

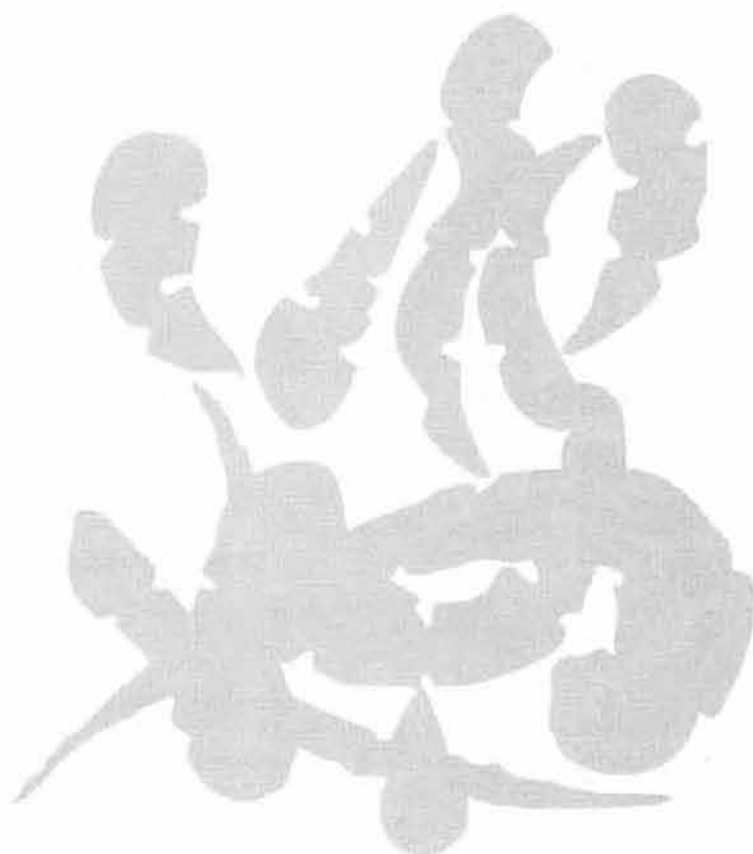
# PAST LIVES™



A Chronicle Sourcebook for *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*



# PAST LIVES™



BY BRUCE BAUGH AND ETHAN SKEMP  
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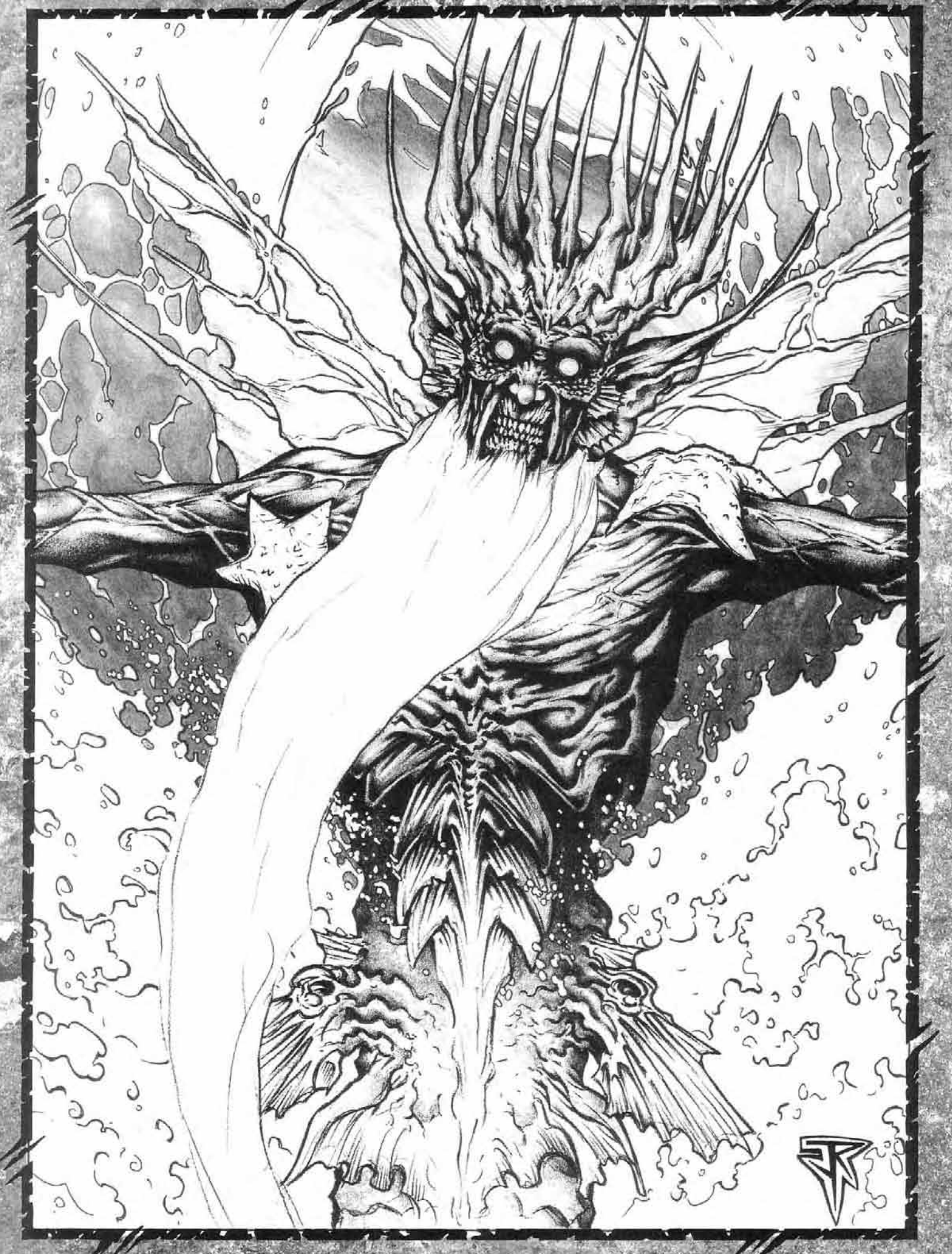
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## The Tale of the Shaking Sea

There's about four different kinds of what we call "tales." I don't mean stories, mind. Anybody can tell a story — a feller can tell you how he met his wife at a dance, or how his Uncle Earl shot his own fool toe off with a shotgun and gave up liquor, and those are stories. Hell, you can tell me how you cooked your breakfast this morning — that's a story. But tales are different. Tales live a long time. Tales tell things that are true even if the story itself isn't. Tales are bigger than people.

Now like I said, there's four kinds of tales, and not all people are good at all of them. There's history tales, which are about the simplest; they're about things that actually happened, about things that somebody accomplished that are still worth talking about. And there's what we call doctrine tales, which talk about things that may or may not have actually happened, but there's a point to the tale that's more important than the facts. These two are just about everybody's favorites, and the only problem you tend to run into is

when people start mistaking one for another. But that's neither here nor there.

Then there's tales of prophecy. You get more of these among the People, because we listen to the spirits better'n the humans do, and because the spirits are the ones who have the best shot at knowing what's going to happen before it does. Humans love tales of prophecy, too, but they've only got a couple that really hold up.

And the last kind is the hardest for most folks to get. Mystery tales, we call 'em. A mystery tale talks about an experience that happened, but it doesn't set it all out there in stone. There's nothing plain or clear about a mystery tale, but that's the point — the point is that the storyteller doesn't tell you what really happened and why, but you got to work it out for yourself. If you figure out a mystery tale, then it becomes one of the other three — but until that challenge is solved, it stays what it is. A mystery tale.

The tale I'm about to tell you is one of those.

...

Long as people have been around, they've been wondering about the deep seas. Sun and Moon, they don't shine there; they light the tops of the waves, and they tug on the oceans back and forth so we get tides, but the light never touches the very deepest parts. Strange things get born down there, and live out their lives, and die, and we never see a lick of 'em.

Things happen slow down there. There are critters down there that haven't changed so much as a scale since the time before the monkeys came down from the trees, since the Dragons were wandering across Gaia. Fish, shelled things, things without shell nor spine. They live in this great vast black, a void that stretches out wider and farther than whole continents, like the night sky without moon, star or clouds. It's cold down there, cold as anything, and the water crushes down on everything. It's like Gaia dug the world's biggest, coldest, darkest grave into Her own flesh and filled it up with water. And things *live* down there.

Every once in a while, we learn about some of it. You've heard about those giant squid that wash up on the beaches sometimes, or the whales that get cut open and have tentacles long as an eighteen-wheeler coiled up in their stomachs. Or about the things that manage to live right where the volcanoes meet the sea, creatures that survive in water that's boiling all the time. Things that make their own light, or crawl their way across these barren dark spaces by feel alone. And those are just the things that Gaia made.

There are things down there not of Her making, too.

We hear less about them. They like to stay hidden, you see. But there are things down there that are alive, and things that are dead, children neither of Sun nor Moon nor Earth Herself. The dead ones are almost more familiar to us — ghosts of people who drowned down where there's no light, or even blood-drinking corpses who walked away from the hot bright life on land and down into the depths, where they drink the coldest blood and Sun is just a memory. We've dealt with the dead before; we know what to expect from them. The living things down there, though — they're only a little bit like the creatures Gaia made. Some say there's these wriggling things that latch onto the spines of divers and ride all the way up into the surface world. Some say there are things like Thunderwyrm that learned how to breathe water, or mock forests that look like they should be growing in the gardens of Malfeas. Some even say there's a whole race of children of the Wyrms down there, living in stone cities with no light, no warmth, no life but themselves.

It's from those depths that he came.

They call him the Drowned King, the rightful monarch of the chasms cut into the floor of the ocean. He was born in an earthquake, drowned in a flood, and crowned by the Wyrms his own self and given all the places out of Sun and Moon's sight to rule over. Down there he eats the corpses of whales that sink to the bottom, and the pale wriggling things with no eyes. But what he's got a true taste for is misery, and that's why we know about him. Because he smells it out, and he comes up out of those dark waters on nights when the moon isn't so bright. And when he comes to the surface, he brings disaster. Earthquakes and storms, and worse. People die — *the People die*.

They say he heaved his huge pale self up out of the water just off the coast of Scotland some fifteen centuries back when the White Howlers' bane-eyed star fell. He could smell their fate, and he drank deep of it when the first proud Howlers started to twist and change.

After that, when he sank on back into the sea, he went swimming over here, to what they were calling the New World back then. The King, he played herald to something much bigger, much worse than himself. They saw him down near the settlement of Roanoke, raising his crowned head out of the water and staring at the shore. That was just before the time that Eater-of-Souls came down on the earth, and nearly brought the Apocalypse on early. Only way they sent that head of the Wyrms on back home was for an entire tribe to die.

And where else do you think they say they saw him? Sure thing. They saw him down in Australia, where they called him Jarapiri. The King had come to drink his fill of the War of Tears.

Some say that the Drowned King is tied to the death of our race. They say that he'll rear on up out of the waters near where the Final Battle is going to take place, waiting for the tribes to die again. Some say that he's gone and done, because he came up to the surface three times, and three tribes died or near as, and all the really important things happen in threes. Most folks think that's being a bit optimistic, myself included.

But here's the real tale.

• • •

This tale is true.

In the First Times, light and dark had not yet been pulled apart, spirit and flesh shared one world, and life and death were still one. Here in the shadows, in the formless and dark oceans of the world, Gaia gave birth. Her first children were not animals, nor plants, nor any living things we know today — they

were *before*. They swam in the depths of Her oceans, and they struggled among themselves. Some of those that succeeded would make others in their image, becoming the grandfathers of the first species. But others grew strong, and remained alone, the first and only things to bear their shapes. And from among these creatures arose a King.

In the times when the Wyrms had begun to wrap its coils around the hearts of mortals, many were the people who turned to its profane worship. Entire cities arose where blasphemous chants echoed through deep pits and hives carved under the palaces, voices raised in praise of Carnage, Hunger and Defilement. It was in these times that the King, already ancient and strong, took his throne. None know the name of his people, for they are all gone. They did not even give their lord and master a name, and he would not give himself one, and this gave him great power over them. So it was that his mastery of his city was complete, and so it was in the other cities.

When Gaia could bear the unholy temple-cities of the Wyrms no longer, She turned to Her favored children. She told the children of Wolf to go to war for Her, and their howls shook the clouds in passionate reply. The children of Wolf raced to the cities where the Wyrms were held in reverence, and they exacted their Mother's revenge. The priests of Carnage were slaughtered, their bowels strewn across their own altars. The priests of Hunger were ripped apart, their flesh thrown to the dogs in the streets. The priests of Defilement were exterminated, their bodies mutilated beyond recognition.

When this was done, and the Wolf-People howled their triumph, Gaia cried out in reply. She tore open her own flesh, and the cities fell into great chasms, and the oceans poured in after them. The world had been cleansed for a time, and the children of Wolf began their vigil over humanity, to prevent such horrible cities from rising again.

But the victory was not complete. The Wyrms still whispered poison into the hearts of humans. Monsters still dug their way into the bowels of the Earth, there to breed and plot their return to the sunlit lands. And in the toppled stones of a fallen city, deep below the waves, the King stirred.

From the ocean he had come, and to the ocean he had returned. The King had fallen into Death without dying — not dead, but Drowned. Among the oldest of things, he had fallen into disaster, and from disaster he would be reborn. He swam deeper into Death, but Death would not hold him. He would return to take revenge on the children of Wolf.

In a land far from here, there was a river. To one side, a spear of iron had marked the river; to the other, a scar of lightning had marked it. The People watched this land, but it was not theirs; they had raised no caerns to their Mother, but instead walked among the trees like ghosts.

The river reached into a sea, a sea younger than the other waters of the world. Its waters washed over stones that had been tumbled down by wrath long ago, stones that were as a cairn for a forgotten people.

Then came the day when the sea shook. The flesh of Gaia trembled and rolled. Down at the bottom of the young sea, the stones cracked and rolled away. And passing up through the rift, swimming out of Death and back into Life, came the Drowned King. The sea churned and rolled, and it rebelled against the thing that had come into it from Death. It gave a final shove, and cast the unborn monster from its body.

When the sea cast its waters forth, they rolled up the river and into the valley. A vast wave bore the ancient King to the place marked by iron and lightning, where it cast him down into the river, and then retreated back to the violated sea. The King lay half in the water and half out — half in Death and half out — and his senses came to him, and he recognized the smell of Wolf. The children of Wolf, the ones who had toppled his city and drowned his people, the ones who had drowned him.

This tale is true.

Human and wolf and Garou stood on the bank of the swollen river. They saw the King arise. He towered up out of the water, a pale giant, a crown upon his head and his beard lank on his chest. His eyes were madness, and his mouth was blood. Humans fell with fear upon the sand and were crushed beneath his feet; wolves bayed and yelped and fled into the forests to escape his teeth. But the Children of Wolf stood firm. And that is why the Drowned King would be cast down once more.

In that moment when the river was bursting, the trees were fallen and blood stained the sand, the King of the fallen city had a doom put upon him. For since he had first been born, there was one thing that he did not own — a name. They saw into his past, and they called him the Drowned King, and thus he became.

All things that have names, have dooms. Only that which cannot be named is beyond fate. Now the Drowned King had a name, and a place in fate.

A blessing came upon the children of Wolf who stood there and fought against him that day. Those who leapt first, who howled their war cries the loudest, were granted a great vision. They looked

outward, across the march of seasons, and saw what was yet to come. They saw that the Drowned King could not die this day, any more than it could truly live. They saw winters and summer fall past, and they saw the sea shake three more times — by night, by wind and by sun. And at the last, they saw themselves tear open the Drowned King with their claws, and it fell through a hole in the sea. They saw the ghosts of the People reach to the sky, and they saw themselves among the ghosts.

So it was that they saw they could not slay the Drowned King here. So it was that they saw their deaths. But they were children of Wolf, and even knowing these visions to be true, they chose to fight. And they did so with the visions they had seen fresh in their mind. They remembered the visions of their claws cutting into its hide, and so they raked the Drowned King's hide in the places they saw bleed, and those wounds opened as they would in the future. They had seen the King thrash against them and crush them, and so they knew when to leap free of its powerful blows. The visions of their future victory told them what to do.

And it was this way that they drove it back into the sea. The Drowned King knew fear for the first time, and it opened the gates between Life and Death. But the heroes had seen this happen, and they were prepared.

Again, the Drowned King fell into Death without dying. And the heroes of the People were riven from their flesh by the hands of their own, and they fell with the King into Death. There they swam with it, and there they still swim.

The tale does not end here, for this was not the last time that the sea shook. Three more times it would come to pass. When the moon turned her face from the Lion-born White Howlers and the Wyrms claimed them for its own, the sea shook and the Drowned King raised his face to a darkened sky. When the Great Devourer consumed the hearts of the Croatan in a hideous feast, the sea shook and the Drowned King searched for scraps that had fallen from the table. When the Black Spiral Dancers tricked the People into murdering their own, the sea shook and the Drowned King came to watch the last victim die.

The rest of the tale is unspoken.

This tale is true. One saw the Drowned King arise in the swollen river, and told the tale. One saw the King arise in the oceans by the Howlers' lands, and added to the tale. One saw the King arise as herald of the Eater of Souls in the world of flesh, and added to the tale. One saw the King arise to feed on the murder of the Southern Tribe, and added to the tale.

This tale is true. This tale is incomplete, and that is also true.





# Introduction: Procession of Ages

*It is indeed desirable to be well descended, but the glory  
belongs to our ancestors.*  
— Plutarch

## *Past, Present and Future*

No culture in the World of Darkness keeps closer to their past than the Garou. The werewolves keep stories of how things came to be, stories that explain more than science can. They commune with spirits that have been around since before the Impergium, perform great deeds to honor their ancestors, and struggle to overcome the problems begun long ago with the Impergium and the Wars of Rage. Their traditions bind them in ways that bound their forebears millennia ago; they are a timeless race, now confronted with the End Times.

This book is dedicated to that very aspect of Garou life — the strong connections to the past, and the history that has shaped the present state of the world. It is a chronicle that allows the characters to walk among living history, seeing things as their own ancestors did; and it is a sourcebook, offering new weapons and wisdom brought forward out of the ages just as the Apocalypse breaks loose. With *Past Lives*, the troupe can watch the history of the Garou come full circle.

Past Lives is divided into two main areas of content — the chronicle *Time and Tide*, and a mini-sourcebook on ancestor-spirits and the secrets some possess. Neither section is utterly reliant on the other, although the two do complement one another. The pack that runs through the events of *Time and Tide* will be responsible for strengthening the connections between the Changing Breeds and the spirits of their ancestors, thus making it easier for Storytellers to introduce the new material in Chapter Four.

### *The Long View*

This is a book about the power of the past—not the continuing influence of ideas or physical environments, but the spiritual power of those who once lived and breathed and walked upon the Earth, and how they may still matter to future generations. In the world of *Werewolf*, everything that was born must die. But everything with a soul may linger on, if it can escape the all-consuming madness of the Wyrms and the many dangers that await disembodied souls in the realms beyond the Gauntlet. Inheritance is more than amino acids and the probabilities of recombination. The bodies and minds of each new generation are shaped for both good and evil by all the souls that have come before them, even though almost no one living fully realizes it. Virtues and vices may lay dormant for many generations, but when the world provides the right circumstances, living souls become the vessels for their ancestors as well as for their own drives.

This is not a book about time travel in a science fiction way. Werewolves do not reach the past in machines or even through the contemplation of mathematical mandalas. The past lies deep in the realms of the dead, the Dark Umbra where neither sun nor moon ever shines brightly and where the devouring servants of the Wyrms are strongest. The past is a place, beyond the deepest graves in the material world, and the living reach it through the sort of quest that the Garou take to the other remote reaches of the Umbra. The few sages among the Garou who understand the journey seldom take it, because necromancy is always risky. There are times, however, the benefits outweigh the risks. The chronicle presented in this book offers the characters the opportunity to break the barriers keeping some tribes' living members separated from the souls of their ancestors and to take part with their own ancestors in a long-forgotten struggle against one of the buried evils of the world, a harbinger of Apocalypse.

Ideas matter, and players and Storytellers will find many of them here, both game mechanics and insights into the World of Darkness as the characters

experience it. They'll also find a great deal of adventure, since ideas matter most when they're put into action. It's fun to roleplay an engaging discussion of profound ideas, but not to the exclusion of the exciting doing of great deeds, so the advice here includes applying the principles and concerns raised in this book to your own games. It's all intended for you to use as well as to admire.

### *Assumptions and Expectations*

The chronicle *Tide and Time* can work with a pack of typical starting Garou. It could even work with a group of characters thrust into the middle of it all immediately following First Change, if they have access to a more experienced Storyteller character to act as mentor at a few crucial moments.

Some players and Storytellers wonder how it is that relatively young and weak characters end up chosen by destiny for this sort of adventure. There are answers at two different levels of the game.

Within the World of Darkness, the Garou labor under the burden of unacknowledged crimes against their intended role and the overall balance of life, driven by an overweening pride that leads them to reject any boundaries on the duties Gaia assigns to them. Even well-meaning individual Garou must come to terms with the society around them, and gradually they lose sight of the corruption at the root of things. Younger Garou aren't yet so tightly bound by traditional assumptions, and are therefore likely to be more receptive to messengers seeking help of unusual kinds. They're less likely to reject the uncomfortable out of hand just because it's uncomfortable. This is an important clause in the chronicle; a pack that feels no regrets for the Garou Nations' past blunders may be entirely plausible, but is a poor choice to achieve any sort of progress by revisiting the past.

The theme of the unexpected heir and champion is worldwide and ancient. The youngest sister who ascends to the throne, young Arthur revealing himself with the sword in the stone, the "foolish things of the world chosen to confound the wise" in the New Testament: all show the potential power in a willing heart, with or without any obvious talent. *Werewolf* takes up the great need for Garou to repent and atone for past wrong and the great difficulty in getting them to do so. In this crisis of the final generation, those who have not yet themselves become part of the problem draw the attention of forces striving for healing change.

In the real world of players and Storytellers, it's easier to build an adventure that works for lower-powered characters and include some tips on scaling it up than to try the reverse. This way, troupes new to

Werewolf can get started with a bang (and other dramatic sounds) just as easily as troupes in ongoing chronicles can add a new dimension to their games already in progress.

The adventure part of this book can accommodate characters of any tribe. Yes, that includes the tribes whose members cannot normally take the Ancestors Background because they're cut off from their ancestor spirits. The story presented here includes the opportunity to break through some or all of those barriers, and in any event the characters' individual experiences do not require contact with the ancestors before or after the trip into the past.

As usual with White Wolf published chronicles, the story is a framework rather than a complete script. Storytellers may use it with very little or a lot of embellishment as they wish. The omens and precursors to the first big encounter might appear spread over several episodes. The characters might spend quite a while in the past, if the troupe would like; *Dark Ages: Werewolf* provides many resources for such a storyline. (It covers a somewhat later era, but most of the basics still apply.) The consequences upon the characters' return to the living present can of course echo throughout the rest of the chronicle. It would be presumptuous to claim that this book covers all the possibilities; inevitably, troupes come up with combinations of character abilities, rules modifications and other adjustments that would never have occurred to the author.

Experience and Renown awards are not listed in a point-by-point manner; after all, a Rank Five pack tearing through the chronicle should get less experience for it, as they won't be nearly as challenged. Some general guidelines are offered for plot-specific awards; otherwise, award both as normal. It's recommended that Storytellers not assign experience or Renown in the middle of the chronicle, with the possible exception of the interlude in the past — the characters are going to be too busy to sit down and work on putting what they've learned into practical skill use. Take notes, and hand out a generous helping when the chronicle is finished; if all has gone well, they'll have earned it.

### *The Chronicle: A Summary*

The story of *Time and Tide* is, as the title might indicate, a chronicle that spans generations. It is the story of the characters' struggle with an ancient Wyrms-creature, the Solium Submergens — the Drowned King. Badly wounded in a battle with Garou two millennia ago, the Drowned King fled into the Dark Umbra, where it recovered its strength. It resurfaces in the modern world, confronting the players' pack —

the descendants of the Garou who wounded it so badly so long ago. In order to defeat the Solium Submergens, the characters are forced to abandon their bodies and even their very modern incarnations, their spirits traveling down tunnels carved through the Dark Umbra into the past — or specifically, an animistic incarnation of the past. There, they possess the bodies of their very ancestors, and relive the first fight with the Solium Submergens. Their time in the past finished, the characters return to their own bodies in their own time, witnessing several key events in Garou history on the return voyage. There, they confront the Solium Submergens for the final time, and win a victory of great significance. Their success opens several doors left barred, and frees many ancestor-spirits to join the Final Battle with renewed vigor.

This last point — the strengthening of bonds between the Garou and the spirits of their ancestors — is the key point of the chronicle. The characters have a chance to tip the scales of the Apocalypse ever so slightly, bringing a faint ray of hope into the End Times.

### *Using This Book*

The most obvious way to use *Past Lives* is to run the *Time and Tide* chronicle, thus opening up the elements of Chapter Four for use in stories taking place after *Time and Tide*. You can of course modify the chronicle, or disregard it utterly and cut right to throwing some new Gifts in your players' paths.

In fact, some modification of the chronicle is likely necessary for any Storyteller. It's almost impossible for an author or developer to gauge the composition of the "average pack"; even the difference between a pack of four Rank One Garou and a pack of five Rank Two Garou is large enough to throw a wrench into making a truly generic chronicle. Some statistics will need to be adjusted to properly challenge your pack; in fact, some will have to be generated whole cloth, considering the dozens of potential antagonists or allies in the events of Act III alone (for which, alas, space forbids inclusion of sample statistics). Take the opportunity to personalize the chronicle to your players' pack as much as possible; that's the difference between a bland off-the-shelf plotline and a riveting chronicle players will talk about for years.

*The Tale of the Shaking Sea* is tied directly to the events of *Time and Tide*. It is the most complete record the Garou have of the Solium Submergens and its first appearance, as kept alive in the oral history of the Uktena. (The narrator of the Tale is presumed to be an Uktena from the American Midwest, although of course the Storyteller may choose a different Garou to

relate the Tale to the characters, if at all.) In the course of their investigations during Act I, the Storyteller may choose to relate the Tale of the Shaking Sea, providing the characters with some knowledge — imprecise and unclear though it may be — about the terrible thing they face.

**Act I: Rise of the King** details the pack discovering their underlying bond of destiny, and their con-

### *Time Travel?*

Although the *Time and Tide* chronicle does involve the characters' consciousness inhabiting the bodies of their ancestors, and reliving the events of history, it isn't a time travel scenario as popular opinion tends to define it. In fact, it's our recommendation that Storytellers not use the term "time travel" at all when running the chronicle; it's a loaded phrase, tending to invoke visions of science-fictiony gizmos and moral dilemmas over whether to assassinate Hitler or not.

Rather than the characters themselves traveling through time with full freedom to explore whatever strikes their fancy, this scenario is more truly about "Past Lives" — the characters experiencing the lives of their ancestors as if remembering in detail the events of a prior incarnation. It's more like the Mnesis quests of the Mokolé — a form of remembering ancient history by being there. This scenario doesn't concern itself with the ability to rewrite the present by changing events in the past; the outcome of the events of Act II is presumed to be the default outcome on which the present is based. If the characters try to send a messenger to the White Howlers to warn them about their fall, they find that in the four hundred years between Act II's events and the Howlers' fall, the message was somehow mislaid, ignored or misinterpreted. The actions they take *already happened*. The idea is not to change the past, but to experience it as it was, and to learn from it. At the end of the chronicle, the characters are unlike any other Garou in the world — they are witnesses to some of the most dramatic events in the course of history.

Of course, some Storytellers may embrace the idea of allowing the characters to change events wholesale, leading to an alternate-future storyline, or even a slew of them. For those Storytellers, we salute your daring, but can offer no real support; the can of worms opened by full-contact time travel scenarios is best left to the individual troupe. You can predict your players' actions far better than we can.

frontation with the monster from the past that has come to destroy them. The Solium Submergens is inexorably drawn to the characters — the descendants of those who wounded it so long ago — and the characters are drawn to it in turn. Their confrontation goes poorly for the Garou, however, and they are slain. However, their ancestor-spirits do not pass on in the usual fashion — instead, they travel through the tunnels that the Solium Submergens cut through the Dark Umbra, back into the past.

**Act II: Living History** takes place in the year 31 BCE, in Eastern Europe. The characters, now inhabiting the bodies of their ancestors, find themselves waiting by the stretch of the Danube where the Solium is destined to emerge. While there, they explore the area, interact with both Roman and Dacian locals, and learn something about the concerns of the Garou of the age. The act closes with the earthquake and flood that heralds the arrival of the Drowned King, devastating the human villages and initiating the legendary battle mentioned in the Tale of the Shaking Sea. At the close of the battle, a potent rite separates the characters' spirits from their ancestors' bodies, binding them to the Solium Submergens, which begins its flight towards the future.

**Act III: Witnesses** details the characters' journey back to their modern selves, a twisted journey through the Dark Umbra in which they relive several significant events from the Garou's past. In particular, they are on hand for the fall of the White Howlers, the sacrifice of the Croatan, and the War of Tears. Although the characters cannot affect actual history, their actions in these Umbral reflections of time may open channels for a few ancestor-spirits of the Lost to return. Finally, the characters are reunited with their own bodies, and face the final confrontation with the Solium Submergens. Success here is a victory not just for the characters, but also for the Garou as a whole.

**Chapter Four: Ancestral Wisdom** is, in essence, a mini-sourcebook on ancestor-spirits in general, both as called by the Background and as spirits encountered in a more general sense. There are also a plethora of Gifts taught by ancestor-spirits of the Lost — the Garou tribes of the Bunyip, Croatan and White Howlers, and the Lost Breeds of the Apis, Camazotz and Grondr. These Gifts are not ordinarily available to Garou (or indeed to any other Changing Breed), but if the chronicle is successfully completed, characters may be able to meet ancestor-spirits that may teach these Gifts.

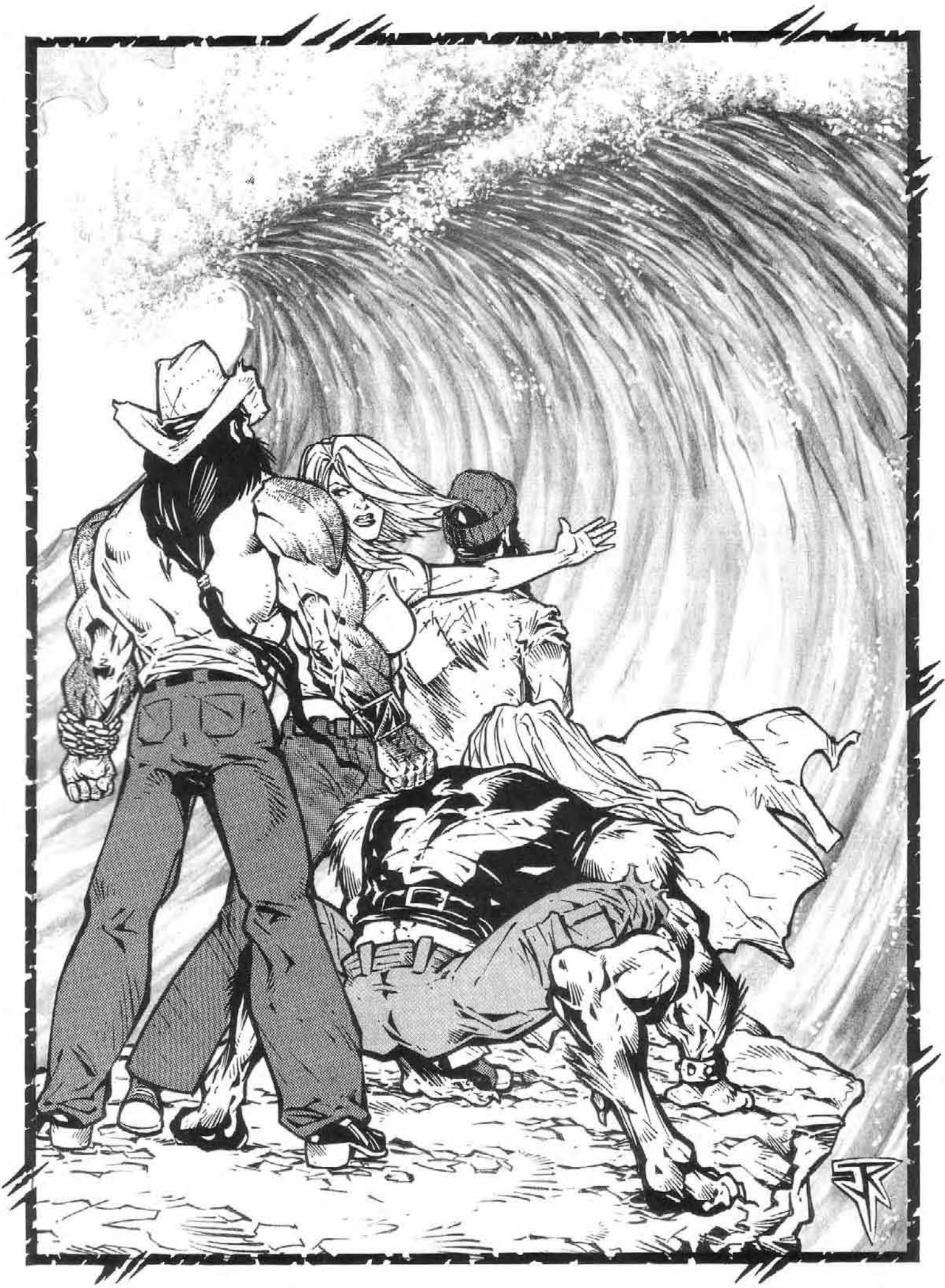
### *A Final Note*

The chronicle of *Time and Tide* is an unusual beast. On the surface, it may seem as though it's a simple

railroading affair, with the characters essentially unable to do as they please and watch whatever comes of it. The pack cannot prevent the fall of the White Howlers, undo the sacrifice of the Croatan or end the War of Tears. The trick is that the chronicle itself is about the events of history, but not about changing history. The characters cannot undo the past, but they *can* change the present — if they acquit themselves with honor, compassion and courage throughout the

chronicle, their bravery will increase the connection between the Garou and their ancestors. Characters acting in the knowledge that it will likely do no good, but who insist on doing the *right thing anyway*, are the heroes. Those who persevere, who demonstrate the Garou virtues of Honor, Glory and Wisdom, will be rewarded in ways they don't anticipate.

But if they could anticipate them, it wouldn't be nearly as heroic, would it?





# Act I: Rise of the King

*Time nor tide tarrieth no man.*

— Robert Greene, *Disputations*

## *Prologue: Out of the Deep*

In the endless darkness of the Dark Umbra, the Solium Submergens — the Drowned King — is swimming toward the living world. The characters, who do not yet know how they're marked by contact with it, experience the first warning tremors. Previously unknown ancestors begin whispering to them. They wake with fleeting memories of dreams about things that happened long ago.

Something is clearly wrong, and for some as yet unexplained reason, the characters' pack are the only ones who can sense it.

The events of the Prologue are not a scene in their own right; rather, they're a series of visions and visitations that foreshadow the events of *Time and Tide*. The Storyteller should introduce these strange prophetic glimpses and flashes slowly at first, but as the Solium Submergens draws nearer to the material world, the characters themselves become directly affected. Characters who have the Ancestors Background may use it twice per session rather than once; characters who don't have it may add a die to one Gnosis roll per

session. In either case, characters feel increasingly urgent messages from ancestors whose spirits have lain quiet for a very long time — spirits they have never heard from before now. The ancestral voices sound strange, with unfamiliar accents and dropping below characters' threshold of hearing just after helping out with particularly urgent matters. These effects remain in play throughout Act I (though they end before Act II begins).

Characters are likely to wonder about this heightened ancestral awareness — they certainly should, since it's not part of the normal Garou experience at all. Some common means of investigation include:

- **Ancestors Background:** Characters who possess this Background can certainly try contacting their ancestors to see what is affecting this ability so. Any ancestors from the last two thousand years say that the new arrivals are older than the ones the character questions. The new arrivals themselves say that "the tide is still rising" and that the time for explanations hasn't yet arrived.

• **Enigmas:** Characters who achieve five successes on an Intelligence + Enigmas roll arrive at the conclusion that the anomalous behavior seems to be more tied to some event surrounding the ancestor-spirits themselves than the characters. Whatever is pushing these newly emergent ancestor-spirits to become more active, it is more likely an as yet undetermined external factor than some peculiarity of the characters' abilities. Maybe.

• **Sense Wyrms:** The characters are not tainted by the Wyrms. Even a single success on a difficulty 8 roll will verify that the strange happenings are not directly tainted. However, 3 or more successes reveal that the newly emergent ancestor-spirits are in some way intimately bound to a force of the Wyrms. No number of successes can tell whether the association is a damning one or not.

• **Totems:** Totems of Respect can tell that the new arrivals have been involved in something momentous, long ago but not yet completed, and sense something dead returning to life. Totems of War sense the veterans of a war that simultaneously ended long ago and has yet to begin. Totems of Wisdom sense a secret which the new arrivals preserve for the good of the characters, and which the totem cannot yet extract. Totems of Cunning find no trickery at work, only an honest mystery.

Players are often suspicious of anything without an obvious explanation (and too often this sort of paranoia is an entirely sensible response to plots foisted upon them). The upshot of the above possible routes for investigation, and any others that the characters may

### *"Amazing Coincidence, Isn't It?"*

Players are likely to ask this question early on. Characters may wonder about it as well. The answer is that the manipulations of fate look like a massive coincidence at the outset, but in the course of play characters and others will do their part to arrange the historical circumstances themselves. It works this way because it has already worked this way, from the vantage point of the world as a whole.

try, is that the arriving ancestors are in fact not a menace themselves but a harbinger of something coming.

This initial period of foreboding can last as long as it suits the Storyteller. A pack of new cubs may well emerge from their First Changes with these mysterious ancestors speaking to them from the very beginning. In a chronicle that includes substantial periods of downtime between bouts of action, the ancestors might appear while the characters are otherwise at rest, with weeks or months of mysterious communication before the next step. In the absence of other considerations, the characters should deal with the new arrivals for a few weeks.

### *Characters Without Ancestors*

Yes, these mysterious arrivals also speak to characters from tribes that cannot normally take the Ancestors Background, or to characters that don't possess any dots in Ancestors. The spirits speak more quietly to such werewolves, but speak they do. If the characters don't realize this is very unusual, then any Storyteller-controlled werewolves they consult with likely will. The Storyteller may smile mysteriously and promise explanations later, if players persist in demanding answers.

## *Scene 1: The Rising Tide*

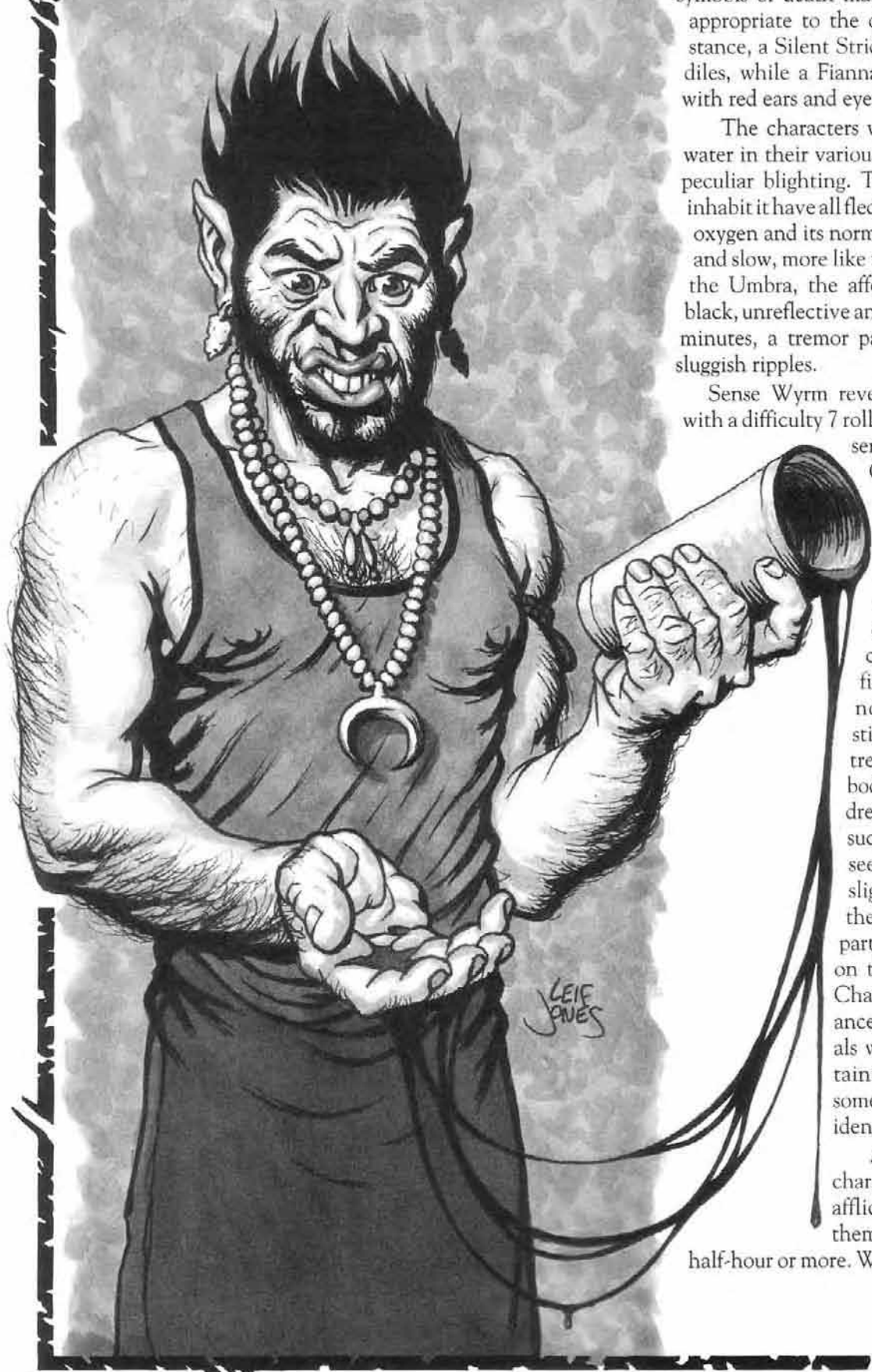
As the Solium Submergens rises toward the present, it encounters more and more spirits after centuries spent isolated with only its hunters for companions. One of these is a water elemental that had traveled down into the Dark Umbra following an underground stream. The Solium Submergens devoured most of the elemental's essence, killing it in a moment and filling the corpse with the Solium's own rage toward the characters responsible for the killer's torments. The dead elemental broke free of the Solium and made its own way into the world in an attempt to relieve its suffering by punishing the characters.

### *The First Portents*

On the first night of the next new moon, the characters share a dream in which symbols of death rise

### *Preparatory Work*

Act I should require relatively little preparatory work; most of the events are easily customized on the fly, without too much meddling with statistics. The most important thing to cover is ensuring that the Solium Submergens is strong enough to threaten the pack, and to kill a few pack members if it really tries. Other useful elements of preparation include selecting a figure from the game to represent the lost mentor in Scene 6, and beginning work on defining the characters' ancestors who took part in the initial battle against the Solium in 31 BCE. Only a general sketch of each ancestor (gender, auspice, tribe, general description) is necessary now, as they appear only in glimpses, in ancestor-spirit form. Still, having this much information to share will greatly help flesh out the ancestors for Act II, and provide some foreshadowing that will tie the acts together more tightly.



up from the nearest substantial body of water to drift toward and around them. Depending on where the chronicle takes place, this might be a river, reservoir, lake or ocean. The dream-symbols of death may be stronger if they are appropriate to the characters' tribes; for instance, a Silent Strider might see pale crocodiles, while a Fianna might see pale hounds with red ears and eyes.

The characters wake to find that all the water in their various dwellings has suffered a peculiar blighting. The spirits that normally inhabit it have all fled, and the water lacks both oxygen and its normal viscosity. It rolls thick and slow, more like tar than water. Seen from the Umbra, the affected water looks matte black, unreflective and faintly chilly. Every few minutes, a tremor passes through it, stirring sluggish ripples.

Sense Wyrms reveals distinct Wyrms-taint with a difficulty 7 roll. Normal Lupus senses, or senses strengthened with a Gift such as Heightened Senses, find the tainted water faintly acrid with a smell reminiscent of rot and decomposition, though there's nothing dead in the water. A Perception + Enigmas roll, difficulty 6, lets a character notice that the ripples stirred up by the occasional tremors point toward the body of water the characters dreamed of. Three or more successes let the character see that the ripples skew slightly in a huge arc, as if the tainted water here were part of a whirlpool centered on the place in her dreams. Characters consulting their ancestors hear the new arrivals whisper that the water is tainted by the "herald" of something it's still not time to identify.

As the day goes on, the characters find the same blight afflicting the water around them anywhere they stay for a half-hour or more. When they're gone for half

an hour, normal vitality returns. For the first hour after each character wakes, normal people around them don't notice the change in the water, though animals detect it and find it repellant. After an hour, it's obvious even to people without any supernatural powers, and bystanders who connect it to the characters naturally wonder just what's going on. The Storyteller may play this source of tension up or not as it suits the pace of the story. Healing gifts and rites return a cubic yard of water to normal for one minute per health level that the power would normally cure, after which the dead taint returns.

If the characters haven't gone to the body of water they dreamed of by sunset, the deadness effect comes on more quickly (within minutes) of their arrival in a new locale and lasts an hour or more after they go. The ripples pointing toward the place of their dreams also grow stronger, sloshing out of open containers. If any of the characters complain about being railroaded, spirits and ancestors they consult readily agree that the tapestry of fate seems to have very little room for give here.

### *The Source*

Throughout the afternoon and evening, the dead water elemental responsible for these disturbances swims up from the Dark Umbra on its way toward the characters. Characters searching the darker reaches of the Umbra notice it if they win an opposed roll, their Gnosis against the elemental's. The difficulty for this contest is 9 before noon, 8 after noon or 7 after sunset. At midnight on the second night of the full moon, the elemental breaks through the Gauntlet to take on physical form, if they haven't stopped it by then.

### *Dead Water Elemental*

Willpower 6, Rage 8, Gnosis 8, Essence 40

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blast, Flood, Materialize, Short Out, Tracking

**Image:** The elemental resembles a waterfall flowing uphill, its top end dissolving into mist. In it float the drowned corpses of the spirits of some of the area's wildlife.

Most of the elemental's personality passed away when the Solium killed it, and it picked up some of the Solium's own drives. It's in constant pain and filled with a largely undirected rage. It knows that somehow the characters are responsible for its misery, and feels drawn to them. It tries its best to make them stop whatever it is they're doing that subjected it to this terrible dead existence. There's little room for subtlety in the elemental's approach. Tracking lets it identify the characters and know whether to hunt them within the Umbra or across the Gauntlet. It

lacks elementals' normal ability to reform — when it loses all its Essence, it will die the rest of the way. That would suit it just fine. Its nature does not allow it to commit suicide, but it can and is proceeding with reckless disregard for self-preservation.

### *The Fight*

Given the opportunity, the dead water elemental fights until it's extinguished and then perishes with a distinct sigh of relief. It has little room for strategy or subtlety, and relentlessly pursues the characters wherever they go.

Spirits the characters command or have alliances with gladly join in the fight, if the spirits possess any useful combat abilities. The dead elemental exudes a reek of wrongness evident to all spirits in the area. Those who can do nothing about it flee, as best they can, and those who can put a stop to it willingly try. The elemental may well find itself fleeing back and forth across the Gauntlet, using any path of dead water as described above as a way to make the crossing.

Finally, the characters may manage to bind the spirit itself. Unfortunately for the clever executors of such a scheme, the spirit wastes away and dies within minutes of its confinement. Cut off from the sustaining power flowing up from the realms of the dead, there just isn't enough to keep it going.

The spirit's very last act, under whatever circumstances it perishes, is to say the words "Solium Submergens." Characters who know Latin can immediately translate this, and so can any available ancestors or spirits who know Latin. Otherwise, it takes a success on a difficulty 6 roll of Intelligence + Computer, Enigmas or Investigation to establish that the spirit said something that means "Drowned King." It shouldn't be clear whether the spirit was referring to itself or something else.

### *Aftermath: Hunters Hunted*

Clearly something strange is going on. Other Fera in the area on speaking terms with the characters (if any) may report brief outbreaks of the dead-water phenomenon, but none encountered anything like the dead elemental. If the chronicle has featured Pentex or other noteworthy Wyrms-related antagonists in the past, characters may well want to go examine them again. Struggles with servants of the Wyrms are always in order, but in fact none of the usual suspects are connected to the Solium Submergens.

The characters' clash with the dead elemental unleashes rumors that make their way to the ears of those who listen for reports of such things. Two days



later, the Dead Man's Hand team, as described in *Werewolf*, pp. 287-289, arrives to capture or destroy the characters. Dead Man's Hand watches from a distance at first, with the aid of long-distance surveillance gear, trying to figure out precisely what is going on. Characters won't notice this first phase of surveillance unless players win a contested, extended roll of the werewolves' Perception + Alertness against the watchers' Intelligence + Stealth, both difficulty 7. The Storyteller can make this roll in secret or tell the players that there's something vaguely troubling the characters as suits the style of a particular chronicle.

Dead Man's Hand watches for one full week in any event, longer if the characters continue to move around a lot. They close in only when they feel they understand the characters' routine well, so the absence of a strong routine postpones confrontation. Direct battle with Dead Man's Hand is likely to be costly to the characters, if the Storyteller plays them with the competency described in their write-up.

## *Scene 2: To the Shore*

One week after the encounter with the dead elemental, the characters have another shared dream. A huge dark mass rises out of the ocean nearest to where they are that night, spreading a black poisonous current throughout the sea. The spot is easily recognizable, a prominent landmark seen in postcards and tourism commercials. It's near civilization, but out of view of major cities, so that there's easy access to it without losing a certain sense of isolation. Everything touched by the black tide dies in terrible agony. The mass itself tunnels through the sea as worms do through soil, leaving behind tunnels that pierce the skin of the world like wounds in the Gauntlet. When the characters wake, the dead water phenomenon is back, now pointing to the stretch of shore in their dreams.

Investigation, if the characters conduct it, proceeds as before, except that now the recently arrived ancestors say that "the king is coming." Characters

may wish to search for known monsters resembling the thing in their dreams. With a total of three successes on rolls of Intelligence + Enigmas or Investigation, difficulty 7, they learn that the motif of the dark aquatic tunneler does occur in folklore of various Eastern European cultures, and survives in weakened forms in fairy tales and children's songs among immigrants from the countries around the Black Sea. With a total of six successes (these rolls may be both cooperative and extended, for the sake of packs that happen not to include any super-geniuses or world-class academicians), the characters can more precisely pin down the stories as originating shortly before the start of the Christian era and find speculation that some unknown species of large sea creature was thrown up during the earthquake that shook the region in 31 BCE.

Garou lore can add little to this, since the mysteries of the sea are primarily the concern of other Changing Breeds. It does include the story presented at the start of this book, the Tale of the Shaking Sea. The Storyteller may add it in at any point during this part of the adventure, providing characters with some food for thought. (Permission is granted to photocopy those pages for personal use, although if you have patient players, reading the story aloud in the spirit of the oral tradition might work much better.) The default keeper of the Tale of the Shaking Sea is an Uktena Galliard from the Midwest, but feel free to substitute a Garou more suitable for your chronicle. The important thing is that the person who relates the tale to the pack is the only one who knows the story, at least to his knowledge — the only other one to know the whole tale was the one who taught it to him, and his mentor died some time ago. Now it's just him — and the pack. (If you choose to make things a little trickier, you can present only the third part of the tale, without the extra context provided by the first section. This will keep things more mysterious, which may not be for everyone.)

During all this time, Dead Man's Hand continues its surveillance of the pack. Anything that makes werewolves worried interests the First Team very much. Each day the characters conduct their investigation, characters who succeed in a Perception + Primal-Urge or a Gnosis roll, difficulty 7, are aware of being watched by someone and may make opposed rolls of their Perception + Primal-Urge or Alertness against one of the Dead Man's Hand member's Wits + Stealth. Both these rolls are difficulty 6. If the watchers realize they've been spotted or are attacked, they withdraw from the immediate vicinity and concentrate on electronic surveillance and monitoring of the characters' activities via credit card expenses

and the like. The watchers try to withdraw *immediately* if they're attacked.

Characters consulting higher-ranking Garou can find little information, but a fair amount of concern. Many elders are aware of the rising pace of events that are either directly predicted in prophecies or seem to be associated with them, and are on the lookout for more such signs. If the characters relate the Tale of the Shaking Sea, any Galliard can tell that it's a mystery tale, and incomplete by definition — is it now coming to fruition with these youngsters in the role of latter-day champions? If so, the characters may face a grave challenge. But there's an even more sinister possibility: someone or something may be setting the characters up to *believe* that they're chosen by fate this way to lure them into certain doom. Prophecy's necessary obscurity and incompleteness makes it amenable to many uses, and Gaia's will does not apparently extend to stopping fraud unless Her thinking creations can discover and punish it. A sympathetic Galliard or Ragabash elder may warn the characters to be on their guard as they proceed.

In the end, any such councilors the characters seek out advise them to follow the lead given in their dreams and the behavior of the dead water, at least for now. They should remain in touch with other packs in their sept, if they have that option, or at least with some other Garou capable of lending assistance in the event of an emergency.

How difficult the trip to the sea is depends on where the characters are as this adventure begins. Characters who live in a coastal area are already on the spot. Those who live within a few hours' drive of the open sea can get there without much fuss. If the characters are more removed than that, it takes more effort. Here, for a change, fate supports the characters. Bosses of homid Garou prove much more cooperative than usual. Characters who need money find some lying loose or stumble onto it through other fortuitous means like unexpected refund checks for overpaid bills. If they book airline seats, they get the benefit of last-minute cancellations on the most convenient flights. Traffic on the road is fraught with accidents that never quite slow them down. If the Storyteller wants to add a note of tension to the trip, show misfortune happening to others nearby, and sometimes quite obvious interventions of fate, like an out-of-control car swerving without explanation at the last moment to hit some innocent bystander. Fate is not kind about these things.

Characters choosing to travel through the Umbra encounter comparably favorable breaks. They get an automatic extra success on rolls related to crossing the

Gauntlet and traveling in the Umbra as long as they're heading toward the sea. They can still fail as usual if players roll no successes, but if they succeed at all, they succeed substantially. Troublesome spirits get out of their way, not wishing to incur destiny's wrath just now.

(The downside of this predestination made manifest is that Dead Man's Hand enjoys similar fortune in tracking the characters. Something has apparently decreed that they, too, will be on hand for the confrontation with the Solium Submergens when it rises.)

One way or another, the characters should finish this scene staying somewhere they can see the particular spot that appeared in their dreams.

### *Scene 3: Earth and Sea Outraged*

An hour before sunrise the day after they arrive at the shore, the Solium Submergens breaks through the Gauntlet deep below the ocean surface. The shock of its arrival in the world triggers a severe earthquake, which does not play precisely by the rules of normal tectonics.

Everyone within ten miles of the characters feels the earthquake at full force; it drops to half intensity for the next ten miles, and lacks power to do anything more than rattle windows beyond that. Those in the affected area must roll Strength or Dexterity (whichever is lower) + Alertness to avoid falling over. In the area of full strength, the difficulty for this roll is 9; in the half-strength zone the difficulty is 6. Those who fail fall and suffer the usual falling damage. Round up when figuring distances, so that someone falling out of

bed or from a standing position down to the floor takes one level of soakable bashing damage.

For each city block or equivalent area (one-fifth to one-tenth of a mile on each side), roll 12 dice and consult the feats of strength table on *Werewolf*, p. 197, to see how much damage that area suffers. 8 successes collapse unreinforced buildings, while 10 successes topple most structures that aren't built to modern earthquake safety codes — that includes most buildings more than twenty years old and more recent ones whose builders paid off inspectors and other complications. Those inside collapsing structures take double normal falling damage, from the combination of the fall itself and being pummeled by debris. Use the feats of strength table to determine when cars and other objects in the area get tossed around. Glass and other brittle substances shatter, leaving behind sharp shards. Anyone running in the area until the mess is cleaned up must make a Dexterity + Alertness roll, difficulty 6, to avoid taking one level of soakable bashing damage. (People moving at walking speed or less can steer around the hazards.) Downed power lines pose the risk of electrocution, equivalent to a chemical fire as described on *Werewolf*, p. 188, and easily ignitable flammable materials burn.

Comparable effects strike the Umbra at the same time. For each square mile in the full-force zone, roll 12 dice. Spirits whose Gnosis is equal to or less than the number of success for that part of the earthquake zone are knocked unconscious, and wake up again in (2 + successes) hours. All but the strongest Umbral structures shatter or collapse and must be reassembled. The ground continues to tremble throughout the rest of the day, requiring the same roll that people in the material world must make to avoid broken glass. The Umbra of the half-force zone suffers only mild tremors, insufficient to inflict actual damage.

Presumably the characters are awake very shortly after the earthquake strikes, if not before; so is everyone else in the area who isn't knocked unconscious, drugged or otherwise very deeply removed from consciousness. Land telephone lines are down, and local TV and radio stations are off the air for one hour per success on the damage roll for their area. Local cell phone relay towers are also down, cutting off anyone with a cell phone that lacks roaming coverage. Incoming and outgoing lines are quickly swamped by people trying to get word to or from people they know in the area, and non-emergency calls are subject to forcible disconnection by emergency services. This doesn't solve the problem for more than a few seconds. A general panic ensues, particularly if the zone is in some part of the world that doesn't often get earthquakes.

#### *On Not Overdoing It*

The Storyteller does not in fact have to roll damage for every single bit of the earthquake zone. You can if you'd like to, but the characters won't be going to most of the area, so it would mostly be an exercise in maniacal completeness. It suffices for most chronicles to roll for the blocks where characters are, for new blocks and equivalent areas as the characters go through them and perhaps for a few representative areas with prominent landmarks. Assume that the range of the first few such rolls reflects the average damage throughout the zone. There's a point where extra detail stops enhancing everyone's understanding of the game situation and starts boring everyone but the person making many many rolls and looking at a few tables many many times.

Under normal circumstances, the characters would likely seek to get somewhere else promptly. But the dead-water phenomenon continues, and today it extends to include all liquids and some other substances. Flames have a tendency to flap in the direction of the point the characters dreamed of. Any teetering damaged walls fall to point in that direction. Lines of people waiting for emergency medical attention or other services run directly toward or away from that point — for apparently obvious reasons in each case, with the pattern emerging only gradually. The newly arrived ancestors speak more strongly now, warning that the Drowned King is at hand, and is coming for revenge on the characters. They do not explain what the characters did to warrant revenge, saying that the answer to that must have come in other ways. (Note the past tense; the spirits are having as much trouble as anyone else would in speaking of time travel.)

Just before sunrise, almost an hour after the earthquake, a tsunami caused by disturbances far below arrives. The surf recedes far out from the normal shoreline, anywhere from a few dozen yards to half a mile or more depending on how steeply the bottom drops off here. A few minutes later, a twenty-five-foot

high tidal wave roars in. The wave strikes with a force of 15 dice on the feats of strength table, and anyone on the beach must get more successes on a Strength + Alertness check, difficulty 6, than the Storyteller does on the roll for the wave to remain standing. Characters take a level of soakable bashing damage for every two successes they needed and didn't get. For example, if the Storyteller rolls 9 successes, a character whose player rolls 7 or 8 successes is pushed over and takes one level of damage, while a character with 5 or 6 successes takes two levels, and so on. It is very likely that the tidal wave kills many people on the beach. The wave's strength drops to 12 dice once fifty yards inland, to 9 dice a hundred yards further, and down to 6 dice a quarter mile inland. The last ineffectual surges lap to a halt half a mile from the shore, and the water then flows back out wherever it can.

The tidal wave extinguishes any fires within the impact zone. It also overloads and shatters many drainage systems, depleting water available for firefighting and bursting mains. Drinking water will be scarce until the damage can be fixed, a matter of days or weeks of work with appropriate power equipment.



The chaos created this morning attracts the attention of both Wyld and Wyrmspirits, both of which take advantage of the situation. Some desperate people yield to temptation and become fomori, developing powers to increase their chances of survival. Prevailing shock grants the werewolves a bit of extra protection in the midst of all this. Treat bystanders' Willpower for purposes of Delirium effects as 3 lower than usual until midday, 2 lower for the rest of the day, and 1 lower for the next week. People who've woken up to a massive earthquake and seen a tidal wave blast the ruins just aren't paying full attention and are very likely to have quite a few bouts of misperception and confusion. A pack of roving werewolves is just one more weirdness right then, and most people's emotions are strained far enough as it is.

What characters do for the next few hours after the tidal wave recedes is up to them. They know that something's coming and that it is connected to them in some mysterious way, but for the moment their choices are their own. There are plenty of opportunities to help, to try to stay out of the way and to prey, as seems wise. (Lupus Garou that hate humanity will seldom get a better opportunity to run amok in the midst of a city.) The Storyteller should be generous with grants of Willpower to characters acting in accordance with their nature in response to the disaster, whether that means helping or hurting others.

Some typical encounters in the interval before the Solium Submergens appears include:

- A person trapped beneath heavy debris—too much for any normal person to move, but within the capabilities of Glabro or Hispo form. Do the characters help?
- A factory or shop full of contaminated chemicals has cracked open, releasing both toxic waste and many Banes looking for the chance to make more trouble. Debris, fires and flooding make it impossible for regular emergency services to get there anytime soon. Do the characters try to deal with the problem?
- Shaky buildings collapse in front of and behind the characters, trapping them in a short section of street along with twice their number of normal people. The dead-water phenomenon calls the characters closer to the shore. How do they deal with getting out of their current jam, and with what consequences?

When the characters finally do get to the small promontory that featured in their dreams, they have it to themselves. The dead-water phenomenon disturbs many people who don't consciously perceive it, and there's a general aura of foreboding about the spot. The characters have at least one hour to rest, heal if necessary, and try to figure out what all of this means.

## *Scene 4: The Drowned King*

Everything that's happened so far has been a warm-up, getting the characters into position and in the right frame of mind. Now the main event begins.

Half a mile or so offshore, a whirlpool suddenly forms. The dead water around the characters begins spinning as if it were part of the whirlpool, and very suddenly it is, as the whirlpool rushes to spread around the characters. The promontory they occupy is now cut off by the whirlpool, which rapidly cuts channels for itself through sand and rock. The mouth of the whirlpool is ten yards across, and the characters can peer down into what seem like endless depths. Depths in which something stirs....

### *The Solium Submergens*

In the earliest ages of the world, there were many unique creatures, before any such notion as "species" took hold of the world's imagination. One of them was a thing rather like a giant earthworm that made its way through the deepest ocean currents. There's a system of currents flowing very slowly at the bottom of the ocean, taking thousands of years to make a complete cycle around the globe. The sea worm lived there, feeding on everything else that called the greatest deeps home. That far removed from the regions where sun and moon shine and most things live, the Gauntlet wears thin, and the sea worm swam easily in and out of the material world. So it fed on spirits as well as animals and plants, and took on a little of the nature of each thing it devoured. Slowly, as some benthic creatures swam alongside it and the remains of the things that live closer to the surface settled down after death, the sea worm grew, and grew, and grew.

The first time it saw the light of day was sometime during the War of Rage, when a storm rite unleashed by some now-forgotten faction of Garou against some equally forgotten enemy dragged the sea worm up to the surface along with many other creatures. The greatly reduced pressure and blistering sunlight drove it insane with pain. Its dying throes attracted a swarm of Banes to it, who gave it the strength to return to the depths. There they gnawed away at its soul, filling it with a perpetual aching sense of contamination from all the things it had eaten. Only fresh consumption can ease the pain, but then digestion makes the sea worm once again feel that it's losing its own self to these poisonous outside entities.

The second time it saw daylight was in 31 BC. The sea worm was swimming along the bottom of the Black Sea when a massive earthquake struck the sea floor.

The Black Sea is shallower than the sea worm cared for, but the Wyrms-blighted ruins of civilizations drowned in prehistoric floods provided it with nourishment that enriched its form as well as its own body. The earthquake disrupted currents at all levels of the sea with a series of prolonged shock waves. Upward-bound surges carried the worm once again to the hateful realms above. This time, though, the worm was strengthened by the Banes and it could attack small creatures along the seashore that reminded it of those responsible for its original agony. Those creatures, humans and Garou, saw the worm's pale bulk and crown-like head and dubbed it the Drowned King.

The full details of that battle are provided in Act II; fate has chosen the characters to play a part in it. In the end, the Drowned King—the Solium Submergens, as the Roman overlords of the region called it — was driven away without sating its hunger, back into the deep sea. Direly wounded, it drifted into abyssal realms and beyond, into the secrets of the Dark Umbra... accompanied by Garou spiritually bonded with it, and transformed so as to survive away from sun and air. Nearly all the sea worm's mind had now gone. From time to time currents would carry it up toward the surface, but it always managed to dive back again before experiencing the terrible scalding weight of sunlight or even moonlight undimmed by thousands of feet of water. Always it struck at the Garou accompanying it, and always they struck at it, each wearing the other down without ever reaching a point of death or victory.

A few years before the present, the Solium Submergens began to smell a familiar spiritual aroma. It had never forgotten the vile things that hurt it so badly, and now here were essences of those little creatures loose in the world again. Its Banes sent calls up into the world to lure the characters into position. The Garou debated what to do in response to this, and chose a few of their number to go up after the Banes' traps. These are the ancestral voices that started speaking to the characters at the start of this adventure. The Solium continued its slow swim all the while, aiming to make another charge at its old enemies despite the misery it knew it would suffer in the process. Any amount of pain would be worth bearing if only the enemies could be killed.

This is the third time the Solium will see daylight. If it can vanquish its Garou enemies, it will be free to heal itself at last, and take on a world whose spiritual defenses are greatly diminished. It would be a good time to usher in a new age of chaos and destruction beyond the reach of reprisal, slaughtering the things dwelling in the deeps and polluting the world sea. If only...

Numbers in parentheses represent the Solium's capabilities in the present moment, after twenty-one centuries of constant conflict and longer deterioration. Storytellers are advised to adjust these numbers upward if the pack is well-experienced; the Solium should be a terror to confront, the sort of thing that can devour a pack of healthy Garou.

**Attributes:** Strength 10 (8), Dexterity 7 (3), Stamina 8 (6), Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 6 (4), Intelligence 5 (1), Wits 5 (1)

**Abilities:** Alertness 6 (3), Athletics 7 (4), Brawl 7 (4), Dodge 7 (4), Survival 8 (5)

Rage 10 (7), Willpower 10 (7)

**Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -2, -3, -3, -3, -3, -4, -4, -4, -4, -5, -5, -5, -5, Incapacitated (subtract one level each of OK, -1, -2, -3 and -4, and two levels of -5)

**Movement:** 75 yards per turn swimming, 25 yards per turn on land

**Attacks:** Bite (Strength +3), Body Slam (Strength — more than three successes indicates that the target is pinned beneath the Solium's bulk), Engulf (opposed Strength rolls to swallow a target, Strength dice of lethal damage from crushing and digestive fluids per turn), Tail Punch (Strength)

**Powers:** Armor (five extra soak dice), Blast (dead water), Flood, Peek, Regenerate (three (one) aggravated health levels per turn), Tracking, Water Tunnel (can choose to leave an opening through water that lasts for Willpower turns) Whirlpool (see below)

The Solium can create a whirlpool up to one hundred yards across, with a central opening of up to ten yards across. This costs 1 Essence to create and lasts for one hour. Anyone caught in the whirlpool takes (Strength + Rage) dice of soakable bashing damage each turn; anyone in the central shaft falls however deep it runs.

**Image:** The Solium Submergens is a pale segmented worm forty feet long and nine feet across for most of its length. Its neck constricts to less than a foot across, opening onto a head three feet wide. Its eyes, nose and ears are all very rudimentary, but a wreath of flexible pressure- and electricity-sensitive tendrils look like a crowned head when seen in silhouette. (It was this feature, with water streaming off it and the sun illuminating the worm's pale body, that led observers in pre-Christian Dacia to give it its name.) The mouth can open to engulf anything up to five feet across, since the jaws aren't solid bone but composed of segments linked by very flexible tendons. The Solium's skin is bleached white except when briefly flushed with blood;

injuries are surrounded by deep dark bruises. In the modern day, the body is also heavily scarred, and some imperfectly healed wounds seep pale red blood.

### *Against the Solium, the First Time*

From far below the surface of the sea, the Solium rushes up at the characters. It senses them as some of its old tormenters in living flesh, and wishes to destroy them. Characters making a Perception + Primal-Urge roll, difficulty 7, may see translucent figures that look like Garou in a variety of forms clinging to the Solium's back. With three or more successes, observers notice that some of the figures look like old battle-worn versions of themselves. These ghostly images fade as the Solium approaches daylight.

The characters now have some time to prepare themselves: two turns, plus one for every two successes on the above spotting roll. On the first turn, the Solium expands the whirlpool to its maximum size. Then it simply charges the characters. Its mouth opens to its maximum width and the crown of tentacles flails forward, gathering as much information as possible. The Solium feels the possibility of escaping its pain for the first time since 31 BCE, and very little can stop it now. As it approaches, it spirals around the whirlpool's central shaft, using the Water Tunnel power to create an additional complication for its targets.

The characters have three major options.

- **Combat inside the Gauntlet.** This begins right where they are now, and can range to any place they can get to. The Solium is a tough opponent, but the characters won't know how tough until they actually engage it. The ancestors who traveled with the Solium know what it was like when it last rose to the surface and that it's badly injured, but can offer little help in evaluating its current power. Characters who have encountered Thunderwyrms may recognize the Solium as somewhat related to those Wyrmspawn, and characters who've studied Garou lore of monsters may make a Wits + Enigmas roll, difficulty 8, to draw the some connection. This still leaves the characters with

#### *Important: Keep Notes*

At the end of this adventure, the characters return to this battle. A lot happens between now and then, and it's very easy to forget things. Keep at least general notes about how this battle goes, so that when the characters engage in it again from a different perspective, they can intervene in something fairly like what they're about to go through now. It adds a dimension to the fray.

the burden of finding out what they can do to the Solium and what it can do to them.

When characters botch attacks, apply exotic complications. Direct attacks on the Solium's body can pierce some of its layers of armor and release jets of icy cold water at very high pressure, forcing the botching attackers to make a Dexterity + Athletics roll, difficulty 6, requiring as many or more successes as they had 1s on the attack roll to retain their balance. The same roll to retain footing can apply to any character standing on reasonably solid surfaces to avoid falling down, and to characters in the water to avoid being tipped under and forced to spend one turn per 1 rolled on the botched attack regaining their orientation and senses.

Anyone who falls into the whirlpool's central shaft or down the Solium's water tunnel quickly disappears from view. Falling characters experience a sudden chill and agonizing pressure. The Storytellers should then say something like "we'll get back to you once the fight is over."

The Storyteller needn't worry about characters getting killed in this fight. As with the above, describe the experience of shock and cold and then say that there's something coming up for characters whose bodies have been crushed, eaten or otherwise been rendered unfit for Garou habitation.

- **Combat outside the Gauntlet.** While within the whirlpool's boundaries, the characters can step sideways through patches of dead water, like those lining the Solium's water tunnels. The Gauntlet rating is 2 less than usual while the Solium is present, down to a minimum of 3, so there's little risk of complication from doing this. The Solium senses any such move and charges across the Gauntlet after characters transformed into spirit, unleashing minor aftershocks while doing so. In the Penumbra, the Solium always moves as if underwater. The water

#### *Accompanying Bane*

Willpower 6, Rage 6, Gnosis 6, Essence 15

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blast (dead water), Corruption, Flood, Materialize, Peek, Tracking

**Image:** These spirits look like one- to two-foot long imitations of the Solium itself. Long ago they had different forms, reflecting many kinds of ocean life, and when down to 1 Essence they take on their original forms.

These spirits are, as far as both the Solium and its strongest manipulators are concerned, completely expendable. If they can harm something before perishing themselves, fine. If not, no great loss.

tunnels form regardless of the medium through which the Solium moves at the moment, a thin sheen of dead water marking the boundaries of shafts that possess their own gravity. It's always down once characters cross into a water tunnel, an endless fall to the aforementioned shock and cold.

For each turn the Solium spends in the Penumbra chasing the characters, make a Rage roll, difficulty 7. Every two successes (rounded up) unleashes another of the Banes that have traveled with it for so long.

The Solium can create whirlpools in the Umbra as well as in the material world. They do no damage, however — they're no stronger than a fairly stiff breeze, creating difficulties only for very flimsy and lightweight loose objects. The central shaft remains a danger: characters can still fall into it and meet an untimely demise.

Combat in the Penumbra is likely to be fairly short, bloody and not a success for the characters.

- **Fleeing.** Particularly after seeing one or more packmates die, characters may well decide that discretion is the better part of valor just right now and attempt to get out of the area as quickly as possible. Umbral flight won't work; however fast they go, the Solium manages to be just a bit faster. If the characters flee through the material world, they must manage to cross the whirlpool and get to shore, and can then move significantly faster than the Solium. When they're fifty yards ahead, the Solium notices its lag and crosses into the Penumbra long enough to overtake them and launch a fresh attack from there.

If the characters manage to get into the city itself with the Solium still in pursuit, the members of Dead Man's Hand join in the fray, doing their best to take down both werewolves and whatever-it-is attacking them. The Solium is big and obviously more thoroughly dangerous, but perhaps it would go away if its equally obvious focus of attention were to go away. Characters therefore find themselves caught in between expert shooting and the monster behind them.

### *Scene 5: The Experience of Death*

When the first character dies, the recently arrived ancestors start encouraging the others to "not let him escape" and to "follow her." It's difficult for them to explain just what they mean, since they've existed with it for so long and since the middle of a fight with a giant supernatural worm isn't really the best time for careful philosophical and theological explanations. The crucial point for the ancestors to convey is that the dead characters are by no means lost to their packmates, but instead on the threshold of a journey that the whole pack must take.

Throughout the time when the pack hangs on the edge of their journey, play up the element of tension and frustration in the ancestors' speeches. In the face of the moment they've waited two thousand years for, they've become somewhat tongue-tied, and they're uncertain just what the characters must hear and what they mustn't at the moment. So they tend to speak in incomplete utterances, and often with unfortunate timing as fresh attacks kill more of the characters, making it that much more crucial that the surviving live ones pay attention.

After the third character death, the ancestors manage to express themselves more clearly. Bound up by fate with the Solium Submergens, the souls of the characters do not automatically pass back into the bosom of Gaia to await judgment or reincarnation. Instead, they linger on the threshold of the realm through which the Solium has traveled. Set free from normal limitations, the characters may play a new role in shaping the Solium's destiny and their own. If any of the characters make mention of those ancestors which seemed to resemble themselves, the ones now speaking to the characters become suddenly evasive and agree that this is one part of the tapestry which the characters may weave if they act promptly. The first step is to set themselves free from the bonds of flesh....

Characters may understandably be skeptical about the wisdom of killing themselves just because previously unknown ancestors say it would be a good idea. In between bouts of fighting with the Solium (and perhaps also with Dead Man's Hand), the characters may try any (or all!) of several means to establish the truth of what the ancestors say. Possibilities include:

- **Prosaic Truth-Checking.** A single check on a Perception + Empathy roll suffices to establish that the ancestors believe they're telling the truth.

- **Supernatural Truth-Checking.** Gifts, fetishes and other ways of drawing on the supernatural to test for truth provide the same results, if the attempt at their use succeeds.

- **Totem.** Characters who call on their totem find that it takes two full turns to answer, during which an ominous interior silence prevails. Then the totem says that it's stared down an unfamiliar abyss out of which it can faintly hear the cries of others of the Garou race. This isn't proof that everything that the ancestors say is true, but *something* strange is going on.

- **Relying on Gaia's Power.** Characters may make a Gnosis roll to see what they can sense about the Umbra in this area themselves. The difficulty for the roll is 7, minus 1 per level of injury a character has taken in the fight so far, down to a minimum of 3. A

single success provides the character a feeling of something deep looming up ahead, whatever direction she faces. Three or more successes give her a glimpse of occupying a crumbling spike of land in the midst of a growing void, the rest of the world receding further and further away.

- **Lore.** If the characters have heard the Tale of the Shaking Sea, they may well remember its cryptic words about passages via death.

Other strategies provide the same sort of information. The ancestors really are telling the characters the truth, and characters that make an effort to establish this should be able to do so.

The Storyteller should privately tell the players of characters who've died so far that they find themselves in spirit form in much the same circumstances as living characters that make the above Gnosis roll. The passage of the Solium Submergens widens the gap into deep, dark Umbral territory with every moment. In addition, the dead characters can see bright spiritual cords connecting the ancestors who've traveled with the Solium to the worm itself, and can see fainter, more tenuous cords likewise connecting themselves and their still-living packmates. They cannot clearly see the ones still alive, but they can hear the exchanges with the recently arrived ancestors. Each dead character may make a Gnosis roll, difficulty of the local Gauntlet rating (remember that it's abnormally low at the moment), to communicate to their brethren. Each character that succeeds may speak a single short sentence—not one with dependent clauses and parenthetical asides—that all the living characters hear coming from somewhere nearby.

It is, in short, time for the characters to die.

Fortunately, this is easy enough under the circumstances. Each character need only pick her preferred way of exiting from among the veritable smorgasbord of carnage. When the last of the characters dies, the pack finds itself reunited in the midst of the now-tremendous void. The Solium obviously remains aware of them, twisting and turning (and crossing the Gauntlet back and forth, with another aftershock each time) in hopes of finding them. It repeatedly crushes any of their corpses available to it, and sometimes passes right through their spirits, leaving behind a most unpleasant chill. The spit of Umbral land on which the characters rest crumbles all the while, and finally the characters begin their plunge downward.

### *An Explanation for the Storyteller*

Mechanistic time travel doesn't make any sense in this game's cosmology. Time is not a matter of math-

ematical dimensions; it's the way the soul of the world measures out events in accordance with fate, heroism and chance. There is, in a very real sense, no past in the living world. The world has just one moment, and it's the present.

But the memories of the past remain, and the emotions that people (and other creatures) invest in those memories give a certain spiritual substance to the events and objects people remember. The living share their souls with their own histories. Just as individual people die and their souls descend into the shadowy depths of the Umbra, so with the world as a whole. In the deepest reaches of the Dark Umbra, where barren wastes stretch off into infinity, there is a graveyard for the remembered world. This is where the characters must go. Following the channel through Umbral depths blazed by the Solium Submergens, the characters with their souls radiating the power of the present may enter into the remembered past. In doing so they'll give it a momentary second life, long enough to help shape the events recorded in the Saga of the Shaking Sea. Like most things having to do with the Umbra, the symbolism is as important as anything else.

The first part of the journey is a simple descent, straight down through the layers of the Dark Umbra to the bottom. The second part takes the characters through the wastes to the resting place of history. The third and final part takes the characters into history for Act II.

### *The Descent*

Falling in the Umbra can be a very peculiar experience sometimes. This is one of those times. The characters are simultaneously aware of moving very rapidly and of drifting leisurely. When something catches their fancy, they can examine it close up for one full turn per point of current Gnosis a character possesses; then they resume their plunge. Characters familiar with the experiences of *Alice in Wonderland* may well find this familiar. A Storyteller wishing to sow a little distraction can call for an Intelligence + Enigmas roll, difficulty 6, for a character to wonder if maybe Lewis Carroll wasn't actually writing about an experience he'd had. (He wasn't, having never gotten close to the Umbra except in dreams, but it's something for characters to argue about in troupes whose players have fun doing that.)

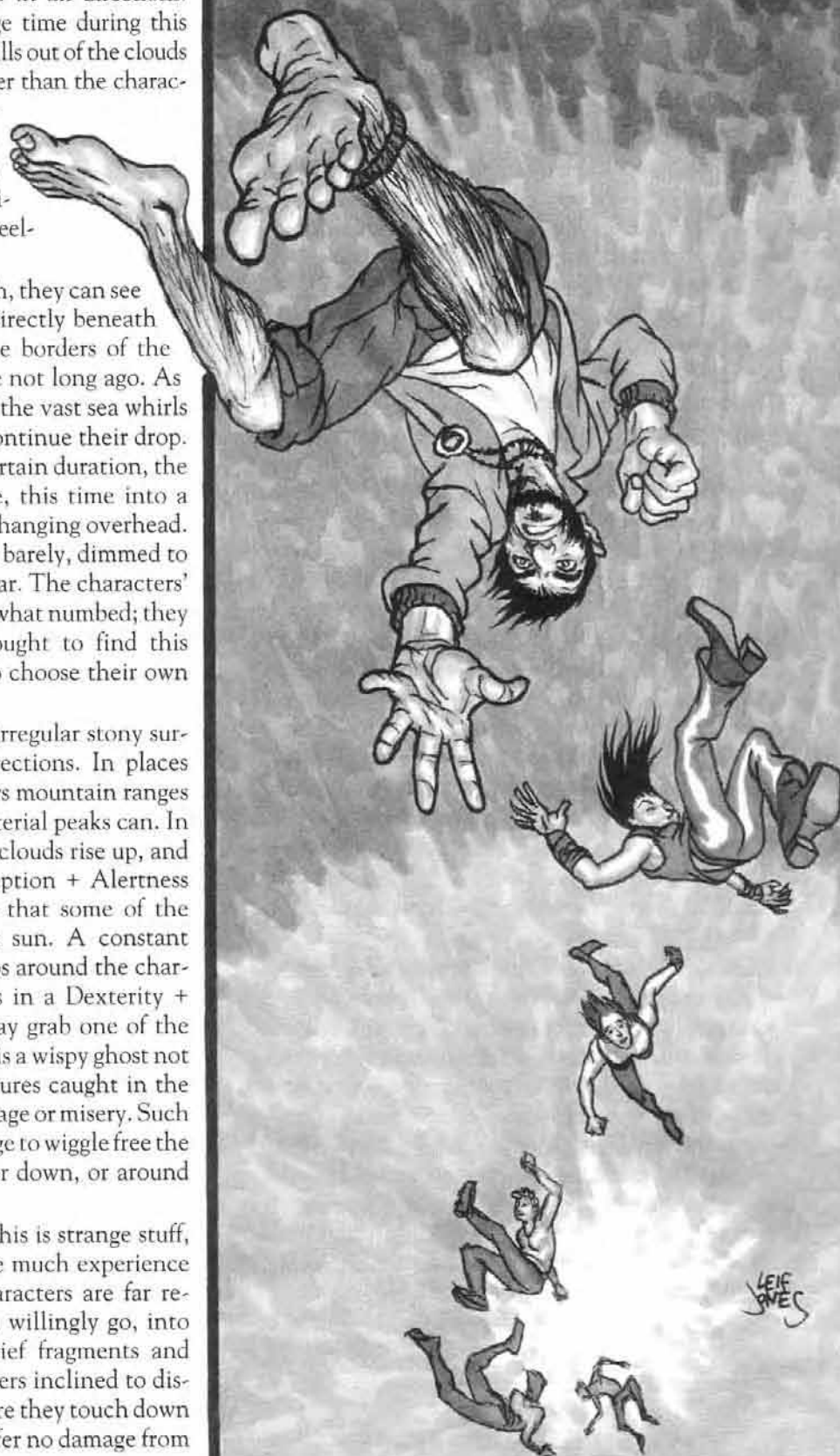
The material world rapidly recedes from view, leaving the characters to fall for a while through featureless dark gray. They break through this first layer as if emerging from clouds, and can see the sun shining about half as bright as it was in the Penumbra up above.

Indistinct forms that might be clouds gust across the sky as if blown by strong winds the characters don't feel. Around them is a vast quiet open space, stretching out as far as they can see in all directions. Occasionally (it's hard to judge time during this experience) something bright falls out of the clouds and shoots down below far faster than the characters. Beneath them is a vast darkness in constant confusing motion. It variously suggests more clouds, a stormy sea and a continent-sized flock of black birds wheeling together.

As the characters approach, they can see that is indeed a stormy sea. Directly beneath them is a pocket of calm, the borders of the Solium's passage through here not long ago. As they approach it, the water of the vast sea whirls away, letting the characters continue their drop. After another interval of uncertain duration, the characters once again emerge, this time into a cold airless space with the sea hanging overhead. The sun continues to sun, just barely, dimmed to the intensity of the evening star. The characters' emotions are apparently somewhat numbed; they may well realize that they ought to find this terrifying, but are at liberty to choose their own responses to it all.

Beneath them now is an irregular stony surface, stretching off in all directions. In places there are huge plains, in others mountain ranges that tower far higher than material peaks can. In the unknown distance, storm clouds rise up, and characters who make a Perception + Alertness roll, difficulty 6, may notice that some of the clouds tower *behind* the dim sun. A constant swarm of unseen entities whips around the characters. Anyone who succeeds in a Dexterity + Athletics roll, difficulty 8, may grab one of the passing things and find that it is a wispy ghost not unlike themselves, blurry features caught in the depths of some overpowering rage or misery. Such ghosts do not speak, and manage to wiggle free the following turn to zip off up, or down, or around with rapid aimlessness.

Even for Silent Striders, this is strange stuff, and few other characters have much experience of the Dark Umbra. The characters are far removed from any place Garou willingly go, into realms spoken of only in brief fragments and conflicting accounts. Characters inclined to discussion have time for this before they touch down on the rocky surface. They suffer no damage from



their fall, and find themselves at full health levels again. They do not need to breathe, which is fortunate given the absence of any air here. The Solium's trail here manifests as a slimy groove worn into the rock, stretching down into a steep canyon and vanishing below the surface a mile or away. The rock occasionally vibrates under their feet as if something large moved in an unseen passage — characters familiar with walking over subways know the sensation well, and Garou who have encountered Thunderwyrms will certainly recognize the apprehensive feeling.

The characters feel themselves to have their customary weight and strength. The ancestors did not accompany them on this long plunge, and all the characters know is that there's something back where the Solium came from that they need to deal with. The landscape offers few distractions. There are occasional breaks in the surface, both smooth round holes and irregular fissures, through which barely detectable ghosts rush at the equivalent of hundreds or thousands of miles an hour, but none within at least a mile of the characters. There's just them and the trail leading down into darkness. Characters may well complain about feeling railroaded, and their only consolation about it is the reminder that everything they tried to confirm regarding the ancestors' story suggested truth. Presumably there's something worthwhile waiting at the end of all this.

## *Scene 6:*

### *Where the Past Lies Buried*

In what feels like just a few minutes' walking, the characters descend into the canyon and then into the tunnel the Solium made. Once altogether out of the light, they notice that the Solium's trail has its own pale glow, which brightens as they go. Lit from below, the characters seem even more haggard and wan to each other than they would in this situation with the best possible lighting.

The characters have two brief encounters in this part of the adventure, intended to show them the nature of the realm they now inhabit. The understanding they acquire now may influence their actions in Acts II and III.

### *The Last Mentor*

The first of these encounters is with an elder Garou known to all or at least most of the characters. He never quite lost the wolf in his old age, but he came perilously close, and he died under circumstances that filled his departing soul with despair for the future of

his pack and sept and tribe. If any events in the characters' history suggest a match for these general criteria, consider adapting them to personalize this encounter, to draw the characters in more deeply. Otherwise, just make it a respected elder of their sept who had growing difficulty maintaining confidence and courage in the face of repeated defeats.

The first sign of the lost mentor is his footsteps in the cave up ahead, well before they can see him. Around two more bends, there he is, pacing back and forth in a round natural chamber twenty yards across. The Solium's path continues across it and out the other side; the mentor seems unaware of it beneath his feet on each pass.

Willpower 5, Rage 6, Gnosis 8, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Calcify, Stasis (Werewolf, p. 282)

The mentor has become something much like a Stasis Vector, a tool of permanence in the service of ultimate destruction. Since his capture upon death by Psychomachiae, he's been subjected to psychological and spiritual torture intended to turn him into a weapon against hope, filled with the power and desire to stop growth or change from ever threatening the world he remembers. What his tormenters wish him not to see is that his desire to protect what is has been corrupted, his grief for what was but is no more leading him to shatter others' potential for transcending their current weaknesses. When his training is complete, they intend to unleash him upon the world as a sort of revenant werewolf.

When the characters enter, he recognizes one of them for each success on a Gnosis roll, difficulty 6. He greets them with surprise and pleasure, and shows himself far from clear on just where he is. His conversation drifts in and out of awareness about the current moment. Much of the time he thinks of himself as in some dark cave near his beloved caern, preparing some great work on behalf of the Garou for whom he cares so much. Any mention of his decline or death, however, sends him into a brief bout of rage at the unfairness of the world, the impending doom confronting all Garou and his deep desire to simply return to joys and even dangers from when he was young and strong and the Apocalypse didn't seem so close. As he calms down from those outbursts, he forgets most of what the characters have told him so far and must have them repeat key points for him.

He tries hard to find out what the characters are up to, and here most of his old personality emerges. He cares very much for them. The thought of their strange journey fills him with concern, and he begins using Stasis unconsciously. Have the characters discover

themselves being forced back into breed form without any obvious connection to the mentor. The same happens with a gradual loss of marks left on their bodies by fatigue and recent damage. The Solium's trail flickers during each of these uses of Stasis, regaining stability as it finishes. For all the characters can tell, this may all be properties of the chamber itself.

The mentor would gladly accompany the characters if they'll have him. A journey away from the dreadful present and worse future suits him just fine. One major hurdle remains. If the characters persist in questioning him about just how he ended up here, so far from anyplace the Garou belong, he becomes increasingly angry. He must make the usual Rage checks to resist anger at their provocations. When he loses, his own personality disappears beneath the layer of commands built into him. Now he uses his charms overtly, and fights the characters as best he can. Worse yet, when he gets down to 2 Essence, one of his creators arrives to find out why its creation is so badly off.

Willpower 7, Rage 10, Gnosis 8, Essence 25

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Corruption, Materialize, Possession

This particular Psychomachia resembles two eight-foot tall people sculpted from jagged metal and glass, fused back to back. Its four legs move with surprising grace and coordination; each of its four arms ends in a bewildering proliferation of cutting instruments of all sorts. The thing has no skeleton or internal organs, just layers of metal and glass (or of refined essence of spiritual corruption that happens to manifest itself that way).

The Psychomachia drops into the mentor's chamber out of a narrow fissure, expanding to its normal dimensions in the blink of an eye. As quickly as it can, it snatches up the mentor and impales him on its chest spikes so that it can manipulate his soul more directly. It wheels around to show its other side to the characters. One arm holds the mentor to the Psychomachia, leaving three free for fighting.

If it's defeated and the mentor still survives, he regains most of his free will. He still fears both present and future, but he understands what's been done to him and has power over the Charms he possesses. He accompanies the characters if they allow it. If they don't, he heads out the way they came in, with the final remark that he will have his vengeance on those who would turn his sorrow into a weapon. Finally, if the mentor loses all his Essence, he fades into intangibility with a parting sigh, and is gone.

### *The Grove*

The Solium's trail leads through a region where the "rock" becomes moist and spongy, more like dense peat than the imitations of granite and basalt that have prevailed so far. The trail here runs downhill, and the characters notice something peculiar: their footprints, soggy impressions in the tunnel floor, drift downhill ahead of them, dropping off a precipice up ahead. From there the characters can't yet see what lies beyond.

The tunnel ends in a twenty-foot drop. The chamber beyond is roughly diamond-shaped, and is about a hundred yards on a side. The tunnel's mouth is halfway between the summit and the bottom. Once they make the drop, the characters land on a forty-five-degree angle, which is uncomfortable but safe to walk on. The glow of the Solium's trail actually runs through the open space of the chamber until it enters the wall on the far side, a few feet above the bottom.

The chamber is full of what looks like life. Specifically, it looks like plants and animals of the characters' native region that have become extinct, mixed in with extinct wildlife of the Danube River valley. Here are casualties of the War of Rage and the Impergium, species lost to ice ages, floods and other natural disasters and the victims of human extermination efforts, all mingled together. It's not a sanitized version of the world: the characters can immediately see predators taking down prey and feasting on the carcasses. It's just that the whole thing is in careful balance so as to remain sustainable indefinitely. Whatever academic and personal lore the characters can draw on shows them that it's a perfect dynamic equilibrium.

Or so it seems. In truth there is only one thing residing here, a piece of the rock that gained a mind of its own long ago and sets traps for the ghosts and other things moving through this part of the Dark Umbra. It extracts memories and desires from the footprints of passers-by and sculpts itself and the surrounding soggy rock into suitable forms. Once victims reach the bottom, the thing exposes its true nature and attacks them. It did this with one of the ancestors who fought the Solium on its way to the present. The ancestor fought it to a standstill. Both now linger on the brink of final collapse.

As the characters touch a plant or animal within the grove, it shrivels up into a foul-smelling mass of purple and green sludge, pulsating softly as it runs downhill. Gradually or quickly, the characters dis-

cover that nothing at all endures but the sludge. Down at the bottom of the chamber, the sludge catches and tries unsuccessfully to regenerate the looming whole it used to possess. It's so badly damaged now that it has a single point of Essence remains. If the characters do anything to remove that, the whole lake of sludge dims from its previous vivid hues and evaporates into even more foul-smelling mist, which quickly dissipates.

At the very bottom, there are the mostly dissolved remains of a Garou in Crinos form. This is the sister of one of the ancestors who started to speak to the characters at the beginning of this act. She has enough flesh on her skull to have eyes that can open and show recognition as they look at the characters, and enough throat to whisper, "So far, so good." She's down to a single point of Essence and needs healing just like the sludge-rock did. Her injuries are too severe, though; hours or days (or longer) of fighting with and drowning in her antagonist has left her body incapable of regaining more than 5 Essence, and she knows that that's just not enough for anything beyond serving as cannon fodder. She tells the characters that they can set her free of this torment or she can do it herself. Her last words of advice are these: "Will makes distance. The next step really is a step, no matter how it seems."

The characters may wish to perform rites of purification and healing for her spirit first. Doing this doesn't change the basic fact of her passing: she dissolves into a faintly acrid mist which floats up and out of the chamber, and there is no sense of her spirit being set free from this realm. But if she goes prepared by such rites, she clearly dissolves in a state of calm and free from pain, rather than in the agony she otherwise experiences. The characters may well find the absence of any pleasant resolution to this encounter depressing, and with good reason. For those trapped among the deepest dead, happy endings just don't come along very often.

## *Scene 7: Where the World Lies*

Troupes who are really into encounters without prospect for redemption or deliverance can find plenty of them along the Solium's trail. Most troupes' players likely want to move on after those last two encounters, and the Storyteller should pay heed to this. Werewolf is certainly a game with a strong tragic element, but here it's a different sort of tragedy, and not one to wallow in unless it's clear that all the players are having a good time. So encounters with

former packmates carried off by Psychomachiae like the ones who took the old mentor and other recognizable figures doomed to pathetic ends are left up to the discretion of Storytellers wishing to sustain this part of the act.

Judging time in the tunnels is very difficult. Characters may sometimes feel that time rushes along very rapidly, and then slows almost to a crawl, and they'd be right. There are tides of fast and slow time here, complicated by the characters' movement in ways not entirely compatible with the usual arrow of time from past to future. They are doing the spiritual equivalent of treading water in the Solium's path, hung in a perpetual moment. Efforts at divination or other contact with the living world show them only the scenes of their deaths, jerking forward or backward a fraction of a second, again and again. The characters feel time to passing, but do not grow hungry or in need of rest.

From time to time the characters encounter chambers holding ruins. In every case the ruins are familiar, one way or another: landmarks of human or Garou history in places the characters live or at least where they've spent time. Each of them is now diminished, worn, drained — they lack any spiritual aura, and are just objects. Characters who push at them find them weak and brittle to the touch. They are, in fact, precisely as fragile as the memories they are.

### *The Remembrance of Things Past*

The Storyteller should make a note of any of these relics that the characters destroy. When they return to the present in Act III, they'll find those things diminished in the cultural lore around them. The destroyed things won't be forgotten, but they'll be downplayed in favor of other related landmarks.

Finally the tunnel widens and stays that way. Over the course of what feels like a day or so, it grows from dozens to hundreds of yards across, and then continues to widen well beyond the limits of their vision. The pale luminescence of the Solium's trail is lost in the immense pitch-black space all around them. Gradually, from somewhere up ahead, a cool blue-green glow appears and brightens, flickering erratically, though the characters can't yet see its source.

At last the characters come to another precipice. It's impossible to tell how deep the drop-off is, beyond "farther than we can see." Once they're actually at the brink they can see the source of the blue-green light. It's the Earth, looming large as life, or so it

seems. Dull brown and gray tones dominate almost the entire planet, but outbreaks of vivid lively color flare up at random across the globe, ranging from what look like pinpricks to swirling aurora-like effects within the ground stretching for dozens of miles. These provide the glow that the characters have followed. The very brightest glows shine up, down or away to offer faint glimpses of red-veined black rock far away. Occasional reflections from these distant surfaces provide the only light other than the planet's own internal light.

The remembered Earth isn't rotating consistently in one direction. It makes most of a turn one way, then slows down and swings back the other way. Occasionally it makes only a fraction of a full circle, and sometimes it swings rapidly around one or more times. There's no obvious logic to this behavior. It does make it easier for the characters to see the Solium's trail, which runs through the void to hit the remembered Earth right where they fought it in the living world. From there the trail dives under the oceans but remains visible, looping around continents, sometimes crossing over itself, and terminating at the mouth of the Danube River, on the banks of the Black Sea.

The characters notice a steady gentle fall of barely visible flecks of something white like snowflakes. As they approach the remembered Earth, they curve toward some particular destination and trigger one of the lively flashes when they strike. The characters may correctly deduce that these are fresh memories, bring the spark of some living soul to refresh the world as it once was. Characters with funerary rites may recognize the distinctive spiritual tang of offerings and memorial services for fallen comrades in some of the descending flakes.

### *Out of One Age, Into Another*

Some of the characters may remember the fallen ancestor's words about distance and steps. If they try to step onto the Solium's trail, it doesn't work—they slide back to the precipice. If, on the other hand, they try to step to the remembered Earth itself, it works—in a single step, they stand gathered around the site of their battle. They loom large here, towering miles high... or perhaps the world is small here, shrunk with the absence of vital spirit. The gray and brown regions are chilly and very uncomfortable, lacking the vitality that even inanimate things have in the world above, and the lit-up regions are not so much comfortable as merely annoying rather than painful. Characters who have never considered how much life resides in the framework of a steel skyscraper or barren lava flow may now see the contrast. Nothing fresh can happen in this place, cut off from Gaia and the work-

ings of the Triat. Even destruction run amok has something that this quiet ending lacks.

Many players will wish to explore this peculiar version of the world for a little while before stepping into Act II. This is perfectly all right and nothing for the Storyteller to worry about. When it's time to move on, the Storyteller can arrange suitable circumstances, such as the world making a sudden jerk that sends the characters tumbling into Dacia or the Solium's path entangling them and pulling them in.

The characters can peer in at details in the manner of their examining things during their fall from the living world: one turn per point of Gnosis, and then their viewpoint zooms back out to their giant elevation. The brown and gray places are very unsettling to look at, composed entirely of ruins drifted over by dust and dirt. Given the long complex history of the world, in many places, ruins are stacked neatly or haphazardly on top of each other, and the characters must spend one of their "zoom-in" turns to pick the right particular epoch from all the possibilities. Where they touch the remembered Earth, the blue-green light erupts and the characters can see some memorable scene unfold in greatly compressed time. Where they know of a story about that point, they experience it all while studying it closely, however long the story is. Where the memory is not one they share, they see several minutes' worth of it during each turn. This can be an excellent way for the Storyteller to pass along pieces of human and supernatural history to the characters.

It may take the characters a little while to realize that they're not seeing The Truth. They're seeing what memories have been attached to the world over the generations. Some such tales are true; many aren't. The remembered Earth discriminates only insofar as it requires stories to fit somewhere on itself. Land and sea may rearrange somewhat to accommodate a particular story, and only the most extremely ill-founded claims about mythic pasts reliably fail to find a place here.

There are two stories the characters cannot see:

- Their own battle against the Solium Submergens. This is because up above, it's still "now" rather than "then." Only when Act III finishes will the living world release that story to sink here.

- The events in Dacia in 31 BCE. The Solium's activity creates turmoil throughout the region on the remembered Earth. Characters feel an intense pull in when they're within a few giant paces of it and cannot concentrate properly.

To move on in the task fated for them the characters must step on the trail and let it pull them in. They experience a rapid shrinking, or perhaps a rapid enlargement of the world all around them. They see

themselves become translucent and then invisible, and the remembered Earth's Danube basin glows vividly green. There's a second flash and the characters feel a weak version of the living world's vitality infuse

the area. (This is actually an emanation from their own spiritual natures, conferring a piece of present-ness on the past here.) Act II may now begin.



# Act II: Living History

*I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.  
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.  
I learn by going where I have to go.*  
— Theodore Rothke, "The Waking"

The characters spend all of this act in the buried past of the World of Darkness. Act I drew them into a tightly controlled channel of events necessary to get them to the place fate decreed for them. Once there, they regain most of their freedom of choice. The deep spirit of the world would very much like them to help defeat the Solium Submergens, but if they choose not to, well, then they can, and the world will suffer the consequences. In keeping with the characters' newly liberated circumstances, this chapter presents less in the way of direct plot and more in the way of locations and individuals the characters may interact with in many ways.

The first section of this chapter deals with the overall setting as the characters will interact with it before their task approaches. The second section details the events of the chronicle, and the scenes as they play out. Finally, the characters fight the Solium Submergens in its original form, backed by a Roman legion and packs of local werewolves. At the last, the characters are returned to spirit form and bound to the Drowned King, to fight it as it tunnels back toward the present.

## *Preparatory Work*

The most important preparation the Storyteller should make before Act II is designing the set of ancestors whose bodies the characters possess. This will require mapping out their breeds, tribes, auspices, and some details of their backgrounds, as well as their Physical Attributes. Rank is important, too, as the contemporary Garou who recognize the host bodies will treat them according to their status. Some extra advice on planning this is given in Scene 1, below; the more detailed the ancestors are, the more interesting the social interaction aspects of this act will be.

Other than that, most of the personalities for Act II have already been provided; there's more emphasis on letting characters explore and interact, and more Storyteller characters that needn't be scaled to match the pack's power level or personal ancestry.

## *The Environment*

The characters have only the briefest sensation of the world as they move from looming over it to participating in it. That sensation is a remarkable one, fresh in a way that virtually nothing in the early 21st century can be, not yet weighed down by the whole weight of the approaching Apocalypse. Any injuries the characters have instantly heal, and they regain their full Willpower and Gnosis. Then they each drop into an unwitting host.

The characters' hosts are, as previously described, their own ancestors. Somewhere along the ancestral line, each of the characters had an ancestor tied to this time and the upcoming emergence of the Drowned King. In most troupes, few of the players are likely to have specified, "Oh, and my character's Romanian or Bulgarian." Fortunately, it isn't necessary for them to have done so for the characters to have someone to inhabit now.

People move around over time, for all sorts of reasons. The Danube River valley is the home to countless wars and invasions, and every military campaign leads to some people being taken prisoner and carried far from home and to others being driven to flee from the destruction of their homes. Thus an Italian peasant ends up living as a slave of a tribe somewhere on the Transylvanian plateau, while a horseman whose ancestors settled on the north bank of the Danube after riding out of central Asia ends up in Rome, or somewhere on the Mediterranean coast of France. In times of peace, traders sometimes go very long distances, and some of them end up choosing to settle far from home or unable to make the trip back, because of ill health, poverty or other complications. Some of these marry into local families and settle down. Religious believers make pilgrimages, and sometimes stay for reasons much like those of merchants or for the sake of being close to a holy object or place. Poor people emigrate in search of better opportunities, while people of all classes sometimes wish to ditch their old obligations and start again somewhere else.

Even longer distances aren't necessarily insurmountable. When most people think about epic exploration, they usually remember the men and women who commanded an expedition: Columbus, Amundsen, Earhart and the rest. But even on "solo" expeditions, the explorer doesn't go alone. It takes people to provide supplies and transportation and (in the modern day) communication with the outside world, to do all the labor that no single person could possibly perform. Julius Caesar didn't march alone into Britain, twenty years before this act takes place. He went with an army, with

units from all over the Roman empire. Men born in Palestine, Libya and Spain found themselves in an unfamiliar land, and some of them had to or chose to stay there, for all sorts of reasons. Captain Cook didn't sail a ship from England to Hawaii and thence around the world on his own, either. Dozens of sailors accompanied him, and on many expeditions, people from other lands joined the journey.

All of this creates the potential for highly unobvious backgrounds. In the early 21st century, there's a population in the central coastal provinces of China descended from Celtic sailors who accompanied Spanish and Portuguese expeditions. They look Chinese, except that they sometimes manifest red hair and blue eyes. The Romans of Eastern Europe have their roots in northern India. There are vanishing tribes in the southernmost tip of South America whose ancestors come from a wave of migration before the Ice Age journeys that brought peoples into the New World via Siberia and Alaska. People mix, and keep mixing.

Characters with established backgrounds that include what's now Hungary and Romania are set. It won't come as a surprise to them that they have ancestors to bond with as they enter into the past. But characters with backgrounds of other sorts aren't automatically cut off from participation here. It only takes a single ancestor in the right place, and fate can provide that one.

## *Here and Now*

The Dacian tribes moved into the Transylvanian plateau and the lower reaches of the Danube river valley long enough ago that it's a matter of folklore by the first century BCE. Sages and storytellers speak variously of ancestors to the northwest, the north and just about anywhere else. More than a dozen generations lived and died right here where the characters are arriving, enough to establish a rich and varied local history full of the ups and downs that keep gossips busy while confounding strangers trying to sort it all out.

Roman troops first arrived in the area in 214 BCE, in response to an alliance between the Macedonian king and the famous Carthaginian general Hannibal. Rome's eastern legions stomped their opposition flat. For the next half-century, troop strength ebbed and flowed as distant administrators juggled the competing claims of an ever-growing empire. The whole area became Roman provinces, all local governments crushed, in the middle of the second century BCE. That was more than a century before this act takes place, and the Danube river has been the northern boundary of this part of the Roman empire as long as anyone living there can remember.

The tribes facing the Roman legions from across the river have always been warlike. Their ancestors were nomads, accustomed to filling in the gaps in their diet and resources by conquest, and even now many clans and tribes move in search of better opportunities. They're not savage. They make elaborately decorated metal objects, both practical ones like shields and buckles and purely decorative ones like plaques, recognized widely for their quality. They have well-defined cultural roles, and the members of a family or village work together with intelligence and care as well as brute force for their mutual survival and prosperity. They tell stories, play games, enjoy times of bounty and luxury as well as occasional hardship... they are at least as smart and complex as their enemies in the imperial garrisons. It's just that they place great value on individual and communal prowess and very little on the virtues of capitulation and compromise. So they fight, often.

In 70 BCE, just shy of forty years before this act, the warlord Burebista unified Dacia as never before or since. Local storytellers revived the accounts of Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander, who conquered pretty much everything worth conquering and then lost it all by dying young. Burebista had the tactical genius and the sheer determination to overwhelm his tribal rivals and build a genuine Dacian kingdom, suppressing local rivalries within a single government. It wasn't as administratively complex as Rome or even as Philip's Macedon, but it was unprecedented in Dacian experience. He led his new subjects in mostly successful wars against their neighbors, expanding Dacian territory at the expense of Moldavia, Muntenia and the other tribes of the time.

The threat Burebista posed didn't go unnoticed across the river. Julius Caesar wanted to mount a fresh campaign against the Dacians, an achievement to compare with his triumphs in Gaul and Britain. In the end it wasn't to be. Julius and Burebista died the same year, 44 BCE, both assassinated by countrymen unwilling to be their subjects. Rome endured; the Dacian kingdom didn't. It quickly relapsed to the pre-kingdom standard of independent groups ranging from single families to alliances of villages dominated by a few prominent clans. Some of the non-Dacian conquered people reasserted themselves.

The Dacians of 31 BCE view this history with mixed feelings. For children, of course, it's all just tales. It's been thirteen years since there was a king of the Dacians, and they've grown up accustomed to dynamic, not to say chaotic, conditions. Adults who supported Burebista's ambitions mourn their lost opportunity and dream of the rise of some future conqueror, while advocates of the traditional Dacian way

rejoice in the death of the interloper and the restoration of the desirable status quo. For Roman observers, the return of chaos is on the whole a good thing, since it removes a large threat. But for the soldiers actually stationed in frontier forts and the families who live around them, it means the return of uncoordinated raiding and pillaging, more loss with little hope of redress until such time as Rome again cares to consider a big campaign.

And nobody knows that the Drowned King is coming.

### *Who Are the Good Guys?*

History is messy. There are things to be said in favor of both the Dacians and Romans, and much to be said against both. Neither culture had any inkling of things we now consider important if not actually self-evident, like fundamental rights for the individual, equality of the sexes, representative government, privacy and the like. If *either* culture existed now, it would seem almost unspeakably barbaric. Fortunately, Werewolf is not a game about arguing political theories, but about heroic struggle in the face of apocalypse, and both sides have plenty of appreciation for heroism. The characters are at liberty to allocate praise and blame as they wish; this book doesn't take a stand on the relative merits of Burebista's reign and the return of disorganized Dacian life or any of the other potentially complex issues presented here. This is all fodder for roleplaying, and as long as choices have interesting consequences, there are no necessarily wrong answers.

### *The Immediate Vicinity*

The Danube River here flows from west to east, tilting a bit north as it goes. The characters arrive in the middle of a hundred-mile-long series of mountain gorges. Above and below this stretch, the Danube ranges from a thousand feet wide to half a mile wide, depending on how much plain it has to meander in. The gorges narrow it down from a maximum of a thousand feet to a mere five hundred feet in places, and the river runs fast and deep, with many patches of white water where submerged rocks make the flow turbulent. The mountains fall steeply to the river, often with no shore at all or just a few inches of embankment below drops ranging from a dozen feet to more than eight hundred feet. Banks wide enough for docks and other buildings are scarce, and rivals fight for control of every usable spot.

Back from the bluffs, the hills remain rugged and steep, but are often passable. The good routes were blazed long ago and are well-known to everyone who's spent any significant time in the region; going cross-country is much slower and more tiring. Dense forests cover the area, with trees growing even in the bluffs and cliff faces wherever they can find a crevasse to start in. Clearings exist only where fire or disease has felled trees, enough water has accumulated to allow marshes or meadows to form or human beings have deliberately chopped down trees. The Romans and Dacians both maintain small fields around small villages, and supplement their agriculture with herding, hunting and fishing.

Very few 21st-century homid Garou have ever seen anything like the wilderness that flashes past them upon entering the past. For that matter, neither have many metis or lupus. Even areas far from any human activity receive pollution from the sky and contamination in the ground water, if nothing else. Here and now, there are still forests in which nobody has ever walked, and if there's anything toxic coming down, it's ash and smoke from volcanoes, forest fires and other purely natural disasters. The Gauntlet is on average 2-3 points thinner than it is in the age of

impending Apocalypse, 1-2 points thinner than in the Dark Ages milieu. Spirits do lurk in the places people seldom go, as do strange creatures whose nature has nothing to do with modern notions of evolution and taxonomy. But these things also pose risks to Garou: whatever the Garou may say about their Gaia-given role, many things in the natural and supernatural world have no interest in submitting just because a changer commands it.

In May the gorges remain cool, with highs seldom exceeding 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Freezes aren't unknown, but they're rare; commonly it gets down into the low 40s or high 30s at night. It rains every two-three days, in showers lasting anywhere from a few minutes to three hours. Most mornings are foggy, though that burns off within an hour of sunrise. The sun rises a few minutes after 5 am and sets a few minutes before 9 pm, though it obviously clears the mountains later in the morning and vanishes behind them earlier in the evening.

There are three settlements within easy traveling distance of each other, halfway through the gorge. These provide the backdrop for the act's actions.



## *Ferrevadium (Iron Ford)*

Back when Julius Caesar was actively planning an invasion of Dacia, he commanded the construction of new fortifications at places along the river that might be handy for coordinated attacks. This is one of those, a fort built fifteen years ago for a war that never happened. On the north bank of the Danube there's a gravel beach ten yards wide beneath quite low bluffs, no more than twenty feet high. A contingent of troops landed there could get up without much difficulty if supported by good combat engineers. The problem is that there was no matching good space on the south bank. That didn't stop the imperial planners, who ordered a road cut into the bluff and a fort built to guard the passage.

The rock here is rich in iron, with many rusty veins setting off the surrounding limestone. Roman laborers heaped up the red rock hewn from the bluffs out into the river, creating a narrow ridge on which they erected an implausible-looking stronghold. The second and third stories extended out on each side above the narrow first level, with scaffolding connecting to the ridge above and below the waterline. A tower rises on the shore side, high end for a rope bridge to connect to the bluff's top. Docks stretch out downstream from the fort.

The fort holds a garrison of 75 soldiers. A village on the hillside above the bluff holds another 200 soldiers and 250 civilians, mostly women, who tend to their needs. These civilians are evenly divided between Roman subjects, mostly criminals convicted of petty offenses, and slaves seized from the surrounding tribes.

### *Cassius Meridius Cinna*

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

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 3

**Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 3, Leadership 4, Melee 4, Ride 3, Survival 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Law 3, Linguistics 3, Medicine 3, Occult 1, Politics 3

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 4, Resources 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Image:** Cinna is a short, slightly stocky man with close-cropped brown hair. (He occasionally shaves it all the way off, and then gets tired of maintaining a smooth scalp and lets it grow back.) He generally looks tired, but not sullen; he's simply worn down by the responsibilities of command in dangerous and unrewarding circumstances. When he has the opportunity to look pleased, particularly when his men do well, he

## *Roman Names*

Roman names come in three parts. First is the praenomen, seldom used except to distinguish between two people with otherwise identical names; it's a sort of personal name, often inherited from the father (and modified if the descendant is female). Second is the nomen, which identifies the individual's gens or clan, equivalent to a modern surname. Third is the cognomen, the personal name, which distinguishes the individual from any others with the same praenomen and nomen. It's often a nickname based on a physical characteristic (like Rufus, the Latin for "red," for someone with red hair) or some bit of personal history (like Africanus for a soldier who earned fame in an African campaign). Friends use the cognomen.

seizes it gladly. He doesn't care about the full details of ornamentation, but he does keep himself and his gear as clean as circumstances allow and rewards his men for doing the same.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Fifteen years ago, you were an ambitious young man on your way up, and honored to be chosen for an important position as part of Julius' war against the Dacians. Thirteen years ago, you expected to be reassigned to a more active front after Julius' death. Ten years ago, you still hoped for it. Now you make the occasional sacrifice to Mars just to remind him that you're still interested, but you don't expect anything to come of it.

You'd love the opportunity to do something interesting, but with your command's limited resources and the defensive advantages the gorge terrain provides the barbarians, what is there to do? You do try to keep your men in good shape, so that perhaps they can qualify for something better than this and because family pride requires you to do your best. It's just that war is what you're good at, and here there is no war. In dark moments you wonder if you could even rise to the challenge now.

You see Velius as very much an echo of your younger self, and do what you can to help him earn some distinction so that he can get on to something better.

**History:** The Meridius family came to local prominence in the campaigns against Macedon a century ago, and the eldest son has taken up military duty each generation since then. Cinna is the fifth of his line to serve as a garrison commander. He's been in Iron Ford for most of two decades, apart from two brief trips to Rome to take part in ceremonial functions.

### *Caius Rusionius Velius*

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

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Expression 3, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

**Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Crafts 4, Etiquette 3, Leadership 3, Melee 4, Ride 3, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Investigation 2, Law 3, Linguistics 2, Medicine 2, Occult 1, Politics 2, Science 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Contacts 4, Resources 3

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** Velius is a tall man with darker skin than most of his fellow legionnaires — the family's history of intermarriage into Middle Eastern bloodlines shows very strongly in him. He has unusually large hands with long, callused fingers that are seldom at rest, and he's happiest with tools in his hands and something to make or improve in front of him. He doesn't devote much attention to his own grooming, but his gear is in beautiful condition, and he's very willing to share tips on packing, weatherproofing and the like with others, so that it's easy to tell whom he's been working with recently.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You've managed to separate yourself from the family scandal and have started to earn a reputation all your own. That's fine. Nobody needs to know. And if anyone ever did bring it up, you might have to take, well, fairly drastic measures to cover it up. That concern aside, you're mostly interested in managing to get away from the Danube, since you feel that you've done about as much as you can here, given the limitations of the environment and the resources at your disposal. You're curious about whatever tales others may have of events and opportunities far away, always listening for a hint of something that might help you in your quest for promotion.

Cinna's acquiescence in his rut disgusts you, though you believe you've managed to conceal that pretty well. You know that he likes you and wants to help you, and if he can, so much the better.

**History:** Velius' father was a Greek merchant with political ambitions who managed to make a complete hash of his schemes and finally committed suicide to avoid further disgrace. His sons scattered in search of opportunities where people wouldn't bring up the Rusionius scandal very often. For Velius, the way out was the army. He discovered an aptitude for civil engineering, and has been working his way up through the ranks with his efforts in the maintenance and improvement of fortifications, roads and siege gear.

### *Drusilla*

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Empathy 4, Expression 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4

**Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Craft 4, Etiquette 2, Leadership 1, Stealth 1, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Investigation 2, Linguistics 2, Medicine 3, Occult 3, Politics 1

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Contacts 4

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** Drusilla is a middle-aged woman with deeply tanned and heavily wrinkled skin. Her hair is pure white and thinning, her eyes once sharp blue but now dimmed by the first signs of cataracts. She walks with a permanent stoop thanks to many years of labor that required bending over. Like many slaves with genuine responsibilities, she shows only minimal deference to her masters, and carries herself with confidence.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Whining is for those with the free time for it. You could be much worse off; at the moment, at least you have reasonably behaved masters and the opportunity to manage your own little domestic kingdom. If you had the opportunity, you'd certainly kill them all and take your chances back among your own people. In the meantime, you do your work and they do theirs. You are constantly curious about what's going on around you, and run an extensive trade in gossip of both innocuous and significant sorts.

**History:** By modern standards, Drusilla's life is an appalling tragedy. By the standards of her own time and place, it's quite typical. She was born in one of the smaller clans on the fringes of Dacian territory, and lost her family in a raid by Burebista's supporters on perceived rivals. She and other girls were taken as slaves, to provide labor and sex for their masters. She changed hands twice in the next decade, once when her captors were themselves set upon and wiped out and once when her new owners threw her in to sweeten a deal for amber and other trade goods. That lasted for the rest of Burebista's reign. In the ensuing turmoil, she was captured by a band of Dacian raiders who were in turn wiped out by a Roman patrol commanded by Cinna. She's been in Ferrevadum ever since, gaining more and responsibility for the domestic duties in and around the fort.

Drusilla is a slave and Cinna is the boss of a foreign occupying army; they have little to say to each other. He probably thinks of her only a few times a year, when something goes particularly well or badly. The other

legionnaires feel much the same way, warm bonding emotions not being common in these circumstances.

## *Longwhite*

Lightning does strange things sometimes. Anyone who spends a while in forests can see trees hollowed out by a lightning strike but living on because just enough of the heartwood survived, or pierced all the way through horizontally with a hole that never heals up, or otherwise weirdly deformed. The village of Longwhite takes its name from one such tree, a pine tree whose bark was scorched off by a cylindrical lightning strike. The underlying layer of wood was shocked dead and won't heal, but new growth continued. Now the three stands eighty feet tall with exposed white wood from eight feet above ground level to just over fifty feet up. Some early settler lost in the night centuries ago saw the bare wood glinting in the moonlight and found shelter from his troubles in the vale the tree overlooks. A settlement sprung up around it, and while its inhabitants have fled or been wiped out during tribal wars several times, someone always establishes a new village on the same spot.

Longwhite is half a mile north of the river, three miles upstream from Iron Ford. The tree stands at the crest of a small valley that empties into a narrow cleft reaching down to the riverbank. There's no natural beach there, but the Dacians have built up a dike out of stones pushed over the bluff, which is more than a hundred feet high on each side of the cleft. Dacian travelers carry their boats fifty yards up the cleft to a level patch flanked by a shallow cave and store boats and baggage there. There's space on the dike to tie up boats, but erratic surges of current too often tear away anything left there.

In 65 BCE — 34 years before Act II begins — Burebista drove out the village's inhabitants, since they had resisted his early ambitions, and granted it as a reward to several of his early supporters. Two of the most memorable raids by Burebista's warriors down the Danube and against ports held by his enemies were launched from Longwhite. The moment the village chief got news of Burebista's death, he immediately proclaimed his independence from the aged tyrant and turned against his former allies in the region. His quickness paid off, with his major rivals slaughtered in short order and Longwhite positioned as the dominant settlement in the area. In addition to the portage route to the river, Longwhite controls a good road through a rugged patch of the gorge from which it can (and does) exact tolls for the privilege of swift travel. Those who choose not to pay can make their own way

overland, with all the risks of moving through an ancient and unfriendly forest.

Longwhite is now home to eight hundred people, half of them children. Six major families exert most of the authority, with war band leaders, priests and other notable community leaders coming almost exclusively from their ranks. One adult in ten is a slave, taken prisoner during the 44 BCE revolt or struggles since then; fifteen of these are Roman soldiers, most of whom have long since given up any hope of escape despite the nearness of their comrades downstream.

## *Dekebalos*

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

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 1

**Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Leadership 4, Melee 4, Performance 2, Ride 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4

**Knowledges:** Law 3, Linguistics 2, Politics 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Contacts 5, Resources 3

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** Dekebalos is a big man, well over six feet tall and heavily muscled. The right side of his face and scalp is heavily scarred, thanks to a collision with a burning branch in the midst of a forest fire, and he has many scars on his arms and legs from battle. His clothes are all made from the hides of animals he hunted himself, and they're decorated with claws and fangs harvested from his kills.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Your father was brilliant. You aren't. That's the way it goes. But you're not a disaster for your clan or village, either: you do a good job of leading your people when they need leading and of protecting them from the threatening world. When you're not required to do your chiefly duties, you have time to hunt and fish and cultivate your prowess at the big games and small wars that really hold your attention. When it's time for you to go, you'll know it because you'll start losing the interesting challenges. Hasn't happened yet, and you're not worrying about it.

**History:** Dekebalos' father was the architect of Longwhite's multiple switches of allegiances, the best schemer the people had seen in many years. Dekebalos inherited little of that. He's not stupid, and he has good instincts for tactics, but he simply isn't a visionary. If it weren't his father's position, he probably would never have challenged for leadership, but since his family is what it is, he does quite a good job as chief. He seldom gets into more trouble than he can get out of, and the village prospers.

## *Mihascu*

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 2

**Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Craft 4, Etiquette 2, Melee 2, Performance 1, Ride 2, Stealth 1, Survival 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 4, Investigation 3, Linguistics 4, Medicine 3, Occult 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 1, Contacts 4

**Gifts:** Mihascu is a mage of moderate power (Werewolf, p. 280). He has expertise in the spheres of Spirit and Entropy.

**Willpower:** 7

**Image:** Mihascu looks much older than he actually is, more like someone on the brink of death than just past thirty. He has the scars of someone who's fought both military battles and unarmed struggles against wild animals, and also the ritual tattooing and scarification that lets him open up his soul to the Upper and Lower Worlds where the spirits live. The energetic dancing his rituals require make him sweat enough that he favors only a simple kilt and sandals for ceremonial occasions; other times he dresses in simple leather garments with an overcoat woven by the mother of a child he healed in a neighboring village. He has the classic distracted look of a shaman, since he is in fact constantly hearing voices from the other worlds and they often demand attention.

**Roleplaying Notes:** A Roman prisoner once said that in Roman cities there are people who willingly seek out magical mysteries to study. You laughed. This? This isn't what you'd like to do, it's just what you have to do. Father Sky shouted at you when you were still in your mother's womb and broke the barriers that keep most people from hearing the spirits, and that set the course of your life. It's tiring and it hurts and there's always something else to do. You live for the rare moments when nobody in Longwhite needs anything from you, so that you can travel in the spirit worlds purely for your own study and pleasure. You wish you could probe the mysteries of the dead village: it rankles you to have an unsolved mystery so close, but you know better than to challenge the man-beasts hiding... well, whatever it is they hide there.

**History:** Mihascu has been hearing spirits as long as he's been alive, starting from before birth. Longwhite's previous shaman knew he was weakening in the years before Mihascu was born and repeatedly called on all his spirit allies and subjects to grant the village someone to take his place before he died. It

worked. The old man lived just long enough to guide Mihascu through the first rites of initiation and see that the young shaman had some well-placed spirit allies. The life of a shaman is a busy one, but it includes many actions that others don't see because the shaman's body is in a trance while his soul acts elsewhere, or the body accompanies the soul on some rare quests. Mihascu likes the people of his village, but feels understandably distanced from them.

## *Kogaya*

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Expression 2

**Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Crafts 5, Etiquette 2, Melee 1, Performance 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics 2, Occult 2

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 3, Resources 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** To casual inspection, Kogaya looks like a young man of the tribe, with unusually smooth skin for someone as weathered as he obviously is. He dresses in the typical boots, pants, and overshirt of the village, and wears on top of that a loose-fitting over-vest of his own design with many pockets for tools and pieces he's crafting at the moment. It takes success at an opposed roll of Perception + Alertness against Kogaya's Manipulation + Performance to realize that he's biologically female.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You live for your craftsmanship. The only time you feel truly happy is when you're making something both useful and beautiful, something that improves the life of the person who'll use it, reflects well on you and honors the gods of the materials and their application. You'd give a great deal, and sometimes have, for new lore of smithing or access to new materials. Very little else interests you, and you prefer to remain apart from others' messy and complicated emotional lives.

**History:** Dacian culture has very strong division of labor by age and gender, just as most nomadic cultures do. It also has seldom-used provisions for a person of one sex to take up the role of the other by renouncing the old identity and adopting the new one. This requires a thorough commitment, and there's no way back — someone who wishes to return to his or her birth role can do so only in exile. Kogaya was a girl with a real talent for metalworking, which is a male preserve for the Dacians of her clan. Women may engage in other crafts, but not that one. When she came of age, she went through the ritual of reassignment, and has

lived ever since as a single man of the community. To himself and to everyone who deals with him, Kogaya has been "he" for nearly twenty years. Like many renunciates, he has a fairly detached personal life, but the beauty and distinctive elegance of his handiwork wins him friends and admirers everywhere.

### *The Dead Village and the Waiting Pack*

Romans and Dacians alike know that after Burebista died, disease flourished on the countless battlefields. In some cases, whole villages perished. And when that happened, not all of the dead souls lay entirely quietly. Where a village could be cleansed and re-settled, it generally was, but some could only be abandoned. Two miles downstream from Iron Ford, just over six miles from Longwhite, such a village stands on a knife-edged promontory overlooking the river. Ten years ago, five hundred people lived there, but they're all gone now, leaving behind only their restless souls to sing songs in strange languages on dark nights and to wander with strange beasts come to feast on their lingering power. Nobody speaks the old village name of Overlook any more, lest they summon the ghosts.

The people of Overlook did indeed die in a plague outbreak in 40 BC, but the village's new inhabitants saw that they were laid properly to rest. Once the plague disappeared, a pack of Garou entered the village to perform rites of burial and repose, and then established a small caern as directed in dreams. Their early scouting revealed that their presence hadn't gone entirely unnoticed in either Iron Ford or Longwhite, but was taken as signs of ghosts. The werewolves promptly set about reinforcing the legend, playing the part of lurking supernatural menace for all it was worth. Now no human being with any knowledge of the area at all will risk going within a mile of the site and the Garou may pursue their plans without fear of interruption.

Scorylo Howls-Like-Ghosts, a Child of Gaia Philodox, took the lead in establishing what he called the Waiting Pack. There are long-settled septs not terribly far away — no more than a few days' travel — and he had a great deal of very careful negotiating to do in order to establish his little community without making any potential rivals feel threatened. In the end he did manage it, and each year one or a few Garou arrived, driven by the same troubling dreams of something rising out of the river that could only be defeated by the combined power of Garou and mysterious strangers. The werewolves keep a constant vigilant watch on Longwhite and Iron Ford and their surroundings in search of any clues as to what may be coming. The village itself they keep comfortable and clean, in the

expectation that when whatever the trouble is arrives and is dealt with, they'll be abandoning the area again.

The village is currently home to about a dozen werewolves, all gathered around the three key figures of the Waiting Pack: Scorylo, the Wendigo Anja Windknife, and the White Howler Aidan Farwatcher. Each one holds the equivalent of sept office, although they lack the true authority that actual ranking officials of a sept would hold. This group is not a sept proper — the site of the village is not a caern — and the social dynamic is a strange departure from the typical Garou hierarchy. If a sept is a military outpost and temple combined, the Waiting Pack is a self-organized militia with a touch of a cult of dreams. The unusual nature of its structure should be a sign to most Garou that something is indeed up.

The three core members of the Waiting Pack, and about half the assembled Garou, are bound under the pack totem of Owl. Their totem spirit cannot foresee what is coming, but has a sense that — just like the village that is their lair — the energies of death are somehow connected.

### *Scorylo Howls-Like-Ghosts, Grand Elder, Master of the Rites and Talasinger*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Philodox

**Tribe:** Children of Gaia

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

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2)

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 4

**Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Crafts 3, Leadership 4, Melee 4, Stealth 4, Survival 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Investigation 3, Linguistics 3, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** Ancestors 3, Contacts 2, Kinfolk 3, Rites 4

**Gifts:** (1) Persuasion, Resist Pain, Scent of the True Form, Truth of Gaia; (2) King of the Beasts, Luna's Armor, Strength of Purpose; (3) Disquiet

**Rage:** 6; **Gnosis:** 7; **Willpower:** 7

**Rank:** 3

**Rites:** (Accord) Cleansing, Contrition, (Caern) Moot, Open Caern, (Mystic) Binding, Becoming, Spirit Awakening, Summoning, Undying Pursuit (Renown) Accomplishment, (Seasonal) Long Vigil, Winter Winds

**Fetishes:** none

**Image:** Scorylo is the local member of the Waiting Pack as well as its founder. He looks like a middle-aged man from any of the local villages, worn by the passage of time, carrying an honorable set of scars and small trophies woven into his clothes from hunts and battles, and not amused by much that goes around him.

**Roleplaying Notes:** When you were young in the ways of man and wolf, you yearned for responsibility. Luna, as she so often does, answered your prayers in a way that makes you wish she'd left well enough alone. You've been at this a decade now, and have no idea how long you have to go, and you have to keep the werewolves you lead in some semblance of hope and discipline. You wish very much you knew more about what you're waiting for, but can't afford to show weakness before the rest. It's a pity solitude carries such risks of its own. The good part of it, of course, is that you get to meet and hunt with werewolves from far-away lands, and you love to learn what they've seen and done.

**History:** Scorylo used to belong to one of the packs that preys along the Danube, making life more exciting for Romans and Dacians alike. Then he started having the dreams of the coming Drowned King. The elders of his sept professed themselves baffled by his visions, but exhaustive testing (the scars of which he still carries) confirmed that there is no deceit in them, only mystery, and he was released to follow his own path. He's spent the last ten years dividing his time between training the pack in the dead village and roaming the countryside in search of strangers drawn to join him.

*Anja Windknife, Warder,  
Keeper of the Land and Wyrm Fox*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Tribe:** Wendigo

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

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 3

**Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Leadership 3, Melee 4, Stealth 4, Survival 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Medicine 2, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** Ancestors 2, Fetish 3, Pure Breed 2, Rites 3

**Gifts:** (1) Camouflage, Falling Touch, Inspiration, Resist Pain, Smell of Man; (2) Cutting Wind, Spirit of the Fray, Staredown, True Fear, (3) Bloody Feast, Reshape Object

**Rage:** 8; **Gnosis:** 5; **Willpower:** 7

**Rank:** 3

**Rites:** (Death) Gathering for the Departed, (Seasonal) Great Hunt, Reawakening, (Mystic) Undying Pursuit

**Fetishes:** Fang dagger

**Image:** In Homid form, Anja is a small stout woman, almost all muscle, who moves with constant wariness and a perpetual scowl. She keeps her long black hair tied up in tight braids, and shields her dark eyes beneath a cap or hood in daylight hours. Her features are broad and flatter than the Dacians', but her origins aren't obvious to anyone who lacks knowledge of northern tribes. (If in doubt, an Intelligence + Enigmas roll, difficulty 6, can settle the question of whether a particular character makes the leap of recognition.) In wolf or Crinos form, she has a grayish-brown coat, and her Wendigo Pure Breed becomes more evident.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You're the stranger in a strange land that a Jewish traveler once told you about, when you shared a tent one stormy night by the Aral Sea. Dacia is too hot, and the hours of light and dark are strange, and the very spirits speak with strange accents. Sometimes you doubt that there's any real truth in your dreams, and then you compensate with a flurry of particularly zealous activity. You train your fellow dreamers and direct the lies that keep the humans away, and wait and hope that someday this will all mean something. You would give a great deal for solid answers. Your arctic upbringing toughened you against what the locals think of as cold, and you do indulge in bouts of showing off, like swimming comfortably in snow melt long after others have fled for dry warmth.

**History:** When Anja went through First Change, she was already a skilled hunter for her people, a small tribe living just south of the Arctic Circle in Siberia. With her rapidly developing talents as the classic Ahroun, she soon saw the path of her life laid out clearly, as a champion of the endless struggle against the things gnawing at the roof of the world. It would be busy, but rewarding in its way. Then the dreams started, of something rising out of a warmer sea, far away beyond where the sun sets, so far south that every day has hours of light and hours of darkness. She tried to ignore them, but they grew stronger and stronger, easing only when she began to take her first steps away from home. Whenever she faltered, they strengthened again. After more than two years of wandering across Siberia, the steppes, the Caucasus and the shores of the Black Sea, she found her way to the Danube gorges and her first meeting with Scorylo. To her surprise, she's ended up with much the role she thought she'd fit, simply in wildly different circumstances.

The one thing that nags at Anja's conscience is something she was given freely. On her journey to the Danube, one night she took shelter in a cave belonging to a grizzled old man. The old man taught her a rite, one she'd never heard of before, claiming that she might need it more than he would. She originally presumed the man to be Garou, but now she's not sure if she met a spirit in mortal guise, or something else. The rite was more complicated than she thought she could master, and she's since noticed that her overall mastery of rites is greater than she'd presumed. Anja is now very concerned that this strange rite of sacrifice is directly tied into her destiny. She taught it to Scorylo and Aidan after learning of their great ritual knowledge, reasoning that even if something were to happen to her, someone would be at hand to perform it should the need arise. She dreads the need ever arising.

*Aidan Farwatcher, Catekeeper,  
Truthcatcher and Talesinger*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Galliard

**Tribe:** White Howler

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

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Primal-Urge 2, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Crafts 3, Leadership 1, Melee 3, Performance 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Investigation 3, Law 3, Medicine 1, Occult 3, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** Ancestors 3, Fetish 3, Pure Breed 2, Resources 2

**Gifts:** (1) Beast Speech, Call of the Wild, Persuasion, Smell of Man; (2) Call of the Wyrms, Jam Technology, Lion's Bite (see pg. XX), Song of Rage; (3) Burning Scars\*, Foaming Fury\*

\*: A Gift now preserved only by the Black Spiral Dancers, and corrupted by them. See **Werewolf**, p. 273, for descriptions; keep in mind that for the White Howlers these Gifts produce eerie, even unearthly, but not overtly corrupt or vile manifestations. Neither the Gift nor its user exude any taint of the Wyrms. Aidan's scars are Wyld designs and his rabid foaming is a pure white venom.

**Rage:** 6; **Gnosis:** 5; **Willpower:** 6

**Rank:** 3

**Rites:** Moot Rite, Rite of the Fetish, Rite of Summoning, Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of Undying Pursuit

**Fetishes:** Harmony Flute, Spirit Tracer

**Image:** Aidan is a tall young man with very fair skin, heavily freckled face and bright red hair, which is constantly frizzing out of control and splitting into barely manageable tangles. He favors a massive wool cape and kilt, with copper-trimmed boots and gloves, unless he needs to pass himself as someone less exotic. He's quick to laugh and to frown, and is almost always in motion, even if it's just pacing back and forth. In Crinos and wolf forms, his fur is the bright white his tribe is famous for.

**Roleplaying Notes:** The war against the world's enemies is of course a very serious matter, but then the loss of passion is one of the enemies' weapons. So you make it a point to feel things deeply, to really enter into the spirit of the moment, whatever it is. You also know that the right solution to a mystery is confrontation: confronted with a secret, you prefer to peel back its hide until the truth stands forth. The years of waiting for answers about your dreams have left you quite frustrated and sometimes prone to fits of uncontrolled anger; you miss your home and worry about your pack, and want something to happen, already.

**History:** Aidan is a native of northern Scotland, and was born into a tribe already in decline, even if the White Howlers seldom speak of their worries or the pervading sense of doom. Until he began having dreams of the Drowned King, he was nothing very remarkable. His talents only really flourished once left the highlands and began experiencing the rest of the world. He never dreamed that the world was so big, and spent almost as long in his journey as Anja did in hers, thanks to more and lengthier side trips to examine features of interest. He's also learned in the last couple of years that has quite a talent for metalsmithing, and has spent most of his time recently studying the craft and the spirits whose blessing or curse affects the smith's work.

## *Scene 1: Into the Ancestors*

The world has been woven so as to bring the players' pack into the reanimated past fairly close together. The characters drift apart slightly as they rush down toward the world, but all remain within the triangle of forest marked off by the three settlements. Each character gets a very brief glimpse of a werewolf that seems somehow familiar, and then feels herself inside a new body.

### *The Harts*

As noted in the Preparatory Work sidebar above, the Storyteller should plan the host ancestors carefully. Keep in mind that the goal is not to screw over the

characters or force players into a no-win situation. Choose options that will enhance the drama and fun for your troupe, and if a complication seems likely to be more nuisance than pleasure, skip it and go for the simpler alternative. The following are all important things to think about.

- **Garou, Human or Wolf:** All Garou have mixed ancestry, and in addition to the Garou drawn to the Waiting Sept, there are humans and wolves in the area from whom the characters are descended. If a character enters the body of a normal human or wolf, the character's first challenge is to draw in enough of the Garou's distinctive spiritual force to create a sort of temporary awakening. At sunset each evening, the character may make an opposed roll of Gnosis versus the local Gauntlet rating (minimum of 2 dice). Once the player accumulates (15 - Gnosis) successes, the character's body goes through a change reminiscent of First Change and the character can make use of the full range of Garou abilities. When the character leaves at the end of the act, this transformation wears off and the host body returns to its normal condition. (This is so clearly impossible under regular circumstances that it may help prove the point that the characters are in a reflection of the past, not the material world of 2000 years ago.)

The character may also end up in the body of an ancestor who is Garou but who hasn't undergone her First Change yet. Forcing this to happen now requires the same roll as above, but only (10 - Gnosis) successes.

A character's host belongs to the same tribe his or her descendant does. Yes, some crossbreeding is ultimately inevitable, and a character could have ancestors of other tribes, but this chronicle poses enough challenges as it is. The Storyteller should keep this consideration fixed and simple.

- **Sex:** If your troupe enjoys some unusual roleplaying challenges, one or more of the characters can end up in a host body that doesn't share the character's physical gender. Don't do this if it will be heavily annoying or just an excuse for a bunch of cheap gags (we've all seen the "Hey, I have boobs!" gag before, and it's not *that* funny). Keep it as an option for players who are likely to enjoy the change of pace and can play the character's disorientation and resulting challenges well.

- **Breed:** Most characters who enter Garou hosts are drawn to hosts who share their breed form. This doesn't have to be the case, however. The Storyteller may assign a breed form to the host, or even determine such randomly. Keep in mind that by definition, metis Garou don't have descendants, so it's a choice between homid and lupus Garou.

- **Physical Attributes:** The character's Mental and Social attributes apply immediately. This does include Appearance, as characters with high Appearance know or intuit how to conduct themselves with an appealing grace and style even if their actual physical features aren't immensely attractive. The host body's physical Attributes should be determined by the Storyteller as appropriate. If these are improvements for the character, she can rely on the host's Attributes. If her own attributes are higher, she can try to call on her own spirit's strength to make the host body perform better than it usually can. This requires an opposed roll of her Attribute versus the host's Attribute, and requires the accumulation of one success per dot of her Attribute score. She can attempt one such roll each day, at sunset.

If the character keeps the host's Stamina then whatever scars the host has remain. If she overwhelms the host and imposes her own Stamina her battle scars emerge. They fade after she leaves, healing like regular lethal damage.

- **Abilities:** The character retains the full use of his Abilities, unless there's a compelling reason otherwise (such as a host's battle scar impeding Athletics rolls). In addition, he can attempt to draw on his host's Abilities. This requires a Gnosis roll, difficulty 8; each success allows the character to retrieve one dot's worth of the relevant Ability. The borrowed Ability can be used for the duration of the scene. The most obvious use the players will have for this tactic is drawing on their hosts' Linguistics; it's unlikely that any pack members are going to be fluent in conversational Latin or Dacian, much less able to give the impression of a native speaker. Of course, the High Tongue of the Garou is essentially unchanged.

- **Gifts & Rites:** The characters use their own Gifts and rites as normal. They cannot access any Gifts their hosts may possess, but they may try to work a rite the host knows by first rolling Gnosis (difficulty 9) to understand the process, and then accessing their host's Rituals score.

- **Miscellaneous:** Characters retain their own Rage, Gnosis and Willpower, and cannot use the host's; these are integral parts of their own spiritual personalities. If a host possesses higher Pure Breed than the character, the character may draw on this Pure Breed, although at one less dot of efficiency; the character lacks the bearing to complete the picture. If the character possessed equal or more Pure Breed than the host, he may use the host's Pure Breed score without penalty. A character cannot use his own Pure Breed score at all, of course.

## *Arrival*

The characters arrive on the scene by "falling into" the host bodies of their ancestors; the sudden sensation of the weight and warmth of flesh may be disorienting, although extremely welcome. All of the hosts are somewhere near the north bank of the Danube, between the haunted village and Longwhite, although they aren't necessarily together; the ancestors were not a pack, and didn't associate that closely with one another. The Storyteller can play up the separation by taking each player aside in turn and describing the situation in private.

Naturally, the host bodies lack any sort of identification that means anything to the characters. (Unless the Storyteller has decided to place an old family heirloom in one of the hosts' possession, which spoils the fun of guesswork but substitutes a strong sense of family.) A character can begin rummaging through the mind of her host to draw out specific tidbits of information (much like using Gnosis to draw on an Ability; see above), although the Storyteller shouldn't point this out to the players; let them experiment and discover the quirks of their new incarnations on their own.

The host bodies are near enough one another that reassembling the pack shouldn't take too long (particularly if the players use howls to communicate), but the initial period of separation can help stress the unfamiliar, isolated feeling the characters are likely to endure. The time of day is before sunset, but after the sun has gone behind the western mountains.

Once the pack is reassembled, and beginning to come to grips with their strange situation, they have a generally free choice of direction. But if any of the characters venture more than a few miles north, they find that they begin to weaken, losing one Gnosis and one Rage per hour. The sensation is unfamiliar to the characters, although a Theurge or other spiritually inclined character might deduce that it's similar to stories of spirits straying too far from the area to which they're attuned. Experimentation shows that lost Rage and Gnosis can be regained as normal, but only if the characters return to within a few miles of the Danube, between the haunted village and Longwhite. As it turns out, the characters are indeed attuned to this stretch of river — this is where the Drowned King will emerge.

In any event, the characters are likely quite tired, both in spirit and in (borrowed) body. The first order of business will entail getting something to eat, and deciding where to spend their first night in the area. The river water is quite fresh, and game is rather plentiful, so food and water won't be too much of a problem. The weather is clear, so the characters

shouldn't be too uncomfortable spending the night outdoors, particularly the lupus.

Camping out does attract some attention, though; a hungry and irritable male bear, who's likely to try attacking one member of the pack in the hopes of gaining a meal while the others flee. Of course, the characters are in no real danger from an ordinary bear, but this encounter may give them the chance to try using their new bodies in a stressful situation.

## *Brown Bear*

As with many other brown bears, this specimen is quite aggressive and quite unpredictable.

**Attributes:** Strength 7, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Stealth 1

**Willpower:** 4

**Armor Rating:** 2

**Attacks:** Claw (8 dice), bite (8 dice)

**Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, -5, Incapacitated

## *Scene 2: Three Meetings*

Once the initial shock of their new bodies has worn off, and presumably once they've had a night's rest to help along the adjustment, the characters will probably set about exploring their surroundings. As before, they have relative freedom to travel upstream or downstream; moving too far from the river causes the same weakening as before. Depending on their course of travel, they're likely to run into one of three groups — the Roman occupation force from Ironford, the Dacian locals from Longwhite, or the Garou who keep an eye on the region.

## *The Romans*

If the characters travel along the riverbank or cross it to the south shore, they'll attract the attention of a Roman patrol. Character hosts native to the area usually know at least the rudiments of Latin, and the soldiers know at least a bit of Dacian, and Gnosis rolls can supplement as necessary, allowing for a sometimes awkward but not insurmountable situation. The patrols are wary of anyone proceeding in a hostile-looking manner and try to capture people who suggest the attitude of scouts for a fresh invasion. Unarmed or at least relatively unaggressive strangers get a civil welcome and directions to the fort at Ironford. The typical patrol is a commanding officer with 3 or 4 dots in key Traits, leading 5-8 soldiers with mostly 2s and a few 3s and 4s.

At Ironford, a recording officer wants the characters' names and purposes in the area. He's used to not getting very useful answers, and the characters can get themselves into trouble with this but have to work at it a bit. Velius enters at the end of the recorder's interviews and speaks to the characters in search of signs of interest in or aptitude for construction work. Knowledgeable characters get offered work on the spot, with Roman citizenship available as a reward for good work and an immediate cash bonus and quarters in the buildings outside the fort. Cinna meets with characters who can make a plausible argument that they have something warranting the centurion's attention; he's bored overall, and not particularly hiding it, but willing to listen to something interesting. Both Cinna and Velius are resolutely skeptical about most native superstitions.

If the characters have been to Longwhite, the haunted village or both, Cinna prompts them for news, with Velius in attendance. Velius clearly thinks more about subduing the independents nearby than Cinna, whose major concern is avoiding another war and not losing what he has right now.

Drusilla approaches the characters on their way out. She's sensed something strange about them but doesn't know what it is. She warns them of the haunted village, and also warns them that attempting anything against either the Romans or the people of Longwhite will likely get them into trouble. If reasoned with or cajoled (especially with Gifts such as Persuasion), she can explain as much as anyone in the area about the history of the region.

### *The Wolf Situation*

Both Romans and Dacians regard wolves active in the area as a sign of trouble, and respond with hunting efforts. They're good at it, too, significantly better than just about any hunter the characters have encountered before. Hunters getting slaughtered en masse arouse alerts within the point of origin and may well also travel across the river, making it significantly harder for any stranger to travel unnoticed. Outsiders in human form will be solicited to join the hunt and may be regarded with suspicion if they decline without having a good reason. To avoid making this last part a total obliteration of the players' freedom of choice, include a moment in each of the human settlements where someone declines a routine task because of a personal oath, geas or curse, as a reminder that such things matter here and now. Canny players should be able to work out the rest for themselves.

### *The Dacians*

Characters approaching the vicinity of Longwhite are carefully watched by Mihascu and by spirits he commands. The spirits do not attempt to hide themselves, and can be easily discovered by any character putting a little effort into Umbral reconnaissance. Mihascu himself seems ordinary enough, although appropriate Gifts for detecting supernatural energies may point him out, and he does cast a faint reflection in the Penumbra. His own soul is clean of Wyrmtaint and other signs of major problems; he's just alert, spiritually aware and very curious.

Mihascu is able to determine that the bodies the characters inhabit have "lost their names" and wonders what the heck is going on. If the characters antagonize him, he does his best to warn the tribe against more spirits wandering loose outside the haunted village; if they manage to avoid offending him too badly, he remains cautious but willing to observe further.

As far as Dekebalos is concerned, there are three sorts of people outside his authority: those who might help him, those who might make trouble for him and everyone else. The first group is a very small one, mostly including the relatives of the people in his village elsewhere in Dacia. The second group is dominated by the Romans, who don't seem likely to mount a war anytime soon, but could, and the ghosts in the haunted village, because it's just never good to have the dead that active that close. The young men of the village patrol the surrounding area in groups of three, looking for anyone they can't identify and attempting to ascertain which sort of person a stranger is. These encounters are cautious but neutral at the outset. If the characters botch social interactions, then one or more of the patrolling locals decides to see his chance for glory in battle and combat ensues. The survivors of such a clash flee in an effort to get support.

Characters brought to Longwhite, either as prisoners or as free travelers, get at least a little of the chieftain's attention. He wants news of the world around him as well as news of the travelers themselves, and conditionally settles for a bit of mystery around the strangers. The conditions he requires in turn are that the characters haven't made too much trouble for the people he leads, and that they can illuminate questions like "What are the Romans up to now?" Note that he is, like all his people, not informed in matters of scholarship and profoundly superstitious, but he's not stupid. And insofar as he's gullible, his advisors like Mihascu provide a check on any foolish impulses. The characters may find themselves facing substantial skepticism if they try tricks intended to impress stupid natives.

Kogaya ignores the characters unless they display crafting talent (mundane or magical), which rouses his professional and artistic interest, or unless they give some sign of having switched genders — a male character in a female host, for instance. The latter attracts his personal interest. Note that he speaks of his own gender as a matter that changed at a specific moment in the past, when the ritual of role change was complete.

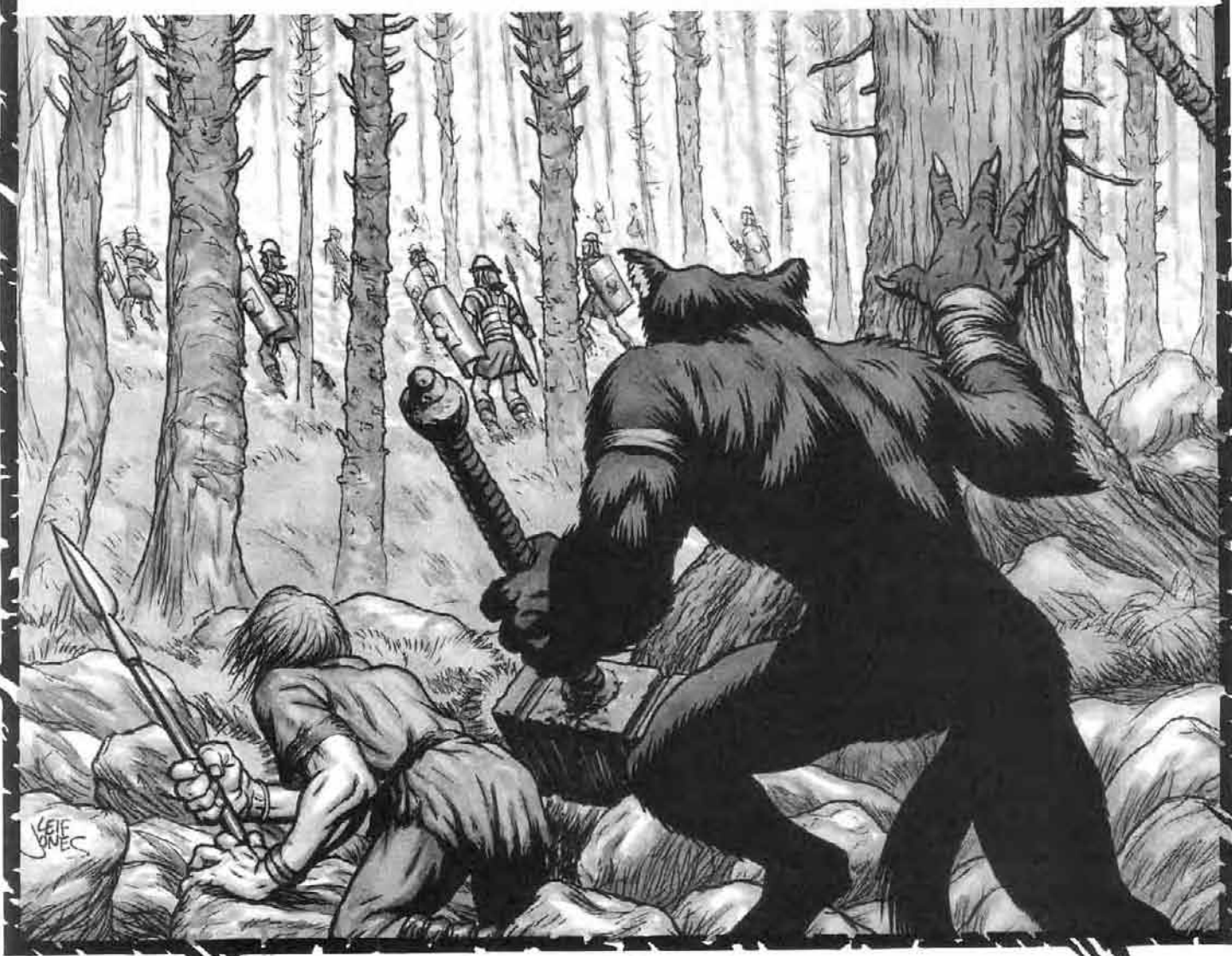
For the villagers at large, the more the characters seem exotic in familiar ways — travelers with interesting tales and interesting lore to share — the better the welcome. It would be possible for a sufficiently slaughter-minded pack to arouse the village as a whole to a bloody hunt, but this would take a lot of work, and the Romans would intervene as soon as they saw the people of Longwhite mobilized that way.

### *The Werewolves*

The local werewolves prowl throughout the area, but there aren't that many of them. Each day the characters spend traveling in the area, make a Perception + Alertness roll for one of the named werewolves, difficulty 6 or opposed to Wits + Stealth if the charac-

ters are trying to hide. When the werewolves of the haunted village detect the characters, Scorylo approaches them, using every tactic of peaceful greeting he knows to convey a lack of hostile intent. In particular, he politely reminds the characters that they should have introduced themselves with howls when they entered the local territory, but that he isn't offended. He hopes that his evident forgiveness of the small Litany breach will make the characters feel indebted to him, but grateful for his understanding.

Like Mihascu, the werewolves of the haunted village immediately notice the characters' strangeness, and they know a lot more about what to ask. They presume that the characters have been brought here by dreams, much as they were. (They assume correctly, in a way; the character's ancestors and hosts were indeed drawn here by dreams.) If the characters avoid confrontation at the outset, Scorylo explains the purpose of the Waiting Pack and asks for the characters' story once the pack can gather. Aidan is willing to act in his assigned role as Truthcatcher... which may create a bit of trouble if he uses any of his tribal Gifts around the characters. They immediately notice the unfamiliar



smell around him, and any characters who've encountered pureblood Black Spiral Dancers recognize the similarity. There's fresh potential for confrontation here, which Anja may have to settle down with authority and personal force.

Characters who don't win the whole-hearted trust of the Waiting Pack — or vice versa — are "invited" to take part in a series of truth-testing challenges. One of the characters and one of the members of the waiting pack engage in an extended opposed roll of a single skill, like Athletics or Climb. When one of the rivals accumulates twice the successes of the other, the loser must explain another part of their situation. If both accumulate successes equal to the stronger Gnosis of the challengers, each must make such a statement. The rationale here is that demonstrating Garou prowess earns one a claim on secrets that may matter in this situation.

If the characters tell the Waiting Pack everything, their hosts react with a mixture of curiosity and disbelief. Scorylo points out that the characters are manifesting in their host bodies in much the same way that ancestors who are out of control take over their descendants' bodies. But the characters' tale would imply that they are the spirits of the unborn, and it is clearly impossible that the unborn can be as knowledgeable as an adult. It isn't natural. The suggestion that the world as the Waiting Pack knows it is not really the world, but in fact a spirit-world memory goes over even worse. Most of the native werewolves decide that the characters are being affected poorly by the dreams that brought them there, and that they should rest until they're themselves once more — although Scorylo puts it very politely.

Optimally, the initial encounter should end with the characters and the Waiting Pack feeling that they have a common interest in the upcoming conflict. If the characters for some reason sour relations with the Waiting Pack, they are still allowed to remain in the area, but are watched from afar to make sure they don't rile up the local humans. Most of the locals believe that the characters are here for a purpose, just as they themselves are, and are willing to put up with some eccentricity to avoid spoiling whatever larger scheme Gaia has laid out for them.

### *Scene 3: Before the Flood*

Scene 3 is not really a scene *per se*, but rather a period between scenes. The characters now have a minimum of one week and a maximum of one month before the Dead Sea earthquake. The Storytellers should adjust the length of this interval based on how much fun the players are having in these unfamiliar surroundings.

This scene may also, if the Storyteller wishes, be used as a chance to award some experience points for the events of Act II and for the players to spend them. If the characters are spending a couple of weeks in ancient Dacia, this might be a good rationale for a crash course in Survival. Of course, awarding and spending experience points is usually a sign for players to relax their guard, and it may be preferable to keep them on their toes, wondering what will happen next.

Over the course of time of Scene 3, a number of potential vignettes may play themselves out. The following are recommended as particularly appropriate, and the Storyteller may devise others as needed. Rely on your sense of dramatic timing for the pacing of this scene. If the players are getting too complacent (or worse, bored), wrap things up quickly. On the other hand, don't rush through this scene too quickly; there are several opportunities to foreshadow the final events of the act, as well as some of the events of Act III.

- **The Doomed Sister:** In Act I, the characters encountered the dying spirit of an ancestor's sister, who also chose to fight the Solium and eventually perished. That same sister is, of course, here. She is present for the same reasons her sibling is; she may not have had the same dreams, but she came along to make certain that his or her mysterious quest would succeed. She will, of course, want to spend time with her sibling, and will not understand why her own kin is acting so strangely. The character inhabiting her sibling will have the unhappy choice of pretending that everything is fine as best he can, or of trying to be honest. The most compassionate thing to do would be to pretend that everything is normal, so that she can spend the last days before her doom free of external worries — but is it right?

- **Familiar Faces:** Some of the members of the Waiting Pack, as well as the other Garou who have been drawn here by their dreams, may seem familiar to the characters. That's because some or all of the werewolves here are fated to share the same end as the ancestors whose bodies the pack inhabit — to be separated from their physical selves and bound to the Solium Submergens, battling it throughout the depths of the Dark Umbra until the modern era. Although the spirits clinging to the Solium were only half-visible and hard to recognize, the characters may piece things together as they spend more time with the local werewolves. Again, do they tell these werewolves of their doom? If they did, what difference would it make?

- **Anja's Ritual:** At some point, one of the local Garou should make some mention of the unusual preparations some of them have taken in coming here. He mentions the dreams, the importance of burying

the village's dead, and makes an off-hand reference to Anja apparently carrying a strange ritual with her, one that she's been reluctant to teach to others. If the characters ask Anja or any other werewolf that the Storyteller has decided knows the ritual as well, the response they get is cryptic — essentially, that it's a ritual of great sacrifice called on in times of dire need. She (and others who know the ritual) is reluctant to speak of it further, as she worries that the rest of the werewolves gathered in Overlook would assume that she was planning to use it. The truth is that Anja is terrified that the ritual might be necessary, although she can't think of any other reason that she herself was called here. Discussing the matter in too much detail makes her irritable, which in turn puts Scorylo on edge as the group's integrity is endangered.

- **Humans and Wolves:** If the characters are interested in further pursuing leads among the Romans and/or Dacians, they certainly have the opportunity; high-Rage characters still engender suspicion and fear among some of the locals, but in an era of dangerous people, this isn't totally unusual. The characters may visit each site just to see how people live, or perhaps even initiate a quick romance or one-night-stand if feeling lonely. (Yes, it would be unusual for a character to, in the host body of his ancestor, sire his own many-times-great-grandparent. It's also probably a little cheesy and a little expected. Be warned.) Lupus in the party may be far more interested in searching out a local wolf pack, just to see how well their wolf brethren are doing in the time period. Unfortunately, there are unlikely to be any permanent wolf residents within the area that the characters are bound to, thanks to the humans' hunting efforts (see "The Wolf Situation," above.) However, a lupus might find a wolf pack passing through the area, or just moving in; they probably react with the usual trepidation toward a strange lone wolf, but their simple presence may be reassuring enough.

- **Invitation to a Hunt:** This classic scenario is founded in traditions and ideals near and dear to the Garou's hearts. Sharing a hunt is a ritual form of bonding, and in more than the simple "macho bloodshed" stereotype — it's a chance for a host and guest alike to demonstrate their skill, and to share in the honor and duty of providing food. It can be a chance for the characters to show off a bit (particularly if invited to a hunt by Dekebalos or another human, where covert use of a Garou's supernatural powers could be very impressive), which most players appreciate. It can also be a chance for the characters to set aside their worries for just a few hours and be werewolves — running through the woods on all fours, with no distractions but the forest and the scent of prey.

- **The White Howler:** Being confronted with a member of the Tribe that Fell, the characters may well demonstrate some curiosity — the players are almost certain to. For his part, Aidan reacts pleasantly enough to characters that ask to learn about his tribe and their stories, although he may find it strange if they seem more curious about his tribe than about the more exotic (for here) Anja's. He relates the tales of a few notable Howler chieftains — Druoc Giantslayer, Megwi Wisest Stone, Braithe the Son of Lion and others, his tales tending to focus more on brutal acts of valor than honorable and wise conduct. This focus is not Aidan's personal preference; it is simply the way of his tribe. He does not voice his worries about the seeming decline of the Howlers unless a character manages to win his implicit trust, and even then he speaks with the reluctance that comes of speaking ill of his cousins. However, if a character tries to confirm his suspicions by telling him that the tribe is doomed to fall to the Wyrms, Aidan angrily refuses to believe that it will come to that, and cuts off contact with the character. His pride will not allow him to believe that his own kind would sink so low.

## *Scene 4: The Drowned King*

The night before the Solium emerges, all Garou in the area are beset by strange dreams and vivid nightmares. In particular, the characters experience two sets of dreams — theirs, and those provided by the subconscious of their hosts. The two dreams overlap one another, with one and then the other alternately gaining priority. Further, the characters know with the certainty that one "knows" things in dreams that these are indeed two separate sets of visions and nightmares, not simply one single surreal dream with a rapidly shifting point of view.

The Garou wake to the ground shaking — the earthquake that rocked the Black Sea and caused the tidal upheaval that will bring the Drowned King here. This far from the epicenter, the effects are minor, but earthquakes are not a common occurrence here. Everyone from the superstitious humans to the local spirit life sees this as a bad omen. Something greater and worse is on its way.

Fate doesn't disappoint. Four hours after the tremor, a huge tidal wave sweeps through the gorge, shattering both Ironford and the portage point for Longwhite. It moves at 80 miles an hour through the gorges, tearing trees from the banks and utterly demolishing any small boats that might be on the river. The flood swamps the banks, making travel along the river all but impossible for anyone with less than Garou abilities.

Anyone venturing to the river makes an exceptionally unpleasant discovery—huge chunks of bloated white flesh, like those of a waterlogged corpse, are strewn along the riverside. Their physical stench is incredible, like a sea poured out of drowned men's lungs; their spiritual stench is just as revolting, and clearly of the Wyrms. As the tidal wave passes and the flood begins to recede, these massive gobbets twitch and move, oozing like giant slugs toward one another. Preventing them from rejoining is all but impossible; they're numerous, very heavy, resistant to cutting damage, and regenerate damage at the Solium Submergens' usual rate.

The regeneration should take about ten minutes, but it's best if the time is customized to the scene. Optimally, one or more characters should discover the beached gobbets of Wyrmesh meat, move to gather allies, and be back on the scene at the time the monster has reassembled the bulk of its body. Representatives of all three factions—Romans, Dacians and werewolves—arrive as the creature knits itself back together. As the bloated, pale monstrosity draws itself fully together and rears against the sky, one of the observers on hand, perhaps crazed by Delirium, perhaps woefully lucid, names the beast.

"Solium Submergens." The Drowned King has arisen.

### *The Battle*

The characters are probably quick to join battle; after all, it's rather obvious that this is why they were brought here. They have help, as well. The Waiting Pack launches into action, as might some of the hardier Roman legionnaires or Dacian huntsmen. Most humans are impeded by the Delirium, but some from each camp should join the battle in heroic fashion. They're likely to die, of course, but their help doesn't go unappreciated.

The Drowned King begins the fight at roughly half strength; it inflicts half damage with its attacks, and cannot effectively use Charms. (It retains its copious Stamina and armor, however.) Each successive turn, it gains an additional dot of Strength and the use of one of its Charms, until in full function. The Solium should get to wreak some massive carnage as it recovers its full capabilities; any humans near where it's beached are devoured, smashed or hurled into trees or rocks with bone-cracking force. Mihascu may be another appropriately dramatic casualty; when the spirits he sends prove ineffectual, he risks getting within range to try banishing this horrible monster from the spirit world. His magic is not strong enough, however, and the Drowned King singles him out and crushes him in reprisal.



The battle against the Solium works much like the one in the Act I. Of course, the characters have help in the form of other werewolves, but the Drowned King is much stronger in this time period. It can more easily destroy a character, but in its current state it isn't driven by as much hatred — only hunger — and it does not discriminate between the players' characters and other targets. Those characters that it does attack may very well die — or so it would seem. Upon being driven below Incapacitated by the Drowned King's attacks, a character manages to linger on somehow — stunned and dangling on the edge of consciousness, aware of what's going on even when unable to act.

Nonetheless, the Solium Submergens isn't invulnerable, and it can tell when it's suffering enough pain that it must be in danger of losing its life. When the Drowned King is reduced to a wound penalty of -4, it gives up on its current meal and begins to slither back to the river, floating on the receding floodwaters and diving below the surface in search of a way across the Gauntlet. If it gets away here, there's no telling where it might resurface next — and how are the Garou to pursue?

### *The Rite*

The Waiting Pack reach a decision quickly, even if only one of them survives — the Rite of Undying Pursuit must be used. When the Drowned King begins its retreat, Anja begins to adorn herself in the blood of the fallen and chant the oaths of undying vengeance. (If Anja has been slain, Scorylo or Aidan will do the honors.) She sacrifices two points of Rage and two points of Willpower to hasten the rite to its quickest form, but by that time the tremendous Wyrmbest is likely already out of sight — she needs a name to target it. (Hopefully, one of the players will thoughtfully supply that name in this dramatic moment; if none think to, though, a dying person on the battlefield can do as much.) As she completes the rite, a wash of power passes over the riverbank, and the surviving members of the Waiting Pack collapse to the ground, their spirits flying under the river's surface to begin their eternal pursuit. The spirits of those slain that linger on do the same. (Only one Storyteller-controlled Garou, of the Storyteller's choice, chooses to remain — for there must be a witness, someone to carry the tale. Anja may be the most likely, particularly as it would explain the otherwise unlikely passage of the Tale of the Shaking Sea to the Americas.)

The characters also have the choice of surrendering to the rite and abandoning their newfound bodies

— and it must be a choice. The Storyteller shouldn't try to influence their decisions either way; although consigning their spirits to what may very well be eternal conflict in the Dark Umbra is the proper choice for the story's advancement, the players shouldn't operate under that assumption. As the characters stand on the brink of choice, they feel an odd sensation — the spirits of their ancestors, of their host bodies, are leaving their bodies and surrendering to the rite. A character can now choose to remain in the host body as the sole occupant, and live out the rest of his life in this setting — more than he has to look forward to in the future, considering that his original body is "dead." The Storyteller should feel free to hint at this option, so that it seems to be more of a valid choice. The only other hint that the Storyteller should offer the players is that they are Garou, and should live or die as a pack — either remaining here, or joining their ancestors in the fleeting hopes of finishing the Drowned King.

If the characters choose to remain, the chronicle takes an interesting turn. The pack members are now effectively the only Garou for many miles in any direction, and can claim this territory for their own. The bonds of destiny have been broken — their ancestors made the requisite sacrifice — and they can now freely travel beyond the Danube area. Several sessions of adventure in Roman Empire-era Europe can be the result. However, the characters do not really inhabit flesh bodies, but have bodies made of ephemera. Keep in mind the rules for disconnection (*Werewolf*, pg. 230); when an appropriate amount of time has passed, the characters convert into ancestor-spirits anyway. A character with strong Enigmas or other Umbral lore can realize this, and may start plotting some sort of way out. Alternately, they may never realize this, and may live out the rest of their days in a world far from the Apocalypse. It really depends on what the troupe enjoys doing.

Presumably, though, the characters choose the path of sacrifice; if nothing else, they may well be ready to inflict some lasting revenge on the Solium any way they possibly can. When they consent to ride the Rite of Undying Pursuit, they feel themselves disconnecting from the unfamiliar host bodies and being pulled toward the Drowned King. As the Solium tunnels across the Gauntlet to the Dark Umbra proper, the characters and other bound ancestor-spirits follow it through, leashed to it by invisible cords, fighting the whole time. Act III may now begin.



# Act III: Witnesses

*The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past.*

— Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

## *Scene 1: Out of the Past*

The first scene of Act III has no clear climax or turning point. It is a state of transition, as the characters again find themselves without flesh, plunging through the labyrinthine tunnels of the Dark Umbra. But where before they had the leisure (if such a word can apply in a place like this) to travel at their own pace, now they barrel through the tunnels tied to the Drowned King, locked in perpetual battle with it alongside the spirits of their ancestors.

No dice-rolling should be necessary for this unending combat. The characters are weightless, and can move around more or less as they please; however, they are tethered by invisible cords to the Solium Submergens, and are pulled wherever it goes. It is, if you will pardon the egregiously fannish reference, much like the mutual fall of Gandalf and the Balrog, only without an ending. The spirits separate from their target and are drawn back to it, raking and biting its flesh. They are bucked off, and yet cannot be left behind. Now and again, one of the ancestor-spirits is crushed, swallowed or otherwise brought to zero Es-

sence and fades from view, only to reappear alongside the Drowned King some indeterminate time afterwards, refreshed from full Slumber.

Time has no meaning during the ongoing fight; without fatigue or hunger or thirst or any concerns other than the perpetual battle, the characters may not even think in terms of time any more. The unending struggle against the Solium Submergens as it writhes through the twisting, slick tunnels of the Dark Umbra is the entirety of existence.

The most peculiar aspect of this surreal, vicious experience is that when the characters fall into Slumber to rest, they dream. Nothing in Garou lore suggests that spirits dream while in Slumber, and yet the characters drift through visions of other people's lives, people who seem greatly familiar and yet are unknown to them. When they wake, they are forced to concentrate on the ceaseless battle with the Solium, but these strange dreams continue to haunt them whenever they fade into Slumber once more.

However, the Solium — and the pack — aren't headed directly back to the modern era. The characters will be bucked off the Solium three times (or perhaps more; see the Expanding the Chronicle sidebar), to fall into three separate historical events — the fall of each of the Lost Tribes. In effect, each of these three events (the Three Great Deaths, as some know them) has left such an indentation on the Dark Umbra that the characters find themselves drawn to them spiritually along the way. If the Solium's path is a stream that flows downhill to the present, these three events are indentations in the streambed that the stream will flow into, fill, and overflow before continuing on its way.

### *Preparatory Work*

Act III will be the most labor-intensive of the chapters for Storytellers who like to have statistics for just about everything on hand. Optimally, the Storyteller should have general notes on the host bodies that the characters possess in Scenes 2 through 4; a sketch of the character's name, breed, tribe, auspice, appearance and Attributes will probably be enough. The characters won't be spending much time with other Garou who know their hosts intimately, so they have more freedom to act as they ordinarily would without too many explanations. Again, try to customize ancestral hosts with the players in mind; properly handled, these scenes should leave the players happily musing on how their ancestors happened to be all of these places at just the right (or wrong) time.

Sample statistics for White Howlers or Black Spiral Dancers met in Scene 2 have been provided, as has a generic member of the Red Talon hunting pack from Scene 4; however, the Clan of the Crow and the corrupted Sky-Shakers pack could certainly be detailed further. The other hunting pack from Scene 4 has not been detailed, as it should be just a touch less powerful than the players' pack.

Vik Stryker's Eagle's Nest pack has not been detailed, either; the characters are a little less likely to fight them, and the Eagle's Nest is happy to let the players' pack engage in most of the mayhem and reap most of the glory. They can be easily ad-libbed by presuming they're Rank 3 at the time — not quite at the peak of their glory, but still respectable adventurers by any yardstick — or the Storyteller can enjoy an exercise in pulp-era adventure by designing full statistics for them. Whatever suits your play style best.

Once the players have gotten a basic idea of what's going on, and have tried one or two things — but before they've adjusted enough to get comfortable — proceed to Scene 2.

### *Intermission:*

### *Running the Witness Scenes*

Scenes 2, 3 and 4 of Act III are unlike any other scenes in *Time and Tide*, but all three have a number of things in common. Each one, as the name implies, centers on the pack being witnesses to one of the three great losses of Garou history — the dooms of the three Lost Tribes.

The Witness scenes are designed to be relatively short in nature, each one probably running for no more than a single session. In fact, all of Act III could be played in a single session, if the characters are decisive and the frills of each scene are filed off. However, it's easy enough to expand each one even further, if the characters are basically enthralled by the idea. Some ideas for doing so are provided for each scene.

Also, each of the Witness scenes has what's marked as a crux — this is, essentially, the turning point where the characters' actions make a difference. If the characters behave nobly and well during the crux, they are able to bring more of a sense of closure and peace to that portion of the Umbra, in effect applying balm to the wounds left open by the fall or loss of a tribe. The Storyteller should take careful note of how well the characters do in the crux, and whether their actions would soothe or aggravate the events of the fall. For each scene that the characters bring the crux to a successful result, an additional beneficial result should come to pass in the modern world. For instance, if the characters successfully defend the Bunyip during the crux of Scene 5, relations with the ghosts of the Bunyip may be somewhat improved. In this way, the characters are able to affect the present despite being unable to change the past; atoning for their ancestral sins, rather than preventing them.

What brings the characters to these scenes? Again, the remarkable chain of destiny has linked different generations of the characters' ancestors. The bloodlines of those who stood against the Solium Submergens in Dacia are repeatedly drawn to the points where the Solium has emerged into the material world, and the Solium is itself drawn to points of significant tragedy and suffering for the Garou. Its utmost hatred for the horrible wolf-things that defeated it at the Danube brings it instinctively to the places where the Garou suffer most, so that it can salve its wounds with their pain and shame.



In fact, the characters are themselves acting much as their own ancestors did to draw their relatives to the scene, though they have no knowledge of it. While the characters fall into Slumber and dream of other lives, their forebears in each of the relevant time periods experience dreams that bring them to Scotland, to Roanoke and to Australia. When the Drowned King breaks through to be present for the tribes' fall, the characters have subconsciously arranged a way to play a part as witnesses as well. If they take advantage of the opportunity, they may be able to ease the pain of the Garou racial memory in each case, thus thwarting the Drowned King again and again.

Of course, the players may not figure out this chain of connection until after it's all said and done, but that's fine; they'll be plenty busy. When the chronicle ends, they can use Enigmas and other resources to figure out just why everything happened the way it did.

### *Expanding the Chronicle*

Of all the portions of the *Time and Tide* chronicle, Act III lends itself the most to further extrapolation from the Storyteller. There isn't enough room enough

in the book to add further Witness scenes to Act III here, but if the Storyteller is willing, there are a number of historical events that the characters could theoretically relive during their journey back to the present. In particular, if the Storyteller wishes to use the options of freeing some of the ancestor-spirits of the Lost Breeds (detailed in Chapter Four), the characters could witness the Shadow Lords' purge against the South American Camazotz. Other historical events of interest might include the invocation of the Rite of Still Skies that bound the Storm Eater, a sojourn in the time of **Dark Ages: Werewolf**, or becoming entangled in one of the World Wars.

Note, however, that the characters are traveling forward through the generations. No side jaunts should take the pack farther back than 31 BCE — the characters' ties to the Solium Submergens hinge on that battle, so it cannot carry them to a time before their ancestors fought it. The first War of Rage and the Impergium should probably be left off the itinerary.

Ultimately, the number of added stops in the past should rely on the players' interest. If your troupe is the

sort to start cracking *Time Bandits* or *Quantum Leap* jokes after the first couple of stops in the past, there's no point in extending their time in the past. On the other hand, if they're thoroughly excited by the possibilities of playing a short series of "historical stories," feel free to add in another stop or two. Just don't let them forget that they must eventually return to the modern era and settle up with the Solium Submergens. Try to spin it so that the climax of the chronicle is something they look forward to resolving, not something they would rather postpone indefinitely.

## *Scene 2: The Black Spiral*

This scene takes place in the remembered past of Scotland, roughly 200 years after the birth of Christ. As with the previous act, the characters fall into the bodies of their own ancestors (although obviously a different set), who have in turn been drawn to Scotland following strange dreams and visions. It's best to divide these hosts into two groups; one a small pack of "more local" Garou (such as Fianna and Get of Fenris), and a small group of outsiders currently speaking to a White Howler guide (who in turn plays host to the spirit of Aidan Farwatcher).

### *Arrival*

As the Solium Submergens nears the first "bubble" on the return voyage, the light overhead begins to shift. Soon the characters become aware of the sensation of rising, and of currents in the Umbra cutting around them in a clockwise direction. As they get their bearings, it becomes evident that the Drowned King is rising through another Umbral whirlpool. The sensation of cold, churning water surrounds the characters, and when the Solium breaks free, it's under a night sky.

The Solium bucks, and the characters — still in spirit form — are thrown off. But unlike in the Dark Umbra's tunnels, the bonds of the rite seem to loosen, or to pay out slack: The characters fly free of the Drowned King, hurled high into the night sky and far inland. They hear the smash of a great wave upon the shore below them, just as when the Solium emerged from the sea in Act I. Again, they feel the sensation of descending down upon an unfamiliar landscape, and being drawn to new bodies that stand on a cold, rocky hillside in the dead of night. The moon hangs close to the western horizon, almost full and a disconcerting yellow hue.

First, the characters will have to make adjustments to their new forms, much as they did at the beginning of Act II (p. 48). Their hosts are broken into two groups, about half a mile from one another. As the characters take stock of the new situation, one of the groups notices that one of the Garou among them is

not inhabited by one of the players' characters. The host body is that of a female White Howler, and its possessing spirit is Aidan Farwatcher — for some reason, Aidan has been hurled into a body as well.

Characters familiar with Scotland may recognize the terrain or some of the local foliage (which is denser and less "civilized" than in the modern era). Those familiar with astronomical lore may be able to deduce their general location from the stars (difficulty 7), as well. Aidan, of course, immediately recognizes his homeland and says as much once he's adjusted to the pure strangeness of inhabiting a body not his own.

Once the pack has regrouped, they have a chance to discuss their options. The characters have no real way of telling what year it is, which begs the question of whether the land is currently held by White Howlers or Black Spiral Dancers. Aidan does recognize the general area, though, and is initially rather relieved; the party is about twenty-five miles from his home village and the nearby caern. If the party is willing, Aidan volunteers to lead them to someone who might be able to put them up for the night. The group is about a mile away from a friend's uncle, a worthy Kin who participated in many of his relatives' raids for mates and glory before age and scars settled him down. His house isn't large, Aidan says, but it's stone and good cover. He won't recognize Aidan's body — for that matter, Aidan doesn't recognize her — but he's Kin, so he'll have to listen to a Howler anyway. It's as good a place as any to figure out their next move.

### *A Poor Welcome*

Crossing the highlands doesn't take much time, particularly since the pack is able to assume wolf form. Before long, the pack is able to pick out the stone house, and smell the remains of a cook-fire. Aidan takes the lead, calling out "Brachi! A Howler has come! Make a light, and bring food!"

However, he's answered by a hurled spear. The house is home not to Aidan's contact, but to a small, motley group of clanless raiders who are reluctant to give up their sturdy hideout. The raiders fight with the strength of desperate men — they know if they're caught, they'll be killed — but they are in no way prepared to face werewolves. The characters may allow the raiders to flee in Delirium-inspired terror, or they may simply take out their bad tempers on a small group of men nobody will ever miss.

Investigation of the house after the raiders have been dealt with (prompted with appropriate Investigation rolls and use of the wolf-form's smell) leads to some interesting results. The raiders have been staying here for about a week and a half, but the house shows

signs of long disuse before their presence. Although it's difficult to tell specifics, it's apparent that before the raiders were here, the house has stood empty for several years at least. If the characters somehow make supernatural inquiries such as successfully contacting local spirits or other creative uses of their resources, they find that the house has been empty for fifty years, and the last people to use it were a young couple who died of fever.

Then a howl echoes across the hills — the Anthem to War, with the intonation that means "Pursuing to lair." The White Howlers are hunting, and they're close by.

### *Human Raiders*

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Intimidation 1; Archery 1, Melee 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2; Investigation 1, Medicine 1

**Willpower:** 4

**Attacks:** Spear (Strength +1, lethal), bow (4 dice lethal) or knife (Strength, lethal)

### *The Clan of the Crow*

The characters should have no difficulty following the sound to the Howler pack. The Pictish werewolves are a young pack overall, and full of bloodthirst; they lope across the highland as gleefully as if they were traveling to a festival.

These White Howlers are quite likely to react poorly to the characters, who are after all outsiders in Howler territory. A fight may break out if the characters are insufficiently diplomatic. The Howlers are expecting to confront Wyrnish foes tonight, and the characters might just be the ones they were warned about, wearing the skins of Garou as bait. On the other hand, a persuasive character that goes to the effort of winning the Howlers' trust can learn quite a bit from them.

- The leader of the pack is Maugh the Axe; the pack calls itself the Clan of the Crow.

- The Howlers recognize "Aidan" as Bone-Whittler, a Theurge from the Sept of the Mile-Deep Loch some two days' travel distant. They note that she's a good ways off from home, and keeping strange company.

- One of them recognizes the name of Aidan Farwatcher — a Howler of some standing who wandered off to die in foreign lands, chasing his dreams, some two hundred or so years ago.

- The pack is currently on the move to reach the Sky-Shaker Pack, a band of heroes who set out two

nights ago to challenge the Spiral. They were expected to enter via a local gateway, conduct a quick ritual and a quick raid and return. If asked about "challenging the Spiral," Maugh explains that it's a great honor — a descent into the Underworld, where they can confront the foes of the Wyrn in ritual fashion and gain much wisdom. The rite is sacred to their tribe, and they hope it'll one day show them the way right to the Wyrn's heart, so they can tear it out.

- A Theurge of their sept prophesied that the Clan of the Crow would come face to face with minions of the Wyrn tonight, and that Garou strength would prevail. Obviously, the pack is elated to have received such a fortunate foretelling of glory. The idea that the warning might tell of Wyrnish Garou who are stronger than they are is ludicrous; no true Garou would serve the Wyrn, after all!

The Clan of the Crow absolutely refuses to abandon their mission; they swore an oath to carry it out, and are adamantly against breaking their word in such a way. However, nothing in their oath forbids them from helping fellow Garou along the way. If the characters want to come along, they're welcome to. For his part, Aidan asks the characters to do so; he's convinced that the rite freed them from the Solium for a reason, and the missing Sky-Shaker pack worries him.

If the characters fight the Clan of the Crow and put up a strong struggle, the Howlers may break off combat after a couple of them are taken out of the fight — it's clear that their foes are genuinely Garou, and they do have other business to attend to. If the characters kill any of the Howlers, the Clan of the Crow fights to the death. Such an outcome sours Aidan's feelings toward the characters, and he quickly abandons them in order to search out more news of his people.

If the characters are left on their own by slaying the Clan of the Crow and alienating Aidan, they may travel in any way they desire. However, they begin to weaken (losing Rage and Gnosis; see page 49) if they travel more than a mile to the east or south, or more than four miles to the north or west. Some clever triangulation may reveal that the heart of the area they're bound to — a valley marked by a strange tunnel dug into the earth at the foot of a hill.

### *Young White Howler*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Galliard or Ahroun

**Tribe:** White Howler

**Physical:** Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/5)

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2)

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Primal-Urge 1

**Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Crafts 2, Leadership 1, Melee 3, Performance 2, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Law 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Rituals 2

**Backgrounds:** Pure Breed 1, others inapplicable to the scene

**Gifts:** (1) Beast Speech, Haunting Howl\*, Master of Fire, Razor Claws, Sense Wyrms; (2) Pain-Strength\*

**Rage:** 7; **Gnosis:** 4; **Willpower:** 4

**Rank:** 2

**Rites:** None applicable to the scene

**Fetishes:** One out of every four warriors has a fang dagger; one out of every ten a klaive.

**Image:** The White Howlers are dressed for war — warpaint in coiling blue and green designs adorns their snow-white fur, and they wear little else. Every inch of their stout, muscular frames bulges with tension, and their muscles are knotted with anticipation and Rage.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are one of the proud sons (or daughters) of Lion, the greatest and most fearsome warriors the world has seen. You revel in your Rage and passion, allowing it to drive you forward — none can resist you when you're in the throes of a fury. All things are reduced to a simple "kill or be killed" in battle, and you are now racing toward the greatest and most glorious battle your people have ever known.

### *The Mouth of the Spiral*

The hole torn in the ground is quite innocuous-looking. It isn't lit with Balefire, it's not marked with profane glyphs, and although the taint of the Wyrms wafts from within, the mouth itself doesn't reek of the Wyrms; the source is farther in and down. In fact, there's no one thing to clearly mark the opening as the Pit so notorious in Garou history, although the characters may have already drawn the connection on their own. If the characters are accompanied by the Clan of the Crow, the young pack bids them farewell and descends into the tunnel; they mean to complete their errand to reach the Sky-Shakers.

If the characters have explained something of the White Howlers' doom to Aidan (or if they do so at this point), he is compelled to react. His first impulse is to race into the pit, in an attempt to reach the Sky-Shaker Pack and pull them free if he can. Needless to say, if the characters allow him to pursue this course of action, Aidan is never heard from again. However, the characters should be able to talk him out of this suicide run if they want to; after all, they know more about Black Spiral Dancers than Aidan ever will. If they

agree that it's a good idea, and decide to accompany Aidan into the tunnels, they are probably going to die — which is certainly a better option than reaching the Labyrinth down within. Even this Dark Umbral reflection of the Labyrinth draws on the power of the actual Black Spiral deep in Malfeas, and the characters' current status as ancestor-spirits in no way lessens the danger they would be in.

Whether the characters decide to enter the tunnel or not, within a few minutes they hear the Call for Succor emerge from below — like the sound of an injured pup, but voiced by a full-grown Garou. If the Clan of the Crow has already entered the tunnel, the characters can then hear their battle-howls.

Investigation reveals that a badly wounded White Howler, his skin torn by Garou claws and teeth, is attempting to escape the tunnel. The Clan of the Crow, if present, have thrown themselves deeper down to confront his pursuers. If not, the characters have to move quickly before his pursuers arrive. The wounded Howler is feverish, and can only mutter a few words in the High Tongue.

"Taken... turned on... warn... doom..."

If the characters act to heal the Howler in some way, through Mother's Touch or even an Intelligence + Medicine roll, he regains some of his former strength and lucidity. His name is Cororuc — a name those familiar with the Howlers' history will recognize as the one who survived, the one who brought warning to the Fianna of the doom of his tribe. He is a member of the Sky-Shaker Pack, and the only one to still be truly a White Howler — something about the challenge of the Spiral corrupted his packmates, and they turned on him when he resisted. Now he pleads for assistance — his warning must be heard!

Hopefully, the characters are noble enough to agree to aid Cororuc. There are two ways this would work best. First, they may try healing him or escorting him out of the valley; if he can get far enough away from the Pit, he can cover his tracks for a while and bring his message home. Second, the characters may volunteer to hold off his former packmates for as long as they can. Although a noble gesture, this is potential suicide, depending on the general power level of the characters' pack. The Sky-Shakers were one of the most powerful packs in the region, and the Fall is unlikely to have dulled their edge much. Even if the Clan of the Crow went on ahead, they're unlikely to do much more than stall the Sky-Shakers.

(Of course, it is possible that through player action, Cororuc is slain in this reflection of the past, never managing to take his warning to the Fianna. Although the characters cannot change history, a

result such as this could strengthen the Black Spiral Dancers' ancestral ties in the modern world, while weakening the Fianna's. The characters' actions may not change history, but they do matter — if the players underestimate their importance in this scene, the Garou Nation may suffer for it.)

When the characters decide where they are likely most needed, Aidan then chooses where he'll go; if the characters decide to confront Cororuc's former pack, Aidan tries to escort Cororuc to help. If the characters decide to be Cororuc's escort, Aidan sets out for the nearest Kinfolk village in hopes of getting some Kin to safety. If the characters argue for him to stay with them, he politely — and emotionally — refuses, claiming that he trusts them to accomplish their task, but that his task needs doing as well. He will not take no for an answer, and he won't stand for their pack breaking up to try covering both jobs. The characters have a destiny that is larger than his; his destiny is with his tribe.

Their decision made, the characters must leap into action. The fallen Sky-Shakers are coming.

### *Newborn Black Spiral Dancer*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Galliard or Ahroun

**Tribe:** Black Spiral Dancer

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

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2)

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 4

**Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Crafts 2, Leadership 2, Melee 4, Performance 2, Survival 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Law 1, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Rituals 4

**Backgrounds:** Pure Breed 1, others inapplicable to the scene

**Gifts:** (1) Beast Speech, Haunting Howl\*, Master of Fire, Razor Claws, Sense Wurm; (2) Lion's Bite\*, Pain-Strength\*, Spirit of the Fray, Stare-down; (3) Bleeding Fury\*, Foaming Fury, Sense of the Deep\*, Silver Claws, Song of Rage\*; (4) Maddening Howl\*

**Rage:** 8; **Gnosis:** 6; **Willpower:** 5

**Rank:** 4

**Rites:** None applicable to the scene

**Fetishes:** One out of every two warriors has a fang dagger or devilwhip; one out of every five a klaive.

**Image:** The Black Spiral Dancers would have the appearance of powerful, charismatic White Howlers

— but their fur is plastered to their skin with strange, oily fluids, and the white of their coats has taken on an unhealthy greenish-yellow tinge. The unthinking berserk fury that they possessed as White Howlers has been replaced with a malevolent cunning, and many grin madly as they set about their new tasks.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Your world has been shattered and rebuilt in one endless night of violation and pain. You cannot speak of the profane glories that were shown you; in time, perhaps, the words will come. But for now, there is only the ecstatic rapture of a virgin night stretched out before you, and the chance to inflict yourself upon it.

\*This Gift appears in Chapter Four of this book.

### *The Crux*

The characters may not immediately understand the crux of the scene, or why they are meant to be here. They haven't arrived here to try to prevent the fall of the Howlers, as much as they might like to do so. Instead, they need to protect the wounded Cororuc long enough for him to get a head start on his fallen packmates. It is Cororuc who provides the first warning of the Black Spiral Dancers to the other Garou tribes, and easing his mission softens the agony surrounding this critical event.

### *Aidan's Doom*

In the default outcome of this scenario, Aidan is presumed not to return to the Solium — his fate, bleak as it is, is to be present for the doom of his tribe and to perish nobly (though vainly) fighting the first Black Spiral Dancers. It isn't a happy destiny, but it is one that celebrates the Garou virtues of courage and faith.

Of course, the Storyteller may choose to avert this fate, having Aidan continue to be subject to the Rite of Undying Pursuit, and ultimately being freed upon the Solium's death in the 21st century. Aidan would be the only White Howler ancestor-spirit left in the world, and thus would be a valuable spirit ally to the characters. In this form, Aidan would be a source for the White Howler Gifts printed in Chapter Four, and something of a sign of hope — something that was good and noble about the White Howlers managed to outlive the tribe. (He would also be a source of future plot hooks; certainly if the Black Spiral Dancers learned of his existence, Aidan would find himself the target of multiple Rites of Summoning....)

As always, let the spirit of your game be your guide. Having Aidan survive to the modern world as an ancestor-spirit is a bit too "happy ending" for straight-up Werewolf, but it might work fine for a game that tinkers with the feel.

## *The Return*

If the Storyteller is choosing not to expand the scene, the scene likely ends at moonset — when Luna dips beneath the horizon, and the Howlers are symbolically lost to her grace. The characters may be in full battle with the former Sky-Shakers at the time, or racing for the edge of the valley to get Cororuc to safety. The Storyteller should choose a point that is suitably dramatic, with some sense of resolution but with the doom of the Howlers clearly on the way.

The characters feel a tug on their beings, the same pull that they felt when Anja completed the Rite of Undying Pursuit. They leave their host bodies, living or dead, and are drawn across the landscape back to the sea. There they see the same whirlpool that surrounds the Drowned King's arrival from or descent into the Dark Umbra, and the Solium disappearing back into it. The characters are pulled back under into the darkness, and the eternal battle begins again.

## *Expanding the Scene*

The Fall of the White Howlers didn't happen all at once; it took time for the newly turned Black Spiral Dancers to hunt down their relatives. Storytellers interested in expanding this scene can use this time to their benefit, letting the players try taking defensive measures to protect the Howlers and their Kin, only to slowly become aware of the creeping corruption that has already been devouring the tribe.

Scene 2 may be extended up to the fall of the Sept of the Mile-Deep Loch if the Storyteller is willing. The *Book of the Wyrms* has more information on the last days of the White Howler tribe, and the siege that eventually brought the last tribal elders to Malfeas. The characters likely spend their time trying to rally White Howlers to a place where they can stand together against their fallen brethren, as well as uncovering more evidence of just how many of the Howlers and their Kin had secretly fallen long ago.

For something shorter, a scene of Kin evacuation might be appropriate. Aidan knows of a nearby Kin village, so close to the pit that it's sure to be the newly converted Dancers' first target. He insists on moving to protect them as best he can. Of course, the best way to protect them is to evacuate them. If the players go along with this course of action, the scene can be expanded to an overland chase. The characters must shepherd several frightened families of Kin to Fianna territory, where they will have a chance; naturally, a pack or two of Black Spiral Dancers chases them the whole way. Success in this venture — or even a noble failure — may even count as the crux point for this scene; after all, in

doing what they can, the characters have ensured that some legacy of the Howlers goes uncorrupted.

## *Scene 3: The Croatan's Sacrifice*

The scene begins as characters arrive on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, specifically on Roanoke Island, in the year 1589. The Eater-of-Souls itself has manifested on the site of the Lost Colony, and the entire Croatan tribe — some thousand or so Garou — has gathered here to banish the Eater-of-Souls in the only way they know how. They plan to sacrifice their entire tribe, and thus return Eater-of-Souls (or Jipijka'm, as they call him) to the Umbra.

The ancestral hosts that the characters possess for this scene are a more eclectic collection than usual. The gathering of the Croatan drew a few of their allies. Several Uktena and Wendigo went to the Croatan's final tribal moot to hear their last words, and the ancestors of any Uktena, Wendigo or more mixed-blood characters might be among them, as might Red Talon ancestors.

This is a particularly tricky scene for characters of strictly European descent. Historically, the only Europeans on Roanoke Island at the time of the Lost Colony were, well, lost afterwards; none escaped to have children later. The Bone Gnawer William Wythers is one European Garou who managed to win the Croatan's trust, and survived the events of the sacrifice; a Bone Gnawer in the pack might possess him. As a result, none of the European-descended characters are likely to have ancestors who lived here, unless they have some American Indian blood in them a ways back. However, some of the characters' ancestors may have stowed away on John White's ships to reach the New World, drawn by reasons they can't explain. These characters have lain low since the Black Spiral Dancer-instigated battle between the settlers and the Croatan, and are only now working up their courage to try reestablishing contact.

Thus, the characters may be split into two groups. Those with native ancestors find themselves among those Uktena and Wendigo who have come to bid farewell to Middle Brother. Those who inhabit stow-aways find themselves beginning the scene on the shore of a small, brackish sound, on the fringes of the action.

For the story of the Croatan's sacrifice as the Wendigo remember it, see *Litany of the Tribes*, volume 4.

## *Arrival*

The Solium breaches by one of the barrier islands surrounding Roanoke. The whirlpool surrounding the

Solium is even more agitated than before; the seas around the islands are unusually treacherous, filled with rip currents and undertow, and these crosscurrents only enhance the disturbance around the Drowned King's arrival. Just as before, the characters are shaken free from it, the bonds of the rite temporarily relaxing as they fall forward into a new set of bodies. More specifically, two.

The island itself is heavily wooded, a mix of cypress, juniper and white cedar, and only a few miles across. On the west side runs a wide river (what will be called the Alligator River); on the east, a brackish sound. The island itself is protected by the barrier islands farther out; these islands, mostly dunes, receive the brunt of the wave stirred by the Drowned King, sheltering Roanoke Island. Wherever the characters are on the island, they can hear distant noises like thunder, and the faint echoes of a Garou war-song.

As usual, the characters may use Gnosis rolls to tap their host's memories and other means of adjusting to their new circumstances.

### *The Natives*

Characters with Uktena, Wendigo or other potentially "native" ancestors find their new hosts in a

small Indian village in the forest, grouped with a handful of Uktena and Wendigo from nations across the East Coast, all dressed in the fashions of pre-colonial America. Some are in Glabro, a couple in Crinos. All appear very tense, with the exception of one old Apache who seems more lost in thought than anything else. These Garou quickly notice their allies' disorientation, and offer assistance. Although they speak a medley of American Indian tongues, they revert to the High Tongue (the language all share in common).

The Garou gathered here are some of the dearest friends to the Croatan. Among them are the young Wendigo warrior Little Fox, friend to Wanchese, and the famous Uktena Ragabash Old Red Eagle, of the Apache. Although the Croatan invited no others to take part in their sacrifice, the small group in the village are all those who came of their own free will, to hear the last war howls of Middle Brother and to ensure that the corruption spread no further.

The village itself is protected by a great rite worked by Old Red Eagle. Characters who succeed at a Perception + Rituals roll will note many glyphs of power painted on the surrounding trees, marking out a circle



of protection. As much as some of the Garou here would like to leave the circle and assist their brethren (Little Fox in particular), Old Red Eagle has forbidden it. It is their duty to remain there.

However, the characters are apparently here for another reason, and their duty lies outside the circle. The only difficulty is convincing their fellow Garou of it. (If they don't, they may find themselves wrestled to the ground if they just try leaving.) Thankfully, at least one of the Garou here knows the Gift: Truth of Gaia, which is a start, and the Uktena with Sense Magic can tell that there's something different about the characters that wasn't true before. If the characters can effectively argue that they have had visions guiding to this place (which is true), and that there are others coming who share a common destiny (also true), Old Red Eagle will let them pass. This leads to a furious outburst from Little Fox, who demands to see his friend Wanchese, but Old Red Eagle will only let those the characters leave. He warns them that if they are planning to see Middle Brother, they must respect Middle Brother's wishes; then he sings a short prayer for their safety. The characters may then leave the circle and rejoin their friends.

### *The Stowaways*

Conversely, those characters whose hosts are uninvited stowaways find themselves well outside the Indian village and the human settlement alike. Their characters are dressed in shabby, lower-class garb appropriate for the time (if they are dressed at all), which offers some hint as to the time period. Most homids with any history knowledge can guess that they're somewhere between the Middle Ages and the late 1700s, but it takes a particularly well-read historian to accurately guess the year. After all, the characters aren't wearing the sort of about-town garb that was most commonly illustrated in the history books.

The first thing the stowaways hear is the crash of the Solium's tidal wave smashing into the barrier island just across the sound. The Drowned King itself is not visible from where the characters stand. They have some time to gather themselves and adjust without having to deal with outside stimuli, although the thunder-like noise and the sound of distant Garou war-songs do reach their ears.

If the European Garou decide to follow the noise, they're likely to reach the scene of the sacrifice before their colleagues; after all, they don't have to argue with Old Red Eagle and his ilk.

### *Eater-of-Souls*

As the characters draw nearer to the sounds of battle, they can make out more specific details. The songs seem to be of death and glory, and are almost

ritualistic in their cadence. At any one time, the same number of singers appears to be participating, but a Perception + Performance roll reveals that singers are consistently ending their song, only to have the song taken up by a fresh voice.

The thunder, on the other hand, seems to be a low, continual roar that eventually resolves itself into a grinding noise. There is a wet undercurrent to it, and as the characters draw closer, they realize that it's a sound like... chewing. Some colossal creature chewing without benefit of lips.

When the characters arrive at the village, the actual sight of what's going on is far worse than what the sounds would imply. Only the stone foundations of a few houses still give the impression of a village — all else has been devoured. Hundreds of Garou surround the area, many singing a war-song. But rising above them even in Crinos is Jipijka'm.

Eater-of-Souls is huge, and hideous, and terrifying. Physically, it is a tremendous bulk of purplish-black flesh that oozes with suppurations. It has no eyes proper, only tremendous, grinding teeth that shift position in its jawless, amorphous gums like an unending rockslide. It is not, as one might expect, bloated and corpulent — instead its muscular form contracts like the stomach of a starving man, even as another truckload of matter is pulverized and swallowed. Materialized Banes of rapaciousness crawl on its bulk, taking to the air whenever its spasms dislodge them. It thrashes across the ground one way or another, catching up whatever comes closest and devouring it — which is, horribly, the Croatan.

(This is, in fact, only one particular form in which Eater-of-Souls might manifest; it is, like most powerful spirits, of no permanent "true form." The Storyteller is encouraged to describe Eater-of-Souls in whatever way would best unnerve the players without outright offending them — it may be spidery, or slimy, or all-but-formless. As an animistic principle of mindless, destructive hunger, it should have whatever form expresses that horror best.)

There are no statistics for Eater-of-Souls itself; it transcends those boundaries. There's just no way a mortal Garou, no matter how powerful, is going to be able to kill it, talk it out of devouring everything in sight, or bind it with magic. Eater-of-Souls is one-third of the Triatic Wyrms, and the most powerful spirit ever to have materialized on Earth since the rise of the Gauntlet. Garou who try to fight it with magic or might are wasting their time, and likely their lives.

### *Clothing Banes*

These disgusting spirits crawl on the outer body of Eater-of-Souls like maggots on a corpse, taking wing when they spot a particularly tasty-looking opponent,

or a morsel that they can safely attack without running the risk of vanishing down their master's gullet. They appear much like fat, writhing grubs with distended jaws that are as wide as their entire bodies, lifted by four pairs of filmy, fly-like wings.

Willpower 5, Rage 5, Gnosis 4, Essence 14

Charms: Blast (acidic vomit), Materialize

### *The Sacrifice*

As the characters watch, Eater-of-Souls lunges at a pack of Croatan. They leap forward at it, claws bared, singing the war-song. One young female manages to rip a tooth the size of her own body almost free of its gums — and then they are gone, devoured. The song seems to echo on in Eater-of-Souls for a moment after they are gone, and then it ceases — and another pack takes up the refrain, and steps forward. This process repeats itself again and again, as Jipijka'm devours pack after pack. Characters who watch for too long will see the sight again and again in their nightmares.

Those Croatan who do not sing still remain close, waiting their turn. A few of them, in fact, are performing some sort of ritual. The ritual is led by a powerful male in Crinos, blood smeared in glyphs across his coat. Any character that pays careful attention suffers a shock of recognition: The sacrificial rite, the one that is empowered by the sacrifices of an entire tribe, is a more powerful and final version of the Rite of Undying Pursuit. Each of the Croatan surrenders to the rite as Eater-of-Souls devours his or her body, and is twice devoured — first in flesh, then in spirit.

Here the characters have their choice of action. Watching the deliberate sacrifice of the Croatan, each Garou bravely leaping at Eater-of-Souls only to be chewed and swallowed like a morsel of chicken, is sure to turn their stomachs. It is literally painful to watch, and the characters may have to make Willpower rolls to avoid losing a temporary point of Willpower. They are certain to want to do *something*.

Naturally, some of the Croatan to the rear, as yet unable to take their place in the confrontation, will soon notice the characters. They are hostile to Europeans — to their minds it was the Europeans who brought Jipijka'm here — and not pleased to see other Garou, even if they are friends to the Croatan. This is the most serious business in the world to the Croatan, and they will try to send the characters back to Old Red Eagle and the warded Indian village as soon as possible.

The characters should have free will to do just about whatever they like. If they want to stop the Croatan from sacrificing themselves to the last, they can try — there are many Croatan here who would rather live than die, but none of them want to live in a world where

Jipijka'm roams free. Even trying to get one Croatan to abandon the sacrifice for the sake of preventing the death of the tribe is difficult, but not impossible.

The characters aren't able to get through to the ritemaster, Wanchese, without a fight. The Croatan who surround him are convinced that the rite is doing its part to help sate Eater-of-Souls at the same time as it injures him — he must consume both body and spirit, and the spirit is able to fight on for a few seconds more thanks to the rite. To their thinking, by the time Eater-of-Souls is full, the act of digestion on his shredded stomach might force him to sleep longer to heal. In the best of all futures, it might even kill him.

It's entirely possible that one or more of the characters may even choose to join with the Croatan in their sacrifice. The Croatan don't want this to happen — they would rather that their friends outlive them — but they do not fight to prevent the characters from also sacrificing themselves. It's not their decision. However, the character that decides to go through with this is lost forever, his fate unknown even to his packmates. Even the Umbral reality of the remembered past does not make it safe to enter Eater-of-Souls' jaws.

### *The Crux*

To successfully resolve the crux of The Croatan's Sacrifice, the characters must accept the sacrifice as something that must happen, even to the loss of the last Croatan ancestor-spirit, and act accordingly. For instance, the characters can fight the clouds of lesser Banes surrounding Eater-of-Souls, thus purchasing the Croatan a little more breathing room to complete their great ritual. They might attempt to evacuate any Croatan Kin who are in the area; or perhaps they agree to carry word of a particular Croatan's noble death to his loved ones. The crux of the scene is necessity, and how well the characters are able to identify and honor it. (If one of the characters decides to leave the famous message "Croatan" carved on a tree for the English to find, by way of honoring the tribe, this would count as a fine resolution, as well as entertaining.)

Unless the Storyteller chooses to expand the scene beyond the moment of final sacrifice, the return to the Solium's back comes at the height of the ritual. The characters are not actually witnesses to the outcome; what was more important was that they see the commitment of the Croatan just before their deaths.

As the Solium slides back into the Umbra, the characters hear the worst sound imaginable, a terrible wordless cry that embodies the fury and pain and greed of a million people and animals all at once. It is a shockwave of pure emotion, of thunderous despair and hate, and worst of all, of obscene satisfaction. It is the

wail of Eater-of-Souls as it descends back into the Umbra and into slumber, the closest thing to the death-scream of an insane god that the characters will ever hear. The Storyteller may call for Willpower rolls, difficulty 8; those that fail pass out, left alone with their dreams.

### *Expanding the Scene*

To allow the characters to participate in more of the story of the Croatan's final days, a general overview of the story is necessary. Roanoke Island is a small place, after all, and the characters can't wander far without running into some of the principal players.

The story of the Lost Colony revolves around John White, the leader of the colony; Wanchese, the Croatan who instigates the arrival of Eater-of-Souls and the sacrifice to banish it; and Manteo, Wanchese's Kinfolk cousin. Manteo had been taken to England for a time, and was now among the colonists rather than the natives; he had even been baptized as a Christian.

The story proper begins with a failed summoning. A Wurm-worshipping mage among the first group of settlers begins a ritual to summon Eater-of-Souls itself to the New World; he is slain by Old Red Eagle before finishing the rite, but his magic had already stirred the great devourer.

Years later, a lean year drives the colonists to ask John White to return to England for more supplies, as their stores are likely not enough to last the winter. When he does so, a trio of Black Spiral Dancers hidden among the colony begin fomenting unrest, and convince the settlers to raid their Indian neighbors for food.

However, the Black Spiral Dancer plot is betrayed by William Wythers, a Bone Gnawer living among the colonists. He informs the Croatan Wanchese and the Wendigo Little Fox, who gather a group of Croatan and set a trap for the settlers. The Croatan slaughters the European raiders and two of the Dancers. The third Dancer escapes, and Wanchese tracks him down. The Dancer catches Manteo and tries to use him as a shield, but Wanchese kills the Dancer and his cousin both. It is this kinslaying that completes the sorcerer's call, and summons Eater-of-Souls.

The manifestation of Eater-of-Souls is small at first and cannot move freely, but the more it eats, the more it grows. The first thing it devours is the colony and its inhabitants; then it begins work on the rest of the island. Old Red Eagle explains to Wanchese the nature of what has happened, and how it cannot be stopped. In a vision granted by Great Uktena himself, Wanchese realizes that the only thing that can stop Eater-of-Souls is for it to be sated by the sacrifice of an entire tribe.

Wanchese gathers the Croatan, and to the tribe's great credit, they answer the call. It takes some time for all to arrive, time in which Eater-of-Souls is only barely contained by their rites, but finally the entire tribe is ready. From that point, the events of the scene unfold, with Wanchese the final martyr to complete the sacrifice.

To expand the scene, it is probably necessary to bring the characters in at some point in this history. A good dramatic point would be the Black Spiral Dancers' abortive raid, with the characters joining in the ambush. Another interesting point would be for the characters to arrive when Eater-of-Souls first appears, and attempt to save as many of the innocents of the colony as possible; the rescued humans might be adopted as honorary Kin, if the characters can successfully convince the local Uktena to do so.

After the banishing of Eater-of-Souls, there's little left to do, and not much of a comparably dramatic scene to serve as the departure point — John White doesn't return for years. However, it might be appropriate for the characters to remain on scene long enough to watch the bitter argument between Little Fox and Old Red Eagle, when Little Fox swears that it's Old Red Eagle's fault that Manteo died.

"You kept me away! If I had been here, I could have saved him!"

"That is not true. Your anger speaks for you."

"Traitor! Older Brother is a traitor! No more will Little Brother listen to him!"

This argument is certainly worth bearing witness to, for it hints at a potential flaw in the Wendigo — some portion of Eater-of-Souls that was perhaps taken into Little Fox. If the Storyteller is planning some appropriately sinister plot in which the Wendigo are endangered from within, this argument may serve as foreshadowing.

### *Scene 4: The War of Tears*

The players may well guess what the third stop is before they reach home — they've witnessed the Fall of the Howlers and the sacrifice of the Croatan. It's only appropriate that they also be witnesses to the final stand of the Bunyip. As such, they find themselves in the Australian outback, in the year 1937. The Solium Submergens breaches in the Gulf of Carpenteria, where the waves that precede it smash a deserted strip of coast, and the characters are sent into host ancestors visiting the Tanami Desert.

The characters' hosts are a little trickier to set up if the players have established family trees that stretch back far enough; the forebears who are "donating" this body for this scene are of the great- or great-great-

grandparents generation. Although the usual reasons of strange dreams and portents have united this generation of relatives, the players may find it odd that they've never heard of their relatives associating in the past, much less in Australia. If the characters' families have not been established as having worked together in the past, the Storyteller may need to choose more obscure relatives (or more Kinfolk) to help ease the strange coincidence. The current group of hosts has come to Australia amid the War of Tears, but refuse to take sides either way — either to persecute the Bunyip, or to pit themselves against their fellow Garou to defend the strangers. They are here seeking the great pallid thing they've seen in their dreams, never aware that their destiny lies with the War of Tears after all.

This scene begins as something of a departure in mood, moving to the pulp genre for a bit. The characters meet a pack of "guest stars" that exemplify Two-Fisted Tales of Adventure, and get the chance to partake in some two-fisted action of their own. But when the pack reaches the Bunyip caern, the mood reverts to pure Werewolf savage horror, at the heart of the War of Tears.

### *Arrival*

As the Solium rises toward the surface, the characters become aware of bright light overhead, and a

sudden heat as the Solium breaks the surface. Again, the ties of the rite loosen, and the characters fall across a great expanse of barren terrain, finally landing in their new hosts in the wide, dusty spaces of the Australian outback.

As the characters begin the now-familiar struggle of readjusting themselves to their new hosts, the Garou opposite them look on with a mixture of concern and suspicion. For their part, these werewolves are clearly not Bunyip, and most look American or European, dressed in a mix of late 1930s garb — a broad-shouldered, unshaved man in fedora, leather jacket and khaki pants; a fiery redheaded woman wearing outdoor clothes; a somewhat bookish-looking fellow in aviator's garb; a lean Chinese man in a martial artist's tunic and pants; and a stunning black-haired femme fatale with a Luger and a thick Eastern European accent. Galliards and Silent Striders may recognize the pack instantly: the Eagle's Nest pack, led by the legendary Vik Stryker.

### *The Eagle's Nest*

Although the Eagle's Nest were just about expecting to have to come to blows with the Garou they were facing, they're appropriately surprised when the pack begins to act as though they'd lost their memory or somehow else been affected in the mind. As the



characters complete the process of adjusting to their ancestors' bodies and focusing on the situation at hand, the Eagle's Nest talk briefly among themselves (eyes on the characters the whole time), and decide to try talking again.

The Eagle's Nest Pack is surprisingly accepting of any story the characters have to offer; they've seen a lot of weird stuff in their time. Unless the characters tell them otherwise, they may wind up assuming that the characters are in fact genuine ancestor-spirits with a touch of confusion. If the pack asks questions like "Where are we?" and "What year is it?" Stryker and his colleagues are more likely to respond with sage nods and matter-of-fact answers than looks of confusion. Stryker introduces his pack blithely, seeming more amused than bewildered.

"We're the Eagle's Nest Pack. Name's Vik Stryker — Galliard to the Silent Striders. The fire-spittin' banshee of a Fianna is Lorna McNab, our Philodox; our Theurge is Stratus there, and I guess you can tell he's a Glass Walker."

"Dr. Stratus, please."

"An Lei Sheng there is Full Moon, and a Stargazer — maybe you've heard of 'em? And of course, there's our Ragabash, Greta Cole of the Shadow Lords, who's got more looks than money and more money than Croesus. Watch out for her."

"Charmed."

Stryker explains that he and his pack are here to take the side of the local Bunyip — "a strange group overall, but hearts as big as any Garou we've ever known." A hunting pack of Red Talons and European Garou is closing in on the Bunyip-held Red Snake Caern, and the Eagle's Nest are trying to get there first. For that, they needed transportation; Stryker could move faster than the trucks the locals are using, but not all his pack have the same Silent Strider speed. As it turns out, the werewolves that the characters are inhabiting were using desert-worthy trucks of their own to get around, but had refused to let the Eagle's Nest borrow them; they didn't want to help the Eagle's Nest fight Garou of their own tribes, even if the cause was arguably just.

Of course, as Stryker points out, if the characters would like to renegotiate...

Presumably, the characters are more interested in helping out the Eagle's Nest than in allowing another War of Tears atrocity to run its course. If so, they can easily assign the two packs between the two trucks however they like. ("You found the keys in *your* pockets, right?" asks Stryker. "So it isn't theft.")

## *Race to the Caern*

The drive into the desert is dusty, blisteringly hot and almost blindingly bright. However, to the characters, it may not be as unpleasant as it would otherwise be; after the cold, dim emptiness of the Dark Umbra's tunnels, the sensations of warmth and light are probably more than welcome even in excess. If any of the characters are riding with members of the Eagle's Nest Pack, they have the opportunity to swap stories or gather a little more information. The Eagle's Nest came to Australia fresh from a caper in Cambodia, tangling with a tiger-demon over a potent fetish ruby, and a quick war story or two might pass the time.

However, there turns out to be less time than anticipated. As the characters drive into one end of the valley that leads to the Red Snake caern, another two trucks come barreling into the same entrance from a different angle. These trucks carry a hunting pack of European Garou, and obviously can't be allowed to reach the caern and start slaughtering Bunyip.

The hunting pack should be a little less capable than the characters, although about double their numbers. Their trucks are both awakened (via the Rite of Awakening), and the spirits of the trucks make them immune to simple tricks like Jam Technology. They carry silver ammunition and knives, but won't use them on non-Bunyip.

Play up the chase as if it were right out of an Indiana Jones movie (or other pulp or neo-pulp source); the characters should have the chance to leap from truck to truck, disabling their rivals' vehicles and sending the members of the hunting pack tumbling in the dust. The Eagle's Nest is more interested in getting to the caern quickly, and don't act like glory hounds; the characters should be the ones doing most of the work to dissuade pursuit (and the players should be the ones having most of the fun). If the characters refrain from butchering the rival Garou, preferring to remove them from the chase via non-lethal ways, consider giving them extra Honor Renown; if they pull off daring stunts in the spirit of the pulp genre, award a little extra Glory. The encounter with the rival trucks should be action-movie tense, not horrific; a chance for the players to relax a bit and have some fun with the genre conventions of the time.

## *The Battle of Red Snake*

When the characters arrive at the caern the mood shifts dramatically. The Red Snake Caern has all but fallen — a predominantly Red Talon pack has just arrived, and only two Bunyip are left. The Bunyip are Warri Oldsong, an older male Philodox, and Little

Jiya, a freshly-Changed female Ahroun; both have been badly wounded in an earlier clash. They're clearly no match for the invaders, and don't even have the spirit to fight. Warri has dropped into Harano after witnessing the slaughter of a pack of thylacine Kin, and Jiya is shell-shocked and finding it difficult to make decisions. She knows a bit of English, and if directed to run in a specific direction, she'll do so while carrying Warri, but at the moment she hangs on the edge of frenzy (and a fox frenzy at that).

The fight against the invaders probably plays out brutally; many of the attacking Garou have the Gift: Silver Claws, and are willing to use it. They presume that the Eagle's Nest pack and the characters are in fact Black Spiral Dancers (of less deformed stock, obviously), in league with the Bunyip. Some are already in frenzy. One or two might be stayed for a moment by a character with obvious Pure Breed, or by a tribemate with powerful social skills, but for the most part they are thoroughly implacable.

For all that, though, the invaders are still Garou. When on the attack, they are every inch monsters, creatures with no motivations other than anger and bloodlust. But when slain, they revert to their breed forms, no more than dead wolves or humans in death. These are clearly not Black Spiral Dancers or fomori attacking the Bunyip and their erstwhile protectors; they are cousins. The characters should regret having to take another Garou's life, if they choose to do so — even in this life or death, “us or them” situation, a Garou of honor should wish there had been another way.

### *Sample Caern Invader*

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Tribe:** Red Talons

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

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Intimidation 1, Primal-Urge 4

**Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 1, Leadership 2, Stealth 3, Survival 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Linguistics 1, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Ancestors 1, Pure Breed 2, no others applicable to the scene

**Gifts:** (1) Hare's Leap, Heightened Senses, Razor Claws, Scent of Running Water; (2) Scent of Sight, Sense of the Prey, Spirit of the Fray; (3) Silver Claws

**Rage:** 7; **Gnosis:** 6; **Willpower:** 6

**Rank:** 3

**Rites:** None applicable to the scene.

**Fetishes:** None applicable to the scene.

**Image:** The Red Talon members of the caern invasion pack fight in Hispo or Crinos; they resemble great purebred wolves, as the practice of breeding with dingoes has not begun in force yet. Each one has a splash of bright crimson in its coat, mirroring the blood on its claws.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are fearful of this land, so different from what a wolf's land should be. This is not a place for wolves — it hates wolves. The death of Greyflank was the final proof; a Red Talon in her prime carved apart like humans carve their prey, offered as sacrifice to this land's treacherous spirits. You hunt to avenge her. You hunt to honor Wyrmbaiter, who has called this hunt. And you hunt because you fear that you will be hunted next. It is the way of the Garou.

### *The Crux*

The crux of this scene is perhaps the most obvious — the Garou must fight to defend the Bunyip from being slaughtered by their own kind. They cannot save the Bunyip of Red Snake Caern from eventual extinction, but fighting on their behalf helps ease the passing of the tribe. If the crux is successfully negotiated, the characters' valor and compassion may have forged a new link between the pack and the ghosts of the Bunyip, one that may yet provide a new ray of hope for the Garou of Australia. As with the chase across the desert, characters who disable the attacking Garou without killing them, or even manage to halt the bloodshed in a non-violent fashion, should be marked for extra Honor or Wisdom rewards.

When the battle ends, possibly with the blood of both ancestors and Red Talons mingling on the ground, the now-familiar call of the rite returns. The characters are pulled free of their bodies, and return to the Drowned King, who thrashes its way down into the Dark Umbra again. As it does so, the characters may feel an additional urgency driving it along. It moves faster than it had before, and its writhing struggles are becoming more desperate. The time of the final confrontation is at hand.

### *Expanding the Scene*

The time spent in the War of Tears can be fleshed out in one of two ways — preferably both. The first way is to involve a little more pulp-style action while the heroes run alongside the Eagle's Nest. The simplest way to do this may be to expand the chase to the caern by having the group have to get information first; they

roll into a small mining town to interrogate a local contact, become embroiled in a giant brawl with all the town's toughs while trying to avoid shifting into Crinos, and finally roll off into the distance while the townsfolk stare in awe.

Second, the darker side of the War of Tears can easily be given more screen time. If the more light-hearted action half of the scene is expanded, the bloodier, more tragic half should be given equal expansion at least; it, after all, is the point of this witness scene. The characters may travel to one caern that has already been raided, too late to be of any help but to bury the dead properly — and there's scarcely time for that, because now the rush to reach the Red Snake Caern is twice as important. The Storyteller can also expand the scene after the Red Snake Caern events, as the characters move from Bunyip caern to Bunyip caern. In some places, they can help a little bit; in others, they're too late to do anything but bury the dead.

A very telling lesson to incorporate into this scene would be to demonstrate how the War of Tears was not simply "the bad tribes killing the Bunyip while the good tribes tried to defend them." The characters might encounter a Get of Fenris who refuses to fight on the principle that it is not a good fight, or a Child of Gaia who joins the hunts because he fears for his Kin's safety in this strange land, or even a Bunyip who responds with all the savagery of the European Garou. The ultimate lesson of the War of Tears is that it's dangerous to make assumptions about a tribe, after all.

### *Scene 5: Conclusion*

As the Solium Submergens draws closer and closer to the future, the characters begin to feel a certain vitality reentering them. The Drowned King's struggles are becoming more like desperate spasms, its movements more strained — but when the characters fall into Slumber from losing their Essence, they no longer dream of other peoples' lives. The images they see are of the shore where they first beheld the Solium, of their own territory — of home.

The Solium rises toward the surface again, more swiftly than it has at any other time. The characters catch a glimpse of an early-morning sky, and then they are bucked free again. They don't have far to fall, and may catch only a glimpse of the familiar promontory where they first fought the Drowned King, before they find themselves once more in their own bodies. It's like coming home; their bodies are exactly what their spirits are used to, a perfect meld. And *more* than perfect.

The characters have reentered their bodies just at the brink of death; by a strange quirk of the ritual, they now possess the strength of themselves as-they-were and as-



they are, albeit for only a brief moment. For a number of turns equal to their Gnosis, each character gains double their normal Attribute ratings, and double their usual Rage, Gnosis and Willpower ratings (to a maximum of 10). This rush of power should make the pack suddenly a very sufficient match for the Drowned King.

Furthermore, if the Storyteller chooses, each turn that the characters continue to fight the Solium, one of the spirit members of the Waiting Pack expends the last of its energy in a final strike, inflicting Rage + Willpower dice of aggravated damage to the Drowned King. This may cheer the players, to see their ancestors and allies finally avenging themselves, but be careful; by rights, if a deathblow is to be struck, the players' characters should be the ones to do it. When the Solium is finally slain, it emits a horrible wailing cry, an echo of the same shriek released by Eater-of-Souls. Blackish blood pours down its sides, and it tumbles backward. The whirlpool surrounding it reverses its flow. The Drowned King, portions of its body breaking away and dissolving like rancid foam, falls back through the waters into the Dark Umbra.

In addition, the death of the Drowned King has completed the conditions of the Rite of Undying Pursuit. The spirits of any members of the Waiting Pack that still remain fade into the Penumbra, and are free to travel from there as they wish.

As the whirlpool begins to slow and close, any characters still near it will feel bursts of warmth and movement, like sudden gusts of a warm wind. Those looking on the Umbral side of the scene see spirits of blurred form, seemingly both wolf and human, escaping the Dark Umbra by means of the gateway. These are ancestor-spirits, many of whom were lost in the Dark Umbra. Although the characters may not realize it, their efforts in the Witness scenes have left a trail for some of their ancestors to find their way back to the world.

Finally, the sea closes and calms. The characters still stand among the physical calamities wrought by the Solium Submergens' appearance, but victory fills them with confidence (refreshing all temporary Willpower). Whatever may lie in their future, they can face it with the strength they've gained from the past.

## Epilogue

At this point, the chronicle of *Time and Tide* ends, with the characters hopefully successful. The characters should receive a minimum of 5 in each of the categories of Glory, Honor and Wisdom simply for

defeating the Drowned King, and other Renown awards may follow as usual. If they acquitted themselves well in the various Witness scenes in Act III, the Storyteller may increase the Renown awards further as he sees fit. Their explanation of events confounds all those who listen to it for many moots to come, but this does not prevent their tribemates and other Garou from singing their praises as they well deserve. The characters have won a major victory, one that has had farther-ranging benefits than they may have realized at first.

Each of the surviving characters receives one dot of the Ancestors Background, even if that would push them to six dots. In the time that follows the final battle with the Solium, they gradually come to realize that their bonds with their ancestor-spirits have been strengthened by their deeds. In particular, characters that did not have any dots in Ancestors at all may revel in their new connection to their forebears, tenuous though it is — particularly if they were Bone Gnawers, Glass Walkers or Silent Striders. This revelation may be played up as a series of further visitations and glimpses of ancestral memory, similar to the foreshadowing that took place in the Prologue — but without the same sense of impending trouble. Rather, the characters' ancestors are proud, and for the next few weeks, unusually demonstrative of the fact. In particular, the spirits of the Garou (or Kin) whose bodies the characters possessed in Act II gladly answer the character's call.

However, a larger boon has come out of the characters' efforts. The characters' deeds while in the past have freed several ancestor-spirits that were trapped in the Dark Umbra, and the path that the Solium Submergens sliced through that dark realm was a trail they followed. At the time of the Drowned King's destruction, a number of formerly lost ancestor-spirits escaped the Dark Umbra, and now the Garou have a few more allies. Just in time for the Apocalypse.

The number and type of the escapee ancestors is, of course, left to the Storyteller's discretion. The more successfully the characters negotiated the crux of each of the Witness scenes, the greater the number of released ancestor-spirits. The events of the default World of Darkness presume a conservative amount overall, but as Storyteller you should feel free to rule as generously as you see fit. Entire stories, even future chronicles, can be built around plot hooks that stem from the arrival of formerly lost ancestor-spirits, even from Lost Tribes or Lost Breeds. The past has brought new life to the future.



# Chapter Four: Ancestral Wisdom

*Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.  
Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,  
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
Creations and destroyings, all at once  
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,  
And deify me, as if some blithe wine  
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,  
And so become immortal.*

— John Keats, "Hyperion: A Fragment"

## *The Honored Dead*

It's hard to imagine a **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** chronicle that doesn't involve the concept of ancestor-spirits in some level. The Ancestors Background is awfully helpful and flavorful, making it the rare pack without even one member who possesses a few dots. Ancestor-spirits teach a wide variety of Gifts, particularly those of interest to homids — the most common breed, of course. And although the Garou don't literally worship the spirits of their forefathers and foremothers, they do revere them. Countless rites begin with an appeal to the spirits of fallen warriors, and countless Garou have sworn to achieve some quest or goal to honor their ancestors. Filial piety is a virtue to werewolves, and in the animistic world of **Werewolf**, the ancestors are in a position to repay that piety.

For these reasons, this Appendix is devoted to enriching the use of ancestor-spirits in a chronicle — offering ideas for new ways to use them and additional clarifications on the roles they play. What's more, players who are appropriately reverent stand to gain quite a bit from the new Gifts and rites in this book that can be gained only from ancestor-spirits of the rarest sort.

Some of the material presented in this Appendix is built on the assumption that the group has played through the events of this book's chronicle. For instance, it's unlikely that the players will be able to get their hands on the Gifts and rites of the Lost Tribes or Lost Breeds unless their victory over the Solium Submergens has cut new paths for lost ancestor-spirits

to travel. In the "official" World of Darkness, these secrets remain hidden to all except those who have followed the Solium Submergens' tunnels to the past and back. Of course, this is only a recommendation; Storytellers who want to use these Gifts without running the chronicle are certainly free to do so.

The rest, however, should be useful to any chronicle that involves ancestor-spirits in a more than cursory role. And, to be honest, we hope there aren't too many of those. The honored dead are just too damn cool to ignore.

## *Roleplaying Ancestors*

For many players, a good portion of the appeal of **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** derives from the genealogy aspect of the game. Just as it's entertaining to find the moon phase you were born under to figure out what auspice you might have an extra affinity for, there's a certain charm to being able to look at your real-world family line and map that out to the various shapeshifters of **Werewolf**.

The presence of ancestor-spirits is an extrapolation of this particular aspect of the game. Just as real-world people trace back their lines of descent to see if there are any historical figures or nobility in their family tree, a **Werewolf** player can explore the heritage of his character — or even define it. (After all, the old adage "you can choose your friends, but not your family" is only partly true where roleplaying games are concerned.) Furthermore, most Garou ancestors are going to be interesting in some way or another — there are precious few werewolves who had the luxury of living boring lives free of betrayal, conflict, triumph or tragedy. If the Storyteller adds an extra wrinkle to a character's lineage by adding in a surprise here and there (the Bone Gnawer whose great-great-grandfather was a Silver Fang, or the Get of Fenris who discovers her many-times-removed great-aunt was a traitor to her tribe and sept), it's all the more entertaining.

By fleshing out the relationship between ancestors and their descendants, a troupe also gains a remarkable opportunity to explore the concept of filial piety. The loyal son or daughter is considered virtuous in most cultures, Western or otherwise, but to some cultures (for instance, much of historical China), filial piety is often considered a greater and more esteemed virtue than compassion, romantic love or honesty. The Garou are in many ways such a culture, bound by their responsibility to both ancestors and future generations. The Litany forbids Garou to mate with Garou, exemplifying the emphasis on responsible breeding over love (or lust). The assistance of ancestor-spirits

demonstrates the possibility of continuing to fight the good fight after death, a reward for virtuous living (as the Garou define it). In many roleplaying games, the motivation of family bonds, for good or for ill, is the exception rather than the rule — in **Werewolf**, there's a chance to change that.

## *Life After Death*

Not all deceased Garou return in ancestor-spirit form. The reasons for this are unknown, frequently debated by Theurges of all tribes, and sometimes even a taboo topic of discussion. It has never been conclusively proved that an ancestor-spirit is indeed the departed spirit half of a shapeshifter; some find it entirely possible that ancestor-spirits are formerly ephemera who gained form by somehow receiving an "impression" of the departed.

If all Garou (and by extension, all shapeshifters) are meant to become ancestor-spirits upon their death, then why are so many never heard from again? There are multiple possibilities, several to go with each theory of how ancestor-spirits come into being. But the worst possibility is also one of the most likely — even ancestor-spirits are spirits, and can be destroyed, captured or corrupted like any other. It's said that those White Howler ancestor-spirits who weren't destroyed by their fallen descendants were caught and corrupted, and are now Banes in the service of Malfestas.

A certain amount of mystery is appropriate — almost mandatory, even, when it comes to answering the ultimate questions of life after death. The players shouldn't have the total assurance that their characters will live on in some fashion after they die; if they did, their willingness to risk their lives wouldn't be nearly as heroic. The Garou are in the position of believing strongly that their legacy will live on after them, which makes it easier to sacrifice themselves for a necessary cause — but they don't know for *certain*, which is what makes those who risk death all the more courageous.

## *Ancestors: The Background*

For simplicity's sake, the Ancestors Background can be dealt with by little more than a hand-wave. The player announces that she'll roll Ancestors, the character growls something like "Spirits of my ancestors, aid me!", the Storyteller responds with something like "New strength floods your veins. What do you do?" — simple, easy, convenient.

But there's so much more that can be done with the Background that it seems a shame not to try.

Just as with other Backgrounds, the more work a player invests in hashing out the details, the more

interesting the Ancestors Background becomes. The simplest way to get started is to make a list of potential ancestor-spirits that the character is in contact with. The list doesn't need to be exhaustive, and to be honest, shouldn't be; neither the player nor the Storyteller should waste valuable roleplaying time fishing through a long list of potential ancestors for "just the right one for the scene." Optimally, the player should provide a basic list of some of the more frequently contacted (or "meddling") ancestors she expects to channel, and the Storyteller devises a few others as potential surprises or to flesh out the list. Obviously, those ancestors who provide help in the most frequently accessed Abilities are the top of the list; if the character expects to use the Background to boost her Theurge's normally neglected Brawl frequently, one or more ancestors who were capable warriors with claw and fang should be at the top of the list.

The other benefit of fleshing out the character's family tree, at least a little bit, is that it provides a wealth of potential story hooks for the Storyteller. A notable smith ancestor might hint at a lost fetish destined for his descendants. An ancestor who died in shame can spark a quest to redeem her name. If two characters both had ancestors who fought against the Roman legions in Gaul, the Storyteller can introduce the possibility of the characters' ancestors knowing one another, and have some threat from their common past resurface. And anything that promotes more stories is good, as long as the other players aren't left out of the fun.

### *Sweetening the Deal*

Ancestor-spirits, like most spirits (and like most Garou), respond well to gifts and praise. A character that offers chiminage to his ancestors not only improves their mood, but may even strengthen his connection to them for a brief period of time.

In game terms, a character that makes a proper offering of chiminage may reduce the difficulty of his Ancestors roll by 1 — to 7 under normal circumstances, or to 9 if trying to contact a specific ancestor. This tactic is essentially of no use in combat (crying out "I dedicate this kill to my forefather Blue Mountain!" isn't quite good enough). However, it can be of great assistance to those who seek to call on their ancestors' wisdom, or to request assistance with long-term tasks.

### *The (Meta)Physics of Ancestors*

It's fairly evident that a character who possesses the Ancestors Background isn't perpetually followed by a swarm of ancestor-spirits, each one waiting their chance to be called into the body. If that were the case,

a character with three or more dots of Ancestors would be at the center of a spiritual crowd every time she stepped sideways. And yet, summoning spiritual aid with an Ancestors roll takes very little time at all — it's much faster than a Rite of Summoning, and extraordinarily effective when it works. How is it that some Garou can summon their ancestors for a specialized purpose more easily than hitting speed-dial on a cell phone? The most popular belief was summed up by the Uktena Theurge Tugheri Walks-Too-Far:

*"The concept of the individual is a human conceit. It may, perhaps, be true for humans, whose souls have atrophied away to dry husks over the millennia. But it is not true for Garou. Our flesh is a gift from our parents; it is not solely ours. Our spirit is a gift from Gaia; and it is not solely ours, either. Just as we are connected to our parents with blood, we are connected to Gaia, and to all other Garou by our spirits."*

*"Each of us carries some portion of our ancestors within us; each of our souls contains fragments of the spirits of every one of our forebears. These fragments are an inseparable part of our being, more of us than they are of our ancestors — but they connect us to our forefathers. They are like eyelets, from which long invisible strings stretch out to connect us with the spirits of our ancestors. We all have these eyelets, although for some they have grown shut, like closed eyes, and the strings no longer hold. The strings of many — far too many — have snapped, and we have lost touch with the ancestors who once held the other ends. Still, these eyelets are there, for any ancestor-spirit with eyes to see."*

*"When I call to my ancestors, I feel the strings tremble. And one of my grandfathers or grandmothers comes riding down the strings like a spider dropping on a thread, and is one with me. And then the two of us are more whole than I am alone, and we do great things."*

This description works as well as any other. The connection that allows ancestor-spirits to possess a descendant seems to be a property of the living descendant, not of the spirits themselves. In some cases, this property has been "bred out" of bloodlines or even entire tribes — the Bone Gnawers, for instance, still can contact their ancestors via the Rite of Summoning or traveling to their Umbral Homeland. They just seem to lack the innate connections that come with the Ancestors Background.

The ancestor-spirits themselves do not have to remain near the character in question in order to be called, although they cannot be too far distant. A character in the far reaches of the Deep Umbra attempting to call on an ancestor-spirit hovering on the border of the Dark Umbra is unlikely to succeed. (The Storyteller may choose to increase the difficulty of an Ancestors roll if the character is somewhere far re-

moved from where his ancestor-spirits might be. Conversely, if the character is in her Tribal Homeland or otherwise very close to her ancestor-spirits, the Storyteller can, at his discretion, reduce the difficulty or even grant bonus successes on the roll.)

It's impossible for an ancestor-spirit to be two places at once; there are no stories of two Garou channeling the same ancestor at once. A character may call on a specific ancestor, only to feel no response — perhaps the ancestor is distracted, or too far distant, or perhaps the ancestor is currently assisting another of his descendants. More convincingly, an ancestor-spirit who agrees to empower a fetish becomes unavailable to assist Garou with the Ancestors Background. And, of course, the connections are not 100% reliable; sometimes an ancestor-spirit might well be available, but the Garou trying to reach him just can't make contact, for whatever reason.

(Of course, what much of this boils down to is that there are a number of reasons to explain away a failed Ancestors roll, from the character failing to concentrate properly to the ancestor-spirit sought being imprisoned somewhere. A Storyteller who's looking for an extra subplot to spice up a story could certainly make use of a simple failed Ancestors roll to get things rolling....)

### *Ancestors as Oracles*

The dead have a peculiar perspective on the world. They are unfettered by all the trials and distractions of life, from their own hormones to the question of where their next meal is coming from. They can look at things from the outside, and thus see things that those preoccupied with living would miss.

As mentioned in the core rulebook, a character can use the Ancestors Background not just to enhance his own Abilities, but as a means of gathering information. This may mean simply rolling Ancestors to add to a given Knowledge — the equivalent of posting to a racial memory messageboard and asking "Does anyone here know anything about the occult?" But for the answers to specific questions about the past, Garou find that it's much more effective to ask the spirits who lived then and there. It's the difference between asking a crowd if anyone has heard about the final fate of the klaive Song of Endings, and trying to find the werewolf who died with it clutched in her fist.

Most Garou that take the route of contacting a specific ancestor for information or advice do so ritually, offering chiminage and formally requesting aid as politely as possible. Ordinarily, the odds for reaching a specific forebear are depressingly low; but properly offered chiminage makes it much easier for the proper

spirit to hear the call and respond. (See "Sweetening the Deal," above.)

Of course, there's no guarantee that any given ancestor is going to be all that well-versed in the events of her times. A Fianna may contact a specific ancestor-spirit who lived during the time of the White Howlers' fall, only to discover that he never visited the British Isles, and only heard third-hand rumors of the horrible events. This usually ends up with a judgment call from the Storyteller, preferably one that is as objective as possible. A player shouldn't be able to unravel a centuries-old mystery with a single Ancestors roll, but neither should she feel that the points she spent on the Background (and the time she spent naming particular ancestors) were a waste.

Finally, in most myths it's the nature of the dead to be somewhat cryptic. Ancestor-spirits may speak in riddles now and then, or use symbolic language or poetry rather than cold, clear exposition. The Storyteller should try to convey this quality as a side effect of a werewolf's mind becoming that of a spirit, and gradually growing more and more like its fellow spirits. After a millennium in the symbolic reality of the Umbra, most ancestor-spirits are going to think somewhat differently than they did when they were alive.

### *Roleplaying Possession*

The most unusual aspect of the Background: Ancestors is that it's a Background where the character gains assistance from outside help, much like Allies or Contacts — but that outside help can be roleplayed by the player, rather than the Storyteller. Not only can the player invent esteemed ancestors much as he invents the basics of his contacts ("my forefather Crushing Jaws," "a pretty teenager named Anthy who works in an occult bookstore"), but if the Storyteller is willing, the player can roleplay Crushing Jaws speaking through his descendant's mouth. This allows the player a certain extra measure of control over the characterization of what are ordinarily Storyteller characters, which is generally a good thing. The Storyteller may retain some veto power over the portrayal of ancestor-spirits, of course ("Sorry, Chris, but Jarl Volki Jotunrender never met a Bastet, and I doubt he'd be that open-minded if he had"), but for the most part, this is an excellent opportunity for players to help flesh out the history of the setting. And, of course, it's an opportunity for a player to roleplay a different personality for a while without having to do anything drastic like drop a long-standing character and create a new one.

Technically, ancestor-spirits don't *have* to speak through the character's mouth. They can address their descendant directly, in what amounts to mental speech.

This is often what happens when the Storyteller is playing the part of an ancestor-spirit, particularly when the character is going to his ancestor for information.

The degree of the ancestor's control during possession varies. For some endeavors, the two minds cooperate within the same body, much like two people folding a sheet together — both have control, but their efforts don't come into conflict. In others, the ancestor may be more in the driver's seat, acting mostly as he would have in his own body years ago, relinquishing control to his descendant once the task at hand is completed. As a general rule, presume that the ancestor gains as much control of the body as he requires. An ancestor-spirit lending his Enigmas skill has no need to use much more than his host's vocal cords, while an ancestor who's donated the equivalent of four dots of Dodge is probably in near-total control until the character has a chance to do something other than evade attacks. He has to be.

In terms of acting out the changeover from the Garou to the ancestor-spirit in his body, it's hard to think of a better place to use some sort of visual or verbal cues. Few things are more convincing than changing your voice to represent the new speaker, whether by raising or lowering your voice's pitch, adopting an exotic accent or mode of speech, or even by changing the volume. A player needn't be a talented vocal mimic for this sort of change; when the revered Theurge Footfalls-of-Shadow takes control of the character's body and begins speaking in a whisper, the other players will take note. And, in fact, vocal changes that are too excessive are not only unnecessary, but also slightly unrealistic — after all, the character's vocal cords aren't changing to match the ancestor's.

Visual cues such as a shift in posture, a particular repeated gesture, or a slight change in facial expression are just as effective, although with some limitations. Narrowing your eyes may serve as a visual cue that an ancestor of familiar curmudgeonly temperament is in residence, but it can throw the other players if you also narrow your eyes to mean "My character is annoyed." Vocal cues are less likely to be repeated by the character sans ancestor-spirit, but visual cues are often easier to use on a regular basis. As usual, it just tends to be a matter of experimenting to see what works best.

### *Twists*

Of course, every family has its eccentricities. And as most Storytellers enjoy making a character's life more diffi— ah, *interesting*, it would be a shame not to provide a few twists on the usual use of the Background. These twists can, and should, be used with some restraint. The object isn't to create some sort of

dysfunctional spirit family that might inhabit some freakish low-grade sitcom, but simply to provide a player with more roleplaying hooks and interesting dilemmas about drawing on the Background's power. Too many twists, and the game slows to a crawl every time someone rolls Ancestors. But with just a few, the complicated relationship between descendant and forebears gets so much more interesting.

- The Garou try to breed along tribal lines, but a certain amount of intermarriage is inevitable, particularly in tribes that are open-minded about adopting cubs born to other tribes. Even if a character possesses high Pure Breed, it's still possible that one of her distant ancestors was of another tribe entirely; the bloodline of the "black sheep" parent may have been absorbed into the main bloodlines of the tribe, but the ties of ancestry are still there. This can be an interesting twist to use, but it can be anticlimactic and forced if used too often. The cross-tribal twist is at its best when the Storyteller and player use it not as a blatant attempt to shock (such as Wendigo with Wyrncomer ancestors, or Silver Fangs with ancestors of, well, any other tribe) but rather because a strong story is suggested.

- Generally speaking, most ancestor-spirits accessible through the Background have sired or borne children in the course of their mortal lives. Shapeshifters who die without a legacy generally have less to hold them to existence in spirit form, and cannot follow the spiritual threads of their own bloodline. Exceptions exist, however; a many times great-aunt or great-uncle can certainly take an interest in the descendants of their relatives, even if they had no progeny of their own. In fact, some ancestor-spirits are attached to the bloodlines of a particular protégé or student, someone they thought of as a spiritual heir even though there were no ties of blood. Such ancestor-spirits may be particularly demanding of a character, demanding that the character live up to the ideal set by the forebear who impressed them so much. Alternately, this is the only way to rationalize a metis ancestor-spirit — a very rare thing, although obviously a metis with Ancestors could draw a great deal of confidence from the presence of a metis "ancestor."

- Not all ancestor-spirits need be distant ancestors. A character with strong Ancestors might channel the spirit of a relative as close as his own deceased parent — in some cases, Garou have channeled the spirits of relatives who have died as little as a week ago. As with most things dealing with ancestor-spirits (and family in general), this can have its good and bad points. A character might be watched over by a loving mother they never knew in life, or be haunted by the

ghost of a domineering grandfather who harangues the character even after death. This may also be a way for a beloved Storyteller character to linger on after a tragic or heroic death.

- A character with the Insane Ancestor Flaw (*Players Guide to Garou*, pg. 167) runs the risk of being possessed by his deranged forefather, in a manner that exceeds the normal function of the Background. An insane ancestor can hold on to the body longer than other ancestors would dare, placing the character in grave danger. When you consider that the Garou can sometimes trace their lineage back for millennia, the sheer number of Garou ancestors in a character's bloodline implies that the odds of having an insane or malevolent ancestor are better than you might think. This rationale is another reason that the core rulebook recommends that an ancestor-spirit might refuse to relinquish control whenever player botches an Ancestors roll. Opening oneself to possession is a decided risk — but that's hardly out of character with the rest of the World of Darkness.

- As noted in the core rulebook, not all ancestor-spirits are indeed the spirits of shapeshifters — some notable humans have managed to linger on in ancestor-spirit form, some of whom aren't even Kin! It's all but unheard of for a human ancestor-spirit to be reached via the Ancestors Background, but since the players' characters are very often the exception to the rule anyway, all bets are off. The player and Storyteller should definitely hash out the basic events of such an esteemed ancestor's life and death; an exceptional story is clearly waiting to be told. Such an ancestor might have some difficulties in directing the unfamiliar Garou form — even Fionn MacCumhail may have been a great warrior, but he didn't fight in Crinos. But at the same time, a human ancestor-spirit might take great pleasure in possessing the character, enjoying all the exotic sensations of the Garou body, its senses and strengths....

- Which leads directly to the possibility of an ancestor-spirit that craves the sensation of possessing her descendant in order to feel alive again. This isn't a common occurrence — existence as a spirit has its own transcendent joys and rewards — but it's all too possible. Such a spirit would likely encourage her descendant to call her frequently, even going so far as to browbeat the character for attempting to do things without her. ("Are you a fool, taking on those fomori without my aid? You deserve those wounds, but not the scars — scars are for the brave, not the foolish! Call on me more quickly next time, and watch the vermin fly before us!") If the Storyteller carefully balances such

an ancestor's potential assistance with the drawbacks of her personality, this can provide a wonderful love-hate relationship. If the player dreads giving his ancestor any more leeway, but dearly loves the powerful assistance she has to offer, the stage is set for some excellent roleplaying.

## *Dealing With Ancestor-Spirits*

Of course, interaction with ancestor-spirits isn't the exclusive province of characters who've purchased the Background. Even the Bone Gnawers and Glass Walkers summon the spirits of their ancestors in order to learn Gifts, empower fetishes, gain information or even — sometimes — just to chat. These interactions can be subtly different from encounters with other spirits, and are worth a little extra attention.

### *Summoning*

Learning the Rite of Summoning involves not just learning one specific rite, but the many changes that can be made to the rite to summon spirits of different types. Thus a Garou who knows the rite effectively knows hundreds of rites — rites to call elementals, Epiphlings, spirits of various animals, even specific spirits.

The Rite of Summoning can be used to call a specific ancestor-spirit, or to send a general call to the first ancestor-spirit tied to the ritemaster's tribe. Versions of the rite used to call "any ancestor-spirit" are rarely used — most shamans prefer not to leave the Rite of Summoning open to too much interpretation, as it's all too common for the worst spirit possible to answer the call. A rite attuned to "any ancestor-spirit" is believed to invite Black Spiral Dancer spirits, insane ancestors, or the spirits of traitors in much greater proportion than the spirits of the honorable fallen. This may simply be superstition, but most Theurges know it's a rare superstition that has no basis in fact.

Ancestor-spirits are generally better inclined toward Garou than are most other spirits, but that doesn't mean the Storyteller should ignore the chance of the Rite of Summoning bringing an initially hostile spirit. After all, the Rite of Summoning isn't an invitation — it's a command. Ancestor-spirits have their pride, and it's all too easy to offend them by using the Rite to compel them when they would have preferred to be sought out and asked in person. As a general rule, the Storyteller may opt to lower the difficulty for contacting a particular ancestor-spirit who has been established to be on good terms with the ritemaster. Otherwise, ancestor-spirits are treated like any other for purposes of the Rite of Summoning.

## *Chiminage*

Of all the different types of spirits, ancestor-spirits vary the most in what they consider ideal chiminage. The finest chiminage to any ancestor-spirit is a gift or service that reflects the events of his or her life. Material offerings can take almost any form, depending on the particular spirit being courted; the offering of an intricately wrought scroll of genealogy that would delight a Silver Fang's honored grandfathers might thoroughly offend a Red Talon ancestor-spirit. The carefully polished and restored revolver that might delight a Glass Walker ancestor-spirit from the 19th century could well bore and irritate the spirit of a Glass Walker who lived a century earlier. The supplicant is well advised to do her research into the life of the ancestor-spirit sought, for certain offerings that seem appropriate might be most offensive. An offering of a perfectly crafted, silver-tipped arrow might seem perfect for the spirit of a renowned archer—but what if that worthy Garou died from a silver-tipped arrow through the heart?

Thankfully, a few offerings of chiminage are welcomed by almost all ancestor-spirits. The ritual offering of food or burnt fragrant woods nourishes a spirit, particularly at a simple altar set up for that purpose. A promise to compose a new ballad in an ancestor's honor almost always goes over well, particularly if the supplicant can

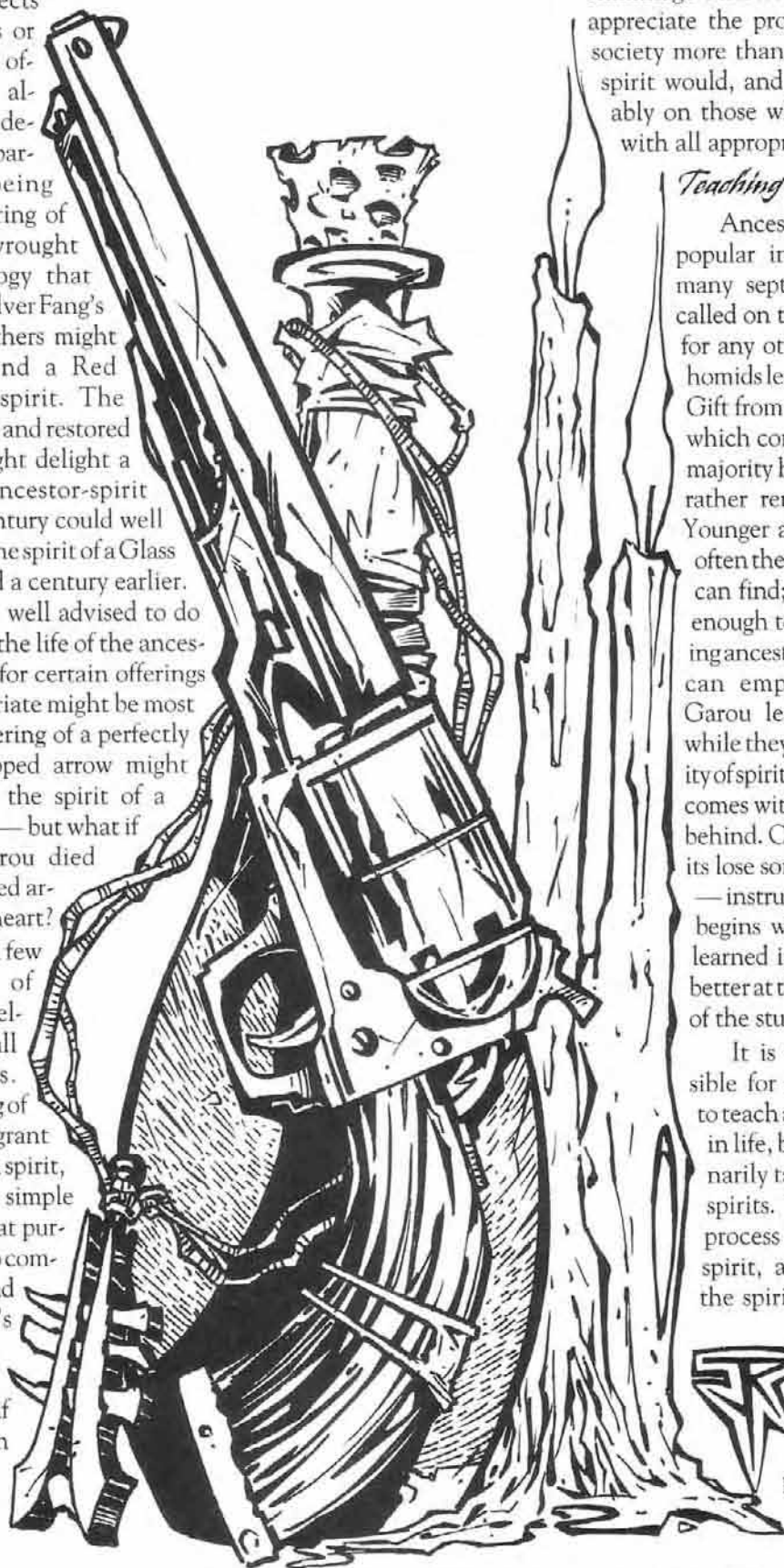
provide a few sample verses at the time of negotiation.

The Storyteller may call for a dice roll (usually Charisma + Etiquette, although others might be appropriate) when presenting the ancestor with chiminage. Ancestor-spirits generally appreciate the proprieties of Garou society more than almost any other spirit would, and look more favorably on those who seek them out with all appropriate courtesy.

## *Teaching Gifts*

Ancestor-spirits are quite popular instructors, and in many septs are more often called on to teach Gifts than for any other purpose. Most homids learn their first breed Gift from an ancestor-spirit, which considering the great majority homids occupy, is a rather remarkable statistic. Younger ancestor-spirits are often the finest teachers one can find; they are still new enough to the nature of being ancestor-spirits that they can empathize with the Garou learning the Gifts, while they still have the clarity of spiritual perception that comes with leaving the flesh behind. Older ancestor-spirits lose some of the empathy—instruction almost never begins with “this is how I learned it”—but are even better at the total immersion of the student's senses.

It is theoretically possible for an ancestor-spirit to teach a Gift that he knew in life, but that is not ordinarily taught by ancestor-spirits. This is a difficult process for the ancestor-spirit, as it requires that the spirit draw on knowledge of a Gift that he can no longer use, trying to reassemble the pieces of memory



into the raw instinct that operated the Gift. Learning a Gift in such a way is similar to learning a Gift from another werewolf (*Werewolf*, pg. 133); the experience cost is raised by one, although the process is quicker, usually taking slightly less than a lunar month. (Most of the Gifts of the Lost later in this chapter must be learned in this fashion.)

### *Empowering Fetishes*

Conversely, ancestor-spirits are rarely called on to empower fetishes. Part of this is sheer respect on the Garou's part; fetishes are honored tools, but ultimately tools. Placing one's grandmother into a fetish, perhaps never to be freed, is a shocking thought. Another reason is that ancestor-spirits bestow relatively few powers that the Garou do not themselves possess, and lack as direct a connection to certain spirit ideals such as "strength" or "speed." Binding the spirit of a strong Garou into a fetish just isn't quite as effective as binding a bull-spirit or bear-spirit. Worst of all, the possibility of losing a fetish containing an ancestor—or having it fall into a Black Spiral Dancer's claws—is reason enough for Theurges to bind ancestors only when necessary.

Even so, there are exceptions. The common Apeskin requires a homid ancestor-spirit to function. Certain wise ancestor-spirits agree to be bound into large fetish objects such as shrines or natural stone altars, providing a measure of wisdom and power to any Garou who calls on them (and also minimizing the risk of the fetish being lost or stolen). Finally, some powerful ancestor-spirits agree to inhabit weapon fetishes, so that they may continue to fight on Gaia's behalf so long as there's a Garou to bear them. Some of the most revered grand klaives are bound with a mighty ancestor-spirit as well as a war-spirit, blending raw power and ancestral wisdom into one perfect blade.

### *Gifts of the Lost*

At the conclusion of the *Time and Tide* scenario, the Garou may find that their relationship with various ancestor-spirits has been greatly strengthened. More ancestor-spirits lost along the millennia are able to find their way back, and may serve as potential tutors for the last generation. And some of those newly freed spirits may carry the wisdom of the Lost.

Gifts of the Lost Tribes of Garou are listed up to Level Five. However, Level Four and Level Five Gifts are hard to master for werewolves lacking the essential connection to the appropriate Tribal Totem. Although the Storyteller may allow characters to learn these mighty tribal secrets from ancestor-spirits, the experience cost to do so is multiplied by 1.25. Thus, learning

a Level Four Bunyip Gift costs 25 experience points, and learning a Level Five Bunyip Gift costs 30 experience points.

All Gifts of the Lost are, of course, taught by ancestor-spirits. Whether they are the ancestor-spirits of the tribe or Breed in question is debatable (for instance, the Croatan's sacrifice was complete, leaving no Croatan ancestor-spirits behind), but the spirits of ancestors who were close to the tribe or Breed in question may teach them.

### *Bunyip*

The ghosts of the Bunyip still hold a potent grudge against the Garou who slew them, and against those who offend them even in death. Those Bunyip ancestor-spirits released by the chronicle's events have little love for to Red Talons (thanks to Wyrmbaiter's actions) and Children of Gaia (thanks to Cernounos' meddling with their legacy) in particular. Overall, the events of the *Time and Tide* chronicle should not be construed as a reconciliation with the Bunyip ancestor-spirits as a whole. However, characters that have taken part in the chronicle and acted to distinguish themselves to the Bunyip (as detailed in Act III) may be permitted to learn some of the following Gifts from Bunyip ancestor-spirits. And, of course, the Storyteller

### *A Note on Reconstruction*

Some Storytellers may be tempted to use the information listed here, as well as in other sources, to craft rules for playing one of the Lost in a historical chronicle. This is, of course, perfectly acceptable. However, it should be noted that the Gift lists here are by no means meant to represent the Gifts available to a living member of the appropriate Lost Tribe or Breed in their heyday; these are Gifts that a modern Garou might learn from an appropriate ancestor-spirit, and nowhere else.

Each of the Lost had particular Gifts that were functionally similar to Garou Gifts—for example, the Croatan had mastered Hand of the Earth Lords long before their Uktena cousins did, and of course the Grondr would use Sense Wyrms in their grooming duties. These Gifts have not been listed here, as Garou can learn them from more accessible sources. However, those Storytellers looking to assemble a more copious Gift list in reconstructing one of the Lost should certainly flesh out the lists with appropriate analogs to Garou Gifts, particularly at the lower levels. Redundancy is nothing to be ashamed of when it means that the tribes and Changing Breeds are doing the jobs Gaia assigned them better.

may rule that various Garou may have successfully won a measure of trust from the ghosts of Australia, and may learn these Gifts as well. As with the other Gifts of the Lost, use discretion in allowing these Gifts into a chronicle; it's the best way to make those who've earned the right to learn these tricks feel as though they've truly earned it.

- **Bunyip's Spell (Level One)** — Great Bunyip has many powers, among them the ability to freeze a person in their tracks with a glance. He taught his children this trick to defend themselves against humans without killing them.

**System:** The Garou must first make eye contact with the target; the player rolls Willpower, opposed by the target's Willpower. For each success that the player gains over the target, the target is frozen in place for one turn and cannot defend himself. If the target is an ordinary mortal, the player may choose to spend a Willpower point to make the paralysis last for the rest of the scene. The paralyzed victim remembers not being able to move, but does not know why; those with low Willpower tend to rationalize or forget the experience, as if it were a bad dream. (Use the Delirium chart to determine whether the person forgets or not.) This Gift cannot be used on shapeshifters or the undead, only mortals or those who are mostly mortal (such as most fomori).

- **Burrow-Bed (Level One)** — This Gift was a common survival trick among Bunyip, learned from the spirits of burrowing animals such as wombats. The Garou can burrow into the ground when he needs to rest, sleeping comfortably to regain his strength without fear of suffocation.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis point. The Garou burrows into the earth to a distance of about five feet, filling in the hole after himself. The Gift allows the werewolf to rest for up to twelve hours without need for air. The disturbed earth filling the Garou's burrow-bed is not automatically concealed, and observers can usually tell that something was recently buried there. As such, this Gift is most useful in areas where the ground will be covered before long by dust, sand or leaf litter.

- **Crocodile's Cunning (Level Two)** — The Bunyip passed into the lore of humans as an aquatic monster, due in part to this Gift. Although of limited utility in the greater Australian desert, this Gift allowed the Bunyip to defend their waterholes, swamps and rivers with clever ambushes, or simply to evade pursuers. As the Gift name implies, the Bunyip originally learned this Gift from crocodile-spirits.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis. The character may hold her breath for up to one hour, and gains

two dice to any Stealth rolls made while submerged in water or mud.

- **Dreamwalk (Level Two)** — The Bunyip had a distinct tie to the Umbra of their homeland, more powerful than that of most Garou. Although those who learn this Gift from Bunyip ancestor-spirits lack the Bunyip's inborn affinity for the Penumbra, they may still take great advantage of the Bunyip's wisdom.

**System:** Whenever the moon is visible in the night sky, the Garou may, after a full minute of concentration, step sideways or use Gifts as if the Gauntlet were two levels lower. This reduction in difficulty is not cumulative with the reduction for using a reflective surface to step sideways. For the Bunyip, this Gift was Level One; characters of other tribes learn this Gift as Level Two.

- **Lonesome Voice of the Bunyip (Level Three)** — This Gift was one of the last Bunyip Gifts to be developed, as it directly arose from the pain and loss of the War of Shame. Interestingly enough, it is also one of the Gifts that the Bunyip ancestor-spirits are most willing to teach to their few trusted Garou allies, for it reinforces the tragedy of the Bunyip's fall and reminds all who listen that such atrocities must never be repeated. The Garou using this Gift emits the booming cry of Great Bunyip himself, a frightening and saddening roar-howl of fear and loneliness.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Performance (difficulty 7). The Gift affects all non-Bunyip (which is to say, all listeners) within earshot. Those affected lose one temporary point of Willpower per success until they have retreated from the Gift user's immediate area (roughly earshot) or until the scene ends. No victim can be affected by this Gift more than once in any sunset-to-sunrise or sunrise-to-sunset period.

- **Landspeak (Level Three)** — Another Gift that arose from the Bunyip's affinity for their homeland, Landspeak allows a Garou to listen to the land and express its various qualities and quirks in the form of a song.

**System:** The Garou must listen to the ground by placing her ear directly against a tree, rock, or the earth itself. The player rolls Gnosis, difficulty 7. The number of successes indicates the relative distance within which the user can gather information. One success might indicate a mile or so, while five successes reaches out to about 100 miles. The specific type of information sought is determined before rolling the dice; the character might, for instance, learn the number and type of creatures walking on the earth within range, or the distance of an approaching storm, or the number and sort of roads that criss-cross the area. Certain queries may provide more information than can be safely pro-

cessed, of course; trying to learn the number and type of creatures walking the land while in an urban environment would likely result in sensory overload.

This Gift is only effective in the character's homeland. Technically, this means one of two places — the area where the character was born and raised, and the geographical location the tribe (and specifically, the character's bloodline) calls home. Thus, a Get of Fenris of Scandinavian stock raised in Minnesota might be able to use this Gift in Minnesota or its adjoining states or in Scandinavia. Characters bereft of a homeland in one or the other sense lose the ability to use this Gift in that sense. Thus, an army brat Silver Fang who never settled in one place for very long might be able to use this Gift in Russia, but not elsewhere. Most Silent Striders cannot use this Gift at all.

• **Gnowee's Torch (Level Four)** — In Australian Aborigine myth, the sun is the torch carried by Gnowee, a mother who spends each day searching for a lost son. This Gift allows the Garou to conjure a miniature replica of her torch, a ball of sunlight and flame.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Intelligence + Occult, difficulty 7. The conjured flame appears in the Garou's hand, and can be held there for one turn per success before it gutters out; while it is in the Garou's hand, the area around the Garou counts as lit by ambient sunlight. The Garou may also hurl the "torch" at an opponent or object (Dexterity + Athletics, difficulty 7), ending the Gift prematurely, but inflicting a number of dice of aggravated (fire) damage equal to the Garou's Gnosis, plus one die per two successes on the Intelligence + Occult roll.

• **Dance of the Lightning Snakes (Level Four)** — The Penumbra of Australia is inhabited by, among other things, the lightning snakes — spirits that leap to the earth and rebound to the heavens during Umbral storms, bringing lightning and rain. This Gift allows a Garou to call on the lightning snakes to evoke a powerful storm in the Umbra, washing away spirits and lashing foes with bolts of spirit-lightning.

**System:** This Gift works only in the Umbra. The player spends one Gnosis point, and rolls Willpower, with the difficulty based on the spirit world's existing weather (if any) — 5 if an Umbral storm is already brewing, to 9 if the spirit world's skies are clear. The difficulty is reduced by 1 if the character is in Australia's Penumbra, where lightning snakes are more plentiful. The storm gathers in three turns; it covers the equivalent of 5 miles per success, and increases the difficulty or Essence cost of any fire, perception or travel-related Charms by 1. The Garou may direct the lightning snakes to strike opponents (Charisma + Occult, difficulty 7 to hit; 10 dice of aggravated damage). The

storm cannot bleed over into the physical world, although a sympathetic (and uncontrolled) rain or storm may gather in the material world.

• **Billabong Bridge (Level Five)** — Great Bunyip was, among other things, a water-spirit. His children used this Gift to successfully cross large expanses of Australian terrain by using water as a shortcut. The Garou may enter one body of fresh water and emerge from another such body any distance away; salt water "fouls" the Gift, and cannot transport the Gift user. Both bodies of water must be personally well-known to the Garou using the Gift.

**System:** The player spends two Gnosis points and announces her destination. At the Storyteller's discretion, using this Gift to leave or arrive in an area of high Gauntlet may require a roll to step sideways to make the transition safely. The Gift user cannot take anyone with her while using this Gift; only those items dedicated to her complete the journey.

• **Black Swans (Level Five)** — The Australian Aborigines attributed the Bunyip with the ability to transform people into black swans. Nobody remembers whether the folktales arose from use of this Gift, or if this Gift arose from the folktales, but the stories are certainly true. The Bunyip used this Gift as a means of punishing those who went against Gaia, and their ancestor-spirits teach it only to those inheritors who display a tremendous sense of justice.

**System:** The Garou must successfully splash an opponent with water taken from the environment; bottled water would not work, while water taken from a local river and carried in a bottle would, and tap water is effective in urban environments. The player spends two Gnosis points and rolls Wits + Occult; supernatural targets (but not ordinary humans) may resist the roll with Willpower. If the player scores more successes than the target, the target is transformed into a black-feathered swan.

The swan loses access to most of its supernatural abilities while transformed, although its basic nature is unchanged; a vampire transformed into a black swan would have no heartbeat or pulse, and would have to drink blood to survive (although it could not expend blood to increase its Attributes or use Disciplines). Shapeshifters and other creatures that can take other forms (such as vampires with shapeshifting Disciplines) remain in swan form for the duration of the scene; for those with no shapeshifting ability, the transformation is permanent unless somehow reversed.

### *Croatan*

Even at the close of the events of the *Time and Tide* chronicle, the Croatan ancestor-spirits remain un-

reachable and lost — the sacrifice they made to banish Eater-of-Souls cannot be undone without undoing the result as well. However, Storytellers wishing to reward players with a few select Croatan Gifts may still do so; presumably, more Uktena and Wendigo ancestor-spirits who had learned Middle Brother's lore have been released, and are willing to share their secrets.

Alternately, the Storyteller may choose to have some or even most Croatan ancestor-spirits return — undoing the result of their sacrifice. This frees up Eater-of-Souls to play a greater part in the End Times. Such an option may be perfect for Storytellers about to begin an Apocalypse chronicle.

- **Turtle Body (Level One)** — Many of the Croatan's Gifts emulated the power of their patron, Turtle. This Gift allows the Garou to emulate Turtle's stoicism by slowing his metabolism into a torpor-like state. The werewolf becomes inactive, but can go without breathing for hours at a time and ignore extremes of heat or cold. Uncontrolled bleeding stops, and any poison working its way through the werewolf's system is greatly slowed, not taking effect for hours.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Gnosis, difficulty 6; success indicates that the werewolf enters the trance. The trance lasts for up to one hour per success, although the Garou may choose to awaken after a specific amount of time has passed.

- **Wyld Sight (Level One)** — The Croatan were able to foretell natural disasters and other such phenomena by attuning themselves to the Wyld itself. By use of this Gift, a character can perceive impending outbursts of Wyld-related activity such as wildfires, tornadoes, earthquakes and the like. He can also perceive Wyld-spirits in the Penumbra while remaining in the physical world, although his vision is somewhat clouded.

**System:** The player rolls Perception + Enigmas, difficulty 7. (In the Croatan's day and homeland, the Wyld was stronger, and the difficulty was 6.) Success reveals the nature and general source of the upcoming Wyld manifestation, if any; the number of successes determines how far in advance the Gift can predict a given Wyld event.

Successes	Time Before the Event
One	10 minutes
Two	30 minutes
Three	One hour
Four	Three hours
Five+	One day

- **Safe Cave (Level Two)** — This Gift derives from Turtle's intimate connection with the living earth. The Garou can will the earth to open up,

creating a small cave that can hold up to six Garou in Crinos, or more creatures in smaller forms. The werewolf can will the opening to close once inside the cave, concealing the cave's presence from outsiders (although supernatural means may detect the cave or the inhabitants within).

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Survival, difficulty 7, to open the cave. The Garou must decide whether to seal the cave or not within three turns; the entrance cannot open and close at will. The cave lasts for a period of time dependent on the successes rolled; once the duration expires (or the Garou chooses to end the Gift's effects prematurely), all within the cave pop out of the earth again as the cave disappears.

Successes	Duration
One	One minute
Two	10 minutes
Three	One hour
Four	Six hours
Five+	Twelve hours

Those within the cave cannot be physically attacked from outside, but some Gifts (such as Hand of the Earth Lords) can still affect them, as can any burrowing effort strong enough to dig down into the cave and break its seal. The cave provides fresh air; those within are not in danger of suffocation. This Gift can only be used on natural earth, mud or sand; bare rock, wood, metal or manmade materials such as concrete are not affected by the Gift.

- **Turtle Shell (Level Two)** — This Gift allows the Garou to seal herself in a mystic protective shield that resembles a turtle's shell. The shell is opaque from the outside, but those on the inside can see through it. The werewolf can opt to bring others into the shell with her, if her power is sufficient.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Stamina + Survival. Each success gives the shell two soak dice and two effective health levels; the radius enclosed is two yards per success. A Crinos-form werewolf requires about two yards radius, so with two successes, two werewolves in Crinos could be protected (or three humans or Homid-form Garou, or so on, at the Storyteller's discretion).

The shell lasts for one scene, or until broken either by the Gift user's will or by sustaining too much damage — whichever comes first. When broken, it shatters into pieces that dissolve like so much mist.

- **Call Earth Spirit (Level Three)** — This Gift is another of those that draws on the ancient alliance with Turtle, summoning an earth-spirit to rampage forth and crush things or people at the werewolf's

bidding. The Garou must have some earth at hand to invoke the earth-spirit, although a handful of dirt or a smallish rock will suffice.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Manipulation + Occult, difficulty 8. The spirit cuts a path of destruction in a straight line for up to 30 yards, inflicting 10 dice of lethal damage to anything in its path. Botching the summoning roll calls forth an earth-spirit of some sort that is hostile to its summoner.

• **Gift of Plenty (Level Three)** — Corn Maiden's earthen spirits of fecundity originally bestowed this Gift on the Croatan. The Gift of Plenty allows the werewolf to multiply any single chosen object into many duplicate objects. In this way, a warrior can make more arrows from a single arrow, or more bullets from one bullet. Any object without spiritual power (no fetishes, awakened objects or the like) can be multiplied: \$20 bills, strips of steak, ears of corn, and so on.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Crafts, difficulty 7. The number of successes determines the number of objects (including the original) that result; two successes would create one extra duplicate, four successes would create three duplicates, and so on. Duplicating precious metals or rare ritual components requires an expenditure of two Gnosis; rare gems or materials such as plutonium, three Gnosis.

The newly created objects last for only 24 hours, and then disappear. But their effects remain — arrow or bullet wounds heal at normal rates, goods bought with multiplied money remain, multiplied food still provides nutrition as long as it was digested before time runs out, and so on.

• **Stronger on Stone (Level Four)** — Just as the Uktena were mighty in the waters and the Wendigo drew power from the winds, the Croatan were at their strongest when standing on the earth itself. This Gift allows a werewolf to mimic that strength — the closer the Garou's tie to earth, the stronger he gets.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and one Rage. The character receives a number of bonus dice that he can add to Strength or Stamina (or divide between them) for the remainder of the scene, depending on where he stands. On dead wood, concrete or other artificial flooring, the bonus is one die. On living plant matter (such as thick grass or a tree root), the bonus is two dice. On bare earth, the bonus is three dice; on naked stone, four dice. If the character is separated from the ground (such in an airplane or on a bridge over water), the Gift has no effect.

• **Underearth (Level Four)** — Since Turtle went into his coma-like sleep, many secrets of earth powers once known are now forgotten — such as the Umbral

tunnels beneath the Umbrascap. The Croatan did not always rely on Luna's moon paths when traveling the Umbra. This Gift allowed them to use the secret tunnels under the earth, known to many earth-burrowing spirits and totems, such as Mole, Badger and Groundhog (who taught them the Gift). In such a way, the Croatan could travel long distances in the safety of the Umbral underground.

This Gift is all but lost to werewolves by the time of the 20th century, but this is almost a blessing; in the modern era, Ratkin occupy many of these tunnels, making them hostile territory for any Garou.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis point; the Garou is made aware of the nearest entrance into one of these tunnels. Such an entrance might not be close at hand; the werewolf might have to go on a day's journey just to reach the nearest opening, depending on the local population of burrowing spirits. Once inside the tunnel, he can reach his destination safely. When he gets to a multiple branching tunnel, he'll know the proper way — otherwise, one could get lost for years!

In all other respects, this Gift is much like traveling a moon path, save that the potentially hostile encounters that may be encountered along the way take the form of Ratkin and other subterranean denizens, rather than spirits.

• **Katanka-Sonnak's Spear (Level Five)** — Some cultures that the Croatan took as Kin were sun-worshippers. The Croatan in turn established strong ties with Helios and the Planetary Incarna of the sun, Katanka-Sonnak. This Gift springs from this alliance; by invoking the power of the sun, the Garou can call a shaft of fire from the sky to impale an enemy and immolate him in continuously burning flame.

**System:** The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Dexterity + Occult to strike the target; no range penalties apply, although the werewolf must be able to see her target. If the strike is accurate, the victim takes 10 dice of damage from fire damage *each turn*; this damage is aggravated, although shapeshifters are able to soak it. The fire cannot be doused with ordinary water; it will burn until 10 turns have elapsed unless quenched by a water-spirit, somehow dispelled, or until the victim takes no damage on a particular turn.

• **Umbral Burrowing (Level Five)** — The Umbral tunnels that the Croatan used to travel don't always lead precisely where one would like. This Gift neatly sidesteps that problem by allowing the Garou to dig his own tunnels through the Umbrascap, between any two points he chooses.

**System:** The player expends three Gnosis; the Garou starts digging. A successful Perception + Occult

roll is necessary to make sure that the tunnel comes out in the right place. The process is a slow one, about twice as long as ordinary Umbral travel (although the burrower need not eat or rest as he digs), but the tunnel is permanent once dug. It isn't necessary to know the Underearth Gift to use Umbral Burrowing, but the werewolf without knowledge of Underearth cannot necessarily travel tunnels not of his own make without getting lost.

### *White Howlers*

As with the Croatan, the White Howler ancestor-spirits remain lost (or corrupted) even after the events of *Time and Tide*. However, a Storyteller who doesn't mind deviating from canon a touch can certainly rule that a few managed to survive the Fall and safely hide for the following centuries, only to be released safely. Also, Storytellers can use the possibility of ancient Fianna (or Get of Fenris) ancestor-spirits who learned some of the Howlers' tricks resurfacing. As always, you know your troupe best — if they would see these Gifts as a cheesy attempt for a comic-book resurrection of the tribe, don't mess with them. If they would love the opportunity to uncover a bit of lost Garou heritage, consider giving them the chance to earn it.

As noted in Act II, under the statistics of Aidan Farwatcher, some of the White Howlers Gifts are in fact forerunners to Black Spiral Dancer Gifts of similar mechanics. These Gifts (Burning Scars, Foaming Fury) may be added to this list in "non-Wyrmish" form, although note that most modern Garou associate such Gifts exclusively with the Black Spiral Dancers, and will not look kindly on characters who use them. Even those White Howler Gifts that do not still exist in Black Spiral Dancer form are still of dubious honor in the eyes of many spirits; the players who use these Gifts may find themselves with much explaining to do, especially to Great Lion.

Most White Howler Gifts focused on harnessing their powerful Rage to even more destructive ends, although the Howlers were justly famous for their howl-Gifts as well. They were also excellent trackers, a strength that ultimately assisted their downfall as the newly-turned Black Spiral Dancers were able to hunt down all their fellows all too easily.

- **Blood-Scent (Level One)** — Part of the White Howlers' reputation as excellent trackers stemmed from Gifts such as this one. The Garou with this Gift finds it childishly easy to track down any human, beast or supernatural being whose blood she has tasted. The Howlers parlayed this Gift into the tactic of letting a wounded enemy escape, only to unerringly track him to his lair and the rest of his clan. Today, the Black

Spiral Dancers continue this practice, although without the aid of the Blood-Scent Gift.

**System:** Once learned, this Gift's effects are permanent. The Garou receives two additional dice on any roll made to track prey whose blood she has tasted. These dice also apply to the use of tracking Gifts such as Sense of the Prey.

- **Haunting Howl (Level One)** — One of the howl-Gifts peculiar to the tribe, this eerie cry often echoed across the desolate moors prior to a White Howler raid. In the years since the White Howlers' fall, this cry has become more alien and forlorn.

**System:** The player rolls Charisma + Intimidation, difficulty 7. All enemies within earshot of the werewolf's howl suffer a +1 difficulty to Willpower rolls for three turns per success. Willpower expenditures are unaffected. No foe can be affected by more than one use of this Gift per scene.

- **Lion's Bite (Level Two)** — Lion's children learned many things from their patron, including some hunting tactics more familiar to big cats than to wolves. The Garou with this Gift gains an unerring ability to bite down on the throat of his prey, choking it unconscious or to death, or even crushing its windpipe as lions do.

**System:** The player may spend a Rage point and roll Dexterity + Brawl (difficulty 7) to initiate a choking bite. If she gains one or two successes on the attack roll, the attack is treated as a bite; if she gains three or more, she successfully begins a choking bite. The target takes bite damage as usual, and will begin to suffocate unless he can beat the Garou in a resisted Strength test in successive turns. The Garou may maintain the hold from turn to turn; she does not inflict any more automatic bite damage, but the suffocation rules (*Werewolf*, pg. 188) continue to apply. A held victim may take actions other than trying to escape, but any such action is at +2 difficulty. Due to the supernatural power of this Gift, it can be used on creatures much greater in size than the Garou. A werewolf could theoretically use Lion's Bite to strangle a Thunderwurm, although the Storyteller may call for more successes on the attack roll to succeed against a foe of such size.

- **Pain-Strength (Level Two)** — The White Howlers were hardy enough to shrug off the effects of pain, but some learned the trick of letting their pain fuel them. The wounds of a White Howler actually gave him strength, allowing him to achieve great feats of might at the cost of his own blood.

**System:** When the character is first wounded, the player may choose to spend a Rage point to activate this Gift. For the remainder of the scene, the character gains



one dot of Strength for every die of wound penalties he suffers from. In addition, wound penalties do not affect his Strength score or damage pools (although they affect any Strength + Ability pools). Thus, a character at Wounded would lose two dice from most dice pools, but actually gain two dice to his Strength score. If the character would ignore wound penalties (due to frenzy or Resist Pain), he does not gain the bonus Strength.

- **Blooding Fury (Level Three)** — The Fianna often wondered if the White Howlers were the masters of their Rage, or if Rage was the master of the White Howlers. This Gift only added to the Fianna's trepidation. By wounding herself, the Garou is able to tap into a fresh reservoir of Rage, for good or for ill.

**System:** The Garou must injure herself with a claw or bite; the character takes one level of unsoakable aggravated damage, and regains all her temporary Rage. This Gift can be used only once per scene.

- **Sense of the Deep (Level Three)** — Up until the Fall, Lion's tribe was convinced it was their duty to Gaia to hunt down Her enemies even beneath the surface of the earth. This Gift aided them in their endeavors to fight Wyrn-things in their own burrows. A werewolf with this Gift is at home in a subterranean environment, almost moreso than above ground.

**System:** This Gift's effects are permanent once learned. While underground, the werewolf automatically knows which direction is north, and can instinctively retrace his path to the exit. (However, this direction sense can be tampered with by other supernatural powers, as happened in the Hive where the Fall took place.) The character can also see in darkness underground without suffering any dice pool penalties or added difficulty; this works much as the metis Gift: Eyes of the Cat, but only while the Garou is underground.

- **Maddening Howl (Level Four)** — The supernatural quality of the White Howlers' howls was what gave them their tribal name, to say nothing of their reputation. This howl-Gift represents one of their worst howls, a terrible ululating wail that bends the minds of those who hear it to the breaking point. This is a terribly dangerous Gift for modern-day Garou to use, as only White Howlers are immune to the howl — and there are none of those left.

**System:** The player spends one point of Rage and one point of Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Performance, difficulty 7; those within earshot may roll Willpower, difficulty 7, to resist. If the player gains more successes than the victim, the victim is driven mad for the duration of the scene. Victims are treated as if they were

affected by the "Catatonic Fear," "Panic," "Disbelief," "Berserk" or "Terror" effects on the Delirium chart (Werewolf, pg. 192). The Storyteller chooses the specific effect, although the Gift's effects tend to be random rather than governed by the victim's personality.

• **Visions of Slaughter (Level Four)** — This frightening curse derived from the White Howlers' unusual practices of bonding with the ghosts of slain animals. By marking a person with his spit, blood or other bodily fluids, the werewolf can curse his victim to be haunted with visions of any animal or individual killed by his actions (or inaction). Even animals can be driven to distraction by visions of prey animals that are always within view, but cannot be touched. This Gift is of course of little use against the innocent, but against the soldiers, shapeshifters and vampires that werewolves most commonly face, it has terrible power.

**System:** The Garou must first bring the victim-to-be into contact with his saliva, blood, sweat or other bodily fluid; the player rolls Intelligence + Occult, difficulty of the target's Willpower. The victim is haunted by bloody visions of any reptile, bird or mammal dead by her hands for one day per success. The more deaths the victim has been responsible for, the more vivid and distracting the visions. Each day, the victim must make a Willpower roll at a difficulty set by the Storyteller to avoid losing a temporary point of Willpower. The difficulty ranges from 4 to 9, based on the amount of blood on the character's hands; an all-but-innocent who has done little more than set mousetraps and accidentally run over an opossum would be a 4, while the average Garou might resist at difficulty 7, and a murderous vampire at difficulty 9. The amount of remorse the character would ordinarily feel has no bearing on the curse; a vampire who cares nothing for the people he's drained to death will still be horribly distracted, as his victims appear far more real and far more frequently.

While the Gift is in effect, the victim cannot recover temporary Willpower. Once the victim's temporary Willpower has been reduced to half of the permanent score, all rolls she makes (apart from soak or damage rolls) are at +1 difficulty until the Gift's effects pass.

• **Mad Strength (Level Five)** — Garou under the spell of this Gift become even more terrifying when they succumb to their Rage. When driven to the breaking point, the werewolf's strength is greatly increased, allowing him to wreak even more destruction on his foes. Werewolves affected by this Gift undergo a bodily change when berserk; their thews bulge and twist in disproportionate ways, giving them an almost monstrous appearance.

**System:** The character gains two extra dice of Strength and one extra die of Stamina whenever she enters a berserk frenzy (or Thrall of the Wyrn). Once learned, the Gift's effects are permanent.

• **White Fire (Level Five)** — This forgotten Gift is the last link to the sacred bone-fires that the White Howlers kept before their Fall and conversion to Balefire. The werewolf can hurl a stream of blinding white fire from his hand, searing the flesh from the bones of his foes.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Dexterity + Occult (difficulty 6). The bone-fire inflicts six dice of aggravated damage, plus one die for every extra success on the attack roll. In addition, if the victim suffers more than three levels of damage after soak, she is blinded for the duration of the scene.

### *Lost Breed Gifts*

The odds against it are astronomical. That the ancestor-spirit of one of the Lost Breeds could have survived for millennia after the extinction of the Breed — not only is it not a guarantee, it's almost impossible. Many abstract concepts are reflected in the spirit world, and extinction is no exception; if a species is wiped out in the physical world, the animistic nature of the Werewolf world might well doom that species' spiritual reflections to the same fate.

But most epics worth telling begin with by bucking the odds somehow. Officially, no Garou in the Werewolf universe are in contact with the ancestor-spirits of Lost Breeds — but a troupe lives to be the exception, yes?

These Gifts, and the spirits who teach them, are the trickiest to use properly. The events of *Time and Tide* are sufficient to explain how a few of these ancestor-spirits could potentially return to the world more readily, but that's only half the struggle. Winning the trust of an Apis, Grondr or Camazotz ancestor-spirit is almost worthy of a chronicle in itself — particularly considering that a character is sure to have ancestors of his own who participated willingly in the War of Rage.

Note that no Lost Breed Gifts of Level Four and Five are listed. This is because the greatest powers of a Changing Breed are generally the province of that Breed alone, and often hinge on the particular physiognomy or spiritual makeup of the Breed in question. The Gifts that Garou (or other Changing Breeds, for that matter) are able to learn are tricks that are somewhat more accessible in nature. In some cases, these Gifts are higher level as Garou Gifts than they would be for the Breed in question; after all, it's much easier to learn the Camazotz' many secrets of flight if you naturally possess a bat's wing structure.

The Apis were were-aurochs, shapeshifters who could take the form of the wild ancestor of domestic cattle. They were a proud, strong race, as unlike the domestic cattle of today as the Garou are unlike domestic dogs. They served an unusual purpose in the grander scheme of things — they are generally understood to have been matchmakers in both a broader and specific sense. They moved among humanity with greater ease than most Changing Breeds, having a relatively low Rage; there they attempted to strengthen human bloodlines, encouraging the wise and strong to produce children that would benefit the race — and Gaia — as a whole. They are also said to have practiced their art among the Changing Breeds, recommending that particular groups settle in particular terrain most suited to them, or arranging beneficial Kin/shapeshifter matches. In some ways, they were the companion Breed to the Gurahl (who healed the land) and the Grondr (who cleansed the land), doing their best to cleanse and heal humanity. Ultimately, though, their comparative lack of inner Rage served them poorly in the wars of the same name.

The Apis were a ritualistic Breed, and even their Gifts often had a ritual feel to them. Their Gifts largely focused on promoting harmony, healing humans and nurturing the emotions as well as the body; however, they also had their share of Gifts that drew power from the aurochs side of their nature. An Apis ancestor-spirit might look kindly on homids, Philodox, Galliards, Children of Gaia, and to some extent Fianna and Glass Walkers.

- **Gift of Flesh (Level One)** — Although herbivorous in their aurochs form, the Apis were as omnivorous as any human in their Homid or minotaur-like Crinos forms, and were famous for ritually devouring their enemies. This Gift was a favorite of the more martial war-bulls, as it allowed them to refresh their own strength by the “gift” of their foes’ flesh. The Garou who learns this Gift may do the same, but at the cost of potentially violating the Litany.

**System:** Once learned, this Gift’s effects are permanent. If the character spends ten minutes in Crinos form devouring the body of a foe slain in combat (not a prey animal), he immediately regains his choice of two temporary Rage, one temporary Willpower or one temporary Gnosis. However, the flesh of the undead provides no spiritual nourishment, and creatures with poisonous flesh are no less toxic to the eater.

- **Scent of Changing Blood (Level One)** — In their roles as matchmakers, the Apis often needed to know if the people they were attempting to bring together were Kinfolk to any Changing Breed or not.

This Gift allowed them to breathe the scent of a man or woman and tell whether or not the person was Kin, in order to properly pair Kin with those who would strengthen their bloodlines rather than dilute them.

**System:** The character can automatically detect whether or not someone is Kin to his own Breed — Garou using this Gift automatically detect Garou Kinfolk. In addition, the player may roll Perception + Primal-Urge, difficulty 7, to accurately pinpoint the strongest tribal bloodline of the Kin in question. Kinfolk to other shapeshifters can be detected as well, but it requires the same Perception + Primal-Urge roll (and a minimum of two successes), and the character can accurately identify Kinfolk only if he has encountered the smell of their Changing Breed relatives before. (Thus, a Garou who has never encountered a Nagah could tell that a Nagah Kinfolk was Kin of some sort if he succeeded on the roll, but would not be able to pinpoint the precise scent.)

- **Sun and Moon Signs (Level Two)** — Like the Mokolé, the Apis were creatures of both sun and moon. They viewed Helios as a source of male wisdom, and Luna as a source of female wisdom, and sought to learn the ways of both. This Gift taps into the wisdom of sun and moon, allowing the user to read omens in such things as eclipses, the color of the rising moon, the rings around either, and so on.

**System:** The character must meditate as he observes the sky; the sun or moon must be visible. The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Intelligence + Enigmas, difficulty 9. If successful, the character may gain a tidbit of information about some upcoming event relevant to him or his loved ones. This omen is revealed in the sense of positive or negative, and a rough time of fulfillment — “a bad fate on the next crescent moon,” or “a potential blessing three sunrises from now.” The Gift can foretell events up to five days in the future for every success.

- **Ties of Destiny (Level Two)** — The Apis, like many ancient human cultures, believed that certain people were tied together from birth to share a common destiny. This Gift allowed the Apis to perceive the threads that tie a person to his destined mate — or someone who was tied to him by a darker fate.

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Perception + Enigmas, difficulty 8. If successful, she perceives the ties of destiny as shimmering red threads that stretch out from the observed subject’s heart, liver or hands in the direction of the person or persons fated to share a common destiny with the subject. The threads may appear slack or taut; the more taut the thread, the closer the tie between people or the nearer the shared fate is to coming to pass. This Gift, however,

does not reveal whether the shared destiny is good or bad — only if it is strong or imminent.

• **Hathor's Blessing (Level Three)** — Among the many gifts given the Apis was the ability to promote fertility in others, even to the point of increasing the chance of a shapeshifter breeding true. Although the werewolf who learns this Gift must sacrifice a portion of her own spiritual essence to bestow Hathor's Blessing, the diminishing numbers of the Garou make it arguably well worth the price.

**System:** The Garou touches the person to receive the blessing at the brow, the sternum, and just below the navel; the player sacrifices one permanent Gnosis. The next child conceived by the blessed individual has an additional 25% chance to breed true (thus, a 35% chance of breeding true if the character mates with a Kin of no particular Pure Breed). If neither the Gift's target nor his or her mate is a shapeshifter or Kinfolk (or is a shapeshifter that doesn't pass on its nature by breeding, such as Corax), there is still a 25% chance that their child will breed true, becoming a shapeshifter of the same type (and apparently of the same bloodline) of the Gift user. This Gift cannot, however, produce Pure Breed in a child if the parents possess none.

• **Strength of the Brazen Bull (Level Three)** — The Apis knew a Gift that allowed them to turn their hides to brass, their hooves to iron, and their breath to flame, making them fearsome opponents in battle. To this day, the brazen bulls are still remembered in legends from around the Mediterranean. The Apis ancestor-spirits are capable of passing on a version of this Gift to Garou, although the potency is somewhat lessened. Still, a Garou with fur of brass and iron claws is something to be feared.

**System:** The player spends one Rage and one Gnosis and rolls Stamina + Survival, difficulty 6. The Garou's fur becomes brass-colored and metallic, offering him one extra soak die, and his claws become metallic, adding one damage die to all claw attacks. The effects last for one turn per success.

### *Camazotz*

The Camazotz were the werebats, alternately called the Ears of Gaia, Luna's Messengers, and the Voice of Gaia. In many ways, they were a direct analog of the Corax. Both served the duty of carrying messages, but where the Corax were tied to Helios and the day, the Camazotz were children of Luna and the night. However, the Camazotz had the disadvantage of relying on a complicated ritual to swell their numbers, much like



the Corax, and fewer advocates among the Garou than the Corax possessed. Most were slain in the initial War of Rage, and Shadow Lords traveling to the Americas centuries later finished the job.

Camazotz Gifts tended to enhance their abilities to carry messages swiftly, communicate over long distances, and use their flight ability to their advantage in combat. Some of their Gifts also enhanced the racial strengths of bats, derivatives of which were later taught to the Black Spiral Dancers by a fallen Bat totem. A Camazotz ancestor-spirit might favor metis, Ragabash, Theurges, Bone Gnawers, Silent Striders, Uktena or Stargazers. Most will have great hate for Shadow Lords, although some will look favorably on the Children of the Bat camp (see *Tribebook: Shadow Lords*).

- **Private Whispers (Level One)** — This Gift exemplified the werabats' ability to deliver a message with utmost discretion. By covering his mouth and whispering, the user may speak to anyone he can see without being overheard.

**System:** The player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge, difficulty 7; if attempting to contact someone unaware of the character or his supernatural nature (for instance, to "haunt" a person), the player must also spend a Willpower point. The character may whisper for one turn per success; the target is the only one able to hear the character's words. The Gift does not empower the target to reply in kind.

- **Shadow Skin (Level One)** — The Camazotz were at home in the darkness, and knew how to bend it to their will. By calling on the power of this Gift, a Garou may enjoy some of the same protection the werabats relied on. The user is wrapped in semi-solid shadow, making her more difficult to see, muffling the noise of her movements, and even offering her some measure of protection against attacks.

**System:** The player spends one Willpower point. While the Gift is in effect, the character gains one die to soak damage (which is treated exactly like armor; see *Werewolf*, pg. 206) and three extra dice to any Stealth roll. This Gift ordinarily lasts for a scene, although its effects are immediately neutralized if the character enters any brightly lit area.

- **Bloodletting Bite (Level Two)** — Although the Camazotz bred with insectivorous bats, not vampire bats, this Gift allowed them to borrow certain properties of their blood-drinking cousins' bite. The saliva of the Gift user becomes a supernatural anticoagulant, causing their victims to bleed dramatically.

**System:** If the character successfully does damage with a bite attack, the player may activate this Gift by spending one Gnosis and rolling Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 8). For one turn per success, the victim

loses one additional health level of lethal damage at the end of the turn; this damage cannot be soaked. Creatures who do not bleed cannot be affected by this Gift. Vampires lose one blood point per turn instead of suffering actual damage. The bleeding can be stopped if the bite wound is magically healed.

- **Luna's Favor (Level Two)** — In some cultures, the bat is a symbol of luck. The Camazotz were not innately lucky themselves, but they enjoyed a measure of fickle Luna's favor. This Gift allows a werewolf to draw on Luna's mercurial blessings much as the Camazotz did, for better or worse.

**System:** The player spends one Willpower and makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 8). If successful, the player may nominate one roll made during the remainder of the scene as "fortunate." The player gains one automatic success to the fortunate roll (as if she had spent a Willpower point). She may also reroll as many dice on the fortunate roll as she scored successes on the roll to activate this Gift; however, the second result stands, even if worse than the first. If she gains no successes on the roll, the Willpower point is wasted; such is fortune.

*For example:* Tara activates Fortune's Favor just before a klaive duel. She spends one Willpower and gains three successes on her Willpower roll. During the fight, her character attempts to disarm her opponent, and Tara nominates the roll as "fortunate." Her normal Dexterity + Melee dice pool is six dice, and the difficulty for a disarm with a klaive is 7. Tara rolls 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 — two successes, plus one automatic success. She can reroll up to three dice, and she chooses to reroll the 1, 3 and 5 — rolling a 3, 7 and 8. She now has four successes plus the automatic success — much better.

- **Bat's Shriek (Level Three)** — The Camazotz developed many Gifts taking advantage of their remarkable vocal range, some of which were used as weapons. It's said that the death-scream of the last Camazotz still echoes in remote parts of the Umbra. The Bat's Shriek Gift is not quite as powerful, but still quite effective; the user emits an ultrasonic cry that stuns, disorients and even bruises those nearby. As the cry is ultrasonic, it doesn't necessarily alert human listeners within earshot (although wolves or Lupus-form Garou within earshot may wind up with a headache).

**System:** The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Stamina + Performance. All those within thirty yards of the Garou take one unsoakable health level of bashing damage for every two successes.

- **Blinding Spittle (Level Three)** — The Messengers of Luna were not above preying on their enemies' reliance on sight. With their version of this Gift, a Camazotz was able to strike a foe blind by simply



spitting on him, placing him at the werebat's mercy. The version of this Gift that can be learned by Garou is less powerful, but still quite potent.

**System:** The character activates the Gift by spitting on the opponent; the player spends one Gnosis and rolls *Dexterity + Medicine*, difficulty of the opponent's *Stamina*. The target is blinded for one turn per success. Blind characters cannot dodge, parry or block attacks, and are at +2 difficulty to all actions.

### *Grondr*

The Grondr were wereboars, appointed to the post of Gaia's groomers. It was their task to keep her surface free from impurity, using their tusks and keen scent to root out potential taints and blemishes before they could become truly problematic. They were a more social Breed than most, although not as tightly knit as the Garou. They were as mystical as most Changing Breeds, though not given to relying on Gifts and rites before their own abilities, and honored their own warrior code, which included a complex system of challenges (or "jousts") for status. Regrettably, they never had a chance to spread much beyond their homelands of Europe before the War of Rage drove them to extinction.

The Grondr's Gifts struck a balance between Gifts of balance, harmony, healing and cleansing and Gifts of endurance, resolution, ferocity and courage. A Grondr ancestor-spirit might favor *lupus* or *Ahroun* Garou. Paradoxically, the Garou tribes closest to their own warrior code are those that fought hardest against them in the War of Rage — the *Fianna*, *Get of Fenris* and *Silver Fangs*. A Garou from one of these tribes petitioning a wereboar ancestor-spirit would have to prove a sincere repentance for his ancestors' deeds, but would do well in the Grondr's estimation if she showed valor and honor.

- **Root (Level One)** — In order to properly perform their jobs, the Grondr had to be able to sniff out sources of potential corruption below the ground's surface. This Gift allows the user to scent out buried objects that are somehow connected to corruption, disease or rot — thus, a werewolf with this Gift could sniff out buried barrels of toxic waste (which corrupt the Earth) or a rotting corpse. This Gift can even detect Hives or deep-burrowing *Wyrms* creatures far beneath the earth's surface, if the user's intuition is sharp enough.

**System:** The player rolls *Perception + Primal-Urge*, difficulty 7; the number of successes determines

the depth of the Gift's effects. The character gains a general impression of any potential source of corruption within the Gift's range — its relative strength, and a vague sense of what spiritual aura hangs over it. A human corpse might read as "moderate rot," while a Thunderwyrms's tunnel might read as "faint corruption," or "powerful corruption" if the Thunderwyrms itself is below. The source of corruption need not be precisely under the Gift user, though it cannot be more than ten feet away horizontally; the Grondr used this Gift on roving patrols.

Successes	Depth
One	Five feet
Two	10 feet
Three	25 feet
Four	100 feet
Five	500 feet
Six+	A mile

• **Taint-Eating (Level One)** — Like the Apis, the Grondr had a tradition of ritually devouring their fallen foes. However, these macabre feasts had a different purpose entirely for the Grondr. By devouring the bodies of Wyrms-beasts and fomori, the Grondr removed them from Gaia's face, ritually eating and digesting their taints and toxins. In the

modern age of O'Tolley's and chemically enhanced fomori, this Gift can prove even more useful than it did in ancient times.

**System:** The player rolls Stamina + Empathy, difficulty 8. With even one success, the character is immune to any ingested poisons or drugs, and will not pick up Wyrms-taint from any tainted food he eats. (However, the character does not automatically know if the Gift's effects have failed.) The Gift's effects last for one scene.

• **Furrow (Level Two)** — This Gift parlayed the Grondr's natural animal talent for overturning earth into a potent supernatural ability. By digging one tusk in the ground, the Grondr could open a long furrow or ditch as easily as uprooting a weed. Garou who learn this Gift use their claws to create the initial cut in the earth's skin that grows into the larger furrow. This Gift was often used to create temporary fortifications, temporarily divert the flow of streams to wash an area clean, or to dig graves for fallen warriors.

**System:** This Gift functions only on earth or sand; rock, concrete or other materials cannot be excavated (although there are rumors of a more powerful version of this Gift that could be used on such surfaces.) The character digs into the earth with her claws; the player



rolls Strength + Primal-Urge, difficulty 7. The furrow created may be up to one foot deep, one foot wide and two feet long per success. Enemies caught above an opening trench must make Dexterity + Athletic rolls (difficulty 4 + the character's successes) to avoid falling in. Although this Gift is not considered harmful to the earth as a whole, overuse of the Gift may anger the local earth elementals.

• **Thunderous Charge (Level Two)** — The Grondr's fighting style centered on powerful charges meant to overbear their opponents, followed by repeated slashes with their long, razor-sharp tusks. This Gift added supernatural hitting power to a charge, allowing the Grondr to knock even a giant to the ground.

**System:** When using the Body Tackle maneuver (Werewolf, pg. 209), the player may spend a Rage point to invoke this Gift's effects. The Gift user gains three dice to both the attack roll and the Dexterity + Athletics roll to remain on his feet; in addition, the damage caused by the body tackle is considered lethal, not bashing.

• **Cleansing Tusks (Level Three)** — Although not chosen to be Gaia's warriors, the Grondr were still bound by duty to oppose those who tainted their lands. This Gift was one of their battle-magics, focusing their skills at purification into a martial application. When this Gift is in effect, the teeth of the user become purest white, so bright they almost shine with inner light. Wyrmtaint boils away at the touch of the Cleansing Tusks, much to the detriment of the fundamentally tainted.

**System:** The player spends one Rage and one Gnosis. If the Gift user bites (or gores, in the case of the original Grondr) a target who suffers from light Wyrmtaint and inflicts at least one health level of damage, the target is freed from the taint, as if targeted by a Rite of Cleansing. Creatures whose Wyrmtaint is a fundamental portion of their being (such as Banes, fomori, demons or vampires) are not freed from their taint, although the Gift user gains an additional die of damage against such creatures. Wounds bestowed on Wyrmtainted creatures by this Gift always scar visibly.

• **Uproot (Level Three)** — The Grondr knew that the tallest tree could be toppled by striking at the root. This Gift conveys the ability to cause considerable damage to a tree or structure if the user strikes at the foundation. The Grondr often used this Gift to topple diseased trees, but were not averse to using it against human dwellings as well if the need arose.

**System:** The Garou strikes at the base of a tree, cornerstone, support beam or other foundation of a structure. The player spends one Rage and one Gnosis

and rolls Wits + Primal-Urge, difficulty 7; this is a reflexive action, and must be performed in the same turn that the character strikes. For each success, the character gains three dice to her damage pool against the foundation. If the tree or structure falls as a result of this Gift, the player may choose the direction in which it falls (if applicable).

## *Rites*

### *Rite of Undying Pursuit (Mystic)*

#### Level Five

This potent but flawed rite was known to but a few Garou in years gone past, and has all but vanished from the world in modern times. The rite is designed as a last resort against particularly powerful enemies, a chance to hurl them into the Umbra and beset them with the spirits of Garou, condemning them to an eternal struggle. The ritual liberates the spirit portions of living werewolves present for the rite, binding them to the foe. However, the sacrifice of multiple Garou — Garou who are *sure* to die, and whose ancestor spirits will be lost to future generations unless they eventually win their struggle — is a hard thing to ask. In the twilight days of the dying Garou race, it can hardly be worth it.

The ritemaster must paint herself with glyphs of death, vengeance and immortality, drawn in the blood of Garou or Kin. The invocations of the rite are a series of bloody oaths, each one proclaiming that not even death can keep the Garou from carrying out their duty to oppose the enemies of Gaia.

**System:** The ritemaster nominates a target, either by line of sight, or by name, and rolls Wits + Rituals, difficulty 7. If the ritemaster has both line of sight and a name, the difficulty is reduced by 1. For each point of Rage, Gnosis or Willpower that the ritemaster permanently sacrifices, the time needed to complete the rite (ordinarily 50 minutes) is reduced by 10 minutes, to a minimum of 10 minutes. At the completion of the rite, a wave of spiritual power and binding rolls outward for 100 yards per success.

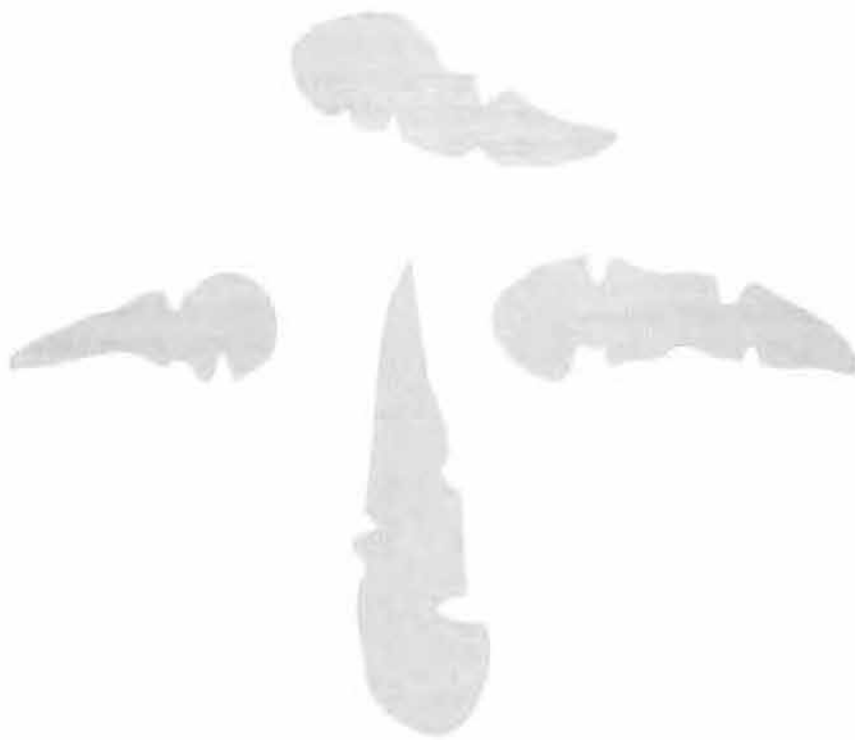
Each Garou within range may choose to answer the rite's call. If he does so, his body dies and his spirit immediately becomes an ancestor-spirit, of a power level suitable to the rank and power he held in life. Each ancestor-spirit created in this way has at least as much Rage, Gnosis and Willpower as it possessed in life; they also gain the Charms: Airt Sense, Armor and Tracking. The Storyteller may assign additional Charms as appropriate; a former Glass Walker of great Renown might gain Control Electrical Systems, while a potent Uktena could gain Flood. The spirits of recently de-

ceased Garou who linger in the area (for instance, if the rite is performed amidst a battle) may also heed the call if they choose.

The ancestor-spirits are bound to the target spirit by the rite, and cannot leave its side for long; they are doomed to struggle with it for ages on end. However, the spirit they are bound to cannot destroy them; an ancestor-spirit bound by this rite that falls to zero Essence falls into Slumber, and is borne along with the target until it reawakens and can fight anew. However,

the ancestor-spirits cannot harvest Gnosis from their target, and thus cannot kill it permanently when they reduce it to zero Essence. When the target reaches zero Essence, the ancestor-spirits gain a brief reprieve until it has reformed, and the battle begins anew.

The more Garou that sacrifice themselves in this manner, the larger and more powerful the creature or spirit that can be banished — in a variant of this rite, the sacrifice of the entire Croatan tribe was sufficient to banish Eater-of-Souls itself.





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