point of view of the participants. This seems to happen most frequently when the viewer is a direct blood relation to the subject.

The vision is always related to some event that changed the life of the participant — or ended it. The Bone Shadows who keep the rite note that the Rite of Recollection always seems to bring images of tragedy or conflict; even if the most important event in a werewolf's life is the birth of his son, that birth will not be recalled unless it is tied to events involving death. As the rite calls on spirits of death to empower it, such a limitation seems inevitable.

The participants are unable to perceive the world around them while experiencing the vision, just as if they were sleeping or catatonic. If a participant suffers injury during the rite, she is pulled out of the vision and can react as normal on the next turn. If the ritemaster exits the vision in such a manner, the entire vision ends for all participants.

This rite can be used successfully only once for any given focus object.

**Exceptional Success:** Successes are added to the total. If 30+ successes are gained, the vision is clear and strong, yet the characters remain somewhat aware of their physical surroundings. Participants may make Perception rolls to determine what's going on in the space around their physical bodies, although at a penalty of -3.

### Suggested Modifiers

#### Modifier Situation

-3	Deceased died more than 1,000 years ago.
-2	Deceased died from 501–1,000 years ago.
-2	Focus was not carried frequently by the deceased.
-1	Per additional person who carried and used the focus.
-1	Deceased died from 101–500 years ago.
-1	Ritemaster cannot provide the deceased's full name.
-1	Deceased is not a werewolf.
+1	Focus is a bone taken from the deceased.
+1	Ritemaster is a blood relative of the deceased.
+2	Focus played a heavy part in the vital events of the deceased's life.
+2	Site of the rite is also the site of the vital events of the deceased's life.

### THE PROBLEM OF PREDESTINATION

The major question with any historical story or chronicle is this: Should the players be allowed to alter the flow of history? It has the potential to be a somewhat sticky dilemma, because saying "no" does restrict the freedom of the players a bit, while saying "yes" could well render the setting unrecognizable, making it much more difficult to set future stories in the same continuity.

It doesn't have to be a grievous sticking point, though. Maybe you're fine with it

(although this is less likely for a flashback story). But also, altering the flow of history is something like breaking genre, or playing counter to the mood of the chronicle. Presumably, your troupe already has agreed that you're going to be playing werewolves (or other supernatural types, or wolf-blooded or even humans) in a game set in the World of Darkness, perhaps customized by the Storyteller somewhat. The idea that a historical chronicle might ultimately not change the course of history is a similar genre assumption. Nobody really expects Jack Aubrey to end the Napoleonic War before Waterloo, and Claudius doesn't kill off Caligula before he can rise to power in *I, Claudius*. If everyone's fine with that trope of historical fiction, it probably won't even come up.

### THE STAND-ALONE CHRONICLE

It's understandably more daunting to plan a historical chronicle that is intended to last as long as its modern equivalent. The characters will have to do more living in the setting, so to speak — the players will spend more time thinking about the environment as it affects their characters' goals. If the chronicle centers on a pack of Mongol werewolves in the era of Genghis Khan's rise to power, the troupe should know enough about 12th-century Central Asia to feel relatively comfortable playing those werewolves. Usually the same inspiration that propels the initial pitch for such a chronicle is enough to inspire a bit of research, though it can help to give each player an "assignment" to bring some useful bit of research to the table. The Irraka's player might find out what sort of foods were common back then; the Rahu's player could find what period weapons are popular, and so on.

Here, war is actually your ally. A historical war chronicle can be easier to plan than a historical chronicle with more traditional "establish a territory, hunt the enemy" focus. The war provides an instant motive for the characters to get proactively involved, and it sets up a clear and achievable goal for the chronicle — the war, or at least the way that the war affects the pack, must be resolved one way or another. There's also a level of immediacy that can be very useful to all but the most self-motivated players. With the constant question of "What's the next battle going to be, and how can we win it?" looming over their heads, players have less time to poke around their territory trying to find things to do that fit the time period. There's no time to feel adrift or worry too much about whether your character's motivations are really appropriate for the culture.

The sequence of battles serves as an excellent framing device for the chronicle. If following a human war, it's simple to weave the various plots affecting the Uratha char-

acters into and around the historical battles. For instance, a chronicle detailing a pack of werewolves' involvement in secret events paralleling the American Revolutionary War might begin with a battle in the Shadow during the winter at Valley Forge, and end with a climactic battle at roughly the same time as the Yorktown surrender. Alternately, the chronicle may ignore most of the larger battles between British and American forces and instead follow the series of raids and massacres perpetrated by and against the Indians allied with the British. If the chronicle is instead following a war between werewolves and their enemies, it still makes sense to plan around the major battles of the war. It's often helpful to design a loose flowchart mapping out how the events of the chronicle may change based on wins, losses or player actions. Optimally, some of the stories within the chronicle should be devoted to the battles themselves, while others deal with events that occur away from the battlefield. Wars don't exist in a vacuum. The Uratha are often forced to deal with the horrific end results of atrocity as well as the atrocities themselves.

Even an entire chronicle can have links to the next chronicle down the road. The deeds and struggles that make up the historical chronicle might inform a modern-day chronicle with a very different focus. You can even change game lines between chronicles if interested. For instance, a **Werewolf** game set in feudal India might be followed up by a modern **Mage** game in which a cabal of magi are searching for the lore hidden by a hideous beast-cult that once ruled over the jungle (and clashing with the descendants of the first chronicle's protagonists). Or a **World of Darkness** chronicle following human Crusaders encountering gruesome supernatural horrors as they try to make their way back home could set up a modern **Werewolf** chronicle wherein the Uratha must deal with the horror that the Crusaders inadvertently awoke.

### WEREWOLVES VS. WEREWOLVES

Another serious question is the nature of the antagonist. For the players, the challenge in a scenario in which other werewolves are the enemy is more physical, just as with a modern story. For the Storyteller, part of the challenge comes in selecting a battlefield where Uratha can turn against Uratha in numbers worthy of being called a war, and yet remain in the shadows of the World of Darkness' history. Ten thousand werewolves can't fight another 10,000 werewolves across Normandy and not raise the notice of humans.

A war against the Pure proper needs little enough explanation (at least here, after the bounty of Chapter One). As far back as Uratha lore can see, the Pure and the Forsaken have been at one another's throats. A conflict between the two nations could take place at virtually any point in history — the only time the two were said to be one was in Pangaea itself, if it even existed.

The Forsaken can and do also go to war against one another. It's not a common thing, at least not war proper.

The bonds of the tribes go a great way toward enabling some peace talks that otherwise wouldn't take place. It's certain that the European colonization of the Americas would have seen much more bloodshed between the Forsaken if the natives and immigrants weren't able to discover that they shared a tongue and many totems. But a war between werewolves doesn't have to involve hundreds of Uratha on each side — even 20 werewolves on each side can make a proper war, given a setup where they can call many more human warriors to fight on their side.

When Forsaken fights Forsaken, it's usually for personal reasons. Fear is also a strong motivator, if there's sufficient reason (even contrived) to suspect that the neighbors aren't as devoted to the brotherhood of Luna as they say they are. A war with the Tribes of the Moon on both sides is likely to be much more personal and tragic than a war against the Pure, and it's a good idea to pick a historical setting to match that.

The tragedies associated with the setting in question are particularly good inspiration for wars fought among the Forsaken. For example, Chris is planning a war story set in Dark Ages Germany. He's looking to the *Ring Saga* to provide him with some mythic inspiration. He decides he's not that interested in having an actual physical artifact be the source of the conflict (figuring that his players wouldn't see a bitter battle to possess a potent fetish ring as particularly novel), but he does like using the family conflicts surrounding Siegfried as a source of inspiration. Noting that Siegfried is a child of incest and that he later betrays his wife out of forgetfulness, Chris decides to build his war story around a pair of Uratha lovers who have turned against one another. Uncovering their shameful secret might be a way for the players to convince the two's followers to abandon their leaders, but it might also spark a series of new battles to find new, worthier leaders.

The idea that a Ghost Child offspring is likely to enter the war at some point seems to be a bonus twist, adding a potential third faction to one of the battles.

## POTENTIAL SETTINGS

- **Prehistory:** This period makes an excellent time for out-and-out werewolf war. The first wars between Pure and Forsaken erupt here, as might clashes between the still-forming tribes. The outcomes of wars in this time might be utterly forgotten in the modern age, or they might be the foundation of millennia of Uratha culture.

- **Dark Ages:** Some consider early medieval Europe the most classic of werewolf settings. Indeed it would be appropriate to look into a bloody war fought by moonlight, howls echoing across the thickly forested valleys while peasants huddle in their cottages.

- **Colonialism:** The powerful trigger of a werewolf's territorial instinct is all that's needed to spark a conflict. When a large number of Uratha arrive in an area, attempting to claim their own territories from the natives, the conflict has the potential to get much larger. Werewolves fighting werewolves is a natural for colonial settings from North America to India.

## WEREWOLVES VS. HUMANS

Werewolves come into frequent conflict with ordinary humans, but it's rare that it can break out into open war. The Oath of the Moon's demand for secrecy makes rationalizing a war in which both sides are aware of their enemy difficult. Even if the humans don't know they're actually fighting werewolves, they'll likely find out quickly enough.



However, the rule “The Herd Must Not Know” might not always have been so vigorously enforced. Violating the rule is a serious Harmony sin, but in a culture where humans already believe in various demons and monsters yet know little of the Uratha, shifting forms or using Gifts might not give anything new away. It may be considered expedient to fight against a human enemy with supernatural resources, passing the People off as some other beasts out of human folklore, if not magicians with a knack for shapeshifting.

A “war” between werewolf and human is typically a guerilla war. It plays out something like a hunt, only with a much greater scale. Several packs prowl the area around an army, picking off scouts, cutting supply lines and tearing apart any soldiers unlucky enough to be isolated from the rest of the troops. It’s rare that the People throw themselves openly at the front lines, wearing the Gauru form like warpaint. While the werewolves have the advantages of strength and supernatural versatility, the humans still have numbers. Massed sling or arrow fire will bring a werewolf down without too much difficulty, and a thicket of spears is a dangerous thing to charge. Depending on the invaders’ pride, the werewolves may have to risk themselves time and again, until the mounting casualties are enough to force their enemy to retreat. If the Scythians could do it to the armies of Persia, werewolves have what it takes to do likewise. The most difficult trick is keeping the armies from harming any human families or loved ones who might be in the contested territory.

As another possibility, the human forces might be only *mostly* human. They might be directed by governors or officers who are themselves supernatural, using the mortal armies as pawns to flush out the Uratha. The advantages of this take are that it offers a new potential motivator for why the humans are targeting the werewolves, and potentially increases the threat level. The downside, however, is that using supernatural authorities somewhat devalues the danger of humans alone as antagonists. It also has a tendency to imply that more wars and other significant events take place only as directed by shadowy supernatural puppeteers. If you prefer a setting with shadow governments of this nature, this may be a plus, but it might strain the players’ credulity.

### POTENTIAL SETTINGS

- **Ancient Unification:** There are several instances in which one particular human culture begins a campaign of unification, attempting to conquer as much territory as possible. Examples include the Persian campaigns of Darius and Xerxes, the unification of China under Qin Shihuang, the wars between Upper and Lower Egypt, the rise of Alexander the Great and later the Roman Empire. These conflicts are highly territorial affairs, and it’s easy to see werewolves playing the part of “barbarians who refuse to be civilized.”

- **The Crusades:** Religious fervor is a popular theme when depicting a conflict between humans and supernatural creatures. The Crusades are a time of great religious fervor, frequently corrupted by bloodlust and greed. Werewolves wouldn’t have to live in the Holy Land to be in the path of a Crusade; they could just be one of the stops along the road where the Crusaders choose to vent some of their emotion and carry off their first spoils. ,

- **Early Modern:** The mid to late 19th and early 20th centuries are full of ugly conflicts — the American Civil War, the rebellions against the crumbling British Empire, and of course World War I. The rise of reliable firepower makes humans a more distinct threat than ever before — service revolvers, Gatling guns and chemical weapons all give humans more of a fighting chance against werewolves. Such a conflict can be used to foreshadow the even more destructive weapons yet to come.

### LUNACY

Even though weapon technology isn’t quite as efficiently lethal as it is in the modern age, humans are something for werewolves to worry about. One of the reasons that The Herd Must Not Know was still a valid rule in ancient times was that humans were closer to the Shadow, even though they didn’t know it. The thinner Gauntlet often produced humans with a greater tolerance for the supernatural, much as constant but mild exposure to bacteria can strengthen the immune system.

In game terms, it’s totally appropriate to rule that humans are more resistant to Lunacy in particular historical systems; perhaps all humans (or at least those tough enough to do well in a military environment) test as if their Willpower were two points higher. This is most appropriate for the Dark Ages or earlier periods. If you as Storyteller choose to implement this rule, be certain to alert the players beforehand — their characters would certainly know how resistant the humans of the age are to the Lunacy. For all anyone knows, this rule represents the true strength of Lunacy, and modern humans are simply weaker than they should be.

### WEREWOLVES VS. THE SHADOW

Although a common source of conflict for the Forsaken, this is a rare form of war. The denizens of the Shadow are individually strong but rarely gather in sufficient numbers to merit a proper war. However, some spirits or other Shadow-spawned monstrosities are too strong for even a few packs to overcome, and sometimes have the ability

to create or attract minions as well. The obvious example is that of the idigam. The idigam Gurdilag that plagued the Rocky Mountains at the end of the 20th century was itself too powerful for even an alliance of packs to defeat without exploiting its ban, and it had a penchant for transforming its victims into monstrosities that themselves would harry and hunt the Forsaken.

This kind of war has the potential for using the Shadow as a battlefield, even more so than a war between werewolves. Creatures that lair in the spirit world don't have to set up near loci, so their werewolf enemies aren't limited to a locus-to-locus route. This avenue of conflict can be useful in two ways. One, it allows werewolves to fight a proper war without actually worrying about humans as accidental witnesses. Two, it showcases the major events of the period, at least those that would leave their mark on the Shadow. Consider what the spirit reflection of France would look like at the height of slaughter in World War I, or gruesome fires might burn in the Shadows of Baghdad and Delhi after Tamerlane's massacres. Wounds open, and the Maeltinet marshal their twisted troops to begin an invisible occupation of the local populace.

At a small scale, this sort of war isn't very different from the classic **Werewolf: The Forsaken** game. At a larger scale, the entire area is all but certain to become strange and surreal. Psychic fallout from the massed spirit troops infects the world of flesh, and "deserters" from the Shadow armies become deadly little threats of their own. The war becomes almost art, albeit nightmarish art — a shadowy *Guernica*, or something from one of Goya's darker works.

### POTENTIAL SETTINGS

- **Prehistory:** Many of the legendary battles between Father Wolf and his foes could easily have parallels in an Uratha war. A war against the Azlu back during the dawn times taps into the same epic sensibilities as the myth of Father Wolf hunting down the Spinner-Hag. The story's themes can touch on the sense of responsibility and loss in the wake of Father Wolf's Death, as the Forsaken attempt to find their way in the world.

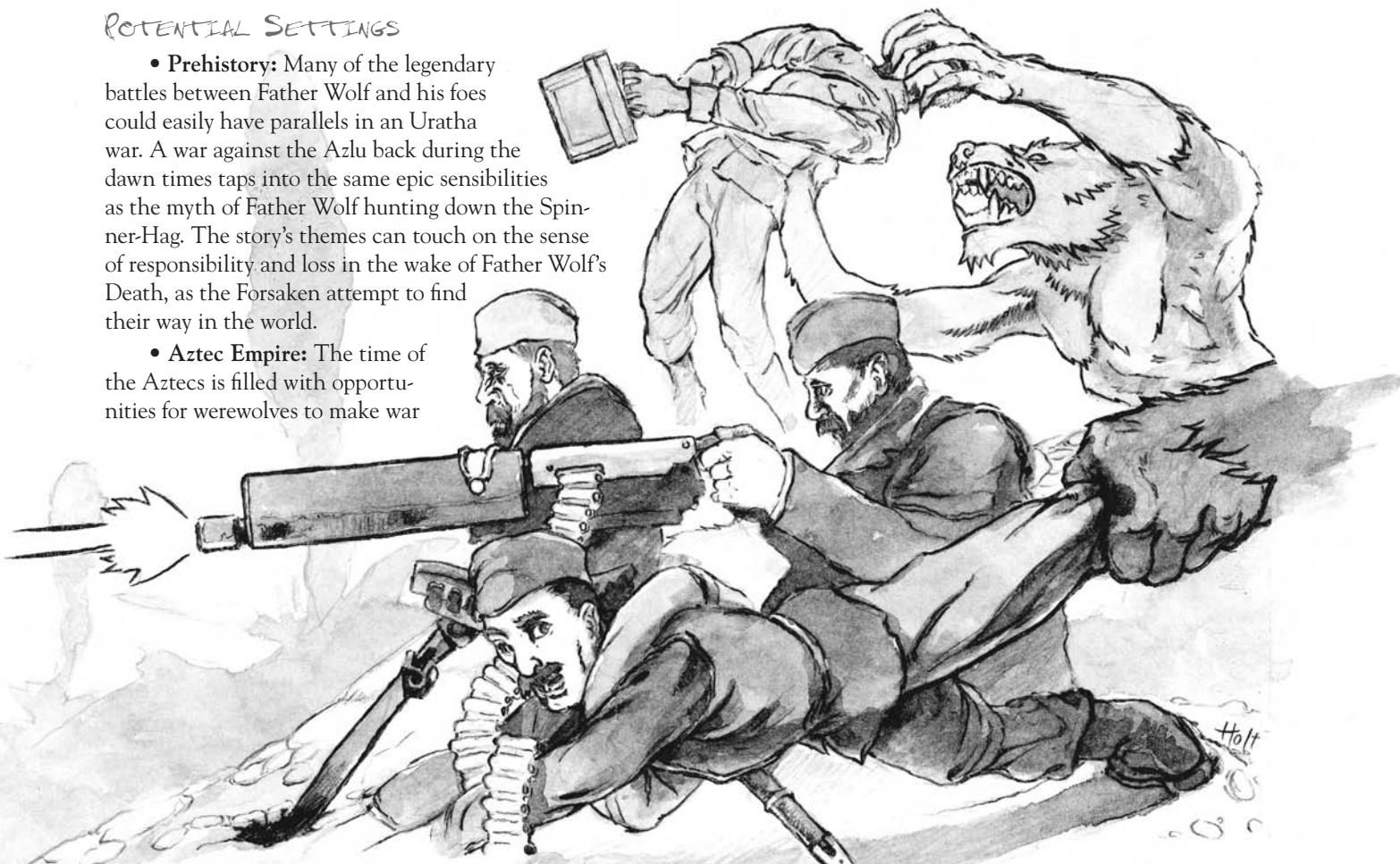
- **Aztec Empire:** The time of the Aztecs is filled with opportunities for werewolves to make war

against the most corrupt denizens of Shadow. Even when the empire was at its height, the ritualized bloodshed would have given rise to many powerful spirits of violence. According to Aztec accounts, more than 84,000 prisoners were sacrificed over four days to consecrate the great pyramid of Tenochtitlan. The arrival of Cortez would only fan the flames, ending in battle and then later massacre. In addition, epidemics of smallpox and typhus would also engender waves of newborn spirits of pestilence. Any one of these events could trigger a massive battle; the combination calls for war.

- **World War I:** The modern-day Shadow of Europe still bleeds from Wounds opened during the First World War. Consider what it must have been like at its height. While some werewolf packs fight one another or the human soldiers who trespass on the Uratha's lands, most are occupied staving off the legions of destructive spirits that flock to the slaughter. The fight swings farther against the werewolves as spirits never before seen are born of the new technologies — spirits of grenades, flamethrowers, mustard gas. It proves to be one of the ugliest wars the Forsaken have ever fought.

### LOGISTICS

The face of war changes with each generation. It helps to keep an eye on those changes, as they have the potential to affect your chronicle on a fundamental level. The difference between a small ball of lead fired from an unrifled musket or a rifled barrel are tremendously significant, even to werewolves. Although **Werewolf** is pretty



far from a game of die-hard simulation, it helps project the atmosphere of the period if some attention to the period's logistics go into play.

Considering the logistics can actually help inspire choosing a historical era for a story in the first place. For instance, deciding that firearms are a necessity to keep the humans more dangerous (even if by accident) but preferring limited communication to increase the sense of isolation suggests a particular swath of time periods.

## SKILLS

Certain Skills will change in application as technology becomes less advanced and cultures have less interaction with their neighbors. The following guidelines should help you adjust a character's skill set to properly reflect the time and place in which she was raised.

### MENTAL

**Academics** remains a viable Skill in most settings. It may be renamed "Lore" in some periods, if the culture in question is more concerned with the oral tradition and has no real form of written education.

**Computer** is obviously of little impact in any historical setting before the advent of the personal computer. It's recommended that this be replaced with the new Mental Skill: Travel, below.

**Occult** is more likely to represent knowledge of myths and supernatural beliefs uncommon to one's own culture. A Viking wouldn't have to have dots in Occult to know the legends of Ragnarok or the belief in berserkers. In his case, Occult might involve more knowledge of the various monsters spoken of by the neighboring cultures, hidden truths behind his people's legends of troll magic or similarly obscure details.

**Science** is likely to be limited by what is known at the time. Though a character in Bronze Age Greece might take a few dots of Science to represent his skill with mathematics, astrology and metallurgy, the Storyteller can prohibit the character from "just happening to invent gunpowder."

The other Mental Skills can be used virtually without modification.

#### New Skill: Travel

*Gregor grinned widely, his eyes still fixed on the Saracen seated opposite him. "Nicholas, tell the fine gentleman that I have among my goods an exquisite statuette, depicting the good prophet Mohammed in purest gold. I would be willing to offer it to him as a token of our mutual good will."*

*Nicholas coughed gently. "That would be most unwise, sir. The Saracens forbid any artist to depict their Prophet in paintings or sculpture. He would take the artist for an infidel, and the gesture as an insult."*

*"What? Absurd. I have read myself that they have golden statues of their gods Mohammed and Mammon in the Holy Land. In a book!"*

*Nicholas winced. "I fear your scholars were less than diligent, sir. You must trust me — do not offer him the statue."*

Travel represents a character's knowledge of lands outside his own, from the trade routes it might take to get to the next country over to the sort of money they accept there or what the dominant religion is. Travel can be a vital skill in surviving abroad, particularly in the days before tourism guidebooks and chartered air travel. Note that this is a Mental Skill, not a Social Skill. Travel does not replace Persuasion, Socialize or Streetwise when actually dealing with foreigners, though a Travel roll may complement those rolls. This Skill is useful for both cultural and geographical knowledge. While Survival might be used to navigate short distances in the wilderness, Travel can be used to navigate longer distances via trade routes, astronomy or other measures.

**Possessed by:** Merchants, sailors, pilgrims, diplomats, campaign veterans, scouts, spies

**Specialties:** Navigation, Trade Routes, Coinage, Foreign Foods, Trade Goods, Specific Cultures (Byzantium, Korea, Mexico, etc.)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Your character remembers the wrong information, or the right information about the wrong region. You might end up taking the wrong trade route, attributing a particular set of hospitality laws to the wrong people or even confusing a hostile culture with a peaceable one.

**Failure:** Your character can't recall any knowledge that fits what you're looking for. Perhaps you knew it once but have temporarily forgotten it, or you never learned that particular tidbit in the first place or things have changed in the appropriate culture since you were last there.

**Success:** Your character is able to recall the appropriate information to deal with the question at hand.

**Exceptional Success:** Your character has especially detailed knowledge of the subject at hand. He may know the right turn of phrase to get through an ugly situation, or an obscure custom that could be of use or particular hazards to be dealt with along a trade route.

### PHYSICAL

Most Physical Skills are largely unchanged. There may be more emphasis on certain Skills than is common in the modern world, depending on the environment. A chronicle set in pre-colonial North America will have many more characters with Survival.

**Athletics** tends to be more common in many cultures, such as Bronze Age Sparta. Some dots in Athletics with the Specialty of Thrown Weapons are virtually mandatory for troops armed with javelins or throwing axes.

**Drive**, of course, is commonly replaced with Ride or Sail in civilizations with no motorized vehicles. In some eras, Drive might still be appropriate where Ride isn't,



such as among cultures that used chariots but rarely fought from horseback.

**Firearms** already covers muscle-powered missile weapons such as bows, and this is unlikely to change. In cultures predating the discovery of gunpowder, it may be renamed Archery simply to maintain greater immersion.

## SOCIAL

Social Skills remain largely unaffected. Only one is likely to be of little use.

**Streetwise** may not have any practical utility in some cultures where there's not much of an urban subculture to speak of. It might, however, be reinterpreted as a general ability to unearth illicit gossip even in small communities.



## HISTORICAL GENDER ROLES

Yes, most historical cultures were inherently pretty sexist — in fact, most modern cultures still are to some degree. (A female President of the United States? No, not yet!) Women have a much harder time attaining equivalent education or social status. Realistically, female characters might have on average fewer skills and ugly modifiers to certain Social rolls that are seen as beyond their place.

Of course, *realistically*, most women weren't werewolves.

When representing the problems women face in a sexist society, it's a reasonable guideline to place just enough limitations to maintain immersion, and to let players' characters bypass those limitations in various ways to keep things interesting for the players. The historical precedents of remarkable women who commanded loyalty and respect (Queen Boadicea, Hatshepsut, Joan of Arc, Elizabeth I, Sharifa Fatima, Khutulun, Yan Yongchun and many more) should be your guide. Even if an Uratha woman isn't likely to command armies or rule nations openly, she should have no trouble commanding similar loyalty and respect from the men around her. And as far as the People are concerned, the blood of Luna is far more important than gender. If the local monks won't teach her to read and write, she can learn from another werewolf on the sly.

Basically, female Uratha can be affected by sexism only as much as the player feels is interesting. The game might not be as accurate as a strict historical simulation, but the players will probably be much happier.



## HUMAN WEAPONRY

The general technological level of the period has a number of interesting ramifications, but the first one on

everyone's mind is usually the tools that people are using to kill one another. When imagining a given historical culture or era, a warrior or soldier of the time is often one of the first images to present itself. Think of the Middle Ages, and swords quickly come to mind. The American Revolutionary War conjures images of flintlock rifles discharging en masse, and the Old West is inseparable from its sixguns and rifles in an audience's mind.

## MECHANICS

The Storytelling system is fairly open when it comes to mapping out the precise effects of most hand-to-hand weapons, and there's no real need to complicate matters further in a historical story. The Roman legionnaire's *spatha*, the Han soldier's *dao* and the Confederate officer's cavalry saber all use the same sword rules; the differences are too small to be represented by a change in damage code. The rules for a spear are just as flexible, and can cover most long-hafted weapons with ease. In some cases, a player may make a case for introducing a new weapon type, such as a short sword whose damage code (two points of lethal damage) lies between that of a knife (one point of lethal damage) and the usual sword (three points of lethal damage). This is generally fine. The exception lies in adjusting a damage code for a weapon to represent "superior craftsmanship." This isn't appropriate; greater craftsmanship is better reflected in an increase in Durability, such as the katana's. A weapon should increase beyond the rules listed (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 170) only in extreme circumstances, such as an eight-foot-tall Ridden wielding a sharpened wedge of metal that an ordinary human couldn't even lift. (Which might be treated as a sword that causes five points of lethal damage, more punishing than a greatsword, at -1 Durability, to represent that such an unwieldy weapon takes increased stress and is probably crudely forged.)

The materials a weapon is made out of may also have some effect on mechanics. In a prehistoric setting, for instance, the available flint and bone weapons suffer a constant -1 die penalty to use. Bone is difficult to break, though, and has Durability 3. Bronze weapons hold an edge well and don't suffer penalties. It's not the hardest metal around, though, and is rated at Durability 2.

Shields deserve some mention. A shield adds extra Defense, but does tend to impede the user's attacks. In general, attacks made while holding a shield suffer a -2 dice penalty (-1 if the user has the Merit: Ambidextrous or Shield-Bearer). If the bearer forgoes attacks with a weapon while using a shield, instead focusing on defense, he gains an additional +1 die bonus. In most cases, ranged attacks made against someone actively defending himself with a shield are made at a penalty (-1 die for firearms, which can punch through a shield more effectively, -2 dice for arrows, quarrels, sling bullets, thrown weapons and the like). Bashing an opponent with a shield is unwieldy (-1 die penalty to the roll, bashing damage). The typical period shield is made of metal, wood or hardened

leather, and may be of a variety of shapes according to the culture (often round, rectangular or kite-shaped). The shield adds +2 Defense, but requires Strength 3 to use properly. With Strength 2 or less, the shield offers no Defense bonus, only the penalty to ranged attacks.

For an extended look at weapons and their use, more than we can provide here, take a look at **World of Darkness: Armory**.

### NEW MERIT: SHIELD-BEARER (•)

**Effect:** Your character has trained in the art of fighting with weapon and shield, striking accurately without giving up the protection of the shield. When using a shield, he suffers only a -1 die penalty to attacks instead of the usual -2.

This Merit is not cumulative with the effects of Ambidextrous.

### THEMATICS

It's not just important how much damage a weapon does; it's also important how you use it. Weapons have the ability to evoke emotional reactions in people, however small, simply by their description. Consider the difference between a rapier and an axe. One is a weapon of precision, seeming quite "civilized" despite its purpose of lancing through a person's vitals. The other delivers massive trauma, cleaving through bones en route to the organs. Swords imply a certain level of personal skill, even intimacy with one's opponent. Guns are often a symbol of the power to kill made easy, empowering anyone with the desire to pull a trigger. Compare a swashbuckling movie to a Western; compare even an older Western such as the relatively bloodless *The Magnificent Seven* to a more recent (and darker) work such as *Unforgiven*. The weapons involved in a war story invoke certain reactions from the audience, and in turn so will the military technology common to the period of your story.

You probably already take this into account, at least subconsciously. After all, it's easier to see werewolves at home in a Viking saga than ranking up with flintlocks in a Napoleonic skirmish, and part of that perception is that an axe simply seems more like a "werewolf weapon." But it doesn't hurt to think about it a little more actively. In particular, consider your fellow players. Are they likely to associate medieval European technology with gritty bloodshed, or with the shining armor of Arthurian legend at its most romantic? Will a katana conjure images of a Kurosawa tragedy, a bloody *chambara* flick, the historical struggles of the Warring States period or a greasy-looking vampire in a black trench coat? And how can you twist those initial perceptions around so that your fellow players

feel that mix of familiarity and unexpected dread that is so essential to a horror-based setting?

The more efficient weaponry is at killing large numbers of people at one time, the more this will affect the overall mood of the chronicle. The chemical weapons of World War I were horrible in effect, killing soldiers in innovatively cruel fashion. But a potent part of the horror of those weapons is how impersonal they were. You didn't have to look the other man in the eye; you just had to open a can in the right fashion. The insignificance of human life in this scenario can be a powerful tool for a story's mood.

But this detail doesn't mean that modern weapons are more horrific than more archaic, muscle-powered ones. Killing someone impersonally is horrific, and so, too, is killing someone personally. To have it be your hands on the pikeshaft that is slowly driving a length of sharpened metal into the intestines of the man marching toward you, or to look into the eyes of the man who's raised an axe to bring it down on your head and see his naked desire for your death — these are elements that fit quite well into a horror story. The sword can be romanticized as a symbol of nobility, valor and skill, but in the savage red light of a **Werewolf** story, a sword is ultimately a sharp length of metal meant to spill human blood and entrails onto the ground. Don't let your troupe go too far without forgetting that.

### COMMUNICATION

In the modern day, quick communication can be taken for granted. Go back 100 years, and it's an entirely different scenario. To some extent, the more advanced the communication, the larger the scale of the war that can be fought. Divisions or legions can more effectively coordinate attacks that are miles, even days apart.

The increasing difficulty of communication actually enables the horror genre. When you have no reliable means of getting a message beyond the sound of your voice, the feeling of terror and isolation is intensely magnified. It becomes much easier to draw a person, a small group or even an army into a trap. The more limited the lines of communication, the easier it is for a hunter to sever them — to butcher a messenger, poison the carrier pigeons, sever the telegraph lines. It's an old literary trick to have the endangered party discover that their means of calling for help has been denied them, and it works well even when there aren't phones to suddenly go dead.

Just as most logistics issues, this works both ways where werewolves are concerned; their opponents lack access to a resource, but so does the pack. Barring specific Gifts, the access to the spirit world doesn't provide much of an advantage. Most spirits are unwilling to act as messengers for the Forsaken, and might in fact be hostile to anyone trying to carry a message for the werewolves through the Shadow. The Pure are better provided for in this case, of course.

## TRANSPORTATION

Depending on the time period, werewolves might not need to worry about transportation at all. Shapeshifting into wolf form is more than enough to outmaneuver an army column on foot. Even most motorized vehicles can't travel particularly quickly until World War II. However, every war is made or broken by its ability to get troops and supplies to the right battle at the right time. Werewolves often have an advantage over mundane armies in that the Uratha can outmaneuver most supply trains rather easily. Overpowering the guards might still be difficult, but the cunning werewolf can take advantage of an army's reliance on whatever transportation methods it has available.

Horses don't react well to werewolves. A horse is aware that it's a prey animal, and it can instinctively recognize a potential predator in human skin. Werewolves suffer a natural -2 dice penalty to Ride checks, as well as to Drive checks made to operate chariots. This penalty can be mitigated over time, if the werewolf makes enough Animal Ken checks or uses some supernatural ability or Gift to win the animal's trust. However, a natural advantage to the horses' fear reaction is that werewolves gain a one-die bonus to any rolls made to terrify the creatures (as well as mules, donkeys, oxen or other beasts of burden). If the werewolf shifts out of human form, the bonus rises to +2. Approaching a camp or supply line by night and driving off the animals is a common and effective tactic for werewolves who have chosen to stand against a human army. This is true even into the early modern era; it takes a long time for motorized vehicles to become reliable enough to make pack animals obsolete.

Naval combat is a rare element in a **Werewolf** game. Even the tall ships of the Age of Sail are terribly cramped things, with scant privacy to be found. Werewolves have a hard time keeping their savage nature in check when humans are consistently intruding on the Uratha's personal space. It's even worse on a warship, where the crew constantly dreams of plunder and chafes at the short rations, and where many may not have even chosen to become sailors at all. However, naval engagements are more feasible venues for Uratha participation earlier in history, when galleys and riverboats kept to the coastlines more often. Bronze Age Mediterranean and much of Chinese history are particularly well suited for vicious ship-to-ship action without werewolves being forced to stay aboard for long periods of time.

## SUPERNATURAL DYNAMICS

Something that can't be simply researched with an Internet search or a few good books is the changing influence of the supernatural throughout history. The threats that slink out of the shadows should be different in theme and application in different historical eras; otherwise, the World of Darkness feels stagnant.

Of course, with all of history as your playground, it's fairly easy to design a supernatural environment to taste. Things can change so readily with a distance of 200 miles or the passage of 20 years that there are a huge number of possible dynamics. The following advice can help you refine ideas for a chronicle, choosing the perfect time and place.

## WEREWOLVES

Werewolves are an interesting and adaptable lot. They're all born human, and therefore are products of their culture. However, the Change can set them entirely apart from their human relatives and society, to the point that the werewolves unlearn their former lives. The werewolf packs of any given historical nation might hew closely to the historical customs of the time, or they may share only a few ideals in common. In general, werewolves are likely to retain the human customs that still have some relevance to their new lives, and are quick to discard the customs that would be problematic. The previous discussion on gender roles is one example; repressive sexism is highly impractical given the comparatively low numbers of werewolves of either gender, and simple werewolf nature disproves several of the more "logical" reasoning behind so-called female inferiority. This gives a troupe a healthy bit of freedom to take what they like from the historical period of the chronicle, but to overcome anything that would be too problematic for gameplay. It does help to make sure that everyone understands this precept, though. It's always good to keep the "your character concept isn't really plausible in this day and age" arguments to a minimum.

It's thematically appropriate for werewolves to always give the impression of being wilder and more primal than the humans around them. This does tend to restrict the use of werewolves somewhat, at least without causing some level of artistic discord. You wouldn't expect to find a werewolf in the Roman Senate, able to lead a public and quite civilized life in the heart of Rome. Urban werewolves of Rome are still a striking and plausible idea, of course — but they gravitate toward lives that they can plausibly maintain. They might be the foreign mercenary brought in as an auxiliary, the drunken legionnaire who has left his corps, the temperamental craftsman who drinks alone. Werewolves work best on the fringes of human culture, which affects how they're placed. You don't find them manipulating events or commanding armies.

This affects the tactics of a war against the People. Anyone planning to go to war against Uratha first needs to find where the leaders are and where the troops live, which is a trickier proposition than following a large human army's movements. Werewolves are more hunters than soldiers, and it takes a good hunter to track them in turn. The chaos of a human war can distract from that goal, but it can also flush out the werewolf enemy. Therefore, it's not so uncommon for a war involving Uratha to take place alongside a human conflict. The humans' war casts its own shadow, which is the conflict of the **Werewolf** story.

If you go far back enough, you can totally change the werewolf dynamic. Auspices have been a part of werewolf culture for seemingly the duration of recorded history, but there's nothing stopping your troupe from playing with prehistory. The same could reasonably be true of tribes. Uratha legend says the tribes formed shortly after the death of Father Wolf, but what if that's just legend, and they're much newer than that? Going back to a time before tribes and auspices can provide a play experience very different from the standard **Werewolf: The Forsaken** chronicle. Werewolves become much more individualistic, while much less specialized. The drawback to such a chronicle, though, is that it does tend to strip away some of the mystery of the World of Darkness. If you play a game set just after the murder of Father Wolf, the First War between the Forsaken and Pure, there's no longer any nagging doubt whether or not Father Wolf really existed in the first place.

The Pure dynamic will also shift with the years. The *Anshega* often find it easier to entrench themselves in the Shadow in areas that have seen little human development. The spirits there are rawer, more primal, more sympathetic to the Pure totems. As a counter-point, the Pure don't have as telling an advantage of numbers in earlier years, and are roughly equal to the Forsaken's numbers in the years preceding the discovery of gunpowder. They are fewer but stronger, more prone to fight in the Shadow if they can help it. Around the 16th century, the balance begins to shift slightly, with the Pure losing more spiritual ground but gaining in numbers. Why do the numbers change? In brief, more Pure survive to full-fledged warrior adulthood. The stronger their totem spirits were, the more demanding they became. The number of devotees wasn't important, their strength was. As a result, the amount of testing that a werewolf had to undergo before the totems recognized her as Pure was sufficiently arduous that a greater number just didn't make it. The Pure eventually began softening their rites of initiation as their spirit allies became weaker, and the Pure's numbers grew. Of course, they kept it a secret that they were becoming less discriminatory, to the point that very few Pure in the modern world have a firm idea that things were ever different.

### THE SHADOW

Similar to the physical landscape, the Shadow Realm changes over time. This affects the ability of werewolves to use the Shadow as a potential venue of attack. The change in an area's general resonance will affect what sort of spirits is drawn there, which in turn can influence the Uratha's ability to move through the Shadow.

Loci are the most obvious example. They are a source of Essence, and a potential path into and out of the Shadow, making them both supply line and tactical objective. They are often the first objective that invading werewolves attempt to identify, and entire battle plans revolve around the distribution and defenses of loci in the area. Strengthening loci or shutting them down entirely

is an additional tactical option that, though difficult, can change the flow of a war.

Tribal alliances can affect even the Forsaken's ability to negotiate with the local spirits, of course. The Blood Talons do well when conflict ravages an area, and the Hunters of Darkness are strong in areas where the spirits have been left undisturbed for centuries. This doesn't usually mean that they have spirit allies that fight alongside them, but a tribe or pack pursuing an ideal sympathetic to the local spirit population has a better chance of negotiating safe passage through the Shadow.

The effect of the Shadow on the People's strength makes altering the Shadow a viable tactic in times of war. War, just as disaster or famine, can change the shape of the Shadow with remarkable speed. The most dramatic example is that of the Wounds. If a sufficiently large massacre or atrocity opens a Wound in the spirit reflection of an area, the werewolves who hold the territory suddenly have a grave threat to deal with. It becomes much easier to take apart the defenders if they're fighting on two fronts. When attempting to sever an enemy's spiritual supply lines, taking a slash-and-burn mentality in hopes of affecting the Shadow is a reviled yet effective tactic. All said, a chronicle that takes place at the beginning of a historical war will have a very different set of problems emanating from the Shadow than a chronicle that takes place toward or after the war's end, before any sort of healing can have taken place.

Interestingly, the idigam can be all but forgotten in most time periods. Their return in the latter part of the 20th century forced the Uratha to start digging up old lore to find out what was going on, but without that immediacy? Many werewolves may have forgotten that some of their most dangerous enemies are still out there somewhere.

This also opens up a new possibility, of course: that the modern Uratha have forgotten about some long-ago terrors that haven't been seen for centuries or millennia, but that are an immediate danger for the protagonists of a historical chronicle. Just because nobody remembers the grotesque *things* that plagued the Etruscan Uratha of the time before the Roman Empire, that doesn't mean it wasn't noteworthy. It might simply mean there were none left to tell the tale....

### VAMPIRES, MAGES AND THE LIKE

Finally, consider whether or not you and your troupe are interested in exploring the presence of any supernatural entities from the other game lines of the World of Darkness. War doesn't generally tend to draw the supernatural out into the open. Vampires have no place on the sun-baked battlefields of Lower Egypt, and mages aren't going to enlist in the King's Navy if they have other means of getting what they want. Therefore, the presence of other supernaturals isn't a necessity. They can show up

as they would in any other chronicle: if the story seems that it would be improved for their presence.

A siege in the vein of Masada or Stalingrad might be the most likely scenario for werewolves to cross paths with other supernaturals. A large part of the populace is forced to cram into tight quarters for the sake of survival, whether human or not. Are the vampires going to prey vigorously upon the desperate populace? Will they perhaps assist the Uratha in the hopes of mutual benefit? What if the answer is “yes” to both questions?

### CHALLENGING WEREWOLVES

In a historical war, challenges for the pack can play out in much the same way that they would in the modern era, particularly where the supernatural is concerned. An Azlu nest is just as lethal during the Napoleonic era as it would be today. However, the antagonist force of a few well-armed humans does lose its impact. Without machine guns or silver bullets, a group of six humans won't strike fear into the hearts of many packs. However, this doesn't mean that humans are off the menu (or rather, on it). A war chronicle in the past offers more possibilities for having humans present a challenge, simply by nature of what the war brings to the table.

### NUMBERS

This is perhaps the easiest and most obvious challenge. One werewolf cannot charge into a formation of 100 men and expect to survive. A pack can't take on 500 in open combat. The press of overwhelming numbers

requires tactics. It may require finding a defensible position to hold (as the Spartans did at Thermopylae), or using the environment against the foe (bursting a dam to wash away a regiment crossing a bridge, for instance). Guerilla warfare is where the Uratha excel; it's also where they have to.

### WEAPONRY

Archaic weapons are still plenty lethal. The problem with swords is that they require a human to stand far closer to a werewolf than is good for him, but a well-trained soldier with a sword who resists the Lunacy can still do some damage. Massed arrow fire can kill a werewolf, and cannon fire is particularly lethal with a direct hit. The ideal places to pitch weaponry itself as an advantage are the battles in which they historically swung the tide. Consider grapeshot and canister fire in the wars of the 19th century, or the deployment of poison gas in World War I. Naturally, weaponry tends to fit better if the werewolves are the ones on the side with the less advanced military technology; that not only gives the characters challenging odds to overcome (or at least hope to overcome), but the werewolf is usually more associated with savagery and primal nature than civilization. It may simply feel more “right” to your troupe to have them on the side with less advanced weaponry, relying on their other gifts.

### TACTICS

Shrewd tactics are at the heart of victory, deception among them. A werewolf's keen senses may be harder to



fool, but werewolves can still fall for a feigned retreat or deceptive troop movements. The whole point is getting the enemy into a position where you can apply an advantage of terrain, numbers or weaponry. Of course, the most effective use of tactics against werewolves relies on knowing that they're werewolves. Which leads to another maxim of war: Know your enemy.

Incendiary tactics are an old standard of war. In some eras, mastery of fire was seen as the mark of a truly great strategist. A historical scenario set in ancient China is very likely to see fire used as a weapon to herd or destroy troops.

## SIEGES

While the first setting that comes to mind with the word "siege" is often the feudal castle, a siege story can take place in virtually any era or location. It's simply a matter of scale. Virtually anywhere fortresses or communities were besieged by invading forces, werewolves might have been trapped behind the walls with them. They may also have been on the invading side, of course, but, generally speaking, the real meat of the tension lies with those who are trapped and must either wait out the enemy or find a way to drive them off.

The larger the party under siege, the easier a time werewolves will have concealing their nature... at least, at first. A large stronghold or fortified town will have more hiding places for a werewolf to enact rites or meet with his pack than a small cave. The challenge to break the siege and win their way to safety may be less difficult than enduring siege conditions without the wolf-nature ending things badly.

## TIMES OF CRISIS

What historical periods have the most to offer a **Werewolf** war story? No simple answer exists. For one, there are so many different historical periods to talk about even for one particular nation that it's impossible to narrow down just one. Neither can one simply track human wars and assume that peacetime isn't conducive to a war between werewolves. The Uratha live, fight and die in the shadowy corners of mortal perception, whether there's a war going on or not. The following discussion is by necessity quite generalized, speaking more about common themes and motifs for a given historical era than specific scenarios. (Though there will be those as well, later on in this chapter.)

## PREHISTORY

The Stone Age can be an interesting time for a war scenario, though human weapons aren't likely to provide much threat on their own. Fire-hardened stakes and flint-tipped spears can kill effectively enough, but for the most part, they don't have much power at range. Getting close enough to a werewolf to use your flint axe is more dangerous for you than for him.

The scale of events tends to be smaller as well. Most wars are fought between tribes or clans; there are no nations to speak of. A single werewolf pack is capable not only of standing against an entire tribe of humans; a pack can likely rout them without more than a few quickly-healing injuries.

The advantage to a prehistoric war scenario is greater freedom for the werewolves to act openly. This is the time when they are placing the first legends of werewolves in the human consciousness. People still believe in spirits, and in turn spirits act more openly. A struggle against a rival clan might be driven by the spirit or Ridden that serves as the clan's god-chieftain, exhorting its human followers to bring it more offerings and conquer other clans in its name. This advantage can be duplicated in some later settings, but no time period offers more opportunity for open supernatural warfare than prehistory.

One twist particular to the prehistoric war story is the potential omission of auspices. According to Forsaken myth, the tribes wandered for many years before Luna offered them her gift. If the Storyteller chooses to address the truth of this legend, the players may have to fight without the blessings of auspice moons. It might also be tempting to craft a scenario in which the players' characters are among those Forsaken who first receive Luna's blessing — what sort of war could trigger this singular event? And was the process really as benevolent as legend claims?

## THE ANCIENT WORLD

With the rise of human civilization, things change for the Uratha. The first cities provide a new choice, to live in the nomadic hunter-gatherer fashion that so suits werewolves or to throw in one's lot with the new face of human culture. The Uratha choose both, and it's not just the Iron Masters who take their first steps into such places as Ur and Çatal Hüyük. And as human nations grow, so does the concept of war.

The ancient world (used here to refer to most pre-medieval civilizations, including Sumeria, ancient Egypt and Greece, the Roman Empire, early China, even the Mayan and Incan empires, and so on) has much to offer. Wars can be small and petty, or as large as the armies of Xerxes invading Greece. The imagery of ancient warfare goes well with that of **Werewolf** as well; it's easy to picture werewolves using Scythian bows or Egyptian khopeshes before resorting to fang and claw. In addition, the mythology of these civilizations provides a plethora of inspirational myths that can be twisted into horror stories emerging from the Shadow. Consider Innana's descent into the Underworld, the pestilence-demons of Sumerian myth, the gruesome Etruscan death-god Charun, the bloody sacrifices to Tezcatlipoca. There's so much available myth, just waiting for a World of Darkness twist.

This is the time when it becomes evident that the Herd Must Not Know. The Herd, as they call it, is simply too large now. As humans begin to amass in larger

groups, even armies, and learn the secrets of metalwork, the Uratha realize that simple human beings have the potential to be the People's downfall. Some initial wars may hinge on the conflict between werewolves who want to still rule openly and those who feel it's better to pull farther back into the shadows. This is an ideal point of conflict between Pure and Forsaken, with the Pure desperate to smash these burgeoning civilizations back to the Pangaeon state, while the Forsaken see an opportunity to have the best of both worlds.

## DARK AND MIDDLE AGES

The medieval period dovetails rather nicely with horror gaming, and has the advantage of a number of particularly bloody wars to offer further inspiration. Europe offers the Crusades, the era of the Vikings, the Norman Conquest, the Hundred Years' War, the War of the Roses as some of the largest conflicts. In Asia, the rise of the Mongol Empire and Japan's Genpei War and Sengoku period present comparable conflicts. In many cases, the emphasis is still on close combat rather than victory delivered by ranged fire, which matches nicely with **Werewolf**. Even so, the Uratha might find themselves on the losing side of their own version of Agincourt or Mikatagahara — perhaps lined with silver, no less.

These time periods benefit from a good amount of attention in fiction and other media. Of course, some of these works tend to romanticize the era, which doesn't help much in building a war chronicle in the feudal World of Darkness. The common "knights in shining armor" perception Arthurian legend isn't appropriate. On the other hand, it's quite possible to extract certain of the tragedies of that (or any) legend and apply them to a more thematically fitting chronicle. Arthur's fall — betrayed by his wife and best knight, himself tricked into siring his own destroyer on his half-sister — is the stuff of a true World of Darkness tragedy.

The Pure can play one of two roles during this era, and likely shift from one to the other and back as the generations pass. When their strength waxes, they become the Big Bad Wolves of myth. They are, even more than the Forsaken, the monsters that come from the dark and devour the helpless. When the Pure's strength wanes (perhaps due to sterling resistance on the Forsaken's part), the Pure retreat to lick their wounds, leaving the Forsaken to become complacent and fight amongst themselves.

## THE AGE OF SAIL

From the 16th to 19th centuries, the presence of sailing ships was shaping the world. Ships carried settlers to new lands where they would frequently come into bloody conflict with the natives. Renaissance and Reformation alter the course of history, but the wars are fought in much the same fashion. This is the age of colonialism, and also an age with many bloody and famous wars. It's an age of

cannon and matchlock, of would-be empires reaching out across the seas for more.

Some of the wars of the period are particularly famous for inspiring the modern imagination. The Napoleonic Wars alone have inspired near-countless excellent works of historical fiction, including historical fantasy. It's quite tempting to use one of these wars as the backdrop for a **Werewolf** story. Consider a feud between werewolves erupting amid the chaos of the American Revolution, or a battle against powerful spirits of bloodshed unleashed by the actions of French troops in Spain. Although werewolves are unlikely to become involved in the period's many naval battles that often changed the course of entire wars, even these battles can have their effects on the Uratha. Spirits born of the pain and wrath of a naval war may cling to the ships where they were born, "going ashore" just as their mortal shipmates do when their ship reaches a likely harbor. The battles might also stir up residents of the deep — a particularly bloody action might rouse the Brineborn to arms (from Chapter Four of this book) or wake some ancient horror sunk beneath the waves and undisturbed until men found a way to spill their blood into the waters around its grave.

Many potential war stories also abound in the name of colonialism. Werewolves fleeing their old rivals, Pure or Forsaken, might travel to the New World only to find their ancient enemy waiting there among the natives. The slave trade was initially built on the captives taken in tribal wars in Africa; what would the werewolves of the Dark Continent do to protect their own families from such a fate? Another catalyst of change is disease: the germs brought on the tall ships wreak unforeseen epidemics in lands from the Americas to Asia. A new plague wakens spirits of disease, which attempt to strengthen the pestilence that brought them into being. Given the Fire-Touched's penchant for allying with spirits of disease, these outbreaks of sickness would serve as a perfect accompaniment for a war called by the Pure.

Of course, this is the age of gunpowder. Few things bring a more dramatic change for the Forsaken than this new kind of weapon. Worse, the secret of silver leaks more clearly into the human consciousness at this time. The legendary Beast of Gevaudan is allegedly slain by a bullet cast from a silver candlestick taken from a church's altar. Though many humans are prone to attribute the bullet's lethality to the holy power of the Church, some already begin to question whether it might be the metal instead.

## EARLY MODERN AGE

From the Victorian era to the early 20th century, the world begins changing even more quickly. Technology develops at an ever-increasing pace. New forms of travel, such as the railroad and airplane, close the distance that can be traveled in a day. And new weapons change the face of war quickly. The rifled barrel, the machine gun, the flamethrower, the many varieties of poison gas — things

change, and not necessarily for the better. What's more, werewolves may find themselves encountering these new and deadly innovations without any real warning. A pack that's used to the limited accuracy of an unrifled musket is in for an ugly surprise when the packmembers cross riflemen who are accurate out to a much greater distance.

The Industrial Revolution has a tremendous impact on the Shadow Realm. Urban spiritscapes twist into new configurations more quickly than the Uratha believed possible. In every city, a rash of conflicts between the spirit courts break out as new arrivals attempt to displace the old guard. A larger number of spirits than before also do their best to flee into the physical world, either frightened of the changes in the Shadow or hoping to bring about their own changes to make the spirit world more comfortable to them again.

The Pure are spurred into action at the same time. In particular, the Predator Kings are appalled at the new vigor with which the humans begin to transform their environment. A number of small shadow wars erupt as the Predator Kings try various desperate measures to eliminate the Forsaken so that they can be free to cull this new human threat. The Pure have plenty of spirit allies willing to assist them in this, which forces the Forsaken to quickly find ways to influence the brand-new spirit choirs also targeted by the Pure.

Nestled in this time period is the heyday of Gothic horror. While crumbling castles and lonely moors don't immediately suggest war chronicles, incorporating a few of these evocative elements might help to balance the mix of war and horror. Werewolves fit so neatly with the Gothic horror motif that it can prove well worth it to pay homage to those old works. The blasted heaths, wild woods and other stretches of "haunted wilderness" are ideal for a large conflict between werewolves.

## SCENARIOS

The following scenarios are presented as quick-start ideas for a historical story. They can be used whole cloth, taken as inspiration for similar clashes in related periods of history or strip-mined for character Traits and visual hooks. The scenarios can also be used as the basis for an entire historical chronicle. The sample scenarios include the following:

- **Terminus:** In the first century CE, the Roman Empire was locked in a struggle with Parthia for dominance over the Middle East. The packmembers, having claimed an ancient sacred site for their own, are caught between the Roman legions and the Parthian cavalry — and the Pure and Ghost Wolves who have also arrived to challenge the pack for the site.
- **Fires of Heaven:** In the midst of the Yellow Scarves Rebellion in the later Han dynasty of China, a spirit has decided to start a rebellion of its own. A rising force of Ridden cloaks itself among the human rebels, targeting

the nearby Uratha. If the Ridden have their way, they will purge the werewolves with fire.

- **Saga of the Wolf:** A feud between two Viking chieftains turns bloody, breaking out into a small war with the Forsaken on both sides.

Each scenario follows a specific format, summarizing the key elements of the story. These general elements are as follows:

- **The Setup:** The time and place of the war in question, and why the werewolves have been drawn into it.
- **Logistics:** This section offers some sample considerations for the scenario such as the technology available in the time period and common tactics for the wars in question. Although this section is no substitution for more intensive research, it should offer some idea of how much information is enough to hit the ground running.
- **Battles:** Here a series of potential major conflict events are summarized. The battles are presented in the order they're likely to take without the characters changing the flow of the story. Just as other aspects of these scenarios, the battles themselves can be heavily tweaked depending on Storyteller preference and player actions. This section isn't meant to provide a rigorous script, only a framework for how the war might play out.
- **The Twist:** This section explores a potential twist to the war, an event or revelation that changes the direction of events and places added impetus on the players to take action. The twist is completely optional, but is intended to heighten the tension as events race toward a bloody climax.
- **Variations:** Here is found advice for taking the base scenario premise and tweaking it in a variety of ways. Potential alternate antagonists, advice on moving the conflict's setting to a different era or nation, tricks for integrating other elements from the book as a whole: all are possibilities addressed here.

- **Dramatis Personae:** Each scenario provides statistics for one or two of the dominant figures in play during the scenario. Though presented as specific personalities, they're designed to be easily modified for use in other stories or chronicles. For instance, the character of Hrafn Kodransson can be used with little modification as a Germanic chieftain in a Roman Empire-era chronicle. As these scenarios are rather short, only the most significant movers and shakers are depicted. Storytellers can also adapt the Traits of characters from other sources as needed. For instance, a few tweaks to Park Sun Ae (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 305) could provide the basis for an Ithaeur crone suitable for most settings.

- **Rank and File:** The scenario is rounded out with sample Traits for the average soldier that is likely to play a part in this war. As with the Dramatis Personae, the statistics provided here can be used in other scenarios to flesh things out. The Uratha berserkers and Viking warriors from the "Saga of the Wolf" are perfectly usable as foot



soldiers in “Terminus,” the legionnaires from “Terminus” could serve as elite troops in “Fires of Heaven” and so on.

## TERMINUS

Along the Euphrates River, on the edges of the Roman Empire, a conflict between Pure and Forsaken is brewing. While the nations of Rome and Parthia each try to push the other back, invading Uratha converge on a sacred ruin held by a single pack: that of the players’ characters. And under the ruin, something long bound shifts in its sleep.

This scenario takes place during the conflicts between Rome and Parthia in the first century CE. Rome and Parthia are often at odds, as the Romans want control of the Silk Road. To some extent, it’s also a matter of pride for Rome; Parthia was once land under the control of Alexander the Great, and many Romans consider themselves more deserving heirs. The Euphrates River is currently the boundary between the two empires, but it’s contested.

The players’ pack is bound by the common desire to control and protect an ancient sacred site, a stone archway that dates back to the earliest human civilizations. This archway sits in a small set of old ruins that the Parthian locals leave alone; it has been protected by werewolves for many centuries, and has a dangerous reputation. The pack may be mostly or entirely Parthians, or the pack may have a more cosmopolitan makeup. It’s quite feasible that werewolves from many lands found their way to this area, drawn by dreams or lore that tells them of the arch. A mix of Roman, Parthian and other Uratha could provide an interesting social dynamic to the conflict.

However, the same lore and dreams that brought the characters to the ruins in the first place is also bringing others. Adeodatus, an Ivory Claw diviner, has attached himself to one of the Roman legions involved in the conflict. Masquerading as a soothsayer (and therefore one of the *immunes*), he has worked his way into the confidences of the centurion Sextus Thracius Aquila, informing him that great glory awaits him on the Parthian front. As Adeodatus draws nearer to his goal, he fills Aquila’s head with tales of a stone gateway that will symbolize his ascension. In the meantime, Adeodatus’s pack skulks in the wake of the legion, ready to move when the alpha gives them the word. According to Adeodatus’ divinations, the arch is the site where one of Father Wolf’s angry children was betrayed and buried long ago by the Forsaken. Even if the wolf-spirit in his dreams is not Firstborn or even Secondborn, it would still prove a mighty ally for the Pure.

Adeodatus is not the only one who is drawn to the lure of the arch. From the northern reaches of Parthia, the Ghost Wolf Anahit the Brave comes riding with her pack. She is motivated by repeated dreams of what she believes to be one of her ancestors, resting beneath the stones. Although she has no inborn ill will toward the Tribes of

the Moon, she considers herself outside their laws, and is not above fighting to claim the site for herself.

## NAMING CONVENTIONS

One of the troubles with representing a historical culture that didn’t produce much in the way of lasting literature is that it’s harder to get a sizable list of names. Don’t let this intimidate you. A quick and suitable workaround is to pick a nearby culture that has a more bountiful output of easily found names, and work with that. In the case of this scenario, it’s easy to use Armenian names (which are easily found) to represent the Parthian names.

There’s plenty of literary precedent for the practice. Most people are more familiar with the Greek names of Egyptian gods (Osiris, Horus, Anubis, Set) than the Egyptians’ own names for them (Asar, Heru, Anpw, Sutekh). Many historical personages are more widely known by the names the Romans gave them than the names their parents gave them, and more people know “Guinevere” than “Gwynwhylfar.” It may not be as accurate, but it makes things much more accessible. That’s not just good enough for the gaming table, it’s arguably preferable.

Just in case, here’s a list of some Parthian names to be used to flesh out the forces on the Euphrates’ east side. (And for the record, “gurg” means “wolf.”)

- Artak, Artashas, Artavazd, Atur, Durust, Farrax, Nerseh, Sahen, Spandadat, Suren, Tirdat, Valakhsh, Vahram, Vahric, Vishnasp, Xusrav, Zangak

## LOGISTICS

The events of “Terminus” take place in what is now modern-day Syria, on the eastern side of the Euphrates River. The area is fertile enough to support agriculture, though the ruins the pack controls stand on an arid hill away from the nearest villages. Local belief has it that the people who lived there were driven away when a curse evaporated the water in their wells.

In the first century CE, Rome is still a strong, conquering state. Despite that, the struggles between Rome and Parthia will see no clear victor for many years. The Roman foot soldiers, well-drilled and professional though they are, have difficulty overcoming the Parthian cavalry forces. The legionnaires are frequently outmaneuvered, unable to press their strength on the Parthian weak point. On the other hand, the Parthians are not as skilled at siege warfare, and have equal difficulty attempting to over-

come Roman fortifications. Their battles may be cleanly won, but the wars are typically inconclusive.

The Roman legionnaire of the time is a hardy soldier trained to carry everything he needs while on campaign — armor, weapons, bedding, even tools for digging entrenchments. He is protected by either chain mail (*lorica hamata*) or steel-banded armor (*lorica segmentata*) and typically fights with a spear (*pilum*) or short sword (*gladius*). Legionnaires use large rectangular shields to protect themselves both from enemy missile fire and close combat attacks. Roman engineering is quite advanced, and a legion travels with specialists capable of constructing catapults, ballistae, bridges and other such necessities of siege warfare. The legion also travels with specialists such as surveyors, medics, armorers, hunters, priests and others. These specialists are called *immunes*, meaning they were excused from the regular duties of a soldier.

The Parthians, for their part, are particularly notable for their cavalry. They field two kinds of cavalry, light horse archers and the more heavily armored cataphracts (whose role as heavy cavalry was much like that of the later European knights). Parthian forces were mustered in times of need, not kept as a standing army. Some Parthian cavalry use camels, but the Roman adoption of caltrops keeps the camel from being a strong choice. The Parthians have little knowledge of siege warfare, and are not prone to turn captured siege engines on their enemies.

The players' pack controls a ruin (once a fortified village) set atop a hill two miles from the Euphrates, in the middle of a barren patch of land. The ruins are in poor shape, with only a few walls still standing higher than four feet tall, but can still provide plenty of cover. The locus (of four or five dots' strength) takes the form of an ancient arch, carved with reliefs of mythical animals too worn to properly identify. Its resonance is attuned to time, making the Essence the locus produces particularly attractive to spirits of morning or night, or other concepts related to the passage of time.

## THE BATTLES

As the scenario progresses, the lines in the sand are consistently redrawn. First one side gains strength, then the other. The pack will find itself shouldering the task of swinging these battles, undercutting either side's efforts if they seem a threat to the territory.

## ADVANCE SCOUTS

The first significant local battle between the Romans and Parthians occurs several miles from the ruin at the center of the pack's territory, where the Romans have crossed the Euphrates and are met by Parthian cavalry. The pack may investigate the battle, or even lend support to one side or the other. If the pack takes no action, the legatus (commander of the legion) is able to defeat the Parthians due to weight of numbers and

good control of the terrain. The Romans encamp there, digging a ditch and erecting palisades as usual.

However, Adeodatus sends two of his packmates to scout out the ruins at the same time that the battle begins. The scouts use Stealth Gifts, the Cleansed Blood rite and mundane disguise as best they can to avoid being caught. They initiate no conflicts unless they are able to catch one of the Forsaken alone and unawares. If that happens, the Ivory Claws give in to their bloodlust, reasoning that one fewer defender can only assist Adeodatus's efforts.

## THE CENTURION'S AMBITION

Once the reconnaissance he asked for is complete, and the legion has encamped, Adeodatus goes to work. Through a combination of Gift



use and raw cunning, he manages to convince the legatus to dispatch a cohort of soldiers to the ruins nearby under the pretense of suppressing locals and claiming a potentially valuable campsite. The Ivory Claw assures the legatus that the Parthians' attention is elsewhere, and that the cohort is in no real danger.

As a result, the packmembers find themselves with 480 Roman legionnaires on their doorstep. A small band of Parthian scouts and horse archers attempts to harass the cohort along their march, but aren't numerous enough to do any damage. The characters must find a way to distract the Romans before they set up camp directly around the locus. To make matters worse, a small group of Adeodatus's brethren precede the cohort, masquerading as a surveyor and his auxiliary bodyguards. However, the Forsaken pack holds the high ground, and is most familiar with the defenses. If the "surveyor" doesn't return from his scouting errand, the cohort entrenches at the foot of the hill in preparation to return to the main legion the next day.

### THE HORSEWOMAN'S CHALLENGE

As the gibbous moon rises that evening, a larger contingent of Parthians arrives to challenge the separated cohort. The Parthians are accompanied by the woman who warned them of the Romans' unusual movements — Anahit the Brave, whose "lucky discovery" owes less to scouting and more to her dreams. The Parthians (some 100 cataphracts and 500 horse archers) engage the isolated cohort, and are able to break it. Anahit herself participates in the battle, riding among the horse archers. The pack may choose to get involved themselves, as it's certainly a good opportunity to send a message that the ruin is not so strategic a campsite.

When the battle is done, Anahit quietly slips away from the victorious Parthians to visit the ruins with her pack. Should the characters reveal themselves to her, she proudly announces that she has seen the archway in her dreams, and is here to assume possession of it. Any refusal angers her, though she bites back her fury and asks the pack to reconsider. She offers the players' pack three days to change their minds, claiming they would be welcome in her retinue. Her offer is genuine, though it wouldn't take too much effort for the characters to provoke her into a battle for dominance. She has no real loyalty to the Tribes of the Moon, but won't play for keeps unless she feels her enemies are trying to legitimately kill her — or unless *Kuruth* overcomes her.

### BLOOD AND ILL Oomens

The three days do not pass without event. Adeodatus becomes aware of the Parthian presence, and suspects the worst. He uses his influence within the camp again, suggesting that Aquila must have offended the gods in some manner. Though doing so exhausts the last of the legatus's good will toward Adeodatus, the legion moves out for the ruins.

A Cahalith among the players' characters may dream of the legion's arrival. The dream is filled with several sinister images — a bleeding moon, cracks in the earth inhaling and exhaling, three wolves at one another's throats. If no player controls a Cahalith, the dream vision may instead come to Anahit. Still angry with the pack, she does not tell them what she's dreamed unless one of them has given her a favorable impression or treated her with exceptional honor. She does, however, inform the Parthians, again couching her knowledge in terms of scouting. Other scouts confirm it, and the Parthians send for reinforcements. Both the legion and the Parthian troops amass near the ruins, more than 5,000 men on each side.

The Romans move to attack near sunset, relying on the sunlight in the west at their backs to give them a tactical advantage. The battle is a fierce one, lasting into twilight if the characters do nothing that could end it early. As the bloodshed continues, a perceptive Uratha might note that the soldiers on both sides seem driven to fight even into the night — a peculiar decision. Unknown to any of the humans present, and even to most of the werewolves, the spirit bound deep beneath the ruins is stirring. The sound of bloodshed and the full face of Luna are calling to it, bringing it partly out of slumber. The fighting is not quite enough to wake the spirit completely, but the resonance of the locus temporarily changes from time to wrath. Everyone within a mile's radius suffers a -2 dice penalty to Composure rolls as their emotions pulse toward the violent.

The full moon rises blood red, as if a caul had been drawn over it. The fighting becomes even more vicious. Adeodatus strikes out for the ruins with his remaining Ivory Claws, and Anahit will do the same when her packmate reports that fighting is breaking out around the archway. Whoever wins here, settles where the borderline is drawn.

### THE TWIST

During the final battle, something quite unexpected to either side occurs: one of the Roman centurions (Sextus Thracius Aquila, if he has survived to participate) falls into what seems to be an epileptic fit, tears at his armor and undergoes the First Change. This comes as a surprise even to Adeodatus, who had not noticed any of the signs that usually surround an impending Change. In effect, the madly twisting resonance surrounding the battle induces the First Change early.

The Change is an ugly one. The moon overhead is full, if obscured and reddened, and the centurion erupts with all the fury of a Rahu under a cursed and ugly sign. He races howling toward the arch, attempting to slaughter anyone who stands between him and the only object his fevered mind still recognizes. The Lunacy washes over those of his men still near him, and those who survive the battle will later tell the story of how their centurion went mad and ran into the desert.

While Adeodatus and most of the pack are likely to keep fighting over the objective of the arch, others of the Pure pack move to get the newly Changed centurion under control and drag him away for later indoctrination. The characters must decide whether to keep pressing the attack on Adeodatus and the other threats, or to attempt to rescue the Roman officer from the Pure (the honorable thing to do, and perhaps the source of a new ally). And they must decide quickly.

## VARIATIONS

This scenario could take place in virtually any of the lands bordering Rome, where Roman legions come into conflict with the locals. Gaul, Germania and the British Isles are all possibilities, as are other sections of the Middle East. Sarmatia was noted for fielding cataphracts much as the Parthians, making it an easy substitution. The Parthians are generally more organized than the “barbarians” to the west of Rome, which may change the tone of the war.

In a more general sense, this scenario uses the human conflict of an invading culture pitted against a nation that refuses to be conquered as a mirror for the struggle between Pure and Forsaken. It could take place during Alexander the Great’s push into India, the years of Mongol expansion, the Norman Conquest or even the Gurkha War between Nepal and the East India Company.

The nature of the antagonists can be changed broadly. Ridden and spirits probably lack the organization to mount an effective campaign, and the Hosts are less likely to get involved unless the nature of the locus’ secret is itself altered. What if the skull of the Plague King lies buried beneath?

As a flashback scenario, “Terminus” can of course represent the deeds of ancestors, either by blood or by tribe. The Hunters in Darkness in particular would have an interest in the core story of werewolves preventing a sacred place from being violated. It could also link to another site similar to the archway, with a similar spirit buried beneath, being the focus for a modern-day war.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

### ADEODATUS

**Tribe:** Ivory Claws

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Crafts 1, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Politics 2, Science 1, Travel 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry (Daggers) 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Fortune-Telling) 3, Expression (Soothsaying) 3, Intimidation (Steely) 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Allies 2, Contacts 3, Totem 3



**Primal Urge:** 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Harmony:** 5

**Essence Max/Per Turn:** 11/1

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Envy

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

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

**Defense:** 3 (all forms)

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

**Renown:** Cunning 2, Glory 1, Honor 1, Purity 4, Wisdom 4

**Gifts:** (1) Call Water, Feet of Mist, Know Name, Sense Malice, Warning Growl, Wolf-Blood’s Lure; (2) Father Wolf’s Speed, Luna’s Dictum, Scent of Taint, Traveler’s Blessing; (3) Echo Dream, Sagacity, Voice of Command; (4) Soul Read

**Rituals:** 3; **Rites:** (1) Banish Human, Rite of Dedication, Shared Scent; (2) Banish Spirit, Call Gaffling, Call Human, Cleansed Blood, Rite of Contrition; (3) Bind Human, Call Juggling, Rite of Healing, Rite of Initiation, Wake the Spirit. Adeodatus also knows a number of Pure Tribes rites dealing with penance, atonement and conversion.

Adeodatus was never a particularly strong patriot. He always felt as though there were something more worthy of his faith than even Rome itself, and his Change proved him correct. When he managed to endure the ordeals of his initiation, he was reborn with the light of a higher purpose in his eyes. Similar to other Ivory Claws of the Roman Empire, he has come to see himself as one of the true sons of Romulus, of the blood of a far greater wolf than the mere *lupa* who suckled Rome’s founder.

The son of a scholar, Adeodatus has devoted his life to learning the greater mysteries of the hidden world. When he recently discovered the legend of the sleeping wolf, Adeodatus felt a charge run through his blood. This would be it. This would be his chance to achieve greatness, to stand astride the world at the foot of his wolf-gods. Upon learning that the ruin was guarded by Forsaken, his resolve honed itself to a razor's edge.

Adeodatus is a strong-featured man with a powerful state who is nearing middle age. He keeps his dark hair and beard neatly trimmed, yet still seems wilder than a civilized Roman citizen should be. He deliberately breaks his composure when "soothsaying" for a gullible human, but is far more savage and intimidating when confronted with one of the hated Forsaken. His pack totem is the Eagle on the Gate, a spirit of death and wisdom that takes the form of a great iron-feathered eagle with weeping empty eye sockets.

### ANAHIT THE BRAVE

**Auspice:** Cahalith

**Tribe:** Ghost Wolves

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Fletcher) 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 2, Occult 1, Politics 1, Travel 1

**Physical Skills:** Archery 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Ride (Bareback) 3, Stealth 2, Survival (Winter) 3, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Horses) 2, Empathy 1, Expression (Song) 2, Intimidation 2

**Merits:** Allies 1, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 1, Iron Stamina 2

**Primal Urge:** 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Harmony:** 6

**Essence Max/Per Turn:** 12/1

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Pride

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

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

**Defense:** 4 (all forms)

**Speed:** 13 (12/17/20/18)

**Renown:** Cunning 3, Glory 3

**Gifts:** (1) Mask of Rage, Pack Awareness, The Right Words, Wolf-Blood's Lure; (2) Camaraderie, Resist Pain; (3) Rallying Cry, True Leader

**Rituals:** 1; **Rites:** (1) Shared Scent

Anahit can proudly trace her ancestral line back to Scythia, where she cites foremothers who rode alongside their husbands and brothers in battle. She wishes she could openly do battle among the soldiers of Parthia with all her gifts, attaining full glory among the people of wolf and man. She is a skilled horsewoman, no mean feat given



the natural difficulties werewolves have when dealing with domesticated animals.

She is a dreamer, and has been led to the ruin by omens granted by the pregnant moon. She takes those dreams to mean that she has been chosen to take control of the sacred site, and becomes quite angry if anyone suggests that she dreamed of what she wanted rather than what she is entitled to. As far as she's concerned, the players' pack should be her vassals rather than her challengers. It's possible that she could be persuaded to join with the players' pack, and a truly heroic feat of diplomacy might even bring her to join a tribe (most likely the Hunters in Darkness or Blood Talons). Such an approach would have to play on her natural pride, though; suggesting that she act more humbly is a sure way to make an enemy.

Anahit is not tall, but she projects an aura of strength. Her complexion is on the darker side of Middle Eastern, and she wears the gear of a horse archer. She wears a few prized gold ornaments of Scythian make, and is an excellent shot with the fine bow she carries. When shapeshifted, her pelt is a deep, dark brown. She has no pack totem.

### RANK AND FILE

#### LEGIONNAIRE

These statistics represent a solid, well-trained but otherwise unexceptional Roman soldier, capable of long and arduous marches and good at following orders.

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

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

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

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Crafts 1, Medicine 1, Politics 1, Travel 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Iron Stamina 2, Strong Back, Weaponry Dodge

**Willpower:** 5

**Health:** 8

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2 (0 in armor)

**Speed:** 10 (8 in armor)

**Weapons:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Gladius	2(L)	8
Pilum	3(L)	7 (thrown)

**Armor:**

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Lorica	2/1	-2

### CATAPRACT

These Traits represent one of the Parthian cataphracts, a heavily armed cavalryman with thick bronze or iron scale armor. The Traits can also be adapted to represent a traditional knight in a Dark Ages or Middle Ages setting, though the cataphract was merely a soldier and lacking in some of the courtly skills and social perquisites that a knight would enjoy.

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Crafts 1, Medicine 1, Politics 1

**Physical Skills:** Archery 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Ride 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Horses) 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 1, Stunt Driver (Horses)

**Willpower:** 5

**Health:** 8

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2 (0 in armor)

**Speed:** 11 (9 in armor); 17 on horseback

**Weapons:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Lance	3(L)	9 (11 on the charge)
Bow	3(L)	11(short range 33)

**Armor:**

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Scale Coat	2/1	-2

### URATHA HUNTER

These are the werewolves who strike quietly by night, on both sides of the war. The Ivory Claws hunters comport themselves like a secret brotherhood, passing among humans as necessary but often releasing their tensions in

ugly hunt rituals. The Ghost Wolves, by comparison, are Uratha with very little tradition of their own. They hunt because they know themselves to be wolves; there's little other reason needed.

**Auspice:** Irraka

**Tribe:** Ghost Wolves or Ivory Claws

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Occult 1, Travel 1 (2 for Ivory Claws)

**Physical Skills:** Archery 3 (Ghost Wolves only), Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Larceny 1 (2 for Ivory Claws), Stealth 3, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1 (2 for Ivory Claws), Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Fleet of Foot 2, others variable

**Primal Urge:** 2

**Willpower:** X

**Harmony:** X

**Essence Max/Per Turn:** 11/1

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Gluttony

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

**Initiative:** 6 (6/7/8/9)

**Defense:** 3 (all forms)

**Speed:** 13 (14/17/20/18) with Fleet of Foot

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

**Gifts:** (1) Feet of Mist, Loose Tongue, Speak With Beasts, Wolf-Blood's Lure; (2) Blending

## FIRES OF HEAVEN

This scenario takes place in ancient China, in the year 188 AD, during the final years of the Han dynasty. The war in question is the Yellow Scarves Rebellion (also known as the Yellow Turbans Rebellion). Famines have forced many peasants to seek employment in the south, where they are often taken advantage of by landowners. The central government is largely perceived as weak and corrupt, with the emperor playing a puppet to his circle of eunuch advisors. Thousands upon thousands have flocked to the banner of Zhang Jiao, who has proclaimed, "The Blue Sky has perished, the Yellow Sky will still rise, in the year of Jia Zi, let there be prosperity in the world!"

Paralleling the turmoil, the Shadow churns with violence as well. Many spirits take advantage of the chaos to escape into the physical world. Some then go into hiding, but others follow the path of human conflict to feed, often Riding humans to better serve their desires. And some have even joined the Rebellion.

Kusa-Isi is a fire-spirit that has absorbed a potent level of resonance touched by chaos and rebellion. The spirit is delighted by the events of the Yellow Scarves Rebellion,

and has decided to involve itself further as best it can. To those ends, the fire-spirit quickly possessed Tiao Jin, a lesser leader in the Rebellion. Now known as the General of Fire, the Claimed leads a growing army against the lapdogs of the Empire. It matters not to him if the Yellow Turbans succeed and prosper or are slaughtered — the burning joy of the clash is all that is important. But as the fever of rebellion continues to spread, the General of Fire has begun to see the potential for a new, more dangerous rebellion: against the oppressive forces that would keep the children of Shadow from walking free under a mortal sky. Rebellion against the wolves that walk as men. And that is a great cause indeed. Already many lesser spirits have joined his cause, possessing the bodies of the General's most loyal followers.

The players' pack enters the picture when the clash between the General of Fire and government troops begins to spill over near the pack's territory. At first, it's a simple clash between the Yellow Scarves and Han troops, and the pack may decide to support one side or the other based on what the packmembers know of the rebellion. However, the General of Fire becomes ardently interested in the pack when he learns of the characters' existence. No longer afraid of the wolves, confident in his new strength and the strength of his army, he sees the packmembers as his first conquest. With their pelts as his trophies, he can rally even more spirits to his cause and build an even greater army. The rule of the Wolf is ending. The rule of the Shadow is at hand.

## LOGISTICS

By the time of the late Han, the Chinese have discovered the methods of forging steel, and have moved away from bronze. The most common sword is the *dao*, a curved blade that is of more use against cavalry; the long straight sword, or *jian*, is mostly carried by officers as a status symbol. Spears and bows are common weapons. Iron armor has come into general use, though many soldiers still wear lacquered leather. Gunpowder is still several centuries away from discovery, but incendiary tactics are a common feature in a strategist's arsenal. Sun Tzu's *Art of War* was written long before, and many of the tactics in the work are in play. Drums, gongs and signal flags are all common means of quickly signaling troops to maneuver.

The spirit world is robust and thriving at this point; the human population is sufficient to support a great many conceptual spirits, while the spirits reflecting the natural world are also strong. The Forsaken must be particularly careful when entering the Shadow, for their allies are few and their enemies are strong. Elodath are particularly valued in any pack that plans to enter the Shadow.

The players' pack is assumed to hold its own territory, in a modestly populated area not too far from a large town. No ties with other packs are necessary or implied by the scenario.

## BATTLES

The battles of "Fires of Heaven" are fought on two fronts. The first is the actual war being fought between the Yellow Scarves rebels and the forces of the Han. This conflict may bring the werewolves into it if they choose sides, or it may simply serve as a backdrop. If utterly ignored, though, this battle is sure to damage their territory to some extent and may claim the lives of some of their loved ones.

The other series of battles, fought just outside of human attention, are Tiao Jin's efforts to destroy the pack and the characters' retaliation. From a distance, these can be mistaken for more skirmishes between rebels and loyalists. Each major story event may entail a mixture of both conflicts, with the mortal battle acting as a backdrop for the struggle between the Uratha and the Claimed.

## TINDER AND SPARKS

The initial skirmish between Tiao Jin's troops and the local werewolves occurs when the General of Fire marches his rebels through the werewolves' territory. The rebels act much as any army on the move would, taking what they need (or what they persuade themselves they need) and striking out at anyone who seems to sympathize with their enemy — in this case, the Han itself. While some of the rebels try to spare the common people they come across, the General of Fire is a bad influence on his men. He consistently praises them for their righteousness, and stirs up their fervor against "enemies of the cause." As a result, most of his troops have all the self-control and moral guidance of a mob. Their passing is likely to offend the local werewolves, if the Uratha care at all about the safety of humans in their territory or respect for the land itself.

The pack is certain to be aware of the events of the rebellion, which has been going on for some time now. If the characters have been diligently scouting, they also know that a large Yellow Scarves troop has been sighted moving toward their land, probably aiming to take the local town and put its magistrate and soldiers to death.

The first encounter with the Yellow Scarves isn't large in scope. It is a simple matter of a few ragged rebels (half a dozen to a dozen, ostensibly advance scouts) attempting to sack a household or two within the pack's boundaries. The pack may respond in whatever manner the characters see appropriate, but violence is appropriate. Whether the Yellow Scarves are driven off, slaughtered to the last or simply let be, the point of the encounter is foreshadowing. The packmembers receive their first taste of the Rebellion, and can see that more is coming — with the main body of troops, at the least. However, if the pack interceded to stop the rebels, the General of Fire also becomes aware that the land has its own defenders. Werewolves are his first suspicion; he's been expecting them to catch up to him, after all. However, he has another concern that must be dealt with first.

## LIGHTING THE FIRE

As the main rebel force nears the town from the north, a detachment of Han forces arrives from the south. They are commanded by Feng Song, himself a volunteer landowner who has raised his own troops to defend the Han. Feng Song is motivated partly out of patriotism, but mostly out of ambition; he hopes to win esteem in the eyes of the Imperial Court by suppressing the rebels, and with esteem, an increase in rank and wealth. He is confident in his abilities, and openly disbelieves the rumors of the General of Fire's Heaven-sent powers.

The night before the battle, the General of Fire sends one of the lesser spirits in his retinue to scout the borders of the pack's territory. Once the spirit has determined the pack's borders as best it can, it reports them to Tiao Jin. Tiao Jin moves his forces very close to the pack's territory, but encamps virtually two fields over, pointedly avoiding their land. In fact, a suspicious werewolf with good insight into tactics might notice that the rebel troops have learned their lesson more quickly than could have been expected.

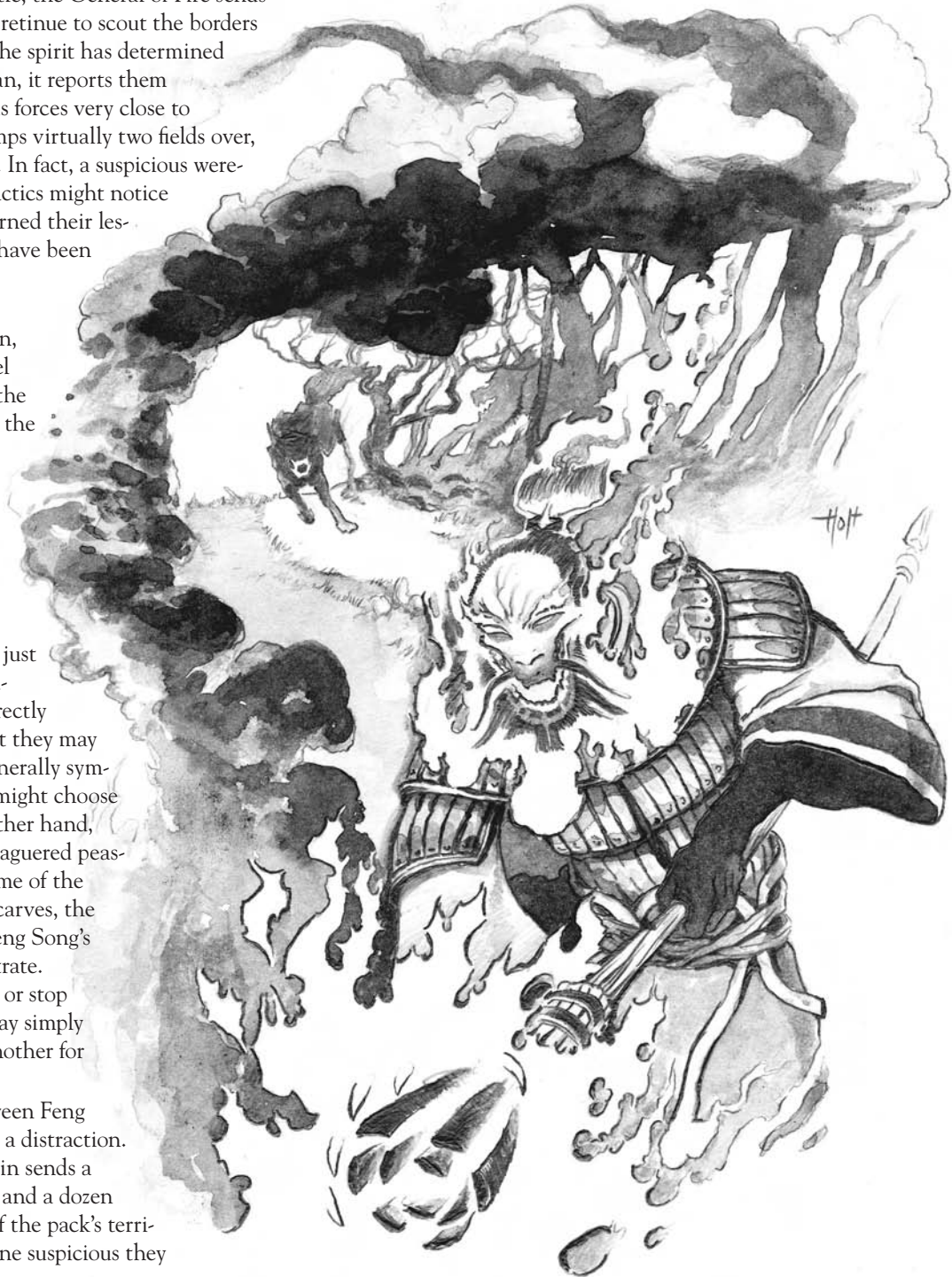
Feng Song approaches in the early morning before dawn, attempting to engage the rebel troops before they can reach the town. His forces number 300; the rebels, led by Zheng Fan, a spirit-Urged fanatic, number 400. Feng Song, counting on his troops' patriotism and the rebels' lack of discipline, mounts a straightforward attack.

As the battle takes place just on the edge of the pack's territory, the werewolves aren't directly compelled to get involved, but they may well want to. If the pack is generally sympathetic to the Empire, they might choose to aid Feng Song. If, on the other hand, some of them come from beleaguered peasant backgrounds and have some of the same grudges as the Yellow Scarves, the werewolves might sabotage Feng Song's attempts to defend the magistrate. They may attempt to redirect or stop the battle entirely. Or they may simply watch the humans kill one another for entertainment.

However, the battle between Feng Song and Zheng Fan is partly a distraction. While the battle rages, Tiao Jin sends a squad of six Claimed fanatics and a dozen rebel soldiers into the heart of the pack's territory, telling them to kill anyone suspicious they

find and set fire to the land. If the characters have left their territory unguarded, the first sign that something is amiss will be a plume of smoke. Otherwise, they have a confrontation on their hands. The packmembers may learn something of the General of Fire if they interrogate a Ridden (or kill it and catch the spirit), but the ordinary soldiers know nothing of werewolves or the General's agenda against them.

If the characters don't get involved, Feng Song is victorious against the Yellow Scarves, though he suffers more losses than anticipated. He begins to recruit more soldiers from young men in the town and surrounding farms. At





least one or two who sign up are wolf-blooded, relatives of one or more of the characters.

### SLASH AND BURN

Tiao Jin is very unhappy that the pack survives his initial strike, and decides to take a more cunning tack to destroying them. He plans to set fires in the Shadow itself to ravage their territory, at the same time harrying them in the physical world.

The Fire General and the greater part of his Yellow Scarves begin to arrive near the town. Many of the locals are demoralized to hear that Feng Song defeated only an advance force, and become prone to panic. Feng Song himself sends a request for reinforcements to the closest city, though well aware that any such troops are unlikely to arrive in time even if dispatched.

Tiao Jin sends a wave of lesser spirits (about four) to light the first fires in the Shadow, then a wave of mortal troops (with two or three Claimed among them) to set fire to the werewolves' territory. The mortal troops are too numerous to easily fight, with at least 40 sent on the errand. Though the General of Fire intends for this to be a surprise attack, his precautions against discovery are fairly basic. He will likely surprise the pack that isn't watching his movements, but is less likely to get his movements past the eyes of a dedicated Irraka scout.

The pack's ability to throw off this attack depends largely on the characters' strategy. If they are able to somehow manipulate the winds and change the fire's direction, or call down a rainstorm to quench the fire, they will injure the morale of the General of Fire's troops. Tiao Jin has built a reputation as a Taoist sorcerer based on his mastery of wind and fire, and the rebels will react poorly to signs that a more powerful sorcerer is present, or that Heaven is withdrawing its favor. Being able to press more elemental spirits into service against the General's fire-spirits would be a strong advantage, as would the ability to rally troops of their own from the locals.

The General of Fire's momentary distraction with the werewolf pack works to Feng Song's advantage. The Han loyalist manages to bolster his troops with continued recruitment, and arms them with weapons taken from the fallen. If one or more of the pack has decided to aid him (perhaps by ensuring that his messenger leaves the area safely), then the governor may boost his troops by another 200 during the lull in fighting.

### CONFLAGRATION

With the pack surviving his incendiary attack, the General of Fire begins to feel a gnawing dread. However, Kusa-Ihi understands that the pack *must* fall, or else his glorious rebellion will be destroyed before it could reach full bloom. In addition, he sees the need to thoroughly defeat Feng Song and his troops, in order to raise the morale of the rebels. The General of Fire, therefore, prepares to destroy the pack by luring the characters into an ambush via a false retreat strategy.

Tiao Jin gathers his rebels and addresses them by the light of bonfires, reassuring them that Heaven's favor is with them and the time to move is now. He tells them that he will lead them into battle on the morrow, and that with his power they will prove invincible. He also has banners painted to read "The General of Fire Comes," and has them planted on the outskirts of his camp for Feng Song and the pack to discover. Tiao Jin guesses that this bold move will ensure that the Uratha will want to come to the battlefield the next day in hopes of taking his head.

If the pack launches a night attack on Tiao Jin to interrupt his plans, they find that the General of Fire is prepared. He has surrounded his tent with the last of his Claimed fanatics, who keep a tireless watch. The fight should be difficult, but not impossible; Lunacy will keep the majority of rebels at bay if the Uratha go all-out.

Should the pack instead decide to look for an opportunity to kill Tiao Jin under the cover of open battle, the General of Fire marches to battle at the head of his troops as promised. He also places many of his newest and rawest recruits at the front, in order to misrepresent his troops' strength. His more veteran troops (and his remaining Claimed fanatics) hide at the end of the battlefield, in ravines, a forest or whatever terrain feature is appropriate to the setting. Once his forces are engaged with Feng Song (and preferably, once he has spotted one or more potential Uratha closing in on him) and the untrained rebels begin to be cut down, the General of Fire feigns cowardice and retreats to the rear with his army, expecting the enemy to follow. Once he has lured them into the ambush, a gong sounds and his veteran troops attack. The final confrontation may take everything out of the Uratha, and they may have to violate the Oath of the Moon and use their more flamboyant powers openly. There is always the hope that their deeds will one day be remembered only as a lesser historical fiction, a poor story compared to *Three Kingdoms* — at least among humanity. The People will remember.

### THE TWIST

Somewhere along the way, Kusa-Ihi's message of rebellion against the Uratha reached ears other than a spirit's. Rat ears. A small nest of Beshilu catches wind of the upcoming revolt, and decides to help... covertly, of course. A mix of cunning and instinctual fear of the werewolves tells them that it's better to let the spirits blaze in open defiance, while they gnaw quietly at the fabric of the Gauntlet in the background.

The Beshilu make their move once they see some form of opportunity. When it seems that the characters must retreat to lick their wounds, or that the General of Fire is causing a sufficient distraction, the Beshilu begin to gnaw away at the wall between light and Shadow. If they begin early enough, Tiao Jin may receive more reinforcements from the spirit world than he expects. A particularly alert pack may catch the Rat Hosts before they are able to do too much damage; a simply diligent pack may

find and close the barn door after only a few cows have escaped.

The Beshilu, for their part, don't plan to stay and join in the battle. They move on, hoping to begin weakening the Gauntlet in other territories in preparation for the General of Fire's arrival. Catching and punishing the twisted *shartha* may be a new hunt for the pack, if the characters have anything left to give to it after their final confrontation with Tiao Jin.

## VARIATIONS

In general, the events of "Fires of Heaven" can take place in a variety of similar rebellions or civil wars. The larger the rebellious force, the more plausible it is that a Ridden such as Tiao Jin can take over a small portion of the troops for his own without causing too much impact on the overall flow of history. The large geography of China makes it particularly ideal, but smaller countries also make fine settings.

The rebellion can become a political one, pitting werewolf against werewolf. In such a scenario, presumably Han-era China would have a disparity in numbers between Pure and Forsaken, with the Pure being the rebels. The General of Fire and his fanatics would be replaced by a Pure pack (almost certainly with Tiao Jin as a Fire-Touched), although some spirits and Claimed would still fit well accompanying them. The two have common cause, after all.

One simple twist might be to replace the Han commander Feng Song with a familiar figure from the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, such as He Jin or Cao Cao, or even Sun Jian or Liu Bei and his brothers. This isn't likely to change matters too significantly (unless the players attempt to kill the notable personage), but it might be entertaining if your troupe is fond of this particular work of fiction.

When developing "Fires of Heaven" into a larger chronicle, a clear possibility is to follow the Yellow Scarves Rebellion to its end. Although there likely aren't that many more supernatural entities hiding among the Yellow Scarves, the upheaval can displace other packs of werewolves and rouse up the spirit world. One of the more challenging scenarios posits that Kusa-Ihi's message of rebellion against the Forsaken has spread far beyond his immediate followers. A rebellion begins to sweep the Shadow, with spirits attempting to mass against the Uratha. The spark may not have begun with Kusa-Ihi, no less — is there a more powerful General in play, one who straddles Heaven and Earth?

When used as a flashback story, "Fires of Heaven" might foretell a similar revolution movement among the spirits of the modern world. Some spirit may have taken it into its head to succeed where Kusa-Ihi failed, and the pack uses the Rite of Recollection to see how it played out the first time.

## TIAO JIN, THE GENERAL OF FIRE

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Medicine 1, Occult 3, Politics 2

**Physical Skills:** Archery 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Expression 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Allies 1 (Yellow Turbans), Language (First Tongue), Retainer 2 (purchased multiple times: bodyguard of devoted peasants)

**Willpower:** 7

**Essence Max/Per Turn:** 20/2

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Wrath

**Health:** 11

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 15

**Aspects:** Blast, Command Fire, Forge-Skin, Terrify, Two-World Eyes

- **Blast:** As the spirit Numen. The blast takes the form of bright fire emanating from the General's seared eye sockets.

- **Command Fire:** As the three-dot Elemental Gift (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 111).

- **Forge-Skin:** By spending one Essence, the General of Fire can saturate his flesh with spiritual fire, hardening his skin as well as heating it. His clothes burn away, and his skin glows with inner light. While this Aspect is active, the General of Fire gains 2/1 armor, and inflicts one point of lethal damage to anyone who comes into flesh-to-flesh contact with him.

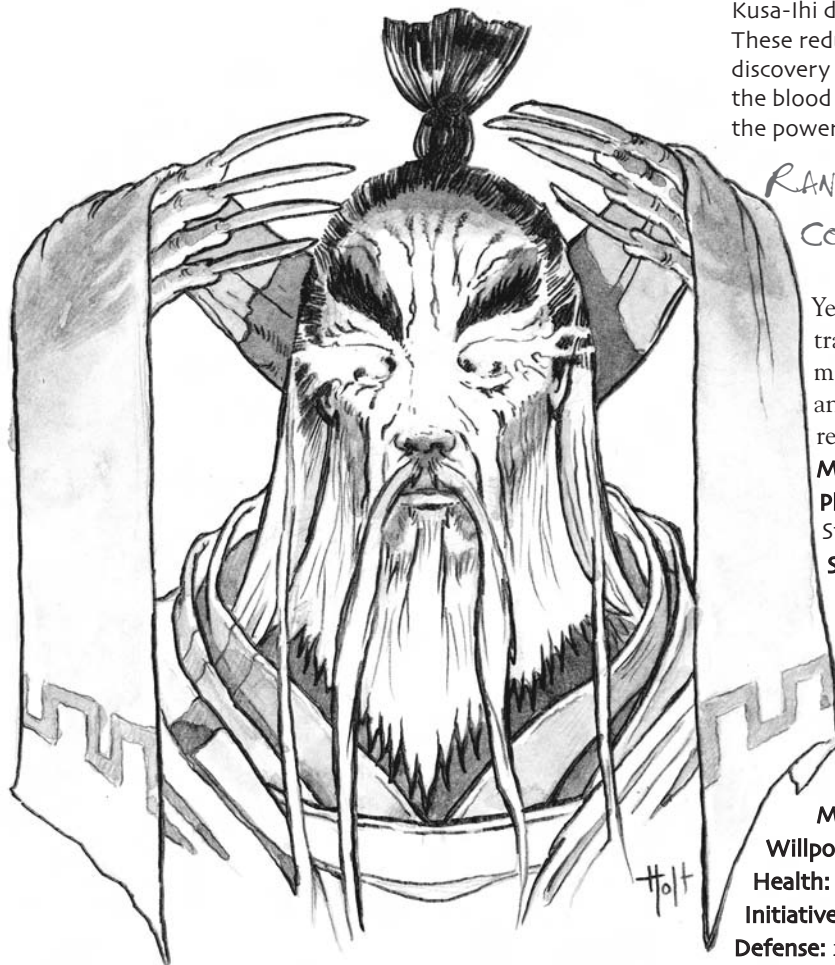
- **Terrify:** As the ghostly Numen (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 212).

- **Two-World Eyes:** As the Crescent Moon Gift (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 104).

Before his possession, Tiao Jin was an angry man, but not yet a brute. He was one of the many farmers who lost everything to famine, and one of those who couldn't even find work to feed his family. He truly wanted to displace the Emperor and see a new regime in which his children had a chance to grow up strong.

The original Tiao Jin, the desperate father and husband, is forgotten now. Now there is Tiao Jin, the General of Fire. When he descends among his troops, his voice stirs them to glory and wrath against the oppressors. The Han still floats at the corners of his mind as a goal, but the core of his soul of fire is obsessed with a different target — the hateful wolf-men.

The General of Fire is lean almost to the point of emaciation, but hard-muscled and quick. His hair, beard and nails are all long, which his followers take to be some sign of his ascetic mind; in truth, he simply has forgotten such things. His skin is a sunburned red, and most of the



time he wraps his yellow scarf around his eyes. When he removes the cloth, firelight spills from his vacant eye sockets. The sight is enough to terrify the soldiers who oppose him, while his followers see it as the sign of Heaven's favor.

### KUSA-IHI

When loosed from the fleshy constraints of his mortal mount, Kusa-Ihi manifests as a whirling cyclone of fire. Ashes the color of dried blood constantly churn up and down the eddies of its form. The spirit's voice resounds like thunder, and a white pulsing light at its core beats like a heart, yet turns toward opponents like an eye.

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 7, Finesse 8, Resistance 6

**Willpower:** 13

**Essence:** 18 (20 max)

**Initiative:** 14

**Defense:** 8

**Speed:** 25 (species factor 10)

**Corpus:** 9

**Influences:** Fire ••, Rebellion •

**Numina:** Blast (Fire), Claim, Discorporation, Gauntlet Breach, Materialize, Wilds Sense

**Ban:** Blood quenches the flames of Kusa-Ihi. Every quart of blood thrown on the spirit reduces his Initiative and Defense by one point. If utterly drenched with blood,

Kusa-Ihi drops to Power 3, Finesse 4 and Resistance 3. These reductions last for 24 hours. The spirit dreads the discovery of his ban with particular paranoia, given that the blood of sacrificed animals is often believed to have the power to dispel illusions and other magic spells.

### RANK AND FILE

#### COMMON SOLDIER

These Traits can be used to represent the Yellow Scarves rebel with a modicum of military training or the soldier of the Empire. Storytellers may wish to lower the Weaponry Skill to one dot and remove the armor to represent the average rebel.

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

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 1, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Politics 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1

**Merits:** None relevant

**Willpower:** 4

**Health:** 8

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2 (-1 wearing armor, +1 vs. unarmed opponents with spear)

**Speed:** 9

**Weapons:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Spear	3(L)	7

**Armor:**

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty	Speed Penalty
Lacquered leather	1/0	-1	-0

#### CLAIMED FANATIC

The elite members of the General of Fire's guard are called the first and most blessed of his revolutionaries. They are lesser spirits drawn to the General's cause of rising up and casting down the werewolves even as the humans cast down their own overlords, taking hold of the bodies of Tiao Jin's lieutenants. The Claimed appear largely human, and bind any odd deformities or half-transformed body parts with yellow cloth. When entering battle with the Uratha, the Claimed's fervor rises to a boiling point as they shriek curses and glorious war cries in the First Tongue.

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Occult 2, Politics 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 1  
**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 1, Language 1 (Chinese), Natural Immunity, Toxin Resistance  
**Willpower:** 6  
**Health:** 9  
**Initiative:** 6  
**Defense:** 3  
**Speed:** 13  
**Weapons:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Hatchet	2(L)	8

### LESSER FIRE SPIRITS

Kusa-Ihi's spirit followers are from all choirs, but the fire-spirits are his most favored. They are the ones he entrusts with his incendiary attacks, for obvious reasons. They appear as small shifting flames, their forms pulsing with their mood. Some attempt to mimic the shapes of physical things, becoming vaguely bird, serpent or dog-shaped.

**Rank:** 2  
**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 4, Resistance 3  
**Willpower:** 7  
**Essence:** 11 (15 max)  
**Initiative:** 7  
**Defense:** 4  
**Speed:** 18 (species factor 10)  
**Corpus:** 5  
**Influences:** Fire ••  
**Numina:** Blast (fire), Claim, Command Fire (as the Gift), Materialize

**Ban:** These spirits are vulnerable to elemental attacks outside their choir, specifically those of earth, wood, metal or water. Such attacks receive a +4 dice bonus against the spirit in question.

### SAGA OF THE WOLF

This scenario details a small war, between feuding households and their kin, in the heart of Viking culture. The scenario is by default set in Iceland in the middle of the 10th century, but could easily be adapted to Norway or elsewhere in Scandinavia with only a few changes.

The principals in the feud are Hrafn Kodransson and Gudrid Runolfsdottir, both alphas of their own packs and landholders of modest means. The two have never gotten along particularly well, and have often squabbled over the boundary between their two territories. As feuds so often do, their feud has gradually grown bitterer until reaching the breaking point.

It began with a few missing livestock, that had "strayed across the border" and were killed and eaten. Both sides have lost animals in this fashion, and both sides claim it was the other party that started it. Then, a thrall Hrafn had set to watch his herds was torn apart "by wolves." Hrafn matched the insult by killing two of Gudrid's thralls in turn. It still wasn't enough to go to war

over, but shortly thereafter freemen started dying. The latest victims have been Hrafn's young nephew Thorolf and Gudrid's cousin-by-marriage Bjarni, both killed in an early-morning skirmish at the crossroads. Now the warriors on both sides sharpen swords and whet claws, readying for the war that's sure to break out.

The most recent instigating event came when Gudrid had one of her pack set up a scorn-pole at the crossroads between the two villages, depicting wooden effigies of Hrafn and his aged uncle engaged in a compromising sexual position — with Hrafn as the submissive, of course. The scorn-pole had a minor spirit bound within it for the purpose of having it cast a reflection in the Shadow, and the result has darkened Hrafn's reputation among spirits and mortals. Hrafn nearly succumbed to Death Rage when he first heard of it, and is now plotting to put an end to Gudrid and her slandering tongue.

The troupe's characters enter the scenario as a pack bound via some form of blood oath to Hrafn and his kin. Gudrid has called on another pack of Forsaken (the Iron-Biters) to strengthen her numbers, and Hrafn has turned to the players' pack to even the odds. The exact nature of the bond between the pack and Hrafn is left to you and your players to determine. One or more of the characters may be blood relatives of Hrafn, or they may owe him a previous debt when his pack assisted theirs at great cost. Storm Lord characters will have added motivation to assist Hrafn in his feud, both out of tribal loyalty and the devotion to Honor Renown. Encourage the players to find ways to make the connection personal and interesting to them. With any luck, it shouldn't take much to hook them on the concept of a bloody feud spiced by honor and battle-lust.

Unlike the other scenarios, this war is driven by the Forsaken themselves. The human men and women are drawn into the conflict of their werewolf chieftains and relatives, only partially aware of the primal context that drives the feud. It becomes more than a skirmish between packs because the werewolves in question are leaders who are quite willing to drag their human vassals and kin into the fight. Indeed, it would be seen as unusual if they didn't — this is the sort of conflict that brings many men into battle, not a few handful to settle things with secretive fights on the moor when the moon rises.

This places the characters in a fairly ugly situation. Honor demands some sort of resolution, but their own wolf natures are likely to rebel and twist out of joint if they kill their own kind. How will they settle the affair?

### LOGISTICS

The logistics of the time are gloriously simple. Most warriors fight with throwing axes, spears or sword and shield. Chain mail is the favored armor. Battles tend to be smaller skirmishes, and this war in particular is between allied households, with combatants in the dozens rather than the hundreds or thousands. Service in the household

of a famous warrior was a common goal, and many leaders therefore needed to make frequent war in order to sustain their retinue of warriors and their own reputation.

In open battle, both sides tend to draw up behind shield-walls (usually with the younger warriors forming the wall, and the veterans close behind), and open hostilities with a salvo of missiles — spears, arrows, even throwing axes. If both sides still have fight in them after an initial volley or two, then the object became to break through the enemy line and kill their chieftain (who was himself protected by a bodyguard). Some would form their troops into a wedge called the *svinfylking*, or boar formation, for this purpose.

The existence of the Forsaken is not entirely secret in the villages where the scenario takes place. The humans tell stories of berserkers and wolf-changers with the knowledge that such things are probably very real, and many warriors have a reputation as such. Some of the known berserkers are wolf-blooded, but others are proper werewolves. The Forsaken pay lip service to the Oath of the Moon by never actually admitting to their gift around their human neighbors, but their wolf-blooded kin know. It's still considered a Harmony sin to shift form in front of other humans, but some werewolves form raiding parties composed of only their fellow Uratha and wolf-blooded kin, and take the Dalu form when the action gets particularly heated.

The Shadow is largely wild, with very little effect worked by the hand of humanity. Spirits that take human-like form rarely get it "right"; they often scale too large or too small, or get the proportions wrong, like the giants or dwarves of Nordic myth. Neither Hrafn nor Gudrid has many allies outside the direct influence of their territory, and spirits tend to obey them out of fear rather than respect. Hrafn's grandfather (also Uratha) built his hall on the site of a locus (••, a rune-marked stone set in his hearth); the locus under Gudrid's control is a round stone with a hole worn through it (•••) that rests in a stream at the base of her settlement's hill.

## THE BATTLES

This scenario follows a path of mounting escalation. The characters are presumed to enter the story when it's about to reach its boiling point, and are present as the situation explodes into outright war.

If the players are interested in playing members of Hrafn's immediate household, then gameplay can start even earlier along the timeline, with a player potentially being among one of the initial brawls where Gudrid's cousin or Hrafn's nephew died.

The following three events are the key points of escalation. If you so desire, you may add additional battles and skirmishes to round out the story and add to the war's length.

## A SCOUTING SKIRMISH

The first major incident of the story occurs when the players are themselves caught in a battle between Uratha, binding them into the feud. While the deaths of kinsmen and the incident of the scorn-pole might mark the point of no return, the potential death of a werewolf by another werewolf's claws sets the stakes for the war at a new level.

The scenario begins when Hrafn holds a feast for the players' pack upon the characters' arrival to his lands, and explains the nature of the feud. The feast is grim; there is sufficient food to feed the guests and a generous amount of mead and beer, but nobody in Hrafn's house is in a jovial mood. Hrafn speaks well of the pack's reputation and deeds, even if his praise is tinged by his seething anger with his rival.

The first favor Hrafn asks of the characters is to go scouting, to familiarize themselves with the lay of his lands. It would also serve as a show of strength for a different pack to be seen along the border, discouraging Gudrid's followers from springing an attack. Joining the packmembers on their scouting run is Black Aud, one of Hrafn's lieutenants. Aud is a grim, sharp-faced Irraka woman of near-middle age. Hrafn and Aud both fail to mention that she has an old grudge against Gudrid; it's not important information in their minds. (Use the Uratha Hunter Traits, p. 101, to represent Aud.)

The patrol sets out the next day, crossing the pastureland between the two territories in the afternoon. Aud insists on looking on Gudrid's lands by the light of the setting sun. "There you'll see what Gudrid's hall will look like when the red fire is upon it," she explains. The timing also allows them an excellent opportunity to be seen, demonstrating Hrafn's strength, but not directly drawing out Gudrid (who is likely to be at the evening meal at the time).

The group is indeed spotted by sentries, and Aud cannot resist throwing out a few choice curses in their direction. However, the watchers have a shorter temper than Aud would have predicted, and a small bad is suddenly closing on the scouts. The sentries include a number of werewolves equal to a little over half the numbers of the pack, and fighting men equal to the pack's size (so a group of four player characters and Aud would face three werewolves and five humans). Aud refuses to back down — as well might some of the pack. While the sentries approach with the initial desire of simply running the scouts off, any show of defiance triggers the wolf instinct of territoriality. Unless the players bodily drag Aud away (which will end in her cursing their cowardice before Hrafn) or somehow talk both groups into standing down, the encounter erupts in bloodshed.

The actual fight can be treated as normal, using Traits from the Rank and File section to represent Gudrid's

sentries. However, Aud is very likely to enter Death Rage during the course of the battle. Exceptional effort from the players may prevent this skirmish from ending with a badly wounded or dead werewolf, in which case the hall-burning will take more time for Gudrid to approve. If Aud, one of Gudrid's Uratha sentries or one of the pack lies dead at the end of the fight, it becomes clear that the war has begun.

### THE HALL-BURNING

After the first Uratha blood has been drawn, Gudrid ups the ante. At her urging, the Iron-Biters pack moves in for a hall-burning. Their intention is a fairly typical Viking tactic: sneak up via cover of night, set the main hall ablaze and ambush those inside as they try to escape.

The Iron-Biters are a large pack mostly composed of Iron Masters from a few days' travel away (by human pace, at least). Gudrid's householders see them as huscarls brought in for the impending war, and openly suspect that they're berserkers. They're a particularly bloodthirsty crew, already straining at the leash. Their alpha, Ragnar Goldshirt, wants to hand Hrafn's head to Gudrid personally. Ragnar sees that a total victory here could give Gudrid a strong claim on Hrafn's lands, and if the alpha is the one responsible for effectively doubling her land, he can call on her for an equally impressive favor later.

Ragnar leads his pack to Hrafn's hall at roughly 3 AM. Hrafn and his pack keep mostly diurnal hours, just as most werewolves of the area; there's too much to do during the day and it tends to draw unwanted attention to act openly at night. Ragnar sends his two Irraka in first to eliminate any sentries that might be posted outside the hall. Use the Uratha Hunter Traits (p. 101) to represent these two. At least one possesses the Gift: Command Fire, which she will use to direct Hrafn's own watch fires to set his hall on fire (eliminating the need for her to carry a torch of her own). The thatch roof catches fire quickly, and the rest of the hall is soon on fire.

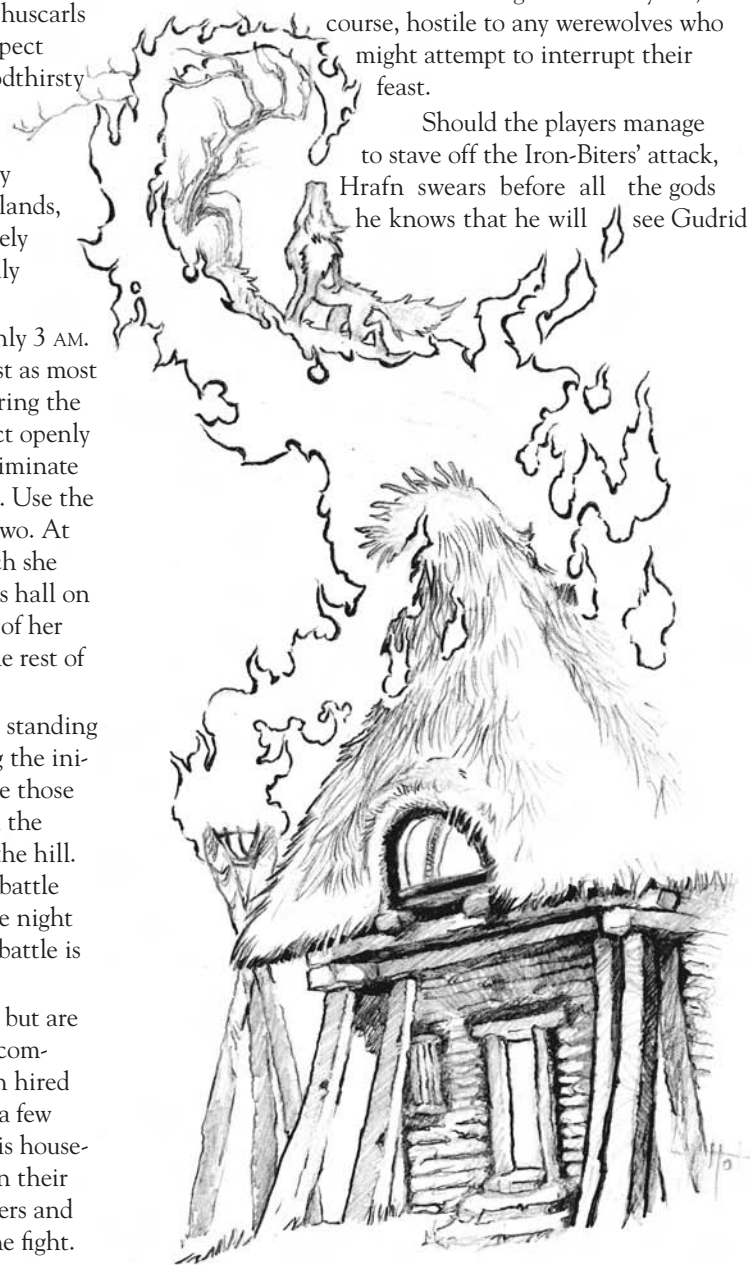
If one or more characters have been prone to standing watch themselves, they have a chance at stopping the initial arson. However, making enough noise to wake those sleeping inside the hall will also alert Ragnar and the rest of his men, and they will charge howling up the hill. The Iron-Biters try to avoid shapeshifting in this battle (though some may take on Dalu form, trusting the night to conceal their features). However, when proper battle is joined, Death Rage is a very likely result.

The Iron-Biters outnumber the players' pack, but are not quite even with the players and Hrafn's pack combined. The Iron-Biters pad out their numbers with hired warriors brought from their own lands, as well as a few bandits that Ragnar has promised to bring into his household. The characters should have a tense battle on their hands — the priority is to force back the Iron-Biters and their cohorts until Hrafn and his men can join the fight.

To make things worse, there are also many non-combatants within the hall, who cannot be safely evacuated while the Iron-Biters stand but who might not survive until the fight is over.

The blazing hall is a dangerous place to fight. The Iron-Biters will do their best to force their enemies into the flames, while themselves maintaining a ring around the hall and keeping Hrafn's warriors from escaping. Hrafn and his pack will enter the fight after roughly three turns (modified by any player efforts to mobilize them sooner) — it's up to the players to see how much damage their characters can endure until then. The Iron-Biters aren't suicidal, and may flee if the battle turns greatly against them. Stepping sideways is only partial protection; Iron-Biters' Ithaeur had sent word among the Fire Choir that a burning was to come, and several fire-spirits wait in the Shadow to feed off the conflagration. They are, of course, hostile to any werewolves who might attempt to interrupt their feast.

Should the players manage to stave off the Iron-Biters' attack, Hrafn swears before all the gods he knows that he will see Gudrid



slain for this. He demands that the survivors be ready to march on her lands by the time the fallen can be buried.

### THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

The scenario is likely to end in an open battle between the two forces. The two chieftains mass as many troops as they can and march to a wide field that lies half on Hrafn's land and half on Gudrid's, divided by a cold stream that runs down the middle. Gudrid attends the battle herself, ostensibly because she would rather die alongside her husband than be taken captive by his enemy, but actually so that she can deal with Hrafn personally.

Depending on the characters' actions, one side may have a significant advantage over the other. If the characters have fought fiercely and well, Gudrid's forces may be lessened through the characters' activities. On the other hand, if the characters have been generally ineffective in defending Hrafn and his warriors, the pack's side may have been dangerously weakened.

The two forces initially fight as described in the Logistics section above, but the battle is all but certain to become more frenzied as the Uratha among the warriors give in to their more savage natures.

Though Hrafn and his pack prefer to fight in the traditional manner of Viking warriors, the player characters might choose to charge in from the flanks, to use stealth or resources from the Shadow, or even to attempt to stop the battle entirely in favor of some other way of settling the feud. Gudrid is aware of their presence, however, and will dispatch several of her own Uratha to hunt down the pack and counter whatever plans the characters might have in mind. The pack may choose to fight these rivals, or may simply elude them. Gudrid's hunters can be used as a mix of the Uratha Berserker and Uratha Hunter archetypes, or you can personalize them as you see fit, even using the statistics for named werewolves from other scenarios or books.

### THE TWIST: HRAFN'S OATH

Hrafn has been taking counsel from unexpected quarters, these last few months. Unknown to the rest of his pack, a small and subtle thing has crawled out of the Shadow and nested under Hrafn's bed. The spirit is a Lesser Jagglung that has given no particular name, instead suggesting that it is Hrafn's "own thought." Its form is that of a sleek, well-fed eyeless raven with blood-red talons that are more hawk-like than corvid. Hrafn has seen it only twice, though he hears its voice often. As it has continued to whisper encouragement, he has begun to fancy it the lesser child of one of Odin's ravens. Hrafn couldn't be more wrong.

The spirit actually does have a name, Nihuru-Sehuz (meaning "Fat-with-Hot-Blood" in the First Tongue). The spirit also has a master — it is one of the spirit servitors of Lamashtu, Calipha of Pride. Though not particularly strong itself, Nihuru-Sehuz is cunning and perceptive. It

fixated on Hrafn as a potential servitor of great value for its lord and choir, and has been sating itself on the ache of Hrafn's injured pride.

Everything up until the final battle has been entirely of Hrafn's own decision. If he gets the upper hand over Gudrid, that may change. He becomes an engine of hateful wrath, attempting to prolong the suffering of anyone in his path whom he believes has somehow injured his pride or laughed at him. The characters may suddenly find themselves trying to stop, restrain or even kill the werewolf they're sworn to if his deeds go too far, or feel a great stain of disharmony on their souls if they let him run free. Without intervention, Hrafn eventually becomes a Bale Hound, which may have consequences in later stories or in the main body of a linked chronicle.

### VARIATIONS

Though ostensibly set in Iceland, the "Saga of the Wolf" could take place in any Viking land with virtually no modifications at all. The most notable difference would be that the two chieftains are likely to owe allegiance to a king, and they are keeping their feud as quiet as they can to avoid his attention.

With some more vigorous changes to the cosmetic details, it could be set in medieval Russia or Eastern Europe, and the core events of the scenario could take place anywhere two families are capable of having a bloody feud without the outside world interfering (such as the American Old West or feudal Japan).

This scenario isn't a simple black-and-white affair, which is why it's more suitable as a Forsaken versus Forsaken conflict. Changing the core conflict to Forsaken versus Pure does remove the possibility of reconciliation (slim though it may be), but also lessens the tragedy of the feud by making it a matter of time rather than unfortunate circumstances.

As a flashback story, the "Saga of the Wolf" could be used as a parallel to an existing feud between Forsaken. If the twist is used, it could also foreshadow a modern appearance of Nihuru-Sehuz or a Bale Hound that has derived some sort of useful legacy from Hrafn Kodransson.

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

#### HRAFN KODRANSSON

**Auspice:** Cahalith

**Tribe:** Storm Lord

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Occult 2, Politics 3, Travel 2

**Physical Skills:** Archery 1, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Drive (Sail) 2, Stealth (Urhan) 2, Survival 3, Weaponry (Axes) 3



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

**Merits:** Allies 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Resources 3, Retainer 3, Status (Chieftain) 2

**Primal Urge:** 4

**Willpower:** 7

**Harmony:** 5

**Essence Max/Per Turn:** 13/2

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Pride

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

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

**Defense:** 3 (all forms)

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

**Renown:** Cunning 1, Glory 4, Honor 2, Purity 1, Wisdom 1

**Gifts:** (1) Call the Breeze, Crushing Blow, Pack Awareness, Warning Growl; (2) Luna's Dictum, Resist Pain, Silent Fog; (3) True Leader, Voice of Command; (4) Break the Defiant

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

Hrafn Kodransson has tried to be a good man. He respects his wife, even if love is perhaps too strong a word. He wants his thralls to be content, even if happiness is a bit much to ask. He pays the Oath more than lip service, even if he cannot remember all its tenets when the red anger comes over him. But no good man could bear what he has been given. Only an old woman could turn the other cheek here.

Among his fellow chieftains, Hrafn has a reputation as a poor-tempered man who prefers to be left alone. His berserker nature is suspected by many, but Hrafn denies it vehemently among those who aren't of the blood. He also works to cultivate a reputation as a fair and honorable chieftain, enough so that others will leave him to manage his own affairs. So far, it works — save for his wretched Iron Master neighbor.

Hrafn is slightly on the short side, but is solid as a stone. His hair and beard are black as the raven he was named after, and his wolf-pelt is the same shade. He is approaching middle age, though he doesn't look it. He wears armor when fighting alongside fellow chieftains who don't know his secret, but prefers to go unarmored when it's likely he will have to let the wolf inside him out, even just a bit.

*GUDRID RUNOLFSDOTTIR*

**Auspice:** Irraka

**Tribe:** Iron Masters

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Weaving) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 3, Travel 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Larceny 1, Stealth (Eavesdropping) 3, Survival 2, Weaponry (Knives) 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Hypnotic) 3, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Hidden Power) 3

**Merits:** Allies 2, Contacts 2, Danger Sense, Language (First Tongue), Resources 3, Retainer 2, Status (Chieftain) 2

**Primal Urge:** 3

**Willpower:**

**Harmony:** 5

**Essence Max/Per Turn:** 12/1

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Wrath

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

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

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

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

**Renown:** Cunning 4, Glory 1, Honor 1, Purity 2, Wisdom 2

**Gifts:** (1) Know Name, Loose Tongue, Partial Change, Sense Weakness, Wolf-Blood's Lure; (2) Anybeast, Father Wolf's Speed, Sand in the Eyes, Slip Away; (3) Distractions, Playing Possum; (4) Double Back

**Rituals:** 3; **Rites:** (1) Banish Human, Funeral Rite; (2) Call Gaffling, Call Human; (3) Bind Human

Gudrid Runolfsdottir is the absolute mistress of her territory. She rules in the most expedient way possible: as an open secret. Most of her neighbors and all of her household are aware that her voice is law, and that her husband is little more than a figurehead chieftain. Her close kins-





men know that she is possessed of some form of witch or shaman's gift, though they also know it would be death to speak about such things too openly with outsiders. This manner of rule is actually not all that unprecedented among the Forsaken of the area. Gudrid is doing things much as her grandmother might have, ensuring that her kin and neighbors respect her authority and power while still seeming the respectable chieftain's wife.

Despite her viciously short temper and vindictive streak, Gudrid is not the devil-crone Hrafn makes her out to be. She can be quite generous when the mood takes her, and genuinely loves her children. But she is still a werewolf. The fury pounds in her breast as the moon rises, and she remembers the anger of being insulted much longer than the sorrow of loss. With the death of her husband's cousin, she wants a weregild paid in blood.

Gudrid is a tall, sharp-featured, ash-blond woman whose werewolf nature has kept her from prematurely aging the way her sisters have. She is still handsome to look on, despite the long scar that runs down the right side of her neck (the mark of her initiation into the Blood Talons). Her voice becomes harsh and unpleasant when she's angry, like a cat's screech... not that anyone has told her so to her face without tasting his own blood. When she changes, her wolf pelt is a pale brown shading to a blondish white.

## RANK AND FILE

### URATHA BERSERKER

These Traits can be used to represent various lesser members of Gudrid and Hrafn's packs, or warriors from other packs who have come for the promise of a fight. They tend to fight in Dalu form when they can get away with it, taking on Gauru only when they lose control. They are the living example of werewolves whose human calling and werewolf heart are in alliance — they live for battle.

**Auspice:** Rahu

**Tribe:** Storm Lords or Iron Masters

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

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

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Politics 1, Travel 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Socialize 1

**Merits:** Iron Stamina 1, Strong Back

**Primal Urge:** 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Harmony:** 5

**Essence Max/Per Turn:** 11/1

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Wrath

**Health:** 8 (10/14/13/8)

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

**Defense:** 2 (all forms)

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

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

**Gifts:** (1) Clarity, Crushing Blow, Partial Change, Straighten (Iron Master) or Warning Growl (Storm Lord); (2) Attunement, Mighty Bound

### VIKING WARRIOR

This is the typical warrior who serves under a chieftain in hopes of wealth, glory and increased status. This Viking mixes the training of a martial culture with the experience of several battles; he's no great hero, but he might get there someday.

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

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

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

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Medicine 1, Politics 1, Travel 1

**Physical Skills:** Archery 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive (Sail) 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Socialize 1

**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 1, Iron Stamina 2, Shield-Bearer

**Willpower:** 4

**Virtue:** Faith, Fortitude or Justice

**Vice:** Wrath, Greed or Lust

**Health:** 8

**Initiative:** 5 with Fast Reflexes

**Defense:** 2 (0 with armor; +2 with shield)

**Speed:** 10 (8 in chain mail)

**Weapons:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Axe or Broadsword	3(L)	8 (7 with shield)
Spear	3(L)	8 (adds +1 Defense against unarmed)

**Armor:**

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Chain mail	2/1	-2





# CHAPTER III

## THE SILVER CRUSADE

Five shadows detached from the gloom along the riverbank and moved separately toward the unlit pyre. The shadows were hunters — silently, with the river mist, they swirled toward the rough-hewn logs of the structure — careful — merging with the shadows of bush and shrub for a moment before moving ever closer to the crude tower. They were wary, they smelled blood; they saw what was left of the carcass hanging by one leg from the tree.

If the figure standing over the body at the top of the pyre took notice of them, it did not react, or move. When they were close enough to hear, it began to whisper to them, “I am Tooth of Darkness — No Moon — Beta of the Split Water pack...” It paused, then continued louder “...father of Strikes with Thunder. I have gathered the Irraka of city and vale not just to listen to a hoary old wolf lament his son’s murder, but to show you a new way, the Silver Road.”

He finished these words by pointing upwards, toward the full moon, with a knife. The light of the moon caught the blade: a silver reflection stained with black rivulets.

“We, the ones called Forsaken, have always taken the hard road — walked the knife’s blade — bled and died to keep the two worlds in balance. We embrace the intellect of man and the soul of the First Wolf and rejected neither. We are used to tough choices, uncertain paths.”

“Until now.” Something heavy, but soft, fell from the other hand of Tooth of Darkness, and bounced down the sides of the pyre.

The five shadows smelled blood, but the voice continued. “Luna has shown me the Silver Road, a righteous path. I, who by auspice and inclination have no desire to inspire or lead, have come to rouse your spirit and guide you to the path, to war with the Pure.”

“Ahh, you look upon my son’s body, rent by the Pure, smell my dried tears, hear the hoarseness of a throat that has howled out its pain and loss.... You think I speak merely of vengeance. Tell me, if vengeance were all the goad that is needed, then wouldn’t we have been at war long ago? Some of us remember the Brethren War. We lost. We bled. Our dead, stacked beneath us, would raise a mound nearly to Luna herself!”

Tooth of Darkness lay the knife on the body and leapt from the pyre, changing as he fell. He landed in a heavier form, his voice dropping an octave. The Dalu drew something from his pocket. A flare snapped and came to life — spilling red, angry light around the six werewolves. His clothes were torn; the wounds on his body were still knitting. They blinked as he stabbed the flare into the kindling, and the pyre quickly ignited.

He turned to face them, a shadow, outlined in flame, and they saw what he had dropped. A heart; their noses told them the rest. It was Uratha.

The flames also lit up the corpse in the tree. They knew that face. It had haunted the Forsaken’s nightmares for nearly the decade. Deacon Marsh, Fire-Touched Inquisitor.

Tooth of Darkness smiled as he picked up the heart where it lay in the dust and tossed it into the flames. “Let the scent from the heart of your murderer guide you to our mother’s arms, my son.”

He closed his eyes for a moment, “There, my vengeance is over. Now my life, my death is yours, Mother. Thank you.”

He pointed toward the body, slowly swinging in the breeze kicked up by the fire, “I bring the weaknesses of our greatest foes, and I bring new weapons from Luna herself — holy weapons for a crusade. The tide has turned, my brothers and sisters. We are the vanguard of a new army. A new path, hunt it with me — the Silver Road.”

The others saw him sigh. “Some of you will say that by taking up this sword, by walking this road, we would make ourselves no better than the Pure — the mad ones that have warred upon us since the death of our Father. I say let them speak. There is truth in their words. A truth we must be willing to hear — it must ring in our ears when we make our plans, consider our deeds, judge our actions. This is the part the Irraka must always play — I would not deny it.

“But, it must not paralyze us, or palsy our hands that would grip a sword in defense of our Mother. One of our parents is dead, by our ancestors’ tooth and claw. Such was his fate, and our destiny. Now another parent is in danger. While the Pure sat by and watched their beloved parent fall, or ran like children — afraid of the Uratha’s duty — they have let themselves become the pawns of the Shadow courts and the demons of their own souls. We will not. We will not run. We will march the Silver Road.”

Six howls pealed the night.

*THE GOD OF THE CANNIBALS WILL BE A CANNIBAL, OF THE CRUSADERS, A CRUSADER,  
AND OF THE MERCHANTS A MERCHANT.*

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON

While the conflict between the Pure and the Forsaken is supernatural in appearance, the truth is that the clashes between the Forsaken and their enemies are fought for same reasons that their human cousins battle: survival, resources, politics and so on. There is another reason to go to war, a supernatural motivation, which this chapter investigates: *faith*. Namely, what if the mighty Lunes themselves, harbingers of Forsaken's goddess, their sole spiritual allies, appeared and called the Uratha to war?

Answering this call will change everything.

The typical werewolf chronicle assumes the characters' pack is first engaged in a struggle to claim territory and then tend to it — often against overwhelming odds. While neighboring Forsaken packs might populate the chronicle, are they allies or actually competitors? In fact, there are omnipresent threats on both sides of the Gauntlet. On the far side are alien spirits, rarely neutral, most often hostile or even diabolical. On this side are humans who, out of ignorance and vice, often throw off the balance between worlds. Since this is the World of Darkness, the pack may even run afoul of other supernaturals. And then there are the Pure, werewolves who are more numerous, better organized and filled with zeal to destroy the Forsaken and their efforts to balance the two worlds.

A crusade offers new possibilities and new rewards but also new challenges. For the most part, a standard Forsaken game revolves around street-level heroism, “me and my pack trying to clean up our backyard.” Heroic? Absolutely. A crusade allows the game to change its scope, addressing regional or even larger play scales. Imagine a werewolf chronicle in which the sometimes discouraging sense of isolation that packs feel was replaced by a unifying goal, and a strengthened relationship with the Lunes. What if the local packs were united as never before against their enemies, where the Forsaken were filled with a ferocious sense of purpose rivaling that of the Pure?

It would be glorious. No more furtive or sometimes ineffectual attempts to stand against the Pure. Imagine not a pack, but an army of Forsaken packs, hundreds, perhaps thousands of Forsaken organized beneath the five banners of the Moon. Imagine

lunar warlords girding their champions with new power and dispensing their favors to their victorious cousins. Imagine the Pure's self-confidence crushed, broken and scattered before the armies of the Moon.

Still, even successful crusades have their price. Certainly, the addition of such a momentous event comes with risk to the chronicle, not to mention the crusaders themselves. The most pervasive and subtle risk is one of theme. The religious motivation of a crusade tends to blur the distinction between Pure and Forsaken. Until now, the Pure have always borne the zealot's brand and have been defined by their religious motivations — now the Forsaken may share many of these traits. This alone may scare away a Storyteller who prefers this distinction between these warring groups of Uratha. A good (and therefore) devious Storyteller of a crusade will not hesitate to incorporate this revelation into the chronicle — what it is like to become more like your enemy in order to fight him?

Many crusaders look back to their initial struggles for territory and rivalries with neighboring packs with grim nostalgia. Yes, crusades offer a chance to battle foes of a greater scale — taking on Pure confederations, fighting the elder spirits and idigam, going to war with other supernaturals, but the price is high. Territory, pack, totem, lovers, packmates, Harmony, all may have to be sacrificed for victory. Can one ever go back? Can balance be restored?

The lure of any religious war is often one of simplicity. “Do this in the name of the divine.” The repercussions, along with the motives behind the dogma, are often much more complex. This chapter will address these concepts as well.

You shouldn't assume that the crusader's road will be easy. The name for a crusade in the First Tongue is *Shukarran*, which can mean “silver road” or “road of blades.” The fact remains that these crusaders have a Herculean task just to get the crusade started since the Forsaken are not a united people. They will have to combat the divisive traditions of their own brothers and sisters. Some Forsaken will never accept a new way, much less a path of war — no matter who compels them, be it Lune, packmate or elder.

Some will even fight against the crusade, attempt to discredit or undermine the cause.

A lunar crusade marks a grand event in the life of a chronicle, in many cases *the* defining event of a chronicle. Even a short-run crusade will change the characters and the setting forever, for good and ill. For this reason, consider this chapter optional. Lunar crusades do not have to be part of your chronicle's past, present or future.

Of course, the hope is that Storytellers, just as the Forsaken, just can't help themselves. Put a foot on the Silver Road, take up the sign of the Moon, comrade. Can't you hear the Moon calling? It's the right thing to do. They will sing of deeds and howl in shame that they were not here to join us.

### USING THIS CHAPTER

We started with an introduction that covered a basic definition of a crusade and warnings for Storytellers about the ramifications of a crusade chronicle. This chapter continues with several sections to help you decide how to incorporate a crusade into a **Werewolf: The Forsaken** chronicle.

The following section, **Crusade Elements**, discusses the most important themes of any crusade: glory and loss. The decisions made here will inform many of the others a Storyteller and her players will make about the crusade.

**Call to War** covers the foundational elements of a crusade that help determine its goals, scope and mood. In concrete terms, this section covers choosing its patron and the events that surround the crusade's formation.

**Crusade Stories** addresses some of complications encountered *during* a crusade chronicle. These include the ramifications to pack and tribe, and the possible creation of new social orders for crusaders.

The **Enemies** section covers some sample antagonists that might appear in a crusade. This section includes one ancient Predator King who can eat entire packs of Forsaken for lunch, a very effective human hunter team and Ghost Children armed with a startling new trick.

**Girding for War** covers the new powers granted by the Lunes for taking up the crusade. Several different kinds of new Abilities are discussed, including new Auspice Abilities, new powers in Gauru form, new Gifts, new rites and more. The Storyteller may choose to implement some or all; take exactly what you think is appropriate, and leave the rest. In unambiguous terms, crusaders are much more powerful

than normal Forsaken. Of course, there is a price for this. . . .

The **Sample Chronicle** is just that, a summary of the events and elements of a complete crusade chronicle. This is just the skeleton, but even if you decide against fleshing out these bones, it should give you a good idea of the possible scope of crusade chronicle.

### NEW TERMINOLOGY

**Delal:** Literally, "Vicious Demon," in the First Tongue. The name for the most experienced and fiercest warriors in a crusade army. The *delal* are usually made up of Blood Talons and Rahu.

**Masgim:** "Ambusher." The common translation would be scout or ranger in a crusade army. Not surprisingly, this role is often taken on by Hunters in Darkness and/or Irraka.

**Maslunim:** "Hidden Lunes" in the First Tongue. These are mighty, primal Lunes that are unknown to most Ithaeur. They are likely patrons of a crusade.

**Nahiru (pl. Nahiri):** "Herald." Heralds are the first Forsaken to join the crusade; their job is to evangelize to others. They are also called prophets for this reason. Prophets normally form part of the crusade's leadership.

**Nindhru:** "Warlord," a general of the crusade, alpha of alphas. This is most often the founder of the crusade, or one of the first converts to the crusade.

**Patron (Crusade Totem):** A crusade totem is the Lune that acts as the sponsor for the entire enterprise, the crusade itself. While patrons do not award bonuses as pack totems do, the crusade totem's power changes all the Forsaken who become crusaders. Lunar crusade totems are incredibly potent spirits, normally Greater Jagglings.

**Redlu:** "Warrior." These are rank-and-file troops, often, but not always the youngest, least-experienced Forsaken in a crusade.

**Warband:** A unit of crusaders formed usually by tribe, auspice, or aptitude, rarely by pack. Warbands are commissioned by the leaders of crusades for particular missions or to fulfill particular roles on the battlefield. Warbands act in many ways as packs for crusaders, but are far less permanent.


**Warband Totem:** Warbands sometimes take totems, usually only in the largest, most well-organized crusades. These can be Lunes themselves. Though warband totems are powerful, these warbands are often driven mad by their spirit allies.

**Shukarran:** The First Tongue name for a lunar crusade. It can be translated as either “silver road” or “road of blades.”

**Silver Road:** Common name for a lunar crusade.

**Sugallum:** “Council of Alphas.” All alphas within a crusade army form this group to advise the lunar warlord, the *nindhru*. The Council of Alphas oversees the formation of warbands.

**Take the Moon, Travel the Silver Road:** A common way to refer to someone joining a crusade, as in “Have you taken the moon yet?”



## DEFINING THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR CRUSADE

What defines a crusade? Certainly the formation of the crusade itself, the call to war from the Lunes, is the most apparent and immediate change from a standard Forsaken chronicle, but there should also be thematic differences which are reinforced throughout the events of the chronicle. Crusades should allow for larger-than-before, heroic action, but also should be punctuated by a sense of loss, even devastation. The proportion between the two is up to the Storyteller and players.

### HEROIC EXPLOITS

Crusades are glorious adventures. The Forsaken have a clear mission and mandate to act from the Lunes. They are fighting for their mother, the goddess that gave them life and forgave their sins. This is a time for bravura, epic accomplishments, reaching for the stars.

Crusades may have a secretive phase as the movement builds among the Forsaken, but there is also the assurance for action, be it a show-down with the Pure’s champions, an epic battle with hundreds of Uratha or a world-spanning hunt for the means to defeat the Lunes’ enemies. Simply put, a crusade is about turning up the 10 point cinematic conflict dial past “11” and breaking the bastard off.

Remember, the Lunes are far more attentive to a pack’s accomplishments, offering the benefits of Renown and the means to gain it. Packs involved in a crusade often find a quick road to power as their deeds of battle and their increased connection to the Lunes force them to grow in prominence and ability.

Even after a brief time on the Silver Road, these Forsaken become prominent leaders in Forsaken politics. They also grow more powerful than their brethren, more driven, but often also scarred in ways they could not comprehend when they joined.

This does not mean that serious character interaction is set aside in favor of a game consisting of one fight-scene followed by another with even more explosions and gore. In fact, it just means that the emotional stakes get raised. The best war stories are ones that frame and play off the characters. The most gripping stories, even the epics such as *Lord of the Rings* and movies such as *Apocalypse Now* or *Gladiator* use the over-the-top action and cinematic spectacle to drive home what is happening to the characters. The characters, and their struggles with the goals and actions of the crusade, make the chronicle.

### Loss

The most important theme, and the hardest to manage, revolves around loss. Crusades mean casualties, but not merely physical ones. Crusades may lead to a loss of family, loss of comrades on the battlefield and an end to the last dregs of innocence a werewolf could possess. These losses can be more subtle, such as loss of a way of life — such as the end of the relative simplicity of a life revolving around pack and territory.

The call of the crusade can be essentially a noble one. Uratha put aside personal goals to acquire standing in a pack and carve out a territory to fight for a greater cause. As the crusade continues, the crusaders’ suffering, the moral costs, often warp the crusaders’ values — the ends justify the means. A crusader who regretted turning his back on pack and territory may later be part of a force sent to take a Forsaken pack’s territory so that their loci can be turned into Moon Gates and their packmembers can be coerced into joining the crusade.

Crusades will strain the old ways and long-standing ties. Packs will fracture as some Forsaken take the Silver Road and leave their old packmates in the lurch. Some packs may lose so many members that they fall apart entirely.

For many Forsaken, the crusade means that they will endanger their very souls as they are asked to kill other Uratha in service to the Lunes — a first for many Forsaken. The fact that Luna does not offer easy absolution for their sins is a hard lesson for them. Some simply break under the strain, unable to resolve this inherent contradiction, to be compelled to sin by the Lunes. There is no reduction in the

Oath. There is death and loss, period. Turning away from the harmony of territories and the hearts of Luna's children is part of a crusade's price. Some cannot bear up under the strain and fall into madness or despair as they are forced to break the Oath of the Moon to fulfill Luna's commands.

Luna does not comment upon this inherent contradiction. When asked, her Lunes fall silent. Some bow their heads in understanding of the Forsaken's plight; others cruelly return these questions with half-smiles, or merely a cool, unbroken stare. Any meaning-making or reconciliation is left to the Forsaken themselves, though the wise say that in this way the Forsaken can participate in Luna's pain — she, too, is hurt by having to kill her children. She never wants the Pure's death to be easy.

A crusade isn't an escape from the horror of an Uratha's existence. Some blinded by *the Cause*, or by the rewards of power and Renown, leap onto the Silver Road with naïve exuberance, only to find at the end the dreadful price they have paid. Depending upon the outcome, this may diminish or invalidate their heroism. At the very least, loss should color their perceptions of a crusade, defining a crusade's cost in sobering terms.

### LUNAR DISPENSATIONS (OPTIONAL)

Some Storytellers may be uncomfortable putting their players in what may seem to be a no-win situation. Some may rationalize that the Lunes offer forgiveness for sins committed in their name. As an alternative to this rather harsh situation, you may offer them the possibility of dispensation. Literally, the Lunes can erase the crusaders' sins by virtue of their great deeds in Luna's name.

For every point of Renown gained during a crusade, the character may be forgiven one sin. If a character loses a point of Harmony due to a sin committed during a crusade, the character may petition the Lunes to forgive this sin due to his Renown as a crusader. The character performs a simple ritual to the crusade's totem and asks for forgiveness. If the prayer is heartfelt, the totem appears briefly and commands the Uratha to an act of penance. These might include restitution to those whom the Forsaken sinned against, acts of chiminage to the totem or even special and often enigmatic actions that further the goals of the totem.

Once these conditions are met, the player erases the character's Harmony loss. In all ways, this functions as if the player had spent experience points to purchase back the point of Harmony — including

curing derangements, etc. The downside is that many Uratha begin to depend upon this forgiveness and risk becoming utter slaves of the Lunes or quickly falling into depravity, should the crusade, and therefore the promise of dispensation, end.

### KILL THEM AND TAKE THEIR STUFF

A crusade could offer a group a very different tone from what exists in most **Werewolf: The Forsaken** games. It's quite understandable that the players might want a game where the Pure are irredeemably evil, and the world was just better off without them. There's nothing stopping you from doing so — you could dial down the shades of gray so common in the World of Darkness essentially to a story of black and white, good and evil. Let's face it, if the Pure had their way, the world, even the much bleaker version of our own, the World of Darkness, is completely fucked. The monsters would win. A crusade to kill the bastards before they could do this seems defensible, especially within the context of a *game*.

But to most folks, the allure of the World of Darkness games isn't just the cool powers (though those are also quite enjoyable). They also play because the stories, the monsters, aren't completely good or evil. Morality is all about struggle and doubt.

So, while the “kill them all and let Father Wolf sort them out” mentality is pretty alluring, it's worth considering that you might end up short-changing the experience of a full-blown crusade game. Playing a game about faith without a hint of doubt seems an awful lot like trying to explain darkness without the concept of light.

### POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

*Crusade, jihad, holy war*: none of these terms are politically correct, but rather than avoid them, embrace them. Roll in it like a dog rolls in a ripe kill. It could not be more correct in this instance. Lunar crusades, just as the real ones, are messy, terrible, glorious, affairs.

At first blush, the linkage between historical crusader and werewolf might seem strange, but their motivations and character are not all that different. It is said that a typical medieval crusader had two key attributes: piety and aggression. Most Forsaken have these attributes in abundance. At the very least, they do not doubt Luna's power or her concern for them, and in fact, they have much more concrete evidence of divine supernatural power than any earthly counterpart. That doesn't make them right — but it helps them believe.



They share other motivations, of course, of a more banal and immediate kind. A crusade might offer an opportunity to atone for a sin or an opportunity for sweet revenge. Just as the crusades of old, lunar crusades offer their members a chance to be part of something greater than themselves. Sometimes this is rewarding, a noble goal, and a chance to serve under great leaders. In other cases, crusades offer werewolves a chance to lose themselves in a band of brothers, and the sometimes dangerous absolution from responsibility provided by "just following orders," and doing God's/the Goddess's will.

Crusading Forsaken should have multiple motivations. Some should be good, some should be bad, most will be a little of both — or they might subtly change over time. Answering the questions of a crusade's "rightness" or "wrongness" should become increasingly complex over the life of the chronicle. Acts of faith and devotion should be punctuated with infamy — maybe not by the characters, but by others involved.



## CALL TO WAR

When planning a crusade chronicle, the Storyteller needs to first determine the events that lead up to the crusade phenomena, paying attention to how these will affect the scope of the crusade. What precipitated or motivates the crusade, and what are its goals? The Storyteller also needs to think about its probable effects on the chronicle and how the crusade might end — although the crusade's finale might be beyond the scope of the current chronicle. Just because the Storyteller defines a crusade's goal or goals, it does not mean that goal has to be achieved. Perhaps the realization that the goals *cannot* or even *should not* be achieved is enough to end the crusade.

The question of scope can be more problematic. Crusades can be relatively local affairs. They might concern a group of supernaturals or a quest to obtain some item within reach of the Forsaken. Unfortunately, they tend to grow beyond the intentions of their founders — and since crusades are often called by spirits, frankly they don't much care about the fallout in the material world. In fact, the vast majority of spirits are incapable of anticipating or considering such effects, much as they are incapable of really comprehending the mortality of physical beings, even half-material beings such as the Uratha.

## IMPETUS

Again it is worth pointing out the conceits of a crusade, if nothing more than to encourage the Storyteller to play around with them. The default storyline for any crusade is a war against the Pure, though some of the examples below involve other foes, and even opportunities for cooperation with the Pure Tribes. Also, it is normally assumed that the Lunes call the Forsaken to the Silver Road, but other possibilities are out there. A group of Uratha may discover histories of past crusades and attempt to talk a Lune into becoming their patron, for example.

When working on the background for a crusade, the essential question is, "What would motivate the Lunes into sponsoring it?" Being spirits, their motivations don't have to be particularly just or rational. The danger they perceive, or insult they comprehend, may not really warrant a crusade, but remember that spirits also tend to be vindictive; some may be even petty and calling a crusade for a poor reason is probably a recipe for disaster. Finally, you might draw inspiration from the fact that it is possible for the Lunes to have their own agendas, ones not necessarily in line with the dogma of Luna or the Forsaken.

Since Luna never speaks directly to the Forsaken, the Forsaken often operate under the assumption that the Lunes, especially when calling a crusade, are doing her bidding. This also can be toyed with by the Storyteller, but should a Lune call a crusade that acts against the nature or goals of Luna, one expects that Luna will have her revenge in some way. Should the players be duped into a crusade and offered no path for redemption or revenge, well, that would suck for them, and likely the chronicle, too. *Be careful.*

What follows is a list of events and motivations for crusades — story seeds for your fertile imagination. This list is not exhaustive or inviolate. A Storyteller might combine elements of these, creating new or blended motivations. She might also look at some past event from her current chronicle as the starting point for a crusade.

### A FATHER'S SHADOW

A group of Ivory Claws have begun their own crusade of sorts. They believe they have successfully resurrected the heart of Father Wolf — the essential shard of his spiritual Essence. After all, can a spirit ever truly die? With First Wolf inspiring them, the Ivory Claw zealots lead a powerful confederation of the Pure Tribes in fresh assaults against the Forsaken. Ancient Predator Kings summoned by First Wolf

spearhead their armies. Fire-Touched inquisitors are quick to guile, torture and the strange powers of First Wolf himself to gather the shattered Forsaken survivors into their cause. Their false god has given them new powers that rival the Gifts of the lunar crusade — a Wolf-Brother pack in service to each Pure totem (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 244) that joins the Pure crusade.

In response, the Lunes endorse a crusade to destroy this movement. Perhaps they wish, if at all possible, to capture and study the false Father Wolf spirit. Maybe they fear that the Pure are correct, and if so, would they wish to destroy it?

### JUST BECAUSE

The Lunes are fickle, mad and vengeful, so it is quite possible that they offer no reason for a crusade. If this crusade is aimed at a known threat, such as the *shartha* or the Pure, many Forsaken won't question the motive. Isn't it enough that the Forsaken's allies want to help them eradicate their enemies? What kind of werewolves will this crusade attract, and how will disillusioned crusaders deal with a patron who refuses to elaborate on its own motivations?

### KNEEL OR DIE

The Pure did not accept their Mother's forgiveness. She has patiently waited for them to join the Forsaken and take up the work of Father Wolf. Instead they have raised up their own false gods — worshipping lesser spirits, the creatures they were born to hunt, to rule, not serve.

Her patience is now at an end. They will come to heel, bear their throats to the Moon in submission or die. To this end, the Lunes arm the Forsaken with a terrible ritual, one that can force auspice upon even unwilling Pure. The Uratha who survive the ritual and attempt to return to their kind are killed out of hand by the remaining Pure. What will the characters do after witnessing what can only be called spiritual rape?

### LUNAR CIVIL WAR

A group of Fire-Touched have come up with a diabolical plan to destroy two hated enemies at once — the Forsaken and Luna herself. Imagine a world where the Forsaken have no spiritual allies. Even if they cannot depose Luna, by the time the crusade begins, they are already successfully weakening the lunar courts.

Their plan is simple: Luna, while holding the regency over the Moon, is just a spirit, albeit a terrifically powerful one. But the Pure have learned from

their spirit allies that once the Moon was governed in concert by many deities. Luna won out in the end, and these other Moon-gods and goddesses faded from favor and memory.

What if one was discovered and strengthened? What if Lunes were corrupted to follow this upstart Moon or fed to it so that it might create Lunes in its own visage? What if one of these corrupted or reincarnated Lunes let slip Luna's ban?

### OPERATION TWELFTH NIGHT

Not all crusades have to pivot around the battlefield. Information is power in this day and age, and the control of that resource could make for a very interesting crusade, one that is extremely challenging for werewolves.

Named for the Epiphany (the festival that marks the revelation of Christ to the Three Wise Men), Operation Twelfth Night is a shadowy governmental group that has discovered and attempts to embrace the supernatural world. Unlike the magi of the Epiphany, Operation Twelfth Night does not worship the supernatural; the group sees it as an unexploited resource, another weapon. So far they have not blown the whistle, but instead seek to control what they can never truly understand.

At first their group had limited success with human paranormals — achievements, but nothing startling, and seldom reproducible. A few years ago an agent named Angela Bolton encountered an Uratha. Angela possessed near superhuman willpower. Unlike the few survivors, she *remembered* the fight. Now she heads Operation Twelfth Night, and last year they managed to procure concrete evidence of lycanthropy in Mogadishu, in the form of a Broken-Souled werewolf. They do not know what a *Zi'ir* is; few can even look upon the beast sealed in vaults below them without going mad. Angela can, however, and she is slowly amassing more humans who can pass her ultimate litmus test.

The crusade in this case is launched to disenfranchise and dismantle the organization, which will require subtlety before any overt action. This will put werewolves into interesting situations as they gather information, and perhaps seek to infiltrate the organization — basically as they are forced to work out of their element, against type. The key here is to play the organization as profoundly ignorant as to the true nature of the Uratha, but yet still competent enough to pose a unique threat. While the organization has important contacts, allies and resources, they have no desire to spread the information, for it is their source

of power. Yet, in the modern day, recovery of the info and evidence will mean the characters will have to do much more than burn a few files and off some humans in an alleyway. The crusade will encompass subterfuge, travel around the world and possibly calling upon spirits, other supernaturals or even the Pure for help.

### PROPHCY OF RATS

One of the mystical leaders of the Beshilu has discovered a terrible secret. Beshilu consumed by humans can reconstitute and take over their hosts. One of these has amassed a great horde of rats that it plans to send into the food supply via the meat processing plants — all of which are conveniently connected to the sewer supply.

Prophetic dreams have tormented the Rokhan seer of a great mass of Uratha tracking down his progeny all led by five heralds (the crusade). But, he has also seen that these five are not yet Uratha. Now the Beshilu will move to kill the crusade's heralds before the battle can begin.

The players may come in as the heralds. More interestingly, they may be contacted by the Lunes as their shepherds.

### RETURN OF THE IDIGAM

The idigam of 40 years ago were but the heralds, scouts and cannon fodder of their betters. Their communications have warned this second wave to move much more gently than before. Several returned in the past years and only now have stirred into action.

While their goals are as inhuman and perplexing as before, their methods are more refined and horrifying. These mad gods began by offering hope and solace to the magath, giving them a dedicated army of spirits. They have also crafted their own races of skinchangers in secret to aid them against the Uratha. Finally, they have prepared a fifth column by sponsoring twisted spirits to aid both Forsaken and Pure as totems and allies — slowly corrupting them. Recently, they have turned their attention to the Lunes — thus tipping their hands and setting the groundwork for a crusade. But, their traps are already set....

As an added wrinkle, Luna might extend some of her blessings to the Pure, allowing them to join her crusade against this new wave of monsters from the abyss of the spirit wilds.



## REVENGE

Revenge is common motivator for war, or at least within the context of an insurgency. The Pure have much blood on their hands. It could be revenge for the Brethren War, or perhaps something more immediate to the Luna, such as the death of a chosen member of the Lunar Court.

Anytime a game descends into the realm of vengeance killing, the results can be horrific. The Pure aren't above playing such games.

## SHADOW OF THE SPIDER CRONE

The Azlu weave. That is the fundamental drive of these monsters and one of the reasons, beyond a historical hatred, that the Uratha fear these creatures. The Azlu's relatively small numbers and their normally solitary existence mean that they do not truly threaten large swaths of the world with their webs. When they do gather to support one of their crones, their breeders, it becomes ever more likely that they will be discovered eventually by the Pure or Forsaken — especially since the Azlu require mammoth amounts of Essence to reproduce.

Should something change this status quo, the spiders could threaten more than small areas at a time. This is exactly what has happened. Many years ago, a mere Crawler entered an abandoned mill with two supernatural features. One of those rooms just happens to be lead to a place that isn't (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 259) and a minor locus as well. Unknown to this minor Crawler, she had stumbled upon the very spot where the progenitor of the Azlu met her end, and this changed her. Spinning never became her priority. The last thoughts of her Great Mother were all about her eggs, and this became the Crawler's greatest drive.

Ensnared in this space, the Azlu began to hunt and grow in secret. When she became a spinner crone, she resisted the aid of her sisters — destroying them and adding their Essence to her greatness. She began to lay and lay and lay. Now tens of thousands of eggs fill her little pocket of the Shadow. There they have lain inert, waiting to be born.

Over the decades she has been at work, the area of the mill has been gentrified. The upper areas have been turned into a loft apartment, and the lower half supports local businesses, art galleries and a bakery. The Azlu watches the vans leave the area and move out into the city. One day she will squeeze her bulk into one of those sacks of skin and start making deliveries of her own. Then overnight, the whole city or perhaps even a larger area will become the

playground for her little spinners. The Gauntlet will crash down overnight — turning a huge area into a Barrens. Let the wolves come then. Their magic will not work, their loci will run dry. She will be waiting... and breeding.

## SHAPESHIFTER ROGROM

The systems and sample races presented in Chapter Four offer both antagonists and allies for a crusade. Many of the sample shapeshifters already present the seeds of conflict with the Uratha. Some are so alien, so inimical to the Forsaken that a crusade against such antagonists would not be a stretch.

The systems presented also allow the Storyteller to create a race of classic werewolves — ones that could ignite a werewolf plague by creating more of their kind via a simple infection. Such an outbreak might easily act as an impetus for a crusade. The characters would have to confront their own reflections and protect the territory and the Herd, while trying to preserve their own secrets.

The Storyteller might design an bizarre shapeshifter race descended from a melding of spirit and flesh, similar to the Uratha, but one that has lost their connection to the spirit world and longs to bring this back — or so weaken the walls that they may journey into the Shadow at will. They might fight on their own, or ally themselves against the Forsaken and tip the balance in favor of the Beshilu, Pure or lords of the spirit courts.

Another tactic is to bring shapeshifters into a crusade chronicle as allies against a common foe. Operation Twelfth Night might have had some success against one of these shapeshifters, and the Forsaken take up their fight fearing an expansion of the group's power. Perhaps one of these shapeshifters is the possessor of information or material needed for the war effort. Imagine the crusaders forced into cooperation with the bizarre likes of the Unclean.

## TIDE OF BLOOD

The Moon declares that the tide will turn; the oppressor and oppressed will switch places. Simply put, it is time for the Pure to be thinned. Throughout history, Luna has allowed the war between Forsaken and Pure to shift dominance to one side or the other. Some tell of a time when the Pure Tribes were almost destroyed forever, but it was Luna's hand that stayed the Forsaken — the madness of her defiant children is also a reflection of her, after all.

Setting the scope for this kind of crusade will be the most difficult. Where will it all end? Perhaps the Luners will target a small area or even individual Pure

packs to be destroyed. If left open-ended, the crusade might spread over huge areas, limited only by the blood lust of its leaders.

### OTHER SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Here are some ideas that come from other **World of Darkness** sources.

#### Boston Pogrom

Those interested in **Mage** crossovers might find some inspiration from the well-detailed description of the spirit world in **Boston Unveiled**. Beyond being a great read, and a cool introduction into spirit politics, the book point out that the *Hisil* of Boston is pretty screwed up, at least from the Lunes' point of view. Conceptuals rule there while Lunes, Helions and most nature-spirits have been pushed into the countryside for the most part.

Enter the crusade. This strange state of affairs may allow for even stranger bedfellows if the Pure and Helions might be willing to lend a hand. Of course, many of the magi, content with this state of affairs might well oppose such a disturbance. Who knows what it might stir up?

#### Jaguar Pretenders and Other Sacrilege

Those with access to **Blasphemies** have a wealth of potential crusade-inspiring ideas. What if the strange shapeshifters, the Balam-Colop, begin to rise in power. Perhaps the Lord of The Smoking Mirror has returned as a Pure totem and summoned his creations to hunt the Uratha once again, and the Lunes decide to hunt the Balam-Colop in return.

Some heresies that deny the power of the Moon might spark the Lune's ire. How about a cult of Spirit-Ridden or spirit worshippers that begin to spread — damaging the *Hisil* and consuming friends or even strengthening a group of allied Pure?

The expanded material on Bale Hounds can also prove quite useful. While unlikely to provoke a crusade since they normally work in such small groups, they certainly will take advantage of any disruptions caused by it.

#### Revisionist Rockies

What if Max Roman's fight against the idigam Gurdilag was a lunar crusade or at least a nascent crusade? Now completed, Max misses the camaraderie and unity of the Forsaken — moreover, he has seen their power. Perhaps even now he searches for a lunar patron willing to call a crusade to build his "Uratha Nation." Perhaps the characters will be those heralds.

Or if one does not want to revise the past, perhaps the Lunes awakened to the idea of a crusade and sent the characters in to organize the crusade. But what if Max senses that he is

not to be this movement's true voice, but only its herald? Will he be willing to step aside?

#### Skinchangers

Clearly most orthodox (if such a word can be used for) Uratha will find many of the skinchangers profane or, at best, pitiable. It's likely that such feelings might take a darker turn to prejudice or even genocide, though the normally low population of skinthieves would make for a short crusade, perhaps the factors that keep their numbers low might change....

The existence of Spirit Skinners might inflame the already intolerant Pure wishing to avenge their spiritual allies (and masters). In this case, skinchangers may be unsettling allies of the Forsaken.

It's also possible that wolf skinthief hybrids might unknowingly (and imperfectly) "out" werewolves either through hybridized DNA evidence (see **Skinchangers**, p. 29) or by mere photographic evidence. A crusade might be called to clean up the resulting mess.

#### Weird WoD

**World of Darkness: Antagonists** contains toolkits for constructing zombies, body-thieves and other monsters. Several of these antagonists would make good opponents for werewolves and could well provoke a crusade. Imagine a game that combined elements of *28 Days Later* with some of the tropes from **Werewolf**. What if some spirits learn how to animate the dead?

### LUNAR PATRONAGE

Lunes who are powerful enough to become patrons for a crusade (Rank 4+ spirits) have moved beyond the common stereotypes of their choir; after all, they must be able to embrace *all* of Luna's children, not just the few that share the same auspice. A patron whose powers faded for most of the month, and drove its followers insane for the remainder, could not possibly achieve its goals. While their demeanor will certainly be colored by their choir, they are near demigods in status and have likely dieted upon many kinds of Lunes and other spirits — growing to encompass other related themes and Influences. So while a patron's choir will color their temperament and motivate their tactics and goals, it is not a straightjacket. Rahu would be welcome in a crusade sponsored by an Elunim — their role is just as necessary in the overall success of the crusade as it is valued within a standard pack.

*Menkushul*, "Dark Heart of the Moon" is a Greater Jagglng Irralunim. Her concern for the People

and their secrets might make her a great patron for a crusade involving Operation Twelfth Night, the humans who risk exposing some of the Uratha's secrets. While she might seek out Irraka to be the leaders of this crusade, she also knows that she needs the skills of all auspices to be successful.

## APOCRYPHAL LUNAR PATRONS

Mystery is one of the most fundamental aspects of Luna, and appropriately, there are lunar spirits and broods that are hidden away from most Uratha and many of her common servants. Those few who know call them the *Maslunim* — the hidden Lunes. These beings have motivations that might easily prompt a lunar crusade, and they have the supernatural might to carry them out.

The *Maslunim* are not directly tied to singular phases of the Moon or her courts. The *Maslunim* stand somewhere between the most powerful of the common Lunes and Luna herself. Perhaps the *Maslunim* are the echoes of ancient lunar gods, maybe they are primordial lovers of Luna (or their progeny) from ages predating Pangaea. Conceptually, it may be best to think of them as fragments of the Moon Goddess's persona, and in some cases, guises for her madness. To the further the confusion of some Uratha, many combine aspects of Luna's broad supernatural portfolio with animals (other than wolves) that are associated with the Moon, such as serpents, stags, bears, cats, bulls, turtles and so on. In short, many Ithaeur do not know how they stand with the *Maslunim*.

Most of their abodes no longer correspond to real-world locations or times and are therefore only accessible via secret paths in the Shadow. Sometimes finding them might be a quest in itself.

Whatever their origin, *Maslunim* are rare and powerful Greater Jaggings or even lesser Incarnae that have formed their own broods. Some members of these broods are minor versions of their masters. Since these godlings have affinities to multiple phases of the moon, their broods also include Lunes from those choirs. Most *Maslunim* also command natural and conceptual spirits tied to their legacies. Lesser Lunes such as Secrets and Glimmerlings are often found where they abide, both as sycophantic servants and ambassadors to the better-known lunar courts.

These lunar demigods are also jealous of Luna's attention and very concerned about their relative power compared to the other spirit courts and each other. *Maslunim* are neither above fighting

each other nor using the Forsaken as their pawns in such battles. Some accuse these lunar demigods of consorting with dark spirits more at home with the Maeljin. It is at least true that the *Maslunim* are as concerned with the spirits associated with sin as with those considered more virtuous.

It might be that the characters assume that the patron of their crusade is a powerful Lune associated with one of the standard courts, only to discover that its master is one of the *Maslunim*.

These spirits might have relationships with enemies of the Forsaken, and some might also dispense favors to the Pure. Many *Maslunim* harbor dark tendencies that put them on the borderline between sinister emotional spirits and the Maeljin. Some Storytellers might nudge the *Maslunim* over the edge, turning them into Maeltinet.

## ADAGMOS, THE DREAMING SERPENT

<<No need to hide, little wolf, I saw you in my dreams long ago. I had my servants remove all the sharp stones from under that laurel so that you would be com-



Lunar Patronage

fortable as you lay there. I heard your heart swell when you looked upon me for the first time.>>

Adagmos is a spirit of lust and dream, inspiration and madness. He is drawn to struggles having to do with love and sexual desire, or to those who use these as a muse. He is also believed to be the most gifted lunar prophet next to Luna herself. He encompasses the aspects of physical beauty, desire, madness, prophecy, art and dream attributed to the Moon.

Adagmos often appears as a beautiful sleeping youth or a serpent basking half in shadow, half in light. His eyes appear half-open, but unfocused, yet Adagmos's perception is keen and thoughtful when he wishes it to be. When Adagmos actually sleeps, his dreams often manifest in the Shadow and spill over into the material world. Luna herself may still frequent his bed, and he has also been known to take Forsaken as his lovers as well.

Unlike many other *Maslunim*, Adagmos, seems very even-tempered, even disinterested in Shadow politics. But, when his limits are reached, his vengeance is always disproportionate, cruel and irrational. Adagmos has a very long fuse, but once it has burnt down, he explodes with a holocaust of retribution.

This *Maslunim* rests in the Shadow of a small Greek isle surrounded by a thick wood filled with his servants. Adagmos's brood includes Cahalunim (the Gibbous Moon Choir), Elunim (the Half-Moon Choir), Irralunim (the New Moon Choir), natural spirits (serpents), conceptu-als (dream, temptation), emotionals (love) and elementals (heat and light). He may also deal with spirits of sloth and lust.

Adagmos would be a good patron for crusades having to do with love and lust — per-

haps an attempt to restore a wolf-blooded bloodline. Adagmos may also start a crusade based on one of his prophetic dreams, in which he foresees a great danger — one that threatens the balance of the spirit world, Luna or his interests. He may rouse Forsaken to take care of this threat.

In a darker crusade, he may just dream the whole thing up — meaning the crusade ends up being the mad nightmare of Adagmos. The characters discover they are being manipulated by the dreams of a mad godling. The only way to stop it is to find his lair and wake him up.

Lashnar and Adagmos have a very tumultuous relationship as both claim to be the Moon's lovers. Adagmos's positive dealings with some Helions also angers Lashnar — though Adagmos typically plays off his rivalry as mere diversion.

**Chiminage:** Psychedelic drugs, sex, a dream journal



DAKULNA,  
THE REARING BEAST

<<Life feeds upon life. Death is its price.>>

The Reaping Beast is tied to the Moon's earliest association with agriculture, the harvest and the natural cycles of life and death. Dakulna is also associated with destiny and timekeeping. It may even have ties to the mysterious Incarnae, Gaea.

Its Demesne is a broad plain surrounded by deep primordial forest. The heart of Dakulna's realm is a patchwork of well-plowed fields, the furrows of which bend back upon themselves in impossible knotwork patterns. The soil is rich with decaying matter and studded with broken bone and fragmented headstones. Detritus from a million years of death slowly rots into loam there as carrion birds wheel overhead. At the center of Dakulna's land is a large, low hill crowned with an enormous

megalithic structure marking the seasons of the year.

Dakulna often appears as a goat-headed creature, sometimes bearing a pair of sickles and surrounded by a pack of semi-feral hounds. Its body is thickly muscled in summer, but grows emaciated and eventually skeletal by midwinter. Dakulna is always clothed with bands of ivy and crowned with mistletoe. The creature's speech is echoed by the death-rattle of various beasts. Few converse with Dakulna for long without giving into fear. The inevitable mortality of the world is expressed in Dakulna's very presence.

Dakulna's ire is provoked most by those who wantonly despoil the earth, waste life or avoid death. Vampires and all other manner of undead are some of Dakulna's greatest enemies. Naïve Uratha assume that humankind is also its foe, but Dakulna does not mark all of humankind as its enemy, though many of the race nowadays win Dakulna's contempt. It's not the use of nature, but its misuse that sparks its disgust. Interestingly, Dakulna also has little patience for humans who anthropomorphize animals or natural systems — people who dress their dogs, groups such as PETA and Dow Chemicals are all foolish to Dakulna, though the level of their sin is different.

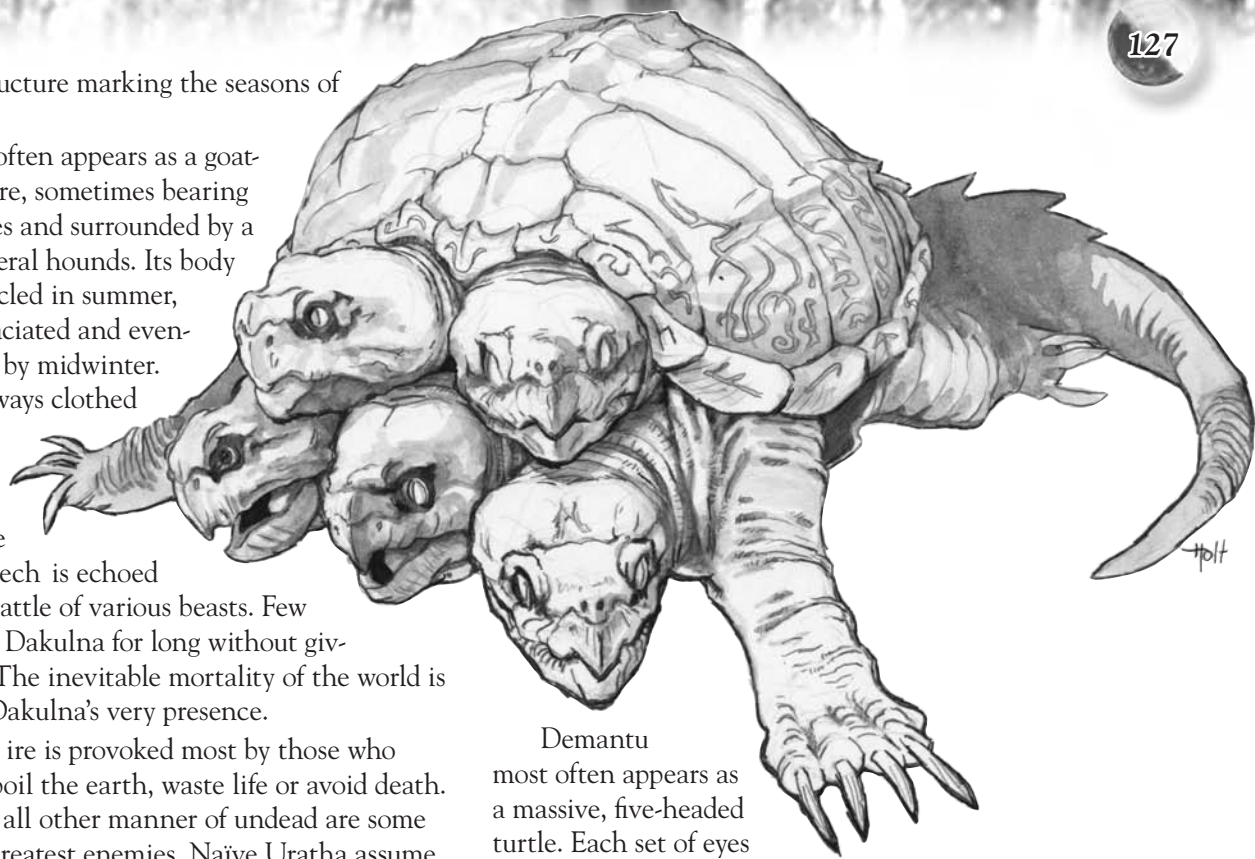
With such a wealth of adversaries, Dakulna could inspire a crusade against vampires. Perhaps a misguided corporate scientist or Necromancer might unleash a plague of zombies (see **World of Darkness: Antagonists**) that might drive the Reaping Beast into action. Dakulna might also target a mundane human corporation or government for its wrath, or launch a crusade to take back some natural resource.

Dakulna's brood contains Ralunim (the Full Moon Choir), Elunim (the Half-Moon Choir), Ithalunim (the Crescent Moon Choir), spirits of death and nature.

**Chiminage:** Blood sacrifice

*DEMANTU, THE ABYSSAL QUEEN*

*<<Creature of forest and sand, you, too, once lay in the shallows as I do. You once learned from tide and wave. Sit. Listen. Show me you have the capacity to relearn what you have forgotten. Then, I may teach.>>*



**Demantu**

most often appears as a massive, five-headed turtle. Each set of eyes reflects the phase of Moon.

Her shell is likewise ringed with lunar patterns and glyphs. She sometimes appears as a pregnant older woman, or as gleaming sea lioness, salmon or an albatross. Most often, she can be approached on some boundary line of water, the ocean surf or a rock in a rushing stream that leads to the sea.

She encompasses the lunar aspects of deep understanding, mastery of the sea, maternal love, fecundity, but also the mystery of the depths. She has great knowledge of hidden lore, especially concerning the sea and its Shadow.

She has no patience for those who harm families, especially mothers and children. The rather rocky home life of the Uratha does not endear them to Demantu, though she shows them some pity as well. Needless to say, Uratha who are egregiously poor parents need not apply for her support.

Demantu is slow to act, but a juggernaut once in motion. She would loathe inciting a crusade, but if convinced, would be an excellent patron as she is a caring mother. She may become aware of some threat from the Shadow sea itself, which could well motivate her into action. It is said that great beasts and some of the idigam lurk there — far away from the territories of the Forsaken.

As one of the most amenable of the Maslunim, she may be a stepping stone to finding one of her kin.



Any Lune may be found in her retinue, often holding court on her back. She also commands respect from water elementals, nature-spirits attached to the water, conceptuals (knowledge) and emotionals (love).

**Chiminage:** An act of great kindness to a mother or child, an act of self-sacrifice for the same, wealth or knowledge sacrificed to deep water.

LASHNAR,

BULL OF FURY, LORE AND GUILE

<<No, no, my sons and daughters. We will make the enemy bare his throat to us. Then we will strike and hear the sweet sounds of his fear and the lamentations of his fellows. I have a plan.>>

Lashnar's palace is built inside a moun-

tain shrouded in darkness and surrounded by desert. The highest peak is often crowned by the crescent moon. The palace's vast rooms and halls take the form of a great chthonic maze that realigns itself based on his wishes. Its massive halls and corridors are always wider than they are tall, giving visitors the feeling of crushing weight suspended above them. The walls and squat arches seem sculpted out of the starry sky. No fires burn there, yet the stars in the walls give off enough light to eek out its gothic splendor.

Lashnar sometimes appears to Uratha in the form of a wolf-muzzled minotaur whose horns, teeth and claws are made of lapis lazuli. Many times he eschews physical form almost entirely, appearing as a mouth of gleaming blue fangs floating in a darkened tunnel. Wherever Lashnar appears, lights dim, the air grows still and the smells of musk and desert dust fill the air.

Lashnar hates Helions; any who call the sun their friend are his enemies. Despite his overweening hatred of the sun, he is a creature of wisdom — especially forgotten things, ornate plans and puzzles. He enjoys spinning riddles of great complexity and entrapping his foes in complex stratagems built around their foibles. But, his riddles always have an answer, and his traps can be defeated, though not easily. He has no patience for those who leap to conclusions (especially *correct* ones) or defeat his machinations by “cheating.” Those poor creatures invite his rather gruesome wrath.

His brood includes Ralunim (the Full Moon Choir), Ithalunim (the Crescent Moon Choir), Irralunim (the New Moon Choir), conceptuals (beasts, riddles, secrets), emotionals (fury), bull-spirits, spirits of darkness and Earth elementals. He may also be tied to spirits of greed and wrath.

Lashnar would be a good patron for crusades to recover some bit of lost lore or a powerful stolen artifact. He may also inspire a crusade as means to some other goal, or perhaps as a ruse to cover some other action. Lashnar may also be persuaded to sponsor a crusade by a more powerful lunar spirit wishing to act in secret.

And then there are the Baal-Hadad (see p. 215). These creatures' relationship with Lashnar is one of his greatest secrets. This story seems as labyrinthine as Lashnar himself. Some say that these shapeshifters are his



children, stolen from him by the Helions — others say that he lost the Baal-Hadad to the Sun in some intrigue against Helios. Or, that Lashar is an exiled Helion, expelled for his forbidden love of the Moon, his children stripped from him as punishment. Perhaps his children sinned against their father, and he drove them to Helios. The question is whether he hates them enough to launch a crusade against them. He, after all, knows the secret of their reproduction, a secret guaranteed to drive many Forsaken to the brink of genocide.

**Chiminage:** Rings or jewelry of lapis lazuli, pieces of esoteric knowledge; the sacrifice of a Helion always attracts his attention and earns his favor (good luck with that)

### SAAH-UR, THE SILENT HUNTRESS

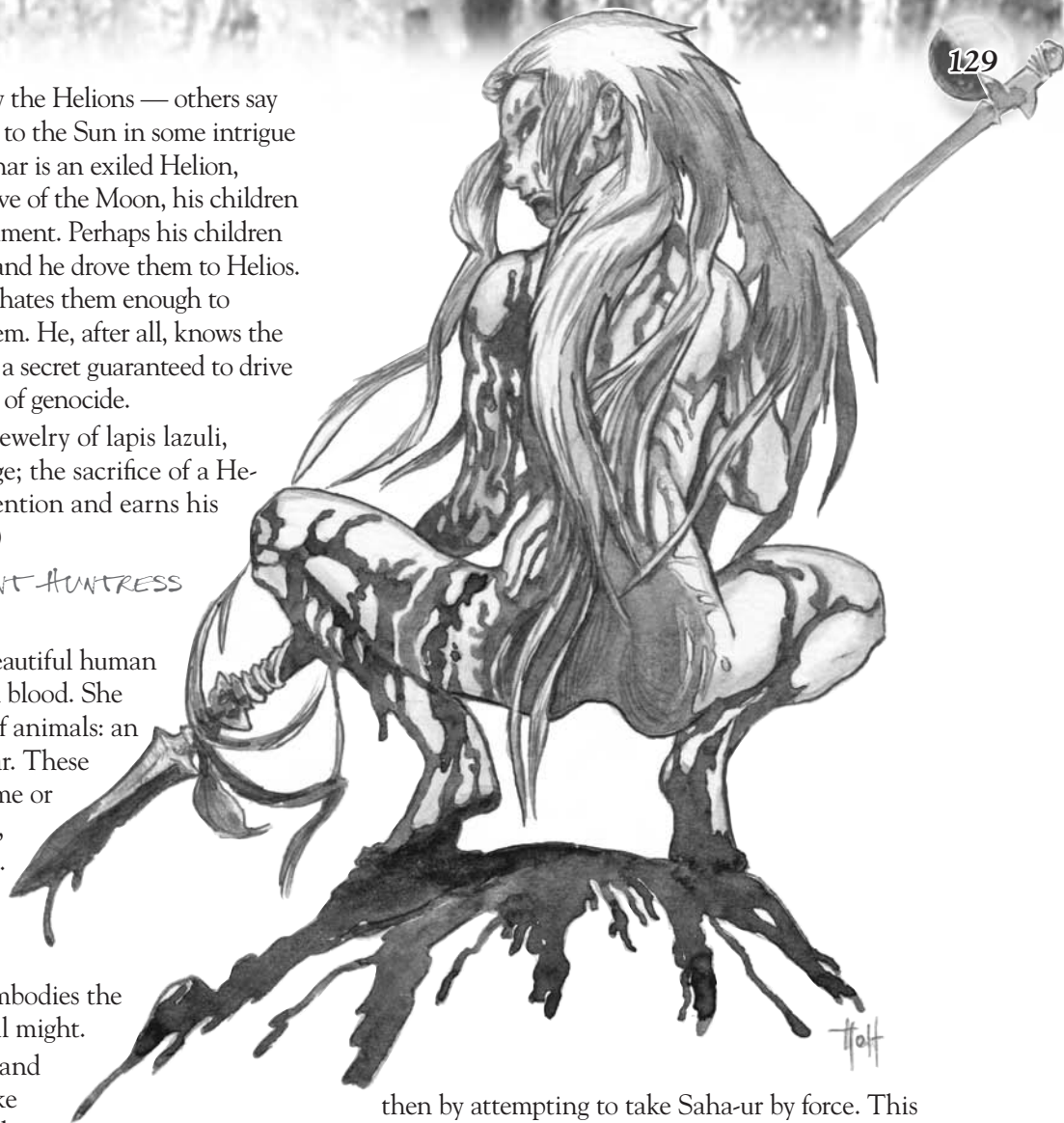
<<Throaty growl.>>

Saha-ur appears as a beautiful human huntress, naked, covered in blood. She sometimes takes the form of animals: an eagle, wolf, tiger, doe or bear. These forms glow with a silver flame or exist as the deepest shadow, seemingly two-dimensional. During a half-moon, her form may be a disconcerting combination of shadow and silver flame. Saha-ur embodies the hunt, vengeance and primal might.

Saha-ur rarely speaks, and when she does it sounds like the roar of a predator. She has the ability to project and read thoughts and emotion, though for one so beautiful, she misinterprets erotic advances as challenges or threats and responds as any wild spirit would — violently.

She is the goddess of the wild, the pure and yet brutal face of nature. Saha-ur also controls the weather and has ties to the elements as well. Though Saha-ur is far quicker to judge humankind as an enemy than Dakulna, she also protects the innocent, favoring women (especially virgins), the elderly and all children. It is not true to say that she hates all men, but she does not trust them and has no compunctions about hunting them.

Some say that Saha-ur was once a spirit of beauty that lured away one of Luna's lovers. In response, Luna turned Saha-ur into a creature completely devoid of lust — it is Saha-ur's ban to inspire lust, but know nothing of its nature or fulfillment. During the time of Pangaea, Dire Wolf once hunted with Saha-ur, but he poisoned their friendship by first courting her, and



then by attempting to take Saha-ur by force. This has made what could have been a powerful ally of the Pure into a relentless foe, especially of Dire Wolf's chosen, the Predator Kings.

Saha-ur has no particular home, hunting in the Shadow of the most unspoiled places of the Earth. She and Dakulna have some unspoken bond, though not quite friendship, and she is often found in the primordial forests that encircle his lands where their broods practice terrifying rituals in honor of Luna.

Saha-ur might easily sponsor a crusade against the Pure, especially one provoked by the Predator Kings and preferably headed by a female. Luna may also call for a crusade for any suitable act of revenge, and have it sponsored by Saha-ur.

Her brood is made up of nature- (weather and predator animals) and elemental-spirits, Ralunim (the Full Moon Choir), Cahalunim (the Gibbous Moon Choir), Irralunim (the New Moon Choir) and spirits of wrath and revenge.

**Chiminage:** Ritual hunts

## CRUSADE STORIES

After the Storyteller has laid the groundwork by choosing a crusade's patron, it's time to think about how she is going to run the chronicle. First, she must consider ways she can establish the crusade in the chronicle. After the crusade takes off, the Storyteller and players will have to deal with its fallout — how it will reshape many of the set-pieces common to a **Werewolf** chronicle. Will the crusade merely augment or dominate the life of the chronicle? How will the crusade affect the pack's territory? How will the enemies of the Forsaken respond to these new phenomena?

Finally, with these issues in mind, the Storyteller needs to think about the likely outcomes of the crusade, without pigeonholing the players or tying her own hands.

### INTRODUCING THE CRUSADE

It may seem that starting a new chronicle focused on a crusade is the best choice for a Storyteller. It does allow the Storyteller to plan and foreshadow the coming crusade, but ongoing chronicles also offer benefits. Characters who have been successful in their quest to find, hold and shape a territory and build a network of allies have a lot more to lose. If there is an established status quo, the changes wrought by a lunar crusade will seem more poignant.

First, you need to be sure that the players are going to go for the idea. It's always easier to abandon a new chronicle than try to fix a damaged game. Even if you look forward to surprising your players with the crusade, should you have doubts about how they'll react, *ask them*. Don't risk depth-charging everyone's fun.

Another tactic is to be a bit of a liar. Bring up the crusade ideas from this chapter and see the players' reactions — all the while feigning disinterest or even mild antipathy to the idea. If they like it, then you have your answer and can begin plotting. (Of course, if they have read *this*, you are probably screwed.) If they don't bite, then don't worry about it. Maybe there will be a better time in the chronicle later.

### FORESHADOWING AND PROPHECY

Perhaps the Storyteller and players prefer something more epic in scope, where the players will lead the crusade as its heralds to the Forsaken? A chronicle built around the crusade allows the Storyteller some chances to use some interesting devices to insert mythic themes into her chronicle.

Crusades tend to be epic in nature; one of the best ways to introduce this theme is through a liter-

ary technique common to myths and legend, the auspicious birth. Concrete examples of this are found in the scenario at the end of this chapter, but in essence what the Storyteller wants to do is sprinkle some hints from the earliest games that something is different about the characters — they have been marked for good or ill by the mysterious powers of the spirit world. This can be done by having the Lunes or other servants of the crusade's patron take more than a passing role in the First Change of the characters.

Foreshadowing could also be done by having the enemies, the future targets of the crusade, attempt to eliminate the characters before their First Change. (For examples, look to the story of Herod's slaughter of male Jewish infants from the Bible, or contemporary movies, like the *Terminator* series.) A local Fire-Touched pack might have a history of vying with local Forsaken for those going through their First Change; suddenly the Fire-Touched shift tactics for the characters — attempting to kill them with ritual weapons, rather than kidnap and brainwash. Perhaps the Bale Hounds learn of a crusade prophecy and maneuver another enemy of the Forsaken into doing this work for them.

### FLASHBACK

This is a pretty advanced technique, but will impress the hell out of your players. The Storyteller prepares a short adventure, complete with pre-generated characters. Normally, this only needs to last a scene or two, or a single gaming session. In this flashback, the characters are playing crusaders, possibly their ancestors, during a pivotal moment in an earlier crusade. Perhaps the players actually play through the event that is the impetus for the current crusade itself. This is a great opportunity to drop vital clues, among a few red herrings. Moreover, the Storyteller can establish the themes and mood for the current game in graphic terms.

### THE CHARGE

Eventually, after a mysterious and auspicious beginning, comes the time when the lunar crusade's patron charges its *Nahiri*, the heralds, with enacting the crusade. Even if the characters are not meant to participate as its prophets, they should hear stories of the event, from other crusaders. So, it is important for the Storyteller to work out some of the details.

The lot of the crusade's heralds is often quite a bit harder than those of ordinary crusaders. As with all dealings with spirits, the Uratha must prove themselves worthy. Most of the time, this is not as easy as being the kid who just happens to be able to pull the sword from the stone or even being the dude brave enough to take the red pill — though both King

Arthur and Mr. Anderson are good examples of the strife and sacrifice that can occur *after* accepting the patron's charge — there is suffering, horror and loss. The heralds may live through the destruction of the territory and pack (optimally by the enemies of the crusade) or be given a quest that asks them to divorce themselves from the ones they love the most. The more zealous the Storyteller perceives his crusade, the more heart-rending the trials of the *Nahiri* should be.

Once convinced of the characters' utter dedication, the patron and its servitor spirits will reveal themselves and their goals to the crusaders and compel their help. This is a burning bush, shock-and-awe-level event in the chronicle — its creation myth. The patron will grant the heralds their new powers and teach them the rights to bring others into the crusade.

A canny Storyteller also leaves room for doubt — faith is nothing without it. The prophets themselves may be consumed with zealous faith, but the most compelling prophets must struggle with doubt. Did the trials of the prophet hint at other, more prosaic, objectives for its patron? Does the story really ring true?

### CRUSADE MOVEMENTS

One of the most interesting ways to introduce a crusade into a chronicle might be as a fully transformative event, one that might completely change the structure of Forsaken culture. In this case, the players do not herald the crusade, though they still might rise to become its pivotal players.

The key here is to slowly introduce the crusade as some alien external force, possibly as a threat to the characters' cherished way of life and territory. It begins with gossip among local packs at an annual gathering where they hear of groups of Forsaken who are beginning to act very differently. Then weeks later, the next gathering is much smaller, as members of other local packs have joined the movement. The characters learn of multi-pack militias moving against their foes and engagements in which werewolves have reorganized themselves for battle. The characters hear of the People creating units composed of members from multiple packs: shock troops of Rahu, scouting units of Irraka and bands of Ithaeur working in concert. Surprisingly, the People are *winning*, the Pure are on the ropes. . . .

How would a pack react to this slowly encroaching phenomenon?

### INDOCTRINATION

*Nahiri* do their best to convince experienced Forsaken to take up the Silver Road, but with the most to potentially lose, they are the hardest to convince. The newly Changed, on the other hand, are the

easiest — the closer they are to their First Change, the more likely they are to regard their Rage and their new lives with fear. Imagine the lure of someone telling a newly Changed Forsaken that this dreadful ferociousness, their Rage, could be put toward a *holy* purpose? The crusade's prophet thus should come across as sincere and a cheesy televangelist. She should be someone the new werewolf likes and respects. Using this kind of tactic allows the crusaders to recruit plenty of fresh meat for the war.

### RUNNING A CRUSADE

This section examines the challenges of running a crusade chronicle. Each crusade will be different in tone and scope, but there are some common factors that each chronicle will have to deal with. Simply put, the crusade is going to rearrange the Forsaken's priorities. In most situations, the crusade is expected to take precedence in its members' lives. Old bonds will be broken, new ones will be forged.

### TERRITORY

While all Forsaken have a desire to have a territory, the time and resources spent to shape a territory become even more precious as duties to the crusade grow. The characters may have to watch their territory wilt as their enemies take advantage. Or the characters might return from some crusade action to find that they have a territory no more — finding it in the hands of other Uratha, or simply beyond redemption.

In some chronicles, the focus may flip-flop entirely. Instead of characters thinking how they might use their resources to change a territory, the territory may be mined for resources for the crusade. In which case, whose territory is it really? The pack's or the crusade's?

In the most extreme cases, crusading Forsaken might begin to covet others' territory for the war effort — perhaps even justifying taking land and loci from so-called neutral packs as the crusaders use up resources and cast about for more power for the war machine.

### PACK

The call of a crusade could destroy a pack, change its focus, or perhaps even become the *raison d'être* for a pack's formation. Most packs attempt to accommodate a member who has joined a crusade, but this often becomes impossible task if the member is called away too often or endangers their territory. More often, packs join together and must refocus their efforts on the goals of the crusade, while still trying to hold their territory even more desperately. In some cases, defense of the territory become easier. Luna gifts her crusaders with potent abilities that can be used to defend and

even shape a territory. Also, crusaders have potent allies to call upon — as new bonds develop between crusaders that are often more immediate and even stronger than tribe or lodge bonds.

### TRIBE

Since the bonds among tribemates are not based upon lunar courts or regular duties, the changes in a crusader's priorities are less likely to cause conflict with their tribe. The totems of the Tribes of the Moon are likely not to be happy about genocidal crusades against the Pure — these totems, to varying degrees, still have some relationship with the totems of the Pure. This is not to say that Forsaken totems will oppose all crusades, but their feelings will vary based upon the crusade's goals. The crusade might be more tribally centered. One or more of the tribes' Firstborn totems could ally itself more fully with the Lunes. Again, this might actually increase tribal tensions as the tribal totems evaluate their stance.

### THE OATH

Joining a crusade does not obviate a Forsaken's adherence to the Oath — joining a crusade only makes adhering to the Oath more difficult. The two most imperiled tenets are those having to do with killing other Uratha (see above) and keeping the nature of werewolves secret. Some of the new rites, such Rite of the Silver Road, go a long way toward making the movements of crusaders much less obtrusive than one might think. Still, wars tend to spiral out of control as the losing side gets more desperate. Mistakes will happen, and Lunacy offers about as many problems as it does protection. Organized crusader movements rely upon specialized members to clean up problems, or better yet, plan for them in advance — establishing wards or diverting human attention away from a battleground. Some movements even go as far as to seek the aid of other supernaturals, though this tactic is rare and has its own dangers. Vampires are expert at manipulating human society, and magi are known for their ability to clean up problems after the fact.

### UNBELIEVERS,

### DISSENTERS AND INFIDELS

How will the crusade handle those Forsaken who refuse its call, or perhaps even work against the crusade? During the initial efforts, those who choose not to join will likely be politely ignored (and probably still regarded as potential recruits). But as the crusade grows in power, as its tactics and social structure grow and possibly morph away from the standard forms of

Forsaken society, new pressures will likely come to bear. The crusade will turn predatory.

First, there will be an ever-growing need for new recruits. While the initiation rites assume the willingness of the recruits, there's nothing preventing recruiters from *manufacturing* willingness. Human cults and militaries are expert in breaking and reshaping a recruit's will.

Such tactics are likely to turn unbelievers into Forsaken who begin acting against the crusade's goals. These Forsaken will turn from merely apathetic or mistaken kin to infidels, enemies in the minds of the most zealous crusaders. Even relatively good-hearted crusaders may justify persecuting infidels — especially if the crusade nears its goals. These crusaders might agree with many of the infidel's criticisms of the crusade, but they rationalize that with just a little more help, the crusade's goals will be achieved and then things will be even better than they once were — the crusade just needs three more loci. Too bad the old pack's territory is in the way....

### I THOUGHT WE WERE THE GOOD GUYS?

These bastards are crazy!

It is perfectly possible to run a crusade game in which the crusaders *are* the bad guys. Actually, it is a given that crusades *always* have their bad side — but crusaders could be the main antagonists for the game. The goal of the crusade could be wrong, or it could have been perverted by its leaders. In fact, they make great antagonists. They're zealots, they're persuasive, they're powerful and they are insidious. They break up packs and endanger territories. Opposing them takes balls — these jackbooted bastards have the *Goddess* on their side. Fighting them means that you set yourself against Luna in many Forsaken's eyes, not just the crusaders, but bringing them down might be the *right* thing to do.

### RESPONSE FROM THE PURE

The Pure are likely to be caught completely off guard during the initial weeks of a crusade, but they won't sit idly by and watch their world be overturned. They will call upon their allies, and they will fight back. Dirty. Unhindered by the concerns for Harmony, and whatever residual human morality the crusaders may have, the Pure will go for the nuts. They will burn down homes, kill friends and disrupt a pack's territory.

Don't forget that, for all intents and purposes, the Pure are already on a crusade. Their confederations are much more practiced at maneuvering and banding together. Moreover, as victors in the Brethren War, they have access to a few, but incredibly powerful, elder wolves. Even in areas where the Pure

numbers begin to wane, they can use their networks to pull in the primordial Uratha who have made the Forsaken tremble in their dens.

Moreover, the Pure will have had it with the lunar courts when the Pure finally figure out what is going on. Whatever truce existed will now disintegrate. The Pure will call upon the darkest of their allies and make even more degenerate promises to the Lords of the Shadow for help against the Lunes themselves and the Forsaken's totems. If it means going to war with the Lunes, so be it.

### BALE HOUNDS

The enemies of the Forsaken will be confused by their new power and purpose, but will also adapt and challenge any new weaknesses that they perceive — and pass those on to their enemies, too.

The Hounds are likely to foment distrust between crusading Uratha and the crusade's dissenters, provoking internecine violence. The turmoil created in Forsaken and Pure societies will offer rich new recruiting grounds for the Bale Hounds. They can offer powerful new spirit allies to the Pure, luring them into their leader's traps. To the Forsaken driven off their land, the Bale Hounds can offer succor and hope for revenge... well, for a price.

### LEGIONS OF THE MOON

Not every crusade chronicle will involve hundreds of werewolves working in concert, much less forming into crusader armies. In fact, a crusade could involve any number of Forsaken, perhaps merely a few dozen, but in most cases, even crusades that start out small grow pretty large. In a more militant crusade, organization becomes an issue. The obvious problems surrounding organizing dozens, hundreds or even thousands of individuals is compounded by the fact that the normal social unit of Uratha culture, the pack, often breaks up under the pressures of the crusade. Some werewolves may be fairly puzzled and confused as to where they fit in.

Generally speaking, the larger the crusade, the more pack structure and politics become an issue. The pack mindset fosters rivalry between neighbors, but when the number of packs increases, this natural aggression between them can become explosively destructive. Breaking up or redefining packs also refocuses the crusaders' minds upon its goals, rather than on the normal goals of a pack (which center upon a territory).

The weakening of pack bonds can provide new opportunities. While it is true that all Uratha are naturally gifted melee combatants, using *all* of your troops as frontline combatants isn't very efficient.



Irraka and Ithaeur, for example, are usually much better in scouting and support roles than leading a charge. Organizing an army of Uratha around packs becomes increasing inefficient and a waste of talent.

When dealing with a numerically superior force, such as the Pure, a crusade's warlord can use the pack organization of the Pure against them. A group of 20 to 30 crusaders organized around what each individual does best (perhaps by auspice rather than pack) could defeat a much larger force. Imagine a large pack of Pure confronted by a wall of Rahu, supported by Cahalith and Ithaeur with groups of Irraka acting as flankers and scouts... messy.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Crusader armies don't look or act like human armies. The idea of a permanent encampment of 300 Uratha drilling outside of town is ridiculous. Instead, they rely on regular meetings between the leadership and a mix of modern and spiritual communications networks to gather and deploy forces. Messages can be spread by runners, spirits, cell phones or even Moon Gates. In this way, a crusade's leaders can keep their forces hidden, yet ready to strike quickly and decisively.

### CRUSADE ORGANIZATION

Crusades are often military in character, and, likewise, their structure tends to be more formalized than positions within tribes or lodges. There is no hard-and-fast rule here about when or even if a Storyteller should use the kinds of structures presented below. That is left to the Storyteller and the dictates of the crusade itself.

#### LUNAR PATRON, THE CRUSADE TOTEM

At the top of the crusade hierarchy is its patron, the spirit that calls the crusade. This spirit is the one whose power is called upon to cement the bonds of the Silver Road ritual and who gifts its crusaders with their new Auspice Abilities and Rage powers. The patron, along with other spirits allied to it, grant Gifts to the lunar crusade.

This spirit's character, its strengths and foibles, mark the crusade and its goals. Some patrons take an active role leading their troops, sometimes interfering in the day-to-day activities or giving orders to the crusade's leaders. More often than not, the crusade totem's leadership is less concerned with the details and more focused on the goals and recruitment, the big picture.

#### NINDHRU, THE WAR LEADER

The *nindhru* is the Forsaken who is the acknowledged leader of the crusade. Many times, this is the

first Uratha to join the crusade, but he or she is marked by the patron as the crusade's leader, though failure or merely the caprice of the patron can cause it to choose another. (Such disgrace is normally a cause for loss of Renown.)

#### HERALDS AND PROPHETS

The *Nahiri* are the first handful of crusaders who first heard the crusade's call and enlisted others to the cause. One of their number often becomes the *nindhru*, but not always. The heralds are always part of the leadership, but sometimes they play the part of gadflies or figureheads — keeping the crusade and its leadership true to the goals of the crusade while not participating in the day-to-day decision making. In some crusades, these prophets play a more sinister role as inquisitors or secret police, informing and persecuting those who lack faith or question the patron.

#### SUGALLUM, THE WAR COUNCIL

Large crusades often have a group of counselors to advise the *nindhru* and assist the leader in coordinating and planning the crusade's actions. Membership in the *sugallum* is fluid, as the leader of the crusade may appoint any to the council whom he or she respects. Normally, these are elders, alphas and the prophets.

#### LUNAR WAR BANDS

The crusade, its leaders and its spiritual patron fulfill many of the social reasons that Uratha join packs — they give them goals, allies, and leaders. On top of this, joining the crusade modifies some of the basic drives of the Forsaken, most notably the overwhelming desire to possess territory. This allows for greater cooperation. Still, as the numbers grow, the difficulties of simply communicating and maneuvering a group of Uratha become impossible without some kind of structure.

For these reasons, crusaders adopt temporary "packs" called warbands. These warbands are organized around the needs of the crusade, sometimes as defined by the leaders, sometimes by the totem, and other times by the crusaders themselves, out of necessity. Warbands offer many of the same blessings of a pack — namely a sense of union, bonds of loyalty and, as is all-important to Uratha, a pecking order. Whoever is the most experienced Forsaken becomes the warband alpha. As the warband alpha is military in nature, this is often settled with a violent test of skill.

Warbands can have their own totems and due to the power of their patrons; Lunes sometimes fulfill these roles. This also marks one of the few times that Lunes will be willing to appear during all phases of

the moon. Of course, other spirits willing to ally with the lunar courts also step into these roles. Spirits of war or nature spirits that complement the ideology of the warband are also greatly prized.

As one might imagine, taking a lunar totem has both upsides and downsides. The upside is that the Lunes want to help and offer totem bonuses unheard of from other spirits. Warband members who set about looking for a totem won't have long or far to look. Serving as a warband totem for a lunar crusade is a badge of honor in the lunar courts — a spiritual résumé padding. Lunes often come to warbands and offer their patronage.

The downside is, that the Lunes really want to help — whether their warbands wish it or not. Warbands find that they get a much more powerful (and demanding) spirit than they bargained for. While the power of the crusade's totem shields its members from the inevitable madness that packs normally experience with lunar totems, warband members still take some risk that they will be driven insane. A lunar totem can burn out a crusader warband, though it might be a glorious ride. (The rules for implementing Lunes as warband totems are found below.)

### CRUSADER ROLES

Roles are assigned based on the talents of the Uratha. Due to the nature of auspice and the natural inclination of certain tribe members, some generalities can be made, but talent is the true selector, and sometimes that's not easily quantifiable (and therefore should not always devolve to dots in a particular trait, group affiliation or similar items). These titles may be given to an individual crusader or to a warband as a whole, identifying its chief role in the crusade.

**Asgar:** "All-seeing eyes." *Asgar* are often not organized into separate units, being highly trained individuals. They may act alone or inside other units. *Asgar* are Forsaken with Gifts that allow them to affect the battlefield, such as Weather and Warding Gifts, or Gifts that can turn the tide in a desperate situation, such as Inspiration, or lunar Crusade Gifts. Similar to *resusdun*, *Asgar* are mainly asked to support others.

**Delal:** "Wicked Demon." These are shock troops. Unlike their berserker image, these are highly trained warriors who know when to use their Rage to greatest effect. Naturally, they are dominated by Blood Talons and Rahu. These units sometimes further distinguish themselves as fast attack units (using Urhan and Urshul forms) that are often used as flankers or reserves.

**Masgim:** "Ambusher." The common translation would be scout or ranger. A *masgim* warband might

be given the responsibility of infiltrating an enemies defenses or scouting a likely battlefield. Not surprisingly, this role is often taken on by Hunters in Darkness and/or Irraka.

**Redlu:** "Wolf Soldier." These are rank-and-file troops, and often these are the youngest, least-experienced Forsaken. They are not cannon fodder, just not as specialized as the other types of crusader.

**Resusdun:** "To their assistance." These are Forsaken with medial Skills, Gifts and/or rites. Similar to the *Asgar*, *resusdun* are often imbedded with other units — but may act in concert to quickly tend a large number of crusaders who cannot heal themselves. *Resusdun* often carry many touchstones to distribute and allow injured but conscious Forsaken to heal themselves when their Essence supply runs dry.

### WARBAND VS. PACK

So, what's so different? Warbands and packs provide many of the same basic functions, to the werewolf psyche. They offer companionship and means to sort out a pecking order. Crusaders regard their warband as packmembers — in the same way that human soldiers begin to identify their comrades-in-arms as family.

A pack's main function is centered on territory. The warband's main concern is the goal of the crusade. Packs normally have relatively long lifespans, while a warlord may form warbands for a single battle.

Warbands may or may not have totems, while packs always have totems. Warbands only bother with totems if the warbands think they will have a chance to use the totems' benefits. No spirit is going to go through the bother of becoming a warband totem for a single battle. Normally, a spirit will expect months of veneration, at a minimum. Within some lunar crusades, there is no asking. When a Forsaken joins the crusades, he is placed into a warband and then expected to venerate its totem.

Warbands are usually more specialized, created around a narrow duty or function within the crusade army. Packs function best when blessed with members from all auspices, basically a wide variety of powers and Abilities to cover a wide variety of threats. Warbands are rewarded by specializing — often around auspice, but sometimes around tribe or merely the task at hand. For example, a *delal* warband is all about bloody, hip-deep-in-gore combat. This means they are usually dominated by Rahu, but anyone who has some other reason to fight close up: Blood Talons of any auspice, for instance, and many others.

Forsaken packs usually run between three and eight werewolves. Warbands have a much broader



range and can consist of as few as two to more than 10 crusaders. Likewise, warbands can be entered into and out of with much less ceremony.

Can a Forsaken be a member of a pack and a warband? Technically, the answer is yes, but the truth of the matter is much more complex and far more dependant upon the goals and scope of the crusade. Over time, demands from the crusade normally begin to pull the member away from the pack, eventually causing the crusader to choose between the two. The result is that most Forsaken are eventually forced to quit their packs. For this reason, wise crusade leaders often encourage or even demand their recruits sever their ties to their packs early on.

### CRUSADING PACKS

While this is not common, entire packs could join a crusade, even a large crusade that is chiefly organized by warbands.

Taken as a whole, packs usually end up being generalists, being a mix of divergent abilities. Should packmates together join a crusade, this adaptability could make them an excellent choice for special missions within a crusade. After all, most packs operate well on their own and have a large pool of talent to draw upon. Their members' talents and bonds make them very efficient.

The greatest impediment for this is the pack's totem. If its goals and loyalties mesh with those of the crusade, there is usually little problem. If not, the totem will refuse — destroying the pack even if all of its members join the crusade.

In a crusade that contains both warbands and packs, packmates could still spend time together, perhaps sharing meals, sleeping quarters, hunting and so on. In other words, the pack is still "family." The concept of work and duty become increasingly focused on their warbands, rather than their pack. The pack is always home, though.

In these situations, the pack must be respected. Alphas must have their standing honored — a mark of pride for all packmembers. All alphas are automatically part of the *sugallum*, the Council of Alphas.

All the alphas in a crusade normally decide amongst themselves who will be their warlord. This may entail combat or a debate until a consensus is met.

### ENDING THE CRUSADE

As any experienced Storyteller knows, merely adequate endings are much, much harder to pull off than blockbuster beginnings. Endings are impossible to do without some forethought. The trick here is to

come up with broad concepts — with all the twists and turns inherent to running an Storytelling game, you want to give yourself a big target.

Of equal importance, the Storyteller needs really think about how she *doesn't* want the crusade to end so that she can try to avoid those pitfalls. First, think about the crusade's goals. Can they actually be fulfilled? Do the players or Storyteller actually want that? One of the common themes of a crusade is that the characters gradually become more and more disillusioned with it as they realize that the end does not always justify the means.

### TECHNIQUES

These techniques aren't necessarily mutually exclusive. You can mix and match to create elements of a good ending. Since crusades are most often epic in nature, you can mine the great stories for ways to bring a crusade to a close.

**Apocalyptic Battle:** Unleash the four horsemen of your imagination and let the crusade end in an epic battle. Thousands of Uratha and their allies have their last showdown in a battle that spans the Gauntlet.

**Betrayal:** The players realize that the crusade is a mistake and bring it down.

**Death:** Not every troupe will look positively on death being the only certainty at the end of a chronicle. But for those who enjoy the bittersweet taste of stories in which death is necessary for victory rather than the price of failure, it can be an ending to remember.

**End at the Beginning:** Choosing the showdown with the ultimate enemy on the anniversary of the crusade's beginning, or perhaps the spot where the *Nahiru* first heard the crusade's call.

**A New Beginning:** The end of the crusade heralds the birth of another. Perhaps the fading remnants of the characters' personalities imbue the essential elements of ancestor-spirits that will one day begin the process anew or revenge themselves upon their enemies.

**The Promised Land:** Perhaps the characters can only pave the way for others, but not actually achieve the goals of the crusade. It is enough for them to pave the way to victory or redemption.

### ENEMIES

Below you will find three different kinds of enemies for your crusade. The first is a Predator King who can take on groups of crusading Uratha

with ease. The second is an elite member of Twelfth Night, a secretive, government-funded agency that is trying to control something they cannot, but creating havoc in their wake. The third is part of a Ridden horde, a old sin come back to carve its pound of flesh from the Forsaken's hide.

## THE PURE

The default enemy for any crusade is the Pure Ones. After prolonged defeats at the hands of the crusaders, the Pure will likely pull out their big guns — the ancient beasts that slumber in the Shadow, waiting a purpose great enough to stir them to murder their ancient foes.

### RED STICK

**Tribe:** Predator Kings

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 7, Resolve 7

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 9 (10/12/11/9), Dexterity 5 (5/5/7/7), Stamina 8 (9/10/10/9)

**Social Attributes:** Presence 9, Manipulation 2, Composure 7

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Uratha Lore) 4, Politics (Uratha) 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Chasing, Jumping) 3, Brawl (Biting) 5, Larceny 1, Stealth 3, Survival (Tracking) 5, Weaponry (Klaive) 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 4, Empathy 1, Intimidation 5, Persuasion 2 Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Allies (Predator King Alphas) 5, Direction Sense 1, Fleet of Foot 2, Inspiring, Language (English) 1, Language (French) 1, Resources 1

**Primal Urge:** 9 (-4 Social penalty, Essence Bleed 1/8 hours)

**Willpower:** 10

**Harmony:** 5

**Essence (Max/Per Turn):** 50/10

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Lust

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	1 (L)	0 (0/20/19/17)
Claw	2 (L)	0 (0/18/17/15)
Brawl	0 (B)	14 (15/17/16/14)

**Health:** 14 (16/18/17/14)

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

**Defense:** 5 (4/4/7/7)

**Speed:** 22 (23/26/29/28)

**Renown:** Cunning 3, Wisdom 3, Honor 3, Glory 5, Purity 4

**Gifts:** (1) Call the Breeze, Crushing Blow, Mask of Rage, Speak with Beasts, Warning Growl; (2) Hone Rage, Mighty Bound, Plant Growth, Ruin, Silent Fog, Ward Versus Humans; (3) Deluge, Forest Communion, Iron Rending, Leech Rage, Running Shadow, Silver Jaws, Technology Ward; (4) Beast Ride, Legendary Arm, Rekindled Rage, Shatter; (5) Nature's Vengeance, Primal Form, Savage Might, Soured Rage

**Rituals:** 5; **Rites:** Any from Chapter Two.



**Fetishes:** (Talen) Decay dust, (•) Spirit Wings, (•••) Brands (turtle: +1/1 Armor in Urshul form; hare: +1 Speed), (••••) Klaive: Fury Fang

Red Stick is an Uratha of legend. The Forsaken gave him that name because that was what his victims look like, piles of red sticks, when he gets finished with them. He does not remember much of his human past; some legends has it he was born into a northeastern American Indian tribe in the late 1880s, but many of the Pure put his age at least a century earlier. He finds it difficult to speak in any human tongue — those that serve him say he focuses best when addressed in Iroquois. No matter his material heritage, Red Stick is now more spirit than physical, both mentally and physically. Even the Predator Kings who pride themselves on their inhumanity have trouble empathizing with Red Stick. Some say that soon he will shed his material form altogether and rise as a Greater Jagglung to hunt at Dire Wolf's side.

He spends most of his time in the *Hisil*, where he has slumbered sometimes for decades in one of his three dens located in North America. Each of these dens is guarded by a pack of Predator Kings was honor Red Stick almost as a totem. Sometimes he honors them by leading them in a hunt. Sometimes powerful Pure make pilgrimages to his lair and abase themselves before him — begging for his help to rid them of a powerful Forsaken or other supernatural that plagues them.

The Pure believe that he alone was responsible for nearly a quarter of all the Forsaken killed in the

Brethren War. It is said that Red Stick accomplished this within days, not weeks.

Red Stick remains in Urshul form most of the time, occasionally venturing into populated areas when a troubling dream reminds him of human habits: women, booze and, strangely enough, sugar. Back in the day, he developed quite a sweet tooth and, from time to time, he wanders brazenly into town in almost a childlike daze to slake it. Oddly, he has rarely killed during one of these binges — though woe to anything that gets in his way. (It is not unknown for candy stores and bakeries to report doors ripped off their hinges, cars thrown through roofs and display cases emptied when he is active.)

In his Hishu form, he looks like a steely-eyed Native American man in his mid-50s, though impossibly huge and well-muscled. Even in human form, his eyes are aglow with a predatory gleam, his clothes are buckskin and, unlike many of his tribe, well-maintained, as if his garments were his best finery.

### ABUSING RED STICK

Red Stick will annihilate experienced packs with ease and shrug off the magical attacks of other supernaturals more easily than shaking off water from a refreshing dip. They are nothing to his might. With his mastery of Strength Gifts alone, he can easily tear car doors off their hinges to get at his prey or turn telephone poles into spears. Due to his Primal Urge and Health, he can regenerate wounds that would outright slay a neophyte Uratha with staggering ease. Save Red Stick for a climatic fight and only with characters who have earned hundreds of experience points.

Red Stick does not have to fight smart, but he will if he begins to meet stiff resistance. He can use lesser Predator Kings as fodder, use hit and run tactics, leech the Rage from the most powerful crusaders, call upon spirit allies and even eat the Forsaken's human allies to gain Essence.

He's likely to kidnap and torture crusaders (to death) first to find out the names of their leaders and use spirits pressed into service to locate them. He will then launch a campaign of terror by eliminating the crusade's leadership and killing their spirit allies. He can easily use Rending the Gauntlet to surprise his foes from the Shadow and Father Wolf's Speed (he can muster a speed of up to 62) to escape. In short, even though he could probably waltz into the midst of a dozen Forsaken and kill them, he won't. He'll hunt, ambush and murder.

To be blunt and mechanical, if the characters can't bring attacks that can mass dice pools at least in the

mid- to upper teens, they will die. Without trying hard, he will do about six Health levels of damage with each attack. Without cutting off his supply of Essence or ambushing him with perhaps a dozen very experienced warriors, the crusaders have little hope of prevailing against Red Stick in a stand-up fight. They will have to fight smart and well to beat him. They will need every ounce of extra power given to them by the crusade.

His preferred fighting form is Urshul, though against a worthy foe he will use Primal Form to its ultimate effect. As his campaign of terror continues, he will begin taking the heads of his most puissant foes and Dedicate them so that he might wear them as an ever-growing mark of his achievements.

**Primal Form Stats:** Strength 13, Dexterity 7, Stamina 12, Manipulation 1, Size 8, Health 21, Initiative 11, Defense 7 (before Armor), Speed 31, Armor 3/2, Bite 21 (L)

### USING THE PURE

If the Storyteller has **The Pure** sourcebook, add these Abilities to Red Stick's repertoire.

**Gifts:** (1) Predator's Presence; (2) Unending Fury; (3) Challenger's Instinct; (4) Embrace the Beast; (5) Baresark

**Rites:** Rite of the Surrogate, Strip the Soul Bare, Rite of the Scorched Earth

**Fetishes:** Betrayer Skull, Decay Tattoos

### TWELFTH NIGHT

This enemy represents a group of super-competent, well-funded monster hunters. While not plentiful, they are incredibly effective since they normally attack when their target is least likely to be aware of them. They ambush and overwhelm.

### HUNTER TEAM MEMBERS

Operation Twelfth Night hunter teams are made up of highly trained operatives with nerves of steel. Since they recruit the most aggressive agents they can find, as an added wrinkle, consider that some agents may even be wolf-blooded. Some team members may instead possess the Merit: Unseen Sense against various supernaturals — though the organization has no way to quantify or test for this Ability other than through an agent's success. Then again, only the successful survive.

**Description:** As with most Special Forces units, Twelfth Night hunters wear specialized uniforms,

usually black, with heavy ballistic armor and a web harness to carry equipment. Their faces are typically hidden behind shields or light-enhancing goggles. They have state-of-the-art equipment, some of it government prototypes not even released to the military.

**Storytelling Hints:** When actively hunting, the squad usually carried silver ammo in separate clips. A team usually consists of two members armed with net guns, two with submachine guns and two with shotguns. All carry backup weapons and grenades.

A team is supported by one or two snipers who can muster a 12 to 15 dice aimed attack with silver bullets. There is also an evacuation team that can be on scene in less than a minute in either a helicopter or armored SUV.

Hunter teams are eerily cool under fire and incredibly loyal to team members and the organization. The fact that most do not run when confronted with Uratha stuns most of their prey. They fight smart and dirty.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4, Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 5

**Skills:** Academics (Criminology) 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Computer 1, Drive 3, Empathy 2, Firearms (Pistols, Submachine Guns) 4, Intimidation 3, Investigation (Crime Scenes) 2, Larceny 3, Medicine 1, Occult 2, Stealth 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2, Survival (Tracking) 3, Weaponry (knives) 3

**Merits:** Allies 4, Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style: Boxing 3, Fleet of Foot 2, Language (Spanish) 2, Quick Draw (Firearms), Resources 5, Status 3

**Willpower:** 9

**Morality:** 6

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 9 (11 with Fast Reflexes)

**Defense:** 4 (3 with flak jacket)

**Speed:** 14

#### Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Brawl	0 (L)	6
Knife	1(L)	8

Type	Throw Modifier	Blast Area	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Concussion grenade	+2	3	4 (B)	1	Knockdown	9
Silver frag grenade	+2	3	4 (B)	1	Aggravated	9

Type	Damage	Range	Shots	Dice Pool
Glock 17 (light pistol)	2 (L)	20/40/80	17+1	11
HK MP-5 (large SMG)	3 (L)	50/100/200	30+1	12
Net Gun*	1 (B)	4/8/12	1	9

\*Characters successfully hit by a net gun are not necessarily entangled. The target gets a Dexterity + Athletics roll — the successes scored on the net gun attack to escape the net count as a reflexive action. If this fails, he falls to the ground and is hopelessly entangled. The only recourse then to break the net (see the **World of Darkness Rule-**

**book**, p. 136). This is a Strength + Stamina roll vs. the net (Durability 2, Size 5, Structure 6).

#### Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Flak jacket	2/3	-1

**Health:** 8

## THE RIDDEN PLAGUE

It could happen for several reasons, but the effect is that hundreds, perhaps thousands of *Hithimu* begin appearing, overwhelming the resources of the Forsaken. The only thing that could stop them is the power of a crusade.

Of course the initial battles only inflame and embolden the lords of the spirit world and as the crusade begins, the *Hithimu* call out for all their brethren to join them and strike down their oppressors forever. The *Hithimu* call upon the most depraved conceptuals and twisted magath, unlocking their chains and offering them a chance for slaughter and revenge. Still, this is not enough, so the *Hithimu* go to a secret place, a wood hidden long ago from the Uratha. It is filled with the sounds of demented howling. They go to *Unihar Uruk'dhur*, the Forest of the Ghost Children. There, the lords of the spirit world bestow upon these mad wolves unheard-of power for bonds of loyalty — the power of corporeality. The *Hithimu* teach the Ghost Children how to possess and direct them to the most vulnerable hosts.

### ARGENT MURDER (SPIRIT FORM)

**Quote:** <<Hello, Father. The son of the freak is here to pay his debts . . .>>

His first memory was the horror on his mother's face followed by the sound of his father's pack hunting him through the city's Shadow. Argent Murder lay cringing in an alleyway when the murder-spirit found him, but he attacked and won. They were watching, and the lords took him to *Unihar Uruk'dhur*. There, he and his packmates hunted. Spirits of war, violence and murder fattened them. The occasional Uratha led there pleased them and reminded them of their true calling.

Argent Murder appears as a wolf with silver eyes and shards of metal for his teeth and claws. Razor wire is matted into his stained coat, and blood tends to pool where he rests, though it sublimates away when he leaves to hunt.

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 9, Finesse 7, Resistance 7

**Willpower:** 16

**Essence:** 20

**Initiative:** 14

**Defense:** 9

**Speed:** 21

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 12

**Influences:** Uratha ••, Murder •

**Numina:** Discorporation, Gauntlet Breach, Harrow, Material Vision, Possession, Rage Armor, Wilds Sense

**Bans:** Just as all of his kind, Argent Murder is driven to revenge himself on the Uratha, but his ban is a little different and probably tied to his hidden envy of his corporeal half-brothers. He can't abide the touch of any wolf-blooded. Their lightest touch causes him bashing damage, and an attack, even from a fist, causes him lethal damage. Possessing one causes him one level of aggravated damage every turn.

**Special:** Ghost Children are immune to all werewolf Gifts and rites, as well as the effects of fetishes that duplicate such Gifts' or rites' effects. This immunity does not extend to certain byproducts of a werewolf's powers — for example, a spear formed through a Shaping Gift would affect a Ghost Child in the same way that a mundane spear would. However, even Gifts that redirect existing phenomena to strike the Ghost Child (such as Command Fire) cannot directly target the *unihar*.

*SILVER CHAIN, CLAIMED GANGBANGER*

**Quote:** "I've come to kill you, you sisterfuckin' Uratha. Yeah, that's right, I know your name . . ."

**Background:** The dreams of the wolf were terrifying at first. Marquan had never seen a wolf for real, but this one talked to him and helped him track down his meth-addicted father. It made Marquan strong enough to kill. At that moment, he and a wolf-monster called Argent Murder became Silver Chain.

**Description:** Silver Chain is forced to wear the hood on his silver sweatshirt up most of the time now as he essentially looks like an Uratha in Dalu form, except his clothes are immaculate, and his jewelry is copious and, of course, silver. The bright chain, which is his favorite weapon and calling card, has been silver plated at each end. He wears this around his waist.

**Storytelling Hints:** He leads his pack of gangbangers with grim determination. They think he is a god; too bad he will probably get them killed, or worse. Silver Chain doesn't care that he's leading them into increasingly more violent fights and preening them for possession by lesser murder-spirits. Then, he will have his pack.

He still carries his immunity to Uratha Gifts and rites and he can expend Essence to heal. One point heals a point of lethal or two points of bashing damage as a reflexive action.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 4, Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5, Presence 6, Manipulation 4, Composure 4



**Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 1, Streetwise 2, Weaponry (Chain) 2

**Merits:** Allies 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Status 1

**Essence:** 20

**Willpower:** 8

**Morality:** 6

**Virtue:** Envy

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 16 (18 with Fleet of Foot)

**Numina:** Discorporation, Gauntlet Breach, Harrow, Material Vision, Possession, Rage Armor, Wilds Sense

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool			
Brawl	0 (L)	9			
Chain	1 (B)	10 (silver)			
Knife	1(L)	10			
Type	Damage	Range	Shots	Dice Pool	
Glock 17 (light pistol)	2 (L)	20/40/80	17+1	8	

**Armor:** None

**Health:** 10

*PREDATOR'S TRAITS*

For those with **Predators**, here are the expanded stats for this *duguthim*.

**Synthesis:** 3

**Aspects:** Camouflage (Hidden) 3, Dark Sight 2, Primal Fear 2, Bite (2 Dice, Hidden, Lethal) 4, Claws (1 Die, Hidden, Lethal) 3, Tough Skin 1

## GIRDING FOR WAR

Treading the Silver Road has downsides and pitfalls, but the most tangible reward is power. Luna expands the Forsaken's Auspice Abilities, grants their war form greater awareness and gives them access to new Gifts and rites. The lunar courts are demanding much more from the Forsaken, and are certainly not beyond sweetening the deal with more powerful weapons. Crusading Uratha are more powerful than standard Uratha, but the crusaders are being asked to forfeit much more as well, and have an even shorter lifespan than their less zealous siblings.

Rather than hand out all of their new Abilities at once, it might be more interesting to have the Lunes dole the Abilities out gradually. Doing so will help the players to learn their Abilities as they go, but it also make sense for the patrons. It is quite likely that as a crusade event proceeds the characters will become increasingly aware of the sacrifices they are making and perhaps disenchanting with their often fickle masters. Each time the crusaders gain a point of Renown or Primal Urge, the patron opens up new powers to them.

**Initial Awards:** Expanded Auspice Abilities and Auspice Specialty Skill bonuses

**Step Two Awards:** Access to all Crusader Gifts and rites (the costs to purchase and any prerequisites are handled normally)

**Step Three Award:** Focused Rage

**Step Three Award:** Auspice Gauru form Abilities

**Step Five Award:** Moon Klaive

## EXPANDED AUSPICE ABILITIES

As the connection between Luna and her children grows, the importance of auspice increases in their lives. Eventually, Uratha discover that their Auspice Abilities have expanded as well.

**Full Moon's Blessing:** Warriors' Eye becomes more discerning. Rahu can now tell a foe's favored combat style (fighting skill: Brawl, Weaponry or Firearms) If the foe relies on supernatural powers — Gifts, spells or whatever — then that is known as well, though only in the vaguest terms. With a dramatic success, the Rahu has an idea of his foe's most effective combat Merit: "You can tell that this one prefers to fight with two blades," or "Her greatest weapon is magic."

**Gibbous Moon's Blessing:** The prescient dreams of the Cahalith can target a specific beings, allowing them to relive one of those target's past dreams. This

dream must occur as part of a normal night's sleep. To do this, the Cahalith specifies the date and rolls Wits + Empathy – the target's Resolve + Primal Urge (or Supernatural resistance). The Cahalith may not retry a failed roll for a month.

**Half-Moon's Blessing:** Elodoth can play hardball with spirits. Elodoth gain a +2 dice bonus to Intimidate (not merely bargain) with spirits, using the implied threat of the Lunes' power against a quarrelsome spirit. This bonus may be further augmented by the character's tactics, such as knowing the spirit's ban, invoking the aid of enemies, etc.

**Crescent Moon's Blessing:** Upon taking the Silver Road, each Ithaeur learns the Rite of the Silver Road and one other rite of her choosing.

**No Moon's Blessing:** The supernatural Ability that werewolves possess, Prey's Blood, (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 179) now applies to spirits. If an Irraka tastes the ephemera of a spirit, he can track that spirit with unerring ability. This "memory" fades after one month.

## AUSPICE SPECIALTY SKILLS

While under their auspice moon, all things related to a werewolf's auspice become easier as the Lunes whisper advice and subtly guide the hand of the Forsaken. This gives them a +2 dice bonus on any use of their auspice Specialty Skills. Specialties with any of these Skills still modify dice pools. So, an Irraka with Stealth (Moving in Darkness), gains a +3 dice bonus when using that Skill in shadows on a moonless night: +1 for the Specialty *and* +2 due to his auspice. (Note: For ease of play, underline these Skills on the character sheet as a reminder.)

**Rahu:** Brawl, Intimidation, Survival

**Cahalith:** Crafts, Expression, Persuasion

**Elodoth:** Empathy, Investigation, Politics

**Ithaeur:** Animal Ken, Medicine, Occult

**Irraka:** Larceny, Stealth, Subterfuge

## NEW GAURU FORM CAPABILITIES

Luna and her court infuse her children with even more power and also subtly realign the focus of their Rage — making her children even more dangerous to their enemies. Their rage becomes tempered; they are capable of more than merely charging or attacking in the war form. These changes are slight and the threat of Death Rage still exists, but in the hands of practiced leaders of a lunar crusade, they give the Forsaken another great advantage over their enemies.

### FOCUSED RAGE

For those who take up the Silver Road, their greatest boon is that their Rage becomes more aligned with the goals of the lunar courts, allowing the Uratha's rational minds to exert a *little* more control. Uratha in Gauru form are still driven to attack their enemies, but they can think a little more clearly about how best to destroy them, and sometimes act more rationally. Considering other options becomes possible, though not easily. As a result, the Gauru form becomes less of a decision of last resort. Pure who face these packs are always surprised at the change in the packs' tactics — they become less predictable and far more dangerous.

These Forsaken must still make control rolls (Resolve + Composure) to act against the normal inclinations of the Gauru from (attack, charge foes), but failure does not *automatically* lead to Death Rage. Failure means the Uratha wastes an instant action as he struggles with his Rage. The only risk of Death Rage from attempting these actions comes if the control roll is reduced to a chance roll. If the Uratha fails under this condition, the Forsaken cannot handle the frustration and enters Death Rage immediately.

All other conditions and situations that can lead to Death Rage are unaffected, except those noted below.

Another aspect of this greater clarity of thought is that crusaders may remain in Gauru form for substantially longer periods of time without having to make control rolls — they are simply able to exert more will and retain more control over their emotions. Instead of only adding Stamina to Primal Urge, crusaders add the sum of all of their resistance Attributes (Resolve + Stamina + Composure) to their Primal Urge. During a character's auspice moon, she still adds her auspice-affinity Renown to the number of turns in Gauru.

### AUSPICE GAURU FORM

The Forsaken gain additional Abilities in Gauru form while under their auspice moons. This benefit allows them even greater clarity of thought, though these actions are limited to the themes of their auspice. Irraka become capable of deceit and stealth in Gauru; Rahu are able to draw upon their full martial abilities, etc.

**Full Moon Gauru, Beast of Battle:** Under the full moon, Rahu on the Silver Road become veritable engines of doom. All their martial knowledge may be brought to bear against their foes, allowing them to use Martial Arts Merits (Brawl or Weaponry-based

Merits only). They are still restricted to muscle-powered weapons and techniques. They cannot use bows or firearms, but spears, pairs of knives, claws, manhole covers, kung-fu — whatever works best, the master of carnage will use them to horrific effect.

**Gibbous Moon Gauru, Splendid Fury:** The Cahalith in Gauru form seems lit by silver fire, charged with the glory of Luna. All packmembers seeing the Cahalith are automatically inspired, adding one to all attack dice pools. Additionally, all foes are so awed that they must make a concerted effort of will to attack. This is an instant action, Resolve + Composure + Primal Urge – Cahalith's Primal Urge; failure means the action is wasted and the foe may not attack the Cahalith that turn. Once successful, a foe need not roll again that scene.

**Half-Moon Gauru, Canny Brute:** The Elodoth probably find the greatest balance between intellect and visceral fury. They are able to put leadership skills to best use, directing battles and allowing them to speak in the First Tongue without having to make control rolls. In addition, packmates in Gauru form may follow these directions (even if it means moving away from foe) without having to make control rolls.

**Crescent Moon Gauru, Arcane Fiend:** While under the crescent moon, Ithaeur in Gauru form see all of their magical Gifts as mere extensions of tooth and claw — Ithaeur may use any the Gifts they know freely in Gauru form.

**No Moon Gauru, Stalking Monster:** Irraka can stay hidden, even in Gauru form, to stalk their prey. While still driven to attack, Irraka do not necessarily have to move toward their prey, or act immediately — which allows Irraka to set effective ambushes, and take advantage of terrain, etc. Moreover, the shadows of the Moon seem to follow them, wreathing them in darkness and giving them Partial Concealment (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 162) and +2 dice bonus to Stealth rolls.

### ALTERNATE GAURU BENEFITS

Some Storytellers may not like the conditional benefits given under "New Gauru Abilities," and prefer simple stat bonuses for Gauru forms. These options are listed below (the bonuses to Advantages are included). This is the simplest way to handle affairs, and may even be the simplest way to mark the benefits of a lunar crusade.

**Rahu:** +1 Strength, +1 Speed

**Cahalith:** +1 Stamina, +1 Health

**Elodoth:** +1 Resolve, +1 Willpower

**Ithaeur:** +1 Essence (i.e., they gain one Essence whenever they purposely shift into Gauru, maximums still apply)

**Irraka:** +1 Wits, +1 Defense, +1 Perception

### RECAP OF ABILITIES

Forsaken who join a lunar crusade gain two new Abilities that apply regardless of Moon phase.

- **Expanded Auspice Abilities:** Luna expands the scope of their Auspice Abilities.
- **Focused Rage:** Failure on control rolls does not lead to Death Rage, unless it is a dramatic failure, though time and effort are wasted.

These apply only under a character's auspice moon:

- While in Gauru form, the character may act in accordance with her auspice without having to make control rolls.
- The character gains a +1 die bonus to all auspice Specialty Skills.\*

### RETARGETING GIFTS AND RITES

Many of the Gifts and rites in **Werewolf:** **The Forsaken** specifically target *packmembers*. Even though crusaders often are forced to leave their pack, these Gifts do not become useless, thanks to the influence of the crusade's patron. If the crusader is a member of a pack, then treat her fellow crusaders as packmembers. If she is not a member of a pack, treat all members of the crusade within the range limitation provided by the description as packmembers/allies. If no range limitation is given, use five yards per dot of Primal Urge as the range limitation.

### LUNAR CRUSADE RITES

These rites are available to all who have joined a lunar crusade.

Note: An Ithaeur who joins, as part of her expanded Auspice Ability, automatically gains the Rite of the Silver Road and any one other rite of her choosing.

#### RITE OF THE SILVER ROAD (•)

This rite is used to cement the stronger relationship between Luna and the Forsaken. With this rite, they pledge renewed and strengthened oaths to their

mother and her servants. This rite also serves to lessen the desire of the Forsaken to possess territory, superimposing the goals of the crusade upon the werewolf's psyche. This does not mean that the new crusader has no desire for territory, or is given leave to break tribal bans, such as those of the Iron Masters or Hunters in Darkness. The rite ensures that the supplicant realizes that the goals of the crusade, at least temporarily, trump all others — even if that means putting his or her pack, territory or own Harmony in jeopardy.

Participating in the rite is often referred to as “taking the road,” or “taking the moon,” as in: “Have you taken the road?”

**Performing the Rite:** This rite is performed with as many of the participant's pack, lodge and tribe members in attendance as possible. Their presence is an acknowledgement that they will do as much as possible to help the participant in his quest, not necessarily directly, but by forgiving some of his duties, and attempting to protect his property and possessions while on the Silver Road.

The rite is normally carried out on the supplicant's auspice moon, or the auspice moon of the ritemaster. When the rite is completed successfully, Lunes appear and mystically brand the forehead of the supplicant with his or her auspice glyph as a sign to all that he or she has taken on a lunar crusade.

The ritemaster scribes a circle of fine ash marking five stations of the moon upon its perimeter. The supplicant stands on the proper sign as the ritemaster recites the Oath of the Moon and a new howl, the Call of the Silver Road.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (five successes for each Forsaken joining the crusade; each roll represents five minutes)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** All accumulated successes are lost.

**Failure:** No successes are added.

**Success:** The supplicants are accepted. They immediately gain their new Auspice Abilities and may learn Silver Road Gifts and rites.

**Exceptional Success:** The supplicants are exceptionally well received by the lunar court. All rolls to communicate with or influence a Lune gain a +3 dice bonus for one month.

#### OPEN MOON GATE (•••)

This rite opens a previously prepared lunar road between two loci. This rite can only be performed



in the *Hisil*. Lunar roads are secretive tunnels within the Shadow. Their existence is never obvious, and even spirits or other supernaturals who have some reason to suspect the existence of Moon Gates have an incredibly difficult time detecting them when in use. (The negative modifier is equal to the combined ratings of the two loci, maximum -5.) This also affords safety to the Uratha, as Luna protects her servants from attack while using them. Finally, and most importantly to her crusaders, Moon Gates are fast, often allowing the Forsaken to travel much more quickly between loci than modern transportation could hope to. In this way, crusaders do not have to outnumber all of their foes when they are able to mass enough forces at critical points and join together to fight those greater than a single pack.

The gateway stays open for a number of turns equal to the amount of Essence contributed to the rite. The ritemaster does not have to journey along the lunar road, and any who enter are carried to the end.

**Performing the Rite:** The ritualist must hold a pathstone dedicated to the destination loci. She simply howls to the appropriate Lunar Choir to guide them to the destination. If successful, the gate opens, and any Forsaken who enter are sent to their destination.

When the rite is successful, the twin of the pathstone (at the other end) begins to send out a preset alarm—usually something rather subtle, such as the call of an insect.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The rite fails, and the set of pathstones is ruined.

**Failure:** The rite fails.

**Success:** A lunar road—a tunnel of silvery light—opens up in front of the ritemaster, allowing all who enter to traverse the Shadow quickly and safely. The normal amount of time it would take to travel between the loci is cut in half for each success generated (halved, quartered, eighthed, etc.).

**Exceptional Success:** Traveling on the lunar road takes next to no time. The characters arrive one minute after departure.

### FORGE LUNAR ROAD (••••)

This rite links two loci, allowing the users of the Open Moon Gate rite to safely and quickly travel between the two. This rite is considered a holy blessing from Luna herself. A locus may have two lunar roads per rating.

**Performing the Rite:** While only one ritemaster need perform the ritual, this rite calls for the cooperation of two to prepare. First, the two must create touchstones at their loci, then exchange them. At this point, the ritemasters also agree upon the warning alarm, some sensory clue that the gateway is being opened from the other side. These touchstones are placed within the loci's area of influence during the ritual, which must be completed before the Essence within them fades (one to three days). When the ritual is successfully completed, the touchstones become pathstones, mystic keys to the other locus. If they are ever removed, the lunar road is broken, and the ritual must be repeated. While most often stone, similar to touchstones themselves, pathstones can be composed of different substances, such as wood, skulls or even plastic and silicon.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (one success is needed for each 20 miles [round up] separating the loci; each roll represents five minutes)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** All accumulated successes are lost.

**Failure:** No successes are added.

**Success:** Successes are added to the total. Once the total is reached (see above), the road is forged.

**Exceptional Success:** The pathstones become especially potent. During the same phase of the moon when they were formed, they add a +2 dice bonus to Open Moon Gate rite.

### SILVER ROAD GIFT LIST

This Gift list is only open to those who have been initiated into a crusade by the Rite of the Silver Road. This list further bolsters the power of Forsaken, making them implacable foes of Luna's enemies, granting them increased powers related to the Moon and the *Hisil*.

### LUNA'S GRACE (•)

Uratha on the Silver Road may ask for Luna's help to resist the effects of others who would turn the Uratha from the Silver Road. By offering her a sacrifice of Essence, the Uratha strengthens Luna's bonds to himself for a short time, intensifying his resolve in her cause.

During this period of grace, the Forsaken's Primal Urge score is considered two higher for the purposes of resisting any magical attempt at deception or coercion. The Gift's effects last for the scene.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** No roll is required.

**Action:** Reflexive

**LUNAR MARTYR** (••)

Use of this Gift suppresses the automatic flight instinct when in Death Rage. The Uratha who falls into Death Rage while under the effects of this Gift only flees when she has one (instead of three) wounds left (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 174). This Gift is dangerous to both the Uratha and her allies, but is often used in instances when the Uratha fears overwhelming odds and wishes to do as much damage as possible.

This Gift lasts for a scene.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** No roll is required.

**Action:** Instant

**LEAP THE MOON** (•••)

This powerful Gift calls upon the Lunes to create a tunnel through the Gauntlet and *Hisil*. The Forsaken can suddenly disappear and reappear nearby, getting the drop on his opponents or moving through solid walls. The Uratha seemingly walks into nothing and steps out somewhere else. (The target of an attack surprised by this Gift normally loses his or her Defense.)

The Uratha's travel is limited by the nature of the Shadow, rather than physical obstacles in this world. A wall that exists in the *Hisil* may block the Forsaken's progress, while a bank vault in this world, with no spirit reflection, offers no impediment whatsoever.

Use the modifiers for stepping sideways (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 250) per normal.

**Cost:** 2 Essence + 2 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics + Cunning

**Action:** Reflexive

**Dramatic Failure:** The Uratha is deposited in the *Hisil* by the offended Lunes and left high and dry.

**Failure:** The Gift fails.

**Success:** The length of the tunnel is equal to the number of successes times two in yards or the Forsaken's Speed, whichever is lower.

**Dramatic Success:** The length of the tunnel is equal to the number of successes times two in yards plus the Uratha's Speed.

**SILVERPELT** (••••)

This potent Gift turns the tips of many individual strands of hair in the Uratha's pelt into silver needles. The more powerful the Uratha, the more hair is transformed. Uratha who touch the character suffer an automatic attack. The damage counts as

silver (aggravated to werewolves). Any attacker making Brawl or Weaponry attacks, or locked in a grapple with the character, suffers this attack.

This is only useful in Gauru, Urshul and Urhan forms.

**Cost:** 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Occult + Purity

**Action:** Instant

**Dramatic Failure:** The silver fur grows inward for an instant. The Uratha suffers an aggravated wound.

**Failure:** The Gift fails.

**Success:** Random strands of hair are transformed into silver needles. The effect lasts for one turn per success. Roll the character's Primal Urge as silver damage against any werewolf making bodily contact with the Gift user. The attacker (the person doing the touching) gains the effect of armor against this damage, but not Defense.

**Dramatic Success:** The needles gain Armor Piercing 2.

### FIVE FACES OF LUNA (.....)

This Gift bathes the Uratha in the area with the light of her auspice, allowing her to function as if the moon is in her auspice phase for the scene. Anyone viewing the moon behind an Uratha using this Gift sees the moon as a rosette of each of its five phases.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, 1 Essence

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Expression + Glory

**Action:** Instant

**Dramatic Failure:** Luna turns her back on the Uratha; any and all allies within 10 yards lose any benefit of the moon's phase for the scene.

**Failure:** The Gift fails.

**Success:** All allies within a number of yards equal to the successes rolled are affected by this Gift. This radiance moves with the Gift user for the duration.

**Dramatic Success:** The area is doubled.

## RELICS

Relics are fetishes containing the spirits of bygone crusades. These spirits may be ancestor-spirits or totem-spirits associated with the crusade. Relics always contain at least a piece of bone from a crusader.

What sets them apart is their devotion to the ideals of the crusade. Some may only be attuned by crusaders, or at very least, only to those Uratha who share the crusade's goals. This property of relics may allow for an interesting introduction. Perhaps an

Ithaeur known to the players discovers a powerful fetish that refuses his most powerful means of deciphering it use or attuning it. Eventually, an Uratha chosen to herald a new crusade touches the relic, and it springs to life, and also sets that Forsaken's feet upon the Silver Road.

The powers of a relic are always related to the crusade that birthed it. For example, some may mimic the powers of Crusade Gifts. Many relics' Abilities reward only crusaders with their benefits and/or target the crusade's enemies with their might.

## MOON KLAIVES

Moon klaives are a pantheon of fetish weapons created expressly for crusades. Each has at least one powerful Lune bound inside, and all reinforce the form and nature of their spirit hosts. Due to the strong wills and capricious nature of the Lunes, moon klaives are always more troublesome than other fetish weapons.

Below you will find examples of some of the five most powerful. Others of equal or lesser ability may well exist — a crusade is one of the few times that Lunes will respond favorably to being bound into a fetish.

### DAHZULNA, THE SCEPTER OF BATTLE (.....)

This gigantic mace might better be classified as a staff since it is nearly six feet in length; its head is a pitted, subtly flanged steel globe, and the counterweight is a great iron spike. When wielded in battle under the light of the full moon, the globe shines and throbs with the full moon's power. The mace's wielder and all allies within a number of yards equal to three times its wielder's Purity are completely immune to any kind of supernatural fear.

Dahzulna rarely consents to be carried by less than an alpha, or a least a war leader. A Ralunim of great Purity is bound into this weapon and, similar to its choir, rewards those who lead through example. The wielder's followers are so inspired that they gain a +2 dice bonus to imitate his actions as long as he succeeds in the feat first. This might be striking a foe or leaping a chasm as part of a chase, etc.

A belligerent air elemental is also bound into the weapon. In combat, a swirling blast of wind is kicked up as the attacker whirls the staff around, giving him one level of Concealment for each turn spend in combat (up to -3). The wielder may also choose to deliver an exceptionally forceful blast during a successful strike. As long as the attacker does at least

three points of damage, those hit by Dahzulna must roll for Knockdown (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 168) with a -5 dice modifier. Those who fail are knocked back a number of yards equal to 10 + the wielder's Strength - foe's Size.

Durability 3 (reinforced to 8), Size 3, Structure 11, Damage 5 (bashing) or 2 (lethal) with spike

AGALU DELAL,  
"DAEMON EATER" (.....)

This ancient scythe-klaive is an awkward weapon, but its crescent-moon blade is supernaturally sharp and greatly feared by spirits. (Its wielder gains a +3 dice bonus to Intimidate any spirit that recognizes Agalu Delal.)

The weapon holds a powerful and surprisingly wrathful Ithalunim, but the weapon's purpose is clear; it is a weapon of last resort when dealing with spirits and ghosts. It will not take kindly to having its powers used for minor purposes. None but Ithaeur of high Wisdom (3+) have an easy time placating this rather haughty klaive — some would go as far to say that its wielder serves Agalu Delal more than it serves him.

Its intent is simple. It does not merely damage or disincorporate; simply put, Agalu Delal kills spirits. Its blade inflicts horrible wounds that seemingly unravel their spirits' corpus. It may freely strike incorporeal spirits or ghosts on either side of the Gauntlet when active (though it does not give its wielder the ability to perceive them, most have that already.) Each level of damage done by the scythe also rips away a similar number of Essence *and* Speed from any ghost or spirit struck. Agalu Delal does not store the Essence — the weapon merely flays Essence away from the being's soul. This free Essence is bound for a time to either corporeal blood or gore (if damaged in our world) or the Essence merely litters the *Hisil* in a form appropriate to the spirit being attacked. It sublimates into nothingness in three rounds.

Likewise, corporeal undead find the wounds delivered by Agalu Delal to be unbelievably painful — for some the first true pain they have felt in their unlife. Treat the attacks as Stunning (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 167). If damage successes inflicted in a single attack equal or exceed the target's Size, the creature loses its next action.

The fact that spirits can so easily feed from the Essence *harvested* by the weapon often leads to smaller, lackey spirits abandoning what may be their master's side of the fight to feed on the free meal. The Shadow is a ruthless environment, and Agalu Delal is

an equally merciless weapon. Merely bearing it often attracts a flock of crow or other carrion-spirits.

Durability 2 (reinforced to 7), Size 4, Structure 11, Damage 2 (lethal), AP2

As with other pole arms, the wielder gains +1 Defense when wielding Agalu Delal in close combat with unarmed opponents.

MUMAIZADUM,  
"FIRE AND WATER" (.....)

Mumaizadum is a five-foot long, double-headed war axe. Glyphs representing elemental fire and water are inscribed on the axe heads, and the handle is made from night-stained oak, inlaid with pearl to form patterns of the half-moon. This klaive bears a spirit of fire in one blade, water in the other and an Elunim bound into the haft — Mumaizadum is a weapon that embodies balance, but also the destructive power of opposites. Unlike most other moon klaives, the Lune bound within this weapon is not more powerful than the other spirits — all are equal and while in tension, existing in harmony. This sense of equilibrium adds two to any pool to resist Death Rage.

The klaive can use the Elemental Gifts: Command Fire or Summon Water (dice pool 10) and adds three dice to attack supernatural creatures associated with Fire or Water elements.

Durability 3 (reinforced to 8), Size 4, Structure 12, Damage 5 (lethal) 9 again

HADAKHU,  
"THE DREAM OF THE VALIANT" (.....)

Hadakhu was crafted somewhere on the Indian subcontinent during the Middle Ages. The weapon resembles an Indian sailaba, a single-edged long sword with a downward curving blade. A powerful Cahalunim was bound into it, along with a conceptual of hope. The bond between Hadakhu and its wielder is incredibly intimate. Hadakhu intrudes upon his dreams, guiding him on the paths of Glory. Those whose personalities and goals conflict with the sword can be driven mad by this attention. Those who possess the Vices of Pride, Wrath and Sloth and attempt to possess this klaive must make Resolve rolls each week or gain one derangement as the weapon plagues their sleep with nightmares. To become one of the sword's chosen, the Uratha's Glory may never be his lowest Renown and must have a Virtue of Faith, Hope or Fortitude.

Any who possess Hadakhu gain a +2 dice modifier to all Expression rolls and Gifts identified with

the Cahalith, though the wielders do not need be of that auspice. Any of its chosen who find themselves locked in battle against fearsome odds gain a potent ability. They can expend Essence to regain spent Willpower, on a one-to-one basis. This can only be done once per day, and is, of course, further limited by Primal Urge. This is a single reflexive action.

Creatures with Vices of Pride, Wrath and Sloth find it difficult to oppose those who wield Hadakhu; their Defense is lowered by two.

Durability 3 (reinforced to 8), Size 2, Structure 10, Damage 3 (lethal)

### SIDM'S DOOM, BROKEN BLADE (•••••)

This klaive was forged in Venice in the 15th century, but did not find its place in the pantheon of lunar klaives until three centuries later. When activated, Broken Blade appears to be a rather long-handled dagger whose blade is snapped off about three inches from its hilt. The trick is that the other eight inches are still there, you just can't see them. Myth holds an Irraka leader of the Sidm crusade used this klaive to kill an idigam (also known as the Hidden). The creature's heart's blood was so powerful that when its wielder buried the knife there, the blood stained the blade, making it invisible when activated. (When inactive, the blade seems oddly discolored, almost rusted.) This has several curious effects. First, it makes the klaive very difficult to master. A wielder suffers a -1 die penalty to Weaponry rolls when the klaive is activated. (Most offset this with a Specialty devoted to the weapon.) Second, it makes the dagger incredibly difficult to defend against, lowering an opponent's defense by one.

Two spirits were bound into the blade at its creation, a lunar hare-spirit and a diamond-spirit. When activated, the klaive adds five dice to any Jump check and five to the wielder's Speed and reduces any falling damage by the same amount. The diamond-spirit gives the dagger AP 2 and +1 Damage.

It is said that Sidm's Essence also tainted the two spirits bound into this powerful klaive making them rather bloodthirsty and greedy. They often bicker amongst themselves and demand regular chiminage in the form of molten silver and diamond dust (Resources ••••).

Durability 3 (reinforced to 8), Size 1, Structure 9, Damage 3 (lethal) AP 2

**Action:** Instant



## BLESSED PACKS

In a crusade chronicle, blessed packs, those that contain one member from each auspice, gain even more status and power. When acting within sight of one another, the members of a Blessed Pack gain +1 to all Harmony and control rolls (Resolve + Composure), but only if all members of the pack join the crusade.

**Twice-Blessed Packs:** Packs that contain all five auspices and all five tribal associations are Twice-Blessed, gaining the benefits above and +1 to their Tribal Primary Renown.

If these packs lose a member and no longer qualify as blessed, they lose the associated benefits, though they can be regained when they again meet the requirements.

## PACK TOTEMS IN A CRUSADE

Warbands and packs can call totems specifically to aid the Uratha in their crusade. These spirits hold wider allegiances than to just the pack they serve, for they also ally themselves with the crusade as a whole, in particular, with that crusade's patron. By agreeing to be a pack totem in a lunar crusade, the spirit is technically joining the crusade as well. Therefore, the ban set by the spirit may not conflict with the goals of the crusade itself — though the ban still may be difficult to abide by.

For an alternate take on pack totems that would also work well within a lunar crusade setting, see "Give the Pack Character," p. 13.

## WARBAND TOTEMS

Warbands can enter into short-term agreements with spirits associated with the crusade or even Lunes to serve as war totems.

The mechanical process for creating warband totems pretty much mimics that presented in the core book (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 186). Warband totems award bonuses to Attributes, Skills, Specialties, Essence, Gifts and Willpower much as pack totems. Because the bond is temporary, warband totems never give out "given" Trait bonuses — why permanently weaken themselves for an alliance that might last only a season or perhaps a year?

The major changes to the rules come with accepting a Lune as the warband's totem.

## TOTEM POINTS

A character who severs his ties to his pack to join a crusade does not get his or her Totem points

back. If he or she joins a new pack or warband as part of a crusade, the character can purchase new Totem points to give to that warband's totem. Again, if he or she leaves the pack, those Totem points do not transfer.

At the Storyteller's option, she may choose to award one to two Totem points to each member of the crusade for the purposes of calling a Lune to serve as their totem — merely for joining the crusade and going through the Silver Road ritual.

## LUNAR TOTEMS

Those who chose lunar totems are rewarded with greater power than most, but also a much greater potential for madness. Each choir has a set of unique blessings they can bestow upon their allied packs.

Lunar totems always push their packs to act in accord with the Lunes' own desires and pursue their associated Renown. The fact that a Lune is actively assisting the pack means that gaining Renown associated with the totem's choir becomes easier. The members' appropriate Renown cost is reduced by one. So, members of pack with a Ralunim pack totem have the normal cost for Glory reduced by one.

Even though the patron of the crusade does much to blunt the insanity normally associated with lunar pack totems, crusaders are still in danger. Packs with lunar totems are always a bit more manic and zealous than their peers. All packmembers immediately begin manifesting various compulsions related to that choir (see below for examples). Moreover, they have more problems resisting Death Rage during their totem Lune's associated phase of the moon (–1 die penalty to all rolls). Should the packmembers lose Harmony during that phase, their roll to resist gaining a derangement is also at –1 die penalty). These modifiers cannot reduce the roll below one die.

While the descriptions below use either warband or pack, the new totem bonuses below may be purchased for lunar totems apply to either.

## RALUNIM BLESSINGS

- **Blessings of Purity (story):** 5 Totem points per dot.

Each dot in this blessing creates a pool of points that can be used by warband members over the course of a story. Each point spent allows the warband member to re-roll any failed test involving Resolve. This may be done once per scene. The second roll always applies.

Example: A pack's alliance with the Moon of the Full Eye allows the pack to reconsider rash decisions — saving the pack's anger for the enemies of the crusade.

- **Fury's Growth (pack):** 8 Totem points per dot, two dots, maximum

Each dot adds +1 Size, +1 Health, +1 Speed and roughly 70 pounds of mass to a member's Gauru form.

Example: The warband's union with the Moon of the Fell Hand makes the warband one of the most effective units in the crusade. When they unleash their fury, none are more feared.

**Ralunim Compulsions:** Must lead by example in all things; refusing to explain actions; must make offerings of an opponent's blood; challenging even lesser enemies to fair fights or duels between champions; not taking food from others, shapeshifting multiple times a day, or during inappropriate times

#### CAHALUNIM

#### (THE GIBBOUS MOON CHAIR)

- **Foretelling (story):** 12 Totem points per dot.

Each dot represents an instance that a member of the pack can ask the pack's patron to look briefly into the future and answer a simple yes/no question. The situation queried must be resolved within the next hour. If the question cannot be answered, the question is wasted. The question can be used once per story per dot.

Example: The Augur's Moon opens the gates of heaven to allow its children to peer through. The patron will speak when the need is truly great, granting knowledge if not always hope.

- **Silver Restoration (pack):** 15 Totem points per dot.

The Cataluña's affinity for healing grants greater regenerative power to the pack, allowing them to draw silver from a wound, converting aggravated damage into lethal damage. The dots in this bonus act as a limit to the amount of damage that can be converted per member per attack.

Example: The Fecund Moon totem allows the members of the pack to convert up to two aggravated levels of damage from silver into lethal wounds. Only one member of the pack may claim this power at a time and only up to two levels from one attack may be transformed in this way. If an attack with a silver weapon did four levels of aggravated damage to a packmember, then only two levels of damage could ever be converted using this totem bonus.

- **Silver Restoration (story):** 8 Totem points per dot.

A number of Health dots of aggravated damage from silver can be healed. The dots in this bonus act as a pool that can be used up by members of the pack over the period of the story.

Example: Palliate Moon grants the warband that venerates it the ability to convert three points of aggravated damage inflicted by silver into lethal damage.

- **Renewal (story):** 5 Totem points per dot.

Each dot represents an extra level of lethal or bashing damage that can be regenerated over the course of the story.

Example: Palliate Moon also grants its warband members expanded regenerative powers. They may call upon a pool of points to boost their regeneration.

**Cahalunim Compulsions:** Acting without thinking; manic creation of art (not sleeping); becoming obsessed with portents, potentially second-guessing their intent; healing opponent's wounds after a battle

#### ELUNIM (THE HALF-MOON CHAIR)

- **Extended Rage (pack):** 8 Totem points per dot.

A Elunim can grant extended time in a war form. Each dot represents a one-round increase, but this bonus can only be used by one Forsaken during a conflict.

Example: A pack's alliance with Shadowed Moon grants one of the packmembers the power to call upon his purity while in Gauru form, allowing one of them to avoid falling into Death Rage for precious seconds.

- **Extended Rage (story):** 5 Totem points per dot.

A Elunim can grant extended time in a war form. The dots purchased represent a pool of points that can be used to increase the time spent in Gauru.

Example: A warband's alliance with Discerning Moon grants the warband's members the ability to extend their time in war form. There is no restriction on who can use this blessing, but Discerning Moon's blessing is limited.

**Elunim Compulsions:** Over-analyzing a dilemma; frequent shapeshifting; compulsive crossing of the Gauntlet; temporarily taking an enemy's side; becoming angry at problems without binary solutions

#### ITHALUNIM

#### (THE CRESCENT MOON CHAIR)

- **Weaken the Weave (pack):** 8 Totem points per dot.

The Ithalunim can temporarily weaken the Gauntlet around the werewolf with this bonus,

temporarily offsetting any hindrances to crossing between the worlds. This aspect does not allow the pack to step sideways at any location; the aspect only makes doing so easier when possible.

Example: *Shaman's Moon can weaken the strength of the Gauntlet around the totem's packmembers. These bonuses can be used to offset negative modifiers for crossing the Gauntlet or pathfinding.*

- **Disturb the Weave (story):** 5 Totem points per dot.

Ithalunim may also disrupt the strands that form the Gauntlet, making perception through it difficult. Each dot purchased is placed into a pool that can be drawn from by any packmember during a story. Each time this is done, powers (Gifts, Numina, or mage spell, etc.) associated with the spirit world that seek to target (if even to perceive, not necessarily harm) the packmember suffer a -3 dice penalty difficulty.

Example: *Wise-Woman Moon can shield her pack from the Reaching Numen of the fire-spirit. When the packmembers call upon her aid, the fire-spirit's Blast becomes almost useless, reduced from five to merely two dice.*

**Ithalunim Compulsions:** Spending time in the Shadow unnecessarily; learning trivia about spirits; refusing to sleep or eat under a crescent moon; asking riddles in return for information

### IRRALUNIM (THE NEW MOON CHAIR)

- **The Hidden (pack):** 8 Totem points per dot.

Simply put, a character using this power becomes invisible for a brief instant. Each dot confers a mere turn of invisibility on the packmember, but only one packmember at a time may use it.

Example: *Hidden Moon gifts one member of his pack with the ability to drop from sight for a few moments — often this is enough to get the drop on an enemy, or move past even the most vigilant guardian.*

- **The Quiet (pack):** 5 Totem points per dot.

Uratha under this benefit make no noise. The period of silence is brief, only one turn per dot, but it is enough to strike foe, open a squeaking door, etc.

Example: *Hidden Moon also allows one of its packmembers to act in complete silence for three turns. This is long enough for them all to move up the fire escape, one at a time.*

**Irralunim Compulsions:** Avoiding sunlight; demanding others not address one by name; never eating or sleeping in the same place twice; avoiding speaking unless on New Moon business

## THE CRUCIBLE

Three wolves sat in front of the cave entrance, waiting for the intruder to come up the path. They smelled smoke on his clothes and sweat, along with something familiar and unnatural. He was one of them, a werewolf.

As the sound of his stumbling footsteps grew louder, two of the wolves split off from one who remained in front of the cave. They slunk into the shadows of the rhododendron on each side of the path and disappeared from the sight of mortal men.

The remaining wolf gritted her teeth and winced silently as her body made mockery of the laws of physics and genetics. She swelled to almost twice her size; new muscle blanketed her body. The werewolf coming down the path stopped when he saw her and knelt down, shuffling awkwardly in man-shape, toward her. He did not react when the two came from the bushes to flank him.

"Might of Stone, I have come to petition your master for help. I have made this pilgrimage in Hishu as punishment for our failure. Our confederation is broken. The Forsaken have... they are different. They have changed. No longer are they squabbling children. They are united and powerful. Their bitch-goddess, the betrayer, has given the fallen ones new powers, new direction. They must be stopped."

He finished with a moan, and she looked at him: his hands were torn, his feet were bare and she could see the dirt caked into his wound as his flesh attempted to regenerate around the wounds caused by his travel.

Might of Stone paused. She did not have much respect for the Fire-Touched's skills in battle, yet they were always brave. She had never seen one cry like this one. They were not tears born of the scourge, or the tears of zealous joy. He sobbed for a moment more, then grew still for a long while.

"They... they corrupted two of MY pack. The whore Moon stole them from salvation. They are damned now."

He looked up at her and saw the fire reborn in his red-rimmed eyes. "Only Red Stick can do this now. We must wake him. He must kill them all."

**Theme:** This is a game of revolution and the price of greatness. The characters will usher in great changes in Uratha culture and reset the balance of power between Pure and Forsaken.

The characters discover themselves to be the instruments of the Lunes which wish to turn the tables on the Pure and their allies. To this end, the Lunes will gift the characters with new and greater



power, but also exact promises and sacrifices from their Forsaken children.

As the chronicle wears on, the characters and others realize that these Gifts have even a greater price than they bargained for. Some may abandon the crusade, others rebel against it. Perhaps they find out it is too late to stop the juggernaut they have created, or come to the realization that sacrifice for the greater good, no matter how painful, is worth it in the end.

A powerful Elunim has taken the role as the crusade totem. He is Thayyanxul, the Intercessor Moon. Thayyanxul commands Lunes of many choirs, and also has power over some conceptual servants, such as ideologicals associated with justice and honor. While insightful, he shows, tests and guides rather than tells. He normally appears as an impossibly bright figure wrapped in loose bands of shadow. His motion creates a strobe effect as flashes coruscate around him, forcing most to avert their eyes.

The only goal he will share with his crusaders is to correct the imbalance between the Pure and Forsaken. In truth, he has grown tired of endless squabbling between Forsaken packs; he wants them to figure out new ways to adjudicate their disputes and cooperate. In other words, Thayyanxul has judged *the Forsaken* as being the root cause of this state of affairs — not the Pure. He does not want a monolithic Forsaken Nation. He does not want genocide. In fact, Thayyanxul does not have the answer to the Forsaken's problem. He knows that he cannot provide it.

Thayyanxul does know the process for solving it. First, he will show the Forsaken new ways and grant them the power to defeat their most powerful foes. He will use these new powers, and the promise of victory over the Pure as a means to an end. His crusade will also test the Forsaken's culture as well — forcing them to question their ways and rise to his challenge. Hopefully, they will solve their own problem. He will be their savior and enemy, angel and devil. A new balance will be achieved.

**Mood:** The overall mood for this chronicle is hopeful, but increasingly charged with tension and doubt. Will the characters make it to the end, or just as Moses, will they take their people to the gates of their "Promised Land," but never enter?

**Atmosphere:** At first, the atmosphere must reinforce at first the great mystery surrounding the characters. Who are they? Why are they different? Strange portents follow them as they grow in power. After the crusade begins, the atmosphere changes, as

a thunderbolt presages a growing storm. There should be moments of epic grandeur punctuated by signs of haunting loss. Fantastic battles with scores of Uratha, but also very real consequences of territories ravaged by the war,

**Setting:** Just as many heroic tales, this story should start locally, humbly, but end on an epic scale. The early scenes of the story should involve the status quo of a standard Forsaken chronicle — the characters enter into a pack culture and work to police their territory. Yet, from the earliest moments, there is something different about the characters: they have been singled out. As the chronicle progresses, the scope changes. The characters come to the notice of local elders early, the characters' successes and the growing interest of the Lunes means that their notoriety will extend well beyond their humble territory. The trappings of the scenes should reflect this. Great things are afoot, and the characters are in the thick of it.

The chronicle is best suited to begin in an area where the Pure have long held sway, where Forsaken packs that have grown too powerful have been ruthlessly culled since the end of the Brethren War. Here, the Pure outnumber the Forsaken at least six to four and have the best territory. Only those who go through the Change within a Forsaken's territory have much chance of escaping the Pure Tribes recruiters. The Fire-Touched routinely attend the local Forsaken gatherings — haranguing the Forsaken with sermons, and keeping track of their numbers (and sometimes gathering new converts).

Rather than having to come up with new rationales to get the local packs together, it would be better to have an established tradition in the area for seasonal gatherings at the spring and fall equinox. The use of the equinox ties in well the patron, and this will provide a nice structure to plot out the changes that will occur in the campaign.

**Character Creation:** Since the characters are *Nahiri* of the crusade, their First Change should be auspicious, perhaps even troubling to local elders of Pure and Forsaken Packs. The Storyteller may choose to have the characters' auspice Lune appear to them and identify the characters with a special glyph — one familiar, yet still puzzling to the local Ithaeur. The characters may even start the game with the expanded auspice powers — marking the characters as different. During their initiation into their chosen tribes, again a Lune appears alongside the tribal totem. Again, the Lune makes the mysterious mark.

**Antagonists:** The most dangerous foes will be the Pure and their allies. The Pure will be caught off guard by these new Forsaken, yet initially the Pure will still have the upper hand. More than likely, the Pure will become desperate after losing important battles — perhaps even watching their members join the crusade itself.

The chronicle's most interesting foes will likely be the traditional Forsaken, those who are happy with the status quo, or fear the upheavals of the crusade. Some of these Forsaken will oppose the characters openly, but the most dangerous will subvert the crusade — either to bring it to an end or to use it for their own purposes.

Eventually, the characters will come to the notice of some of the world's most powerful Pure Uratha, such as Red Stick. The characters' confrontation with him marks the climax of the crusade. If they can defeat him, then the Forsaken's world will change. All Uratha will learn that change can happen. A new way is possible.

**Story Concepts:** After the events of their First Change and indoctrination into the world of the Uratha, the Storyteller needs to structure events to give the characters a baseline picture of the setting, mostly as a reference point for the later crusade. They need to see the dominance of the Pure in action. The characters' initiation into Uratha culture may be colored by tales of Forsaken packs that “got too big for their britches.” The characters should witness a neighbor pack's destruction due to the power of the Pure and the internecine violence between Forsaken packs.

During these initial games, the Storyteller should weave into the story hints of the growing power of the characters, allowing them to use Crusade Gifts and powers when appropriate, even though the characters do not have them yet.

After the standards are set comes the revelation of Thayyanxul's crusade. This event should be colored by heavy mythic overtones. One way to do this is to have it come at a gathering where the Pure have come to teach the upstart characters a lesson or two. In the middle of the fight, a host of Lunes, one for each of the characters' auspices, will appear and take the characters on a road of trials where they must prove themselves to Thayyanxul. He will test their judgment and their resolve by depositing them hundreds of miles away in the Shadow. They will have to make their way back to the gathering ground

before Thayyanxul will allow them back through the Gauntlet. These challenges should be based upon the characters' Virtues and Vices. At the end, Thayyanxul will perform the Rite of the Silver Road upon them, and welcome them as his heralds.

When they return from the Shadow, it will not be to a heroes' welcome. Their exit during the gathering prompted the Fire-Touched to attack their remaining packmates at the gathering. The characters' alpha was humiliated in front of the others — he does not want them back.

Now comes the process of building the crusade. This should be a series of stories that might take the characters far out of their territory as they move about recruiting Forsaken to their cause. Eventually, the characters' successes against the Pure and growing power mean that Forsaken will begin to seek them out. At some point, the crusade might grow into a full military campaign, as in “Legions of the Moon” section, above. They will steamroller the Pure in their old territory. It is important to create a small number of crusaders at this point to personify all that is good and bad in the crusade. One should be an excellent leader, well loved by the crusaders, but become increasingly unbalanced — he might eventually become the war leader of the crusade. Another might play the role of the doubting Thomas — the crusader who begins to question their ethics. The players may find themselves marginalized, more figureheads than leaders.

At this point, the campaign's focus should shift, and the characters will have to deal with the more negative sides of a crusade as zealots among the crusaders will be likely begin preying upon weak Forsaken packs, the infidels who do not see the true way. Other Forsaken, especially the characters' old alpha, will begin to speak out against the crusade. He should score some points here before the war leader or the crusade's secret police put him down.

In these days of growing crisis, the Pure will strike back. They will unleash Red Stick upon the crusaders. (His tactics are detailed in the “Enemies” section, above.) This will mark the beginning of the characters' real crucible. They will have to find a way to defeat Red Stick and deal with the overzealous members of the crusade.

As Thayyanxul planned, there is no easy out for the characters. They have come to the end of his road. At best, he and his servants will offer more questions — not answers.



FRAN  
LESLIE  
'06

# CHAPTER III

## UPWARD SONS

They left him one arm so he could drag his ass back home.

His feet, they bit off. Nothing but gory stumps, which they then burned. The right arm, though, took a bit more work. One of them had to go at it with a nicked-up machete. Proud Howls was strong, but not that strong. He screamed like a kicked baby the whole time. Passed out hard. When he woke, they were burning that stump, too.

Howls reached out, grabbed another clump of dead grass, pulled himself up the hill another three feet. The stumps itched awful bad. They were healing, but it was coming slow. Never felt good, the healing. Bones poking through ruined meat. Strands of muscle seeking more of the same, fumbling together like blind worms.

Those who did this to him, Howls had never seen anything like them. For a little while there, he thought they might be werewolves. Maybe Pure. Maybe something else.

But then they changed. They encircled him, and he heard bones cracking and meat shifting, and then they stood before him. Yellow cat-eyes. Long claws. Faint black hair, soft-looking, almost sweet, covering their faces.

That's about when they ripped into him.

One of them — red eyes, different from the others — told Proud Howls that he could keep his one arm provided he gave the rest of his "murderer friends" a message.

The message was: Leave the human herd alone.

The sun beat down on Howls' back as he hauled himself forward another couple of feet, finally at the crest of the hill. He spit out bits of brown grass, dirt, then thought, *Sorry, kitties, I'm going to give my friends a whole different message.*

That message was: Kill them. Kill them all. This was war.

SEEING YOUR GREAT FORM WITH MANY FACES, MANY EYES, MANY ARMS, MANY THIGHS AND FEET, AND MANY TERRIBLE TUSKS AND STOMACHS, O MIGHTY ARMED, THE WORLDS ARE TERRIFIED AND SO AM I.

— THE BHAGAVAD-GITA, 11:23

The enemy that is most frightening is the enemy one does not know. Within the deepest shadows and the brightest daylight dwell things that the Forsaken do not know of or understand. It has always been that way, and always will be that way, for in their imbalance the worlds find many horrors clawing at the door. The unknown enemy may wear a skin that isn't its own, or may have a body that succumbs to many forms. The enemy may hunger for blood or raw meat, and may wither in the rays of the sun or under the drop of a silver blade. But before, these enemies have been few. They were singular creatures, lurking in their own private hells, trouble enough as one.

Now, imagine that they are many.

## RISE OF THE UNKNOWN

This chapter is about what happens when the Forsaken find themselves confronted with creatures capable of changing forms much as the Forsaken themselves can do. Except, these creatures are not one, or two or even five. They form a whole society — and, in many cases, comprise a veritable army. This is about war with an unknown force, a bloody and unpredictable clash with shapechangers never before seen.

In particular, this section will help you design a new society of shapeshifters. What forms can such a creature take? Do they share a mythology similar to that of the Forsaken, or is it a wholly incomparable set of stories? Why have these shapeshifters been concealed from the world — or, scarier still, have they been here all along, lurking unbidden among us all?

Moreover, this chapter gives the opportunity to not only create such a force as an enemy, but also allows you to create characters from your new shapechanger template, allowing players to assume the role of a whole new type of creature. Players can make war with the Forsaken, seeing things from the other side of the fence.

## WAR!

This section will briefly talk about the nature of war between shapeshifters. Why does it happen? How

does it happen? War is no small thing in a game, and this section will at least help you answer some of the questions that arise when monsters clash on the battlefields of dead highways and broken cities.

## IMPETUS FOR WAR

War may seem a drastic solution. To invoke a full-scale campaign of tooth and claw against one another isn't the easy answer, and yet it remains the default solution for a number of reasons.

The first thing to understand is that war isn't the product of a single moment. Two sides do not discover one another and then, independently or together, decide to bear conflict against the other. It may have happened that way in the "civilized" wars of old, but that's not how it happens here. War is the product of many parts — or, more appropriately, many mistakes. A chain of errors or missteps is what often leads people to war, and it's no different among monsters.

Consider that, when a pack of Forsaken encounters the presence of something never-before-seen, whether it's a man with cat eyes or a woman with bees crawling around the inside of her mouth, the first response is rarely a kind one. The werewolves don't offer to shake hands and give gifts. Werewolves are hot-blooded creatures cursed with relentless anger. The easiest response when coming upon some alien thing is, frankly, to kill it (or at least capture it). Since any unforeseen being likely mimics any number of known werewolf enemies (Ridden, Host, spirit), the sudden leap to violence is expected. Worse, any creatures the pack encounters are likely driven by the same awful humours that enrage the Forsaken. Every monster has its own private madness, and it is an easy thing to bring that madness to bear against a handful of invasive Uratha.

It matters little if both sides desire similar goals. Even if both groups believe themselves the guardians of the Shadow, that single opening encounter can diminish or destroy any common ground. Insults and violence, fear and loathing: it culminates in the opening salvos of an eventual war. It's made worse by the fact that both groups exist as parts of larger societies. If it were just a handful of jelly-eyed fish-men, fine, their

deaths may grow to seem regrettable, but the Forsaken are burdened by *legendary* regret — adding a little more to the pile is unfortunate, but oh well. Those gilled humans are just a small part of a larger force — an entire *society* of amphibious shapechangers, who won't be thrilled to learn that some of their own have been murdered by insidious wolfmen. Moreover, then the Forsaken go to their neighboring packs to show them the corpses of the strange creatures they found lurking at the edges of the territory. Fear builds. Fury mounts. War is coming.

Still, it isn't always so simple. Sometimes it is, but other times greater motivators lie at the throbbing heart of war. Below are a few such motivators. Note that each needn't be independent. One side may have one impetus for war, while another may act on an entirely different impulse.

### A CRIMLY BALANCED EQUATION

This is discussed more completely below, but it's worth noting at the beginning: in these conflicts, it's hard to peg exactly who's right. While certainly one side may seem in the wrong, remember to present and answer the question of "Who started it?" twice. The Forsaken have an answer to this question, and so do the shapechangers with whom the Forsaken fight. There should never be absolute clarity regarding which side wears the white hats and which wears the black hats. Both sides can easily interpret their own people as the clear victims, and their adversaries as the obvious aggressors. Rarely does it end up as black-and-white; it's usually various shades of gray. Splattered with red, of course.

### TERRITORIALITY

Werewolves are social creatures, and as such, tie the soul and safety of the group to the land it claims. For the Uratha, territory is everything. It's all they have. And if a locus sits on that territory, then that slice of land — whether it's as big as a mountain range or isn't much more than a dock at the north end of the city — becomes a sacred protectorate. Werewolves are willing to kill to protect a territory. Human or Pure, Host or Ridden, anybody who threatens the borders of a pack's land will end up as an example to others, probably with guts draped from trees like tinsel.

The same goes for any gaggle of monsters who go sniffing around for land or locus; if a covey of men with hollow bones and hidden feathers cross into a forest claimed by a pack of Blood Talons, those werewolves are unlikely to ask questions or extend a polite warning.

It goes both ways, however. Most other shape-shifters are just as territorial as werewolves. Social animals are driven together and often assert their dominance over some swatch of land big or small. Doesn't matter whether they call it a hive, enclave, colony or kingdom — the idea is the same, and anybody who crosses over those borders is first an enemy. If the Forsaken pack goes nosing around for new territory and instead crosses into an area conquered by that swooping covey of bird-men (who relish in the notion of stripping flesh from bone with powerful beaks), then the tables are turned.

Territory is everything. And, as soon as one side violates that tacit though unspoken agreement, conflict is born.

### OTHER RESOURCES

Territory isn't the only valued resource, though it's likely the most cherished. What happens when a nest of barbarian-looking bear-men (all spit-frothed muzzles and blood-crusting claws) come to steal away a pack's wolf-blooded family to use as breeding stock or a workforce? Maybe a powerful Ithaeur binds a spirit into a fetish, but that spirit was a totemic spirit for a whole tribe of hidden shapeshifters. That act of ignorance and slavery may bring the whole colony of monsters out of hiding, hungry for the Ithaeur's head on a pike. Other resources that can be stolen or destroyed include money, allies, even enemies. If one werewolf pack believes that its job is to stand vigil over a city block and battle the ceaseless tide of Beshilu that seem to crawl up out of the sewers every new moon, and suddenly some new skinshifters think that it's *their* job to maintain the balance, the clash of purposes (and egos) is likely to end with blood and intestines on the asphalt. Worse is what happens if those new shapechangers instead cement an alliance with the Beshilu. Perhaps the shapechangers don't consider the Beshilu an affront. Or maybe the shapechangers themselves can change into rats, and consider the rat *shartha* to be inbuilt allies or slaves.

### IMBALANCE

The Forsaken believe they serve a sacred function. Some see that function as a holy ordinance meant to salve the guilt of the past, while others

believe that such a function is a more pragmatic task, one encapsulated by the spiritual balance of local territory. No matter how grand or small the notion, the werewolves believe they protect the balance between worlds. Anybody who disturbs that sensitive equilibrium is an enemy.

While the Forsaken believe that the worlds must remain separate, other shapechangers may not agree. Lion-changers who stalk the veldt in massive prides may feel that the borders between worlds should come crashing down so that they have greater access to all manner of prey. And so they work to create places where the Gauntlet is thin, so that spirits may come freely over to the physical world (and so that the humans in the physical world may find themselves lost in the Shadow). A pack that claims territory near these leonine shifters are unlikely to agree with such a philosophy — especially when materialized spirits come swarming across the wind-whipped grassland, hungry for Essence.

Once again, it goes the other way, too. Consider that a society of shapechangers might believe that *they* are the guardians of the sanctity of the worlds, and they see the Forsaken as the ones who are, frankly, fucking it all up. These new monsters may see the Uratha as sloppy, emotional guardians who let selfish concerns come before the concerns of the Shadow's harmony. The only answer then may be to exterminate the crude protectors so that the society can aptly take their place.

Moreover, such alien shapeshifters may count any number of strange duties as paramount among their kind. The Forsaken may work unknowingly in opposition to such bizarre obligations. Men who become owls may see humans as their protectorate, and when the werewolves come along and harm or kill mortals — who ostensibly deserved it from the Forsaken perspective — the owl-men must mount an attack. A nomadic tribe of beast-men may believe that the world cannot be owned, and so they work to destroy those packs that claim territory (as they are “shackling” Mother Nature and doing more harm than good). It's all a matter of perspective.

### XENOPHOBIA

Humans destroy that which they cannot understand. It has been one of the guiding precepts of civilization since its inception. Nobody will *admit* to such a principle, but it's there. Those of different color, language, economic background, ritual, faith,

whatever. All are targets to those who cannot comprehend them.

It's not the bestial part of the Forsaken that drives them to this, but the human side. And so, too, with the human side of any other shapechanger that exists in this world. Xenophobia, while unspoken, is the easy answer for many. The Forsaken see a woman whose skin turns slick and scaled moments before she dives into the water as a snake or eel, and the immediate response is to kill it. The same goes for the eel-woman who sees the appalling sight of a man who deigns to walk upon the wicked Earth as a bedraggled wolf: *kill it*.

Even if the response isn't to kill, xenophobia demands cruelty. One side might hope to capture and dissect the other for “information.” Another may hope to torture them — as they cannot be human, so surely it's not a sin against Harmony — so that they will give up the goods on their “species.” Some may hope merely to exile them, or imprison them, or weaken them. Xenophobia rarely calls to mind a positive, healthy response. Both sides don't understand one another, and this “fear of the alien” leads down one road to one place: war.

### WAR'S MANY FACES

While much of this book devotes itself to the logistics of war, this portion briefly discusses what can happen when two shapeshifter societies go to war. This isn't an exhaustive list; war wears limitless masks, and these are just a few.

### WAR OF COMBAT

A combat war is just as it sounds: force versus force. Combat war is a raw, physical conflict in which two sides (“armies”) attempt to destroy one another to gain dominance over some people or resource. Shapeshifters rarely war this way. They may intend to, but their monstrous natures demand covertness so as not to draw the attention of the human herd (which, when spooked, can stampede). Admittedly, some portions of the world are desolate enough where two warring monstrous forces can clash openly, changing shapes and raking flesh, howling across an empty plain. That's rare, though, and so two sides don't often “take to the streets” to fight. Below is an example why.

#### The Horrors of Shilohtown

Shilohtown, Pennsylvania, is a defunct timber town up in the Pocono Mountains. For 20 years, the town has been hemorrhaging its populace, leaving



behind a stalwart 62 residents. The area around the town had long been under the guard of a small coalition of packs — Hunters in Darkness, mostly — who kept the Shadow safe (and were even instrumental in ending the logging operations two decades prior). But something — and to this day the Uratha couldn't say what — awakened a potent force inside the caves north of town. The night sky filled with bats that, upon hitting the ground, became men with razor teeth and smothering hands. The werewolves attacked on sight, fearing some horrid breach from the Shadow. The shrieking man-bats returned the favor, screeching something about the Uratha being an “ancestral foe.” For a week, the two sides would clash in the middle of town, two hideous forces battling bloodily in front of closed-down storefronts and still-open bars. They'd fight, lose a few members and lick their wounds at daybreak. Night would come, and the battle resumed. Postscript is, the Forsaken won that fight, but barely. When they were nursing themselves near to dawn, surrounded by a street full of shriveled

bat corpses, something unexpected happened. The humans, who had been hiding in abject fear for days, sensed an opportunity. They attacked, managing to kill a few Forsaken before dying.

#### WAR ON MORALE

Sometimes, one side knows it cannot militarily defeat the other, at least not without damning losses to its own force. The war changes subtly with this realization. It becomes less about destroying their physical army, and more about destroying their *spirit*. It's a conflict designed to push one side to yielding to the other. The attack may involve diminishing the enemy's moral center, or simply whittling away at their morale with little wins.

This type of war is what the Pure have done to the Forsaken in many areas. The Pure don't outright defeat the Forsaken everywhere, but instead push the Forsaken to a point where they can no longer (or *will* no longer) resist.

This works between two groups of shapeshifters, as well. If one or both sides recognize the futility and



cost of war, they may change their tactics to suit this style of conflict. Attacks may take place where one side aims to remove key resources from the other: a major locus, for instance, may be a prominent target. Taking that away will diminish the hope of the other force even more than it will take away their actual power. Yes, they lose access to some Essence, but more importantly they lose some of the *will* to fight.

If the shapeshifters have known of the Forsaken, but the Forsaken didn't know of them, this war can easily go in their favor. The alien shapeshifters represent an alien force, and can more easily convince the werewolf packs that they are more powerful than they perhaps really are. Werewolves, already hedged in by the Pure, the Hosts, the Ridden and so forth, may crumple like a paper airplane when put under that kind of pressure. Keep in mind in such a situation, regardless of the dominant side, a "win" in the war against morale doesn't guarantee an end to the war. A win often shifts the focus of the war, and the subjugated side often begins a guerrilla war (see "Unconventional War"). Below is an example of this war on morale.

#### The Subjugation of Loma Soledad

The Ghost Wolves of Loma Soledad held that territory for as long as their history could remember. Their ancestors claimed that land 1,000 moons before, and they believed they could keep it for 1,000 more. They had tense accords with the spirits, and farmed out several wolf-bloods living on ranches nearby. Life was good. But their mounting battle with the Ejército de Toro (Those Who Become Bulls) changed everything, eventually losing the Ghost Wolves their land. The bull-skinned men, normally a brutish lot who seemed incapable of savvy, returned a year ago after a decades-long absence. They fought differently this time. Yes, many still attacked head-on, horns oiled with pig-fat, nostrils frothing and foaming with black mucus. But others pulled the rug out from under the Forsaken. The bull-men dammed up the stream, killing the werewolves' source of water. They convinced spirits to leave the Ghost Wolves' side. And then the bull-men took the wolf-bloods. Worst of all, the wolf-bloods *wanted* to go. They were tired of being raised like livestock, treated kindly only when breeding season came. They went to the army of the bulls without hesitation, children and all. It wasn't long before the Forsaken, unconvinced of their authority, ceded to the bull-skinned men, giving up everything — including their will.

#### UNCONVENTIONAL WAR

War needn't be about open conflict at all. Unconventional war involves guerilla warfare, terrorism or the use of specialized (and often forbidden) weapons.

Between two groups of shapechangers, unconventional war is the most common means of battle. In most cases, the Forsaken and their enemies blend with humanity relatively well (if they didn't, they might not last long). As such, much as an insurgent force can disappear into the populace from whence it came, the two shapeshifting forces can easily return to the human herd as wolves in sheep's clothing. The irony with most unconventional warfare is that usually only one side fights unconventionally. The other assumes a more standard role, attempting to match force versus force. But the other (rarely stronger) side fights dirty either because it can or because it has little choice.

Consider a shapeshifting society that blends completely with the human throng. Do Forsaken attack every human upon assumption that he is the enemy? When a sudden group breaks from the mortal herd and suddenly sets fire to the forest in which a pack makes its home — and then slips right back into the sea of humanity — what happens? The Forsaken, used to direct tooth-and-claw conflict, are often left grasping for advantage. Worth noting, though, is that the Forsaken can fight this way, as well. Many Uratha have staged guerrilla attacks against the dominant Pure, as well as against a seemingly insurmountable shapechanger presence.

In the world of the Forsaken, several elements fall into the category of unusual and/or forbidden weapons. Any irregular resource used as a weapon counts as unconventional warfare. For instance, weakening one side's territory by turning the diseased Beshilu against it. Or convincing spirits to use their Influences to create troubling conditions (sickness, fire, rioting humans, etc.).

Below is one example of unconventional warfare among the shapeshifters.

#### Witchrats of the Tenderloin

San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood is drearily squalid. The Beshilu have long dwelled here, as have their half-human masters, the *Benesharu* (rat witches). The Forsaken have long been unable to penetrate this world, swarmed at every turn by rat *shartha* and ratshifters, each with diseased claw and scum-soaked teeth. Their human slaves — pros-

titutes, addicts, itinerant madmen — are just as vigilant in their protection of the neighborhood. But now, the Forsaken know what to do. They're going to poison the whole goddamn neighborhood. Brew up some homemade mustard gas and drop cyanide into the sewer grates and street fissures, and those rats — and their mortal buddies — are going to all die. It's not easy. It's not nice. But the overwhelmed Uratha see no other choice to save the Shadow, which is growing daily into a massive, sucking Wound.

## LOGISTICS OF WAR

War ends up one way: with physical conflict. Whether it's on the open battlefield of the Mojave Desert or in the tight passages of an old insane asylum, battle happens. Bodies clash together. Claws rake faces, the air smells of discharged shotguns, knives punch through the tender meat between exposed ribs. Yes, in some cases, war can be a mental war against morale or a social war of dominance, but in this case, we're talking about *real* war. This is the kind of war where characters are willing to die for some cause or to protect a parcel of land. Combat is inevitable.

Various elements are worth considering in regards to how shapeshifters might fight. Some of the elements, when considered in context, may move you to change the rules or adapt new systems to fit specific situations. Below are several of these elements, and some possible systems made to fit the horrors of war.

## HORROR

We said “horrors of war,” and we meant it. Propaganda paints war with the veneer of heroism. The battle of good versus evil is what it's *supposed* to be, but that's rarely true. Especially in the case of a conflict between two shapeshifter races, rarely is one side so obviously malevolent that it can be called evil — though, each side may certainly demonize the other so that it *appears* evil. One group might spread vicious rumors to stoke the coals of hatred against the other: “Those monsters kill the children of those they conquer by dashing infants against rocks,” or, “The only way they can breed successfully is through rape — the potential mother must suffer *mightily* for the seed to take.”

All that stuff is just propaganda, though. War is rarely so cut and dry. It's often about selfish interests: territory, resources, slavery. While characters on one side might feel the heroism pumping through their veins, seeing the war as a noble conceit, it's really not.

War is horrifying. That mood needs to be apparent. It's not about the cavalry ride coming in to save the day. It's about the stink of bile when a werewolf gets his guts opened up. It's about lying half-dead in a puddle of brackish water while allies die all around. Even the most resolute Rahu will feel terror on the battlefield. This terror is what makes him feel alive, and ultimately, what drives him claws forward against his foes.

When dealing with two shapeshifters clashing against one another, you have a number of ways to enforce the feelings of horror. The first is obviously through description: you can't just tell the players that their characters feel scared. Describe the effects of fear. Hearts beating faster and faster. Hackles standing on end. Shadows moving through wraiths of fog seem like the enemy at every turn.

Second, you can use some rules and systems to drive the horror home. Some such systems include the following:

- Think of the Picts and how, covered in blue woad, they appeared otherworldly and barbaric on the battlefield. The sight of something new and strange — shapeshifters going to a bizarre hybrid form all at once, for instance — causes a kind of internal shock and awe. It can rattle an opposing side. Resolve or Composure rolls for the remainder of the scene are made at a -2 dice penalty.

- Adrenalin may accompany feelings of horror. Adrenaline plays a significant role during stressful situations, acting as the chief physiological response to threatening conditions. The release of adrenaline may grant Physical bonuses (+2) as well as penalties to Social rolls (-2) because the adrenalin doesn't work to make a character a more eloquent speaker, it causes him to be more efficient when trying to *survive*.

- Rage — whether the *Kuruth* of the werewolves or another type of feral reaction — may be pulled closer to the surface in the heat of war. *Kuruth* likely builds on *both* sides as the battle rages. During combat, what happens when an ally perishes? Or the chaos of spraying blood and bits of fur is just too much to handle? Rolls for *Kuruth* can either be more common, or be instead used punctiliously with heavy penalties (-3 dice penalty to resist during one roll when the battle reaches a grim apex and characters on both sides feel the spiritual weight of war hammer down).

- The senses of shapeshifters are attuned to stimuli that humans are not. Use that. Demand

reflexive Wits + Survival rolls (with appropriate Perception bonuses) to see and smell the awfulness all around: dirt, blood, spit, cordite, steel, silver, sweat, musk, fear, hatred.

- Consider shellshock: after a battle is over, the participants grow to develop nervous habits or compulsions. They may gain mild derangements (Depression, Fixation and Inferiority Complex are common) or may suffer  $-1$  or  $-2$  dice penalties to Mental rolls (they become unable to “get it together”). Some suffer nightmares of the other shapeshifters, images made worse by the weave and weft of bad dreams.

### BEAST FIGHTS

Every shapeshifter has an animal side, and that animal side will show itself during war. By and large, combat doesn't *need* to be run any differently, but it is a unique circumstance that may warrant the inclusion of some modified systems. A werewolf going *mano a mano* against a pack of wolverines is frightening, because a wolverine is a mean, frenzied creature with abnormal Strength and Speed despite its Size. Its animal form may not adequately translate how hard it is to fight a smaller creature. Worse, what happens if the Forsaken is instead fighting something airborne, such as an owl or a bat? Here are just a few suggestions on how to make combat versus shapeshifter animal forms a little more dizzying:

- Size matters. Think of attacking a smaller creature as a targeted attack. Something Size 3 or 4 (a dog) may be equivalent to targeting a human torso ( $-1$ ), while something less than Size 3 (a lynx) might incur a  $-2$  dice penalty, equivalent to targeting an arm or leg.

- Alternately, consider the possibility that in animal form, all shapeshifters (Forsaken included) get to use the *highest* of their Wits or Dexterity as Defense.

- Certain animals give off powerful scents — heady musks, pungent piss, the aroma of blood in the mouth. This may incur bonuses to try to hit animals, especially for a Forsaken in any of his mixed forms where he gains Perception dice. It may warrant a  $+1$  die bonus to attack if he can smell the creature as well as see it, granting him a second instinctual advantage when trying to connect with a strike.

- Hitting flying animals is tough. It's not like a bird lingers in a single space for more than a second at a time; it *can't*, it has to keep flying. Trying to hit an airborne moving target will surely confer penalties to attack ( $-1$  to  $-3$  dice). However, consider that

a successful grapple attack completely obliterates a bird's airborne advantage.

### TERRAIN

Battle doesn't happen on nice even ground, in bright sunlight, with perfect weather conditions. Especially when dealing with new shapeshifters, whose territories might be uniquely chosen to suit their needs (desert, ocean, mountain pass). War also wrecks a landscape. Digging in a heel to make a powerful attack causes a rut that someone can trip over. A Forsaken might get thrown into a sapling, snapping it and making it a hazard on the battlefield. Maybe enough blood spills (shapechangers heal fast, remember) to churn dirt into mud. Below are some considerations of terrain with accompanying battleground hazards, should you choose to use them:

- Think of the bodies. Characters fighting amidst fallen comrades (or humans killed as casualties) may suffer penalties ( $-1$  to  $-3$ ) to both attack and successfully navigate the obstacle course of corpses.

- Certain terrain types will diminish Speed. Snow, mud, swamp water: all of these may halve every combatant's Speed score.

- Some shapechangers may get bonuses when fighting on certain terrain. It's not just home territory advantage; it's about being built to function on certain types of landscape. A werecreature based on a poisonous adder snake may gain bonuses when moving on the sandy desert ground. Alternately, some animals may lose dice when operating on unusual ground: the same snakechanger may have problems traversing mountainous ground.

- Fighting underwater? Maybe one shapeshifter tackles another into a lake or the fight simply spilled over into the crashing waves along the shore. Those not built for underwater fighting will suffer at least a  $-1$  die penalty to all attack rolls, as well as  $-1$  die penalty to Defense and Initiative. Note that some creatures (such as the Brineborn example at the end of this chapter) may be built upon an aquatic framework and therefore not suffer underwater penalties.

- Does the terrain provide certain types of cover? Fallen logs, spires of rock, sheets of glacial ice? Or is it wide open with no places to hide? (See “Cover and Concealment,” pp. 162–164, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

- Are grapple attacks harder to make because of adverse conditions? Shapeshifters slick with mud or

moisture may be harder to hold. Grappling attacks suffer a  $-2$  dice penalty in such conditions.

## WHO NEEDS THE FORSAKEN, ANYWAY?

This chapter is about what happens when the Forsaken go to war with some strange new race of monsters. Except, if you really wanted, you can remove the Forsaken from that equation. Consider pitting two entirely new races of shapechanger against one another. Two bird races fighting over an ancestral home? Werehyenas battling to steal territory from a bloodthirsty pride of man-lions? Consider, too, the possibility of having one race fight itself. Much as werewolves can be driven to internal battles (tribe versus tribe, pack versus pack) or are subject to the struggle of Pure versus Forsaken, so, too, could one race of shapeshifters suffer the deprivations of civil war. Clashing ideologies or spare resources may drive one side to butcher its own. On what side do the characters fight?

Finally, consider the option of replacing one side with humanity. What happens when the human herd wakes up and is able to muster some kind of strength outside of Lunacy or the Fear Effect? Humankind is a very efficient war-maker, and may turn the tide against the shapeshifters with alarming speed. (That said, such a war won't be conventional by any means. The Forsaken are very good at guerrilla warfare; it is their bread and butter.)

## STRANGE GENESIS

No creature is born from spontaneous generation, and that same rule applies to your new shapeshifter. At some point — which may be as long ago as the rise of humans in the city of Çatal Hüyük or as recent as two weeks ago in Parsippany, New Jersey — these creatures came from some event, some grim nativity that spawned them. Are their origins spiritual in nature, birthed from cosmic totems, per the Forsaken? Or is it purely biological, a gross disturbance in the genetic code leading to bone and sinew being able to change form? Their origin may be told in oral myth or written down in sacred blood-inked catechisms for all their children to read. They may see it as a blessing from on high or a curse from below. Their origins might shackle them to unshakeable duty or grant them maddening freedom.

This section will help you determine just where these things came from, why it happened and what it means to them *and* the Forsaken. For any group of shapeshifters, the reasons for war may lurk as far back as this moment, when flesh and spirit became twisted into one. One's origin story can just as easily foretell one's destruction.

Below are a number of elements you want to consider when designing the origins of this new shapeshifter society. These elements are important whether or not you use them as enemy or ally, or allow players to run them as characters.

### AGE

How long have these monsters existed? Do they represent an autochthonous population, as endemic to an area as its trees and rocks? It may be the case that these creatures have dwelled in a region since time immemorial, though should that be the case, another question begs asking: how did they manage to exist for so long without *anybody* finding them?

A number of scenario options will help you determine just how long these monsters have existed — and how they've managed to survive regardless of their time on this Earth — which lets you incorporate them into your chronicle in the best way possible. Each scenario is coupled with a sample hook you may choose to incorporate into your story.

### HIDING IN THE SHADOWS

The creatures have always been among us, but nobody, human or Forsaken, has known. The monsters, therefore, have a means of blending in with the world around them. Have they been able to walk without detection among the human or animal populations? Do the monsters have some means of staying hidden even among the populace, perhaps dwelling underground or giving off some kind of repulsive aura that banks on the same way that the local humans ignore their homeless even when the dispossessed lie in the street before them? Could be that the population of shapeshifters is thin or spread out enough so that no investigation has yet been warranted.

#### The Chacma

The rule is simple, and has been for hundreds of years: don't feed the baboons. In Cape Town, one of South Africa's largest cities, the populace has long begrudged the baboons for their presence, and yet the people keep to a series of old rules and laws about the long-muzzled primates. Pester them, and they can be wild, aggressive animals — a frenzy of howling,

biting, scratching. But leave them alone, and they leave you alone. Even the Forsaken know the deal, venerating the baboons from afar with silly trinkets or bits of food. The spirits ask that they do so, and the werewolves know when to comply. If only they knew that some of these baboons, agglomerating in groups of 100 or more, could walk as men during the nighttime. If only they knew what the baboon-men were doing when the moon is dark, just a fingernail sliver in the sky. If only the werewolves knew about the giant bones that lie hidden in the grottoes beneath Devil's Peak not far from the city, and how the baboon-men go there to assemble those bones, driven by some ancestral memory passed from child to child.

#### INTRUSION UPON LANDS

Sometimes, creatures needn't hide in the shadows. If their lands are sufficiently remote, they can walk with bold authority among the flora and fauna, with the world none the wiser. In this scenario, the monsters are discovered because humans or the Forsaken intrude upon the monsters' lands. It's like when a boy kicks over an anthill. Neither the ants nor the boy cared about one another until that moment. In this case, however, the boy may not think much of

his actions — until the ants find him sleeping that night, and choke him with a squirming clot of biting, stinging mandibles. Too often, the Forsaken assume dominance — it is, after all, their task in this world, to take land and enforce their idea of balance. Too often, the werewolves are the boy who kicks over the ant's home. That's not to say it can't happen in reverse. A group of shapechangers that comes seeking resources that the shapechangers' own lands cannot provide may run afoul of the Forsaken, stumbling into Uratha territory without a clue as to what that may mean. Both sides have lands upon which one can intrude.

#### The Dens

Humankind knows when to leave well enough alone. Many won't openly admit to recognizing how certain parts of the world are meant to be remain remote. But in their hearts' blood they know it to be true, just how when they cross over into a werewolf's territory, the hairs on the back of their neck stand and they get this feeling of being *hunted*. The same goes for that old-growth forest north of Highway 80 in the middle of Pennsylvania. The state calls it a conservation area, but even if it didn't, people just



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know to stay out (it helps that the area is replete with urban legends about missing teenagers and a crazy snake-handling cult). The Forsaken, it seems, just aren't attuned to that same level of fear and awareness. When the pack of Hunters in Darkness, ousted by the Pure from their own territory in Montour, came sniffing around, the pack found out why the humans (even back to the native tribes that dwelled here) keep out of that forest. The forest was home to *Crotalus horridus*, or timber rattlers. Except these snakes could shed their skin and become men and women who built odd twisting churches ("sacred dens") out of gnarled thicket and bent trees. These strangers, with their golden eyes and earless heads, were happy to have guests. They took the packmembers, biting them with venom to make them sleep, and dragged them deep into the forest to the snakes' holy dens. There, they make daily sacrament out of the still-living Forsaken, a holy tribute to a pantheon of antediluvian gods. Luckily, one of the pack escaped alive — and now he plans to tell others about the snake cult in the woods.

### BURST OF BREEDING

Their numbers have been low, but something has driven them to breed. Their breeding mechanism (discussed in greater detail later in this chapter) may allow for a surge in new numbers. Before this, their numbers were few enough to not be recognized by the Forsaken — or, if the werewolves had discovered them previously, the Forsaken consider the shapechangers a singular anomaly or simply not worth considering. With new numbers, however, the shapechangers can become a reckoning force. Why the burst of breeding? It may be biological, in which the entire mass feels a potent urge to reproduce. It may be something religious, in which myth or some holy book designates this as the time in which the world ends (or is truly beginning), thus requiring the creatures to "inherit the Earth." Could be that the opportunity now exists where it did not before. They may uncover a new means for procreation, or perhaps encounter humans whose bodies are strong enough to weather the shapechangers' possibly grotesque birth mechanism.

### Feed and Breed

To breed, they must eat. The werehyenas, living in the shadows of Tanzania's Ngorongoro Crater, know this. The better, richer meat they eat, the more they can breed. The power in the meat and blood gives them a magical edge, a potent desire to procreate. For as long as they can remember, their clan has

numbered only five. Four weak, mealy-mouthed spotted hyenas, and one white hyena: the female alpha, watching over the clan with her pale, pink eyes. She claims now to have had a vision. The sun, which they worship, has come to them and told her it is time to eat, and therefore, it is time to breed. The lodge at the top of the crater, overlooking the caldera, is thick with safari-bound tourists goggling at the zebras. The albino mother tells her children that these tourists will be their food. They know that the werewolves are not far, and that if they smell the blood on the wind they may come looking. But by then the hyenas will have sated their hungers and will have retreated to the shadows. The birthing will begin before long. It is a profound and fast process with human meat resting in a warm belly.

### SOMETHING NEW

Without a full-fledged "society," these shapechangers are relatively new to the world. Why is this? Maybe whatever curse that spawned them is recent: a powerful god-like spirit manifests to lay its curse upon a number of murderers who remain uncaught, and now those murderers must repent as shapeshifters. Maybe at some construction site in the middle of the city, the company digging a new foundation for a high-rise building stumbles upon a rickety box whose latch breaks and releases a sickness into the air. The resultant disease, affecting only those with immune deficiencies, creates a shapechanger "condition" that grants them a robust constitution.

However it happens, going this route with an entirely new shapechanger has both an upside and a downside. The upside is, the foe is relatively easy to introduce, especially in the middle of a long-running chronicle. The players won't balk at suddenly confronting a whole new enemy if that enemy hasn't been *at all* present before now. This option allows you to create the conditions for war without worrying too deeply about the creatures' laws, customs or mythologies, because they probably don't *have* any.

Therein, however, lurks the disadvantage. If they're not a society, they might be less interesting as enemies. Moreover, do they really have the ability — given to them normally through history and years of social bonding — to withstand even a small force of Forsaken?

You have ways around this. First, consider that a "new" shapechanger still has a society, and therefore has the background to be a powerful lycanthrope.

Consider what happens if an entire familial bloodline finds that its members suddenly awaken to the shifting bones and muscle, thus becoming something altogether different. The family has traditions and customs all its own. The larger (and frankly, weirder) the family is, the more interesting it will be as a “new” society of shapeshifters. Are they a family of architects, criminals or survivalists? Do dark secrets linger within the family’s history, with morbid tales of incest and murder waiting at the margins?

Maybe the group is a cult with its own religious laws and eschatological traditions. Or it’s a disparate, ragtag bunch of survivors who have formed a kind of “support group” for their condition, and thus have found unity.

The point is, with a new group of shapechangers, you have to go the extra distance in giving them form and function. Without that, not only do they risk being boring, but the Forsaken will probably rend them into gory ribbons on the first full moon.

#### Guster’s Quarrel, North Carolina

The village of Guster’s Quarrel sits up in the Appalachians, away from the mainstays of civiliza-

tion, and that’s how the people like it. They’re not backwards, not exactly, but the townsfolk do eschew some modern conventions and are awfully superstitious (horseshoes over doorways, admonitions against Old Scratch, cornhusk dolls to ward off evil). The time came though when a stranger came through town one night, black robe dragging across the gravel road, cloudy breath coming through his red mask all icy despite the night’s heat. The people, staring out of the windows of their houses, knew that their superstitions and traditions hadn’t been enough, because here the Devil Himself was staggering through their town. He was just passing through, but that was plenty bad. The curse was born. Every night after that, the people found themselves turning into barrel-chested dogs, like rottweilers but thrice the size. Hellhounds, they knew, in supposed service to Old Scratch. But they wouldn’t let themselves become that. They decided during a town council they’d hold on to the vestiges of their goodness and would tear evil limb from limb with their powerful jaws, cornhusk fetishes hanging from their meaty necks like dog



collars. When the Forsaken come knocking — and they will, they always do — the people of Guster's Quarrel will confront them and end their savage devilry.

## MYTH AND HISTORY

Myth and history work together in every society to inform the group's customs, traditions and goals. A group of werereatures — such as the Forsaken — are the same. Most werewolves give context to their ways and abilities through an understanding of myth (i.e., the death of *Urfarah*, the empowering Luna, the hatred of the Pure) and history (Pure attacks, the idigam, other local events). Other shapeshifters will do the same. Some may couch their myths through grandiose dogma, keeping seven books bound in bile-soaked birch, or giving their lives over to intense ritual. Others may ascribe to more fluid mythology, telling stories that shift and change as easy as the flesh of the creatures who tell them. One story may be urban legend (“I hear that if you go down to the landfill south of Telford, you might find three-headed spirits that can tell you your future”) while another may adhere to a kind of superstitious pseudoscience (“Our abilities to read others' minds comes from our protein-rich diets, so keep eating your meat, boy”).

This section will help provide you with some inspiration when forging the myths of a new shapechanger race. Provided with each concept is an example to illustrate such inspiration in action.

## GENESIS EVENT

The event that creates a new type of shapechanger is approached on two fronts, and it's up to you to determine the importance of each. On one hand, you have what *really* happened, and on the other hand, you have what the group *believes*. The two can be the same, or wildly different. One is history; the other is a creation myth. How much the two intermingle is up to you.

**Spiritual Mythic:** One approach confirms an origin based upon spiritual ideas similar to that espoused by the Forsaken. The group's creation is tied to spirits, the Shadow, Essence or other fundamental animist ideas. They may have a spiritual founder (à la Father Wolf) or maybe suffered some curse (Helios brands them infidels and forces them to walk as animals during daylight). Such a creation story likely ties them to literal spirits, perhaps explaining why spirits love, hate or ignore them. They may also tell tales as to how the Shadow Realm and physical world were once one, but were rent in twain with some spiritual

event. The group may even tie its own origin to this moment. When the worlds were sundered, a blessing (charged by a powerful spirit to walk in both worlds) or a curse (responsible for severing the worlds, man is cursed to become beast) is levied against the group.

**Religious Dogmatic:** In this approach, the group's origins are tied to real-world human religions. They may believe that they are the product of Islamic Djinn, or are the children of the Christian Devil. Perhaps they see themselves as castoffs from an angry God, or are the blessed brothers of Ganesha. Such groups are likely to possess more than one set of oral traditions and oaths, and may ascribe to very intense religious dogma, most of which is highly ritualized and contained in “holy books.”

**Local Folkloric:** Regional folklore dominates the creation myth. A group might believe that long ago, Seven-Leap Jack watched over the rivers but because the people didn't keep up the sacrifice to Jack and the rivers, he left this world and cursed the locals to live in the rivers like fish. One society may believe itself to be some kind of house-spirit, a creature sworn to protect the homes of the village. Another group may tell tales about how, 200 years ago, a murderer stalked the forests whispering entreaties to chthonic gods — because the villagers failed to catch the murderer, the town council was cursed to stalk the forests as shapechanging beast-men, punishing the wicked with gore-soaked retribution. This may tie to the spiritual mythic, but this approach is less about the Shadow and spirits, and more about regional legend.

**Historical Scientific:** Both history and science are ostensibly about fact, and one group of shapeshifters may rely strongly upon such so-called truth. If their condition is the product of infection, they may give the spiritual or religious angles zero credence when it comes to explaining their creation. If they breed like people or animals — or even like bacteria or plants — they may rely soundly upon scientific evidence to give their existence context. History, too, may provide a framework for the condition. During the Napoleonic Wars, a group may believe that the French blood spilled led to their creation, creatures born of disharmony and revolution. Another may claim that, when the Loma Prieta earthquake in San Francisco shattered parts of the city's highway, the earthquake released an infectious agent into the air, thus leading to the shapechangers' condition.

### Brother Buzzard Becomes Ill

Buzzards and vultures have digestive systems that act like blast furnaces, searing away most of



the dangerous bacteria and viruses that lurk within the carcasses the birds consume. But the diseases of men are resilient and terrible, and so there came a day when humanity was young that the great spirit Brother Buzzard found a human corpse moldering on a slab of sandstone, baking in the sun. Buzzard could not resist a taste, teasing the wormy meat from the hot bones with his crooked beak. But his body could not resist the virulent disease that destroyed this man, and so Buzzard went back into the Shadow, hacking up bits of froth and blood, finding himself unable to sustain flight for long. Before Brother Buzzard died, he demanded that his children become sturdy by breeding with men. The bastard children of vulture and human would be responsible for culling the sick and dying souls from the human herd, because to leave such ill beasts in the world would lead to the demise of many. The human herd needed to be trimmed, and Brother Buzzard's new children would assume that obligation.

### FACT OR FICTION?

This is a horror game. While you may be concerned with the ideas of fact (i.e., hard evidence for the creation of a new shapechanger race) versus fiction (i.e., anything religious, mythic or folkloric), don't feel overburdened by the distinction. The World of Darkness is marked indelibly by the forces of the supernatural, and while one character may *want* to give his existence some kind of fact-based background, that doesn't mean it's the hard truth. Truth in the World of Darkness wears many faces. Mythology is as good as textbook history when it comes to such creatures as the Forsaken.

### MYTHIC JUSTIFICATIONS

Consider, too, that mythology and religion are etiological. The shapechangers have questions about their condition, and so myth is designed to answer it. The myths may be true or imagined, but regardless of their authenticity they are designed to answer the big questions possessed by most members of the race. Questions such as the following:

- Why does silver hurt worse than other metals? How are the mystic or physical properties of that metal tied to harming a particular race of shapeshifters?
- Where do their supernatural abilities come from? Given as a gift, forced upon them as a curse,

developed by the shapeshifters over time, stolen from the gods, etc.?

- Are they alone in the universe? Do their myths explain the other creatures of the World of Darkness: Forsaken, vampires, Ridden, mages, Hosts, etc.?
- Why Rage? What is the origin of the anger, fear and madness that stir within? Is it a manifestation of righteousness? A weakness set upon them as punishment?
- What is Essence? They can feel it. Some can see it or touch it. All of them let it bleed into them and expend it on many of their unique abilities. Is it something tying them to the earth? To another unseen world (or the Shadow, for those able to access it)? Is it a blessed energy, or a tainted source?
- Humans likely figure into the myths (nearly impossible to ignore the dominant species on the planet). Are they sacred cows or bulls for the slaughterhouse? Saints, sinners, both? Meat puppets or God-touched puppet masters?

### HARBINGERS

Part of building this new society of shapechangers — and then *using* that new society — is making them feel like an organic part of the story. One way to do this is through the use of foreshadowing. By giving players and their characters a glimpse into what's coming, you help justify the foe's inclusion. Moreover, it doesn't stop there; even once the pack has encountered the creatures (or, if playing the creatures, once they've encountered the werewolves), the hints keep on coming. Consider the dramatic tension of having a scholar behind the scenes studying up on the creatures while the Forsaken go out to battle them. Upon hearing more about such creatures, the characters may find a contrast ("Old legend suggests the creatures are peaceful and weak, but today's massacre shows otherwise") or a confirmation of the horror ("This woodcut shows the depth of their willingness to protect their young").

You can foreshadow the presence of the shapeshifters, as well as the coming war, through a few key avenues.

**Forsaken Lore:** The Forsaken do not have a global body of lore upon which to draw, but they do rely upon oral storytelling to explain their condition and give their goals context. Much of this lore is local, and since the shapechanger condition is likely regional, the Forsaken may uncover lost lore that speaks of this unseen race of monsters. It may talk of the race's history, detailing for instance an Ithaeur's

encounter with such creatures in the Shadow some 100 years previous. Alternately, such lore may prophesy the coming conflict, gauging the steps to war and the war itself in poetic, ambiguous language. Forsaken lore may appear in a number of forms: oral tradition, a ratty journal, woodcuts, sketchbooks or even a series of complex claw marks on trees or rocks. Totems and spirits, too, can act as mouthpieces for such lore... though the Forsaken shouldn't automatically trust such fickle ephemera, which can lend further dramatic tension. Are the spirits telling the truth? Why are they so free with this information? Spirits are selfish, after all, and must want *something*. (Another good story hook involves the Pure as the keepers of sought-after lore. To learn more about their new enemy, the Forsaken must first confront the Pure and steal this crucial knowledge.)

**Shapeshifter Lore:** If the players are playing the new shapechangers instead of werewolves, the above ideas are just as useful, except now it's the mythology of the creatures which comes front and center. Feel free to make shapeshifter lore unique, something wholly different from what the Forsaken keep. Do the shapechangers keep their lore in dissonant songs or screams? Maybe their lore is contained entirely in ornate tattoos upon their bodies, or is instead written

in books bound with human or animal skin. Everything might be written as poetry in iambic pentameter, or scrawled in some language such as the First Tongue. Keep in mind, too, that shapeshifter lore can figure directly into a game in which the players still assume the role of werewolf pack. What if the Forsaken, before discovering the presence of these new creatures, finds their lore instead? Coming upon the alien mythology of some as-yet-unseen shapeshifter race will pack a wallop in terms of tension, and gives a definite signpost that something big is coming.

**Dreams and Visions:** Visions of the new race, the Forsaken and the coming conflict can ratchet the tension in a story. Such visions can come as dreams, nightmares, aural and visual hallucinations or even unreal glimpses caught in the corner of one's eye. Note that visions shouldn't be clear-cut. Visions are interesting in a story because they are somewhat ambiguous, because a pack can mull over the details of a particular vision with an eye toward discerning its message. It's a case of show, don't tell. It shouldn't be a vision giving a clear idea that a new race of monsters will come down from the Russian River Valley. The vision might instead show a river run with blood, and faces reflected on the frothing red waters that turn from screaming human



to howling animal. It's up to you whether or not these visions are purely the domain of the Cahalith (or the shapechanger equivalent, should the players be controlling them instead) or if what's weird is that the Cahalith is no longer the only one receiving such discomfiting revelations.

**Parallel Events:** War is coming, and you can represent this through parallel events in the real world. With war as one of the story's themes, you can give the players glimpses of conflict all around their characters. Civil war may happen in a country half a world away, but it gets a lot of news coverage that they can't ignore. (Or maybe the pack has territory in a ragtag Third World country, and the civil war is on their doorstep.) Maybe the spirit choirs are at war. Or the Azlu and the Beshilu are fighting a grotesque guerrilla conflict just a couple of towns away. Alternately, war is a shattering, world-bending affair. Events that confirm that *feel* without directly involving war can work, as well. Natural disasters are a good way to presage a coming horror: earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis.

#### Ten Knives' Diary

An ally from a neighboring pack shows up with a ratty, Army-grade duffel bag in tow, says he found it in a buried stash under a fallen log between the two packs' territories. He thinks it belongs to a werewolf from 60, maybe 70 years ago. The pack has a bunch of stuff in it: bloated cans, a can opener, a rusty bayonet (no rifle), a moldy stack of titty magazines. Then there's the diary. It tells the daily story of Ten Knives and his pack, who kept vigil over a goodly portion of this domain at that time. The diary offers tales about spirit negotiations, warnings from the Pure and the day-to-day fights between packmembers. But what's concerning is what comes at the end: a new threat that rises up one county over. They look like werewolves, but have heads like jackals in their war-forms, and speak in a language Ten Knives and the spirits have never heard. He also claims they're blind, pouring out of a deep grotto not far from the Carpenter's Field baseball diamond. (This diary may also function as a two-dot fetish. Imbued with a mirror-spirit, upon activation, a werewolf literally *sees* the events written in the journal as Ten Knives remembers them. Even details that went unwritten show up in the vision. Moreover, the werewolf can write his own memories down, and replay them in his head like erratic hallucinogenic movies.)

### THE RULE OF NO RULES

This chapter provides you with guidelines for creating a new race of shapeshifters. These guidelines, however, are not exhaustive, and moreover, they're meant to work firmly in line with the rules and setting of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**.

That said, guidelines are just that, guidelines. No hard-and-fast rules exist in this chapter, except the Golden Rule: do what you want for the good of the story. Don't like the options presented here? Use them as examples to create your own, or scrap them entirely. If your players may read this section, or may instead be able to anticipate the rules laid out in this chapter, create your own. Or use other games (**Vampire: The Requiem** or **Mage: The Awakening**) as the basis for the creatures' society and power sets, thus surprising jaded players. The only rule is, *do what thou wilt for the good of the story*.

### SHAPECHANGER TEMPLATE

This portion of the chapter will help you build a new shapechanger race from the ground up. Everything here is plug-and-play: various options chosen will culminate into a more complete creature template. Two things are worth remembering.

First, these are not the Forsaken. They're similar in that they are creatures torn between two forms and two souls, but beyond that, nothing else needs to be the same. You aren't required to make them cousins. This is an opportunity for you to create something wildly divergent and truly alien.

Second, in creating a creature, it's important to identify some kind of theme that ties all the elements together. Are they creatures of vengeance? Or are they beasts of burden? Does the blood that runs through their veins bring them madness, or a cold and calculating sanity? Your theme, likely expressed in a one- or two-word statement, should carry throughout the entire creation process. While this theme needn't be universal, it should remain prevalent. Don't choose powers and abilities just because they're interesting; choose them because they are appropriate. Remember, too, that what's frightening

about any creature is not what powers they possess, but what they're willing to do *with* those powers.

## GUIDELINES

In addition to what's presented throughout this chapter, we recommend you stick to a few guidelines when determining the natures and powers endemic to your shapechanger race.

- Stick to social animals. Roughly defined, assume that social animals are ones that stick together. Think of animals that travel in herds, packs, flocks or hives. Many reptiles are generally solitary (though this isn't universally true), as opposed to, say, hyenas, which gather in clans of 100 or more animals. That's not to say solitary creatures make poor shapeshifters, but the purpose of this chapter is to give you a large society of monsters that you can take to war. If you use a solitary animal as the basis, then it is man's social side that drives them to mass together.

- Most of **Werewolf: The Forsaken** is played out on a local scale. Yes, werewolves are a global phenomenon, but what one pack of Bone Shadows does in Los Angeles can be quite different from what you'd find from a similar pack in North Korea. So, assume this society of shapechangers is a local phenomenon. Others of their kind may exist elsewhere, but your concern is what happens in the lands local to your story. (Besides, unless you're planning on changing the world or running a global chronicle, the war will be local by necessity.)

- Any story about a new shapechanger race — whether told from the side of the Forsaken or from the perspective of these unknown creatures — is about horror and savage fury. Elements of mystery and investigation should be present to confirm the horrific truth about both sides in this conflict. What do werewolves fear? What is it that the shapechangers fear? The savagery and shock present in any **Werewolf: The Forsaken** game should be amped up here; war with a strange new race should reveal new depths of violence and madness. Remember, they're *all* monsters.

## REPRODUCTION

How is it that these creatures make more of themselves? To be a reckoning force capable of taking the fight to the Forsaken, the shapechangers must possess a manner of reproduction that isn't too byzantine. It can be *weird*, but it shouldn't require conditions to be so improbably that their large numbers seem inexplicable. Below are several ideas to help

you determine how the race propagates itself. These ideas aren't exhaustive, so feel free to come up with your own if the ones presented don't give you quite the right feel. Also, these elements can be combined if need be.

## PROCREATION

They breed biologically. It matters little whether the act of intercourse carries the condition through genes or through some kind of supernatural force transmitted through the mystic sexual experience. The reality is, the shapechangers breed to continue their race. This can take several forms.

**Bloodline:** With a bloodline, the group breeds either together or with humans to make more of their kind. The Forsaken can't breed together, but maybe these monsters can. Or, perhaps they maintain breeding stock similar to the wolf-blooded, which may be humans — or might instead be animals. (Imagine a new werewolf race that breeds only with wolves.) Other parameters may color the bloodline concept. Maybe in the families, the seventh son born is always one of these shapechangers. Maybe the mothers die at birth, and so only one unique child per female is possible (unless, of course, the mother gives birth to a whole *litter*, a brutal birth for which her body was unprepared). Feel free to throw in some mystical elements, too. Maybe they can only spread their kind if they breed during the full moon, or if they bite the mother as she gives birth. Perhaps new children must be marked with a set of claw marks and sigils. With those markings, the children develop into the creatures. Without them, the child will die by age two.

**Animal-Specific:** Nature plays host to a number of bizarre breeding habits, and any of these can be the mechanism by which your new shapechanger race propagates itself. Some snakes engage in "breeding balls," in which many serpents coil together in a squirming pile, and that ophidian orgy results in new children. Do the shapechangers lay eggs? Does the mother's womb erupt in a writhing knot of 100 young, 90% of which will perish (perhaps because she eats them to maintain her strength)? Maybe she instead consumes the father after conception, ala the praying mantis or black widow spider. If she doesn't consume the father, perhaps the child will be born "normal." Killing the father and eating him, however, ensures the child will be special. Mating rituals may be key to triggering the condition during conception. The ritual can include whatever components seem thematically appropriate. Must the breeder change to animal form during sex? Do two shapechangers

first battle, drawing blood with claws before they can copulate?

**Asexual:** While unusual and not found commonly among animals, it's possible the shapechanger creates more of its kind asexually. Some sea creatures (jellyfish, starfish) and parasites (tapeworms) can reproduce this way. The shapechanger may, upon hitting a certain point in his life (puberty or some other watermark), begin growing a shoot or pod from his body. Over time, this pod grows and distends, perhaps painfully. This new being splits off from the body, and begins its life. Alternately, maybe the shapechanger gives off spores that attach to trees, walls, the water's surface, whatever. The spores grow slowly into a new creature. Asexual reproduction has limitless possibilities. A tapeworm breaks off part of itself, which grows into a new being. Could a shapechanger cut off a part of himself (finger, hand, a peeled ribbon of skin) and achieve the same effect?

### INFECTION

Some creatures are able to communicate their condition to others via an infectious mechanism. The nature of this mechanism may be mystical or biological. If mystical, the exact parameters of the infection aren't significant. What matters is only

how it spreads, and what happens upon infection. Being mystical, the scientific processes matter little. However, if you wish to make the mechanism more biology-based, those processes become significant. Is the condition spread as bacteria, viruses or prions? Is the shapechanging condition conferred through some parasite, be it a blood fluke, intestinal worm or burrowing fly? How is such an infection introduced into the body? Open mouth? Open wound? Can an infected victim fight the colonization of his body by the pathogen?

Another question is, how much of a shapechanger's identity is given over to the pathogen or parasite? If the condition is purely the result of say, protozoa that attack the system and rape a victim's nervous system and alter brain chemistry, is this race really a slave to its programming? (Some might answer, "Aren't we all?")

Below are two other items to consider when determining if the werecreature condition is caused by means of infection.

**Deliberate:** The infection is deliberately spread by each shapechanger. The shapechangers literally foist the condition upon a human. Common means of delivery include claw, bite or other injury. Ques-



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tion is, does *every* claw or bite wound confer the condition? Likely not, as the infection vector would be swift and widespread. More likely, the shapechanger chooses when such an attack would potentially cause infection as an act of will. Another means of transmission includes exchange of sexual fluids. Feel free to make it deliberately as bizarre as you need it to be. Perhaps a creature shoves a proboscis into the throat of a sleeping victim, depositing infectious materials into the stomach. Maybe the monster can focus her will and convey the transmission of the condition through breath alone. Other parameters are worth considering: how often can one infect another? Is it limitless, or does the opportunity only arise once per story, year or only once in the creature's entire lifetime?

**Accidental:** The creature cannot choose to focus the spread of its condition. Transmission is beyond her control. Whether communicated via breath, touch, blood or simply by being in the same physical space as the creature, she can't turn it on and off. This means that, by and large, those in the race were not chosen, but forced into the life by the fickle whims of fate. (A creature can certainly maximize the possibility of infection, however. If her breath causes it, she can try to breathe on a desirable target in the hopes of infecting him. However, nothing stands in the way of other victims being similarly infected.) Does the infection have any natural limits? What's to stop a single shapeshifter from infecting, say, an entire airport full of people by dint of her poisoned presence? Does it only work on the already infirm, and thus the unwell become easy targets? Or perhaps the condition only takes hold in children, who take years to manifest the disease. The condition could be epidemic in its spread, which makes the game a frightening race against the disease while combating those who are already infected (i.e., the new shapechanger race). Such a game becomes a war on two fronts: a physical battle against the monsters and an invisible battle against a supernatural pathogen.

### SORCERY

The shapechanger breeds through the use of magic, whether that magic is born of a curse, blessing or some kind of ritual. This is a broadly defined category, and falls into any purely supernatural conveyance of the shapechanger condition. Perhaps a ritual is necessary whereupon the creatures must paint a newborn human child with their own blood and fur so that their totem will look favorably upon the infant

and grant him the condition. Maybe becoming a part of the society is, at least in part, a choice made by the human. If he willingly swears his soul on the society's catechism, and sacrifices something from himself (crushing a beloved locket underfoot, for instance), then he has given himself over to the condition.

Again, magic is fickle and broadly defined. It can be random, whereupon a human being so hateful and vile is cursed by the very air around him. It chokes him, and he drops to the ground, and dies *for just a moment*. Upon awakening, he finds himself cursed with the soul of an animal within him, the result of a cruel, open-air baptism by forces unknown.

Magic may require the blessing of one shapechanger, or may instead require an entire pack (or flock, herd, colony) of wercreatures to give their blessing. Do they all stand around in a circle, with the novitiate bound within their chanting diameter?

One guideline about magic is worth considering: magic requires sacrifice. Almost always, something has to be given for something to be received. This idea is bound to the concept of Harmony, whereupon balance is sought. The greater the gift or curse, the greater the sacrifice is needed by *someone*, be it the shapechanger or the one the shapechanger hopes to change.

### FORMS

Most shapechanger races will conform to three forms: a human form, animal form and an in-between hybrid form. The rules of shapeshifting are the same as they are on p. 170 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**.

Note that certain Aspects (see below) can modify these forms, or grant a character an extra form.

#### HUMAN FORM

As with werewolves, the wercreature is indistinguishable from a normal human. Even supernatural attempts to detect his condition are made at a -2 dice penalty. Some elements of the beast may come out in mannerisms or figure: one who becomes a cat may appear lithe and act aloof, for instance.

**Traits:** None

#### HYBRID FORM

This hideous, frightening form is an amalgamation between man and animal. It's likely as overt and awful as the Forsaken's Gauru form, though some hybrid forms are less "war form" and more "weird form." Some of this is dependent upon the animal. The Gauru form is an expression of the wolf's most violent heart — all teeth, jackal heads and barrel

chests. The hybrid form of, say, an owl and man won't be quite so brutal in appearance, but it'll damn sure be weird (head that pivots 360 degrees, feet distended into flesh-ripping talons, big, black eyes).

A shapechanger cannot remain in its hybrid form indefinitely. The form is unnatural, and the creature cannot sustain it for long. The werecreature can remain in the hybrid form for a number of turns equal to its Stamina + Resolve + Primal Urge. Once that time is up, the form's duration can be extended by spending Essence. Each point of Essence spent grants an additional turn in the hybrid form.

In this form, the shapechanger may be subject to a type of Rage (see below). The creature can end his hybrid form prematurely unless he is caught in the throes of Rage.

This form also causes the Fear Effect (see below).

**Traits:** You have six bonus dice to split among Strength, Dexterity and Stamina. At least a +1 die modifier must be applied to each (meaning that no modifier can go above +4). The form also gains +2 Size, +2 Perception and innate armor (1/1). Adjust all Advantages (Defense, Health, Initiative, Speed) in accordance to the bonuses granted to Physical Attributes. Claws, teeth, talons, beaks all cause lethal damage in this form. Character also fails most Mental and Social rolls, per the Gauru form.

Note that the above doesn't imply each character determines his own Attribute split upon creation. It means that each *race* template is given its own innate set of bonuses, which may be different from what the Forsaken receive. These traits should reflect the nature of the animal form. A hyena, for instance, is tough, but not necessarily strong. Its Strength bonus may be +2, Dexterity +1 and Stamina +3 (which differs from the Forsaken set).

#### ANIMAL FORM

The shapechanger, in her animal form, appears generally indistinguishable from that beast. The only difference is, in those cases in which the animal is particularly small compared to the human form (owl, housecat, snake), the shapechanger probably appears to be larger than the average animal of that species, but not so large it appears freakish. A witness may feel unsettled by the thought of, *That's a big god-damn owl*, but he won't believe it to be some kind of monster bird.

In animal form, a character inflicts lethal damage with only one part of her body. A lion may inflict lethal damage with its mouth, whereas a falcon may

cause damage with its talons. Pick one upon creating the template.

**Traits:** The animal form gets +3 bonus dice to split among the Physical Attributes. They can be split in any way desired; an Attribute does not require that it receive any bonus at all (and so, a full +3 bonus can be granted to a singular Attribute). The animal should become a Size approximately equal to that of the animal (example: owl 2, vulture 3, lion 6). The animal form gains a +3 bonus to all Perception rolls. Adjust all Advantages (Defense, Health, Initiative, Speed) in accordance to the bonuses granted to Physical Attributes. In many cases, too, bonuses may correlate to Size. Larger animals possess greater Strength or Stamina but less Dexterity. Smaller animals may gain generous bonuses to Dexterity (also, smaller animals might use the highest of Dexterity and Wits to determine Defense instead of the lowest of the two). Health, for sake of game balance, shouldn't drop more than one for those shapechangers that lose Size in their animal forms.

#### AUSPICES

The term "auspice" is unique to the Forsaken, but the idea of categorizing characters into certain affinities and abilities may carry over to your new shapechanger template. How many auspices are there? Are there a few key auspices, as one might find in a colony of ants or hive of bees (worker, warrior, farmer, queen)? Are these new auspices driven by cosmic bodies (sun, individual stars, constellations, comets) or some other kind of breakdown apropos to an animal species (male, female)? Are characters of this race born into auspices, or can they change them over time?

Also, you must figure out what bonuses if any apply to given auspices. Suggestions include the following:

- Ability to choose a fourth Specialty in certain Skills. (Warriors may get Specialties to certain Physical Skills, for instance.)
- Additional Merit points, likely no more than two, perhaps limited to a certain type or list of Merits. A mystic type may be able to choose from certain Mental Merits (Holistic Awareness) or other supernatural-based Merits (such as those listed below under "Character Creation").
- Bonuses to certain rolls (no more than a +2 bonus to one Skill) or the ability to ignore up to one die of Unskilled penalties in a given bracket (Mental, Physical, Social).

- One free one- or two-dot Aspect geared toward the auspice's Affinity (stealthy auspices might get an Aspect that allows them to move quickly or act unseen).

If you choose for your race not to have auspices — and they may not if they're either a newer race or simply don't define themselves so precisely — then a new character in of this species gains a fourth Specialty at the time of character creation.

## RAGE

Shapechangers are subject to one of three types of Rage, chosen upon the creation of the werereature template. The same rules and triggers for the Forsaken's *Kuruth* apply to any of these three types (see pp. 173–174, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**). The results, however, may be different.

**Death Rage:** Same as what the Forsaken suffer (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 175). Adjust stats for hybrid form, however.

**Escape Rage:** This version expresses *only* the flight instinct of the Forsaken's Death Rage. The creature, lost to the throes of Rage, must flee the scene at any cost. Persists for the rest of the scene. This version of Rage has effects that go beyond that scene, however. Until the character can get a full eight hours of sleep, she suffers a –1 die penalty to all Mental rolls — including rolls to resist entering Escape Rage.

**Madness Rage:** This Rage is not expressed immediately upon failing the Resolve + Composure roll. If that roll fails, the character enters her hybrid form and remains in that form until its duration is over (she cannot leave it prematurely). The effects of Madness Rage take over once she leaves the hybrid form. For the next 24 hours, the character gains one of the following *severe* derangements: Hysteria, Megalomania, Obsessive Compulsion, Paranoia or Schizophrenia (see pp. 96–100, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Each species is tied to only one particular derangement (i.e., the character doesn't choose which), which is designated upon creating the werereature template.

## WHY RAGE?

All shapeshifters are subject to Rage for one reason: because they are the product of two souls, and in some way, their very existence is unnatural. Both animals and humans have dark sides; rabid dogs, madmen, beasts that

chew their paws into bloody gobbets. Rage is reflective of this unhealthy, troubled side expressing itself under extreme duress.

## THE FEAR EFFECT

Shapechangers don't cause Lunacy in mortals, as shapechangers aren't Luna's children.

That said, a shapeshifter's hybrid form can be deeply unsettling. Any mortal witnessing a shapechanger in hybrid form must roll Resolve + Composure with a penalty equal to the shapeshifter's Primal Urge score (which may force a chance die roll).

A dramatic failure causes the human to react badly: he crumples, urinates or defecates on himself, and gains a mild derangement (Storyteller's choice) for the following week. Failure on the roll indicates that the human panics and flees in terror. Success means the human can stand his ground, but suffers a –2 dice penalty to any roll directed at the shapechanger. Exceptional success means the person exhibits a will of steel and reacts no differently than if he were looking at the mailman.

## INBORN ASPECTS

Each werereature race has three Inborn Aspects. Two of these advantages are in-built, and the third is chosen at the time of template design.

## SHAPESHIFTING

As noted above, all shapechangers maintain the ability to change between their three forms. Some groups may be able to change into additional forms (roughly equivalent to Dalu or Urshul), but those require Aspects purchased by the player at the time of character creation.

## REGENERATION

Shapechangers regenerate lost Health in the same way that the Forsaken do. The rules for regeneration on pp. 168–169 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken** are all applicable in regards to this new shapechanger race.

### Silver

In regards to regeneration, pure silver harms shapechangers *exactly* as it does the Forsaken (see p. 169, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**). This surprises those werewolves who discover the weakness, as the Uratha tie their silver vulnerability to legends surrounding the death of *Urfarah* and the curse of Luna.



## FINAL ASPECT

At the time of template creation, pick a third innate ability from the Inborn Aspect list, found below under “Aspects.” The template gets only one from this group, though at your discretion you may replace the Regeneration Aspect with a second Inborn Aspect. The Shapechanging Advantage may not be replaced in this way, as that ability is core to the very nature of a werecreature.

### IMAGINED BETRAYAL

It remains possible that one of the causes of war is a sense of entitlement — and from that, feelings of betrayal — possessed by the Forsaken.

Upon seeing another shapechanger race that *appears* to embody many of the same strengths and weaknesses of the Uratha, the werewolves may feel betrayed by Luna, or even *Urfarah*. The very fact that such creatures can be harmed by silver may be deeply disturbing. The Forsaken may want to exterminate such creatures by virtue of this perceived betrayal — or, they may themselves rebuff the advantages given to them by Luna (i.e., auspices), feeling thusly deceived.

## ASPECTS

Werewolves have Gifts that allow them to perform special feats and deal with spirits. Shapechangers don't have access to Gifts, however, and instead have Aspects. Aspects can inform various elements of a werecreature, from his relationships with spirits (if any) to modifications or additions to his three forms.

### CHOOSING INBORN ASPECTS

Some Aspects are innate. A character does not choose these at character creation; the Storyteller decides what abilities are intrinsic to a particular race of monsters.

At the time of template design, pick one new Inborn Aspect to accompany the other two innate Aspects (Shapechanging and Regeneration) from the list below. The Aspect should make sense with the type of shapechanger you hope to create from this. Each Aspect lists a number of corresponding animal-types that might complement the particular ability. You can, of course, make up your own to suit the needs of a given creation.

### Shadow Bond

Not all shapechangers deal with the spirit realm. Some don't even know — or care — that spirits exist. This Aspect allows a creature to enter the Shadow and deal with spirits in exactly the same way as the Forsaken. The shapechangers can pierce the Gauntlet and step sideways per the rules on pp. 250–251 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**. They can also use loci for Essence. This Aspect is appropriate for any type of shapechanger.

### Totem Guardian

A group of shapechangers, containing three or more individuals from that race, can have a patron spirit that works similarly to a Forsaken totem with a couple of key differences.

First, the totem (which may be called anything from “patron” to “My Lord”) is nearly always descended from the animal side of the werecreatures it aids. For instance, a werehyena's totem might be Laughing Hyena, Blind Hyena or Stalking Hyena. They couldn't have a rhino totem, or any other animal spirit.

Second, a group doesn't choose the totem — it chooses them. This process is different for every shapechanger, but it often boils down to the creature finding the shapechanger in a dream or manifesting and “claiming” the shapechanger through some long and exhausting ritual.

Characters of a race that possesses this Inborn Aspect can buy the Totem Merit, and it functions the same as the Forsaken Merit. Players can divvy up the appropriate points as the group sees fit, and they will also take an appropriate ban on bar with the spirit's potency.

Note that having a totem spirit doesn't confer the ability to enter the Shadow, or even be aware of the Shadow as anything beyond an abstract notion. The spirit speaks to the pack (flock, colony, whatever) through various Numina (Materialize, for instance).

This Aspect is appropriate for any type of shapechanger.

### Resurrection

When an aggravated level of damage is marked in the last remaining Health box and would normally end the creature's life, that creature still dies — but only for a short period of time. The creature remains dead for a number of hours equal to 10 minus the character's Harmony score. Provided the body remains relatively undisturbed during that time, the character will reawaken at the end of that period of

time and will lose *one* Primal Urge dot. If she has only one Primal Urge dot at the time of dying, then death is permanent. This happens *once* without any roll. At any points after that, the character must roll Resolve + Composure to return to life. Each time after that first, too, a cumulative -1 die penalty builds upon these rolls. (A character who has died three times previously will find that the fourth time the roll is penalized by three dice. And she must still have the Primal Urge to lose, or death cannot be avoided.)

Assume that in the time between death and resurrection, the body gains a number of Structure points equal to the character's Stamina (in human form). If, during this time, damage is done to the body that would diminish all those Structure points, the body may not resurrect.

Upon resurrection, all aggravated damage turns to lethal damage, and the character may begin healing accordingly.

This Aspect is appropriate for a shapechanger based on a particularly resilient animal. The cat myth, for instance, infers that the animals have nine lives, and this Aspect reflects that. Flies, too, can be "killed" and reborn by pouring salt over their heads. Some reptiles can remain living after losing limbs, and some mammals are just damn tough (bears, lions, hyenas).

#### Hivemind

Some creatures are intimately tied to one another on both a physical and psychic level. This Aspect confers a number of bonuses shared by all members of the wererecreature race.

When in line of sight (i.e., they are able to see one another), any member of the race may transfer to any other member Willpower points or points of Essence. They can do this as a reflexive action, and they can transfer one point per turn and from only one type (a character cannot transfer one point of Essence *and* one point of Willpower in a given turn; it's one or the other).

Also, a character may spend one Willpower point to psychically communicate with another member of his race. The character instigating the communication can speak unhindered for 10 seconds. The only stipulations to this are that the two characters are within a mile's range of one another and have met previously.

Finally, a character can spend a full Willpower dot to send out a "distress" signal. This psychic frequency pierces the mind of any members of that

character's shapechanger race, provided they are within 10 miles. They know exactly where the character giving the signal is. The signal goes until the character either turns it off or dies.

This Aspect is common among insect- and fish-based shapechangers, particularly those that gather in large colonies, schools or hives (ants, bees, termites, dolphins, sharks, piranha). Hivemind may, however, be applicable to any type of creature that bonds deeply (and perhaps abnormally) with his comrades.

#### Flight

All members of the group can fly. In animal form, no roll is necessary to gain and maintain flight, unless particularly tricky maneuvers are attempted, at which point success on a Dexterity + Athletics roll is necessary (with potential penalties coming from strong winds, rain or other adverse atmospheric conditions).

In hybrid form, achieving flight always requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll (same penalties apply). This roll must be made reflexively for every turn the wererecreature wishes to remain flying or gliding. This also applies to any additional forms characters might purchase with Aspect points.

In human form, the character cannot fly. He does, however, act as if he has hollow bones, which helps him gain distance while jumping. The character can jump twice as far as a normal human. (See "Jumping," pp. 66–67, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

This Aspect is likeliest among those shapechangers based on birds (crows, owls, falcons), flying insects (flies, wasps, some beetles) or bats.

## CHARACTER CREATION

Below are the steps to follow when creating a shapechanger character. Whether using one of the pre-defined templates in this book or applying one created by your Storyteller (or even another player), the steps are relatively the same.

### CREATING A SHAPECHANGER CHARACTER

Create a mortal character using the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

In Step Five, add the shapechanger supernatural template.

Some of the sample shapechanger races have auspice-like groupings; if so, choose one. Some of these auspices come with additional bonuses such as extra Merit points or Skill Specialties. Otherwise, choosing an auspice is not necessary. If no auspice is present, the character simply gets four Skill Specialties at creation instead of the usual three.

Shapechangers get seven Aspect points on which to spend on abilities that are endemic to their condition.

They also have access to a number of unique Merits.

Note that Morality here becomes Harmony, just as it does for werewolves.

More information on character creation can be found below.



## STEP ONE: CONCEPT

At the core, shapechangers were once human. It's potentially best to consider the human side of the character before applying the monstrous one. The concept allows you to pair the character's basic story with the themes of the wild, primal nature of the shapeshifter. Reclusive hermit? Zealous hunter? Solemn preacher? Your concept should ideally be a few words that provide the basis of the character you'll create through the rest of this process.

## STEPS TWO THROUGH FOUR: HUMAN TEMPLATE

Follow the steps for creating the human side of your character. You can refer to both the appropriate pages in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (pp. 34–35), as well as the creation notes found on pp. 60–61 in **Werewolf: The Forsaken**.

It's important to tie all these elements to the concept you hope to create. A revered hunter would go remiss without points in the Stealth Skill. A social butterfly may sacrifice Mental Attributes so she can spread her dots between Social and Physical Attributes (attractive physical form paired with the ability to show it off). Specialties, too, help you focus the character even further. For example, if the character grew up in the American Southwest, maybe a Stealth Specialty in "Desert Ground" is a good idea.

For the most part, you should be thinking of the human side, but some of this will certainly cross over into life among her shapeshifter people.

## STEP FIVE:

## SHAPECHANGER TEMPLATE

Whether the First Change begins at birth when clawing free from the mother's ragged womb, or whether it happens 40 years later after getting bitten by a seemingly rabid bat walking home from the pub one night, the character is now one of the shapeshifters. Once you decide what kind of shapeshifter the character is (whether one of the five designated later in the chapter or an all-new, home-built template), it's time to start digging down into what it means to be one of these primal creatures.

### AUSPICE

If the shapeshifter race has auspices, choose one of them that best suits your character's concept. In such a case, most auspices come with unique rules that go into effect at the time of character creation, and they usually involve gaining a few more perks that help specialize the character (Merits, Specialties, etc.). If no auspice applies, then the character simply gets a fourth Specialty in addition to the three purchased through the starting human template. This Specialty can be applied to any Skill the player deems appropriate.

### PRIMAL URGE

The Forsaken aren't alone in their possession of Primal Urge. All the shapechangers in this chapter are given over to the wild soul of a beast, and this score represents the power of that soul within the character. The rules are the same as they are in **Werewolf: The Forsaken** (pp. 75–76).

One way you can tweak it, however, is to change the type of penalty associated with Primal Urge gain. The default is a Social penalty as Primal Urge rises, but this penalty can be changed to suit the nature of the species. A shapechanger based on a reptile may lose Mental dice for certain tasks, or may just gain penalties on Resolve- and Composure-based resistance rolls (as the reptilian brain is given over easily to base functions). Alternately, perhaps pick a battery of five Skills that are hampered. A shapeshifter whose flesh becomes more amorphous, like that of a jellyfish, may have trouble with actions requiring manual dexterity (Computer, Crafts, Drive, Larceny, Weaponry).

### ESSENCE

The character's wild soul connects him to the primal and supernatural. Essence is the force that

fuels that primal part of the character. The character can use it to:

- Fuel some Aspects, as they may require Essence expenditure.
- Change form automatically as a reflexive action, allowing the character to forgo the normal Stamina + Survival + Primal Urge roll.
- Regenerate a lethal wound, provided the character has the Regeneration Inborn Aspect.
- Enter the spirit world without the need for a roll while in the presence of a locus, provided the character possesses the Shadow Bond Inborn Aspect.

A shapechanger character can regain Essence in a number of ways. Note that the character's Primal Urge score governs the maximum Essence that character can have at one time.

- On the Storyteller's say-so, a character can regain up to three Essence points between stories. The larger the victories (success over enemies, learned valuable information or wisdom, defended one's territory), the greater the Essence received. Between one and three points can be awarded in this fashion.
- When the character sees an animal representative of her animal soul for the first time in a 24-hour period, the character may regain Essence. (A hyena shapeshifter who sees a hyena for the first time in that period gains one point of Essence.)
- Some characters may be able to draw Essence from loci. This requires either the Shadow Bond Inborn Aspect, or the purchasable Dowser Aspect (see below).
- Some Merits may allow for certain types of Essence gain (see below).
- A character can eat part of his own flesh and turn it into Essence. The character bites his flesh, causing himself aggravated damage. For each aggravated level of damage taken in this way, the character can gain three Essence. It's not exactly cannibalism, but it's still an unnatural act and is a sin against Harmony. Assume that this is a Harmony 4 violation.
- A shapechanger may eat werewolf flesh to regain Essence. She gains one point of Essence for every point of damage inflicted with the intention of devouring the victim's meat. This is not a Harmony violation, as it involves hunting and eating prey, which is ostensibly normal behavior for a predator. If the shapechanger needlessly causes harm or tortures the werewolf (say, allowing the werewolf to heal and them cruelly continuing to eat, or simply consuming

the Uratha while he's alive and bound), it becomes a Harmony 3 violation.

- A shapechanger can eat human flesh or the flesh of her patron animal (a hyena for a werehyena, for instance). She gains one point of Essence for every point of damage inflicted with the intention of devouring the victim's meat. This is a grave sin and is a Harmony 2 violation.

### RENOWN

Shapechangers do not keep track of Renown as Forsaken do. Shapechangers may lean toward certain codes of Renown over others, but the scores aren't checked with dots or given mechanical function.

### ASPECTS

A beginning shapechanger starts with seven points to devote toward Aspects.

#### GAINING ASPECTS

A character can gain Aspects through play, learning them from elders within their race or by performing strange rituals found in hidden books. Aspects are purchased similar to Merits, and cost five experience points per Aspect dot. Inborn Aspects cannot be purchased or changed throughout play.

#### Alarming Alacrity (• to ●●●●●)

The character spends a Willpower point and can double his Speed for a number of turns equal to the points purchased in this Aspect. This can be used in any form.

#### Echolocation (• or ●●●)

Some animals are able to ping their surroundings with sonic echoes — these echoes are instantaneous, and give the creature a sense of the world around it without requiring any other sensory organ. The character with the one-dot version of this can ignore any penalties associated with fighting in adverse visual conditions such as darkness, smoke, or fog (see "Fighting Blind," p. 166, **World of Darkness Rulebook**). The three-dot version provides the same benefit with two additional advantages. First, the character can never be surprised unless she's asleep (see "Surprise," pp. 151–152, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Second, she gains a persistent +1 Defense

because her echolocation allows her to more intimately perceive incoming attacks.

#### Invisible Mark (•)

Ants leave pheromone trails. Cats spray. Some deer exude musk. The character can do similarly, leaving behind an invisible mark by simply touching his bare flesh against the ground or an object — a minor exertion and his pores will do the rest. This mark has an advantage in that only others of his kind can perceive the mark with a successful Perception (Wits + Survival) roll. The character can just leave a “generic” marking, or she can infuse it with a single word or name (such as “Gutterhorn” or “Death”). Those who successfully perceive the mark also perceive the single word message. This power costs nothing to activate.

#### Parallel Gift (•+)

The shapechanger has a power similar to that of an existing werewolf Gift. When imitating a Gift, the shapechanger must pay any Willpower or Essence cost just as a werewolf, and must make any roll necessary to activate the power. Not all Gifts are appropriate for shapechanger Aspects; a short list follows, but the Storyteller is invited to use her discretion for additional or custom Gifts.

Remember that, many shapechangers don’t use a Gift in the same way that a werewolf does. Instead of a learned method of manipulating Essence and coercing the spirits, a shapechanger’s Gift is a supernatural ability that stems from its nature, just as any other Aspect.

The cost of the Aspect is the same as the level of Gift (so Corpse Witness would cost three Aspect points, as it is a three-dot Gift).

Suggested Gifts: Corpse Witness, Warning Growl, Loose Tongue, Sand in the Eyes, Playing Possum, Father Wolf’s Speed, Sense Malice, Omen Gazing, The Right Words, Know Name, Traveler’s Blessing, Know the Path, Sense Weakness, Slip Away, Feet of Mist, Running Shadow, Crushing Blow, Mighty Bound, Savage Might.

Full details on these Gifts can be found in **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, Chapter Two.

#### Spirit Animal (•+)

The character is given power by an invisible spirit or “power” animal. This animal is different from the one she changes into. It provides dice toward one Skill, chosen at the time this Aspect is purchased. The Skill should roughly reflect the spirit animal’s nature (a gazelle may provide Athletics dice, a bee-spirit

may grant pluses to Socialize, while a shark might confer Intimidation dice). The character spends one Essence point to gain that Skill for the remainder of the scene. For example, a werewolf may possess the Aspect: Spirit Animal (Monkey, Larceny) 2, which grants her +2 to Larceny rolls when she spends the Essence. This Aspect is unavailable for any character with the Totem Guardian Inborn Aspect.

#### Unsettling Eye (•)

The eyes of some animals are frightening to behold, revealing the predator’s merciless fury. When making any Intimidation roll, the character can activate this reflexively. For a split second, the target of the roll catches a subconscious glimpse of the animal’s eye: the lidless shark orb, a snake’s eye, a tiger’s hungry stare or a fly’s iridescent facets. The character doubles his Intimidation on that roll. This power costs nothing to activate, but can only be used once per scene.

#### Carnivore’s Puissance (••)

The character regains Essence by eating hearts. The larger the animal from whence the heart came, the more Essence is gained in this manner. Take half the prey’s Size and round up; this is the amount of Essence gained from consumption of the heart. (A dog heart would provide two points of Essence. A bear’s heart would confer four points of Essence.) The heart must be consumed raw. Note that consuming a human’s heart or the heart of the character’s own animal representation is a Harmony violation. This Aspect provides the character nothing when consuming a werewolf’s (or other shapechanger’s) heart. This Aspect can only be used once per game session.

#### Cull the Weak (••)

Many animals hunt by picking out the weakest in a herd, and this Aspect is a reflection of that. By spending a point of Essence and rolling Wits + Empathy, the character can discern who in a situation appears physically the weakest. An exceptional success on the roll also reveals if any characters in an area seem to be suffering from any kind of illnesses. This Aspect can only be used on one group at a time — in other words, if there are five Forsaken and three humans in an area, it doesn’t help the character determine which of the eight is the weakest. He must pick one group (Forsaken or humans) to find the weakest among that individual set. Weakness is a subjective thing, largely given over to a combination of wound levels and Physical stats. Note that some can trump this Aspect in a few ways: first, some feign weakness by making a Strength + Subterfuge

roll. Second, wound levels may make a Forsaken the weakest in the group, but once they're healed, he may become the strongest.

#### Unnerving Cry (••)

The character spends a Willpower point and rolls Presence + Primal Urge as an instant action. He emits a horrible, unsettling sound that may be tied to his animal form (a bird's screech) or may be unrelated to any animal (a keening moan). Success indicates that any individuals within 200 yards must resist with a Resolve + Primal Urge roll. Failure to resist indicates that an affected victim's next action will suffer a -2 dice penalty. If the character making the cry gets an exceptional success, that penalty increases to -4 dice.

#### Feral Collective (•••)

The character taps into a kind of neural network of animals within one square mile around her. By succeeding on a Wits + Animal Ken roll, she can sense the presence of *every* animal in that area, provided the animal does not possess human-level intelligence. (This does not include insects. This seems to be a self-defense mechanism, for those who

have tapped into the millions of insects in a square mile were left gibbering and brain-damaged.) She can also spend a Willpower point to "ride the senses" of any one of the birds or mammals in that range. Riding the senses of a fish requires both a Willpower point and an Essence point, as their minds are so unfathomable that it requires preternatural effort to pierce their alien thought processes. When riding the senses, the character travels with that animal wherever it goes. She has access to all the creature's senses. She sees, hears, smells, tastes and feels every stimuli parsed by the animal. She can also feel its thoughts and instincts at work. Note that she cannot *control* the creature. She merely lurks in its mind for a while. This power lasts for one hour.

#### Hypnotic Allure (•••)

Some animals are simply captivating. The way a snake moves, the sinews beneath a panther's silken coat, the distant majesty of a soaring bird. The character is able to channel some of that and turn on the charm when dealing with a crowd. The player rolls the character's Presence + Persuasion. Those affected can resist with a Resolve + Composure roll



(alternately, the Storyteller may resist with the highest Resolve + Composure score within the affected range). If the character's successes beat those of the crowd, they are given over to her primal allure. Any Social rolls made with those affected are made with a bonus equal to the successes achieved on activating this Aspect. This ability affects those within the character's Primal Urge score in yards. Once active, it cannot be turned off. It lasts for one scene.

#### Near-Man Form (●●●)

This form lies between the human and hybrid form. In this form, the character appears *mostly* human, and in shadows most people will still believe him to be as such. However, certain animal traits appear when applicable: increased body hair, bestial-colored eyes (yellow, green, red, etc.), tougher skin, distended jaws, antenna nubs and so on. In this form, the character walks on two feet, like a man.

This form gains +1 to two Physical Attributes chosen at the time this Aspect is purchased. The two bonuses chosen may not be changed after the initial purchase. Size goes up by +1, and Perception goes up by +1. Note that other advantages (Initiative, Health, Speed and Defense) may change with the bonuses granted to Physical Attributes. Because this form is somewhat unnatural, a character suffers a -1 die penalty to any Manipulation roll. This form still invokes the Fear Effect, but the human rolling to resist that effect is *not* penalized by the character's Primal Urge score.

#### Parallel Numina (●●●)

The shapechanger has a power similar to that of an existing spirit Numen. When imitating such a power, the shapechanger must pay any Willpower or Essence cost just as the spirit would. Most Numina require a Power + Finesse roll, but shapechangers don't possess those scores. Therefore, assume that the roll instead becomes Wits + Intelligence. Not all Numina powers are appropriate for shapechanger Aspects; a short list follows, but the Storyteller is invited to use her discretion for additional or custom Numina.

Suggested Numina: Animal Control, Blast, Harrow, Magnetic Disruption, Phantasm, Terrify.

Each Numen purchased in this way costs three Aspect points.

#### Venomous (●●● or ●●●●)

The character's teeth or claws become venomous for a short time. (The player must choose only one — claw or fang — at the time this Aspect is pur-

chased; this Aspect *can* be bought twice, however, so it covers both claws and fangs.)

The three-dot Aspect allows the character to spend one Essence point to make the appropriate attack (bite or claw) venomous for a single turn. This is reflexive. The Toxicity level of this venom is 5, and upon a successful attack it does that in lethal damage automatically on *top* of any successes gained on the attack roll. (Note that if the character using the venom misses, the venom effect is wasted as it only lasts for a single turn.) The venom remains in the bloodstream for a number of hours equal to the attacker's Primal Urge score. Every hour, the victim must roll Stamina + Resolve to resist the effects of the toxin (see pp. 180–181, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, for rules on how venom does persistent damage).

The four-dot Aspect only does the damage once. It does not recur every hour. All other rules are the same, except the damage incurred is aggravated, not lethal.

#### Near-Beast Form (●●●●●)

The character gains a static new form between the hybrid and animal form. The form appears as a primal, nearly prehistoric version of the animal side of the character. All parts of the beast's flesh are exaggerated and frightening: slavering jaws, flesh-ripping claws, glistening mandibles, iridescent scales, whatever. In this form, the character walks more like the animal than like a man (on all fours, for instance).

This form gains an even +2 bonus to all Physical Attributes. Size gain is +1 (the reflection, remember, is prehistoric and thus abnormally large), Initiative is +2, Speed is +7, Health is +3, and Perception is +2. Defense may also change if Dexterity was previously the lowest score used to determine that advantage. This form invokes the Fear Effect. Also, because this form is unnatural, it incurs a -3 dice penalty to any Manipulation rolls made while in this form.

#### War Heart (●●●●●)

The shapechanger's heart and body are shot through with incalculable anger. When the character takes damage, it only makes her stronger. For every lethal damage that she takes in one turn, she gains +1 to her Strength in the following turn (to a maximum of +5). That Strength is only available for that one subsequent turn following the application of lethal damage. The increase in Strength also Speed accordingly. This power costs nothing to activate, and is always on.

## RITES?

The shapechangers do not generally have access to mystical rites. Rites provide a link between the two worlds — this one and this *Hisil* — and are largely exclusive to werewolves.

That's not to say shapeshifters eschew rites, only that the rites don't usually provide any kind of mechanical benefits. Rites are purely for religious function (though some may perform home-spun compulsions masked as "rituals"), similar to Catholic or pagan rites.

If you do want to give one group access to rites, assume that you can buy access to a rite as one does Aspects. If the Storyteller allows, a character can buy rites by spending the dots from her initial Aspect pool. Some rites (Banish Human) are probably more common and thematically appropriate than others (Rite of Renunciation).

## STEP SIX: SELECT MERITS

Beginning characters get seven dots to spend toward Merits (unless an auspice grants them more). Merits should fit the character concept, and not be purchased simply for advantage's sake: would an itinerant hitchhiker start with significant Resources? Would a teen girl who just experienced her First Change possess lots of points in a Fighting Style Merit?

Below are additional Merits available only to shapechanger characters. Note that, at the Storyteller's discretion, these Merits may apply to Forsaken characters, as well.

### ALTAR STONE (• TO •••••)

**Effect:** The character is in control of an altar stone. This stone acts as a vessel for Essence. The altar stone produces no Essence of its own. To give it Essence, the character sacrifices a living creature upon it. Upon the creature's death, the altar gains a number of Essence equal to the creature's normal Health score (sacrificing a dog would yield between four and seven points of Essence depending on the Size and therefore Health of the animal). The character, or any other member of his race, may draw Essence from the stone once per day by rolling Harmony. Successes gained equal Essence points taken. The altar can only hold a number of Essence equal to the altar's Merit points times two. Moreover, only one creature can be sacrificed to the altar per week.

Several characters can contribute to an Altar Stone's Merit points.

(Note that killing animals upon the altar doesn't count as "torturing prey" unless the character actively torments the animal. Killing humans, animal representatives of the shapechanger, or other shapechangers is a Harmony violation, however.)

**Drawback:** The altar suffers Essence bleed. After a number of days equal to the points spent in this Merit, the Essence begins bleeding off the altar, depleting it by three per day. If the Altar Stone Merit has •••, then on the fourth day the altar begins to bleed. (Spirits can claim this Essence only after it bleeds off — many therefore gather around it in the hopes of feasting.) Also, when an altar stone goes dry either from taking Essence or bleeding Essence, the altar must be "reawakened" with a Willpower point, or the altar will hold no Essence.

### BEZOAR (••)

**Effect:** Some animals cough up a calcified ball of hair or fiber, and ancient civilizations all the way through the Middle Ages considered such biological detritus to be an excellent talisman against evil, poison and sickness. The bezoar kept by the character may be from the character (i.e., he threw it up at one point, likely after consuming a hearty kill) or another shapechanger. Three types of bezoars exist, and the character may choose one effect to accompany his talisman:

- The character gains +1 on any resistance rolls when opposing supernatural powers that would affect his mind (such as the Forsaken Gift, Loose Tongue).

- The character heals wounds lost to aggravated damage a little faster. Instead of taking a week (seven days) to heal one point of aggravated, it only takes five days to heal one point.

- The character gains +3 dice when making a Stamina + Resolve roll to resist poisons and toxins. Some poisons or toxins don't allow a character to roll to resist, but if the character possesses this type of bezoar, he is afforded a chance to resist reflexively (though in such cases, he does *not* gain the +3 bonus; the chance to resist is reward enough).

### FIGHTING STYLE:

#### SAVAGE FURY (• TO •••••)

**Prerequisites:** Strength •••, Wits •••, Primal Urge •••

**Effect:** This fighting style isn't a trained style. Shapechanger characters do not learn it so much as



stoke the predator's fury within, using the pent-up anger to unleash brutal, savage attacks. Note that this "style" works in all forms, even human. While the character may be wearing human flesh, the animal within always lurks close to the skin.

Dots purchased in this Merit allow characters access to specific combat maneuvers. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the subsequent maneuver. So, your character cannot possess Predatory Defense before he has Beast's Blunder. The Merit's maneuvers and their effects are described below. All Maneuvers are based on the Brawl Skill.

**Caged Fear (●):** Wild animals don't like to be caged. They do what they must to escape behind held or leashed. In this case, the character gains bonuses against grapple attacks. She gains +1 Defense against all incoming grapple attempts. Moreover, if held in a grapple, she can choose to replace her Strength with her Dexterity in any roll attempted to get herself free. She wriggles, squirms and thrashes violently about to escape.

**Beast's Bluster (●●):** Beasts fight with more than just claw swipes or crushing jaws. They bark, howl and hiss. They radiate authority in their body language, seen in the way two bull elk face one another, or in the way that dogs circle one another before a fight. This "move" allows a character to forgo an attack for a single turn and make a Presence + Intimidation roll as he postures and asserts his dominance through sound and movement. Hairs stand on end and his very stance indicates feral supremacy. He directs it against a single foe. Success on this roll indicates that this foe loses one Willpower point, and in the next turn, suffers a -2 dice penalty on her attack if it's against the character. Exceptional success on this intimidation attempt doubles that attack penalty, and the foe still loses a Willpower point. The character can still apply his Defense against incoming attacks if performing this maneuver. **Drawback:** Performing this move costs a Willpower point. Beast's Bluster can only be used against a foe once during a scene (though it may be applied against multiple foes in a given scene).

**Predatory Defense (●●●):** For the remainder of the scene, the character gains a Defense bonus equal to half his Primal Urge score (round up). The way he moves is almost intuitive, as if every hair on his body senses incoming attacks. This only applies to persistent Defense used against incoming attacks. It does not modify the way a character applies any Dodge. **Drawback:** Opening oneself to this tactic costs a

Willpower point. Moreover, if at any point during the scene the character must roll for Rage, he does so with a -2 dice penalty. This ability requires bringing the dark, uncontrollable animal side dangerously close to the surface.

**Baiting (●●●●):** Some animals know how to bait one another — they stand a certain way to indicate weakness or give off pheromones indicating false fear. A character declares that he's baiting at the beginning of a turn, and makes a reflexive Strength + Subterfuge roll to appear frail or damaged. During the turn in which the character baits a single foe, he gains +2 Defense against incoming attacks from that foe. The *following* turn, provided the baiting was successful and the opponent attacked, the character gains a +3 bonus to attack as he uses the element of surprise ("He's not weak, but strong!") against his opponent's misstep. Because this tactic doesn't supernaturally convince a foe to attack, the Storyteller may allow the foe to make a reflexive Wits + Empathy roll to contest the baiting and determine the true nature of the character's feigned weakness. **Drawback:** Baiting costs one Willpower, and can only be used once per game session.

**Furious Assault (●●●●●):** The character makes an all-out attack per p. 157 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. This attack is ruthless, a frenzy of bloodthirsty destruction — a rain of fists, a rending whirlwind of claws, a skull-crushing clamp-down of jaws or mandibles. Instead of gaining the normal +2 for the all-out attack, however, the character can add his Primal Urge score to the attack roll. **Drawback:** The shapeshifter puts the whole of his bestial spirit into this attack and forgoes his Defense for that turn. Moreover, he *must* roll immediately — whether the attack is a success or failure — to resist whatever Rage plagues his people. The roll to resist Rage is made at -3 dice. With this attack, the animal within becomes too hungry to ignore.

### OLD BLOOD (● to ●●●)

**Effect:** Something about your character gives off a wild resonance, as if his blood were old and his roots were deep. This aura grants him a kind of *de facto* clout over other shapeshifters both of his kind and of other races.

Each dot possessed adds a +1 modifier to your character's Persuasion or Intimidation rolls when dealing with any other shapeshifter creature. The aura he gives off is palpable, even if others don't consciously recognize it.

**Drawback:** Each dot possessed also confers a -1 die penalty to any Socialize roll when dealing with other shapechangers. Socializing requires a kind of comfort level, and other beast-men find such intimate social situations uneasy when your character is included. His old blood announces that he's a top predator, not an amiable chap.

### PREY CHARM (•••)

**Effect:** Your character keeps around a talisman made from some part of a prey animal (likely the kind of prey hunted by the shapechanger's own animal). It might be a rabbit's foot, a coyote ear, a desiccated fish skeleton or even a bunch of dead wasps in a jar. It's always worn as some kind of jewelry, often around the neck or dangling from a bracelet (though it's possible it could serve as something unconventional such as a keychain).

Once per game session, the charm provides its "luck" for a character at a moment of the player's choosing. The player may re-roll a failed roll, and gain +3 dice to the re-roll.

## STEP SEVEN:

### DETERMINE ADVANTAGES

In Chapter Four of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, you'll find the rules for establishing your character's physical advantages as well as his Willpower score. From there, it's time to decide your character's Harmony score, as well as his Virtue and Vice.

### HARMONY

Just as the Forsaken strive to manage the internal balance between their human and animal souls, so, too, must every shapeshifter contend with the same struggle. By and large, the hierarchy of sins applied against the Uratha is the same for shapeshifters, with a few simple (and mostly semantic) differences:

**Harmony 10:** No changes necessary. Shapeshifting is key to their existence, and cannot be ignored.

**Harmony 9:** No changes necessary. Silver still hurts (except in the case of the Midianites, and they count this violation toward those who'd carry iron and fire). Moreover, shapeshifters are all hunters in some way, and must obtain their own food according to the ways of their wild soul.

**Harmony 8:** Not every shapeshifter can enter the Shadow or deal with spirits, and so disrespecting spirits becomes something of a non-concern. Those werecreatures that *do* still truck with spirits should still face repercussions when disrespecting them.

Disrespecting elders within the shapechanger's own race is still a violation.

**Harmony 7:** Shapeshifters are not given over to any tribal vows, and so they can't violate them. Spending too much time alone is still a concern, however. These are social creatures. They forge bonds. They stay together.

**Harmony 6:** Some shapeshifters can mate with one another, and so this isn't a concern. It can still be a violation for those who can only breed with humans or infect others, especially if the result of interspecies breeding is overtly negative. Needlessly slaying a human or an animal representative of the shapechanger's primal side remains a violation.

**Harmony 5:** Slaying another of their kind in battle is a regrettable and sometimes unforgivable sin. Note that this doesn't count toward other *kinds* of shapeshifters, only those within the character's own race.

**Harmony 4:** Revealing the existence of their people to the human herd is still a terrible idea and counts as a sin for obvious reasons. Using silver (or, in the case of the Midianites, iron or fire) against their own kind is also a wretched transgression.

**Harmony 3:** Torturing prey remains as a sign of degeneration. Murdering one of their own race is a sin (though murdering a werewolf *isn't*).

**Harmony 2:** Hunting humans or the animal representation of the shapechanger race is a grievous sin.

**Harmony 1:** Betrayal of either one's own internal group or the race at large counts as a sin. Also, hunting one's own kind as food is the very nadir of grotesque behavior, and represents a contravention of all that is sane. (Eating werewolves is not a sin at this level.)

### CULTURAL RELATIVISM

It may be tempting to ascribe a new set of sins to a home-spun race of shapeshifters, and you're certainly welcome to do so. Maybe eating humans for food is perfectly acceptable at median levels of Harmony. Perhaps they're *expected* to carry silver because of internal strife among their own kind.

That said, we encourage you to remain with Harmony as listed. Werewolves and other shapeshifters are, in many ways, wildly different creatures. Different biology, divergent goals, incompatible societies: all the things that lead to war. See, but they're all still *thematically* the same. All shapechangers, werewolves included,

are beings caught between the human mind and the animal soul. They're angry. Their flesh is mutable. They are given to feral urges. Harmony, therefore, remains appropriate for all of them. Harmony in this way isn't really subjective: it represents a very real, non-relative balancing of these two halves. It isn't the invention of society, bent around the werewolves' Oath. It's the other way around: the Oath accommodates Harmony.



### VIRTUE AND VICE

Information on Virtue and Vice can be found in Chapter Four of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. It's worth a quick note here that you may want to consider in a given shapeshifter race what Virtues and Vices could stand out above others. A race of wild boar-men may be more likely to have Virtues such as Fortitude (tough bodies) and Charity (some pigs share their food) and Vices such as Gluttony (voracious hog appetites) and Sloth (lying indolent in the mud). Think about how these elements tie to both the human side *and* the animal side of both a shapeshifter race and the characters that populate its society.

Moreover, this book is about war between the races. What kinds of Virtues and Vices are likeliest to contribute to war? Of Virtues: Faith, Fortitude and Justice may spur characters toward conflict. In Vices: Envy, Greed, Pride, and Wrath are all very emblematic of a war-like people.

### STEP EIGHT: SPARK OF LIFE

Your shapeshifter character is almost ready to play, but it's time to give him some additional elements that will help push him from being "dots on a page" to "living, breathing character." Why are his Traits the way they are? What in his past has added up to the words and dots on the character sheet? How has the First Change transformed his life for good and ill?

It's also time to give the character a bunch of little but important details: his name, for starters. Plus, he may have certain mannerisms or turns of phrase, even an accent.

After that, you're done the character, and it's time to put him through the prelude. Information on running the prelude can be found in **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, pp. 67-70.



# THE COLONY

SUTHANU-SUA

Light from the moon came through the broken boards of the barn walls. The sounds of fireworks popped in the distance, followed by the requisite oohs and ahhs.

The killer stared down at his prize, the woman bound with duct tape to the base of the old grain hopper. Red hair. Mother of two. Born in December. She was perfect, stolen from her family in the midst of the July 4th celebration. Stupid girl. He'd have his way with her. Then he'd take each of her fingers and each of her toes, just as his master demanded. Of course, he'd kill her afterward. Otherwise, the dismembered extremities were no good to the old man's magic, and the killer did not want to upset his master.

As she woman struggled to blink away a bead of blood that had dribbled into her eye from her busted brow, the killer saw something to his right. He wheeled on it, camping hatchet in hand, but found it was only a black cat with green eyes, watching him with a kind of disconnected curiosity.

"Piss off," the killer said, and kicked a rust-eaten grain scoop at the animal. It darted off into the darkness, hissing as it fled.

Taking a deep breath, the killer thumbed open his belt and button, setting the hatchet down on a hay bale. He moved toward his prey, grinning, but he noticed something.

She wasn't looking at him. She was staring behind him.

Then he saw them, too. Cats. Behind him, sitting in a perfect row. Above him, too, looking down from a cock-eyed beam. They were everywhere, glaring at him, green eyes, red eyes, yellow eyes.

The black cat with the green eyes — which had previously ducked the grain scoop — looked up at the killer and blinked.

"You're going to die now," the cat said.

The man screamed. The cats swarmed him.

Cats have long occupied a unique place in world mythology. In Thai legend, cats were the sacred guardians of the temples, standing vigilant against evil invaders. In Egypt, the aristocratic cat was a guardian on many levels: actual cats killed poisonous snakes that threatened the household, while on a cosmic level the cat-headed goddess Bast worked as a sometimes avenger helping to annihilate the enemies of Ra and the Dynasty. Cats have long been the sacred guardians of man as well as the ushers of souls going from this life to the afterlife. Of course, some see cats as the embodiment of evil. They might be witches' familiars. Or maybe there is truth about how they suck the breath from sleeping babies. Perhaps cats are thieves, killers or malicious spirits. Are cats good, or are cats evil? The answer may be, a bit of both.

The werecats of the Colony pay some attention to the animal's place in mythology, but they don't credit any one story over another. They know only that they are driven to a life that they may not want. Their minds, coupled with their vengeful souls, set them upon those who would do ill against his fellow humans. Those who sin must be destroyed for the good of the world. The cats of the Colony may not agree with this in their heart of hearts, but it matters little. They do what their instincts tell them, or they begin to go mad.

Madness haunts them, you see. Failing to live up to some lunatic ideal from 1,000 years ago still affects the werecats, today. Their lives — all nine of them, if you believe the stories — sit perched on the precipice between sanity and insanity, and to neglect what their urges tell them is the easiest way to topple off that edge and into the darkness below.

So, the werecats gather together in the places where man can be found: rural towns, suburbs, cities. Together, they settle in a location and from there, they hunt. They dart into the darkness, looking for those who would do humankind ill. When the were-





cats find them, they kill them. And, for a time, they stave off their madness and feel a little better.

**Appearance and Forms:** As humans, the *Suthanu-sua* often dress to blend in with the local humans. It does little good if they appear as members of some unusual subculture and draw needless attention to themselves. No, the members of the Colony blend as best they can. If their home is in the bad part of town, maybe they dress in rags or second-hand clothing. If they live near the financial district, it's all power suits and spit-shined shoes. The goal for most is to dress unassuming, though some find that the fickle nature of the cat within causes them to dress a little more exorbitantly than others. Some, too, seem occasionally driven to wear clothes that reflect the fur patterns found when in animal form (black suits worn by black cats, striped furs for the mottled or tortoiseshell set).

In their hybrid form, the werecats take on an eerie appearance. Similar to images of the goddess Bast, their heads become overlarge exaggerations of a cat's head, but the grace and poise found in the goddess's icons is not present in the hybrid form. In this form, the character's body thins almost sickeningly, and she gains a foot or two in height. Human flesh becomes covered with a faint, soft layer of cat's fur, though the pink human skin is often still apparent. Her limbs grow long and abnormally lithe, and the weight of this often leads them to hunch over. Many werecats express their vanities in this form, wearing jewelry or strange makeup (particularly painted to call attention to the animal's large and frightening eyes).

The Traits for hybrid form are Strength +1, Dexterity +4, Stamina +1, Size +1, Initiative +4, Speed +5, Armor 1/1, Health +2, Perception +2.

In animal form, the character appears as a normal, though perhaps slightly large and feral, housecat. Various fur patterns are possible. This form has a curious exception that the hybrid form doesn't feature: the cat can speak in a human tongue. Whatever human languages the werecat knows, she can speak them in this form. Many use it to unsettle their enemies, as a talking cat is, in practice, more frightening than one might expect.

The Traits for animal form are Dexterity +2, Stamina +1, Size -3, Initiative +2, Speed +5, Health -2, Perception +3

**Reproduction:** The werecats create more of their own through a unique and willful infection mechanism, (some call it "Cat Scratch Fever" in a morbid tongue-in-cheek way). Upon every werecat's 10-year

birthday (10th, 20th, 30th, 40th and so on), he begins to suffer a nagging itch to bring another werecat into the Colony. Some call this "going into heat," though the werecat doesn't become so much amorous as simply unable to control himself in various situations (suffering a -3 dice penalty to all Resolve or Composure rolls).

At this point, the werecat is expected to — and must, if he wants to negate the maddening penalty — find a worthy candidate for the Colony and bring the candidate into the fold. To do so, the werecat spends a Willpower point. In either the hybrid or animal form, his claws grow slick with an oily, pungent residue for one day after the point is spent. He can scratch *one* human during that 12-hour period. Provided the scratch does *any* damage at all, that person becomes infected (the pathogen is not combatable). Within a week, she will suffer a debilitating fever. That fever will kill the person unless she is taken in by the werecats. The mere presence of a *Suthanu-sua* is enough to keep the fever from killing the human. Within 24 hours of continued presence, the fever dies down, and the person goes through her First Change. (If the person dies before being taken in, the werecat's Resolve and Composure penalties do not go away. That penalty remains until the scratch victim's First Change.)

Most take great care in selecting a new member of the Colony. Prior to the appropriate birthday, as far out as a year beforehand, a werecat will diligently select a number of possible candidates for the condition. Ideally, the person should be someone capable of maintaining the fight against malevolent forces, because the person is going to be forced into that role whether she likes it or not. Some werecats will take this opportunity to *punish* mortal offenders, however, by cursing them with the lycanthrope condition. Other werecats are, frankly, a little crazy despite their curse. These creatures may literally select a human at random, giving into the aloof and insane whims of the cat side of their personality.

**Character Creation:** Cats are sharp and communicative creatures, and so werecats tend to favor Mental and Social Attributes. Some, of course, prefer to be the vigilant guardian, silent and strong, and so Physical Attributes (Dexterity in particular) become important. Human-centric Skills are prominent, such as Computer, Crafts, Medicine, Drive, Streetwise. All used to help them blend in with mortal society and use those Skills appropriate to the task at hand (i.e., the curse). Occult is popular among some scholarly

types, while others favor manipulative Social Skills such as Empathy, Intimidation or Subterfuge. (Some might not consider Empathy a manipulative Skill, but they haven't seen a werecat wield it like a weapon. A Wits + Empathy roll allows the werecat to determine a foe's emotional state, and then can tune her Intimidation or Subterfuge attempts accordingly, gaining a +1 on any Social roll that can use the information gleaned from using Empathy.)

**Inborn Aspects:** Shapechanging, Regeneration, Resurrection

**Common Aspects:** Hypnotic Allure, Invisible Mark, Near-Man Form

**Rage:** Madness Rage (Megalomania)

**Territories:** Cat Colonies claim territory differently from the Forsaken. The Forsaken seek borders, defined limits to their area. The werecats do no such thing. They mark a town or a city neighborhood as theirs. It matters little who else calls it home or divvies it up into nicely sliced domains. The cats call the area all theirs. They're not pushy about it, and in fact will do their very best to remain utterly hidden from any other supernatural, because there's little reason to go setting off alarms. But the werecats know the truth: it's all theirs, no matter what the maps and guidebooks say.

In the approximate center of a territory (town or neighborhood), the cats often set up a house or other building as a communal space. (Some jokingly refer to these as "feral cat colonies," but the joke is more appropriate than some might care to recognize.) Five werecats might hole up in an old Victorian house at the edge of town, or may instead simply all get apartments in the same tenement so they can be close to one another.

**Concepts:** Abuse victim, alleyway hunter, antiquities dealer, building superintendent, gore-soaked spirit of vengeance, New Age boutique counter jockey, prostitute, wrathful housewife

**Quote:** *"You want it to be subjective, and so do I. I'd love for evil to be in the eye of the beholder. You know how many people I've killed who could've maybe become better with rehabilitation? But it doesn't work like that. So, if you have a prayer or last request, get on with it, because I'm growing bored."*

### NAMING OF THE CATS

Werecats each have two names. The first is their human name, which may or may not

be their given birth name. The human name is meant to let them blend in with the mortal throng, and has a first and last name (Betty Johnson, Peter Cosgrove, etc.).

The second name is the cat's name. It always comprises an adjective-noun pairing meant to indicate the *Suthanu-sua's* nature and habits: Quickpaw, Fickletail, Crueltongue. In most cases, a character receives this name from the werecat that scratched her (thus bringing her into the Colony).

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Below are several elements of werecat culture that may play into a story involving these creatures.

### THE CURSE

The curse we've been talking about the whole time is this: werecats must destroy evil to protect humanity. The werecats don't have to like humanity. They don't have to care one whit about human beings. But the werecats are driven to cull the herd of its awful elements, cutting out the wretched cancer wherever they find it.

Each werecat is beholden to a time limit as determined by her Primal Urge score. This limit is equal to 10 minus her Primal Urge score in weeks (minimum of one week). The werecat has this amount of time to end the life of some creature with a Morality (or equivalent Clarity, Harmony, Humanity or Wisdom score) of 4 or less. If she does not end the life of a degenerated individual by the end of that time limit, she immediately suffers a mild derangement that she does not yet possess (this is up to the Storyteller, who should choose the derangement based upon circumstances in the character's life). She has *one* more week in which to kill someone with a Morality 4 or less. After that week, the mild derangement upgrades to the severe version. The derangement — mild or severe — disappears once the cat has killed an appropriate victim. At this point, the "clock" resets to the original time limit of 10 minus the character's Primal Urge score.

The curse comes with an awful stipulation: the werecat cannot suss out an individual's Morality score. She can only hazard a guess of that individual's moral qualities and, frankly, hope she's right.

The werecat does gain benefits from killing degenerated sinners: Essence. The Essence gained grows the more debased the victim was. (Morality 4 earns





the werecat one point of Essence, Morality 3 nets her two points of Essence and so on.)

The origins of the curse are in no way clear to the *Suthanu-sua*. Some suggest it's purely mythological; cats performed a task in the days of old, and they're expected to perform that task today, whether or not they care to do it. Others believe that their kind offended some higher power — God, Buddha, some asshole pharaoh — and this is their penance. Many werecats speak quietly about how, if they kill enough sinners, their curse will be revoked and they can live in peace once the body count has reached its bloody peak.

Some werecats attempt to live with the curse and reject the maddening feelings within that drive them to insanity. These werecats live often solitary lives, moderating madness with drugs or therapy. Some lose their minds entirely and become the evil things they hate, and must be hunted down by their brethren.

Worth noting is that the slaying of “sinful” humans is a violation at Harmony 7 for the werecats, provided the victim was actually worth killing. Should the character be mistaken about the victim and needlessly kill someone who was not appropriately debased, it becomes a violation at Harmony 6, instead.

### CAT'S EYES

The werecats are “born” into auspices, similar to the Forsaken, but it has nothing to do with when they were infected or the conditions surrounding their creation.

Each *Suthanu-sua* is simply inclined toward certain ways of living, mannerisms and hunting patterns. This is indicated by the color of the werecat's eyes in both hybrid and animal form.

Red-eyed werecats (sometimes called *Bloodeyes*) are the brutal slayers, the silent skulkers of the night. Upon creation, the character may take an additional Specialty in Stealth, Streetwise or Brawl.

Yellow-eyed werecats (*Goldeyes*) are the scholars, the intellectuals, those who often hang back at the Colony house and read books about murderers and crazy cults. Upon creation, the character may take an additional Specialty in Academics, Investigation or Occult.

Green-eyed werecats (*Leafeyes*) are those most likely to interact with people. Leafeyes are intimately familiar with the ways of humanity, and walk among them to sniff out those deserving of protection — and those who need to be exterminated. Upon

creation, the character may take an additional Specialty in Empathy, Socialize or Persuasion.

### SUPERSTITIONS

The *Suthanu-sua* are highly superstitious. No supernatural impetus drives them to this paranoid attention to old folklore; it's just something that's been passed down from werecat to werecat. Though, certainly, it's possible that eschewing these superstitions have real and unfortunate effects.

- Never harm a cat or evil will befall you.
- Upon visiting someone, always kiss her cat. Failing to do so will bring the entire household bad luck.
- When looking at a one-eyed cat, spit on your thumb, thrust it into your palm, then make a wish. That wish may come true.
- Knock three times on wood after noting your good fortune. Failing to do so ensures that evil's power grows.
- Keep a knotted handkerchief on your person when going outside the house. It helps ward off evil.
- Always thank the Moon upon seeing her at night, because Bast became a moon goddess in the pantheon and hopefully watches down on her children.

### SILVER

Silver hurts werecats just as it hurts the Forsaken. The werecats have various stories explaining this phenomenon. Some, for instance, believe that cats were fettered to their sacred duty of protection by collars made of pure silver. Others claim that the metal was cursed to hurt them by the Catholic Inquisition, which harnessed dark pagan sorceries to ensure that pure silver could kill witches and their familiars. The most popular story, though, relates to how Bast became a moon goddess in the Egyptian pantheon. Silver, a metal related to the moon, is Bast's way of reminding her children with a stinging rebuke (i.e., the burning of flesh from a pure silver wound) that evil exists and must be excised.

### UNIQUE ASPECTS

Below are a few Aspects unique to the werecats, and can be taken at the time of character creation. If you choose to use these for other werecreatures, that's fine, but they are designed with the *Suthanu-sua* in mind.

## RIGHTING REFLEX (• OR ••)

The one-point version of this Aspect helps the cat with the old somewhat-true story that a cat always lands on his feet. If the werecat falls far enough to take damage, halve that damage (round up). This applies even if terminal velocity is reached.

The two-point version is as above, but it also grants the werecat a +2 to his Defense in animal form only. The housecat exhibits alarming balance, and can deftly duck or dodge attacks by barely moving.

## WALODOR (•••)

The werecat pisses somewhere, thus marking that spot with an acrid, dizzying odor. Any who smell that odor are subject to a Composure + Primal Urge roll. Failing that roll indicates that the victim begins to suffer dizziness and nausea. All dice pools suffer a -3 dice penalty, and Defense, Speed and Initiative all subtract one from their scores. The effects of this last for a single scene. To invoke this power, the werecat must spend an Essence point.

## SPINEBITE (••••)

A cat's mouth works like a pair of ragged scissors, deftly slicing through meat with use of its rough tongue and sharp fangs. All cats, whether big (tigers) or small (housecats) often kill their prey by biting its neck, either severing its spinal cord or crushing and then tearing out its windpipe. With this Aspect, the werecat spends a Willpower point and makes an attack roll against a target's exposed neck (-3 dice penalty for a targeted attack). If successful, all damage done to the neck is aggravated. Flesh is torn, arteries opened. This can only be done once per scene.

## WERECAT WAR STORIES

Werecats are not going to provide a traditional war story in that, the *Suthanu-sua* and the Forsaken clash openly in the streets, howls merging with hisses, blood spraying from extended claws. It may *come* to that, but it isn't likely to start that way. Wolves, while stealthy, are somewhat direct. They hunt. They kill. Cats, however, play with their food. Cats can be mean. Disdain a cat, and she'll act like you just ate her firstborn, and for days she'll enact vengeance. Werecats are going to be similar. They fight dirty. They remember grudges and don't let go of

things easily. And yes, they most certainly play with their food.

Below are a couple of story ideas that draw the Forsaken and the *Suthanu-sua* together in a war-like conflict. Use them or modify them as you see fit.

## AN UNCORRECTABLE MISTAKE

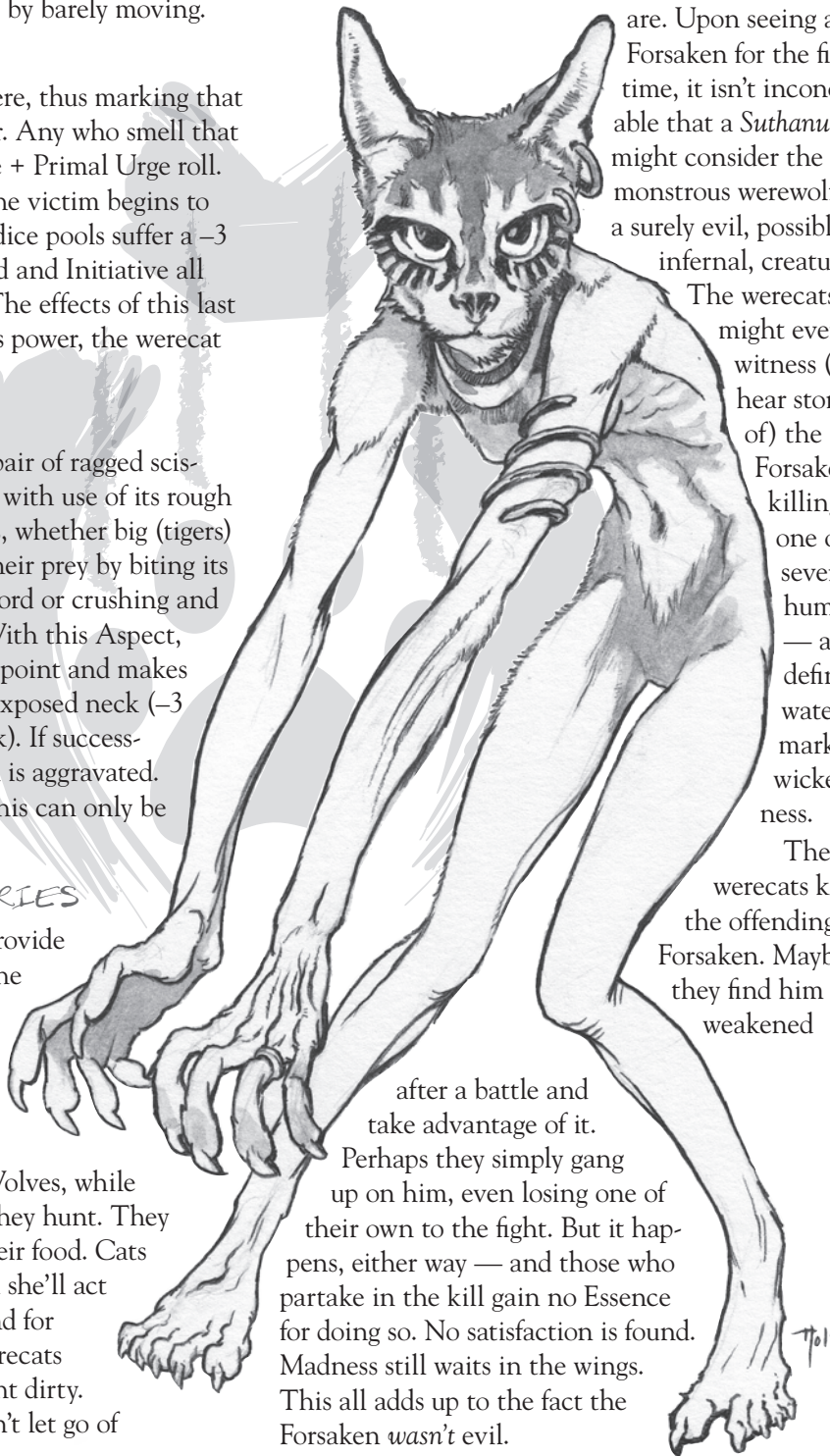
Werecats are driven to destroy what they believe to be evil. It's in their blood, pumped through them by the virulent infection that makes them what they

are. Upon seeing a Forsaken for the first time, it isn't inconceivable that a *Suthanu-sua* might consider the monstrous werewolf a surely evil, possibly infernal, creature.

The werecats might even witness (or hear stories of) the Forsaken killing one or several humans — a definite watermark for wickedness.

The werecats kill the offending Forsaken. Maybe they find him weakened

after a battle and take advantage of it. Perhaps they simply gang up on him, even losing one of their own to the fight. But it happens, either way — and those who partake in the kill gain no Essence for doing so. No satisfaction is found. Madness still waits in the wings. This all adds up to the fact the Forsaken *wasn't* evil.







It's an error that cannot be mended. The other werewolves will come, and they will see what happened as a certifiable act of war. The werecats, who gather in groups often larger than packs, may even call others to their side from nearby towns. The Forsaken will do the same. Is there anything that can end the war besides the extermination of one side? Could a new common enemy drive both sides to reconsider the conflict, even temporarily?

### INSURGENCY

A few packs have come in and claimed territory that ostensibly belongs to the werecats. That's fine, though, the *Suthanu-sua* have seen it before. They're the real rulers of the roost, and continue to do their thing hidden from the others.

Except, as the cats see it, the werewolves are throwing their weight around a little too much. Killing those who come into their territory. Convincing locals — through kind words or growled threats — to act as brood mares. Claiming dominance in particularly non-polite ways.

The werecats decide to act. But they know that their strengths do not lie in direct conflict, and so they act as insurgents against an occupying force. They attack at night. They sabotage operations. They blend back in with the world as human or cat. Wolf-bloods are kidnapped and taken away to "safehouses." Loci are wrecked.

Characters may assume the role of Forsaken, who must uncover this constantly evolving threat and once discovering it, must then contribute to the task of finding and eradicating this threat. Alternately, the characters may control the werecats responsible for mucking up the werewolf territories and resources. Both sides think they're right, of course. The Forsaken know that they're maintaining spiritual balance. The werecats believe that the moral balance, however, grows weaker by the day. Do the characters contribute to the fire and wrath? Or do they promote some kind of accord between the two sides?

### SAMPLE CHARACTER

Below is a sample *Suthanu-sua* character. She can be used as a player's character, or can instead be dropped into the game as an ally or enemy.

MARYAM FRENCH, "HONEYTONGUE"

**Auspice:** Leafeyes

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

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2 (3/2), Dexterity 3 (7/5), Stamina 2 (3/3)

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

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Occult 1, Politics (Non-Profit) 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Stealth (Broad Daylight) 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Secrets) 4, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Chatty) 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Allies (Civil Lawyers) 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Resources 2, Prey Charm (ex-boyfriend's thumb on a keychain), Unseen Sense

**Primal Urge:** 3

**Willpower:** 4

**Harmony:** 7

**Essence Max / Per Turn:** 12/1

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Wrath

**Health:** 7 (9/5)

**Initiative:** 5 (9/7)

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

**Speed:** 12 (17/17) with Fleet of Foot

**Aspects:** Alarming Alacrity 3, Imitate Gift (Speak With Beasts) 1, Righting Reflex 2, Unsetting Eye 1

Her boyfriend, with the help of his brother, took to her one night with belt-wrapped fists. Even now she can't remember why. Did she leave the stove on? Forget to make them dinner? Was her ironing too loud, drowning out the sounds of the hockey game? It matters little. The concussion — and subsequent three-day coma — left her with nearly zero memory of that night.

What she does remember was the gray cat, a Russian Blue, balanced upon the rails of her hospital bed when she awoke. She knew it was a dream, had to be, and then the cat hissed and flashed its paw and claws across the back of her right hand. It stung. She passed out.

The fever overtook her, but the persistent presence of Nurse McAvoy — whom Maryam would later know as Nimbleclaw — kept her alive. It didn't take long for the curse to settle in. It did, however, take a while for Maryam to find any kind of sanity. Yes, McAvoy took Maryam to live with the others in that old rundown bed-and-breakfast not far from the vineyards, but there she refused to hear what they had to say, to do what they told her needed to be done. She drove herself mad, and stayed that way for many months. Cutting herself. Biting her own flesh. Wailing.

Eventually, though, she found some peace. She remembered what had been done to her, if only vaguely, and set out to rectify her madness.

The police found her ex-boyfriend and his brother a few days later, dead under the docks just past Bodega Bay. Gulls and crabs ate judiciously, but even through the half-eaten flesh, the cops couldn't quite explain why the skin was marked with so many cat scratches.

Now, Maryam works at the local Woman's Place shelter, helping battered women find some kind of sanity. Even better, it helps her find those serial abusers so she can set her brothers and sisters upon those human monsters.

Honeytongue is a lissome woman in flowing skirts, with a warm smile but cold eyes. In her hybrid form, she becomes an eerie specter with a stern cat's head atop bony shoulders. In her animal form, she is a darkly orange tabby with a long, lean body.

**Seeds of War:** To draw Honeytongue into conflict with the Forsaken, what if a local pack abuses a wolf-blooded woman, who then goes to the Woman's Place shelter where Maryam volunteers? What happens when she sends her friends to kill an abuser, but discovers that the abuser is anything but human?

## BABY'S BREATH

Perhaps there *is* truth to the old legend where a cat can steal a baby's breath.

A werecat in hybrid or animal form can place her mouth over the mouth of a sleeping human infant. By expending a single Willpower point, she begins to consume the child's life force. The baby loses one Health level to lethal damage per turn (an infant has approximately two to four Health levels), and it is conferred to the werecat as *two* Essence points per Health level consumed. The child sleeps undisturbed the entire time, and perishes quietly.

This is a blasphemous action among the *Suthanu-sua*, and those werecats who find an offender will tear him apart. Whispers suggest that a small faction of the werecats exist and do this in secret, addicted to the rush of destroying something so simple and innocent.

The action is considered "hunting a human for food" and remains a Harmony 2 violation.





# THE DISTANT ONES

SURTHU ATHILAL

*We had a pact. But we had to break that pact. And now we're fucked.*

*Three o'clock in the morning, we're running down the closed up pedestrian path of the George Washington Bridge, heading back to Jersey, back to our lands away from the canyons of that dark city. Cars everywhere. Even this late, the bridge is packed. Doesn't matter. We're still fucked.*

*Bonebender gives me a sharp elbow, gestures up. I know what I'm going to see before I see it. Black shapes, shadows circling and caught in the bright light of the full moon. Birds, but not birds. Men, but not men. We keep running.*

*"We shouldn't have done what we did," Bonebender says through gritted teeth. Headlights strobe, catch his panicked face in the coruscating light.*

*"Had to do it," I said. And it was true. Those Fire-Touched cocksuckers came in and took damn near everything we had, and then fled to Manhattan, back home. It wasn't our territory. We knew that. But sometimes you gotta take things into your own hands. The bird-men, they're fickle. Like the wind. Can't trust them with the job, and so we got our own hands dirty.*

*But that required we go up, up, up. To the tops of the buildings. To the forbidden stratosphere. That's where the Fire-Touched were hiding, but it was also the Land of the Sky, and that's one place we'll never own. The birds and us, we always had a deal. They'll leave our land alone, and we'll leave their sky alone. But now, we broke that pact and we had to run.*

*Above us, one of them let out a hard, short shriek. Not a war-cry, not yet. Just a warning. You know what it said?*

*It told us just how fucked we really were.*

The world isn't so simple that you can separate the land from the sky. In some places, yes, that dividing line is simple. But other places, not so much.

The land and its architecture is given over to a certain topography where various points go so high that they pierce the very sky itself, and in these places the designation between the firmament and the fundament blurs. Skyscrapers. Clifftops. Mountain peaks. In such a place, the wind is like a fist and the air thin. These distant points do not belong to the creatures of the ground, who from up above are as meaningful as ants and aphids. Up here, the lords of the sky are the Distant Ones, the men who become falcons.

The Distant Ones believe themselves royalty, with the strains of godhood running through their blood. They hold on to no particular mythology, because mythology is for those who have forgotten their divinity or have offended the powers-that-be. The *Surthu Athilal*, however, believe that they are — at least part — actual gods on earth. Why wouldn't they? They can do what no others can do. As men, they become powerful birds-of-prey. They have beaks that can crush a man's skull, and talons that can rip the flesh from his bones with a single swooping dive. All the old stories talk of sky gods, many of whom could become birds both powerful and wise, and the Distant Ones recognize themselves in every such tale.

It isn't a blissful existence, however. The Distant Ones are angry and warlike, and driven by territoriality. One or several of the species will claim a high point of land (top of a water tower, a bridge, the peak of a dormant volcano) and its surrounding airspace as its "aerie." They fight with one another to hold dominion over such nebulous, unbounded (for open air has no distinct borders) territory. These "gods" clash in the skies and blood rains down as talons wrench feather and flesh from one another.

They also fight with humans who dare to invade or despoil their spaces — though, admittedly, it's not much of a fight. Unsuspecting humans, unless traveling in large groups, make easy targets for the hooked beaks of the Distant Ones. It's important to note that

these creatures don't *hate* the humans, not exactly. The Distant Ones are simply above humans, literally and figuratively. It's not just that they're the top predators, though. They have the powers of gods, and those who dare disturb the gods deserve the merciless judgment of the mighty divine.

**Appearance and Forms:** The human form of the Distant Ones isn't given over to many common traits. Gods, it seems, can look like anyone. A few appear with distinctly "falcon-like" traits: stern hook noses, dark small eyes remaining ever-alert, long feet with long toes that look like talons. Such physical characteristics are far from universal, however. They dress as they see fit. Some wear tight clothing so the wind that whips at such heights moves around them, while others prefer loose and flowing raiment, so that the currents of air captures it and rustles it like feathers.

Their hybrid forms grant them a sublime air, an uncanny divinity coupled with a cold killer's veneer. The face in this form remains superficially human, but emergent features give it a horrific countenance: the character's nose and jaws cease to be exist, replaced by a beak made of hard, white bone tipped with black. The eyes, too, become glossy, dark and expressionless. Usually, the hair falls out, leaving the head bald, though for many they also grow a wild configuration of feathers that crowns their skull. The character's arms remain tipped with hands (fingers now topped with meat-ripping talons), but she also grows a feathered patagia between wrist and the trunk of the torso — wings that allow flight, per the Distant Ones' Inborn Aspect. Feet, just as hands, grow vicious talons.

The Traits for hybrid form are Strength +2, Dexterity +3, Stamina +1, Size +1, Initiative +4, Speed +5, Armor 1/1, Health +1, Perception +2.

In animal form, the character becomes an abnormally large falcon, most comparable to a peregrine falcon with its black, gray and white markings and pale yellow beak. Some might appear all black or all white, and a rare few are brown. The character's wingspan is about six to seven feet, and the sitting raptor ends up about half that in height. The beak remains a terrible hook that can rip muscle and pierce bone without a second thought.

The Traits for the animal form are Strength +1, Dexterity +2, Size -2, Initiative +2, Speed +3, Health -2, Perception +3. The bird has double the speed bonus (+6) when in flight, however.

**Reproduction:** The Distant Ones don't go hunting for new members. Few deserve to be like them,

and those who do will come searching out new heights in a phenomenon the birds call "The Seeking."

From time to time, someone will attempt to master a certain height. Someone attempts to scale a troublesome mountain. Another comes to the top of a high-rise office tower so that he may feel the wind around him and look down upon the city that spurns him. A homeless woman tries to live in a water tower or raise pigeons in coops at the top of an apartment building. Another man climbs to the tops of the cliffs overlooking the crashing ocean waves with the intention of diving off to his death.

The Distant Ones claim they know who deserves the gift and who deserves to be hunted and killed for invading their territory. Few of the wrefalcons seem able to make clear what it is that separates one from the others — a look in the eye? A lofty air? A heart that beats so strongly the birds can hear it from a distance?

When they decide whether the interloper is a potential god or a mere mortal, they make their move. Mortals, the wrefalcons either scare away by nipping and clawing at them till they leave, and if that doesn't work, the wrefalcons hunt and kill the poor bastards. Those with potential, however, the wrefalcons kidnap. They perform a ritual upon the captured called the Soaring Uplift; this ritual can transform a human into one of these avian lycanthropes.

The ritual lasts for a few hours, and so the victim must remain restrained. During this time, the birds perform several actions upon the bound human. They paint upon his naked flesh with their own plucked feathers, decorating his body in wind-like whorls drawn in blood and the egg yolk from lesser birds such as pigeons, crows or sparrows. They screech and shriek over his body as they do so, piercing the air with their bird-like cries. All the wrefalcons (three are necessary to complete this ritual) all expend one Essence point and one Willpower point apiece. At the end of the ritual, when his entire body is covered in these spiraling sigils, they blindfold him, gag him and throw him from the highest point of the aerie (at least 100 feet above the ground).

Some don't make it. They weren't ready to transform, or maybe the Distant Ones' instincts were wrong. Those who fail to transform hit the ground or street and die on impact.

Those who do transform do so by spending a full dot of their own Willpower, which gains them a point



of Primal Urge. They change immediately in mid-air, usually to the animal form (though occasionally to the hybrid if they're particularly ferocious or spirited individuals). At this point, they fly. Some fly back to the aerie to confront or beg information from the Distant Ones; others try to escape. They usually come back, of course — they're different now, able to fly as gods, rulers of the Land of the Sky. A few don't. These lost birds go off on their own to make peace with their condition, though many go mad trying to reconcile what has happened to them. The werefalcons will go seeking the lost fledglings when the time is right, but if

the werefalcons don't save them or find them, then that's the way the wind blows.

**Character Creation:** Creating a werefalcon is, in some ways, similar to orchestrating one of the Olympian gods. The werefalcons act like that — in the pecking order, one might consider himself the mightiest Distant One, similar to Zeus or an Egyptian pharaoh. But even he is lorded over by his woman, his advisors, his "children" (i.e., those he has personally trained after the Soaring Uplift ritual). While the werefalcons all pride themselves on Physical Attributes, each Distant One is different. One might be Social, able to converse at length at any subject with his aerie mates,

while another might be purely Mental, focusing upon the deep concentration it takes to fly through the glass-and-steel canyons of the city.

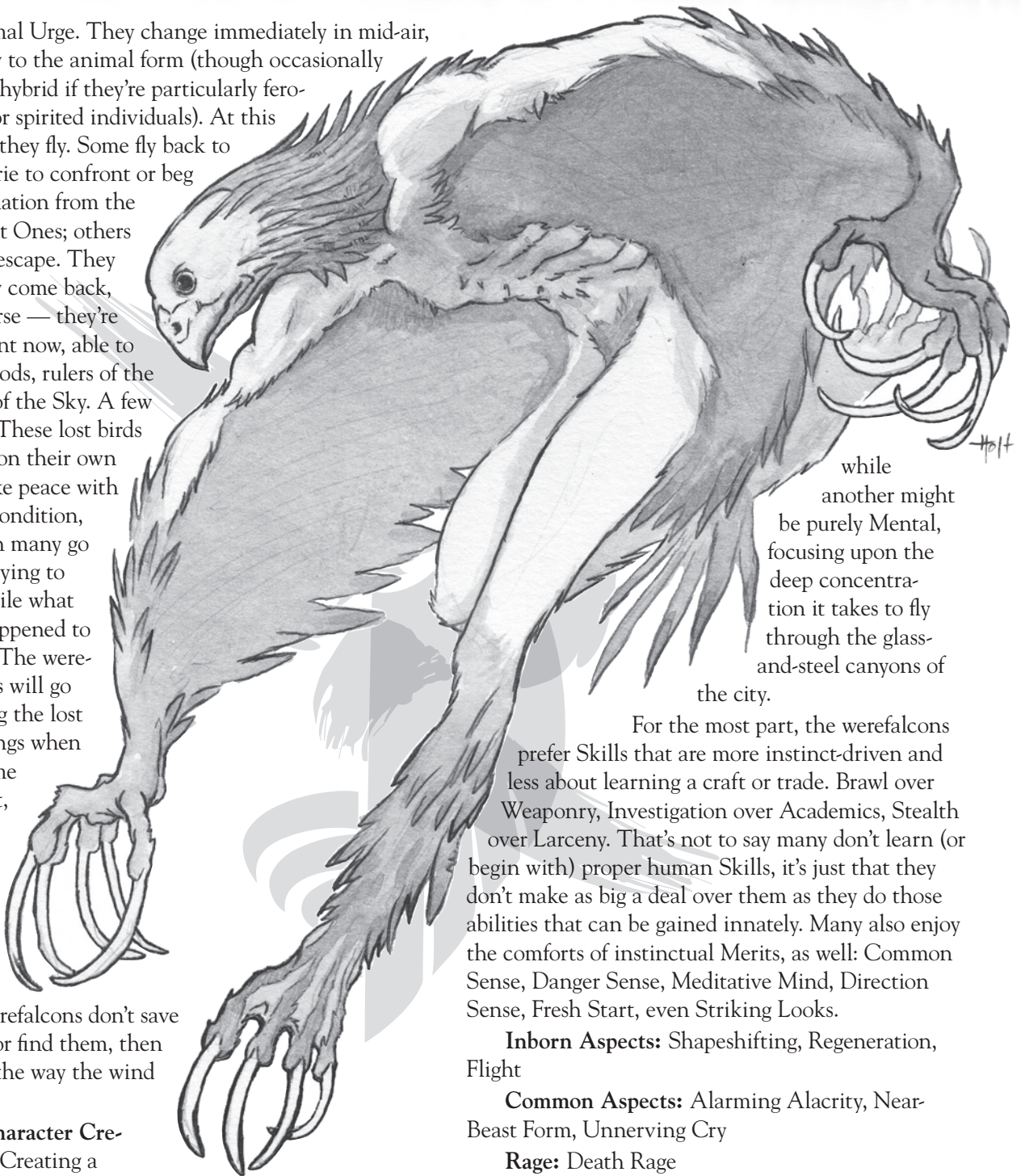
For the most part, the werefalcons prefer Skills that are more instinct-driven and less about learning a craft or trade. Brawl over Weaponry, Investigation over Academics, Stealth over Larceny. That's not to say many don't learn (or begin with) proper human Skills, it's just that they don't make as big a deal over them as they do those abilities that can be gained innately. Many also enjoy the comforts of instinctual Merits, as well: Common Sense, Danger Sense, Meditative Mind, Direction Sense, Fresh Start, even Striking Looks.

**Inborn Aspects:** Shapeshifting, Regeneration, Flight

**Common Aspects:** Alarming Alacrity, Near-Beast Form, Unnerving Cry

**Rage:** Death Rage

**Territories:** The werefalcons claim their aeries at the high points of a given area. In a city, if their numbers allow, they may claim a vast network of building tops linked together by shared airspace. Some actually live outside, where others may instead sleep in penthouse apartments, rooftop shanties, whatever they can manage. In wilderness areas, they make their homes atop mountains, buttes, tall trees (such as redwoods), coastal cliffs and grassy bluffs. In rural towns and suburbs, they still manage to find



high points: water towers, church steeples, hilltop mansions, even the tops of the towers at power plants. While some werefalcons remain isolated in little flocks of three or four, most form vast protectorates of airspace and peak points. These protectorates are never without contention, though, as the birds fight constantly for dominance over the highest (and therefore the most glorious) points piercing the sky. The only time the birds *don't* squabble and try to reassert the pecking order is when they have some external force (such as the Forsaken) to fight.

**Concepts:** Arrogant hunter, base jumper, bloodthirsty competitor, cliff-top hermit, mountain climber, penthouse dweller, pilot, stunning bird-goddess of the towers and rooftops

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Below are some elements of *Surthu Athilal* culture to consider when using them in a game or assuming control of a Distant One character.

### KILLERS IN THE CLOUDS

The ground — the fundament of the Earth, that plane that is too far from the sky for some — represents many things to many werefalcons. For some, it's the place where “everybody else” goes. It's not their world down there, and so they visit it infrequently. Others consider it the very embodiment of base, profane existence, a physical representation of everything that the Distant Ones are not. Gods do not walk down there. Humans and other vile beasts share that space, and that's how nature intends for it to remain.

Some werefalcons are willing to visit the ground (sometimes called “Below”) to achieve certain ends. Obviously, the more human-oriented Distant Ones may go down there to visit friends or loved ones or purchase supplies. A few even hold down jobs, though over time they feel so disconnected from the humans around them (and the ground beneath them) that they just can't handle it. Just as for the Forsaken, ties to humanity are possible, but always troubling.

Of course, others never leave the skies. They remain in their aeries, content to spit upon the land below. Why should a god deign to visit that dreadful place of bottom-feeders? Just as humans won't visit with ants, some Distant Ones believe they shouldn't lower themselves to be with humanity. Such strata exist for a reason. (Of course, the reality is that many go to the surface — some to hunt, others to secretly reconnect with their old mortal lives. Woe to the

Distant One who is caught by another in such a crusade, however.)

The werefalcons do suffer very real concerns that help remind them why the ground often feels so vile. If a Distant One remains on the ground for a full 12 hours, his Regeneration stops working. At this point, damage taken heals at the human rate. The werefalcon can resume Regeneration by spending time *above* ground, but this time spent must also be equal to a full 12 hours.

For purposes of definition, consider “above ground” to be anything approximately 100 feet (10 stories) above the average ground level of the region. Anything below that is, well, the “Below.”

### PANTHEON

A werefalcon aerie has, at most, five or six Distant Ones dwelling there. In many places, however, each aerie is connected by invisible space, and the many nests link together to form a kind of protectorate over the skies. The Distant Ones in these aeries operate as a kind of pantheon of sky gods, and they work against one another as often as they work together. In almost operatic displays, the werefalcons betray each other by stealing lovers or claiming another's place in an aerie or even competing constantly for glorious kills. This is par for the course, and while it seems frightening and perhaps unseemly for a new werefalcon, the older ones give into it like an obsession. They give their battles epic meanings, maintaining grudges with one another for entire lifetimes.

Assume that, while the Distant Ones do not practice or care about the Forsaken codes of Renown, the Distant Ones do unconsciously favor two of them above any other: Purity and Glory. Purity is all about the aerie and the sky that they claim. An unblemished sky is a powerful thing to each werefalcon. Pollution enrages them. Humankind clambering up all over the high places like a bunch of tree-swinging monkeys disgusts the birds. They aim to keep the skies free from fools and their contamination.

More important is Glory. This is in part why the birds squabble and one-up one another so often, for the sheer triumph of pride. Most Distant Ones can make even the smallest event, such as stealing a kill, into a Homeric legend of trials and tribulations.

This also feeds into the pecking order. The draw of Glory is what allows the birds to enforce a pecking order — a werefalcon, fresh from some lofty success, may suddenly assert his dominance and become the



leader of his aerie, or if particularly noteworthy, the entire protectorate. That's the thing about Glory among the Distant Ones, however: it's always in flux. They don't maintain Glory scores because it goes up and down. One day the wind blows strong and mighty, the next it is a weakly stuttering breeze, and so to with the Glory among the werefalcons. While some pecking orders are maintained for years, most change month to month with the victories and losses of the Distant Ones.

### CELESTIAL ARROGANCE

This divine one-upmanship of the werefalcons also bleeds over into what they call one another. Upon becoming a werefalcon after the Soaring Uplift ritual, a Distant One is given a god's name by his new aerie mates. This name is literally the name of a sky or heavenly god throughout history. It doesn't matter from what pantheon; the god's name, along with the flavor of that god's history and personality, is what matters. (For this reason, many werefalcons are either true mythology buffs, or at least know a few bits.)

A white falcon with a powerful male presence might be called Olorun, after the Yoruba sky-father. A Distant One who walks among humanity more than others might be called Enlil, a wind god of the Mesopotamians who was friendly with the mortals. A passionate, lusty werefalcon might earn the name Ehecatl, after the Aztecs' paramour wind god.

### UNIQUE ASPECTS

The following Aspects are unique to the *Surthu Athilal*.

#### KEEN EYE (• OR ••)

The first dot of the Keen Eye Aspect confers a +2 bonus to any reflexive Perception (Wits + Composure only) roll. The second dot provides the same bonus, but allows the werefalcon to see at far greater distances than his eyes normally allow. Up to three dice of distance-related penalties to *any* Perception roll can be ignored. This Aspect costs nothing, and is "always on."

#### SEXUAL DIMORPHISM (••)

In some species, the male and female exhibit different traits, sizes and other physical features in an effort not only to differentiate the genders, but

also to encourage breeding. A character with this Aspect features elements unique to its gender that accompany all forms. A male might be a little bigger, somewhat more extravagant in plumage or in the way he dresses. A female may be similarly extravagant, or be more subtle and smaller. In both cases, the character gains a +2 to any Social roll when dealing with a character of an opposite gender. This excludes Intimidation rolls.

#### SWEET WING (•••)

By some descriptions, the peregrine falcon is the fastest animal on Earth: when getting the drop on its prey, the animal may reach speeds of 250 miles per hour. This Aspect allows the Distant One to move quickly in any form to complete an attack. When charging an opponent with a Brawl or Weaponry attack (see "Charging," p. 164, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), the character may move up to three times his Speed, and may still apply a single die of his Defense against the first incoming attack (if there is one). This power costs a Willpower point to use.

#### UNIQUE MERIT

Below is a Merit found only among the Distant Ones.

#### BLESSED EGG (•••)

**Effect:** Werefalcons can attempt to breed with one another without the worrisome consequences of deranged, deformed or outright monstrous children. In 90% of most breeding between two Distant Ones, the result is a normal human child. They can at any point try to give the child the ritual of the Soaring Uplift, though most wait until the fledgling hits puberty to do so. However, about 10% of the time (roll a die, this occurs if it comes up a 10), the female werefalcon will give birth to a lifeless egg that is about half the size of a human infant. The egg, however inert, radiates a kind of power — moreover, its shell is often faintly decorated with whorls and spirals similar to those used in the Soaring Uplift ritual. Any werefalcon character can attune herself to the egg by holding the egg for an hour and succeeding on a Harmony roll. Once done, the egg provides two things. It first provides an Essence roll every morning, provided the character is near the egg (within 100 yards). Second, even when the egg isn't near, it grants a +2 bonus to one Skill. This Skill is persistent, chosen by the birth mother. (An egg that provides a +2 bonus to Empathy will *always* provide that same Skill bonus, regardless of who attunes himself to the egg.)

**Drawback:** If at any point the egg is destroyed, both the original mother and the werewolf attuned to it suffer a single aggravated level of damage. However, a blessed egg isn't fragile like other eggs, and is in fact surprisingly resilient. A blessed egg's stats are Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 4, Damage 0.

## WEREWOLF WAR STORIES

Using the *Surthu Athilal* in a war story requires considering their role in conflict against the Forsaken. What follows are a few ideas to help you create interesting and frightening war story scenarios using the werewolves.

### AIR SUPERIORITY

The Distant Ones can fight as the werewolves cannot. The ability to fly gives these shapeshifters an extra dimension in any battle, and one to which Forsaken must adjust.

Assume that the Forsaken have not ever seen or dealt with the werewolves before. The Forsaken may tell old stories of "bird people" who guarded mountain passes and the tops of temples, but surely some Forsaken believe such stories to be as much metaphor as anything else spoken of in legend or rumor. No hard evidence of the Distant Ones exists, only some mythic foreshadowing and maybe a couple of nightmares here and there.

Then comes the day that the werewolves arrive. (Or, alternately, perhaps the story draws the pack into Distant Ones' territory.) The ensuing battle is likely to be erratic and frightening. Being dive-bombed by sharp-taloned bird-men out of the darkness — the rush of wings, the marrow-curdling screech, the circling shadows darker than the night sky — has to be frightening even for the werewolves.

They likely survive the fight. Whether or not the werewolves were attempting to kill or just wound to scare matters, the attack wasn't at its maximum ferocity. But the Forsaken have to consider: Is this battle worth fighting? If it is, how will they fight them? Arrows? Bullets? Can they stealthily clamber up to the drastic heights and ambush the birds? Fighting an airborne opponent, whether on the offense or defense, is a trying and terrifying endeavor. What happens when the Forsaken receive a surprise attack from the bird-men? Are the Forsaken prepared for such a possibility?

### THOU SHALT NOT PASS

Imagine a small town in the mountains. Doesn't matter where — an old coal town in the Poconos, a

skier's hamlet in the Rockies, a little farm community in the Nepalese Himalayas. This town features a resource sought-after by the two sides of shapeshifters: the Forsaken and the Distant Ones. The nature of the resource is up to you, and may not even be the same resource shared by both sides. The Forsaken may want to protect a newfound cluster of wolf-blooded while the Distant Ones may consider this place ancestral territory. Maybe the werewolves seek to protect a hidden (or stolen) nest of blessed eggs, whereas the Forsaken may hope to close a prominent Wound in or around the town.

This single location provides the staging ground for an awful, protracted conflict. Neither side claims the territory initially, but both want it and are willing to sacrifice their lives to get it. Worse, the conflict ramps up as each side calls in reinforcements from their respective societies. At what point does the sacrifice cease to be worth it? What happens to the poor bastards who live in that town (and, is it worth the characters assuming the roles of humans instead of the shapechangers)? Does the war eventually become less about the sought after territory and more about pride and vengeance?

## SAMPLE CHARACTER

Below is a sample *Surthu Athilal* character.

### ISAKURA

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

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2 (6/5), Dexterity 3 (4/4), Stamina 2 (7/5)

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

**Mental Skills:** Academics (History) 3, Computer 3, Investigation (Library) 3, Occult 1, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Jumping) 3, Brawl 1, Stealth (Standing Still) 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Contacts (Library) 2, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style: Savage Fury (Caged Fear) 1

**Primal Urge:** 2

**Willpower:** 8

**Harmony:** 6

**Essence Max / Per Turn:** 11/1

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Wrath

**Health:** 7 (13/10)

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

**Defense:** 3 (1/1)

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

**Aspects:** Keen Eye 2, Swift Wing 3, Unnerving Cry 2,







For a few years now, Ishkura hated what she had become. A grad student in her mid-20s, she would come up to the rooftops of her apartment building to get away from it all. It helped her relax during crunch times: papers due, finals approaching, another boyfriend dumped her because she was too intense. She would watch the big birds — hawks or buzzards, she figured — circling above in the night sky, and she would marvel at their freedom.

The day she got a taste of that freedom was the end of everything, or so she thought. The Distant Ones came for her, bound her, painted her and tossed her off the top of the Four Seasons Hotel. She doesn't remember willing herself to change, but somehow she did, and she flew back to that roof as a falcon, not a woman.

Since that time, she has railed against what she perceives as her captors. Many times has she gone back to the ground to try to resume some part of her old life, but it inevitably fails. Sometimes, she can't get it together, and longs to once again be part of the sky. Other times, the birds of her aerie come and "collect" her against her will.

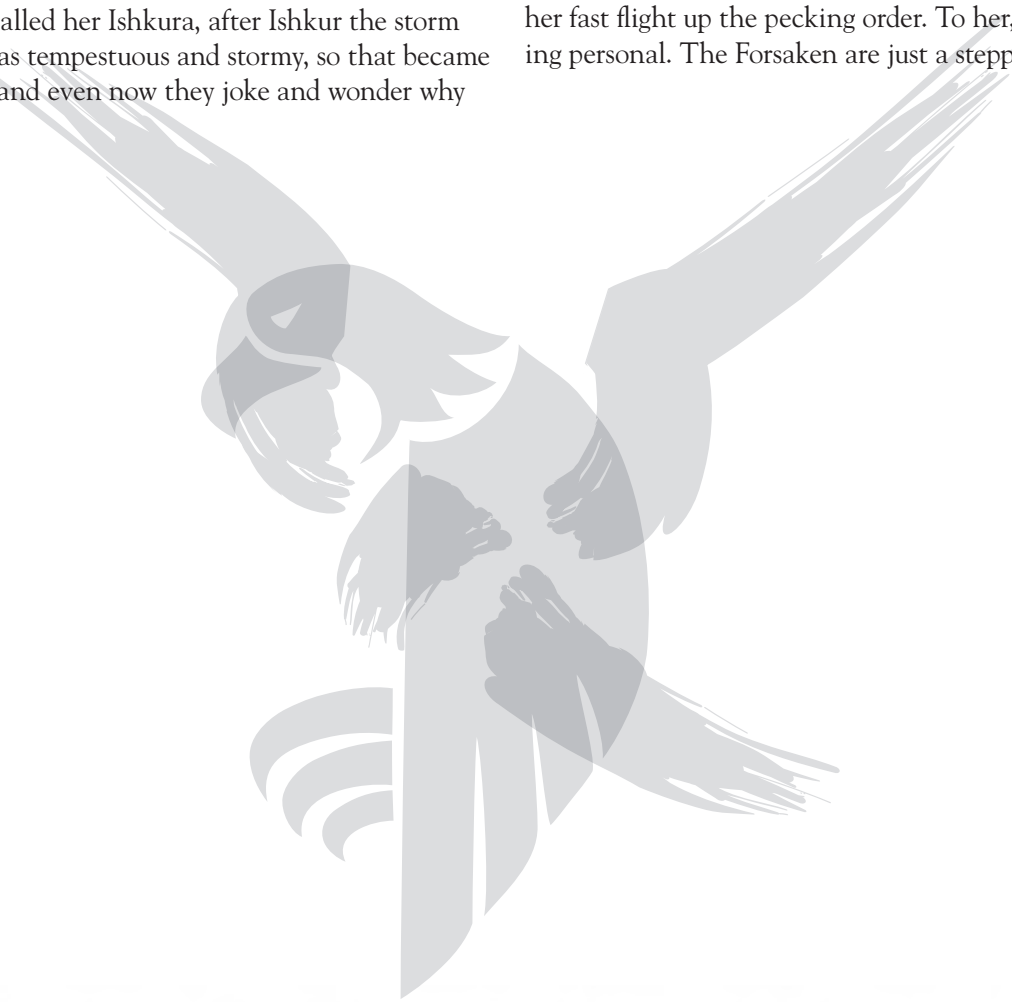
They called her Ishkura, after Ishkur the storm god. She was tempestuous and stormy, so that became her name (and even now they joke and wonder why

so many storm gods are male when it is the females of the species who are so wild). She is last in her aerie's pecking order, because up until this point she hasn't seen herself as part of this world.

But that's starting to change. She's understanding the game, watching how these stupid man-birds one-up one another all the time. She sees how triumphant the winners act, and how sore the losers become. Ishkura plans to be a loser no longer. It's time to stop railing against what she is and become part of the aerie. She'll do whatever it takes to move up the pecking order and teach these stupid, petty creatures a lesson in weakness.

Ishkura is a small woman, dark in every way: brown eyes, short-cropped hair, skin the color of a mud-churned river. She wears spare black clothing, tight upon her rosy frame. Smiling isn't a facial expression with which she's comfortable, and prefers instead a cold, icy stare.

(In situations of war with the Forsaken, Ishkura will make her move. She'll see the werewolves as her way to best her aerie mates, and will do whatever it takes to dominate the Uratha so that she may begin her fast flight up the pecking order. To her, it's nothing personal. The Forsaken are just a stepping stone.)



# THE BRINEBORN

BETA BALAG

Lying on a bed made of barrel halves, Sally barely registered what was happening. Seven shadows stood around the makeshift bed, human bodies with wolfish faces, each whispering to the other about what to do with her. Sometimes, one would shift, and it would give her the opportunity to look outside and see the bloated carcasses of her kidnappers. The wind blew in, bringing the smell of death, that rank odor of bodies gone to rot far sooner than what's natural.

Her kidnappers, even now how she recalled them couldn't be right. Eyes like frog eggs. Veiny webbing between gray-flesh fingers. Gills glistening, working at the open air like hungry mouths. But these new monsters, they had destroyed every last one of them. They killed the whole town, from the looks of it — and worse, from the smell.

She felt something in her belly kick. She winced. Was it time?

Her guts twisted up inside her, as if little hands were wringing her intestines like a dishcloth, and she felt something give way. From her womb poured a hot rush of salt water, stinking of brine and fishbones. Something slid free from between her legs, plopping on the ground. Then, more of the same. Little plops, like fat globs of lard or jam hitting the floor.

"Fish eggs," one of the wolf monsters said. Another's lip curled in disgust as something else shook free from her body. This one was bigger. This was the baby, and she felt it wrenching itself free, forcing its own birth with slick and insistent hands.

It came loose and hit the floor with a thud. Squalling (wet screams, horrible in a way but still the sound of a baby) followed.

"What do we do?" the one wolf said to the other, and Sally didn't want to hear the answer, she just thought that maybe she could have and hold her baby, no matter what it looked like.

"Take it outside," another wolf said, sighing. "Dash it against the rocks, and burn it with the others. We're done here."

Humans started their existence as feral, unmannered brutes.

Humans had no civilization, or so claim the fish-men of the Brineborn.

Humans knew nothing beyond the hypnotic dance of the campfire and the sweet taste of bloody brains that oozed from a rock-smashed skull. For humans were made from the same things that other mammals were made: bristling fur, hungry teeth and hot blood.

Mother Ocean, however, was as wise as she was deep. But her world only went so far — where land rose up and overtook the world, her influence was lost. And so she decided it was time to pass her wisdom along to the human brutes so that they may carry her beyond the shores that imprisoned her and up onto the fundament of land. She birthed a creature that shared some of the physical traits of man: a human face, legs, arms. But his skin was scaled like a fish, and the tail that flapped behind him belonged to the ocean, too.

For years, this child of Mother Ocean's — whom she called Oe — taught the humans things that soon give them civilization. He helped them learn rudimentary math, writing, music; all the trappings of what would grow into human culture and grant them wisdom.

It wouldn't last. Yes, humans had the seeds of civilization, but he was still a brute. The tribes of humans saw Oe suddenly as an abomination, a wretched thing that did not deserve to live. They hacked at Mother Ocean's child with the stone axes they had built, spilling his blood all the way back down to the beach where Oe managed to escape by entering the water once again.

But Oe's pain didn't end there. Not only had humankind rejected him, but now Mother Ocean loathed him, as well. She whispered to him that he





had failed her, and she gained no power over the land. Having no room for failed children, she cast him out of the ocean, as well. The humans had gone by then, and Oe was left to live on the shore, that dividing line between worlds.

The Brineborn are the modern children of Oe, a figure they do not revere but instead loathe. These half-men, half-fish are desperate creatures, longing to find some kind of place in a world that hates them. Many revere Mother Ocean, but others give themselves to different religions and ideas, driven to near obsession in the hopes of being accepted by something, even an invisible being that offers no evidence of existing.

**Appearance and Forms:** Brineborn in human form don't look quite right. They're often pale, even sickly looking. Many are extremely thin or exorbitantly fat. As most are bound to the shorelines around oceans or other bodies of water, they dress accordingly — some wear thick longshoremen sweaters to stave off the stinging cold that comes off the water, while others in more temperate climes may wear very little but rags and trash.

Every Brineborn has a different hybrid form, depending on what Aspects the character possesses. They all appear somewhat *fishy*, of course, often with scaled skin that's iridescent like the inside of an abalone shell. Most have webbed fingers, big bulbous eyes and gills. Others might possess fins jutting out from parts of their body that may not make sense (one from the shoulder, another from the tailbone), or spines that grow from fingers, toes or the top of a character's hairless head.

The Traits for the hybrid form start at Strength +2, Dexterity +2, Stamina +2, Size +1, Initiative +2, Speed +4, Armor 1/1, Health +3, Perception +2. These may be modified by different Brineborn Aspects.

The animal form allows the character to appear as a particularly large fish — about as long as the human form is tall, with maybe 100 extra pounds on the fish's frame. Many appear as giant catfish, sturgeons, gars or lungfish. A rare few can turn into animals such as sharks, giant eels or swordfish (doing so grants an additional +1 to Strength in animal form, but costs eight experience points at the time of character creation).

The Traits for the animal form are Strength +1, Dexterity +2, Initiative +2, Speed +3, Perception +1. The character's Size doesn't change, except now he's horizontal (fish) instead of vertical (human). Note

that these stats are really only applicable if the creature is in the water. Outside the water, the character can survive far longer than regular fish (a number of hours equal to his Primal Urge score, at which point the character begins drowning in open air if he doesn't shift immediately), but can only flop about with little gain.

**Reproduction:** The Brineborn breed through sexual reproduction. A male Brineborn impregnates a human, or a male human impregnates a female Brineborn. The resultant baby, born in nine months, has the ability to shapechange *at birth*. The babies do not undergo a First Change as the Forsaken. One curious side effect of this is that the live birth (which gushes out in a mix of amniotic fluid and salt water) is accompanied by a small glut of fish eggs or actual fish (usually small ones, such as sardines or perch). In most cases, such a birth happens in the proper isolation — as enforced by the Brineborn — so that word doesn't get out and draw negative attention. Sometimes, though, the gruesome tales of such a strange nativity creeps out and summons mortal hunters or the Forsaken. Those women who give birth in hospitals away from the waiting hands of the fish-men often flee with their babies as soon as they are able; if the woman doesn't, soon she'll be under the scrutiny of tabloid reporters and doctors.

The Brineborn can breed with one another, but it isn't pretty. The result is a true monster, a character unable to leave the hybrid form and given over to the constant draw of Death Rage. Still, though, the Brineborn are strange creatures. A few communities don't consider the hybrid children to be taboo, and occasionally engineer the birth of one or several such monsters, often in honor of Mother Ocean.

**Character Creation:** The Brineborn are very communal (they have to be), but most aren't necessarily strong in the Social department. Many prefer Mental Attributes and Skills, though certainly Physical prowess is welcome, as well. Still, though, some long to be a part of humanity so badly that they train themselves in Skills such as Empathy, Persuasion and Socialize just so they can be a part of humankind, if only for a short time. Many train with Weaponry, too — gaff hooks, clubs, axes, spears.

**Inborn Aspects:** Shapeshifting, Regeneration, Totem Guardian

**Common Aspects:** Feral Collective, Imitate Gift (Call Water), Near-Man Form

**Rage:** Death Rage

**Territories:** The Brineborn, whenever possible, agglomerate in communities. As they have to be near the ocean or some other body of water (see below, “Society and Culture”), and they’re often a little too weird to hang with mainstream society, they collect in weird niche communities up and down coasts or around lakes. When driving past an odd, gray little shantytown near a ramshackle lighthouse, most mortals know to keep driving. The fish-men live together, operating as fishermen, boat engineers, artists, even preachers. Some Brineborn live apart from their broods, going as far from the shorelines as their minds allow, living as hermits in out-of-the-way cabins or even in shitty city apartments. Most, however, stick together, marking an area as their own by dint of their presence and protection.

**Concepts:** Deckhand, hermit who lives beneath the pier, lighthouse operator, lobsterman, pastor, ranting preacher for Mother Ocean, watercolor painter

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

What follows are some of the cultural elements unique to the Brineborn. These elements may help you use them in a story featuring the Forsaken or when creating a character who lives as part of these strange fish-men.

### BETWEEN LAND AND WATER

The Brineborn are cursed to live between land and water. They cannot stray too far from the water’s edge, but alternately, they can’t live in the water. Due to this reason, most of these creatures gather together in their own peculiar towns and parishes near the ocean or to lakes.

The further the fish-men get from the water, the harder it becomes for them to concentrate. For every 10 miles away from a large body of water, the character suffers a –1 die penalty to all Mental rolls. This increases to a maximum of –5 dice, which is equivalent to 50 or more miles away from the water.

Living in water presents other problems. One problem is that the Water-Breathing Aspect — if possessed — comes with a time limit. Second, if the character spends more hours in the water than his Wits score, he suffers a debilitating panic attack. The panic attack for each character confers the exact same feeling, as if a terrible creature from the deep is going to come up and swallow the character whole. Some claim that this is just an irrational fear of the sea, because Mother Ocean is essentially just one big

endless mouth. Others, though, assert that they have seen *something* down in the water coming for them — many descriptions describe this thing as a human-legged sea monster with as many needle-toothed mouths. Despite the common vision, none have ever been attacked or bear any evidence beyond their collective horror stories.

Many fish-men refer to the problem of living between land and water as being “between Scylla and Charybdis.”

### GOT RELIGION?

The Brineborn sure do. Almost universally, the fish-men seem desperate to believe in some higher power that binds them together in service. Is this because they hope to find some light in their obvious accursed condition? Or are they perhaps given strength in the face of constant devolution?

A good portion of the fish-men offer worship to Mother Ocean in various ways, though even the various communities can’t seem to agree on just *how* to please this unseen goddess. Some pray to her while braving her depths (and subsequent panic attacks), hoping to earn her favor by glorifying her wisdom and power. Others offer her adoration in far ghastlier ways: sacrificing land-walking mammals, such as dogs or humans, to her waters so that she may feed.

Many keep a ragtag set of holy books written in a gross approximation of the First Tongue, which the fish-men utter with mixed success. The books, known generally as the *Sithkur Abthag* (roughly, “Intercessional Prayers to the Center of the Sea”), are composed of anywhere between three and 33 sub-books, depending on the devoutness of the practicing Brineborn.

Curiously, many reject the trappings of Mother Ocean and her dogma, and instead practice human religions. Christianity is particularly popular, though some adhere to the tenets of Buddhism, as well.

### FRESHWATER

While Brineborn are less common around bodies of freshwater, they still accumulate there, breeding and keeping their own odd little communities. They still worship (or at least recognize) Mother Ocean, even when near freshwater, because as they are fond of saying, “All water goes back to Mother Ocean.”





## TOTEMISM

The Brineborn do not have auspices. Mother Ocean is not multi-faceted. She is deep, and dark, and those two things go hand-in-hand when talking about the sea.

That said, while the fish-men aren't acutely aware of the Shadow or its inhabitants, the Brineborn do believe that each child born of their kind is guarded over by a totem spirit. This spirit, ostensibly a patron from the sea (always a fish, never a mammal or crustacean), doesn't manifest until the child joins a "pod" of at least two other Brineborn. Pods, sometimes called "congregations" by particularly religious fish-men, are little more than social units that a Brineborn carries with him for much of his life. Generally, the fish-men have the luxury of choosing their own podmates, though some end up in congregations determined by their elders. (Note that "pod" often refers to mammalian sea-goers: dolphins, seals, whales. This is what the Brineborn consider themselves, analogously, to be closest to.) To become a pod, the process is simple: All the Brineborn cut their hands and taste one another's blood. They spend a Willpower point, then go out into the ocean or lake to swim together in their respective animal forms.

A pod of Brineborn shares everything: food, wine, song, prayer, mates. They also share the totem.

The totem manifests within a few days of the pod coming together, and sometimes manifests in the water or in mid-air to communicate with its children. The presence of the totem is what gives the pod a deeper bond. The Brineborn believe that each child is born with the totem guardian already decided, and so when a pod comes together and shares a single guardian, this is the obvious watermark of destiny.

Leaving a pod is dangerous for the Brineborn. While many allow it to happen, doing so costs a full Willpower dot. Some more radical communities will destroy those fish-men who dare to discard the sacred bond between podmates.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

These Aspects are unique to the Brineborn.

### BIOLUMINESCENCE (•)

The Brineborn glows like a deep sea fish. What part glows is up to the character (eyes, throat, entire body, some weird thing dangling on an organic stalk), but it emits the same general amount of light regardless. The light is equivalent to a strong flashlight, and negates up to two points of dice penalties caused

from operating in darkness. The character can turn this on and off; it costs nothing to do so. The Aspect needs time to recharge after it's turned off, however: after using it, the character must wait 10 minutes before she can turn it back on. It lasts for one scene, then fades automatically.

### ELECTRORECEPTORS (•)

Sharks have various pores on their head that allow them to sense electrical impulses in the water around them. In this way, they can sense an animal hidden beneath the ocean floor. A character with this Merit can sense bioelectric activity in a radius equal to 10 times his Primal Urge score in yards. The character can detect life within that range even if it was hidden in a steel safe with three-foot thick walls. This power costs one point of Willpower to use.

### WATER-BREATHING (•)

The shapechanger can breathe underwater. This costs one point of Willpower to activate, and lasts for a number of hours equal to the character's Primal Urge score.

### RIGID SCALES (•• OR •••)

For the two-dot Aspect, the character gains armor equivalent to 1/1 in his human and animal forms, and gains no increase in the normal 1/1 armor found in the hybrid form. The three-dot version confers an increase to the hybrid armor to 2/2, instead.

### JAWLESS (••)

The character has no lower jaw, and instead has a mouth like a lamprey or hagfish. He can attempt to grapple with his mouth, and a successful grapple does lethal damage equal to successes gained on that attack roll. While Jawless doesn't confer any further damage, note that the many little teeth that line the sucker mouth do transfer an anticoagulation agent into the blood, causing the blood to run more freely than it would in other wounds. This is applicable only in hybrid or animal form.

### RAZORSKIN (••• OR ••••)

The character's flesh in every form is similar to a shark's skin: when rubbed the wrong way, the character's flesh can cut flesh like a knife. When a foe makes a successful Brawl attack against the character, the foe takes one lethal point of damage. If attacking with a weapon of some kind, the weapon suffers two points of Structure damage. The three-dot version of this Aspect requires the character to expend a single Essence point to use this power, and it lasts for the scene. The four-dot Aspect causes this ability to be

“always on.” In both versions, the Aspect works in all forms (human, hybrid, animal).

### NEEDLETEETH (•••)

Some fish have teeth that can bite through strong materials. Piranha and barracuda, for instance, can bite through a steel hook. This Aspect grants a character that gift. In animal and hybrid form, the character can ignore up to two points of an object’s Durability for purposes of damaging it. Needleteeth doesn’t confer any additional damage to biting organic material.

### NAMES OF THE BRINE

Many fish-men take only a human’s first name, and often a basic monosyllabic one at that: Jack, Sue, Tom, Jan, etc.

However, by puberty, many claim to hear a calling voice come drifting over the tides, a whisper in a feminine lilt that tells them their true name as one last gift from Mother Ocean. This name is almost always something in a botched approximation of the First Tongue. Strangely, few Brineborn know what their First Tongue names even mean.

Of course, some Brineborn are raised by humans, having lived off in the world and therefore have names that suit purely human existences. This is rare, however, as the fish-men often come hunting for their “children” whenever possible.

### BRINEBORN WAR STORIES

Just as all shapechangers, the Brineborn represent a unique opportunity to tell very different stories, specifically those stories involving war with a bizarre new race. Below you’ll find a few scenarios to help you tell such tales.

#### DEER RISING

Two small Brineborn communities lie only a couple of dozen miles apart on the coast. The northernmost community is highly zealous, devoted to getting back into Mother Ocean’s graces. The Brineborn there also comprise an apocalypse cult, believing that certain interpretations of their holy books indicate that soon, the sea will rise as a terrible wave and will consume all that lives on land. The southernmost fish-men, however, are weird as all Brineborn are, but

their community is mostly quiet and given over to human religions.

Unfortunately, the apocalypse cult has taken to trying to usher in the consuming wave by appeasing Mother Ocean with violent sacrifices. Animals, humans, maybe even a Forsaken. It’s not without effect. The water elementals that lurk along the shore are growing potent with the sacrifices that are *ostensibly* in their honor. The sea grows wine-dark with bloody resonance, and threatens to truly rise up and come crashing down upon the shore.

The Forsaken will get involved, especially if their territories are anywhere near the affected ocean. Tracking the hungry elementals back to the source reveals the mad cult of destructive fish-men, and the werewolves will likely act accordingly. Except, what happens when they find the second community of Brineborn? Will they kill them, too, unable to see the difference between one group and the next? Or, will the more peaceful Brineborn rise up to defend their cultic brethren, believing that they have chosen the lesser of two evils (the Forsaken representing the greater evil, being men who turn into vicious wolves).

#### HOLY LOCUS

The werewolves receive visions or information leading them to the potential discovery of an incredible locus (•••• or •••••) that *appears* unclaimed. This locus needs to be water-based. Maybe it’s a hollowed-out tree on a small island out in the center of a placid lake. It could be an old oil tanker or rig, abandoned and rusting off the coast. Anything will do: a swath of beach, a boulevard in the middle of a shore town, an island in the South Pacific.

Of course, the reason the locus hasn’t yet been claimed by any werewolves is because the Brineborn already have it. They don’t know what it is, having no connection to the Shadow, but in some ways it’s more important to them than a locus — this is their *home*.

While the Brineborn aren’t as combat-oriented as the werewolves, the fish-men do tend to aggregate in large, potentially overwhelming groups. A pack could easily get bogged down outside the locus by a horde of Brineborn defenders, who will preserve the sanctity of their home with religious furor. For the Forsaken, the locus represents something worth fighting — and maybe dying — for. Can they, in good conscience, wipe out a town full of these peculiar fish-men? If the players assume the role of the Brineborn, can they mount an effective response against the fe-





rocious Forsaken? If the Forsaken manage to lay claim to the locus, how far will the Brineborn go to get it back? This is, in a way, a religious war over territory. The battle over sacred ground can soak the earth in buckets of blood.

### SAMPLE CHARACTER

Below is an example of a *Bith Balag* character.

*CARL (ZETHAGH AIBIZH ANAUR)*

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 1, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4 (6/5), Dexterity 2 (4/4), Stamina 5 (7/5)

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

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

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive (Boats) 4, Survival 3, Weaponry (Gaff Hook) 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy (Personalities) 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 2

**Merits:** Barfly, Contacts (Fishermen) 3, Strong Back

**Primal Urge:** 4

**Willpower:** 5

**Harmony:** 6

**Essence Max / Per Turn:** 13/2

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Sloth

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

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

**Defense:** 1 (1/1)

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

**Aspects:** Bioluminescence 1, Near-Man Form 3, Rigid Scales 3, Water-Breathing 1

Carl's lived a quiet and simple life. He lives at the northernmost tip of the New Jersey Shore in a dinky town called Beach Garden. Most of Beach Garden are people like Carl, and all the Brineborn of the little ocean burg find a way to make the time go by. Carl, with his podmates, has learned to fix boat engines. He likes to sometimes go among the humans, and so sometimes he hangs out with the kids at the arcades up and down Long Beach Island, or maybe he watches the partying Wildwood teens from a distance. Sometimes he offers boating tours to those who don't have much money and don't mind his silent, often solemn presence.

Most people think he's a simpleton, a dumb brute with weird eyes who doesn't tan too well (not at all) in the sun. Carl's fine with those assumptions.

His other simplicity was the Bible. He never took much to those acolytes who seem hell-bound to follow Mother Ocean — those fish-men always seem shifty, like they're up to no good. But Jesus, there's a man who makes sense. Carl doesn't go to church much, but he sure reads the Bible plenty.

Lately though, things haven't been so simple, and definitely not so peaceful. Someone's been killing folk — human folk — and stuffing their dead bodies



full of fish, crabs and jellyfish, topped off with sand. Worse, something else has come sniffing around: men who have the feel of animals, who give off a stink like wild dogs.

Then came the day that Carl's own pod got killed. Not like the humans, no. His podmates were just torn to shreds, rent into pieces as if by, well, by wild dogs.

Now, Carl's not sure what to do. He wants to find out who's killing the people, not so much because he cares about them but because one of the victims was a boy he played some arcade games with the one time. But more importantly, he wants to find out if those bad men with the wild dog smells were the ones who tore up his podmates. He hasn't mentioned this theory to the other Brineborn yet, but if he finds the proof he's looking for, he'll tell them. And then they'll bring the offenders to God's justice, and maybe a little of Mother Ocean's justice, too.

Carl's not a pretty man. He's a hunched-over slab of muscle and fat, with broad, flat lips sitting beneath a crooked nose and squinty eyes. In hybrid form, he

grows out as much as he does up, and his skin turns even grayer as uneven scales cover his pale flesh. In fish form, Carl's a fat, round fish — like a bulging catfish but without the “whiskers.”

(Werewolves who hear his First Tongue name might be able to translate it. An approximate paraphrase would be, “The Voice of the Red Horizon.” Carl doesn't know that his name means any such thing, and mostly goes just by “Carl.”)

## SILVER

The Brineborn believe that silver is a metal with mystical properties that ties it to the human soul. When the humans rose up against their Brineborn teacher (Oe) to slaughter him, the legend is that the attacking humans were wielding silver-edged weapons. The irony is, legend goes on to note that it was the Brineborn that *taught* humankind how to forge and craft silver, thus furthering the sting of how terribly it can injure them.





# THE UNCLEAN

NIEDMUZUG

Not much can rattle the living dead, but Gordo was shaking like a girl in his blue blazer and steel-toed boots. The thug seemed paler than usual, too. Stoplight, already nervous, snapped his fingers as if to say, “C’mon, hurry it the fuck up.”

The bloodsucker slid a manila envelope across the table as the fluorescent lights flickered and buzzed above. Stoplight pinned it with a grimy nail and pulled it close.

“I know to stay outta the tunnels,” Gordo said. “We stay out of your business, you stay outta ours. But Aurelio, he was tracking something, something that had come up into his condo and ransacked the place. I don’t know if he found what he was looking for, but —”

Inside the envelope were pictures, printed from a camera phone. No flash, and the light in the old subway tunnel was meager. Stoplight squinted, saw shapes. Lots of shapes, each close to man-sized. Fingernail slivers of light reflected back on each, as if caught on a smooth, slick, wet surface. Like armor. Or something else.

“I can’t tell what I’m looking at,” Stoplight growled. “Explain.”

“Aurelio took some shots from his cell, but you know how those turn out. Still, you can, uh — you can make them out if you look hard.”

“Make what out?”

Gordo shivered again, like he’d just walked through a cobweb.

“Antennae,” he said. “Lots of goddamn antennae.”

The urban legend goes a little something like this: a girl goes to a popular fast food restaurant and orders a chicken soft taco. The taco tastes strange, but this place’s tacos always taste weird. She eats it. She goes home. The next morning, her jaw and neck are swollen. The girl goes to the doctor, who says it’s nothing to worry about and gives her maybe some ointment, possibly an antibiotic. She takes her medicine, but after a few days, the swelling is worse. It hurts. She can barely open her mouth. So, back to the doctor. Now, though, the doctor’s worried. He sends her to the hospital for tests, and here’s

where the story ends a couple of different ways. One way has the doctors removing swollen nodes from around her salivary glands, and they find that she had eaten roach eggs, and they were incubating and about to hatch. In the other story, the eggs hatch before she can get tested. Baby roaches flood from her mouth and down her throat.

The story is bunk, right? Not entirely.

The true story isn’t about roach eggs getting into food, it’s about a virulent infection — spiritual in origin — contaminating a food or water supply. It’s about those who drink the water or eat the food, and how they sometimes get sick. Some of the diseased suffer for a little while, coughing, runny nose, squinting at light because it bothers the eyes... and then they get better. Their body fights the pathogen, and boom, no problem.

Except, some people don’t get better. Sure, they seem to get better, but then begin to suffer a whole new malady. Their body undergoes inexplicable changes. Legs and arms sprout stiff, barbed guard hairs. Mouth turns to bisected mandibles. Skin grows glassy with a waxen carapace.

The First Change for an Unclean roach-man seems to blessedly occur at night, when few others are around. It’s a horrifying, solemn experience in which the person watches while his body slowly shifts and changes into something wholly grotesque. But he won’t be alone for long. As soon as the change is finished, his body emits an odor detectable only to others of his kind. They’ll come for him. They always do, because they’re always nearby.

They’ll tell him the truth, holding him against his will if they must. They’ll tell him that he’s not only Unclean, but unlucky, as well, because nobody chooses to live as a half-human, half-roach. But it isn’t all bad, they’ll say. They get some benefits. The food’s good, because most of them can eat damn near anything. The company’s all right, too, since the rest of the Swarm are all poor bastards just like him. Yes, sometimes the light bothers them, and their flesh is

certainly repulsive, but it is what it is. One can make peace with it, or go mad.

### NICK NAMES

Those Forsaken who have encountered the Unclean have other, more grimly humorous names for these gross shapeshifters: Kafkas or Gregors.

**Appearance and Forms:** Anybody can become one of the Unclean. The supernatural pathogen spread through spiritually contaminated food isn't choosy. As such, the human form of an Unclean character may share next to no traits with another of her kind. Some are certainly pale and sickly in appearance, dwelling as they do away from the light, but some go for fake tans or cover up most of their skin with lots of dark clothing. Older Unclean tend to dress sparingly, with dark clothes that allow them to blend into the shadows in which they lurk. Younger roach-men run the gamut in clothing, often choosing modern garb. Both young and old tend to wear sunglasses when any light is present.

The hybrid form is sickening to behold. The face becomes insectile: sideways mandibles oozing spit, compound multi-lens eyes, stunted antennae sprouting from the brow. The character's skin becomes waxy and covered in carapace plating. The limbs grow guard hairs and feelers while the back hides under a pair of useless roach wings that twitch and shudder but won't allow the character to fly. (Both the mandibles and the guard hairs are what do lethal damage.)

The Traits for the hybrid form are Strength +1, Dexterity +1, Stamina +4, Size +1, Initiative +1, Speed +2, Armor 1/1, Health +5, Perception +2.

The animal form is sometimes called "swarm form." The character in this form moves as a single writhing mass of fat cockroaches (each about four to six inches in length). The average character turns into about 500 or so of these roaches. The roaches do not leave one another — while in this form, every cockroach is touching at least two other cockroaches, as all belong to one "body" of roaches. While individual roaches do not have notable stats, when moving as a whole, the "animal form" has unique stats. The mass can bite (100 or so roaches at once chomping down) and therefore cause lethal damage. The

roach mass can perform crude maneuvers, creating "limbs" out of writhing insects. (Important to note is how the transformation to this form and back again takes place. Flesh literally balls up and "rolls off" the character's frame, with each lump of skin and blood becoming one roach. When damage is done to the swarm form during this time, those killed roaches simply fail to rejoin the body, leaving behind vicious gashes and holes.) The swarm form has the added ability of traveling through places far too small for the human body. Provided an opening has a few inches of clearance, the player can make a Dexterity + Athletics roll for the character to squirm through that opening.

The Traits for the animal form are Strength +1, Stamina +2, Speed +1, Health +2, Perception +1. The character's Size doesn't change, and the swarm form is roughly equivalent to the size of the character's human form, except, you know, made of bugs.

**Reproduction:** The Unclean can't breed with one another. Pregnancy always results in a bloody miscarriage a month or two after conception, with the womb also flushing out bits of crushed roach parts such as legs or snippets of wing. They can breed with humans, though even there they run the risk of miscarriage (the chances of miscarriage are nearly tripled). Children who do survive are relatively healthy, though nearly all of them suffer from bad asthma throughout their lives.

How then, do more Unclean end up in the world? Every time one of the Unclean gains a dot in Primal Urge, he sends out an invisible "pulse" of infection. This pulse radiates out in a radius equal to 100 square yards per current (before the new dot) Primal Urge. Within this radius, any raw foodstuffs or exposed water supplies become contaminated. Those who drink the water or eat meals cooked from the tainted food must make a Stamina roll. Failure on this roll indicates that a character gets sick with mild flu-like symptoms. She makes the Stamina roll every day until she either succeeds, in which the illness fades, or she suffers a dramatic failure, in which she becomes one of the Unclean. (Failure merely indicates the illness continues for another day, while an exceptional success allows her to reclaim a Willpower point from "feeling better.")

What this means is that, the more Unclean there are in an area, the more likely it is that more of their kind will be made. As they increase in Primal Urge with greater frequency due to the larger numbers, the spiritual infection spreads with alarming alacrity.





**Character Creation:** It's often the weaker of the human species that end up as the Unclean. Lower Physical scores (Stamina in particular) allow the promotion from physical malady to spiritual infection. Expect that most starting characters have a low Stamina, but more experienced characters often purchase Stamina at an alarming rate (lending to the myth that, after a nuclear bomb strike, the only creatures left living will be the preternaturally resilient cockroaches).

Many possess Mental Skills to make up for this deficit. There seems to be some connection between the socially maladjusted and the physically weak (think of an abuse victim or that kid picked last during gym class sports), and so Mental Attributes and Skills tend to run high within the Unclean.

**Inborn Aspects:** Shapeshifting, Hivemind, Darksight (Note that the Unclean do not get the Regeneration bonuses. They heal damage at the same rate as humans.)

**Common Aspects:** Alarming Alacrity, Near-Man Form, Venomous

**Rage:** Madness Rage (Inferiority Complex)

**Territories:** The fact is, the Unclean hang out together because they understand one another. They have solidarity in their grotesqueness (though, over time, many cease to feel that their condition is grotesque and it instead becomes a point of pride), and so they find comfort with one another.

Many claim small communal territories as a result: big basement apartments, a decrepit house or subterranean tunnels. Lack of light is a common factor, due to the way in which light disturbs most of the wereroaches. Older bug-men, however, tend to come together in massive throngs, cutting out entire areas of darkness for themselves: whole sewer systems, abandoned mines, even entire tenements with the windows blacked out. Some such territories, known colloquially as "hives" or "intrusions," feature upwards of thirty or more Unclean.

**Concepts:** Addict/alcoholic, cancer patient, homeless guy, nighttime security guard, serial killer, subway operator, victim of bullies

**Quote:** "I don't know, man. For a while, this whole thing kind of freaked me out. Living in the darkness. Eating whatever I find on the ground. The, uh, the bug parts. But you know what's freaking me out worse? I think I'm maybe starting to like it."

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The *Nidmuzug* offer a unique (and sometimes disparate) society. Below are some elements of their culture.

### LIGHT BRIGAT

Light bothers the Unclean. Much as how real roaches scatter when the kitchen lights come on, the wereroaches want to do the same thing. The older and more powerful one of the Unclean becomes, the deeper his aversion to light grows.

It's tied to Primal Urge. The roaches, in addition to getting the normal Social penalties associated with increasing the score, also suffer increasing light-related penalties when their Primal Urges goes up. These penalties occur when operating in bright light: the sun, fluorescence, spotlights, etc. You can determine the penalty according to the following chart:

Primal Urge	Light-based Penalty
1	-1
2	-1
3	-2
4	-2
5	-3
6	-3
7	-4
8	-4
9	-5
10	-5

This penalty affects all dice pools. Sunglasses help mitigate this somewhat, allowing the character to sometimes ignore one die from the penalty.

### INBORN ASPECT: DARKSIGHT

The Unclean do not get Regeneration, but instead receive the Darksight advantage as an Inborn Aspect.

The bug-men can see *perfectly* in the dark. They suffer no penalties from operating or fighting in darkness. This Aspect also allows them to see more easily through adverse conditions (fog, smoke, snow), halving any penalties they might have had otherwise (round down). Finally, when operating in total darkness, the Unclean gain a +2 bonus to all Stealth rolls, as they can see precisely where it is best to step to remain concealed among the shadows.

## RELEVANCE OF AGE

Younger or less powerful Unclean are close to still being human. Generally, they find their condition repulsive and seek to find peace away from it. While there are those who find a surprising and sublime comfort in being able to turn into a big bug-man or a swarm of roaches, most consider it abominable — at least, initially. Hence, those Unclean with higher Harmony and lower Primal Urge scores often still go to jobs, often graveyard shift positions, still have hobbies, still drive cars. They want to be human very badly, and mimic as much a normal life as their condition allows.

That changes as Primal Urge and Harmony shift. If Harmony goes south, the resultant degeneration often leaves a character feeling that his revolting condition is actually quite empowering — so much so that it is perhaps worth being a monster in the darkness, hungry mandibles squishing and clicking. Primal Urge, on the other hand, doesn't convince an Unclean character to be *monstrous*, per se, but it informs the character's existence with power and purpose. The character finds solace in his form, and often incorporates it into his increasingly inhuman lifestyle. Some band together to hunt human predators, or maybe they take territory away from gangs. Others colonize whole castoff areas of the city, forming vast societies and temples beneath the ground in closed-off subway tunnels or in gutted housing projects. There they feast in bacchanalian orgies, consuming whatever gets thrown through the grates above, or rushing out en masse in swarm form and sweeping over whatever rats (or sleeping bums) lie in their way. Power and degeneration lead the Unclean down some strange roads. Elder wereroaches often scare the hell of the younger members, so alarming are they in their alien ways of thinking.

## RUMORS OF A PURE FORM

The Unclean tell stories about a "pure form" accessible to only the most powerful — and, as some suggest, the most insane — of their kind. Such rumors include the following:

- The ability to become a single tiny roach that wiggles from the human form's mouth and leaves a comatose body behind while it wanders about. When the pure Unclean wants to return to human form, he just climbs back in his mouth... or the mouth of any *other* sleeping human.
- Some can grow into roaches the size of a bull mastiff — and they can *fly*, too.

- Those able to access the pure form can transmit the spiritual infection of the Unclean by touch alone. Or maybe eggs that gestate in their mouths. Hard to say.

- One guy says he saw one of these "pure" Unclean, and said that the thing could summon waves of biting cockroaches, and could orchestrate them like a writhing tide going in and out.

- The "pure form," reached at the pinnacle of Primal Urge, just grants two additional forms equivalent to the Near-Human and Near-Beast Form Aspects (see p. 182).

## HELL CULTS

One curious, and admittedly uncommon phenomenon, extant among the Unclean is the proliferation of "hell cults." Some roaches get it in their heads that they are a manifestation of the Underworld, seeing as how they're generally forced to be both chthonic and nocturnal. The "hell cult" term for some is just a catch-all title, as they don't worship a Satanic Hell but instead believe themselves avatars of *other* underworld entities (Hades, Hel, Ereshkigal, Osiris). Of course, just as many believe themselves to be the spawn of the Devil, the glorious and grisly result of sin existing in the world.

What do hell cults do? It depends on the "flavor" of the cult. Most tend to be thrill-seekers or gratuitous hell-raisers (setting fires, making homemade bombs, performing brutal thrill-kills). Several hell cults go for more subtle misdeeds, preferring instead to be the ones who convince others to sin. They act as kind of deadly and disgusting muses, exploiting the internal weaknesses and mental wounds of the down and out and abused, driving them to turn on the human world and debase themselves (through sex, pain, crime, or some combination of sins). A few such cults avoid the negative side and actually do what the old underworld gods were supposed to do: be the arbiters of forbidden wisdom in the deep dark of the world. These types are rarer than the Unclean would prefer, and when they *do* pop up, they tend to be lumped in with the other fiends and therefore scorned.

Hell cults are not a healthy phenomenon among the Unclean. Most Unclean either dismiss them as an urban legend or spurn them as a disgusting exception. Despite this, the cults pop up time to time, either given power by the vanity of youth or the madness of the older roaches. They don't last long, usually; their actions often draw enough attention to get them





killed. Some survive long enough to do real damage, and rumors exist of hell cults that have maintained power for decades, lingering like a persistent infection.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

The following Aspects are unique to the Unclean.

### GROSS EATER (• OR ••)

With the one-dot Aspect, the character can eat anything organic. Doesn't matter if it's cooked, raw, or outright roadkill. The character's stomach is capable of breaking down even the nastiest, most diseased biological matter — even human waste. It provides just as much sustenance as a normal square meal. The two-dot version allows the character to consume *inorganic* matter, as well. Provided he can shove it into his mouth and swallow it (chewing with teeth or mandibles optional), he can eat it and gain nutrition from it. Note that some inorganic foods (glass, metal shards, wood splinters), while digestible, may cause damage on the way down the esophagus.

### EXOSKELETON (••)

By spending one Essence point, the character's flesh grows tough and waxy for the remainder of the scene, moreso than usual. The skin — now a shiny shit brown, the color of a roach's wing — provides additional armor equivalent to 1/2. However, while active, the exoskeleton hampers the character's Defense and Speed by -1 apiece. This Aspect can be used in any form, and its armor rating is *added* to the natural armor formed in the hybrid form (for a total of 2/3).

### ASTHMATIC REACTION (•••)

Cockroaches aggravate asthma. Scientists aren't exactly sure why, but believe it has something to do with the proteins in a roach's saliva. This Aspect allows the character to take advantage of this unusual reaction. Spend an Essence point. The player makes an attack roll with Dexterity + Athletics (the opponent's Defense is counted against this roll) to successfully connect with his spit, which he hocks upon the victim. If the attack is successful, no damage is done initially. On the turn following the successful spit attack, the victim begins to suffer a terrible coughing fit, feeling as if his throat is closing (it's not, but that's how it feels). The target suffers a -3 dice penalty to all rolls during this turn. This penalty lessens by one die per turn: second turn it's -2 dice, third turn it becomes -1 die and it's gone by the fourth turn. However, during this fourth turn the target suffers two points of bashing damage from the severe coughing.

## UNCLEAN WAR STORIES

Following are several scenarios that may help you decide how best to use the *Nidmuzug* in a war-based scenario. They make unique enemies for the Forsaken. Below are ways to take advantage of them in stories of war.

### EXTERMINATION

Cockroaches cause consternation. They're a symbol of filth, illness and out-of-control gluttony. Men who can become these bugs aren't going to be instantly welcome (would *you* feel comfortable coming face-to-face with a seven-foot tall humanoid roach creature?). The Forsaken, upon encountering one or 100 of the Unclean, may see fit to tear them from this mortal coil.

The thing is, it's not necessarily about xenophobia. It *can* be — the roach-men are perhaps aberrant enough to warrant misunderstanding based solely upon sheer revulsion. However, the Forsaken may come to recognize that these creatures don't breed. They are born of an infection whose likelihood of distribution increases with the number of new Unclean. Greater numbers of Unclean can bring a world of unwholesome consequences: disturbed Shadow, older and more powerful wereroaches suffering potential degeneration and a unified sub-society of subterranean fiends. Throw in the unfounded fears of the creatures spreading disease and filth, and you have a very real recipe for why the Forsaken might want to destroy the Unclean. (Irony is, the way the Forsaken may end up seeing the roach-men is the same way that the Pure see the Forsaken: less than pure, revolting, worthy of extermination.)

Alternately, consider the possibility that the Unclean may *fear* extermination, even if they've no proof of its coming. Upon discovering that the Forsaken exist, the wereroaches may band together to pre-empt an attack that may not even be coming. But if they can convince one another that the werewolves will destroy them eventually, it may launch them into an early, brutal assault on Uratha territory.

### THESE DARK PLACES

Horror is darkness. Horror is the subterranean world in which the Unclean sometimes dwell.

Imagine a Forsaken assault on a hive of Unclean living beneath the city or under a mountain. It's dark. Some spaces are too cramped, while others are so wide open that something could strike from any direction. The city rumbles above, the earth shifts and every shadow seems to move and breathe. Doesn't

Doesn't help that the walls crawl with normal *everyday* cockroaches, little legs whispering against rock and steel.

Down below, the Forsaken are way out of their element. Why do they make such an assault? Maybe a wereroach hell cult is at work, whittling away at a city's foundation from beneath, which summarily rots the sanctity of the urban Shadow. Could be that the roaches are down there in the darkness, making some strange machine out of old bones and iron gears that will chew up those who abused them. Or they control some resource critical to the Forsaken: a doorway to the Shadow that requires no roll, an old ancestral fetish, a sleeping idigam or vampire who, if disturbed, could lay waste to them all. Maybe the poor dumb Unclean are totally innocent and the Forsaken think they're responsible for some atrocity or another.

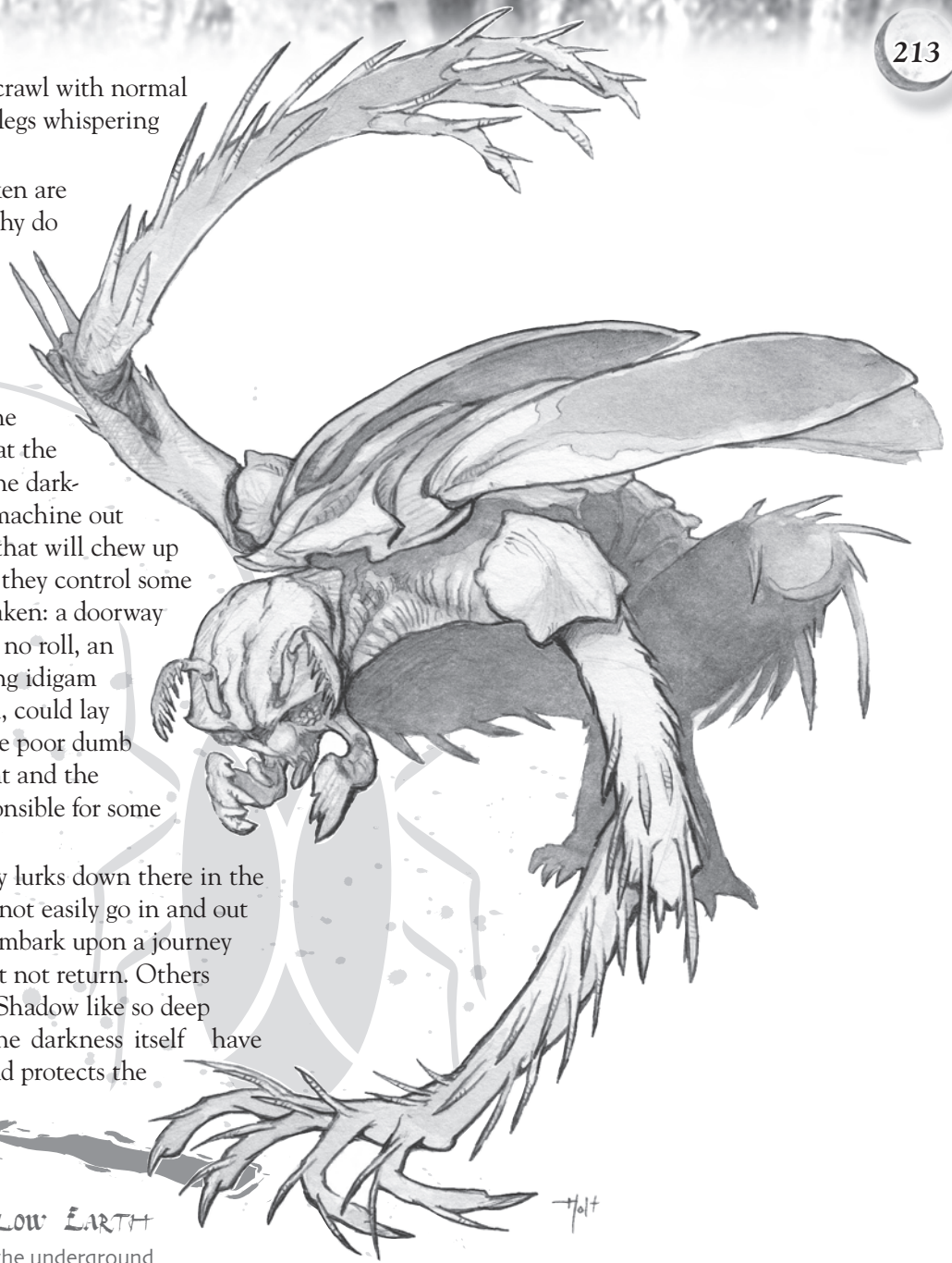
A truly frightening story lurks down there in the darkness. The Forsaken cannot easily go in and out of the darkness: they must embark upon a journey into the depths. Some might not return. Others might go mad. What is the Shadow like so deep beneath the world? Does the darkness itself have a hungry spirit who loves and protects the Unclean?

### BIG DIG AND HOLLOW EARTH

Boston's "Big Dig" — the underground highway project that allowed I-93 to go beneath the city instead of through it — is finally completed. Except, they dug a lot of holes and tunnels that were never filled in (budget constraints, oops). The Unclean have made an impromptu home here, and lurk in a little "town" connected by winding tunnels and unfinished hunks of highway.

But they've found something there, too. A hole that goes deeper than anything they've seen. Some of the older roaches hear whispers floating up out of that massive pit, susurrations that tell of a hollow Earth and the alien ghosts who populate its center. Some of the Unclean

have explored the area and found some very strange things: a few pages from Admiral Byrd's journal when he ventured to the South Pole, a piece of a Nazi flag with the swastika still intact and a smooth piece of burnished metal embossed with a distinctly inhuman language. Is the hole a gateway to some place else? Some other *time*? The Unclean don't want it closed. But the Forsaken sure might when they find out what kind of spirits are crawling up from the depths....





## SAMPLE CHARACTER

Below you'll find a sample *Nidmuzug* character.

### SAMANTHA GREGORY

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

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

**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Technology) 3, Computer (Bypass Security) 4, Investigation 3 (Internet Searches), Occult 1, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Firearms 2, Larceny 2, Stealth 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Excuses) 4

**Merits:** Eidetic Memory, Encyclopedic Knowledge, Resources 3

**Primal Urge:** 3

**Willpower:** 4

**Harmony:** 7

**Essence Max / Per Turn:** 12/1

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Lust

**Health:** 7 (12/9)

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

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

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

**Aspects:** Asthmatic Reaction 3, Gross Eater 2, Invisible Mark 1, Unsettling Eye 1

Just because Samantha Gregory is a teenage genius doesn't mean her parents don't worry about her. Boy, do they worry. And why wouldn't they? They're good Christian people. Dad was the home-run king of his high school baseball team, and Mom was student council president. But their daughter isn't anything like that. She wears all black. Stays up all night staring at a computer monitor, her thin fingers tap-dancing across the keyboard doing Lord knows what. They know she smokes cigarettes. They worry about her health, being so pale and skinny and all. The kids at school pick on her, and the parents wish their daughter would just try to... *fit in* more, and maybe the other kids would leave her alone.

All this is *before* she became one of the Unclean. She turned into a roach-person after eating a ham sandwich that had been sitting out for a couple of days on her desk (she was hungry). At first, it was horrifying. She threw up a lot. Suffered nightmares. Tumbled into depths of self-loathing far more profound than any she had considered before. But it wasn't long before she had "new friends" such as Jenkins and Po-Boy and Squick, and she liked them a lot. It was even better that her parents didn't like them!

They took her to meet the *others* — elder Unclean who built this little shantytown inside this fire-gutted asylum on the far side of town. Inside it's a hodgepodge of corrugated tin, stolen amenities, TV screens and ragtag furniture. At least a dozen others like her live there, eking out a pretty cool living doing whatever they can. Even better, the elders have a plan to make things even more "comfortable." Samantha (they call her "Sammy") doesn't know what it is, but she just likes the thought of belonging.

So, she's getting used to what she is. School's harder and harder what with all those bright lights, and people seem to pick on her even harder, now. But she's graduating soon. And the elders say that, if she really *wants*, she's welcome to take out her aggression — or better, her desires — on those bullies who would dare to humiliate her. Her parents wouldn't approve, but you know what? Screw them.

## BUC NAMES

The wereroaches go for nicknames. Nicknames can be anything, whether a shortened version of a normal human name (Charles becomes Charlie), or some kind of home-brewed epithet indicative of the character's habits (Killer, Chomper, Piggy, Shadow, Puke). Such nicknames tend toward the grotesque, obviously.

# BAAL-HADAD

GUDTHABAK

Eyes watched them from storefront windows and behind hedges. As they passed by an old drugstore, a shadow moved within, and a set of dusty blinds clattered closed on the far side of the glass.

Boneroller blinked away the bright noon-day sun. He surveyed the rest of his pack. "You're sure this is the place? Looks harmless enough."

And it did look harmless, like a town frozen in the 1950s — all picket fences and pastel houses, seltzer shops and corner stores. A grand old movie house waited up ahead, though it looked boarded up. The air was still. The sky was blue. He smelled something strange, but he couldn't peg it.

"This is it," Switcher said. "This is where they took her."

"My little sister," Janelle growled, and Boneroller could smell the sweat and fury coming off her skin, as if she'd change any second and tear this town asunder. He put a stabilizing hand on her arm — a bad move for some, but it always calmed her down.

It was then that Boneroller noticed something. An odd detail, to be sure, but one that worried him considerably. He scanned the rooftops of this town's single main street.

"No steeples," he mumbled. "No church. Town like this, and no church?"

"And look at this," Switcher said. He pointed to the drugstore window, where the blinds hadn't closed completely — just beneath the bottom of the blind sat a small figurine made of bronze. The statue was of a throne, upon which sat a monster whose body whose body was of a man, but whose head was of a bull. Red jewels marked the eyes.

"That's what I saw," Janelle said, stifling a weep and a growl. "That's what took my little sister."

They have no Bible, and their commandments don't number 10. Only one tenet matters, truly, to the bull-changers of the Baal-Hadad, and that tenet

is found in every house and business in every town over which they stand vigil. That tenet is: "Thou shalt have no other gods before us, because all gods have forsaken you."

The Baal-Hadad — sometimes just called bull-men, other times allowing the vulgar *minotaur* to be used if sparingly — place themselves as the gods of various towns and villages that sit at the margins of any map. The world is a bad place, a dangerous cesspool with inequity at every turn. God, if such a character ever existed, has long left this world to its own devices, and that is simply unacceptable. The Baal-Hadad have chosen to take God's place over the people, giving the herd fences from which they may not stray, and providing protection from the injustices of a rotten world. They watch over these small towns and hamlets, accepting sacrifices and worship from the people. They don't bother with cities or suburbs that lie connected to the rest of society — such places are already lost to the sweeping cancer, and deserve nothing more than excision.

No, these burgs lurk far from the highways, with the people insulating themselves from the rest of the world by making sure that they have everything they need without straying from their own borders. They grow their own food. They entertain each other, holding festivals and dances. Their children do not leave town for schooling, and they shun university life because it's simply unnecessary. Of course, the insulation is imperfect, and from time to time, the people of these towns decide that they want to leave. And leave they shall, but in doing so they must realize that they will never be allowed to return. Exile is permanent.

Of course, the bull-men don't live within the towns themselves, and usually remain outside the civilized borders. Gods do not live with their worshippers, after all, for they are separate from men. That's not to say the townsfolk and the minotaurs







don't mix. The bull-men walk the streets at day, or the people come to them at night to bring them supplies or other sacrifices. The minotaurs choose wives from the village women, and the men sometimes come to seek advice or justice from the bull-changers. The two groups are inextricably tied but forever separate — yes, the people fete the Baal-Hadad at their festivals, but they recognize that they are not feting their own, but are instead venerating those clearly above them in station. So the command goes, having no other gods but the Baal-Hadad.

**Appearance and Forms:** In human form, the *Gudthabak* are often powerfully muscled or tall and lithe, appearing in many ways as the pinnacle of physical perfection. They dress plainly, not as ostentatious deities but as examples of humility and simplicity. They separate themselves — marking their godhood — in a few subtle ways. Some shave their heads. Others take odd ornamentations such as septum nose rings or scar configurations. All wear brands, burned upon their flesh by Helions (see below, “Sun Worshipers”). No matter what the Baal-Hadad wear or what brands mar their flesh, they always seem to have the presence and authority of the bull: a powerful, stubborn air that seems initially overpowering.

Hybrid form for the bull-changers gives them, as their nickname suggests, the appearance of a minotaur wrenched out of Greek myth. Their human bodies remain, but swell and bulge with bloated muscle and turgid skin lined with stiff guard hairs. Their hands, too, remain as human, but their feet become powerful hooves — cracked and dark and heavy enough to crush a skull with little effort. The Baal-Hadad's head distends and appears as a massive bull's head with broad black horns. Its muzzle and nostrils grow slick with spit and foam, but the creepiest thing is its eyes: still human, even in such a beastly visage.

The Traits for the hybrid form are Strength +3, Dexterity +1, Stamina +2, Size +2, Initiative +1, Speed +3, Armor 1/1, Health +5, Perception +2.

In the animal form, a Baal-Hadad appears slightly larger than an average bull. Some are lean and rosy, while others are thick and stocky. Most minotaurs assume a black coat of hair, though some have coats the color of dried blood or even milky white. White bulls are often considered holier than the others, even if no evidence supports this theory. (Hence, white bulls often end up as the head or the “blade” of the herd.)

The Traits for the animal form are Strength +2, Stamina +1, Size +1, Speed +2, Health +3, Perception +2.

Note that in both the hybrid and animal forms, the horns incur lethal damage, and attacks can be made using those horns through a Strength + Brawl roll (with the horns providing a +1 bonus to that roll in hybrid form only).

Also worth noting is that the “bull” form, while typically associated with male animals, applies across both genders within the Baal-Hadad. Females may possess some manner of feminine grace above and beyond their male counterparts, but females still grow the horns symptomatic of the bull-changer condition.

**Reproduction:** The bull-changers do not increase their number through normal breeding. Yes, they breed with humans and sometimes breed with one another. The resultant children, however, are universally human. These children are certainly favored, allowed to act as liaisons between the minotaurs and the townsfolk, but beyond that the children not gifted with any of the shapeshifting powers that their parents possess.

The way that the Baal-Hadad truly reproduce themselves is what can most immediately draw them into conflict with the Forsaken. The bull-lords require a wolf-blooded human to reproduce. The younger the victim, the better. The Baal-Hadad perform a rite that has reportedly been among their kind for thousands of years — the Rite of *Molech*, or the Rite of True Sacrifice. In this rite, the wolf-blood's own supernatural potential is literally transubstantiated into the blood of the Baal-Hadad. The victim literally *becomes* one of the bull-changers through the performance of this ceremony, changing into the beast's hybrid form at the very end of the rite.

New bull-lords are encouraged not to rebel or stray, and as a reward, are treated incredibly well. They're given the finest foods as well as a sense of true belonging. The Baal-Hadad want their new charges to know that they are now something different, something *better*, and that they no longer belong to the lesser world of mortals. Having been deified, they are stronger, wiser and eminently more moral.

The question is, do the bull-lords therefore know of the Forsaken? Some herds do, others do not. If the wolf-blooded used to create more of their own are aware of the existence of the Uratha, then it stands to follow that the Baal-Hadad of that particular herd know of the Forsaken, too, at least in part. That said, many wolf-bloods go through their lives without ever

recognizing their feral relatives or their own bestial potential.

So how do the Baal-Hadad find and identify wolf-blooded humans? The Baal-Hadad don't. Helions do. The bull-changers are sun worshippers, and commune with sun-spirits regularly. Helions are the ones that help identify wolf-bloods, and the Baal-Hadad go where the sun-spirits direct them.

Many of the towns lorded over by the Baal-Hadad feature whole families of wolf-bloods who are favored and privileged because of this distinction (a distinction of which the families may be wholly unaware). The advantage here is that the bull-lords do not have to stray from their own domain to find those who will become like them. Sometimes, though, the well runs dry so to speak, and the *Gudthabak* must go afield searching for the wolf-bloods (or as they know them, "the bull-blooded") who will become one with the herd.

### THE RITE OF MOLECH

Assume that all bull-gods are taught this rite, and so it has no intrinsic point value.

During this rite, a wolf-blooded (or so-called bull-blooded) victim is bound to an altar made of stone or wood. The victim is wreathed in a garland of flowers, often laurel. A burning cluster of sage is pressed to the victim's bare chest while bull-changers slice inch-long slashes into the victim's palms. The victim is forced to drink his own blood (he may do it willingly, if he chooses). All Baal-Hadad participants — there must be three — expend one Willpower point and one Essence point. The bull-god with the highest Strength + Resolve roll must succeed against the victim's Stamina + Composure roll. If the victim wins, the process fails. If the minotaur wins, the rite is a success.

This rite *must* happen under a visible sun. The rite cannot be concealed by clouds or behind a mountain, and most certainly cannot be performed at night.

**Character Creation:** Physical prowess is foremost among the Baal-Hadad. Those strong and stalwart of body are those prized above others. Plus, most *Gudthabak* do not rest on their laurels, working among the human herd, and one requires muscle to plow the field or build a house.

That said, it's almost equally as important to be strong of will and mind. One cannot be a proper

judge or arbitrator without these unseen strengths, and so some favor Mental Attributes and Skills in parallel with the Physical aspects.

Unfortunately, Social Skills and Attributes are often lost by the wayside, cast off in favor of other avenues of improvement. But, the Baal-Hadad accept this weakness. They recognize that it is not their place to be diplomats. Judgment needn't be delivered with a honeyed-tongue — it only needs to come with a crushing hoof or falling axe.

**Inborn Aspects:** Shapechanging, Regeneration, Totem Guardian

**Common Aspects:** Cull the Weak, Near-Beast Form, War Heart

**Rage:** Death Rage

**Territories:** The nature of the bull-gods is to take large hunks of territory, far larger than a pack of Forsaken would normally assume. The Baal-Hadad often claim as their herd an entire town (rarely with a population more than a couple of hundred people, though), as well as a few miles of the land surrounding that town. The bull-lords themselves generally stay to the margins, choosing instead not to dwell with the humans directly.

**Concepts:** Brood cow, herd mother, hoary priest, hunter, moral enforcer, reluctant neophyte, wrathful bull-god, zealous sun worshipper

**Quote:** "The safety of the herd is paramount. Its liberty is not."

### SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Below are descriptions of *Gudthabak* society, and how it relates to their mortal "herd."

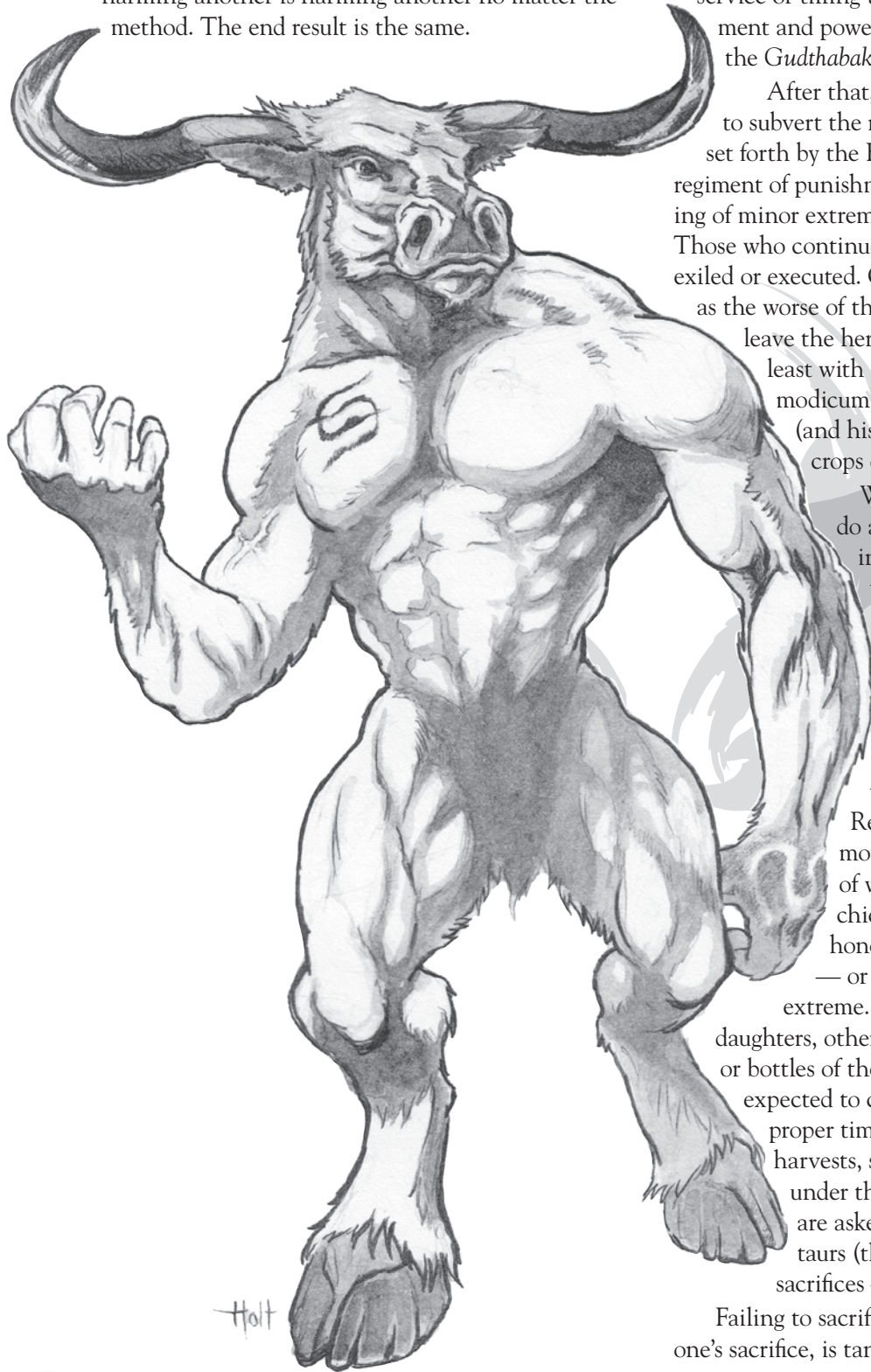
#### OF HUMAN AND BULL

The Baal-Hadad maintain a curious relationship with the townsfolk over whom the bull-lords watch. It's not adversarial, not exactly. Most bull-lords don't lord over the humans as narcissistic deities (though it can happen), but rather, they rule the mortal herd much as a parent does with a passel of children. The bull-men recognize that the herd, while not helpless, is certainly guideless. Humans are easily led astray and find their way off the path far too often. The Baal-Hadad believe that they are there to keep the herd safe and under control. Under the bull-lords' guard, nobody wanders from the path.

This is all subjective, of course, but most Baal-Hadad come to some simplistic ideas as to what constitutes the straight and narrow. While they don't use the term "sin" to represent what they feel are



transgressions, they do believe that a human is not to do harm against another human (unless the bull-gods sanction it as part of some kind of public castigation). Stealing from a person is the same as stabbing them, as the fruits of their labors are very much a part of them. All crimes are in this way considered equal: harming another is harming another no matter the method. The end result is the same.



The initial and most basic punishment for the townsfolk is work. The Baal-Hadad generally believe that work is pure. Effort — and the results born of effort — is cleansing and rewarding, with the sweat of exertion being a kind of baptism. Whether it's putting up a barn, performing some kind of community service or tilling the fields, work is a great punishment and powerful reward (at least in the eyes of the *Gudthabak*).

After that, a town member who continues to subvert the natural order and betray the laws set forth by the Baal-Hadad will face an increasing regiment of punishments: public beatings, the severing of minor extremities (fingers, ears, toes), isolation. Those who continue to willfully disobey are either exiled or executed. Curiously, the bull-gods see exile as the worse of the two options, for being forced to leave the herd forever is a gross dishonor. At least with execution, one is allowed some modicum of respect and tribute upon death (and his blood is allowed to fertilize the crops or stain a barn's wooden walls).

Worth noting is that the townsfolk do a great deal of their own policing in this regard. Most are willing to sell out their neighbors to the bull-gods if it earns them any favor at all.

### SACRIFICES GREAT AND SMALL

The townsfolk are expected to sacrifice to the bull-gods. Regular sacrifices, which happen monthly, are lesser: a burning pyre of wheat, a sack of recently beheaded chickens, a poem written in their honor. Those that happen yearly — or once every 10 years — are more extreme. Some farmers offer virginal daughters, others offer pints of their own blood or bottles of their tears. Every town member is expected to commit his own sacrifice at the proper times (usually on holidays such as harvests, solstices, equinoxes — and always under the noon-day sun). Even children are asked to give something to the minotaurs (though never large or dangerous sacrifices — those come later).

Failing to sacrifice, or failing to appease with one's sacrifice, is tantamount to a crime. Punish-

ment awaits those who fail. Over time, they learn the proper ways to venerate the Baal-Hadad. Usually, one's neighbors will set a man straight — though, should the man be disliked, his neighbors may set him on an improper course so that he inadvertently offends the *Gudthabak*.

### How Many?

How many bull-gods watch over a single human herd? Some towns might have as few as three Baal-Hadad, while some larger burghs might sit beneath the watchful gaze of a dozen or more.

What gives them more fearsome numbers is when several towns sit together in the middle of nowhere. Three villages, each 10 or 20 miles from one another — but 100 miles from any major metropolitan area — might support three dozen bull-gods over that swath of space. An individual town's Baal-Hadad might make a fair match for a single pack of Forsaken, but woe to the pack that finds a dozen more *Gudthabak* rushing to the aid of their nearby allies.

### Idols of the Bull-Gods

The minotaurs do not necessarily break themselves out by any kind of auspice, but at the time of becoming one of the Baal-Hadad, a bull-god chooses an idol to represent him in this world. Some idols are nothing but round stones with faces carved into them, others are petrified wood or bone carved to look like a bull's skull. Others may choose idols out of certain metals such as bronze, brass or lead. Any material is up for grabs except silver (see sidebar below, "Silver") and gold (too perfect, reserved only for Helios). The material and idol chosen (or made) grant certain bonuses. This idol is said to reflect something very special and unique about the god, so much so that the townsfolk may make their own idols as honorary replicas to be placed on in-home altars. Below are a handful of materials of which an idol might be made, and the bonuses that accompany them. Note that this list is not exhaustive, and players should be encouraged to come up with their own, using these as guidelines:

- Bone:** +1 to any Medicine rolls.
- Brass:** Two free Mental Skill Specialties.
- Bronze:** Two free Social Skill Specialties.
- Lead:** +1 to any Intimidation rolls.
- Stone:** Two free Physical Skill Specialties.
- Wood:** +1 to any Survival rolls.

(An idol must be possessed to provide its bonus. In fact, it needs to be touching skin — hung from a leather cord against the Baal-Hadad's chest, for instance.)

### Labyrinths

The bull-gods don't always make it easy for humans to come to them. Some establish troublesome physical obstacles between their own lairs (which may be caves, open fields or distant manor houses reclaimed by nature) and the towns they rule. One might set up a series of jagged rocks or hidden pits, while another might literally create a maze formed of trees and briars.

Some instead create moral labyrinths. The more intellectual, thinking Baal-Hadad draft various townfolk as "actors" in a drama meant to seem real to a tested individual. The actors may set up temptations of infidelity or theft, or might instead attempt to cultivate certain negative responses like anger or hatred. If a person fails this test, he's said to be "lost in the labyrinth," and may be punished. Success is purifying, however, and such mortals become favored, at least until the next major harvest or festival.

### Hidden History

Some bull-gods know of their history. When they reach a certain age, the "blade" or head of the herd might share with them what is believed to be their history. Others remain ignorant of it for their entire lives, told only of the stories upon their deathbed or never told at all.

The histories of the Baal-Hadad are purely oral, and much may have been lost in translation over the centuries and millennia (if they were ever true at all). The stories suggest that once, the bull-gods opposed God much as they do now, but did so in a way that contravened the natural order and relished in the nature of sin. Once grotesque, gore-caked beast-men, they demanded human sacrifice and obliterated those who dared flaunt their virtue.

Some herds possess those young bull-gods who, upon learning of this supposed history, wonder aloud if they've really come that far. Such a notion is heresy, and the offender will swiftly learn to never bring that up again. Other herds have decided to renew these old ways and blood-soaked oaths, forcing their humans to kneel and serve — or die before their brothers.





## HELION TOTEMS

The bull-gods are sun worshippers, a fact they keep mostly hidden from their mortal herd. They possess various names for the sun god: Helios, Apollo, Ra, Ahau-Kin, Sol, Moloch, each being used interchangeably. Their worship is not given through blind faith, however; the bull-lords *see* the avatars of the sun. They hear their words, gain their aid and offer them prayers of their own.

The Baal-Hadad take Helions as their totems. The Baal-Hadad don't know that the Helions are merely lesser sun-spirits, believing instead that they are avatars of the sun itself (and the Helions do not correct them). Each herd of Baal-Hadad possesses only one Helion, and they don't choose the spirit — it chooses them.

The Helions brand the flesh of the *Gudthabak* with seemingly incomprehensible symbols. One group receives a single symbol to share, though none of them can say precisely what it means (though many speculate or invent meaning).

(More information about Helions can be found on p. 280 of *Werewolf: The Forsaken*.)

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

What follows are those Aspects unique to the Baal-Hadad.

### SUN-FLECKED EYES (☉)

During the day, Baal-Hadad with this Aspect find that the sun above grants them above average Perception. If the day is clear and the sun is visible, all Perception rolls gain a +2 dice bonus. If the sun is veiled behind clouds or is otherwise muted, the bonus is lost until it can again be seen fully by the bull.

### STAMPEDE RUSA (☉☉)

Bulls can demonstrate sudden bursts of speed that carry their massive frames forward. The momentum is brief, but powerful. In any form, the character can make an all-out attack, doubling the normal bonus so it becomes +4 instead of +2. This can also be used out of combat, when attacking inanimate objects for the purposes of doing damage. When making a Strength + Stamina roll to attack an object, the minotaur can move suddenly and swiftly, gaining +1 bonus to the roll. In all uses of this ability, the bull-god loses his Defense for that turn.

### SPOOK THE HERD (☉☉☉)

Sometimes, the herd needs to move, and this Aspect helps a minotaur force that very thing. He

makes threatening gestures: nostrils flaring, hooves stomping, horns cutting through air like spear-tips. The roll is Presence + Intimidation versus the highest Composure + Primal Urge score of any characters within 100 yards. If the Baal-Hadad's successes exceed those of the opposing crowd, the crowd flees the minotaur's presence. They use all available means to escape the bull-god, and do so for a number of turns equal to the bull-god's Strength + Intimidation pool.

### CASTIGATING BRAND (☉☉☉☉)

The Baal-Hadad believe that Helions taught their kind this punishment more than 1,000 years ago, for that is what their totems tell them to be true. With this power, the minotaur lays hand or hoof on a subject and expends two points of Essence. (If the subject is bound, no roll is necessary to touch, but if the subject resists, a successful "touch" attack must be made.) The victim assumes one aggravated level of damage, and his flesh burns and bubbles into a swollen brand (which is a simple design of the bull-god's choosing — an 'X,' for instance).

This brand remains until that aggravated level of damage is healed. Until that time occurs, however, *any* time the branded victim performs an action that is at all in line with his Vice, he assumes a -1 die penalty to all actions. This penalty is cumulative; if a character with Gluttony as his Vice overindulges three times in a couple of days, all his rolls are given over to a -3 dice modifier. (And, as a reminder, every indulgence of Vice makes the brand tingle and itch.) All penalties cease when the brand heals and fades.

## MINOTAUR WAR STORIES

Because the bull-gods sometimes steal the wolf-blooded and claim vast swaths of territory (whole towns, really), it's very possible that they will come into brutal and bloody conflict with the packs of the Uratha. Below are a few examples of stories that may grow out of this conflict.

### BLOOD THEFT

The Baal-Hadad of the town of Thorpe's Run has no wolf-bloods of its own — but they know that they need them. And so they do as they've always done: leave the herd, led by their sun-spirit totem, in search of what they call the "bull-blooded."

Of course, they find what they're looking for. Maybe they take one wolf-blood, but ideally they find a whole clan of them and spirit them away in the night.

Except this time, they take wolf-bloods who are close to the pack or the pack's allies.

This is the genesis of war. Both sides will clash and call upon allies both near and distant to help them in this struggle. The Baal-Hadad also have the townsfolk to help them when the poor souls can muster enough will to stand against the blood-stained claws of the Forsaken.

This conflict exposes something, however. It exposes the potential rift between a pack of Forsaken and its wolf-blooded kin. See, the Baal-Hadad treat their abducted well — after all, these “bull-bloods” are going to become bull-gods, and so they are treated thusly. It's unlikely that the Forsaken have ever treated their allies so well. It's therefore possible that some or all of the wolf-blooded actively side with the Baal-Hadad, given courage and pleasure by how they are treated. The pack may come to realize that they have mistreated their wolf-blooded allies, but has this realization come too late?

### CELESTIAL PAWNS

Here is perhaps a secret truth about the Baal-Hadad: they are pawns in a cruel celestial game, meant to be driven into contact with Luna's slaves, the Forsaken. Great Helios and his brood care little for the Forsaken, and are glad to have an army of horned pawns to tear down the wolves of the moon.

In this story, neither side recognizes the great celestial battle — not at first, anyhow. Something drives the two sides into conflict, whether it's the theft of a wolf-blooded ally (as above) or a contest over territory. It's not apparent at first, but spirits seem to have great interest in this battle. Helions are caught spying on the Forsaken. The Forsaken are given clandestine information by the Lunes, who are normally too fickle and mad to truly trust. Both sides are stirred like hornets in a nest, driven against one another again and again.

Over time, however, as the Lunes and Helions seem so zealous that they'll sacrifice themselves and their pawns for the cause, one or both groups of shapechangers should come to realize that they're being manipulated. If the players' characters don't realize it first, then the other side does — but will the characters accept peace long enough to hear out this spiritual conspiracy? If the characters are the ones who first suspect, does the enemy listen, or reject such notions as ludicrous propaganda spouted by a weakened adversary?

### UPRISING

The bull-gods aren't evil, not exactly. They're in fact highly moral, at least in their own eyes, and any harm they bring to the herd is deemed a necessary misfortune. In much the same way that an electric fence will keep cattle penned in with sharp shocks, so, too, do the practices of the Baal-Hadad keep the mortal herd “straight.”

It won't be the first time, and it won't be the last, but the herd rebels. They run a bloody uprising against the bull-gods — some charge with axes and pitchforks, throwing coffee cans filled with black powder. Others flee entirely, escaping in the madness.

This can go several ways in involving the Forsaken. Either the escapees come across Forsaken territory, and tell their stories (either willingly or at the point of a claw at their throats), or the minotaurs must go roaming in an effort to find another town that they may claim as their herd. In roaming, the minotaurs are sure to come across Forsaken territory, and conflict ensues.

### SILVER

This is why the Baal-Hadad believe silver harms them: because it's imperfect. It's close to perfect, but gold (the color of the sun, not of the moon) is the true reigning metal, the pinnacle of refinement. Silver aspires to perfection and purity and fails. Such failure is anathema to the *Gudthabak*, whose very skin burns and is rent asunder by blades and arrowheads made of this inadequate metal.

### SAMPLE CHARACTER

Below is a sample *Gudthabak* character.

#### AURELIUS OF THE RED HARVEST

**Idol:** Bone

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

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5 (8/7), Dexterity 4 (5/4), Stamina 3 (5/4)

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult 1

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

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (dogs) 3, Empathy 3, Intimidation (silent) 3

**Merits:** Allies (Farmers) ●●●, Giant, Iron Stamina, Iron Stomach, Strong Back



**Primal Urge:** 5

**Willpower:** 7

**Harmony:** 5

**Essence Max / Per Turn:** 14/2

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Sloth

**Health:** 9 (14/12)

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

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

**Speed:** 14 (17/16)

**Aspects:** Alarming Alacrity 1, Cull the Weak 2, Near-Beast Form 5, Stampede Rush 2

Aurelius is a sometimes sweet and straightforward man. He's imposing in his massive frame and lantern-jawed visage, but remains soft-spoken in most instances.

He's also the herd's executioner. He possesses a fire axe with the word 'righteousness' scratched into the flat of the blade (though the word is now rusty and blood-flaked), and he has used this axe to punish the town's wicked for nearly 30 years.

It's not that he enjoys being the executioner. He doesn't. But he has ultimate faith in his fellow Baal-Hadad, and recognizes that someone must fulfill this task. With his powerful arms and keen aim, it seems only natural that it's him. Of course, he also does what he's told — that, at his core, is what Aurelius is good at doing.

Lately, though, he's been suffering nightmares. His executions always take place out in the fields, and the heads are separated from the body on a wooden platform above the crops so that the jetting blood will fertilize the coming harvest. His dreams are of

this scene, played endlessly over and over again, except often enough *he's* the one with his head on the block. In the distance, he hears howls, like those of wolves, and in the daytime he sees the moon in the sky sitting next to the sun and just as bright.

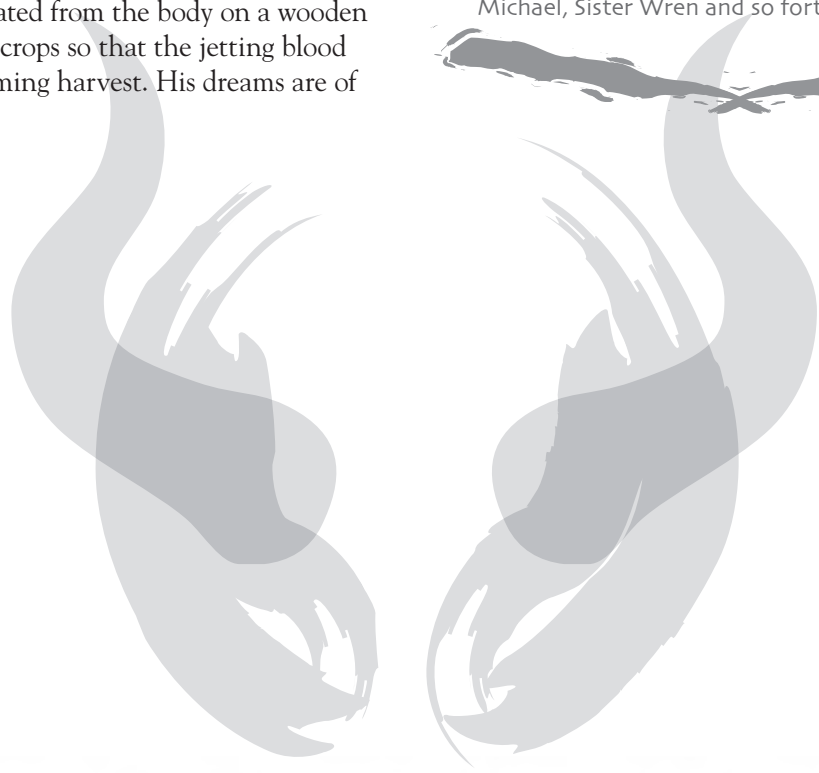
It's not enough to make him question what he does, not yet. But it's unsettling him so much that he's not sure how much longer he can go on. When he even thinks about the next execution — they come maybe once a year, or thrice in a year if the herd gets surly — his hands begin to shake and he hears the howls in the back of his head. Sometimes, he weeps for those he killed.



### NAMING CONVENTIONS

Most Baal-Hadad assume epithets similar to the ones found in mythology (for instance, Athena, the Greek goddess, was sometimes called "Athena of the Flashing Eyes"). These epithets are meant to say something about the shifter, embodying his strength in a statement. A bull-goddess who possesses strong combat prowess as well as an incisive perception into the human condition might be called "Serena of the Piercing Horns." A calmly meditative bull-lord executioner might be known as "Thomas of the Silent Ax."

Some eschew such epithets and assume familial titles, instead. The head or "blade" of a group of Baal-Hadad might be known as Father Paul, while his brethren might be Brother Michael, Sister Wren and so forth.



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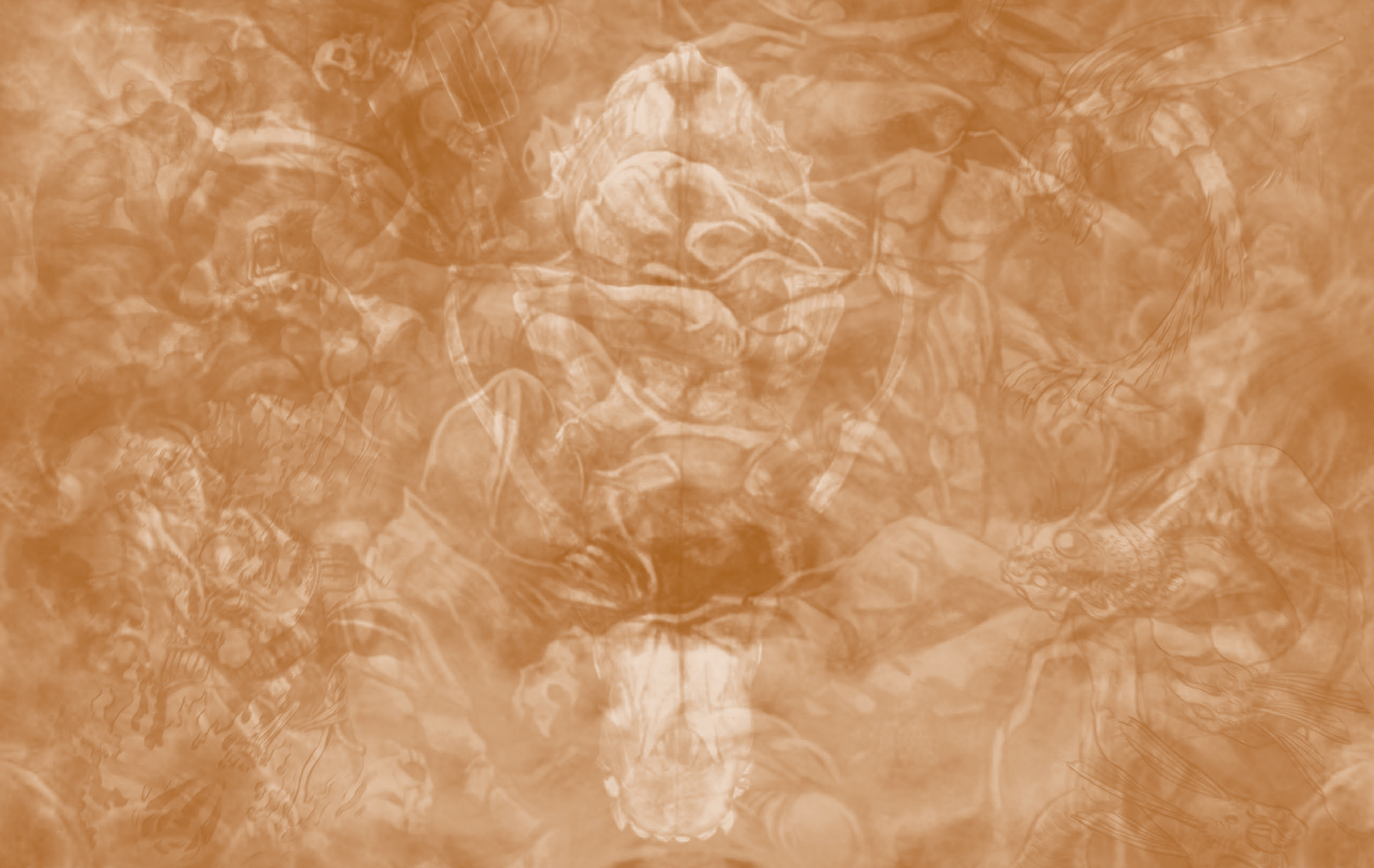


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*"We stand as brothers and sisters tonight.  
Pack beside pack, rival beside rival,  
bound by blood and moon against the forces that would  
come here and murder us all and our kin.  
Someday we may have the luxury of fighting amongst  
ourselves again, but not tonight. Tonight we are one.  
Tonight we go to war."*

*— Ruth Hundred-Scars, Blood Talon*

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