

Rage Across EGYPT



The Egypt Sourcebook for Werewolf: The Apocalypse™

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LEGENDS OF THE GAROU

How Nephthys Lost Her Soul

"I've heard that one."

If I hear the kid say that one more time, I think I will kill him.

"So, Damien, what kind of story do you want to hear?" I ask with all the patience I can muster. That's not a hell of a lot of patience. We've been at this for hours.

We're called "Striders," but sometimes, it's easier to drive. Just at the moment, we're hunched in the back of a decrepit truck tearing through the scenic Western desert. It's hot as boiled piss, the driver doesn't speak any English, and all I've got for company is this cliath Theurge who seems hell-bent on making me jump out and start running for Cairo.

He's sitting there with his lips pursed, considering my question. I'm hoping he'll keep himself quiet for a while. I've really run through most of my repertoire, and I'd started telling stories of the First Times. He really seemed to get off on the more modern stuff, but apparently whoever uncled him told him a lot of the older tales. Which is good, I suppose, but it does leave me in a bind. I could shut up for a while, but if I know this kid, he'd just love to be able to brag that he exhausted Samir the Jackal, the Galliard Who Speaks 'Til Sunrise.

And I just can't have that.

I resist the temptation to reach for my canteen. I haven't a clue how long it'll take to reach Cairo, and if this guy's vehicle dies (and from sounds it's making, the poor thing is begging for release) we're hoofing it. If that happens, I'll need the water. My young compatriot, however, hasn't learned to think that far ahead and takes swig from his. I smile, knowing

he'll be asking me for water later. Can't laugh too much, I did the same when I was a kid.

He frowns at the taste of the water and looks at me quizzically. He takes another sip and grunts as though what he tastes isn't what he's drinking.

"What's the matter?" I ask him.

"Water doesn't feel right," he answered, smacking his lips.

"Doesn't 'feel' right how?"

"Oh, I don't know. It's spirit brew. Normally it has a more... full taste, I guess."

Oh, hell.

"You brought *spirit brew* into Egypt?" I sniff the air, searching for Wyrms spawn. Nothing, at least that I can sense. I really wish I could change down to wolf form, but that might upset our driver just a tad.

"What's wrong?" he asks. He can see I'm getting nervous, and that (understandably) makes him a little jumpy, too.

"Thought you said you knew the history, kid. The curse on the Striders? Never rest in the land of Khem? Spirits fading from hunger, and all that?"

"Well, yeah, but I didn't think..."

"Obviously." I peer out into the sand. I can't see anything but white heat. I can't step sideways without losing my ride (I seriously doubt that this jalopy exists in the Umbra) and I'm sure that something knows we're here. "Look, it isn't like we're safe during the day or anything."

"But if the curse was placed by a vampire..." He trails off as he sees me shaking my head.

"Don't think of it that way. Quit using logic. The curse is more serious than that. The vampires are the least of our problems here." That's an exaggeration, but he's sure paying attention now.

I continue. "Guess you never heard the story of Nephthys' soul, huh? About how Khepri Leaps-the-Dunes learned the worst of all punishment rites?"

He shakes his head. "Gaia's Vengeful Teeth?"

I've got to hand it to him; he's done his homework. Not a lot of cliaths know that much about rituals, but between the spirit brew and the Teeth, he impresses me. Not that I let it show, of course. "Nope. There's a much worse punishment, Damien. The Shattered Soul." He looks at me with a rather hungry attention. "Oh, did I find something you haven't heard?" He nods, and moves closer to hear me. "OK, then. But listen — if we're lucky, the fact that you effectively coated us in honey and then kicked a beehive will go unnoticed. If not... we may have to fight, fuck, or hit the fence. So keep your eyes open, yeah?" He nods again. To his credit, he shifts his weight and stretches his arms. Trying to stay limber, not cramp up from being in the car too long. Good plan, kid.

I run through the story in my head. It's been a few years since I've told it, after all. Once I've got the cast of characters and the punch line (such as it is) down, I give him the opening I always use:

"Let me tell you a story."

...

The sun rose over the Nile, the light illuminating the bloodstains on the bank. A great evil had died there over the night, and nothing æ not the crocodile that swam blithely by, not the birds overhead, not the reeds on the banks æ mourned its passing.

At one time, it had enjoyed the favor of all life. It was a priestess of Isis herself, and no living creature would harm it.

Indeed, while it lived, no living creature had.

When this evil had a name, it was Nephthys. As a living woman, she had sided with Shu-Horus when he advised against meeting with Sutekh. She had guided him toward meeting with her mistress, Isis. But every good gesture in her life she made was reduced to less than nothing when she accepted Sutekh's Embrace.

She stalked and battled Shu-Horus. The mighty Garou warrior, refusing her offer of immortality, tore her to pieces. Her dying words, however, were not acceptance of her fate or even an apology for her betrayal. No, in last moments before her dismembered body turned to sand and worms, she cursed Shu-Horus, refusing to die, as she saw it, in his debt.

Shu-Horus left the banks of the Nile, never to return to Egypt in his lifetime. Nephthys' soul, however, drifted down to Amenti. There, it sat in trial before the scales of Ma'at and the Devourer of Souls. The Judge of the Dead reached for her heart to weigh it against a feather, and found it... gone.

For you see, Sutekh removed the hearts of his children and kept them stored safely, so that he could continue to command them in the next world. And so Nephthys, instead of being judged and devoured or found innocent and allowed to move on, was trapped, a servant of the snake-god, forever.

Or so it seemed.

...

From the portrait of night-blood and sun-scarred ashes, we turn to a much-different figure. A young Garou, born under the new moon, running across the dunes. The elders shake their heads, knowing the pup will soon be begging for water, that he will come trotting up, tongue hanging out, asking for a drink. And they know they will oblige him, because there is nothing for thirst but water, just as there is nothing for youth but time.

The young Ragabash's name is Khepri, sometimes called Leaps-the-Dunes, for his capering, hopping run. Even among the desert Garou, renowned for their speed, he is quick. In time, legends will say that he could jump from one dune to the next, even if they were miles apart, and that the sands never burned under his feet. Now, however, or in the "now" that is our story, he simply runs, lungs full of summer's heat, mind full of spring's promise.

Khepri runs without a pack, fresh from his Rite of Passage. His daily wanderings take him further into the desert, though the elders warn him against it. The deserts have grown strange since the curse, they say. Most of the tribe has begun to wander away from the black land, away from the great deserts, and out into the world. It is Khepri's opinion on the matter that gave him his name.

Khepri is named for the scarab-god. The scarab, born of dung and decay, means rebirth and renewal to the Egyptian people. Khepri, born of a Kinfolk woman and a normal man, hears the horrible stories (still too fresh in the tribe's mind to be called "legends") and asks why not deny it? Deny the curse, deny Sutekh's power over the noble Garou. March straight into the old, Umbral places and find a way to undo it, even if that means behaving like the scarab, finding answers and perfection in the most unclean of places.

The elders are not enthused by the pup's proposition. They cannot be blamed for their fear. They have lost much.

And so that is what is in the mind of the young no-moon, running and leaping across the dunes: warnings of the deserts and grandiose ideas about the curse. He finds a place where the dunes rise close, creating shade, and he stops and assumes human form.

Khepri is handsome. Like most Garou, he is hale and strong. Like most of his tribe, his build is a runner's lean. He has dark, muddy-Nile skin, and the fierce eyes of a wolf. He dresses simply, covered from the sun. He sprawls in the shade, the sand here cool and smooth beneath him. He stares off, into the desert, and wonders if Sutekh is there, now, waiting and growing fat off the blood of the Strider's lost Kin. He lies there, wondering, tired from his run, and he sleeps.

When he wakes, the shade's cool has turned to night's chill. He stands, and stretches, and is about to take on the wolf-form and run back to his sept, when he feels eyes upon his back. He turns, looking across the dunes, slightly afraid now, for who could hide in plain sight? "Show yourself, serpent!" he commands, sure that his observer is a spy for the snake-god.

"No serpent, I," says a smooth, honeyed voice. And from shadows and sand appears a lithe young man with skin so dark Khepri can barely see it against the night-covered dunes.

The man's eyes are an odd gold color, and they glimmer and shine in the dark. He is handsome, like Khepri, but unlike the Garou, his hands are clean and he wears jewelry. The newcomer sits on the dune and watches, almost playfully, as Khepri sizes him up. This, Khepri realizes, is not an ordinary man, as no human would venture so far into the desert at night. "Then what creature are you, traveler?" Khepri asks.

"Traveler?" it responds. "No traveler, I. You are the traveler, wolf-skin. You and your people are traveling quite a lot of late. I see them every day, running from Khem. Is it true, then, that your kind have been cursed and that the spirits of the dead rebuke you?"

The question stings Khepri's heart, and he answers, "I have no answers for you until I know your name, and from whose walls you come."

The man nods, and answers, "I am called Khons, and I come from Bubastis. Now do you know me?"

Khepri shakes his head. "No, I know only what you tell me."

Khons grins. "Yes, wolf-skin. You know only that, and that is all you need know."

Khepri shakes his head, trying to clear it. He struggles to remember what manner of spirit or being would speak so arrogantly, so elliptically, to someone he knows to be Garou. But all he can remember is playing at riddles with the Ahroun Amadi Nile's Roar, and the full-moon saying that Khepri had the tongue and mind of a... cat.

Khepri smiles now, because he knows the first of the man's secrets. The man is a shadowcat, and speaks in riddles when he says he comes from Bubastis. "Very well, then, Khons. You are correct — you have told me all I need know. And expect the same from me." Khepri sits down facing the cat-skin, and readies his mind for riddles. "I don't know what rebuke you speak of. The Nile still grants life and the sun still burns the sands. Nothing seems changed to me."

"The spirits of the land sing different songs to my people, wolf-skin," replies Khons. "They sing songs of betrayal, of one called Nephthys."

Despite himself, Khepri snarls. He has heard only that Nephthys disappeared during one of the last battles with Sutekh's priests, and is now thought dead. "Nephthys," he says "led our people to wisdom and life, that we could turn away venom and death."

Khons shifts on the sand, as if uncomfortable. "Hrm," he mutters. "Is that all you know of her?"

"What else is there to know?" A growl creeps into the Garou's voice.

"I don't think I should be the one to tell you, wolf-skin," answers the werecat. "I think you might call me a liar, and then we'd fight, and I'd lose. I have no plans to see Amenti tonight."

"I will not call you a liar," says Khepri. "But if you know something about Nephthys or what Sutekh has done to her, you must tell me so that my people can bring her home safely."

"Far too late for that," says the cat quietly.

"We'll bring her rest, then. Avenge her death, and let her soul be at peace in the Duat."

Khons stands and stretches. "One of your great warriors slew her, for she betrayed your kind and accepted Sutekh's immortal kiss. If you walk north and then east, you will find a small stream that leads to the Nile's banks. There you will find a red blot upon the sand, and that is all that remains of Nephthys in this world."

"And what of the next world, Khons? How does her soul fare in Amenti?"

"I know nothing of Amenti, wolf-skin. But perhaps you would find me and tell me, when you discover her fate?" And with that, Khons changes and ripples, and a sleek, black cat pads silently into the cool desert night.

Khepri turns and runs northward, changing to his wolf-legs as he does so. He finds the Nile bank, and sniffs at the ground. Indeed, a red blot lies there, perhaps two days old. Not far away is a robe, and the scent that lingers on it is death, blood... and Kin. Khepri realizes that the cat did not lie, and standing on a dune, facing the rising sun, he howls his sorrow to whoever might listen.

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We must leave Khepri howling on the bank for a moment, and return to Amenti. In the realm of the dead, Nephthys stands, heartless and cold, before the scales. Beneath them sits Ammit the Devourer, the great goddess who consumes the hearts of the unworthy. She licks her chops and greedily awaits the judgment — she cannot eat Nephthys' heart, there being none to eat, but perhaps she can devour the woman's soul instead.

Who can know Nephthys' mind now? Does she feel remorse for her betrayal, or fear of her fate? More likely she feels nothing, because her heart is gone, far away in the living lands, sealed in a canopic jar, or caressed by her new father and lord, Sutekh. In the cold pit of her soul, she knows only that her life, now twice ended, grows steadily worse. And perhaps she spares a thought to her spiritual mother and patron, Isis. How ashamed the great goddess of life must be of her chosen now!

Nephthys waits, and the great judges confer. And finally, they turn, and deliver their decree:

"You, Nephthys, once-beautiful Kin to the Silent Striders and lover of Shu-Horus the warrior, you come to Amenti with no heart for judgment. You are therefore unfit to see either your eternal reward or the gullet of Ammit the Devourer, and must return to your master, Sutekh."

Nephthys turns to go, and the booming voice of the judge stops her. "Stop! That is not the whole of our verdict. You, who cursed your former kin shall evermore be cursed. While the spirits of the Striders starve, so shall you. You shall forever wander the Duat, hearing only the voice of your master, but unable to do his bidding. As your betrayal has helped to rob the noble Garou of their home, so shall you remain a breath and a whisper away from your home, never able to touch or feel it."

Again, Nephthys turns, and this time leaves the chamber of judgment unheeded. She wanders back the way she came, but finds the path impassable from this side. The path to judgment is tread but once, and she has heard the verdict on her soul.

She wanders through the dark lands of the Duat, listening for a voice, a sound, a summons, and finally one comes. Her master, Sutekh, calls to her across the shroud of death, and, listening to his voice, she finds him.

Sutekh carries her heart, and she knows that beyond any doubt, she belongs to him. He sees her — somehow, through death, he sees her, and reaches forth to her. The shroud between the Duat and the living worlds, yet thin, parts for him. Nephthys stands silently as he caresses her. His hands cannot reach her body, his scaled lips and forked, flickering tongue cannot find her mouth, and yet she feels his stain growing upon her all the same. She does not care. She has no heart and no life; she has nothing left to lose.

Sutekh whispers to her, and instructs her. She nods, and like a vulture's shadow over sand she is back to the place where she died, where Shu-Horus tore her asunder. The Duat changes such vistas, however, and the Nile, to her, looks swollen and filled with bile. She does not see Khepri howling on the riverbank, but she hears his cry floating over the sounds of the river. Such a howl should fill even a dead soul with dread and loss, especially since it is for her that Khepri howls. She feels nothing. She does not care.

She sits on the bank and waits, as instructed.

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His grief spent, Khepri lies on the bank. He is confused and sad, but little Rage stirs the no-moon's heart. He stares into the waters of the Nile, wishing for guidance. A pair of yellow eyes stares back.

He jumps back, growling, preparing to run. He has no wish to battle a crocodile. The crocodile, however, slides from the water... and speaks.

"Sun sees you, wolf-skin," says the crocodile, and Khepri knows by its greeting that it is one of the Dragon-folk, the Mokolé. While the Garou and Dragon-folk see each other

only rarely, they are respectful when their paths do cross. This will change in time, but for now, Khepri and the crocodile sit on the banks together.

The crocodile's tail recedes, its limbs lengthen, and its toothy maw vanishes into the face of a handsome woman, several years older than Khepri. She is darker skinned than Khepri, but not so dark as the shadowcat that Khepri spoke to earlier. As he changes to human form, Khepri reflects that tonight must hold some dire fortune, given the company that blesses him.

The woman stirs him from these thoughts. That her voice so recently emanated from a crocodile's mouth is unsettling. "Why do you roam so close to Nile at night, wolf-skin? One of my cousins might have snapped you up."

Khepri nods to the bloodstain near the bank. "That is why," he says, and proceeds to tell the story as he knows it. The wolf and the crocodile do not play at riddles the way that the cat did; that is not their way. When he has finished, the woman—who simply calls herself Sabah, for her true name matters only to her folk—nods in sympathy. "So," Khepri continues, "I wish to find Nephthys' soul, and bring her peace, but I have no idea where to begin."

Sabah stares at the waters and her eyes take her back into time. When she returns, she turns to Khepri and takes his face in her hands as she would a child's. "Your heart is pure and true to ma'at, Khepri, Leaper of Dunes," she tells him. "You could bring her peace, should you make the right choices, and I will tell you the road to walk." Khepri nods, eagerly, and they both stand.

"I will carry you across the Nile, and you must continue traveling east. When sunrise comes, you must—*must*—be far enough away from the Nile that you hear no human sounds. No speech, no children crying, no men working—no human noise must disrupt the song of the desert. At the moment that the sun rises, you must howl, with all of the grief that you did here. And at that moment you will see a door. What happens beyond that door is beyond my knowledge and the Memory, for it has always existed, and not even the Mokolé can remember a time before...."

"Death," finishes Khepri. And Sabah only nods. "Very well, then. Let us go." Sabah kisses him on the cheek, as a mother might a child, and wades into the Nile. She sinks, slowly, and Khepri watches her body disappear into the black waters, finally only her hair remaining, and that too vanishes after swirling about on the water's surface. Then the water roils, and a creature with the head of a crocodile but a long, slender neck surfaces. It lowers its head, and Khepri carefully grips its neck, and slides down to its immense back. Khepri cannot see the creature's tail or legs, and can only guess at its true size as it carries him across the Nile.

On the other side, he leaps to land, and turns to thank the creature, but sees only a crocodile's tail disappearing into the water. "Sun sees you, Sabah," he whispers, then runs on wolf legs into the desert.

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In the Duat, Nephthys sees none of this. She only knows what she is told, and her master tells her to walk.

She stands, and walks across the Nile. The viscous waters feel solid under her feet, but she does not marvel. Her feet touch the sands again on the other side, and the shroud of death parts, slightly. She sees a man she knows to be a Silent Strider, simply by the colors that surround him when he grieves. When he changes and runs, her feelings are only confirmed.

Her master commands her to follow, and she follows. Again like wind over the dunes, she is with him, a fading shadow of what she was, yet still, inexplicably tied to the tribe. No matter how fast the wolf runs, she is there, flittering just behind him.

And perhaps he can sense it, and that is why he runs with such fervor?

...

Khepri runs as he has never run. No race between pups, no matter how fierce the competition, has ever meant so much to him. He calls upon the Gifts of the swift-running desert hare, and races across the bone-cold sands, trying to outdistance the human sounds that he knows will rise with the sun.

He feels nothing except the pounding of his own heart and the sand flying beneath his paws. The dunes rise and fall before him and he runs for hours on end, until finally, the sun creeps over the next dune and washes the sand with reds and shining whites.

And Khepri stops, listens, and hears nothing but the rush of blood through his exhausted frame.

And he howls.

Khepri is not a Galliard, destined to sing glorious songs or sorrowful dirges. His howl is unaided by any Gift. His howl is simply what he feels: exhausted, confused, and sad. And that howl rings through to the Duat.

The light changes, and he realizes that although the sun should be in front of him, his shadow falls long and lean before him, as though the day were ending. He turns, and there, behind him, is the setting sun. Confused, he faces east again, and from his long shadow, something beckons. The door opens, he walks towards it, leaving the valley behind him with night close at hand. Ever after, the Garou know that place as the Valley of the Day-Long Howl.

The doorway feels like a naked bath in the cold Nile. It leaves him afraid and shivering, and on human's legs he walks down a gray, rocky path. Footsteps echo behind his, but he dares not turn around. He knows he walks the paths of the Duat, and even if he should escape, he will never lose what he acquires here.

...

Nephthys follows the Garou across the sands. He finally stops in a valley, just as a strange, blue-gray light that Nephthys only barely recognizes as daylight oozes over the sand. He stops, and then howls.



The howl surrounds Nephthys like a sandstorm. The howl is the dry Nile. The howl is mother's pain. The howl is blood, leaving the body, the body growing cold as it dies. The howl could make a statue weep, could make a rich man release his slaves and end his life. Had Nephthys the power, she would reach out to him, weeping, and hold him close, trying to comfort the man who could make such a sound.

Nephthys has no such power. The howl covers her and washes over her as the wind over a stone. She has no heart, and cannot hear the howl for what it is — her own dirge.

The howl lasts a full day, and at the end, when the odd light has traveled all the way around them and slinks towards its own home, beaten down by the Garou's awful cry, a doorway opens. The Garou walks though, and now she can see him clearly. He walks down a path between two dunes, and she follows, as ordered.

The path becomes a tunnel, almost suddenly, as is common in the Duat. The sand becomes stone, and the soft padding sounds of his feet become harsh slaps. He pauses, about to turn around, and then continues on. Nephthys thinks this is just as well, for the Garou probably could not see her anyway, thanks to the magic Set has taught her. She does not care, however, if she is seen. She is commanded only to follow, and so she does, deeper and deeper into the Duat.

• • •

On and on Khepri walks, at each step wishing he had the courage to turn and see what manner of creature follows him, matching his pace exactly. He resists this temptation, and, trying to ignore the sound, wonders what he is to do here that might give rest to Nephthys.

His foot touches something. Bending down, he finds a game piece from a senet board. He tucks it into a fold in his robe, and continues walking.

He finds more pieces, strewn about the corridor, and each one he keeps, tucked into his robe. He does not know why, except perhaps that they might serve as proof of this journey when he returns to his sept. Having found all but one piece, he watches the ground, and is in the room before he notices.

The room is small, and resembles a servant's chamber in a rich man's tomb. It contains only a small table, upon which sits a senet board and the remaining piece. Seated at the table is...

Khepri is not sure. The being resembles a man, but a hood obscures its head. Paintings and drawings of Nehebkau, the cobra-headed god who guards the spirits of the pharaohs in the Duat, adorn the walls. The man shifts, and Khepri sees his eyes — slitted, green-yellow, and placed in such a way that the Garou knows this being is no man. But when it speaks, its voice is deep and rich, and fills the small room with comfort.

"Have you brought the pieces, Khepri?"

"I have," answers the Garou, too frightened to move.

"Very well. Then shall we play at senet?"

Khepri only nods, dumbly, and sits across from his opponent. He knows better than to ask for a name, because he is afraid of the answer. He sets up the board, and tries not to peer beneath the man's hood. All the while, his mind aches with a horrible question: who is the man? Nehebkau is a benevolent, if frightening spirit of the Duat, and bears no grudge against the Garou that Khepri knows of. However, there is one other being who might have eyes like a cobra...

He throws the sticks first. He reads their result, and moves the first of his pieces. His opponent throws the sticks, moves, and the game continues, both players silent.

The first game ends, and the man has won, but just barely. Khepri sits uncomfortably before him, and the man's voice comes forth from beneath the hood. "Another game?"

Khepri shakes his head. He can barely sit still, let alone play another game.

"Then why are you here, Khepri?"

"To give rest to..." he begins.

"I know," says the man. "You wish to have the power to lay a spirit to rest. That is a great power for a living being to have. Only the great judges have that power."

"I know," says Khepri, "But it would not be a power I would use often. Only when something terrible happens, as it has with Nephthys, would I use the power to grant a spirit peace."

"Choose your words carefully, young Garou," warns the figure, "Lest the rest you achieve be only a warped version of what you desire." He seems to shift, although Khepri sees no movement. "We shall play again," he begins, "and you must win this game. If you do win, you may make your request again, and it will be granted."

"And if I lose?" Khepri is afraid he knows the answer.

"If you lose, there is nothing I can do. You will not be granted your wish, and you will have to find your own way home."

Khepri looks helplessly at the throwing sticks, which determine much of the game by chance. "But... fate decides the winner! Why not a race, or a fight?"

The being turns to face Khepri, and he sees inside the hood. And he knows, beyond a doubt, the nature and name of the being he faces. And he does not know whether to rejoice or despair in the death-god's presence. "Because fate *must* decide this game, Khepri. These are not decisions you can make, nor I." And with that, he picks up the sticks to begin the game.

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Nephthys watches the game, and when the being in the hood wins, she takes a step forward. She steps around the Garou, and, invisible through Sutekh's might, touches each game piece. Each touch of her pale hand carries with it a tiny fraction of Sutekh's power, a grain of sand upon a fingertip,

unnoticeable even to Nehebka. The power that she places upon the pieces is doubt, as she is commanded to do by the unclean thing that fondles her unbeating heart.

She steps back, her work complete, and watches as the two of them, Garou and god, play again. With each brush of his fingers against the pieces, she sees the Garou falter a bit more. She knows that one glance backward over his shoulder to see the doorway, one word of doubt to his opponent, will taint his request with despair and loss.

And, having no heart, she does not care.

• • •

The game wears on, the sticks fall, the pieces move, and Khepri wonders. He wonders how it is possible that this being, this so-called god, has the power to grant such favors but not to grant them outright, masking his power behind this children's pastime. He wonders why the cat and crocodile did not tell him more, since they clearly knew. He wonders if this entire experience is only a heat-dream, and he is even now lurching through the desert, half-dead, gibbering for water. He reaches for the sticks, and stops, and glances up. He peers under the hood again, and the being turns away.

Khepri feels his insides turn to cold sand. He picks up the sticks and throws them, and moves his pieces, winning the game. He looks up expectantly, but the man is gone.

The board is gone as well, and Khepri finds himself in the valley where he entered the Duat. It is night, but not quiet — the winds howl around him. He hears the dark, soothing voice of Nehebka, and what he hears nearly makes him weep.

"You knew who I was, and what the stakes were. Yet you let me fall from your heart and doubted. You are granted your wish — you have the power to dispel the spirits of those like Nephthys. Return now to your people and share with them the knowledge you have gained."

Khepri runs off towards his sept, crossing the Nile by stealing a boat, and reaching his brethren before dawn's light. He tells them what he has learned, and explains the bizarre rite that Nehebka granted him.

The Theurges of the sept gather together, and enact the rite. They stand, gathered around a fire, and howl out the charges against Nephthys, betrayer of the great Shu-Horus. As the howls wind down, the fire dies, and she stands there in the center.

She is pale and beautiful, and Khepri, watching from outside the circle, cannot help but notice that she does not look anguished. In fact, she looks as though she was made of marble, completely unflinching, as the elders finish the rite.

The howls of the Theurges dwindle, and they assume human form, recite a last curse, and spit upon the betrayer.

As Khepri watches, her ghostly form solidifies, then cracks, then shatters. She falls to pieces in a cascade of white rock, and does not even cry out. Khepri does, however. This is not what he wanted for her.

• • •

Nephthys waits in the valley. The Garou returns to the living lands, and she waits in the Duat. Later, after the sun has risen and set again, she feels herself pulled towards the west. She follows the pull, fluttering again over the sand like moonlight on the Nile.

She appears in the center of a circle, surrounded by the Silent Striders, all cursing her. She does not flinch. They howl her crimes to the sky. She does not budge. They spit on her, and her spiritual form is cracked and consumed.

She does not care. She has no heart.

And elsewhere, her heart also cracks and turns to sand, and slips through the fingers of her lord and master, Sutekh. Sutekh smiles.

• • •

The truck is still rumbling towards Cairo, and I pause to take a sip of water. The kid is staring at me, trying to make sense of it all. Finally, he asks, "So then what?"

I sigh. "I mentioned earlier that Khepri Leaps-the-Dunes went on to become a legendary Ragabash. He was known for many things, but what most moon dancers remember him for was the Rite of the Shattered Soul."

"Is that what happened to Nephthys?"

"Of course," I retort. "Remember, Khepri said he wanted a way to give rest to spirits in special cases, like Nephthys. When he gave in to doubt, he lost control of the wish. 'Like Nephthys' came to mean someone who betrays the Garou and gives himself — or herself — over to the Wyrms entirely, so much that not even death can wipe the slate. The Shattered Soul means that the spirit is gone, or if it's ever reborn, it's reborn as a creature of the Wyrms — its true form."

We start passing cars. The road became paved back there somewhere. We're almost to Cairo. "So, why did Sutekh want the wish that way?"

I almost swat him. "Think about it. If Nephthys is never reborn, no skin off his nose, right? But if she is..."

His eyes grow wide. "Oh, shit."

I smile. I love it when they get it. "Yeah."

"Was she ever reborn?"

I turn to face the rapidly advancing city of Cairo. I hate the smell, but here we are, and we've got work to do. I turn back to face the kid, and give him the worst and truest answer I can.

"Not yet."

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Rage Across EGYPT™

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Introduction: The Setting Sun

The land of the Nile is mysterious and ancient, not to mention dangerous. The sandstorm that whips through the desert, the disease that stalks the streets of Cairo—the land of Khem holds more than its fair share of dangers, mundane and supernatural. But amid these dangers is knowledge and power for the taking: relics from civilizations long dead, magic from writings on the walls of tombs, and rites passed down from past generations. Even natives regard Egypt as a land of mystery, and outsiders often feel overwhelmed by the weight of history in the land.

The native Garou, the Silent Striders, were driven from their homeland by an ancient vampire called Sutekh (or Set) thousands of years ago. Scattered to the four winds, they carry with them an unquenchable hatred for Set and his vampiric brood. In the wake of the Red Star and the signs of the End Times, many of the tribe feel that if the Striders are to reclaim their home, it has to be now. A decade, a year, or even a month from now might be too late.

But the Silent Striders are not alone. Other tribes of Garou have taken up protectorates in Khem, and stand ready to help the Striders win their war. That, at least, is what they say. But Egypt has a strange effect on some Garou, driving them towards goals that they never knew they had. Likewise, Egypt has long been a stronghold for the Mokolé and the Bubasti, and the Ratkin are no strangers to any large city. With such a large population in such a small space, even races that usually avoid the Fera sometimes rub shoulders with them. These meetings are sometimes profitable, but more often end badly.

How to Use This Book

The Year of the Scarab is a series of books examining the Middle East in the World of Darkness. **Rage Across Egypt** can be used in conjunction with these books (especially **Cairo By Night**, the Year of the Scarab book for **Vampire: The Masquerade**) or by itself as fertile chronicle material.

Whether you are a Storyteller wishing to run a chronicle set in Egypt, or a player who simply wants more background on the Silent Striders' homeland, **Rage Across Egypt** provides complete information about Egypt in the World of Darkness. Herein you'll find information on the Garou of Egypt (not just the Striders) and their current activities; the Wyrms' activities in Khem; and information on the Egyptian Mokolé and Bastet.

More specifically:

- **Legends of the Garou: How Nephthys Lost Her Soul** is the story of Khepri Leaps-the-Dunes and how he discovered the most terrible punishment the Garou can inflict on a transgressor, as told by Samir the Jackal, the Galliard Who Speaks 'Til Sunrise.

- **Chapter One: The Ancient Land** is a history of Egypt from both human and Garou perspectives. Obviously, the werewolves have abandoned Egypt for some time, but the country hasn't waited for them.

- **Chapter Two: Up from the Sands** contains information on the cities, septs, and caerns of Egypt. The geographical information on mundane Egypt has

been written with the interests of Werewolf characters in mind, focusing on potential historical side notes and ecological concerns.

- **Chapter Three: Wolves of the Desert** details the various involvement of the twelve tribes in Egypt, plus information on the Stargazers and their interest in the land. Significant members of each tribe especially suitable for integrating into a chronicle are also given attention.

- **Chapter Four: Storytelling in Egypt** is an overview of how best to use the information in this book. It includes particularly relevant information on the secrets of the local Garou, the subplots ready to break into full stories, and even a few extra story hooks.

- **Chapter Five: Children of Apep** is a chapter full of antagonists. Banes, Black Spiral Dancers, the machinations of Pentex, the Leeches — the Garou of Egypt have their work cut out for them.

- **Appendix One: Cat and Crocodile** focuses on the current state of the two Fera races most relevant to Egypt: the Bubasti, the shadowcats of Khem; and the Mokolé who once swam the waters of the Nile.

- Finally, **Appendix Two: Spirits of the Land** details several of the indigenous spirits of Egypt, as well as a few spirits suitable for use in other lands.

Theme and Mood

The theme of **Rage Across Egypt** is reclamation. While the Silent Striders obviously lost the most when Set conquered Egypt, several of the other tribes had home and family here as well. Now, after so many thousands of years, the Garou are prepared to retake the land of Khem. They know the road will not be easy and that many warriors will fall, but such is war.

Note, however, that the vampires do not think of themselves as usurpers or invaders. Indeed, the Followers of Set (Egypt's predominant clan of vampires) think of Egypt as *their* ancestral home, and would be surprised (or at least amused) to learn that a mob of Lupines thinks that it has some prior claim. And since both sides have history in the country stretching back into ancient times, who is to say which side can truly lay claim? In the end, the spoils will go to the army strong enough to take them.

The mood of this book is endless mystery. A deeper level of intrigue always beckons, and the native supernatural beings of Egypt never seem to find the answer. Thousands of years of supernatural intrigue have left layers after layers of secrets and unanswered questions scattered about the region, bewildering and enticing those who come into contact with them. From the Bubasti's insatiable hunger for knowledge (reflected by their curse of endless physical hunger) to the Silent Striders' eternal wan-

derings, to the mummies' endless travels through the worlds of the living and the dead, a solution only ever leads to other enigmas.

The theme of reclamation and the mood of mystery work nicely together. Consider: even if the Silent Striders find a way to end the Curse and retake their homeland, what then? Certainly, not all of the woes that Egypt has suffered since their exile can be blamed on the vampires. Other menaces lurk beyond the dunes and in the streets. And enemies would not be the only trials to face: several Egyptian caerns that the Striders may once have tended are now under the control of other tribes. Would the Children of Gaia give up their caern of Solace, perhaps the only one of its type in the world, because the original owners suddenly became able to tend it again? And what of the Silent Striders who wouldn't feel at home in the Middle East? Would they be willing to offer their elders the support they needed to retain a newly regained homeland?

Victory — even reclamation — may be possible. Truth is more elusive.

Lexicon

Ahadi: A non-aggression pact between the Fera of Africa. The Garou, Mokolé, and Bastet have agreed to help each other when possible, and to put old conflicts aside. While the Ahadi is ostensibly open to any member of any Changing Breed, some (notably the Ratkin) have not heretofore expressed any interest in supporting it.

Ali: Ali was a cousin of Muhammad and married to the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. He was elected fourth caliph of Islam but lost his position during warfare and arbitration. The resulting conflict split Islam into the sects that exist today. His followers are called Alids.

Allah: In the Muslim faith, Allah is the Supreme Being, the one and only God. According to Islam, Allah is the same God as that worshiped by the Jews and Christians. Arabic-speaking Christians also use this name when referring to God.

Amenti (or Amentet): The place where the sun set in the west, it became synonymous with necropoli and the entryway to Duat, the realm of the dead.

Anubis: The Greek name for Anpu, jackal-headed funerary deity of ancient Egypt. The Silent Striders claim him as a patron spirit and totem.

Apep/Apophis: In Egyptian mythology, a monstrous serpent that attempted to swallow the sun regularly. Many Silent Striders use either name as a synonym for the Wyrms. Apep is also the name of the

Cultural Sensitivity

Stereotypes about Muslim culture and the Middle Eastern world abound, and few of them are pleasant (or accurate). Readers may find that a few of the characters in this book hold, or even live up to, these stereotypes. This is by no means meant to present the culture in a negative light, and the reader is asked to remember that the characters in this book are 1) works of fiction and 2) quite possibly bigoted and biased. It is the World of Darkness, and the genre presumes a rather low opinion of human nature.

Do chauvinism, spousal, and child abuse exist in the Middle East? Of course they do, and everywhere else in the world, besides. However, **Rage Across Egypt** focuses on (as the title would suggest) Egypt. Simply because these social ills appear in this book does not mean to imply that they are rampant throughout Egypt. The inclusion of the Seventh Generation in **Rage Across New York** didn't mean that we were trying to imply that the average New Yorker is a child-molesting cultist; it's the same here.

A Storyteller running a chronicle set in the Middle East shouldn't portray every man the characters meet as a brutal, chauvinist bastard; any more than she would if the chronicle were set in America. As always, any topic with which the player might become uncomfortable should be treated with caution, respect, and communication. This is, after all, a game, and meant for entertainment.

Wyrmspirit that acts as totem to the Hive of the Thrashing Serpent (see Chapter Four).

Ba: The soul of the deceased. Often depicted as a bird or a human-headed bird, ancient Egyptians believed that after death, there would be a final union between souls and their bodies.

Bubasti: A tribe of Bastet that once bred with the now-extinct Kyphur cats of Egypt. They are all midnight-black in cat form, and share the Striders' implacable hatred for the Leeches (who slew their feline Kin).

Caliph: (from Arabic Khalifa, meaning deputy or successor) The Caliph is the title of the theoretical leader of Islam. The Caliphate is now vacant in Sunni Islam. The Shi'ite sects have complicated beliefs concerning it.

Duat/Tuat: One of the ancient names for the afterworld, the dark realm of death in Egyptian mythology, situated west of the Nile (in later times considered to be beneath the earth). The sun passes

through this place on its return journey from west to east. This underworld is represented by the hieroglyph for a star. It is here that the souls are judged. Silent Striders and other Egyptian Garou often use the term to refer to the Umbra.

Ennead: The group of the nine chief deities of the Osirian cycle in ancient Egyptian myth. They are Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Seb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. The term is also frequently used in Egyptian texts to denote the divine council of gods and goddesses in general.

Gûl: Literally "ghoul." In Arab folklore, gûls are blood drinking, wasting spirits and often none-too-bright. Needless to say, Middle Eastern Garou use this as a pejorative word for vampires.

Hadith: Hadith means communication or narrative. It is a record of individual sayings or actions of Muhammad taken as a model of behavior by Muslims. (pl. ahadith)

Heart Scarab: A scarab figurine, roughly the size of a human heart. Flat on one side and inscribed with spells from *The Book of the Dead*, it was placed on the mummy's chest to protect the deceased's heart so it could be weighed on the scales of Ma'at. Some heart scarabs were magical amulets with arcane powers.

Hieroglyphs: Hieroglyphs were the pictorial/written language developed in Ancient Egypt. Hieroglyphs changed substantially in character and meaning from their creation during the Early Dynastic Period and are roughly divided into five periods: Old Egyptian (approx. 2920-2134 BCE, mostly of a religious or official nature), Middle Egyptian (developed 2134-2040 BCE and in use to at least 1070 BCE), Late Egyptian (used up until 715 BCE), Demotic (the "popular" form in use from the 25th Dynasty through the late Roman Period). Hieratic is a cursive form of the language introduced during the Old Kingdom and was most commonly written on papyri.

Isis: The Greek name for the Egyptian goddess of life, queen of the gods (Ast or Eset in the original Egyptian). To the Silent Striders and Bastet, "Isis" denotes an important historical figure, most probably a magic-worker of some kind; "Ast" or "Eset" refers to the deity herself.

Jann: A Bane, native to Egypt, that drains a victim's willpower by causing horrific nightmares.

Ka: The Ancient Egyptian definition of the spirit and life force of both humans and gods. Ka and ba (soul) form together the immortal elements. When a mortal is born, his ka remains in the world of eternity while his mortal body is alive on earth. When a person dies, he "rejoins his ka." Ka also acts as a protecting



spirit and guards its dead body against the dangers of the after life.

Ka'ba: Ka'ba means "cube" in Arabic. The Ka'ba is the principal shrine of Islam, and is located in Mecca. It is the center of the Muslim pilgrimage and the point toward which all Muslims the world over face to pray.

Khem: Egypt. Also "Khemt."

Ma'at: Cosmic order and balance; in shapeshifter belief, ma'at was once embodied by the Triat before it became unbalanced.

Mecca: Mecca, also spelled Makkah, is the caravan town where Muhammad was born and raised. It is near the west coast of Arabia, about seventy-two kilometers from the seaport of Jiddah and about midway between the northern and southern ends of the Red Sea.

Medina: Medina is another caravan town about 447 kilometers north of Mecca, where Muhammad spent the last ten years of his life and where he is buried. Originally called Yathrib, it became known as Madinat al-Nabi (the City of the Prophet) and hence, Medina.

Muhammad: According to Islam, Muhammad is the prophet of God. He was born in Arabia around 570

and died in 632. According to Islam he was the last of a line of prophets, including many of those of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ.

Mummy: Also called "Reborn." A race of humans made immortal by a powerful rite (which many claim was created by Isis). Most mummies oppose vampires, and some act as allies to the Garou.

Nephthys: A priestess of Eset and Kinfolk to the Silent Striders. She was made a vampire by Sutekh, and then slain by Shu-Horus, an Ahroun of the Striders. Not to be confused with Nebthet, the goddess from which she takes her name.

Naos: The shrine or tabernacle of a god. Many Egyptian Bubasti (and some Garou Theurges) call the room within which they perform their ceremonies by this name.

Nome: An Ancient Egyptian province or administrative region (from the Greek *nomos*, the Egyptians called them *sepat*).

Qur'an: The Qur'an (also spelled Coran, AlQur'an, etc.) is the holy scripture of Islam revealed to Muhammad by Allah. The word Qur'an means "readings" or "recitations."

Greek vs. Egyptian

Students of Egyptology will note that **Rage Across Egypt** uses the Grecian names for most of the Egyptian gods, at least in most cases. "Anubis" is used rather than "Anpu," "Horus" for "Heru," "Nephthys" for "Nebthet," and so on. This style choice is made for two reasons. One is, naturally, that the casual reader is far more familiar with names like Horus and Osiris than Heru and Asar, and reacts more strongly to those names. However, we have also chosen to use the Grecian versions of these names when referring to the supernatural beasts that allegedly inspired the tales of Egyptian gods, and the Egyptian names when referring to the gods themselves (who may take whatever form the Storyteller finds most appropriate, from utter fiction to genuine Incarnae). Thus, if you don't care for the thought that the ancient Egyptians of the World of Darkness worshipped a collection of vampires, magi and other fraudulent "deities," you have the tools to rule otherwise.

Set/Sutekh: In Egyptian mythology, the god of darkness, war, hostility, and foreign lands; eternal rival of Heru (Horus). The Striders hold that Set took physical form in Ancient Egypt as a vampire who conquered Egypt and drove the Bubasti to near-extinction and the Silent Striders into exile. Some Garou believe he still sleeps somewhere in Egypt. Regardless, his vampiric descendants, known as the Followers of Set (or Setites) now hold subtle influence in many parts of the world, typically in such arenas as the drug trade. Both the Silent Striders and the Bubasti detest the Setites (for obvious reasons).

Shabti (pl. Ushabti): Ancient funerary figures buried with the deceased to protect, accompany and guide him through the realms of the dead. The spirits bound to some of these figures still maintain their own existence and agendas.

Sharia: The body of Islamic law. Literally meaning "path," when spelled with a small "s" it is also used to denote a street name.

Shemsu-heru: Literally "Followers of Horus," this is a specific order of mummies, but a respectful Strider term for all mummies.

Shi'a: Shi'a (adj. Shi'i or Shi'ite) is the minority division (10-15%) of Islam. It consists of scores of dissident sects opposed to Sunni Islam and to one another. The name means "party" in the political sense and comes from Shi'at Ali, the party of Ali.

Soul-Drinkers: A race of Banes that stalks the Umbral deserts hunting for Silent Striders. At night, they become solid and hunt in the physical world. They can feed on any being with Gnosis, but seem to be able to sniff out Silent Striders in particular.

Sunna: Sunna means "tradition" and is the sum of sayings and actions of Muhammad as recalled by his companions and followers. As such it is second only to the Qur'an as a source of Islamic belief and practices. Sunna (adj. Sunni or Sunnite) also denotes the mainstream or "orthodox" body of Muslims as opposed to Shi'a.

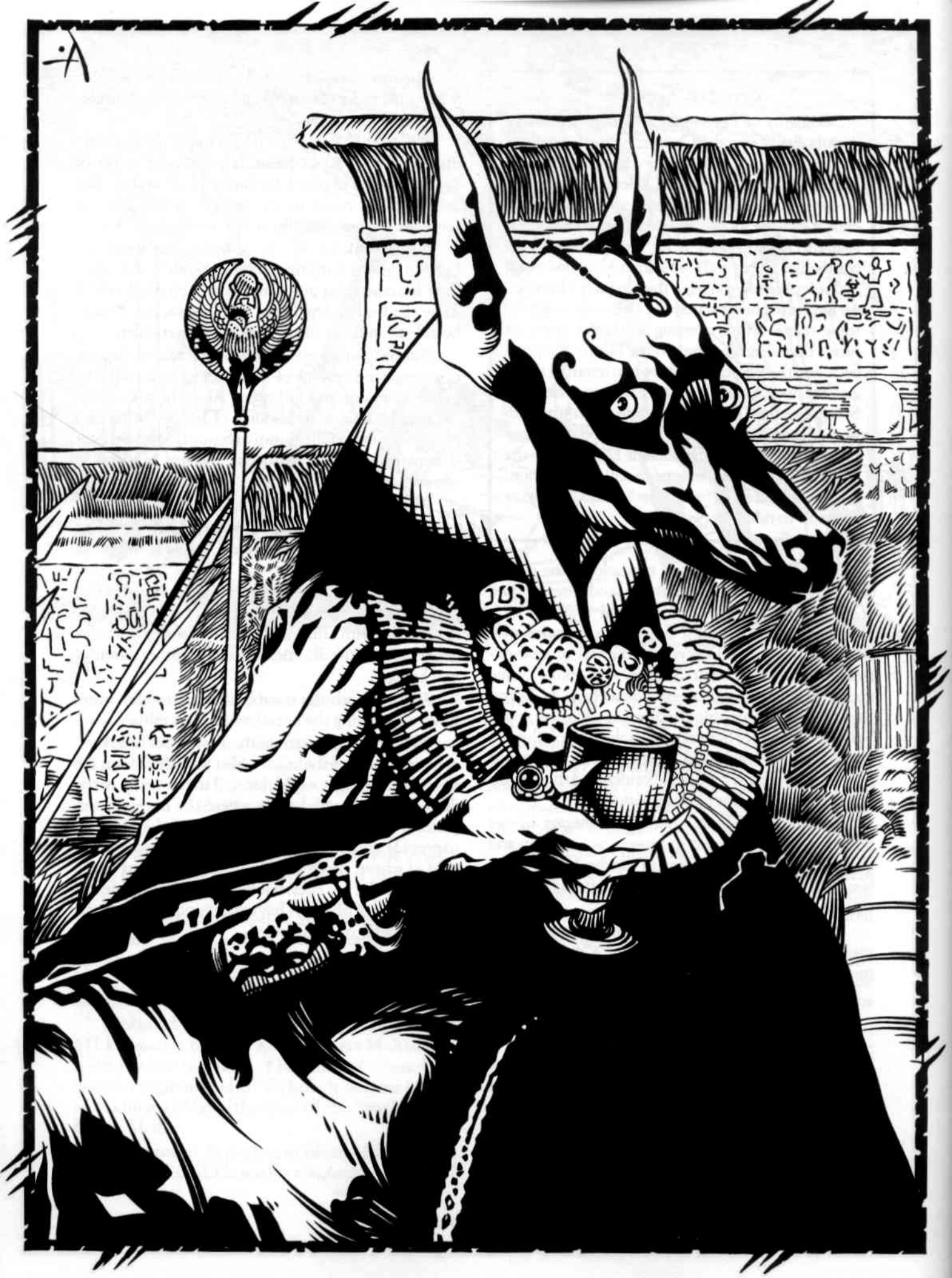
Ta-Mera: "Land of Desire," the physical world.

Ta-tchesert (or Ta-djesart): Literally "The Holy Land," the Silent Striders' Tribal Homelands in the Umbra.

Urthekau: The name for Egyptian supernatural powers. Some Egyptian Garou speak of urthekau interchangeably with Gifts, though they also apply it more generically to the abilities wielded by other paranormal beings.

Wadi: Mostly dry riverbeds through which water flows only during the occasional winter rains.

Yaaru: In Egyptian myth, Yaaru (Sekhet-Aaru, meaning "field of the reeds"; also Iaru, Aalu) are the fields of the nether world, located in the realm of the dead. It is a beautiful place where the deceased can perform their favorite activities. These fields are tilled to provide the dead with food. It is represented as a vast field of wheat, symbol of life. Yaaru is situated in the east where the sun rises, but is sometimes also referred to as a group of islands. They correspond roughly to the Elysian Fields of the Greeks.



Chapter One: The Ancient Land (History)

Let it go. Breathe. Out, out, out.... Let the fire pass from your heart and the red mists leave your eyes. This is a dark place, where past hatreds and stale frenzy echo endlessly and without purpose. It is difficult for those of our kind to resist the rage it evokes in us, so I forgive you for attacking me when I first arrived. Ah, I see the light of reason returning to your eyes. My blade is simple Damascus steel, a keepsake from my Spanish homeland. It is quite sharp, but does not cause lasting damage when I use it to chastise over-enthusiastic pups like you. You summoned me here. Remember? You burned the papyrus roll, containing your hard-earned wisdom, and inscribed the eight-spoked wheel. Sekhet Wheel-Dancer, am I. Once Garou like you, my sister and I have been rendered spirit by our totem, Owl, so that the lore of our tribe would not perish in our homeland. I am twin-keeper of the old lore of Alexandria and banished Lady of the Marble Stair. You are of Damien Mourns-the-Dead's blood, yes? I know of you and your mission here. Few things pertaining to our tribe escape my attention and I have watched you since your Firsting. But let us pass first from this place ere we speak longer; we have too many enemies to afford us careless words. The Citadel of the Western Fire is not far from here for those who know Egypt's airts as I do. Come. Follow.

...

Much better. The Fire Citadel has stood here through storm, plague and war for at least 6,000 years. This fortress is one of four ancient towers, built in the cardinal directions and representing the four-fold elements (at least as they are counted in Western mysticism). The northern Tower of the Etesian Wind appears sporadically in Tanta's Penumbra, while the southern Citadel of Midnight Waters belongs to the Bubasti and sits along the Nile just over the Sudan border. I have only heard rumors of the eastern tower representing Earth, for its location is beyond our knowledge. Powerful mages erected them in the earliest reaches of Egyptian history to bind and direct Khem's spiritual energies, or at least so the legends say. The mages are long gone, however, and the Western Tower now serves our tribe's purposes. It stands on the border between the Penumbra and Duat, what you call the Dark Umbra, the realm of the restless dead. The fire it represents is the fire of dispersion and to walk into it is to die.

Ah, but perhaps I am getting ahead of myself. You have come to your land of ancestry to reclaim it from our enemies of old, and with Gaia and Allah's help you may accomplish your ends. Do not look so surprised. Though I have chosen not to don the veil, I have been a Muslim since my birth in the 15th century. A belief in the Celestines of our pantheon and a belief in the God of the Qur'an are no more a contradiction than a shared belief in the same God of the Bible or the Torah, despite

what you may have heard from others. But you have not come to hear me philosophize. You require knowledge to complete your mission. That is why you summoned me here, is it not? We are not a subtle species, we children of the wolf, but Egypt is a subtle land. Even from the earliest times, survival here has been more a matter of cunning than of brute force, a contest some would say that we Garou are ill fitted to win. But then, we are learning. I have discovered much in my five centuries as the caretaker of Alexandria's lore and there is much I can teach you. There is far more to the Wyrms' age-old involvement in Egypt than the pathetic plots emanating from Cairo's corporate offices. But, we must hurry. The wheel will soon turn and take me from this place, so listen carefully....

Cosmogonists

You have heard the tales of our kind before and I will not waste much of your time delivering a course on comparative religion. Nevertheless, Khem is a complex realm and there are things you must know. Before the pharaohs, before the first tribes, or even the first fish crawling from the sea, there were Celestines such as Gaia and Helios, and the three forces of the Triat. These are the old stories of our kind and they describe the old ways well enough. But they are not the only legends, as those who live long in Egypt soon learn. Let me then propose an alternative story, or more precisely, in the beginning, three.

Yes, the ancient Egyptians had three tales of how the Tellurian began. The first came from the city of Yunu near modern Cairo — what the Greeks called Heliopolis (the city of the sun). The second, superceding myth rose from Memphis while a third universe sprang from the myths of Hermopolis. The first story begins with a great sea of formless possibility. Call it the chaos of endless Wyld without the parameters set by the Weaver, or perhaps it was stagnant order with only the potential for creative chaos. Call it the womb of Gaia or the unordered scattering of free electrons after the Big Bang if you are of such a mind. The Ancient Egyptians called it the goddess Nu or Nun, a primordial deity encompassing an endless sea of inert water. Indeed, in their belief this sea never ceased to exist, but remains surrounding our Earth, the skies and the very cosmos. The Ancient Egyptians lived in fear that this twilight sea would one day come crashing back in, drowning the ordered world of man. But I am getting ahead of myself....

From this void, bootstrapped into existence by his own will, rose the god Atum, the demiurgic creator of the world as we know it. Atum is also the predecessor to the sun god Re, or Ra, or as we call him, the Celestine Helios. The primeval ground upon which he stood was called the *Benben* which, perhaps not too surprisingly in the Heliopolitan cosmology, still exists in Heliopolis. This legend then relates how he masturbated the twin god and goddess, Shu and Tefnut (often represented as

lions), along with the rest of reality into existence — an image more one of sacred creation than the licentious or even ridiculous image it may suggest to modern listeners. This was not the only creation myth, however. Memphis, a powerful political capital, developed a tradition that held Ptah, not Atum, as the true creator of the cosmos. Ptah, they believed, spoke everything (including the before mentioned Atum) into existence in an act of demiurgic creation similar to that found in the Book of Genesis. But hold, we are not done yet.

In Khemnu, Hermopolis to the Greeks, the creation myth took on an almost scientific exactitude in its concern for the nature of the primordial matter. An energy known as “flood force” offset the stagnant waters of Nu. Also two other forces, “darkness and concealed dynamism,” were part of the mix. Did I say “scientific”? This is not surprising, for this tradition evolved into the myth that brought forth the god Thoth (Hermes Trismegistus to the Greeks), who represented the first form of organized magic in Egypt, perhaps even in the world at large — a tradition that would soon cause us no end of trouble.

How the Wolf Came to Egypt

Are wolves native to Egypt? Perhaps. Perhaps not. Certainly there have never been many of our kind in the desert realm, and fewer still in modern times. Still, we were somewhat ubiquitous in the rest of Africa and we Garou have always had the will to move our packs along when hunting grew thin. One need look no more further into Egyptian mythology than the lupine “god” Wepwawet to know that the ancient Egyptians had experience with wolves. Although we Striders have always been the most itinerant of Gaia's lupine children, Egypt was the one place we would call home. Despite what you may hear from others, our ancestors are the only Garou truly native to the Nile.

Eventually stories of growing gatherings of apes along the Nile reached the ears of Garou in surrounding lands. We came from near and far, finding rich hunting grounds. The Nile itself was a blessing to those around it, a force of the Wyld, but tempered by the then benign Wyrms of Balance. This Wyrms' Ouroboros, for such many of us considered the Nile with its predictable yearly cycle, flooded and then receded, depositing its rich layer of silt on the surrounding planes. Indeed, some among us still believe that, if there is any spiritual fragment left by the original Wyrms of Balance, it may reside along the Nile. We wolves observed this Edenic plane, watching over the growing cities from the surrounding dunes or going among the people to learn more. This was something new... Garou had watched over humanity for millennia before civilization emerged as such, but still we noticed how the apes, touched by knowledge gleaned from Grandmother Weaver, learned to speak, to build and to kill.

Gods and Monsters

Is your head about to explode yet? Perhaps it would help if I told you that many of these competing visions, like so many other creation myths, are the result of politics — overt and subtle, human and supernatural. The ancient Egyptians had a habit of “syncretizing” their deities. They’d blend one god with another to form deities who encompassed multiple metaphysical concepts. Alternatively their reasons were more political and pragmatic; they would mix local gods from the various *nomes* to create a new god to keep everyone happy. Where else but Egypt would you get composite deities with names like Ptah-Seker-Osiris? (That one in particular encompassed the properties of all three gods: creation, stasis and the afterlife.) Among the vast profusion of deities in the Egyptian pantheon, there were few genuine gods (though some, such as the Celestine Re/Helios would qualify), but there were plenty of monsters.

Vampires, potent spirits and even we Garou spawned human cults for our own purposes. Are you familiar with Anpu — Anubis, God of the Dead? Notice the family resemblance? As far as I know, there never was a specific entity who spawned the Anubis myth, but centuries of our tribe being spotted here and there in Crinos form — dimly remembered through the Veil — was enough to get the image burned into the Egyptian psyche. Of course a few vampires have tried to cash in on the archetype since that time. We Garou can only lay claim to a small, but important, portion of Egypt’s mythology. After all, with such creatures as our ancient nemesis Sutekh (known in the West as Seth or Set) laying false claim to godhead, the struggle for the Egyptian soul was a complex affair, ultimately not winnable by any one faction. Even today in the Umbra, you will find Incarnae, Jagglings and even a few potent Gafflings with pretensions to godly status.

This was the reason for the Impergium, was it not? Humanity spread too far, too fast, killing excessively and depleting the old hunting grounds. But we wolves never numbered many in the Nile’s fertile delta, and this was seen as the rightful realm of the Bastet and other Fera. Wild packs of those Garou that would soon become Red Talons were alone in attempting to control humanity’s numbers in Egypt. Despite their tenacity (or, perhaps, fanaticism) in this regard, they were never able to bring the Impergium to the fevered pitch it reached in other nascent centers of civilization. The Impergium proper ended sometime before Egypt became a major place of civilization, but the fact that it was never enforced here probably gave the Nile civilization a head start.

Egypt’s population grew in numbers, learning the ways of agriculture, science — and magic. Of course, they were helped along a little in this regard. The Bastet had a certain fascination with the apes from early on — as did, admittedly, some Garou. Far more important to the development of civilization in the Nile, however, were the machinations of the undead. They were few in number back then, but individually wielded vast power. The oldest gûls no doubt saw the world as a hostile place and, given their need for human herds and vulnerability during the day, sought to gather humans around them in ever-greater numbers. Our legends tell of an ancient city openly ruled by the gûls somewhere in the Western Desert, though tales of that wicked place are mere rumors to even the wisest of our lore spirits. The Western Desert retains a dark and dangerous reputation to this day. But, with or without their aid, humanity’s numbers grew upon the verdant plains of the Nile.

While it is true that we Striders were the first and most numerous tribe to gather along the Nile, we were not alone. Beside the previously mentioned Red Talons, there were those Garou whom we called “Warders of Apes,” or simply Warders. These predecessors to the modern Glass Walkers had already demonstrated their fascination for humanity and its Weaver inspired toys, so the rumors of cities of humans growing in the desert presented an irresistible pull to the artificers. At about the same time, wanderers from the Children of Gaia (most likely from Mesopotamia) discovered the Nile region and may, along with the Warders, have served as a force to blunt the Impergium.

So too, the silver-furred leaders of the Garou nation sent some of the most discerning of their number, from both Africa and the cold lands of the north, to watch the situation and decide what must be done. These Silver Fangs, who would soon constitute House Wiseheart, claimed mates among the region’s chieftains as is their custom. Say what you want about the tribe’s failings these days, and much of it is deserved; back then we had good reason to trust in the leadership tribe. Further, even to the present, House Wiseheart has arguably done more to earn the other tribes’ respect than any other Silver Fang family. Among other things, they were the only Silver Fangs not to participate in the War of Rage. This was partly a tactical decision in Egypt (where our numbers were few and engaging the other Fera in combat would have been near suicide), but those of Wiseheart have always pursued accommodation with the other Fera for spiritual and ethical reasons as well.

Finishing out the first wave of Garou entering the region were the Bone Gnawers. In the early cities of ancient Egypt, those of this tribe first went from being the lone wanderers at the outskirts of the village fire, to dwelling among the slaves and the dispossessed at the



city's heart. It was, perhaps, the tribe's earliest experiences here — and their subsequent disenfranchisement when Egypt became a captive domain for thousands of years — that has embittered the Egyptian Gnawers even beyond what you see in that tribe throughout the rest of the world. Many Egyptian Gnawers are of an unwholesome variety and recent events may have made things far worse. Enough of that for now. We are speaking of ancient history and it was in Egypt that we Garou first had a vision of the world that was to come.

The War of Rage

In Egypt the War of Rage was more a sideshow than anything else. I suppose a cynical take on this may be to say that there were too few wolves to pursue such a war effort, so Khem's Garou chose a path of accommodation in order to survive. Perhaps more pragmatic than cynical, I can nonetheless say that Egypt's Garou were never as ideologically driven as they were elsewhere in the world. House Wiseheart deserves some of the credit here. While the leadership of the tribe was whipping up the blood rage against the Fera in other parts of the world, House Wiseheart maintained its cool. It's interesting that some say the Silver Fangs' madness stems from Gaia's curse in the aftermath of the war, since House Wiseheart displays

less in the way of Harano than the other houses. Our tribe too had little interest in partaking of the madness that was ongoing in the rest of the world. This isn't to say that we didn't take part in hostilities elsewhere, but we had no particular bad blood against the other Fera here. At least one Egyptian tribe, the Red Talons, did make some feints in the conflict, but it never even approached the mad pitch it reached throughout the world at large.

Sakhmet

Do you know the tale of Sakhmet? No? She was Simba, one of the lion tribe, and I am sure that one of their number could do this tale better justice — if you could follow their maddeningly subtle manner of speech. This tale is of importance to the Garou for three reasons. The first, because it spells out for us how most of us are strangers to this land when compared to some of the other Fera. The other two? Well, you shall see in a moment. Sakhmet was a warrior queen among the Bastet's preeminent warrior tribe and, unlike most Bastet, she was far more enamored of the solar Celestine Re than of Gaia or Luna. The citizens of Ancient Egypt soon came to know her as a fiery agent of divine destruction, an avenger goddess known as the "Eye of Re." In this guise she was a vengeful aspect of the usually benevolent goddess Hathor (who

The Bastet

The Bastet have always been far more numerous than we Garou in Africa, and Egypt has been a special stronghold for them from time immemorial. After all, the collective name for the werecats, "Bastet," was no doubt the genesis for the Egyptian goddess Bast. (Most casual scholars think of her as having the head of a domestic cat, but she was originally portrayed as a lioness.) Go for a walk in any Egyptian museum exhibit and you'll see just how enamored of cats the Ancient Egyptians were. Most Bastet are not the warriors that we Garou are, but they are sneaky and some of them (especially the remaining Egyptian variety) are potent magicians. They typically revere the Celestine Luna with the same high regard that we hold for Gaia, while viewing Gaia as a relatively minor figure in their pantheon.

Many modern Bastet view even native Striders as outsiders. I understand their reasoning to some extent. After all, when Set's curse drove the Striders from Khem and the other tribes followed, it was mainly the cats (and a few other Fera, most notably the Mokolé and the now-extinct Nagah) who prevented the country from falling completely to the gûls and other pawns of the Wyrms. Things have been somewhat better between us since the adoption of the Ahadi, however, so you may find cooperation with them more easily than in the past. Most of them still distrust us "dogs" because of the War of Rage, but some still make useful allies if properly approached. Remember, they've been here longer and more consistently than we have, and they know their way around. Bottom line, the werecats are more numerous than we in Egypt, so if some no-moon night you decide to entertain yourself by chasing cats down the Cairo alleyways, be careful: Those cats may well have friends you don't want to scrap with.

By my count, there were four sub-species ("tribes" if you can use such a word with creatures as loosely affiliated as the cats) in ancient Khem, though only one is prominent at present.

- **Bagheera:** No, there are not any leopards in modern Egypt, but one of the earliest Egyptian deities was Mafdet, "The Lady of the Castle of Life." Her form was feline and, many speculate that of a panther. She was noted principally as a destroyer of snakes and scorpions. A few foreign Bagheera have appeared in Egypt from time to time, but they rarely stay long.

- **Bubasti:** These "shadowcats" never left Egypt despite hard times. They are, I have found, a mixed bunch. They are undoubtedly the most potent "Theurges" among the cats. This can make them potent allies if you can manage it, but it also leads some to make unhealthy pacts with both Banes and the undead. The last Bubasti I met attempted to summon and control me as one might treat any common dune spirit — a mistake I let him live to regret. Although they've never been particularly fond of Garou, they also realize that there are far worse things to contend with. I have spoken with a few of them who see our recent return to Egypt as a positive event. They have been pressed hard over the millennia since our departure and on the losing end of most entanglements with Set and his progeny. Indeed, I hear the Setites have captured a few Bubasti and their Kin for amusement. This gives the shadowcats an incentive to aid us with magic and advice, but be wary; they are not above attempting to wind us up and send us against their enemies while they watch safely from the shadows. Cats...

- **Simba:** There are no lions in Egypt's modern borders, but this was not always so. Arensnuphis, Bastet, Dedun, Maahes, Mahes, Menhit, Mihos, Sakhmet and Satet, just to name a few, were leonine deities held sacred by the ancient Egyptians. The Simba mainly came through Upper Egypt as part of the "Nubian connection," and some of them (most notably Sakhmet) played a major role in Egypt's earlier history. Far more recently, the Simba Black Tooth made several forays into Egypt, causing a good deal of commotion among Cairo's vampires before his death. You may still find a few of his followers lurking about.

- **Swara:** Before gun-toting colonialists overran the Nile in the 19th-Century, there used to be cheetahs in Egypt. I've heard tales of Swara along the Nile's banks, but have not seen one since the 1700s. There have also been persistent, if unsubstantiated, rumors of actual cheetahs in the Western Desert's Qattara Depression. If so, I suppose it's possible that some Swara may be there too. Since Qattara is one of the most dangerous places in Egypt, however, I wouldn't give two piasters for their chances of survival. If any remain along the Nile, they stick to those Penumbral regions that still maintain some of the river's ancient, more verdant attributes.

some among us consider an aspect of Gaia herself). She was also the "Lady of Pestilence" who could send plague

and disease, but at the same time was revered as a healer of these ailments — a paradoxical goddess indeed.

As the story goes, in an episode of godly paranoia, the sun god Re came to believe that humanity was plotting against him and sent his avenging eye against the human race. Sakhmet, maddened by her charge, descended from the heavens and slew almost all of humanity before Re thought better of his command. After some difficulty, he restored her to her more benign aspect (reportedly by tricking her into drinking vast quantities of beer colored red to look like blood). The intoxicated goddess abandoned the slaughter and humanity was saved.

Myth. Yes? Perhaps in part. Substitute "all of humanity" for the "people of pre-dynastic Egypt" and you may have a better idea of the power levels involved. I have asked numerous lore spirits about this and here is what I've pieced together: Sakhmet was a real historical entity and in fact somehow garnered abilities from the Celestine Helios, making her an avenging avatar of his might on Earth. The barriers between the Umbra and Ta-Mera were thinner then than they are today. A crimson Penumbra sun shone over Egypt for almost a full week, day and night, as Sakhmet battered down the defenses of the ancient villages, incinerating and mauling her victims in an ecstatic orgy of bloodlust.

I can only imagine the gûls' fear and surprise at such a strange phenomenon. They used to move about the night with little fear, for what could challenge such creatures? Potent though most individual vampires were back then, even they would have been poorly suited to resist such an onslaught as some of them were caught unawares in this week of midnight sun. I understand that a favorite childe or grand-childe of Set himself, died in the first night of the slaughter. Others went hungry in Sakhmet's fiery wake as many of their human "herds" were incinerated or flayed alive, their precious blood draining onto the dusty streets. Nor can I say what actually happened to Sakhmet in the aftermath of her carnage. Perhaps she came to her senses as the tales say, or perhaps, over-charged by carrying the power of a Celestine, she burned herself out. Ah, but I promised you two more reasons for why this matters to us today. First, of course, Set and his brood took a special interest in the Bastet (and by extension, we Garou) from that night forward; no small matter that soon became. The other? Let us just say that it proves a cautionary tale when discussing the archetype of the avenger goddess — especially as it pertains to our dark Kin, Nephthys. Curious? Then let's move on.

Castles Made of Sand

The Impergium a thing of the past and the War of Rage only a distant rumor, Lower and Upper Egypt united into a contiguous political entity. It was in those early days of pharaonic Egypt that we Garou first had an inkling of what bad tidings were born by civilization's advance. First and foremost, we saw how the Weaver

grew. In the beginning it was merely a curiosity to many Garou; after all, it was isolated to a single area and most of the world remained strongly within the domain of the Wyld. Encouraged by the Warders, the other tribes in Egypt allowed civilization to prosper, perhaps as a controlled experiment, but now we began to reap the consequences. In the past, if a village grew too large or upset Gaia's balance, a pack of her Garou avengers would sweep into the town, culling the most aggressive hunters and fertile breeding stock from their ranks. Now, with large numbers, stone buildings for defense and organized supernatural entities (human and vampiric) claiming the cities as their private demesne, we suddenly found such tactics ineffective.

Strange new spirits entered the surrounding Umbra. Many of them were of the Weaver and began to spin their webs far and wide. Remember I said how many Garou once considered the Nile to be, in part, an aspect of the Wyrms of Balance? Then it should come as little shock that the poisoned spirits of an increasingly maddened and malevolent Wyrms — at least locally trapped in the Weaver's webs — first made themselves known in the land of the pharaohs. Certainly it is no accident that the serpent god Apophis became a perennial nightmare to those who strode the Umbra. I have heard alternative tales explaining this creature, but to me it is unlikely that Apophis and the Wyrms are anything but synonymous. Corruption feeds upon itself and soon all kinds of monstrosities flocked their way to Khem, drawn to Apophis like moths to a darkling flame. Even today some of the oldest and most potent Banes make their home in Egypt.

Also into this mix appeared another force. Human mages, long known to us as wild shamans, began to codify their magics in a new and troubling manner.

Dynastic Rule

In pharaonic Egypt, House Wiseheart cut their silver fangs on leadership, as did we Silent Striders (though we played the role of vizier far better than that of pharaoh). With notable exceptions, however, neither tribe was able to get too firmly ensconced in the royal power structure. There were just too many other interested parties, including human mages, vampires and the Bubasti. Earning their name, House Wiseheart quickly learned to pull strings in the royal court without exposing themselves — a trick even the gûls took some time to learn. The Silver Fangs' totem, Falcon, has been strong in Egypt from the beginning. Indeed, the first pharaoh, Menes, credited with joining Upper and Lower Egypt, was the chief of the so-called "Falcon Clan" and Kin to House Wiseheart.



Whether they gathered in the cult of Thoth or in other secret cabals, this new breed of will-workers began to cut a swathe through the formerly sacrosanct realms of the Wyld, ordering it to fit their whim. They built four great towers in the Penumbra to bind and direct the powers of this land. Additionally, one of the main tenets of Egyptian magic involved the pursuit of immortality, either in this life or the next. Some mages used their magics to fuse human and animal spirits into totems to guard and serve them in the afterlife. Many of these "Shabti" spirits have survived their creators and still pursue their own agendas. So too, the gûls took advantage of the ancient pharaohs' desire for life ever lasting, using their potent blood to bind vassals to their service. Nor were we Garou immune to Duat's siren call; it is no coincidence that we Striders and those Fangs of the Ivory Priesthood (which has its origins in Egypt) are the only Garou with experience in the Dark Umbra. The distance between the Penumbra and the necropoli of the restless dead was always smaller in Khem than in almost any other region of the world.

Finally, ever in opposition to the vampires, rose the Shemsu-heru, commonly known as the Undying. These immortal beings apparently arose from the blood feud

between Set and another potent vampire, Osiris. You have heard the tale of how Set murdered his brother Osiris, and how Isis and her sister Nephthys gathered his body and resurrected him. I cannot pierce the veil of myth that surrounds this particular legend, despite we Striders' close connection to Nephthys, but the tales tell how Osiris and Isis's son, the hawk-headed Horus, somehow spawned the Shemsu-heru to battle against Set and his minions. We Garou have had cause to ally ourselves with the Undying from time to time and they have earned our respect, if not our full trust.

Do you see how forces converge in Egypt? In a country so densely populated into a few miles along each bank of the Nile, and with such rich prizes at stake, how could it be otherwise? Garou and magi, vampire and Shemsu-heru, even in those early times, the pressure of so many forces in so small a region escalated to explosive proportions. Unfortunately, as events would soon prove, the game could go on without us.

Nephthys

Our legends typically date this tale to the tumultuous years of the 13th Dynasty. The wild Hyksos had invaded much of the Nile Delta from without, in part

backed by supernatural agencies of whose identity I am still unsure. In any event, this invasion managed to disrupt many of Egypt's already ancient power structures and particularly rattled the undead. Old Sutekh himself wandered openly for the first time in centuries — though our oracles say that he was oddly bereft of much of his ancient power. We Striders, ever a thorn in his side, once again became targets in a manner unprecedented since just after Sakhmet's rampage. Against even a weakened Set, we were hard pressed to defend ourselves. If anyone could rally such a defense, however, it was Shu-Horus. Shu-Horus was, perhaps, the greatest warrior and leader in our tribe's history, and furthermore we Garou had allies that even Sutekh did not suspect. One of these was the "goddess" Nephthys.

Born Strider Kin many centuries before, Nephthys had not "bred true" as the saying goes, and one might have predicted that she was destined to play no more than an honorable but supporting role in our struggle. But then one would not have known Nephthys.... Crossed by Fate, our Kinswoman had pursued other avenues of magic. Over time she gained a reputation as a goddess, but she nonetheless countenanced no temples being built to her, as did some of the other supposed gods of the old pantheon. She had become a master in the spheres of life and death and prophecy, unnaturally prolonging her life for centuries uncounted and walking paths in Duat unknown to even our wisest lore masters. Although such magics as she wielded were suspect to us, she continued to support our tribe, and we took full advantage of her wisdom and power.

Shu-Horus was as close to her as any in our tribe had been in generations, but even he did not know that the magics that had so long sustained her life had begun to fade. If he had known this, perhaps he still would have asked for her aid against Sutekh (for our need was desperate), but then again he might have thought better of it. In any event, her magics and her lore gave Shu-Horus the power to wound old Set and his clan in a manner they had not experienced before — vengeance was not long in coming. Injured and enraged, the ancient serpent struck out against the woman who had loosed the arrow against him. Some of our tales tell how she battled Set blood and spell to the last, others that she willingly offered her throat to the serpent's bite. In either case, her other magics reportedly left her even as she gained life everlasting. Shu-Horus met her one last time, along the banks of the Nile and, injured to the core by her fate, slew her to restore her soul to Gaia's grace.

It is said, however, that Nephthys was not grateful for this release. Our legends hold that it was this act of kin-slaying, and her dying curse, that effectively banished our tribe. Perhaps, or perhaps Set, puissant in the ways of spirit lore (at least for a *gûl*), played an active role in fulfilling her curse and poisoning the well for us. At any rate, within

a couple of generations, we found that we could no longer "rest" or recoup our spiritual energies while in our native land; our centuries of enforced wandering had begun.

But wait, there is one thing more. You have heard the tale of Khepri, of how his quest to put her soul to rest may have merely bound her all the more closely to her deathless sire. But then Nephthys was also a seer of no small talent and it seems likely that she could have seen, at least in part, the patterns that surrounded her death. If such is the case, as Owl has foretold, then the time of her return as a new sort of avenger goddess may be nigh. We may soon witness the genesis of one not magi nor vampire nor restless dead, but something that transcends all three. Perhaps she will still be in some manner the thrall of Set, though my feeling is that the old serpent may have set in motion events that even he cannot fully control. This might provide our tribe with a moment of dark mirth and some small revenge, but then her last words were a curse for our perceived betrayal of her. This matter has occupied the thoughts of our tribal leadership for millennia now, but if the portents are true, our time of waiting may be at an end.

Diaspora and Empire's End

You already know how the war with Set ended. Somewhere during the war, he learned the names of the elders of our tribe, and using those names, he cursed us with the power of a god. No more could we rest on the soil of our native land; nightmares tore at us if we tried. So we became the Silent Striders in truth, setting out on roads that would never again lead us home for long.

By the beginning of the so-called New Kingdom, there were few Striders who could stay any length of time in Egypt and hope to survive. Fortunately we were already used to wandering, but this had always been instinct rather than necessity. Now we were scattered to the winds, but ever we planned for our eventual return. Egypt, meanwhile, continued on without us. Go ahead, stick your hand in the Nile and then pull it out again. How long does it take for the water to close in on where your hand was? We Striders left slightly more of a mark than that, but such places are hidden now, either in ancient tombs or in the Umbra. The other tribes made the best they could of the situation, but without us they were badly outnumbered. By the time the Egyptian Garou received fresh blood with the arrival of the Greek-born Furies during the 26th Dynasty, we Striders were mostly a faded memory in Khem. We entrusted some of our caerns to the remaining tribes, but others fell to our Bastet competitors and to covetous magics.

Egypt witnessed the turn of the millennial seasons. It passed from the center of civilization, to regional importance under control of the Nubians, Ethiopians, Persians and the Ptolemaic Greeks, and finally to colonial status under Rome. With the ascendance of Rome, even the

Shemsu-heru left Khem. Their reasons may have been sound — Egypt, after all, had become provincial, seemingly unimportant in the grand scheme of things — but with their departure went any hope of stemming vampiric domination. I've heard that one vampiric faction battled another as Western vampires tried to take power from the native variety, but Set's brood still seems to hold the balance of power, especially in the south. (Most Garou can be forgiven for not giving a damn what sort of Leech is sucking their blood.) Even with our intermittent aid, the remaining tribes lacked the knowledge and the will to do much more than survive. From the rise of Rome to the dawn of the modern era, the Wyrms has slithered into the vacuum left by the Garou often uncontested. The other Fera, outside of a few strongholds, largely failed to stem this spreading darkness.

The Black Furies found a home in Alexandria and formed a mystery cult that has somehow managed to survive through the present. Rumors of their collusion with local non-Setite gûls are persistent and troubling, but I've never seen any proof. House Wiseheart maintained a tenuous existence throughout the centuries with the aid of spiritual allies, but they have wisely never depended on Egypt as their main power base. Most of the Warders moved on to greener pastures once the center of ancient civilization shifted to other lands, though a few returned once Arab rule returned Egypt to a preeminent position during the Middle Ages. In the intervening centuries, drawn by Egypt's reputation for arcane lore, a few Stargazers and even a Shadow Lord or two made brief sojourns here in the hopes of gleaning wisdom or power from the ancients. Perhaps not surprisingly, however, it was the Bone Gnawers who best survived, even thrived, in Egypt's hostile supernatural climate. Some less charitable than I may ascribe this success as much to dangerous pacts with Cairo's Ratkin population, and even worse creatures, than to their native abilities.

The Return of the Wolf

And so Egypt was without Gaia's warriors — or at least, any number of them — for generation upon generation. But times do change, and sometimes for the better.

Through empire, caliphate and crusade, Egypt's vampiric population was able to maintain their preeminence for over 2,000 years, but there was one thing they could not prevent. Progress, so often our enemy, also helped open Egypt to us once more. In the last two centuries, under cover of the growing influx of foreigners, Garou from various tribes began to build their numbers in a manner unprecedented since the time of the pharaohs. Certainly we Striders played no-small part in encouraging this migration, not that it was all that difficult to do. We dropped a few hints here and there that Egypt was a vast storehouse of hidden treasures that would aid the

Garou Nation in its war against the Wyrms. This is no lie, so the manipulation involved is minor, especially since we've been straightforward about the dangers involved. Of course, our tribe was still relegated to the fringes by Set's curse, so we've been cast in the unenviable position as crass manipulators trying to get others to do our dirty work. Fortunately we've proven ourselves enough in other tribes' wars that we've earned a few favors.

Starting with Napoleon's invasion in the late 18th century, our cause caught fire among certain segments of the Garou population, especially those younger wolves with something to prove. Their numbers increased sharply in the second half of the 19th century as improved transportation and Egypt's importance in regional affairs again became apparent. We got a smattering of Fianna during the British Occupation, and some Get of Fenris arrived during subsequent German forays in the region (though Garou of those two tribes often came as colonialist oppressors and were not necessarily disposed to help the native Garou).

Because of population pressures and the small amount of living space in Egypt, this resurgence could not go unnoticed by the gûls forever. We crossed swords as early as the French invasion, and the number of "incidents" between us increased more-or-less in tune with the growth of our numbers, though we were outnumbered by at least five to one in those days and moved cautiously at first. Meanwhile, I don't think that the vampires realized just *how many* Garou were coming here. This was in part because most of us were too busy dealing with other Wyrms spawn in the Penumbra and getting the lay of the land to engage the gûls. This pattern continued more-or-less unchanged for about 150 years, with us carving out a niche for ourselves, trying to smooth things over with the other local Fera and staging the occasional day raid on an exposed vampire's lair.

Of course, the gûls have long memories, so our conflict reached a slow burn that only intensified over time. By the early 1900s they had pretty much figured that our numbers were up and that we were making a play for the region. Fortunately the infighting that goes on at your average moot is nothing compared to what goes on between the gûls. Most of them would sooner be throated while trying to outwit us on their own than to trust each other. This seems particularly true in Egypt with Set's tribe spreading mistrust and corruption as is their wont. Nevertheless, in 1952 we got a major reminder of just how dangerous they can be when they get their act together.

Black Saturday (January, 1952)

After two world wars and decades of false starts, independence was finally at hand for Egypt. People were taking to the streets to demand that the British withdraw once and for all. Students and the Muslim Brotherhood



undertook a guerrilla war against them in the Suez Canal Zone, and things escalated from there. The British attacked an Egyptian police barracks at Al Ismailiyah, killing fifty Egyptians and prompting the "Black Saturday" riots. The Cairene police got into the act, mutinying against the British as rioting spread to other cities. By July 1952 the Free Officers had seized power from King Faruk and formed the Revolutionary Command Council. That's how things played out, at least as far as most people know. As you are aware, however, such episodes sometimes camouflage events that don't make the history books. Few such events, I have found, occur because of direct "supernatural" manipulation — by either us or other paranormal agencies — but a lot of the times we'll hitch a ride on major social dislocation to carry out operations that we wouldn't contemplate during calmer times....

His name was Shukri Lightning-on-the-Dunes. It was, all things considered, a fitting name for the Glass Walker Theurge who had been so successful against the Wyrmspaw who had followed in the trail of Rommel's Afrika Corps a few years before. I counted him among my few friends, but his studies always pushed the envelope in a dangerous fashion. Unfortunately, as is so often the case with such men, the brilliant mystic had little

appreciation for the limitations of intellect. He sought hidden lore in the Western Desert, a place that has long been taboo for Egyptian Garou, and with good reason. His first few expeditions unearthed some interesting artifacts, but then he disappeared in 1943 and was not seen again for seven years.

Upon his return he was vastly changed. Thin as the sickle moon and considerably aged, he nevertheless seemed to crackle with spiritual energies. He claimed to have wrung enlightenment from the forbidden desert. His first "disciple" was his cousin, a charismatic young Philodox named Youssef, who was no doubt partly responsible for Shukri's impending celebrity. While there were skeptics, within a year Shukri had ascended to near messianic status. It was a heady time for Egypt. Shukri's rhetoric and promises of victory struck a deep chord among many Garou, especially gaining him disciples among the Bone Gnawers, though at least two Fenrir and a trio of urban Talons also joined his cause. (Ironically, his own tribe largely dismissed him as a desert-addled primitive.)

Shukri promised his adherents a major victory against the Wyrms, and in Egypt — when one speaks of the Wyrms — one is often as not speaking of the undead. One could not fault Shukri's reasoning in this respect. The gûls had

stolen our birthright and no Garou would truly be able to call Egypt home again until their reign was at an end. But we Striders knew the price of moving precipitously. Now, we knew, was not the time. Both House Wiseheart and we hotly contested Shukri's course in several moots, but to no avail. A growing schism developed among the tribes, and Shukri's followers closed themselves off to develop their plans. I met him one last time after his return and he asked me, as a friend, to aid his cause. Wise Owl, however, had prophesied disaster for Shukri and those swept up in his religious fervor æ an event that could prove catastrophic for all of Khem's Garou if things went awry. I tried to caution him against his course, but he would not listen. He left cursing me for a coward and a fool; I never saw him again.

Shukri had gathered about 20 Garou for his crusade. One of his follower's Kinfolk was placed high enough in the military to gauge the prevailing political winds. When the British police's actions ignited riots in Cairo, Shukri and his associates were ready. The initial action occurred in Cairo as sections of the city went up in flames. The operation went smoothly at first. As riots broke out on the 26th, the raiders managed to destroy several gûls. Operating, almost inexplicably, solely by night, the raiders seemed to wrest the sunless hours from the gûls. Killing over half a dozen vampires the first two nights, and at first without any deaths among his own followers, Shukri swiftly gained a reputation as an untouchable warrior-prophet. The third night, however, he killed several more gûls, but lost one of his warriors as well — Youssef. As things would turn out, this was an ill omen of things to come.

Despite his holy reputation, in some circles rumors had circulated that Shukri was an agent of the Wurm, or at least one of its pawns. I discount this theory, but certainly what happened next couldn't have caused more harm than if he had been a traitor from the start. By the fourth night, the undead had evidently realized what was happening and had either pulled up stakes or were laying traps of their own, killing three more Garou (including a Wiseheart observer who strayed too close to the action). Shukri, meanwhile, was mad to avenge his cousin — his mystic's reserve giving way to his werewolf Rage. Most of the gûls he had killed so far had been fairly young (at least in vampire years) and this, apparently, made him even more headstrong. Abruptly Shukri and his followers pulled up stakes from Cairo and grabbed a late night flight to Alexandria where their "true target" lay.

Alexandria had been the Black Furies' dwelling place since antiquity and, right or wrong, they had largely foregone engaging the region's gûls in favor of targeting its ubiquitous Banes. The Furies had ignored Shukri's crusade as a Cairene phenomenon and were surprised to say the least by his arrival. Shukri and his followers had

chosen a particularly potent gûl for their final target, one whose death, they hoped, would largely fragment Lower Egypt's vampire population — and one against whom, some speculate, Shukri had a personal grudge.

The details of the Alexandrian raid are obscure; there were no reported survivors. Shukri and his adherents attacked the creature and its followers in their lair. No one knows exactly what happened next. Apparently Shukri and his warriors killed a number of gûls, but Alexandria has always been a stronghold for the undead. The attackers were simply overwhelmed by the ancient Leech and its minions, though subsequent activities indicate that at least one very old vampire died in the attack. Several Garou warriors were evidently taken prisoner and were tortured to death, their corpses turning up uncomfortably close to the Fury caern. I shudder to think what sort of information the gûls tore out of their prisoners. It is a matter of some concern to us that a number of portents have indicated that Shukri himself was the lone survivor of the raid, ignobly abandoning his disciples to their fate and fleeing back into the Western Desert. The truth of this matter, or whether he still lives these 50 years later, is a matter of hot debate in some circles. Accusations that he was the Wurm's pawn from the beginning persist. Despite the number of gûls killed during the riots, this was clearly a loss for us and should serve as an object lesson about moving prematurely in Egypt.

Today

In the aftermath of Black Saturday, vampiric countermeasures have weakened the Garou as a whole. We lost many good warriors (no matter how misguided) during the riots, and several more to retributive strikes in the years that followed. Our numbers have always been so small in Egypt that such a loss crippled us for decades; we're only now beginning to recover. No tribe was untouched, but it was the Bone Gnawers who suffered the greatest damage in numbers. After these events they closed their ranks, avoiding even the few contacts they had maintained with the Glass Walkers and the Children of Gaia.

Further, the backlash from the raid opened the Alexandrian Furies to retribution, their sept shrinking to almost half its pre-1952 strength. The Furies were, to put not too fine a point on it, furious at the Cairene tribes for allowing their sept to be dragged into the battle zone without their consent. Unsurprisingly, recriminations have continued to the present. Accusations of Wurm taint are a common invective they've aimed against Cairo's Bone Gnawers, though truthfully there is more evidence to this charge than just that coming from the aggrieved Furies. The damage to inter-tribal unity has, perhaps, outstripped even the loss of numbers. House Wiseheart lost prestige for its perceived lack of leadership in preventing the raids, though in truth there

is little they could have done. To the extent they were involved, the Red Talons have largely retreated back to their Upper Egypt holdings and we Striders have lost valuable allies in retaking our homeland.

Meanwhile, despite a continued growing influx of foreign Garou, our fortunes have been spotty over the last 50 years. A few successes against major Banes and the recent recovery of an ancient Strider artifact have been offset by sporadic clashes with the undead. Despite the setback of Black Saturday, most tribes' numbers have climbed steadily from the 1960s through the present. Fortunately, most of these foreign Garou don't bare the grudges left over from the '50s, though the natives often try to infect them with their prejudices. Perhaps once we Striders may have balked at the idea of inviting even our fellow Garou hither-and-yon into "our" land, but most of us recognize that without their aid it will remain forever closed to us.

Two things more, for I sense the Umbral wheel beginning to turn; I will soon be called from this place to I know not where. Over the last few decades, we have improved our relations with some of the nation's other Fera (the recent Ahadi helps immeasurably). The Children of Gaia and the Stargazers have performed no small service in this matter and it is vital that nothing occurs to damage these growing ties, especially our growing rapprochement with the Bubasti. Despite this good news, however, our enemies still sorely outnumber us. I understand that the vampire "prince" of Cairo has, in part, made his reputation by keeping Garou out of the city. He lies, of course; we are there, and in growing numbers, but the gûls still outnumber by as many as three to one, so we've kept a low profile since Black Saturday. Nevertheless, there are many of us who live for the day we can pull him out of his sarcophagus and show him just how successful he's been.

Finally, we Striders have suffered a major blow in the past year. Banished from Egypt, we nonetheless held onto our homeland by a tenuous spiritual reed. Ta-tchesert, our Umbral homerealm, has been the heart of our tribe since near the beginning. Rarely visited, because of its remote location in the far reaches of Duat, it nevertheless served as a spiritual anchor for our dispossessed tribe. In the last year, however, a great maelstrom of some sort swept through Duat, smashing the old airts and dispersing Ta-tchesert's inhabitants to the four winds. My sister, keeper of old Alexandria's lore, lies stricken in her tower while I—once guardian of the hidden roads—have been cast to the winds, unable to return home or to stay in any one place for long. The air is thick with storm clouds at this, the beginning of the 21st and, perhaps, final century. Egypt was in many ways the birthplace of civilization and at this dark corridor end of history, it may be Egypt where we find the answers to save it.

Human History

Even a comprehensive timeline can only give the barest hint of the scope and flavor of Egypt's truly ancient history. Exact dating of the Egyptian dynasties is impossible; the chronology shown here is only one of several used by historians.

Ancient Egypt

Little is known of the earliest Egyptian settlements, though some evidence indicates the first cereal grains being cultivated there as early as 15,000 BCE, in the late Paleolithic or early Neolithic era. Near-Eastern Neolithic tribes build up the first farming communities around 6500 BCE, soon developing agriculture, religion and hieroglyphic writing.

Predynastic Period

Upper Egypt

Badarian (4500-4000 BCE): The Badarian people live on the Nile in the El-Ham-mamiya, El-Matman, El-Mostagedda, and the cliffs of the El-Badani. Living in hide tents or huts, they are skilled farmers and crafters.

Naqada I (4000-3500 BCE): Amratian. The people of this cultural sequence are located from Dier Tasa to Nubia, including Heirakonpolis, Naquada and Abydos.

Naqada II (3500-3000 BCE): Gerzean. A semi-nomadic cultural sequence ranging from the Delta to the Nubian border, this grouping includes traders, artisans and metallurgists (copper, gold and silver), and develops advanced cultural institutions and traditions.

Lower Egypt

Faiyum A (4400-3900 BCE): A migratory culture on the northern shores of an ancient lake in the Faiyum district. The Faiyum people survive by farming and fishing.

Merimde (4300-3700 BCE): A site on the western edge of the Nile Delta, the people of this culture build semi-subterranean residences.

El Omari (3700-3400 BCE): Located near the Wadi Hof, between modern Cairo and Helwan, very little is known of this tribal grouping.

Ma'adi (3400-3000 BCE): Located over a large area northwest of the El Omari sequence location, the Ma'adi people are farmers, rudimentary metallurgists (copper) and traders with contacts reaching Naquada II, and even the Mediterranean.

Early Dynastic Period (3000-2686 BCE)

1st Dynasty (3000-2890 BCE): Menes (Nafirmer) unifies the separate kingdoms of Lower and Upper Egypt, establishing his capital at Memphis. This period witnesses trade with Mediterranean cities, the development of irrigation and the calendar.

2nd Dynasty (2890-2686 BCE): Rebellions and wars continue as Khafsekhemwy completes the unification process. Osirian cults become popular.

Old Kingdom (2686-2181 BCE)

3rd Dynasty (2686-2613 BCE): Also called the Pyramid Age, the Third Dynasty reaches a high level of achievement. The age is associated with Chancellor Imhotep, adviser and architect of Pharaoh Djoser. Northern Nubia comes under Egyptian domination.

4th Dynasty (2613-2494 BCE): By the Fourth Dynasty, there is a grand vizier or chief minister who heads every government department. Snofru builds the first true pyramid. His successor, Khufu, builds the Great Pyramid at Giza. Nubian and Libyan campaigns expand Egyptian borders.

5th Dynasty (2494-2345 BCE): The power of provincial lords increases, particularly in Upper Egypt. Art and architecture flower.

6th Dynasty (2345-2181 BCE): Nubian expeditions increase. Unrest brings about the collapse of the central administration. A century and a half of civil war ensues.

First Intermediate Period (2181-2040 BCE)

In the absence of central authority, feudal landowners take control. This period of decentralized rule and confusion lasts from the Seventh through the Eleventh dynasties.

7th Dynasty (2181-2173 BCE): Memphite Dynasty.

8th Dynasty (2173-2160 BCE): Period of noble territorial rule.

9th Dynasty (2160-2130 BCE): Herakleopolitan clan unites.

10th Dynasty (2130-2040 BCE): Instructions written for Merikaref, a code of pharaonic leadership.

11th Dynasty (2133-2040 BCE): Theban Dynasty. Inyotef clan rules as contemporaries of Herakleopolitan kings. Thebans begin war to regain all of Egypt.

Middle Kingdom (2040-1786 BCE)

The reestablishment of a powerful central government during the Twelfth Dynasty briefly re-institutes the patterns of the Old Kingdom.

11th Dynasty (2040-1991 BCE): All of Egypt. Mentuhotpe II defeats the Herakleopolitan king.

12th Dynasty (1991-1786 BCE): Amenemhet I assumes the throne. Faiyum is restored with hydraulics. Forts are built to the Third cataract of the Nile; the canal is restored at the first cataract. Copper and gold mines are discovered. The Middle Kingdom ends with the conquest of Egypt by the Hyksos, the so-called Shepherd Kings.

Second Intermediate Period (1786-1567 BCE)

13th Dynasty (1786-1633 BCE): The nomadic Hyksos (Semitic nomads) break into the Delta from the Northeast and rule Egypt from Avaris in the eastern Delta.

14th Dynasty (1786-1603 BCE): Hyksos rule. Xois line of kings.

15th Dynasty (1674-1567 BCE): Hyksos rule. Horse, chariots, shaduf (an irrigation device) and bronze weapons introduced.

16th Dynasty (1684-1567 BCE): Hyksos rule.

17th Dynasty (1650-1567 BCE): Theban kings rule over Upper Egypt. Campaigns begin against Hyksos rule. Nubian mercenaries are used in the army.

New Kingdom (1570-1085 BCE)

During the New Kingdom, Egypt reaches the peak of its power, wealth and territory.

18th Dynasty (1570-1320 BCE): The country is liberated from the Hyksos and unified by Ahmose (1570-1546 BCE). Amenhotep I (1525-1504 BCE) opens the Valley of the Kings. Thebes becomes the capital. Through the intensive military campaigns of Pharaoh Thutmose III (1490-1436 BCE), Palestine, Syria and the northern Euphrates area in Mesopotamia are brought into the New Kingdom. Queen Hatshepsut (1473-1458 BCE) is particularly devoted to the worship of the god Amun, building temples to him and to her own funerary cult at Dayr al Bahri in western Thebes. The cult of the sun god Ra becomes increasingly important, culminating in the proto-monotheism of Pharaoh Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV, 1364-1347 BCE). Akhenaten and his wife, Queen Nefertiti, move the capital to Amarna (present-day Tel el-Amarna). Akhenaten's successor, Tutankhamen (1347-1337 BCE), returns Egypt to the old ways. Akhenaten's new city is abandoned to the desert sands. Horemhab (1319-1307 BCE) further expands the empire.

19th Dynasty (1320-1200 BCE): Ramessids regain lost land, but clashes with Hittites. Ramses II (1290-1224 BCE) is the most vigorous builder to wear the double crown of Egypt. Nearly half the temples remaining in Egypt date from his reign.

20th Dynasty (1200-1085 BCE): Pirates, Sea Peoples and Lybians are defeated. Priests of Amon attempt to usurp the throne. Under Hittite pressure, Egyptian power declines at home and abroad. Egypt is once more separated into Upper and Lower kingdoms.

Third Intermediate Period (1085-712 BCE)

21st Dynasty (1085-945 BCE): During the Twenty-first Dynasty, the pharaohs rule from Tanis (San al Hajar al Qibliyah), while a virtually autonomous theocracy controls Thebes. Egyptian control in Nubia and Ethiopia ends.

22nd Dynasty (945-730 BCE) and 23rd Dynasty (817-730 BCE): Libyan rule.

24th Dynasty (720-714 BCE): There is prosperity and a cultural revival, accompanied by large scale Greek settlement.

25th Dynasty (770-712 BCE): The pharaohs of the Twenty-fifth dynasty are Nubians and Ethiopians.

Late Dynastic Period (712-332 BCE)

The Late Period is the last era during which ancient Egypt functions as an independent political entity.

25th Dynasty (712-657 BCE): The pharaohs of the Twenty-fifth dynasty are Nubians and Ethiopians. The dynasty encompasses all of Egypt. The Assyrians defeat the Ethiopian King Taharka and then sack both Thebes and Memphis.

26th Dynasty (664-525 BCE): The Twenty-sixth Dynasty is founded by Psammethichus I, who ejects the Assyrians with the help of Greek mercenaries and makes Egypt a powerful and united kingdom — the last great age of pharaonic civilization.

27th Dynasty (525-404 BCE): Egypt becomes a province in the far-flung Persian (Achaemenid) Empire.

28th Dynasty (404-399 BCE): With Greek help, Egypt regains an uneasy independence.

29th Dynasty (399-380 BCE): Internal crises. The delta remains the center of power.

30th Dynasty (380-343 BCE): Internal crises.

31st Dynasty (343-332 BCE): The second Persian occupation.

The Ptolemaic Dynasty (323-30 BCE): Alexander the Great defeats the Persians at the Battle of Issus in 332 BCE and becomes king of Egypt, founding the city of Alexandria. Alexander dies of malarial fever in 323 BCE. Ptolemy I Soter (323-282 BCE) adds Cyrene, Palestine, Cyprus and parts of Asia Minor coast to the realm, and constructs the great museum and library at Alexandria. Ptolemy II (282-246 BCE) builds the lighthouse at Pharos. Under Ptolemy III (246-221 BCE) Alexandria reaches its height of splendor. A canal to the Red Sea is opened and Greek sailors explore new trade routes. During Cleopatra's reign, Egypt again becomes a factor in Mediterranean politics. After her defeat at Actium in 31 BCE, Cleopatra chooses to die by the bite of an asp.

Roman and Byzantine Rule (30 BCE - AD 640)

With the establishment of Roman rule by Emperor Augustus in 30 BCE, more than six centuries of Roman and Byzantine control begins. According to some Christian traditions, St. Mark brings Christianity to Egypt in AD 37-45. The Coptic Church in Alexandria is founded in approximately AD 40 and spreads throughout Egypt by the second century. Septimius Severus's edict of 202 dissolves the Christian School of Alexandria and forbids future conversions to Christianity. In 212 Rome gives the Egyptians citizenship in the empire. A renaissance of imperial

authority and effectiveness takes place under Emperor Diocletian (284-305), who also launches a violent persecution of Christians known as the Era of Martyrs (303-306).

In 312 Emperor Constantine (324-337) establishes Christianity as the official religion of the empire. In 313 the Edict of Milan establishes freedom of worship. In 330 Constantine establishes his capital at Byzantium, renamed Constantinople (present-day Istanbul). In 324 the ecumenical Council of Nicea establishes the patriarchate of Alexandria. In 392 Theodosius I declares Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Partition of Roman Empire into East and West (395), notional date for beginning of the Byzantine Empire. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 initiates the great schism, separating the Egyptian Coptic Church from Catholic Christendom.

Medieval Egypt

Note: All dates are according to the Western Calendar.

Arab Rule

For the next two centuries Egypt is a province ruled by a line of governors appointed by the caliphs in the East. Egypt provides grain and tax revenue; most Egyptians convert to Islam, adopting Arabic language and culture.

The Arab Conquest (639-41): Amr ibn al As crosses into Egypt on December 12, 639. In July the Arab and Byzantine armies meet on the plains of Heliopolis. Byzantine held Babylon falls to the Arabs on April 9, 641. Alexandria surrenders in November. The Arab conquerors reinstate the Coptic patriarch. Amr moves the capital south to a new city called Al Fustat (present-day Old Cairo).

Umayyad Caliphate (661-750): With its capital in Damascus, the Umayyad Caliphate rules over a united Arab empire stretching from the borders of China to the shores of the Atlantic and up into France. Shiite dissent, combined with tensions resulting from the incorporation of non-Arabs (Persians and others), into the Islamic community finally brought an end to Umayyad rule.

Abbasid Caliphate (750-868): The Abbasids succeed to the caliphate and rule the Arab world from Baghdad, weakening central control over Egypt. The Abbasid Caliphate declines in the ninth century and local autonomous dynasties arise. Several Coptic revolts occur during this period. Losing direct control of Egypt in 868, Abbasid Caliphate itself eventually comes to an end with the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258.

The Tulunid Dynasty (868-905): Ahmad ibn Tulun, an Abbasid Governor, inaugurates the autonomy of Egypt, greatly reducing the drain of revenue from the country to Baghdad. The Tulunid state ends in 905 when Abbasid troops enter Al Fustat. For the next thirty years, Egypt is again under the direct control of Baghdad.

The Ikhshidid Dynasty (935-969): This autonomous dynasty rules Egypt until the Fatimid conquest of 969. The Tulunids and the Ikhshidids bring Egypt peace and prosperity by pursuing wise agrarian policies, eliminating tax abuses and by reforming the administration. Neither the Tulunids nor the Ikhshidids seek to withdraw Egypt from the Islamic Empire headed by the caliph in Baghdad. (In 909 the Shi'a Fatimid Caliphate is established in North Africa.)

The Fatimid Dynasty (969-1168): The Tunisian Fatimids seek total independence from Baghdad and challenge the Sunni Abbasids for the caliphate itself. Egypt becomes the center of a vast empire, comprising North Africa, Sicily, Palestine, Syria, the Red Sea coast of Africa, Yemen, and the Hijaz in Arabia (including the holy cities of Mecca and Medina). The Fatimids foster both agriculture and industry. Egypt becomes a center of world trade.

Saladin and the Ayyubid Dynasty (1168-1260): In 1168 crusaders attack Egypt and are driven from Jerusalem and most of Palestine by the Salah ad Din ibn Ayyub, known in the West as Saladin. Saladin abolishes the Fatimid Caliphate and reincorporates Egypt into the Abbasid Caliphate. In 1193 Saladin dies in Damascus. Economically the Ayyubid period is

one of growth and prosperity. Egypt becomes a center of Arab scholarship and literature.

The Mamluks (1250-1517): In Egypt the last Ayyubid sultan dies in 1250; Mamluk generals seize the sultanate. In 1258 Mongol invaders kill the last Abbasid caliph in Baghdad. In 1259 a Mongol army enters Syria. The Mamluk Sultan Qutuz defeats the Mongols in 1260. Between 1260 and 1517, Mamluk sultans rule an empire that stretches from Egypt to Syria, including the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. By the fourteenth century, Cairo is the religious center of the Muslim world.

Egypt Under the Ottoman Empire (1517-1760): In 1517 the Ottoman sultan Selim I (1512-20) conquers Egypt, defeating the Mamluk forces at Ar Raydaniyah. Although militarily defeated, Mamluk power remains strong. Struggle between the Ottomans and the Mamluks for control of Egypt — and competition among rival Mamluk houses for control of the beylicate — lasts until the late eighteenth century.

Modern Egypt

The Neo-Mamluk Beylicate (1760-98): Political and military power is consolidated in the hands of the Mamluk Ali Bey al Kabir (1760-66) and his successor,



Muhammad Bey Abu adh Dhahab (1772-75). Ali Bey invades Syria and opens the Port of Suez to European shipping. The Neo-Mamluk Beylicate effectively eliminates Ottoman control and repositions Egypt as a central power. Unsuccessful attempts by the Ottomans to reestablish the empire's control occur (1786-91). Waves of famine and plague hit Egypt between 1784 and 1792.

The French Invasion and Occupation (1798-1801): On July 1, 1798, a French invasion force under Napoleon takes Alexandria, defeats the Mamluk army and enters Cairo on July 25. The French control only the Delta and Cairo; Upper Egypt remains the preserve of the Mamluks and the Bedouins. The British and Ottoman governments join forces to drive Napoleon out of Egypt. On August 1, 1798, the British fleet under Lord Nelson annihilates the French ships at anchor at Abu Qir. On October 21, the people of Cairo riot against the French. On August 22, 1799 Napoleon secretly leaves Egypt. The French forces in Cairo surrender to an Anglo-Ottoman force on June 18, 1801 and in Alexandria on September 3. In the invasion's wake, French scholars publish the exhaustive *Description de l'Egypte* (1809-28), opening Egypt to Western eyes.

Muhammad Ali (1805-48): After the French leave Egypt, hostilities break out between Ottoman and Mamluk forces. By 1805 Muhammad Ali gains dominance and becomes governor of Egypt. In March 1811, Muhammad Ali has sixty-four Mamluks, including twenty-four beys, assassinated. Muhammad Ali greatly expands agricultural and industrial development. His invasion of Syria in 1831, and his attempt to break away from the Ottoman Empire, jeopardizes British regional interests. The great powers (Britain, France, Austria, Russia and Prussia) ally with the Ottoman government to drive Egyptian forces from Syria. A British fleet bombards Beirut in September 1840, and a British naval force anchors off Alexandria. The Treaty of 1841 strips Egypt of all its conquered territory except Sudan. Muhammad Ali loses power in 1848 and dies in 1849.

Abbas Hilmi I (1848-54): Abbas Hilmi I discontinues Muhammad Ali's development plans. The British build a railroad line between Alexandria and Cairo. Regular steamship services link Britain to India via Alexandria, Suez and Bombay.

Said (1854-63): Said revives agriculture, irrigation and education projects begun by Muhammad Ali. In 1854 Said initiates construction of the Suez Canal.

Khedive Ismail (1863-79): Ismail seeks Egyptian independence from the Ottoman Empire. He increases agricultural productivity, chiefly by bringing more land into cultivation through expensive irrigation projects. Roads, bridges, railways, harbors, and telegraph lines are constructed. Towns and cities are modernized with

water distribution, transport, street lighting and gas supply. Public education is reorganized and expanded, and a postal service is established. The army and bureaucracy are expanded and modernized. In short, Ismail constructs the infrastructure of a modern state.

By 1875 Egypt is 100 million in debt. In that year, Ismail sells his shares in the Suez Canal Company, making the British government the largest shareholder in the company. Opposition to European intervention in Egypt's internal affairs increases. The European powers, particularly Britain and France, pressure the Ottoman sultan to dismiss Ismail in favor of his son Tawfiq. Ismail leaves Egypt for exile in Naples and Istanbul, where he dies in 1895.

Khedive Tawfiq (1879-1892): In July 1880, the Law of Liquidation is adopted, limiting Egypt to 50 percent of its total revenues. The rest goes to the *Caisse de la Dette Publique* to service the debt. A secret society of Egyptian army officers led by Colonel Ahmad Urabi comes into existence in 1876. Beginning in 1881, the army officers demonstrate their strength and ability to intimidate the khedive. Urabi joins the government as undersecretary for war. These developments alarm the European powers, particularly Britain and France, who agree on a joint show of naval strength. Violent anti-European riots break out in Alexandria.

In July 1882, the British fleet bombards Alexandria. The British install Khedive Tawfiq in the Ras at Tin Palace. The khedive declares Urabi a rebel and deprives him of his political rights. Urabi in turn obtains a religious ruling, a fatwa, deposing Tawfiq as a traitor, and declares war on Britain. In August Sir Garnet Wolsley and an army of 20,000 invades the Suez Canal Zone and routs the Urabi forces at Tal al Kabir on September 13, 1882. The nominal authority of the khedive is restored, and the British occupation of Egypt begins.

British Occupation (1882-1956)

The khedival government provides a facade of autonomy, but Egypt becomes part of the British Empire (though never officially a colony). Between 1883 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, there are three British consuls general in Egypt: Lord Cromer (1883-1907), Sir John Eldon Gorst (1907-11) and Lord Herbert Kitchener (1911-14). Between 1899 and 1907, at least seven workers' associations are formed, focusing on conditions and pay. The unions, like the nationalist movement, are severely repressed by the government.

In 1906 the Dinshawi Incident intensifies anti-British sentiments. In 1907 two political parties are formed: Kamil's National Party (also known as the Watani Party) and the People's Party (Al Hizb al Umma or Umma Party). The National Party is considered "extremist" because of its demand for the imme-

diate withdrawal of the British, while the Umma Party favors a gradual approach to independence.

World War I: On October 29, 1914, the Ottoman Empire enters World War I on the side of the Central Powers. The British declare Egypt a protectorate, severing the country from the Ottoman Empire. Britain deposes Khedive Abbas (1892-1913), who is suspected of pro-German sympathies. British actions during the war cause widespread hardship and resentment. Specifically, these include Britain's purchase of cotton and requisitioning of fodder at below market prices, forcible recruitment of about 500,000 peasants and its use of the country as a garrison.

The 1919 Revolution and its Aftermath: When the war ends, the nationalists press the British for independence. On November 13, 1918, thereafter celebrated in Egypt as Yawmal Jihad (Day of Struggle), Egypt demands complete independence. In March 1919 the Egyptians form a delegation, Al Wafd al Misri (known as the Wafd), headed by Prime Minister Saad Zaghlul. On March 8, the British arrest the delegation, sparking the popular uprising of March-April 1919 among Egyptians of all social classes. On March 16, between 150 and 300 upper-class Egyptian women in veils stage a demonstration against the British occupation, an event that marks the entrance of Egyptian women into public life. Negotiations lead to the release of the Wafd leaders and a halt to the demonstrations. The subsequent Milner-Zaghlul Agreement in 1921 sets the stage for eventual independence.

Party Politics (1924-39): Political power during this period consists of the king (King Fuad I), the Wafd, and the British. During the 1930s, Ismail Sidqi emerges as the "strong man" of Egyptian politics. He abolishes the constitution in 1930 and drafts another that enhances the power of the monarch. On April 28, 1936, King Fuad dies and is succeeded by his son, Faruk. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 provides for an Anglo-Egyptian defense alliance that allows Britain to maintain a garrison of 10,000 men in the Suez Canal Zone. The treaty produces a wave of anti-Wafdist and anti-British demonstrations. During the 1930s, support for the Wafd is eroded by more aggressive, paramilitary organizations. The Muslim Brotherhood (founded 1928) attributes difficulties in Islamic society to deviation from ideals of early Islam. Young Egypt (founded 1933) emulates Nazi Germany and organizes a paramilitary movement called the Green Shirts.

Egypt During WWII (1939-45): During World War II, supposedly neutral Egypt plays host to many Allied armies pushed out of Europe. In September 1940, the Italian army invades Egypt, but within two months is driven into Libya. In spring of 1941 Rommel's Afrika Korps invades in force, leading to heated com-

bat that see-saws back and forth until Rommel suffers a major defeat at El Alamein (Oct. 23-Nov. 4, 1942). Unexploded landmines remain a danger around El Alamein to this day. The Wafdist government falls in 1944; the elections of 1945 bring a government of Liberal Constitutionalists and Saadists to power.

Cold War (1945-52): Concerned by Soviet expansion, the West sees the Middle East as a vital element in its postwar strategy of "containment," stressing the vital importance of the Suez Canal. In December 1945, the Egyptians request the evacuation of British troops from the country. Britain refuses. Mass riots ensue in Cairo and Alexandria. The British withdraw troops to the Suez Canal Zone. The Brotherhood called for strikes and a jihad (holy war) against the British.

In 1948 David Ben-Gurion establishes the State of Israel in Tel Aviv. Arab armies, including Egypt's, enter Palestine and are defeated, though Egypt takes the Gaza Strip. Scandals ensue over the poor leadership of the Egyptian army. The Committee of the Free Officers' Movement forms in 1949; in 1950 Gamal Abdul Nasser is elected chairman. In January 1950, the Wafd returns to power.

In October 1951, the Wafd party unilaterally abrogates the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, proclaiming Faruk king of Egypt and Sudan. Students and the Brotherhood undertake a guerrilla war against the British. The British attack an Egyptian police barracks at Ismailiya (Al Ismailiyah). Fifty Egyptians are killed, prompting "Black Saturday" on January 26, 1952. The Cairene police mutiny and there are widespread riots.

On July 23-26, 1952 the Free Officers seize power from King Faruk and form the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). On January 17, 1953, all political parties except for the RCC are banned. In February 1953, the Egyptian government agrees to a plan for self-determination for Sudan. The Sudanese opt for independence rather than union with Egypt. On June 18, 1953, Egypt is declared a republic and the monarchy abolished. Nasser outlaws the Muslim Brotherhood in February 1954. By October 1954, Nasser signs an agreement providing for the withdrawal of all British troops. In February 1955, the Israeli army attacks Egyptian military outposts in Gaza. Increasingly in conflict with Israel and the West, Nasser negotiates an arms agreement with Czechoslovakia in September 1955.

Tripartite Invasion: On July 26, 1956, Egypt takes over the Suez Canal, prompting an invasion of Egypt by Britain, France and Israel. On October 28, Israeli troops cross the frontier into the Sinai Peninsula. British bombing destroys the Egyptian air force. Egypt is briefly invaded and occupied. Near universal condemnation of the Tri-

partite Invasion (including censure by both the United States and Soviet Union) forces the three countries to withdraw. A United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) arrives at the Gulf of Aqaba and remains until 1967. Soviet influence in Egypt increases, stemming from Soviet financing of the Aswan High Dam construction and Soviet arms sales to Egypt. Egypt becomes the cornerstone of the Soviet Union's Middle East policy.

Egyptian/Syrian Union (1958-61): A plebiscite briefly unifies the two countries and Cairo becomes capital of the United Arab Republic with Nasser as president.

Egyptian/Yemen Union (1958-61): A plebiscite briefly unifies the two countries as the United Arab States.

1961-1966: In July 1961, Nasser announces a list of nationalizations that continue in successive waves through 1963. In 1962 a military coup overthrows the royalist government in Yemen. Nasser intervenes to support the new republican government against the Saudi-backed royalists. At the height of its involvement, Egypt has 75,000 troops in Yemen. Egypt's intervention lasts until its defeat in the June 1967 War. In 1964, Arab summits in Cairo and Casablanca create the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) with units stationed in Egypt, Syria and Iraq. In November 1966, Egypt and Syria sign a five-year defense pact; the same month Israeli forces cross into the West Bank of Jordan in retaliation for Palestinian guerrilla raids.

The June 1967 War: In April serious Israeli-Syrian air clashes occur over Syrian air space. On May 16 Nasser expels the UNEF. Israel regards this as a hostile act. Jordan and Iraq sign defense agreements with Egypt. On June 5, Israel launches a full-scale attack on Egypt, Jordan and Syria. In three hours, at least 300 of Egypt's 430 combat aircraft are destroyed. Israeli ground forces make a lightning strike into Sinai and by June 8 reach the Suez Canal. By June 11, total Arab defeat gives Israel control over all of historic Palestine, including the Old City of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, as well as Sinai and part of the Golan Heights of Syria.

At an Arab summit in Khartoum in September 1967, Nasser agrees to stop his attempts to destabilize the Saudi regime; Saudi Arabia promises aid to Egypt. Arab proclamation of "the three no's" of the Khartoum summit: No peace with Israel, no negotiations, no recognition. In November, the UN Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 242. This resolution (still not implemented in 2001) calls for Israel to withdraw "from territories occupied in the recent conflict."

1968: In May 1968, Egypt agrees to accept Resolution 242 if Israel agrees to evacuate all occupied areas. By accepting the resolution, Egypt implicitly recognizes the existence (and the right to continued existence) of Israel. In return Egypt gains a UN com-

mitment to the restoration of Sinai. Syria characterizes the plan as a "sellout" of Arafat and the PLO. Israel rejects the resolution. In 1969 PLO leader Arafat's open criticism of the parties accepting the truce leads Nasser to expel many PLO activists from Egypt. Yasir Arafat takes control of the PLO from the Arab League.

War of Attrition (March 1969 to August 1970): The Egyptian artillery attacks Israeli positions. Israel constructs the Bar-Lev Line and uses its air force (American made Phantoms) to silence the Egyptian artillery. By January 1970, Israeli planes fly at will over eastern Egypt, prompting Nasser to request that the Soviets establish an air defense. The Soviet Union sends between 10,000 and 15,000 Soviet troops and advisers to Egypt. Superpower tensions flare, but the Rogers Plan leads to a cease-fire by August 7, 1970.

In September 1970, Jordanian civil war breaks out. King Hussein launches a major military drive against the Jordan-based PLO. Syria sends an armored force into Jordan to support the guerrillas. The United States and Israel offer assistance to King Hussein. Nasser calls for a Cairo Summit to stop the civil war. Jordan decisively repulses the Syrians, although PLO forces are not pushed out of Jordan until July 1971. On September 27, 1970, Hussein and Arafat agree to a fourteen-point cease-fire under Nasser's mediation, officially ending the war; Nasser dies the next day.

Sadat (1970-81)

On February 4, 1971, Sadat signals willingness to sign a treaty with Israel in return for a partial Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. The initiative is rebuffed in Tel Aviv and in Washington. In May, Sadat proclaims the "Corrective Revolution," arresting the vice president and 100 other important figures of the Nasser era, and charging them with plotting a coup against the government. Sadat signs the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation on May 27, 1971 while simultaneously planning to expel the Soviet advisers. The completion of the Aswan High Dam in 1971 and the resulting Lake Nasser alter the time-honored place of the Nile River in the agriculture and ecology of Egypt. On July 17, 1972, Sadat expels Soviet advisers.

October 1973 (The Yom Kippur/Ramadan War): On October 6, 1973, Egyptian forces launch a successful surprise attack across the Suez Canal. The Syrians carry out an attack on Israel at the same time. President Nixon pushes an emergency military airlift of arms to Israel. Saudi Arabia decrees a complete suspension of all oil shipments to the United States. After initial confusion, Israel counterattacks and succeeds in crossing to the West Bank of the canal and surrounding the Egyptian Third Army; Sadat appeals to the Soviet Union for help. On October 22, the UN Security Council passes Resolution

338, calling for a cease-fire. Egypt accepts the cease-fire, but Israel, alleging Egyptian violations, completes the encirclement of the Third Army. On October 24, the Soviet Union threatens that if the United States is not prepared to join in sending forces to impose the cease-fire, the Soviet Union will act alone. The United States responds by ordering a grade-three nuclear alert, the first of its kind since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

A UN emergency force arrives in the battle zone to police the cease-fire. Negotiations toward a permanent cease-fire begin in December 1973, resulting in a partial Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and limiting the number of troops and kinds of weapons Egypt can have on the eastern side of the canal. Israel agrees to withdraw from the Abu Rudays oil fields in western Sinai. Egypt also agrees not to use force to achieve its aims, a concession that effectively makes Egypt a nonbelligerent in the Arab-Israeli conflict. As the price for its agreement, Israel extracts important concessions from the United States which promises to meet Israel's military needs in any emergency, preserve Israel's arms superiority, and pledging not to recognize or to negotiate with the PLO. On June 5, 1975, the Suez Canal is reopened.

In April 1974, Sadat introduces *infitah* ("open door" economics), allowing increased foreign investment in Egypt, greater private sector economic participation and relaxed currency regulations. The leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood are freed along with other political prisoners. In 1975 Sadat permits the establishment of three groupings in the ASU. These express the opinions of the left (National Progressive Unionist Party; NPUP), the right (the Socialist Liberal Organization, SLO; later the Liberal or Ahrar Party), and the center (Arab Socialist Organization). The Wafd, Muslim Brotherhood, Nasserites and communists lack representation. In the October 1976 election, the pro-government center platform wins an overwhelming majority.

In July 1977, Sadat establishes his own party, the National Democratic Party (NDP); the Arab Socialist Organization merges with NDP. Sadat also wants a more pliable left-wing opposition party, so the Socialist Labor Party (Amal) is founded with Sadat's brother-in-law as vice president. Sadat also allows comparative freedom to the Muslim Brotherhood. The movement away from a one-party system matches Egypt's turn away from the Soviet Union and toward the United States. In January 1977, protesting corruption and poor economic conditions, Egyptians take to the streets in the biggest upheaval since the 1919 riots.

Peace with Israel: November 19, 1977, in response to an invitation from Begin, Sadat journeys to Jerusalem. In December 1977, Egypt and Israel

begin peace negotiations in Cairo. On September 17, 1978 Camp David Accords are reached. The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty is signed on March 26, 1979. Israel agrees to withdraw from Sinai; normal diplomatic and trade relations are established and Israeli ships pass unhindered through the canal. A multinational observer force is stationed in Sinai. The Camp David Accords make Sadat a hero in Europe and the United States; in the Arab world, he is almost universally condemned. Arab states suspend all official aid and sever diplomatic relations. Egypt is expelled from the Arab League.

In later years Sadat becomes increasingly autocratic. In September 1981, he orders the biggest roundup of his opponents since he came to power. On October 6, members of the Al Jihad movement, a group of religious extremists, assassinate Sadat.

Mubarak (1981 —)

On October 24, 1981, Sadat's handpicked successor, Husni Mubarak, is overwhelmingly approved in a national referendum. Slowly, parties and newspapers begin to function again, and political opponents jailed by Sadat are released. In April 1982, the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai takes place as scheduled. In 1983 Egypt's isolation in the Arab world begins to end. Arafat meets Mubarak in Cairo. In January 1984, Egypt is readmitted unconditionally to the Islamic Conference Organization.

In 1984 Egypt has its first relatively free elections since 1952; five parties are allowed to function in addition to the ruling NDP: The left-wing opposition consisting of the National Progressive Unionist Party and the Socialist Labor Party. The Wafd resurfaces and one religious party is licensed — the Umma. Not officially represented are the communists, the Muslim Brotherhood, and avowed Nasserites, although all three tendencies are represented in other parties.

In November 1987, an Arab summit resolution allows Arab countries to resume diplomatic relations with Egypt. This action is taken largely as a result of the Iran-Iraq War. On Egypt's side, its economic crisis worsens. In 1991 there is further liberalization and privatization of the Egyptian economy. In September of 1993 Israel and the PLO agree upon mutual recognition. In 1995, after the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin and the election of Binyamin Netanyahu, Israeli/Palestinian intransigence on peace talks increases Arab unrest. In 1997 Islamic terrorists kill 100 tourists in Egypt. In October 2000 increased hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians engenders rallies in Egypt calling for war with Israel and an emergency summit between the two sides in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.



Chapter Two: Up from the Sands (People and Places)

'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

— "Ozymandias," Percival Shelley

Bedecking the plush convention hall, in Arabic, French and English, is a colossal corporate banner reading: "Egypt & Endron: Ancient World—New Hope." The text tops a slick photomontage featuring a smiling pharaoh straight from central casting in Liz Taylor's "Cleopatra," shaking hands with a grinning Arab executive. In the background are a dramatic pipeline shot and a group of smiling fellahin. Even the crocodile, sunning himself on the discarded segment of pipeline that elevates him so obligingly above the Nile shallows, seems blissfully unaware that the same pipeline will soon be rocketing him toward extinction. Everybody's happy.

Normally a place like this would be verboten to a member of the underground press like me, but tonight a dead man's face and papers are the only ticket I need for admission. Looking around, you'd hardly guess that Endron Egypt has just narrowly survived the fight of its political life. Early this year they sank a tanker in the Suez, seriously curtailing traffic for over two months and letting loose a firestorm of criticism. That, paired with the refinery they lost in the Qattara Depression a while back, means it's been

a rocky couple of years for the company. That's all in the past now. The government's blamed the Red Nile terrorists for the tanker crash and Endron has written all the right checks. Say what you want about Endron; the evil bastards know how to throw a party. The bar's open and, Islam or no, a number of guests—mostly officials from the EGPC, mid-level members of the ruling NDP and major shareholders—are busy getting hammered. Wined and dined, and in some cases paid and laid, all of them are here to pay homage to their new god... Apophis.

No, not the ancient snake demon that attacked Re on his nightly excursions into Duat, though the family resemblance is striking. This Apophis is a nickname for the more prosaically titled Aswan-61, the massive pipeline and refinery system Endron's been constructing along the Nile over the last decade. You might call this shareholder's meeting its coming out party. Endron's stockholders have cause to celebrate; after years of public controversy, sabotage and "wildlife problems," it's finally going on-line next month. Over 300km longer and almost twice as wide as the aging Sumed pipeline, it is, if you believe Endron's hype, the

preeminent conduit for Persian Gulf oil to an energy hungry West and the savior of Egypt's economy. It is also a threat to Egypt's antiquities unparalleled since the High Aswan Dam, an aesthetic eyesore and an environmental nightmare waiting to happen. Of course, none of that is important tonight.

...

As things pick up, I sidle over to Jaromir Fakhry's table. Jaromir is Endron's "Environmental Initiatives Officer," a position which, among other perks, provides him with a bodyguard and a table full of toadies to laugh at his jokes. His guard, a heavily armored bruiser with a body by Dr. Veridian, snarls as I introduce myself and sit next to his boss. Jaromir is a fat Cairene of Bedouin extraction. He wears a \$6,000 suit, chain-smokes American cigarettes and has a briefcase securely cuffed to his wrist. He is also a little drunk. After a few more rounds, he lays things on the line for me with a candor I find most refreshing for a PR flack.

"We Egyptians love our history: our temples, our pyramids and, yes, our mummies," he jokes in his corporate language-camp English. "None of that means a damn compared to what Endron offers us. Al-tahdith, 'modernization,' brings real opportunity for those who are smart enough to grab the golden ring. Give us another 20 years and this whole country will look like your American Las Vegas. What's funny is that no one will even remember the old Egypt," he laughs. The line about "memory" sends a chill down my back, but I join the laughter of his sycophant chorus. The lock on his briefcase is the real joke, however, and his massive bodyguard is most heavily muscled between the ears. Nobody notices a thing — not the transfer of papers or the subtle barb that injects Jaromir with nerve toxin as I shake his hand goodbye. The poison won't kill him for almost a month; sometimes my job is so easy, I almost feel ashamed of myself... almost.

— From the journal of Hugo Pale-Dawn, Corax Chaser

Society

Political Freedoms and Human Rights

Constitutionally, Egypt is a social democracy with Islam as its state religion. A closer look, however, reveals a government that — while not, perhaps, as repressive as charged by its most vocal opponents — is far from a fully functioning democracy. Egypt's dominant force, the National Democratic Party (NDP), has governed uninterrupted since 1978, maintaining an overriding majority in the popularly elected People's Assembly and the partially elected Shura (Consultative) Council. The NDP retains a stranglehold on local government, the mass media, labor and the country's massive public sector; it also controls the licensing of new political parties and media outlets.

This means that, in all practicality, citizens do not have a meaningful ability to change their government.

After Independence, Nasser used charisma and coercion to impose a populist style nationalist consensus on Egypt's political arena under a single party, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU). His successor, Sadat, developed a strategy mixing limited liberalization, calls to tradition and repression, allowing a controlled multiparty system. Although opposition parties became legal, they were expected to refrain from "destructive" criticism of regime policy. Indeed, when they refused to play by his rules, Sadat suspended the experiment.

Mubarak generally portrays his regime as both Nasserite and Islamic, while mostly continuing Sadatist policies. In the plus category, the Mubarak regime restored the faltering political liberalization pioneered (and then abandoned) by Sadat, reviving opposition parties and expanding the permissible freedom of political expression. Such, albeit limited, political pluralization is primarily to accommodate the demands of the educated upper and middle classes. Given the continuing passivity and deference of most of the population, these quasi-democratic reforms have been less risky (and more profitable) than engaging in large-scale repression. In the minus column, such egalitarian largesse isn't equally applied. The regime generally accommodates more conservative forces, such as the bourgeoisie and conservative Moslems, while reserving selective repression for leftists, strikers and Islamic radicals.

Political Parties

In Egypt's "dominant party system," small opposition "parties of pressure" on the left and right flank a big ruling party straddling the center of the ideological spectrum.

The National Democratic Party (NDP)

The ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) is a direct descendant of Nasser's ASU, albeit minus the leftist intellectuals and politicized officers who dominated it in the 1960s. It is currently a ruling coalition controlled by law and army officials, bureaucrats, conservative (i.e., non-revolutionary) clerics, big business and the land-owning elite. Thus, the NDP is a conglomeration of strategically chosen special interests, ultimately accountable to no single group, but allowing enough privileged access to maintain their support. The NDP, largely lacking in organization and ideological legitimacy, is more an appendage of government than an autonomous political force.

Opposition Parties

Despite the NDP's monopoly on power, they are no longer the only game in town. Since the 1970s Egypt has

given birth to an array of new political parties. Among the more secular opposition parties are the right-wing Liberal Party, the leftist Khalid Muhi ad Din (National Progressive Unionist Party, NPUP or Tagamu), the center-left Socialist Labor Party (SLP or Amal) and the New Wafd Party. The Islamic opposition is fragmented into numerous factions, each sharing the goal of an Islamic state, but differing in origin and tactics. All the Islamic groups share a rejection of Westernization in the name of an Islamic "third way" that accepts private property and profit, but seeks to contain capital's less egalitarian consequences. Those willing to work through the system are allowed to organize and nominate candidates in parliamentary elections, though no Islamic party, as such, is permitted. Various populist preachers enjoy broad personal followings.

Although Islamic militants are certainly a minority, and even resented by a good portion of the public, their activism in a largely passive political arena gives them greater power than they might otherwise enjoy. The more mainstream Islamic party is the Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimiin (The Muslim Brotherhood) while the more activist Islamic fringe is represented in the Jamaat al Islamiyah (Islamic Associations), an amorphous movement of many small groups. The most radical of these include At Takfir wal Hijra (Atonement and Alienation) and Al Jihad (Holy War). The most extreme groups advocate a violent overthrow of the government in order to create an Islamic theocracy (see Terrorism, below).

Civil Liberties

While the Constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, the government continues to place limitations on these rights. Citizens can (and do) openly voice their opinions on a wide range of political and social issues, including sharp criticism of the government. The government, however, enjoys a monopoly on the printing and distribution of newspapers, including, bizarrely, the opposition press, and occasionally uses this control to stifle dissent. Strict laws stipulate fines or imprisonment for press criticism of the president, members of the government and foreign heads of state. Further, upon obtaining a court order, various ministries are authorized to ban or confiscate books and other works of art related to the Qur'an and Islamic scriptural texts. The Ministry of Interior regularly confiscates leaflets and other "inflammatory" works by Muslim fundamentalists. It also has the authority, which it exercises periodically, to stop foreign materials from entering the country.

Human Rights

Egypt has what one might call a checkered history on human rights. Although its record has improved of

late, it continues to restrict many basic rights. First and foremost in the government's arsenal of tools to manage dissent and maintain control is the "Emergency Law," passed in 1981 in the aftermath of Sadat's death. In fighting terrorism, security forces continue to mistreat and torture prisoners, arbitrarily detain persons, and engage in mass arrests. The penal code contains several provisions to combat extremist violence. These provisions broadly define terrorism to include the acts of "spreading panic" and "obstructing the work of authorities." In actions unrelated to antiterrorist activities, local police have killed, tortured and otherwise abused both criminal suspects and others. While the government takes occasional disciplinary action against these officers, it doesn't pursue most cases or seek adequate punishments.

Both foreign and native human rights groups have reported a number of torture methods. Detainees may be stripped, hung by their wrists with their feet touching the floor or forced to stand for prolonged periods, doused with hot or cold water, beaten, forced to stand outdoors in cold weather or subjected to electrical shocks. Some female detainees report that they have been threatened with rape. Human rights monitors are, theoretically, allowed to council and observe prisoners, but in reality face considerable bureaucratic obstacles. The Government does not, for example, permit the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or the Arab/Egyptian Human Rights Organizations (AHRO/EHRO) to visit prisons. On the other hand, such issues are often a matter of perspective. Egypt, for example, is far less assiduous in practicing the death penalty than America. This, paired with Western colonial and quasi-colonial activities over the years, means that Western calls for human rights in Egypt are sometimes viewed with a certain degree of cynicism.

The Justice System

The Egyptian judicial system is based on British, Italian and Napoleonic models, as well as that of Islamic legal and social codes; hence, there are no juries. The Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic groups have demanded the government adopt *Sharia* (Islamic law). In 1985 the People's Assembly rejected these demands, but supported a recommendation to review all statutes and change the ones that conflicted with Islamic law.

The criminal code lists three main categories of crime: "Contraventions" (minor offenses), misdemeanors (offenses punishable by imprisonment or fines), and felonies (offenses punishable by penal servitude or death). At the village level, an umdah (pl., umada, village headman) represents the central authority and adjudicates minor offenses. Capital crimes that carry a possible death sentence include murder, manslaughter

occurring in the commission of a felony, arson, rape, treason and endangerment of state security. Few of these convictions, however, result in execution.

Courts: There are three levels of regular criminal courts: Primary courts, appeals courts and the Court of Cassation (the final stage of criminal appeal). The judiciary is, at least in theory, independent. The Constitution provides for the independence and immunity of judges, and forbids interference by other authorities in the exercise of their judicial functions. Military or State Security Emergency courts, (in which constitutional protections are not always observed), handle cases involving national security or terrorism. In the last few years, the Government has added lectures on human rights and other social issues to its training courses for prosecutors and judges. In keeping with Islamic law, a woman's testimony is equal to half that of a man's in court. There is no legal prohibition against a woman serving as a judge, but in practice none ever have.

Crime

Minor crimes, such as petty theft, pick pocketing and purse snatching are widespread in the streets of

metropolitan Cairo. In rural areas crime victims generally seek retribution without going to the authorities, especially in cases where the honor of an individual or a family is tarnished. More than half the murder cases in rural areas occur within the family and commonly involve issues of passion, honor or vengeance. Urban areas have experienced sharp growth in the theft of cars and other goods, offenses by women and juveniles, kidnappings, and vice cases. White-collar crime, smuggling, black marketing in currency and other economic offenses are also rampant and escalating. The use of narcotics has become an increasingly serious problem in Egypt. Many people use cocaine or heroin, while others used opium or hashish (which Egyptians have smoked for centuries). Certain factions among vampires have long made a profit in cash and corruption from the drug trade; it is little surprise that they retain a certain control over the trade here as well, where many of them are stronger than anywhere else.

People

Most Egyptians are descended from the successive Arab settlements that followed the Muslim conquest

"The Egyptian State is not going to be overthrown. We always write its obituary, but it has been around for a long time and it is really in the saddle."

— Fouad Ajami, Professor Middle East History

"American Intelligence analysts believe that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt is in grave danger of being overthrown by Islamic fundamentalists."

— Denis J. Sullivan, Professor Middle East History

Terrorism and the Security Apparatus

The level of violence in Egypt as a result of political or criminal activity is below that of many countries of the Middle East. Periodic outbreaks of unrest have occurred, but are rarely on a scale sufficient to threaten the existing political structure. Nevertheless a number of radical Islamic groups clandestinely seek to overthrow the state and to reorder society in accordance with Sharia.

Terrorist Groups

In the Egypt of the World of Darkness, extremist violence continues to grow, especially in Upper Egypt. There are currently two major terrorist cells of note operating in Egypt. One of these, the Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group, IG), exists in the real world, while the second (the Red Nile) is wholly fictional and more heavily influenced by supernatural agencies. Often targeting the police

or other government institutions, both groups also attack the highly valued tourist trade.

Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group, IG): Active since the late 1970s, Egypt's largest militant group is loosely organized. Its actual strength in numbers is unknown, but it probably has several thousand hardcore members and at least as many sympathizers. The organization operates mainly in Al Minya, Asyut, Qena and Sohag, but also has support in Cairo, Alexandria and other urban locations. Its foreign wing maintains a presence in the United Kingdom, Afghanistan and Austria. The IG's activities include armed attacks against the Egyptian government, Coptic Christians and domestic opponents of Islamic extremism. It has launched attacks on tourists in Egypt since 1992, most notably the attack in November 1997 at Luxor that killed 58 foreign tourists. In the West, the organization is arguably most famous for bombing

the World Trade Center and the subsequent arrest of the group's spiritual leader, the blind cleric Sheikh Omar 'Abd al-Rahman. Signatory to Usama Bin Ladin's *fatwa* in February 1998 calling for attacks against US civilians, the organization nevertheless denies that it supports Bin Ladin.

The Red Nile Group: Built on the bones of the defunct Gama'at al-Jihad (the organization responsible for the death of Sadat), this organization has undergone something of a metamorphosis over the past decade. Where once the organization fought ostensibly for the creation of an Islamic state, now — rhetoric to the contrary — the organization is playing the role of agents of chaos. Striking out at Israeli border points, Western tourists, Egyptian security forces and fellow Islamic groups alike (the last of which they have proclaimed as collaborators), they have caused great consternation among both the intelligence and supernatural communities. While most of the group's operatives are clearly mortal, it has become increasingly clear that the organization has been co-opted by supernatural forces. On the one occasion where the group ran afoul of the Garou, they exhibited an immunity to the Delirium and swiftly dispatched their enemy (a visiting Shadow Lord) with silver hollow-point rounds.

Security Forces

There are several security services in Egypt's Ministry of Interior, two of which are involved primarily in combating terrorism: The usually effective General Directorate for State Security Investi-

gations (GDSSI), and the poorly trained Central Security Force (CSF). These security forces have committed numerous human rights abuses, though the use of violence by security forces in the campaign against suspected terrorists appears more limited than in previous years. (This trend, however, may not hold true in the World of Darkness.) Besides those detailed below, other security agencies include the border guard, the Department for Combating Religious Activity, General Intelligence, Military Intelligence, the Ministry of the Interior, State Security Investigations Sector (SSIS) and the Supreme State Security Court (Jihaz Amn al Daoula).

As with the Special Affairs Division in the American FBI, and governmental security agencies in other countries, there are individuals within the Egyptian security apparatus who are aware of the existence of the supernatural, just as there are paranormal entities who seek to manipulate these agencies to their own ends. Most notably, a clandestine department within the GDSSI (the Rosetta Naos) uses government resources to investigate and stymie supernatural activities. As with most such clandestine security organizations, individuals within the shadow cabinet work toward both benign and sinister agendas. The commander of note within the Rosetta Naos is a surprisingly spry for his 70 years ex-army colonel named Jean-Francois Said. Of late, the organization has taken some blows, both in unexplained budgetary cuts and the disappearance of three of its top agents while investigating Red Nile activities in Luxor.

in the 7th Century, mixed with the indigenous pre-Islamic population. The typical Egyptian fellah (pl. fellahin), or peasant, is of mixed heritage and constitute about 50% of the population. Egyptian Copts, a Christian minority who constitute 6-10% of the population, are the least mixed descendants of the pre-Arab population. The Nubians, who live south of Aswan, have been Arabized in religion and culture, although they still speak the Nubian language. Nomads, who live in the semi-desert regions, are composed of both Arab and Berber elements. Small minorities of Italians and Greeks live in the cities.

Egyptians have rightly gained a reputation for being outgoing and friendly. Even in the World of Darkness, their relaxed attitudes, reputation for hospitality and the renowned Egyptian sense of humor manage to shine through. As Egypt comes increasingly under the strain of modernization and overpopulation, however, there is an increasing sense that the once community-minded Egyptians are more and more just fending for them-

selves. Where once few Egyptians would not hesitate to give all to a stranger in need, many increasingly seem content to care only for their own problems. Further, one of the less attractive features endemic in the West — the blind pursuit of wealth to the exclusion of all other considerations — seems to have affected a new (mostly younger) generation of Egyptians.

Religious Minorities

The Egyptian Constitution affords freedom of belief to its citizens; however, the government places clear restrictions on this right. Most Egyptians are Muslim, but 6-10% of the population (depending on whose numbers you believe), belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church. Christianity was purportedly introduced to Egypt in AD 35 by the apostle St. Mark and by the 4th Century it was Egypt's official religion with the patriarchate residing in Alexandria. In 451 the Council of Chalcedon initiated the great schism, separating the Egyptian Coptic Church from Catholic Christendom. For the most part, non-

The information below cannot begin to detail Islam's richness or history. Islam is the world's second largest religion (after Christianity) and Muslims comprise about one-fifth of the Earth's population.

History

Relatively new when compared to its two sister religions, Christianity and Judaism, the history of Islam begins with the Prophet Muhammad. Losing both parents at an early age, Muhammad was raised by his uncle and found work as a trader, traveling with caravans to Syria. At age 25 he married a wealthy widow (Kadijah), their marriage producing a daughter (Fatima). Muhammad soon gained a reputation as an arbiter of disputes between individuals and tribes. According to tradition, at age 40 the angel Gabriel appeared to him in a cave outside Mecca. Muhammad himself was illiterate, and his companions recorded the actual book (the Qur'an) born from these revelations. As Muhammad gained followers, the Meccan elite soon became alarmed by his monotheism, but in 622 the people of Yathrib (later renamed Medina) invited him to settle their disputes. With this action, the Hegira, begins the Muslim calendar. From Yathrib, Islam spread and soon came into conflict with Mecca. Islamic warriors defeated the Meccans in a series of battles, culminating in the city's surrender in 630.

After Muhammad's death in 632, Islamic rule passed to a succession of four caliphs (632-61): Abu Bakr, Umar I, Uthman, and Ali, a period called the Rashidun (rightly guided) Caliphate. The Rashidun Caliphate sparked an impressive territorial expansion of Islam, annihilating the Sassanian Empire, driving the Byzantine Empire out of the Levant, and conquering Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Iran. Islamic rule flowered further under the Umayyad Dynasty (661-750), which ruled an empire stretching from Spain to the borders of India. The Abbasids (750-1258) moved the capital of the empire to Baghdad, where Islamic thought, the arts and literature reached their apogee. At the same time Islam spread among the Turks, who became active in the Baghdad court. From 945 on, however, the rise of regional rulers greatly weakened the caliph's power.

The post-Abbasid Muslim world eventually consolidated into three powerful states: the Ottoman Empire (1300-1922), the Shiite Safavid Empire (1502-1736) and the Mogul Empire (1526-1858). In the 19th Century many Muslim lands fell under the rule of European colonial regimes, only to re-emerge as independent nation-states in the mid-20th Century. Muslims responded to their loss of temporal power and the intellectual challenges posed by the West by re-accessing their history and traditions. Today some argue for recapturing the essence of the Islamic message, but seek to combine the old faith with modern thought. Others advocate a militant defense of Islam and a return to its original values. The majority of Muslims,

however, pursue neither philosophy, but continue to live according to their faith's time-honored traditions.

Foundations: The Qur'an contains 114 chapters (suras) that cover a variety of issues — ethics, history, theology and religious obligations. Varying interpretations have developed different schools of Islamic thought, but the Qur'an itself has remained more-or-less unchanged. After the Qur'an, the Prophetic Traditions are the most important foundation of Islam. Muslims consider Muhammad the messenger of God, and accord him all the reverence that Christians reserve for Jesus Christ. Devout Muslims are supposed to emulate the Prophet's example in every facet of their lives, though obviously interpretation, piety and practice vary from person to person. This is particularly true in the World of Darkness where — as with any faith — the direct and indirect influence of supernatural agencies has served to misguide its practitioners and to warp its most dearly held precepts.

Sharia: The Sharia is the divine law of Islam and encompasses every aspect of Muslim life. Muslims view the Sharia as a guide by which to live, and, more importantly, as the will of God. The Sharia divides all acts into five categories: obligatory, recommended, reprehensible, forbidden and neutral (or permitted). The Sharia is rooted in the Qur'an, the Prophet's sayings (hadith), and traditions (sunna), argument from the consensus of the Muslim community (ijma) and argument from analogy (qiyas). Over the centuries the application of the Sharia has led to the development of a class of experts known as fuqaha (jurists) and ulama (scholars).

Practice: The basic duties of Muslims include: Prescribed prayers (salat) performed five times each day; fasting (sawm) during the month of Ramadan; the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj), to be performed at least once in a lifetime for those who have the means to do it; and the payment of a religious tax (zakat) intended for the poor or works of piety. Some also include "striving in the path of God" (jihad), which is of two kinds: the greater jihad, which is striving against one's soul in attaining spirituality; and the lesser jihad — defending the faith against outside aggression.

Sufism: Islam's mystical path is rooted in the fundamental teachings of the faith, but aims at attaining direct knowledge of God through Islamic teachings. The Sufi path (tariqa) is concerned with the nature of the Divine Reality, how it can be attained, and how to purify the human soul so that it can reflect the Divine Reality. Despite its general acceptance, Sufism is sometimes criticized by more radical or conservative (depending on your definitions) elements within Islam, primarily because some feared the Sufis' quest for personal, experiential knowledge of God would lead to the neglect/rejection of more traditional religious practices. A significant percentage of magi, Garou Theurges, Bubasti mystics and other seekers in Egypt are often adherents of, or at least conversant with, Sufism.

Muslims worship without harassment, though some are subject to violent assaults by Islamic extremists. While security forces arrest those who perpetrate violence against religious minorities (mostly Christians), some believe the government is not sufficiently vigorous in its efforts to prevent attacks or in deterring nonviolent discrimination. Anti-Semitism appears in both the government and opposition press, despite official condemnation by the government.

Family and Kinship

The family remains the most significant unit of Egyptian society. This value is evident from the most essential to the most trivial aspects of life. A husband and wife are not considered a family until they produce their first child. Egyptians reckon descent through their male heirs, and the ideal family is an extended one, consisting of a man, his wife (or wives), sons (and their wives and children) and his unmarried daughters. Younger members of the family defer to older members, and women defer to men. For good and ill, Western influence has had only limited impact on this family structure.

Egypt's laws pertaining to marriage and divorce favor the social position of men. Muslim husbands are allowed to have up to four wives at a time in accordance with Islamic religious custom (though a majority of Egyptian men do not have multiple wives). A new wife usually lives with or near her husband's family, is expected to help her mother-in-law with household chores and is under considerable pressure from her husband and his family until she bears a son. Barrenness is a woman's worst possible misfortune, and not giving birth to a son is almost as bad. Men are the preferred, valued members of the lineage. Women who have only daughters are often disparagingly called "mothers of brides." As a mother's sons mature, her importance increases. A woman is at the peak of her power when her sons are married because she can then exercise influence over her sons' children and wives.

Women's Rights

"I recommend that you treat women with goodness. The best of you are those who treat their wives the best."

— Prophet Muhammad

Despite what many in the West understandably feel to be the second-class status of women in heavily Islamic countries, others note that on a whole list of issues the Qur'an is at least as — and in some cases more — progressive on women's rights than both the Bible and the Torah. From the concept of Original Sin lying more with the woman (Eve), to attitudes about menstruation, bearing witness in court and female inheritance, the Qur'an arguably takes a more enlightened stance toward women than the holy books of





either of its sister religions. Of course, no Muslim society adheres completely to the high ideals of Islam. With respect to the status of women, Islamic law — as interpreted by the male dominated power structure — is hardly in keeping with the Qur'an. Obviously this gap between the religious ideal and day-to-day practice is found within every country and culture, Islamic or not. Nevertheless, this disconnect may seem a little stranger in countries (even ones as comparatively secular as Egypt) that so assiduously claim Sharia as the primary source of their laws and custom. Indeed, it is a widely held precept among Muslim feminists that long-standing cultural and legal traditions have robbed Muslim women of their basic Islamic rights.

Egyptian law broadly provides for equality of the sexes, but aspects of the law and traditional practices discriminate against women. Many Egyptians, especially rural and lower class urban men, believe that women are simply morally inferior. Women are expected to defer to senior male relatives, to avoid contact with men who are not kin, and to veil themselves in public. By law, unmarried women under the age of 21 must have permission from their fathers to obtain passports and to travel;

married women of any age require the same permission from their husbands. Egyptian women do have employment opportunities in government, medicine, law, academia, the arts, and — to a lesser degree — business. Labor laws guarantee men and women equal rates of pay for equal work in the public sector. Social pressure against women pursuing a career is strong, however, and some women's rights advocates fear that recent fundamentalist trends are increasing these pressures.

Domestic violence against women is a significant problem in Egypt (as elsewhere). While neighbors and extended family members generally intervene to limit incidents of domestic violence, abuse within the family is rarely publicly discussed. Several NGO's have begun offering counseling, legal aid and other services to women who are victims of domestic violence. Although the government enforces the 1996 decree banning the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), many families persist in subjecting their daughters to the traditional practice. When "honor killings" (a man murdering a female relative for her perceived lack of chastity) occur, perpetrators often receive lighter punishments than those convicted in other cases of murder.

Geography

Modern Egypt occupies the northeastern corner of Africa, the Sinai Peninsula in adjacent Southwest Asia, and some islands in the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea. The Mediterranean Sea borders it on the north, Sudan to the south, the Red Sea and Israel to the east, and Libya on the west. At first blush there seems to be little subtlety about the boundaries of Egypt's landscape. Lush Nile, crowded cities and hard desert stand in stark contrast with each other, with seemingly little gray area in between. And yet there are mysteries beneath the subtly shifting sands, nuance to the twists of the Nile banks, and even the most modern parts of Egypt's cities are steeped in tradition. Egypt has always been a crossroads for a profusion of peoples and supernatural forces; visitors who hope to survive here long must gain a sense of the land.

Flora

The Nile banks are festooned with numerous strains of water grasses. Tamarisk, acacia, jacaranda and poinciana speckle the Nile region in summer, while water hyacinths (known as the "Nile rose") choke parts of the Nile. There are also mangrove stands in the Sinai and various herbs with medicinal properties (often used as an item of trade among the Bedouins). Perhaps Egypt's best-known plant, papyrus is all but extinct in Egypt, except in botanical gardens.

Fauna

Compared to the animal life found in the verdant rain forests and bountiful grasslands throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt's animal population is, in a word, anemic. This has not always been the case. The Egyptian Nile region used to be a sanctuary for many larger mammals, including leopards, cheetahs, oryx, aardwolves, striped hyenas, sand cats, fennecs, two species of gazelle and caracals. Unfortunately, the last few centuries of heedless development have driven most of these species to or past the brink of extinction. What remains are about a hundred types of mammals, most notably various species of mice, rats and bats. Egypt is also home to *Ictonyx striatus*, a skunk-like mammal more commonly known as the zorilla. Larger mammals are almost exclusively domesticated such as camels, donkeys, horses and buffalo.

Ironically, where harsh conditions and human carelessness have combined to wipe out much of the nation's rural biome, an urban animal order swarms among Egypt's city dwellers. Fitfully, spasmodically, the Wyld is on the increase under the streets of Cairo and in other urban environs, albeit of an order that few but the Bone Gnawers or Ratkin would be apt to appreciate. Cairo and many

surrounding cities contain what may well be the largest rat population in the World of Darkness. Teeming in the city's sewers and urban slums, the bold rodents have been known to eat children and even to attack lone adults. Attempts to control them have largely met with failure, so it is, perhaps, with some small relief that the authorities tolerate the cities' large canine and cat populations. Millions of cats and semi-wild dogs wander the urban milieu, alone and in packs. Although useless as breeding stock or true camouflage, these animals nonetheless make it marginally easier for Garou or Bubasti to wander around in animal form (or at least to get away with being seen as a wolf or great black cat). Indeed, there have even been tales that the last of the Kypthur, the great wild cats of antiquity, still wander the back allies of Egypt's cities, acting as a royalty of sorts for the feline population, as well as mystic anchors for their Bubasti kin.

As for the urban dog packs? While it's impossible to breed true by mating with dogs, the Bone Gnawers have still used the dog packs as agents, soldiers and cover for their movements. While wolves, as such, have not existed in Egypt for thousands of years, it is widely believed that Egypt's great Eastern Desert Red Talon pack has maintained its numbers through selective breeding with the wild Cape Hunting dogs (from sub-Saharan Africa). Although wolves are for all practical purposes extinct in Egypt, scattered packs still make their home in the adjoining Penumbra.

Compared to Egypt's mammal population, its avian-life is rich and varied, with about 430 extant species, including large birds such as flamingoes, storks, cranes and herons. Most importantly to the Garou, there are also at least nine species of owl; numerous species of eagles, falcons and kestrels; and several Corvid species. These and others provide an ample spiritual basis for tribes and packs that revere avian totems. Among the smaller birds, the house sparrow and the hooded crow are the most common. Egypt's crow population has provided ample camouflage for Egypt's largish Corax population, who have flocked to the Middle East in search of both its ancient secrets and prevailing rumors of war.

There are also numerous species of snakes, most notably the cobra. While a few Garou who are nominally conversant with Egypt's supernatural history (and ignorant of snakes and their spirits) may be tempted to kill any serpents they see on sight as "agents of Set," such indiscreet actions are likely to cause more trouble than they solve. In reality only a microscopic portion of Egypt's serpents, or their spirit analogs, serve the ancient gûl. Besides Sutekh, the cobra was holy to such ancient deities as the tutelary goddess Buto and the enigmatic guardian spirit Meretseger, neither of whom were friendly to the



ancient vampire (though no less dangerous for all of that). Further, some Striders like to fantasize that the presumably extinct Nagah still watch over the country's activities from beneath the Nile, though, not surprisingly, this does little to endear snakes to most Garou. Still, perhaps it is the tales of the serpentine "soul-drinkers" (see Appendix II) that are most likely to have Garou sniffing twice at any undulating tracks in the desert sand. Scorpions too are ubiquitous in the surrounding desert and their various spirit manifestations — among them a hive-mind species of blood-slicked Banes, and the gargantuan Wyld spirits once thought holy to Isis — are difficult to ignore.

Finally, the once plentiful Nile Crocodile have become virtually extinct north of the Aswan Dam (the last one was shot by a British officer in 1891). One of the largest and most aggressive branches of the family *Crocodylidae*, they routinely eat wild and domesticated animals and — in other parts of Africa — hippos and even the odd lion or two. Confirmed man-eaters, they have been picking off fellahin along the Nile since the time of the pharaohs, but nothing in the past has prepared people for the frenzied burst of random killings carried out by the crocodiles over the last 18 months. A series of well-publicized attacks have taken place along the banks of Lake Nasser, the sheer number of which have exceeded anything recorded in modern history. Over 80 people and at least three boats, including a large tourist cruiser, have disappeared with hardly a trace. Many environmentalists have cited Endron's construction of the Apophis Pipeline as one cause, but even this explanation is not wholly satisfactory since animal attacks have increased throughout the rest of Africa over the last year. Some supernatural luminaries suspect the long-silent Mokolé may be behind the attacks, but have offered no single, coherent explanation as to why.

The surrounding waters of the Mediterranean and Red Sea teem with life, including reef sharks, stingrays, turtles, dolphins, colorful corals, sponges, sea cucumbers and a multitude of mollusks. Reports of Rokea in these waters are persistent, but without solid proof.

Environment

With 96% of Egypt's people living along the Nile, environmental issues are becoming an increasingly important, if still frequently ignored, component of Egyptian life. Runaway population growth, modernization and increased economic development have caused numerous problems. In Cairo, emissions from vehicles and lead smelters, together with sand blowing in from the adjacent Western Desert, have created high levels of particulate matter in the air. Egypt also faces problems with its remaining agricultural land being lost to urbanization and desertification, and increased soil salination south of the Aswan High Dam. Threats to the water include oil spills, agricultural

pesticides, raw sewage and industrial effluents. It should be no surprise that Banes of pollution flock to such sites, and the more cunning among them do their best to encourage more incidents of such environmental abuse.

Regions

Egypt consists of four major regions. First, and most importantly, there is the Nile Valley and Delta, where about 99% of the population lives. In spite of the strong Weaver and Wynn presence in these areas, in Egypt even the Garou and other Fera cleave mostly to the urban regions. Beyond the Nile Valley, there are the mostly (though sometimes deceptively) barren Western Desert, Eastern Desert and the Sinai Peninsula. The section below gives a broad overview of the land and various sites, cities and natural formations along the way.

Nile Valley and Delta

To many people, natives and foreigners alike, the Nile Valley and Delta are Egypt. Shaped like a great funnel, the widest part of the Delta is a 200km stretch of coastline along the Mediterranean Sea, which steadily narrows until it reaches Cairo at the southern-most base of the funnel. Thereafter, the only green to be found as one follows the river south is in a narrow ribbon bordering the Nile for 20-30km on either side, or at the occasional oasis. The Delta can almost be described as one continuous population center, with over 60 million people crowded into an area about the size of Switzerland (or tinier than all but the smallest American states). Forget what you read about population densities in your almanac (which spreads a country's population over its entire geography); the Nile Delta is about the most crowded area on earth. With this many people tripping over each other, it is hardly surprising that Egypt has also become a hotbed for every conceivable secret faction, often with one major cabal sitting almost in another's back yard.

Northwestern Mediterranean Coast

Starting with the northwestern most point of Egypt along the Mediterranean Coast, a thin beaded necklace of small coastal towns is strung between Libya and Alexandria on the outermost fringes of the Nile Delta. Often overlooked in most studies of Egypt, these include (from west to east): The small Bedouin towns of Sallum and Sidi Barani, Marsa Matruh (a small city with a large military presence watching over the Libyan border) and El Alamein (site of the decisive battle in the WWII North African campaign).

Alexandria (Arabic: al-Lakandariya)

Alexandria is the chief port and second-largest city of Egypt. Founded by Alexander the Great in 332 BC, it served as the seat of power for the Greek Ptolemaic

Haunted Egypt

In case it need be said, the World of Darkness is not our own. And so it is with Egypt. To be sure, gargoyles do not encrust the streets of Cairo as they do on many Western edifices, but the Middle East has taken the same sick turn somewhere in its history as the rest of the world. Arabesque columns, arches and domes are often of a more sinister slant, and the hieroglyphs in Egypt's ancient tombs often contain far darker themes as they portray the antics of "mythological" gods such as Set or Apophis. Some of them are even more realistically rendered as if, perhaps, they had been drawn from life.

Although this book is true to life in most of its greater contours, many of the details are different. The Egypt of the World of Darkness is more polluted and crowded than its real world counterpart. Modernization, while delivering many benefits, has caused even more wholesale destruction to Egypt's environment and antiquities than in the world we know. Many tombs that have withstood the millennia are now horribly pitted and blackened; large stretches of the Nile are choked with oil and other effluents. Towns and cities, some only partially industrialized in our world, spew out oil smoke day and night, blackening desert or delta for miles around. Meanwhile, places that are badly polluted in our world have become truly horrific Hellholes in the World of Darkness. While many of the names, dates and locations in this book are true to life, many others are wholly or partly fictionalized for effect; feel free to use the same sense of dramatic exaggeration in your own game. *Caveat emptor.*

dynasty. Under their reign of Cleopatra VII it reached its pinnacle as a center of learning, art and architecture, rivaling the city of Rome in everything but military power. After her death, Alexandria remained the capital of Egypt for over 600 years through both Roman and Byzantine rule, but in the 4th Century AD it was laid low by famine, disease and war. Thereafter it began its slow twilight decline until it became little more than a large fishing village. Its invasion by Napoleon (1798-1801), however, revived its fortunes by underlining its political importance. (Many streets are still named by the French prefix "rue" rather than the more familiar Egyptian "sharia.") The city's revival continued under Mohammed Ali, becoming once again a cosmopolitan center, playing host to writers, wealthy Europeans and Egyptians, and a British base during both World Wars. The nationalization of much of Alexandria under Nasser put a major dent in this growth, but today the city remains both a thriving

trading center (handling almost 80% of Egypt's trade) and a favorite tourist spot. Excellent railroads and highways connect it with Cairo and other cities.

Like many cities of the ancient world, modernization has taken its toll on Alexandria's antiquities. Of what is

The Nile River

The Nile is the alpha and the omega. Without it, the great pharaonic civilizations of antiquity would never have formed and human history would be considerably different. It has enthralled explorers, scholars and romantics for millennia, yet its source remained a mystery until the 19th Century. From the vast triangular delta where it empties into the Mediterranean to its remotest headstream, the Luvironza River in Burundi, it winds back like a great serpent through 4,160 miles (6,695 km), nine countries and thousands of years of human history.

Following the Nile proper from its origins in the south, its trunk stream is formed at Khartoum (Sudan) by the convergence of the Blue Nile (1,000 mi/1,610 km) and the White Nile (2,300 mi/3,700 km). The Blue Nile issues from Lake Tana (Ethiopia), a region of summer rains, and was the source of Egypt's soil-replenishing annual floods æ at least until the construction of the Aswan High Dam. The Blue Nile's tributaries flow from Zaire, Kenya, Tanzanian, Rwanda and Burundi, which flow directly into the Nile or into Lake Victoria. The White Nile, flowing from high Lake Victoria, has a more constant flow and winds through Uganda, Sudan and Egypt. The Egyptian Nile stretches some 700 miles from the Sudanese border (where two recent dams have created Lake Nasser) and then, flowing northward, encounters five hard reefs of black igneous stone (cataracts) that churn the river into turbulent rapids at each reef. Finally, north of Cairo, the Nile splits into two major tributaries that fan out with the delta, emptying into the Mediterranean at Rosetta and Damietta.

Umbra: To the Ancient Egyptians, the Nile was the source of life, its annually flooding waters depositing rich lairs of silt ideal for farming. To native Garou and other Fera it became something more. Its carefully maintained sense of balance became a spiritual avatar of the Serpent Ouroboros, the original Wyrms of Balance. Some believe that — even today, despite the Weaver constructs that impinge on it — a fragment of that original, more benign aspect of that Wyrms may still be found in the Nile. The river's great Umbral twin courses through at least a dozen realms, its pulsing course reverberating throughout the surrounding spirit world with an almost human heartbeat.

left of the ancient city, Egyptian and Greek ruins predominate, though there are also examples of medieval Christian and Muslim architecture. Surviving sites include a Roman amphitheater, the ruins of a temple to Isis and the Mosque of Abu al-Abbas Mursi. In the World of Darkness, more clandestine sites such as the Roman catacombs of Kom ash-Shuqqafa and the Necropolis of Al-Anfushi have a deeper supernatural significance and are not as well explored as in our world (see below). On top of this much older city, however, is a teeming modern city of over three and a half million, which has built facilities for trade and tourism, as well as its native oil refineries, auto-assembly plants, food processing and textile industries. Still, underneath the modern concrete and glass, one can still find the ancient Ptolemaic city, the sometimes jaded but surprisingly lustrous city of dreams.

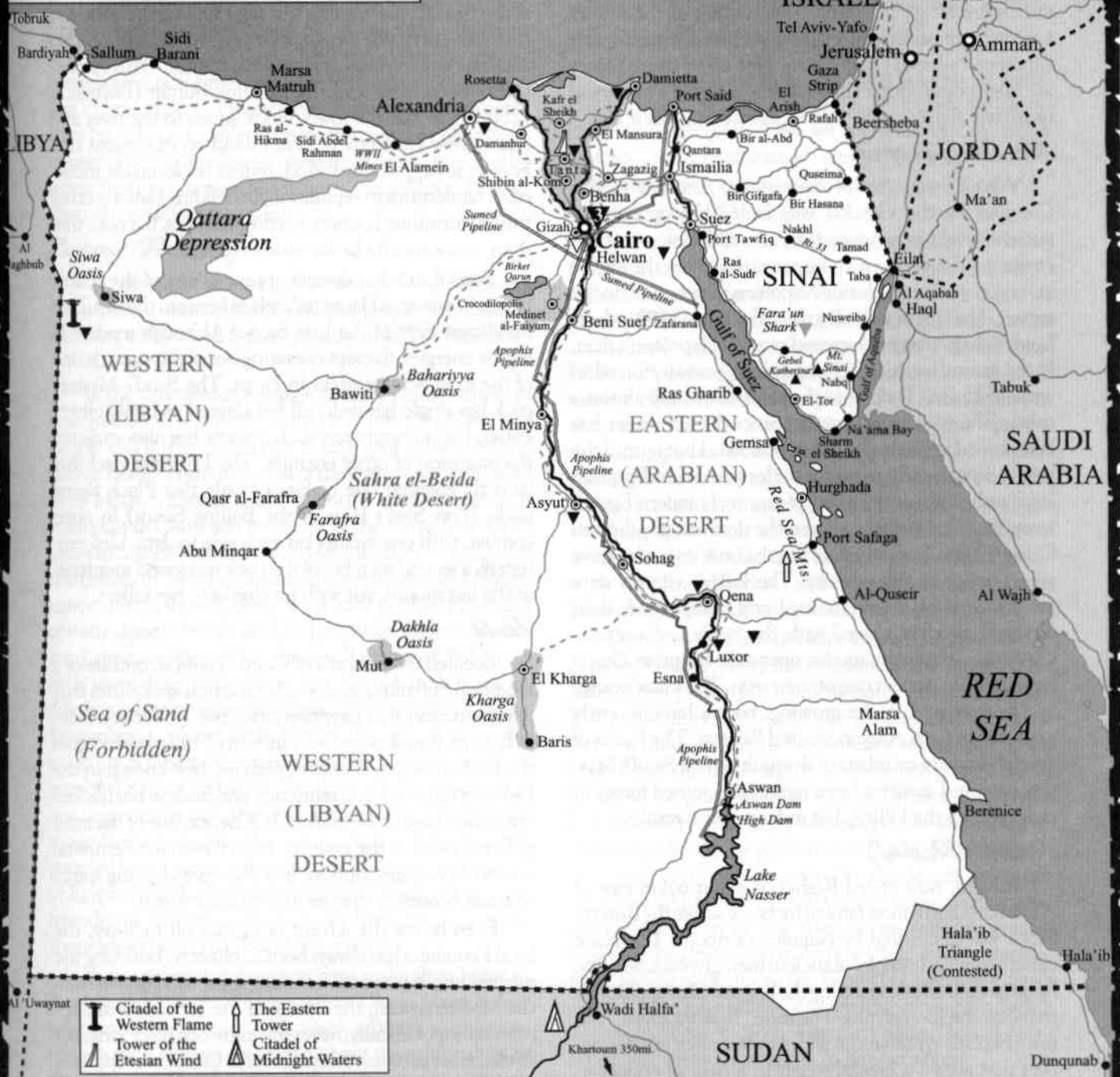
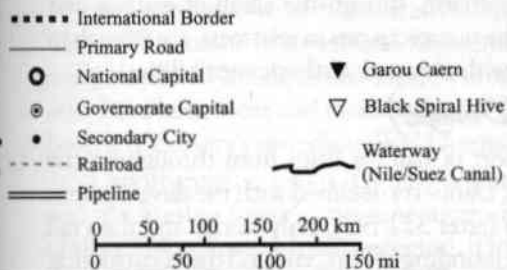
Geography: Located on the northwestern edge of the Nile Delta on a strip of land taking up about 20km of Mediterranean beachfront property, the city only stretches a mere 3km inland. The Western Ras at-Tin Harbor acts as the city's main shipping hub and sits side-by-side with the city's bowl-like eastern harbor. The Eastern Harbor is used mainly by fishing and pleasure boats, and once housed the great Pharos Island Lighthouse, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. (The lighthouse collapsed during an earthquake in the 14th Century, and a Mamluk sultan used the rubble to build Fort Qait Bey.) The city's center is an area popularly known as Ramla and is situated on the southeastern edge of the Eastern Harbor. Mahmudiya Canal stretches south of the city, connecting it to the distant Nile; Lake Mariyut borders the city's southwestern corner.

City of Dreams (Supernatural Alexandria)

Perhaps it is the spirit of Cleopatra enjoying a last laugh from her suicide's grave, but in a male-dominated country, in Alexandria it is the women who seem to rule. To be sure, the city fathers and captains of industry are all still reassuringly male, but a troika of powerful women holds power amongst the city's supernatural population. Indeed, as one misogynistic Shadow Lord caustically observed, Alexandria seems to be ground zero for the female mystery cult.

While the ways and means of several of these groups — most notably the Thothian House Shaea (a Hermetic Tradition mage cabal), the Alexandrian "Prince" Ionna, and the enigmatic Lilim — fall outside the scope of this book, the Black Fury pack that controls the city's only caern do not. The Sept of the Bloodied Stair beneath the city's Kom ash-Shuqqafa catacombs has been a regional stronghold for the Furies since time out of mind. (For more information on this and other septs, see the Caerns section at the end of this chapter). Lastly, Alexandria was for centuries the repository for much of the ancient

Egypt



world's knowledge, common and arcane. Burned by the Romans and partially rebuilt by Cleopatra, it burned a second time at Christian hands in AD 391 in an assault on "pagan-intellectuals." Nevertheless there are oft-re-

peated tales amongst the Garou and other Fera that large portions of the library still exist within the shadowed confines of the Strider's Tribal Homelands.

The Nile Delta

Although some argue that the entire Delta has become one big urbanized agglomeration, in reality there are still a number of distinct cities, broken up by rural stretches, within the Delta. Coastal cities along the Delta include Abu Qir, Rosetta and Damietta. (Port Said is just beyond the far eastern point of the delta on the Sinai border.) Traveling south, and in ever increasing proximity to each other as the funnel narrows, are noteworthy places such as Tanta, Zagazig (ancient Bubastis) and Cairo. Not all of these places are huge population centers, but some hold a historical or mystic significance that far transcends their size.

Abu Qir (Canopus)

About 24km east of Alexandria, Abu Qir (called Canopus by the Greeks) was famed throughout the ancient world as a refuge for Paris and Helen in their escape to Troy. Much more recently it was the site of several major battles during Napoleon's adventures in the region. The first was the Battle of the Nile (1798) where Lord Nelson's forces destroyed most of Napoleon's fleet. In the second battle (1799), Napoleon's cavalry forced an army of 15,000 Turks into the river, drowning almost a third of them in the Nile waters. Since then, the town has been famed for little else but its seafood. That is until the last six months, when it came under scrutiny by Egyptian legal authorities as the point of origin of modern Egypt's worst recorded serial murderer, the dramatically dubbed Scarab Killer. The police are not the only ones who have taken notice of this activity. The killer's victims were mauled as if by a large animal and decapitated, their foreheads crudely gouged with the symbol of a scarab. Obviously, given the *modus operandi*, Egyptian Garou have cause to suspect one of their own. The killer's range and hunger seem to be growing; bodies have recently appeared in both Alexandria and Rosetta. The Furies of Alexandria and members of the multi-tribal Sand's Mystery pack in Damietta have tentatively joined forces in order to stop the killing, but so far with no results.

Rosetta (Rashid)

Rosetta, now called Rashid, is about 65km east of Alexandria and is most famous for being where the Rosetta Stone was discovered by Napoleon's troops. The black tablet contained samples of ancient hieroglyphics, demotic Egyptian and Greek, enabling the linguist Champollion to translate the hieroglyphs. The term "Rosetta Stone" has since become synonymous with any key piece of information that allows a breakthrough in a field of endeavor. (Needless to say, both human archaeologists and various supernatural investigators continue to comb Egypt for similar finds.) An important port until the reemergence of Alexandria, it's a bit of a backwater these days. It has a

certain grubby charm, though the smell of garbage and manure, and the numerous rats in its streets, are enough to upset anyone with elevated aesthetic sensibilities.

Damietta (Dumyat)

Once a port of call for ships from throughout the ancient world, Damietta declined with the development of Alexandria (after 322 BC), only to rise and then fall again with the founding of Port Said and the construction of the Suez Canal. During this time its strategic location and open port made it easy pickings for invading crusaders and later the Germans, French and English. This vulnerability eventually lead the Mamluk Sultan (Baybars I, 1260-77) to raze the town, block access to the river and erect a new Damietta 6.5 km inland on its present site. Now enjoying its third wind, tourist books credit industrial Damietta for its reputation for building (among other things) furniture, leathers, textile and ships, but note that there is not much else for visitors to see.

Something that doesn't appear in any of the tourist books, however, is Damietta's role as home to the small but significant Sept of the Last Stone. Although modest in mystic energies, the sept operating out of this caern is one of the most activist packs in Egypt. The Sand's Mystery pack has single-handedly all but cleared its home city of Banes, but unfortunately such activity has also attracted the attention of other enemies. The Damietta pack has recently engaged one of Egypt's only two Black Spiral packs (Port Said's Hive of the Boiling Sands) in open combat, with one fatality on each side to date. Unfortunately, a second member of the pack was found murdered in the last month, but with no clue as to her killers.

Tanta

Located 90km north of Cairo, Tanta is, outside of a medieval Sufi mosque, devoid of the rich antiquities that mark so many other Egyptian cities, but... "What it lacks in history, it makes up for in industry," or at least so goes the Endron slogan. Tanta is, perhaps, best known in the Delta for its massive oil refineries, and Endron has hacked out its fair share of the market. It is, hence, one of the most polluted cities in the country and a haven for elemental Banes of every description. It is the city's choking spirits of smog, however, who are the greatest threat.

Even before the advent of Egypt's oil industry, the local Penumbra has always been... blustery. Buffeting the surrounding region with a cooling spirit wind drawn from the Mediterranean, the Tower of the Etesian Wind appears only sporadically, never staying in one place long, but its effects are certainly felt year round. Once these spirits of ocean air, far cooler than their desert counterparts, seemed a welcome change to shapeshifters who visited Tanta and its environs. Over the last three decades, however, many have become tainted or wholly corrupted by Hogling

Wyrm elements belched from the city's ubiquitous smokestacks. The rumor of a vast and frighteningly prescient smog elemental hiding in the region's dreary Penumbral skies have been more and more borne out by the keening lament of the city's dwindling Wyld spirits.

Unfortunately, given Tanta's polluted condition and the Etesian tower's constant summoning/creation of airy reinforcements into the region, it looks as though the problem can only grow worse. Tanta's local Garou, belonging to a caern named, not surprisingly, the Sept of the Etesian Wind, have attempted to ameliorate the tower's affects. Regrettably, not withstanding the obvious mystic correspondence between tower and caern, they have been unable to enter the tower or change its course. The Tanta caern is often the first place visited by many foreign Garou since it hosts more Moon Bridges than any other caern in Egypt.

Zagazig (Bubastis)

"... the city of Bubastis, in which is a Temple of Bastet well worthy of mention; for though other temples may be larger and more costly, none is more pleasing to look at than this."

— Herodotus

If the city name Bubastis seems familiar, even to foreign Garou, it should be little surprise. Of course, few people call it that these days, except tour guides and the native Bastet who still dream of the city of cats in its salad days. Modern Zagazig is a 19th Century town about 80km northeast of Cairo and is, except as the birthplace of the famous Colonel Ahmed Orabi (who led the revolt against the British in 1882), of inconsequential historical significance. Nevertheless, there is an easy pace of life and a certain disheveled sensuality here that visitors have a hard time resisting. The ancient Temple of Bubasti is little more than rubble these days, though both it and an adjoining cat graveyard continue to draw tourists. In the Penumbra it seems little better, though more of the structure is intact. It is only when one is taken in tow by one of the town's shadow cats (an unlikely honor) that one can appreciate the surrounding den-realms' true magnificence. In an adjacent pocket-realm is a town peopled by human emanations that live a life reminiscent of Egypt under the Ptolemaic dynasty. Open, relaxed and friendly to strangers, the humans here dote upon the thousands of cats that wander the streets.

A few puissant Bubasti sorcerers make their home in Zagazig and it is usually here where Garou come if they want to make contact with Egypt's Bastet population, though such attempts are not without their difficulties or their dangers. The shadowcats hardly hang out a sign and, even when they do make contact, are prone to be impetuous toward what they feel to be the idiot howling of the dogs at their door. Ahadi or no, Egypt's feline Fera have had enough bad experiences with the Garou to monitor

them closely before making contact. Garou would do well to check their attitude at the door when entering Zagazig. It is not only the Bubasti's place of power, but also their most sacred shrine. While the cats may not necessarily harm interlopers out of hand, they have no patience for what they perceive as Garou barbarism. Along with other secrets, this town has a Moon Bridge that can instantly transport travelers over 800km south, just over the Sudan border to the Bubasti held Citadel of Midnight Waters.

Cairo (Arabic: al-Qahirah)

"He who hath not seen Cairo, hath not seen the world. Her soil is gold; her Nile is a marvel; her women are like the black-eyed virgins of Paradise; her houses are palaces; and her air is soft, sweet as aloeswood, rejoicing the heart. And how can Cairo be otherwise, when she is the mother of the world?"

— City of 1001 Nights

Even in the World of Darkness, amidst its chaos, pollution and teeming crush of humanity, Cairo still retains some of its mystical, mysterious past. Like other great world cities, Cairo is a patchwork quilt of smaller cities, each with its own history, culture and economy. From the old suqs and capillary alleys — where a jumble of shops are still organized by trade, much as they were in the Middle Ages — to the modern shopping plazas that exhibit the latest in modern goods, Cairo is a study in contradictions. Ancient tombs, medieval mosques, vast slums and modern high rises vie with each other for attention. Corporate advertising in Arabic and English exists side-by-side with ox-plowed fields, and wooden donkey-drawn carts and luxury automobiles share the streets.

Over the past few decades Cairo's population has exploded well beyond the confines of the original city boundaries, pressing its aging infrastructure to the limit. The population density of Cairo is exceeded only by the cities of India. Indeed, if Cairo were a sovereign nation, it would be the fifth-largest Arab country. Cairo is also home to 62 slums such as Dar al-Salam and Sayyida Zeinab, which collectively house over five million people. Since the 1970's, the government has built half a dozen "satellite cities" or "new towns" in the deserts surrounding Cairo. Although central Cairo's population is conservatively given at less than seven million, greater Cairo weighs in at approximately 18-22 million people. In an incident specific to the World of Darkness, Cairo's population took a minor, though frightening dip during a mini-epidemic in 1998. The aptly named Jackal Fever is detailed more thoroughly in later chapters.

Not only the nation's capital, Cairo is also the largest industrial, business, commercial and transportation center in Egypt. Its industries — mainly centered in the suburbs of Helwan and Shubra al-Khaymah — produce

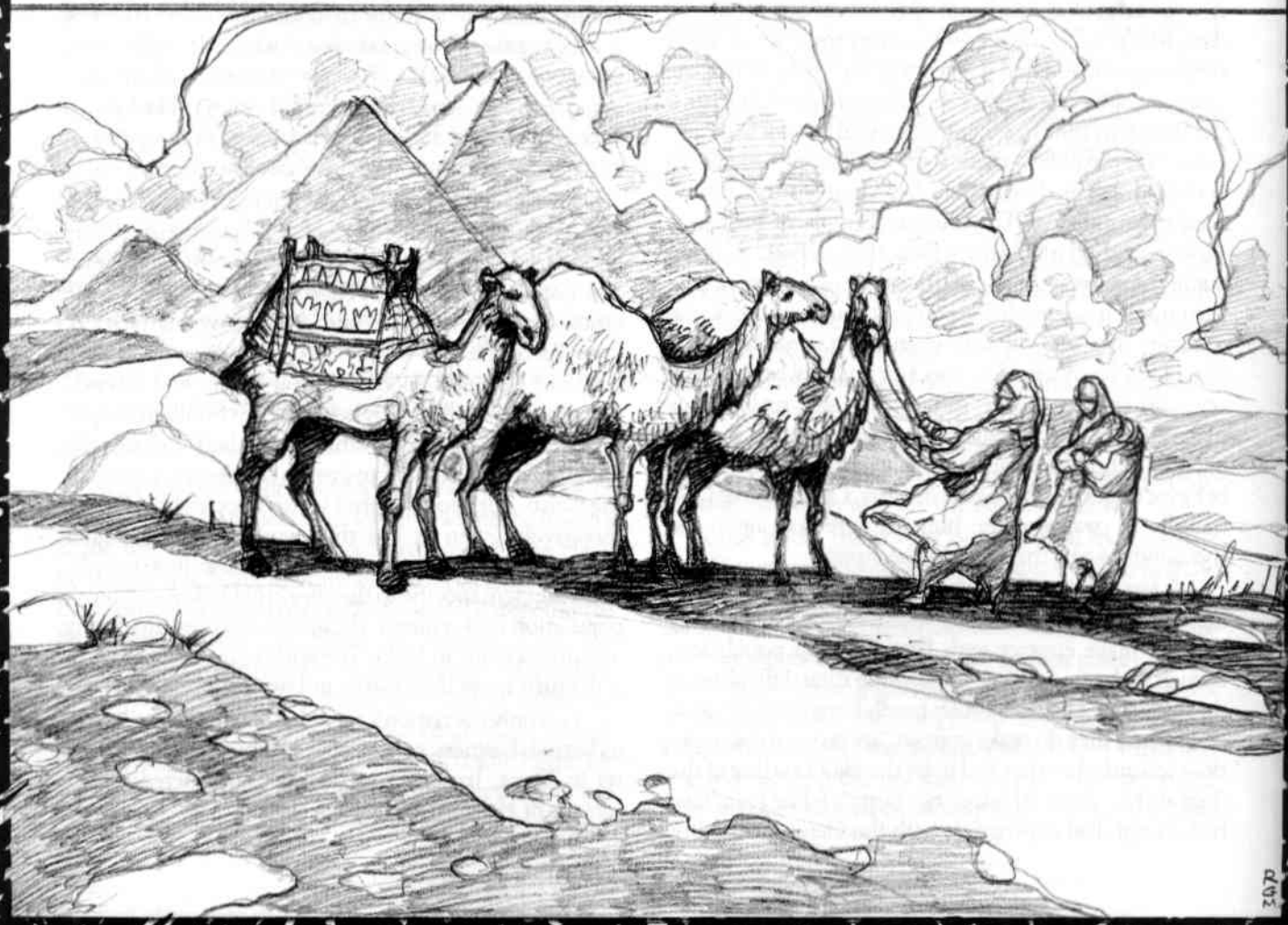
iron and steel, automobiles, cement, appliances, textiles, tires and plastics. The Middle Eastern publishing and filmmaking industries are centered here, and its daily newspaper Al-Ahram (The Pyramids) is the world's largest Arabic paper. Cairo is also one of the leading educational centers of Africa and the Arab world. Its universities include Al-Azhar (founded AD 970), Cairo (1908), Ain Shams (1950), and the American University (1919). Among Cairo's many museums is the famous Egyptian Museum, housing one of the world's finest archaeological collections. Africa's first subway opened here in 1987.

Geography: Cairo occupies a triangular plain, bordered by the Giza Plateau on the west, the Moqattam Hills to the east, and the Nile Delta to the north. The Nile divides the city into two administrative districts, with Cairo proper on the eastern bank and Giza to the west. The city center, Midan Tahrir (Liberation Square), is located on the western bank. To the north-east is a district of Western-style shops and inexpensive hotels, while to the north is Ramses Station, Cairo's main railway hub, and its international airport.

Islamic Cairo is east of the central city, and contains the crowded, and often impoverished neighborhoods of Al-Muski and Darb al-Ahmar. Towering above these communities is a medieval fortress, called simply, the Citadel. From here are visible the domes and slender

minarets of Muhammad Ali's mosque, and the Moqattam Hills and Eastern Desert beyond. To the north and south of the Citadel are the Cities of the Dead. This great necropolis is a functioning city within a city, where many of Cairo's most poverty-stricken residents use cenotaphs as tables and hang their laundry lines between tombstones. While many of the necropolis's citizens may be conversant—at least via urban folklore—with the reality of the existence of ghosts, something far darker now moves among the alleys of the dead.

South of Midan Tahrir is the exclusive Garden City, with its embassies, five-star hotels, and fine homes. Traveling further south along the Nile, one encounters Old Cairo, home to many of Cairo's Coptic residents. Two Nile islands are visible from downtown: Gezira (also called Zamalek) and Roda Island. On the western bank of the Nile are the districts of Agouza and the new area of Mohandiseen. To the southwest is the Giza district (home to Cairo University and the Cairo Zoo); beyond which lie the Giza pyramids and the Western Desert. Finally, due south of the city along the Nile are the industrial Helwan suburbs on the Nile's west bank, and the ancient sites of Memphis (the Old Kingdom capital of Egypt), and the great necropoli at Saqqara and Dahshur (home to the famous "Bent Pyramid").





City of 1001 Shadows

Cairo's supernatural denizens are just as fractious, aggressive and mixed as they are in almost any other city, but with several vital distinctions. First and foremost, given the city's vast population relative to its size, it is — as one visiting Glass Walker somewhat hyperbolically stated — difficult to swing a claw without throating a Leech. Vampires, Garou, mages and other Fera, not to mention the profusion of wraiths who populate the city's vast inner-city necropolis and an important Arcanum chapter house, make the competition for territory in Cairo a heated proposition, if ultimately academic because of the overwhelming numerical superiority of Cairo's gûl population. Whether measured by influence, history or sheer numbers, there can be only one inescapable conclusion — Cairo belongs to the undead.

Cairo's vampire population is, in one sense, unique, in that it is a "Caitiff," (roughly the vampire equivalent of the tribeless Ronin) who holds dominion over the city's vampires. An elder vampire named Mukhtar Bey, he has ruled over the city's undead population for some centuries, and even a few Garou have become aware of his existence (though precious little else about him). The vampiric overlord has declared the city open to gûls

of any "tribe" who will obey his laws, but these egalitarian sensibilities hardly extend to the Garou. Indeed, Mukhtar Bey has partially made his reputation by keeping the city clear of wolves — and thereby safer for the undead. In the aftermath of past skirmishes, most notably after the Black Saturday melee of 1952, the prince took apparent delight in not only targeting several Garou for assassination, but in returning their bodies (or at least parts thereof) to their packmates.

Of course, despite his reputation as a wolf slayer, Mukhtar Bey has not really rid the city of Garou. Certainly most Garou would be best advised to tread stealthily, but, given Egypt's lack of a viable countryside, even the usually rural werewolves cannot afford to be pushed completely from the cities, especially one as important as Cairo. This is especially true in light of the fact that there are three Garou caerns within the city limits. Two of these (the Sept of Shagarat al-Durr and the Dar al-Salam caern) belong to the Bone Gnawers and currently wage a thinly veiled war against each other. The Sept of the Solar Barque is a highly potent Glass Walker caern in the Qasr al-Baron office complex in the prosperous Heliopolis suburbs. The solar caern is a highly valuable commodity, particularly given the grave uncertainty currently surrounding the city's

Bone Gnawers. Cairo's Glass Walker leader is one of Egypt's very few female corporate executives, an enigmatic woman named Leila El-Sabeei (Leila Veil-Shredder to other werewolves). Leila has wielded the caern's power to great personal effect; visiting Garou in need of Gnosis have little choice but to make their supplications to her, and the price is often steep. Besides the three urban tribes, a smattering of Garou from other tribes visit or live in Cairo, but many soon find it too inhospitable and move on in search of greener pastures. Hence, the total number of werewolves in residence here at any given time is fairly low.

Besides the caerns consecrated to Gaia, Cairo is also home to what may well be the most potent Black Spiral hive on the continent, the Hive of the Thrashing Serpent. Residing in the Penumra adjacent to the Giza pyramids, tales of this place of horror run rampant. One such rumor, spread by knowledgeable Bubasti, is that the well-hidden hive was once a mage chantry. Regardless of its origin, the Spirals of this hive have a disturbing habit of appearing and disappearing without warning. Other sites of interest to visiting Garou include a regional Endron corporate office, several potent Bubasti den-realms (most notably the Den of Shadowed and Lit Corners) and boltholes for the city's numerous Ratkin.

Note: For a much deeper exploration of Cairo in the World of Darkness (from a vampiric point of view, mind), see *Cairo by Night*.

South of the Delta

The Nile between Cairo and the Sudanese border some 1,000km south, is peppered with cities, towns, pyramids and other places of great historical and mystic antiquity. Among these are Helwan, Al-Faiyum, Al Minya, Asyut, Qena, Luxor, Esna, Edfu, Kom Ombo, Aswan and Lake Nasser.

Helwan

About 25km south of Cairo, Helwan is an industrial suburb and about the most polluted place in Egypt. The Pentex subsidiary Rainbow Plastics has recently forged a presence in the area, but the considerable toxins they've added to the Nile here are somewhat akin to bringing coals to Newcastle. In the Penumra almost the entire city is a nightmarish maze of sickly blights, and four Hellholes of great size and intensity scar the land, spewing forth Banes at a truly alarming rate. Recently three Garou (two Striders and a Get) visited the suburb on an unknown errand. Of these, the two Striders disappeared without a trace while the Fenrir returned to Cairo, where he murdered two packmates before being dispatched. While the initial reaction among those Garou who monitor such things has been to blame the nest of vampires coiled at the city's heart, rumors of a truly ancient and powerful cobra fomor of the Hollow Men

breed have also circulated Cairo. The Followers of Set, it seems, are not the only serpents at work in Egypt.

Al-Faiyum

Al-Faiyum (also El Faiyum or El Fayum) is the capital of the Al-Faiyum Governorate and is situated about 113km (70 miles) southwest of Cairo, between Lake Birket Qaran and the Nile. Almost startlingly lush in appearance, a closer look reveals that its reputation as the "Garden of Egypt" may be more an expression of admiration for the region as an ordered agricultural concern, than as a place of the Wyld. That the area is verdant, there is no doubt. Crops of rice, wheat, and melons (not to mention a disturbing increase in factory farming, mainly chickens) are a major boon to the country's economy. Groves of palms and acacias dot the landscape, while more wild plants grow in ordered profundity along the region's elaborately ordered system of canals. At the center of this beautiful oasis is the shabby city of Medinet al-Faiyum, a place some would say encapsulates all that is worst about Cairo; it is overcrowded, polluted and just plain dismal (though hardly the Hellhole Helwan is). Despite this profusion of greenery, even the seemingly sterile wastelands of the Western Desert reflect the Wyld's dance more truly than the ordered splendor of Al-Faiyum's "garden," for underlying all of this is the dying bellow of Khem's custodians of memory, the Mokolé.

Al-Minya (El Minya)

Al-Minya is the capital city of the Minya Governorate about 225km southwest of Cairo. The city is a trade center for the cotton and cereal crops grown in the area, as well as sugar processing and soap. Important as the dividing point between Upper and Lower Egypt, Al-Minya is sometimes called Arous as Sa'id, the "Bride of Upper Egypt." Despite this conjugal appellation, the city has been witness to increasingly violent clashes between Muslims and its large Christian population. Political and religious killings have become almost a matter of routine here, in spite of the high profile presence of governmental security forces. Strangers, in particular, are a target here. While these problems appear solely of human make, with no supernatural component, there are many that find this unlikely. Whether they are a symptom or the cause, the town is home to a particularly nasty strain of psychomachiae, who encourage and grow fat off the killings. Also, it is common knowledge among even some shapeshifters that an ancient spell once discouraged the Followers of Set from travelling north of here, but that magic is no longer in effect. Even when the spell was in place, the Setites had at least a nominal interest in this city. At least one dead Garou (a visiting Glass Walker) has been fished out of the Nile along here, along with the human victims of its sectarian conflict.

Crocodilopolis

Al-Faiyum lies below sea level in the Faiyum Depression, the bed of the huge, though now extinct, Lake Moeris and the site of the ancient town of Shedet. About 4,000 years ago, however, the pharaohs of the 12th Dynasty emptied out much of the lake by cutting off its tributaries, shrinking it to 1/5 its former size to create a lush oasis. While this benefited the people of the region, it slowly choked out the habitat of the crocodiles and destroyed the great Setje Wallow, what was once, perhaps, the largest Mokolé "caern" in the world. The draining of Lake Moeris, admittedly an engineering triumph, had also become one of the first and most damaging large scale manifestations of the Weaver on the planet. Despite the voracious reputation of the Nile Crocodile, most Mokolé are, fortunately, slow to anger. After the diminution of their wallow, however, what were once seen as ultimately benign, if dangerous, creatures became unholy terrors to those who strayed unwary along the Nile. The Mokolé had always pursued a limited version of the Impergium, but in this instance it became personal.

It was only thousands of years later, when an unnamed sorcerer advised the Ptolemy ruler to widen the canals and open up new habitats for the crocodiles, that the hunting of humans along the banks sunk back to its previous levels. The town of Shedet was renamed Crocodilopolis and the Mokolé reclaimed their status as holy creatures. It is, thus, unfortunate that this pact was again broken, albeit unknowingly, by later generation of humans (namely the Romans) who settled the region. Tourists may still visit Al-Faiyum as the cult worshipping place of Sobek, but few, if any, Mokolé have visited the deadened wallow in over a century. Following the concentrated effort to damage the Mokolé in Lake Nasser, however, there are rumors that this wallow may become important again.

Asyut

Asyut lies on the west bank of the Nile about 380 km south of Cairo. It's an important commercial center and is also known for its fine crafts and university. Less appreciated by the general public is the fact that it was once the cult center of the supposed wolf-god Wepwawet. More Striders pass through here than anywhere else in Egypt. The city is home to a minor caern, The Sept of the Second Night, an on-again, off-again proposition in terms of Gnosis, but one of the only two places in all of Egypt where the beleaguered tribe may find rest. Beyond this, Striders come here pursuing legends that a far more

powerful caern (The Sept of the First Night), allegedly dwarfing even that of the sun temple at Karnak, once flourished here. Despite the dubious claims of godhead for their progenitor, Strider loremasters note this locale as the earliest place of residence for the Striders in the world, perhaps in conjunction with the Neolithic El Badari who once lived here. The Striders flourished here for millennia until Set's curse drove them out and they believe that, if the curse (or Sutekh) is ever defeated, the caern will spring back to life. Of course — given the fact that the caern's center is now situated in the middle of a city of about 350,000 — the caern would most likely be of a vastly different character than it once was. Various Wyrminions also evidently buy into these legends because a persistent, though largely transient, population of Banes also stalks the city's Umbral streets. While they particularly target any visiting Garou, other Fera are far from safe.

Sohag

A small town about 115 km South of Asyut, Sohag is not a major tourist attraction, though it is semi-famous for its White and Red Coptic monasteries. (A thief who converted to Christianity founded the Red Monastery.) Sohag is also a power base for the terrorist Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya. There are apparently no supernatural inhabitants here at this time but, like so many other things about Egypt, first appearances may be deceiving.

Qena

Qena is a provincial capital located about 39 miles north of Luxor. It is most famous for its proximity to the ruins of Dendara and Wadi Qena, a major traffic route between Upper Egypt and the Red Sea. The city also has a considerable Sufi heritage and its Sheikh el-Qenawi Mosque is a magnet for mystics and spiritual seekers of every description. Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya has staked out territory in Qena, an irony considering the Garou who have chosen to call the place home. The Children of Gaia have maintained a former Strider caern, the Sept of the Healing Dawn, near the Temple of Dendara since the great Strider Diaspora in the wake of Set's curse. The Temple of Dendara was originally a tomb to Hathor and some traditions maintain it is the resting-place where Sakhmet was restored to her more benign persona. It is thus, perhaps, not surprising that the caern is the one sanctuary where Silent Striders may dependably regain Gnosis while in Egypt. The caern's totem, the Starlight Spirit, is a potent enigmatic creature that appears most often — when she is seen at all — as a woman-shaped field of stars. A spirit of both healing and trickery, she is in large measure responsible for maintaining the Dendara sanctuary. Banes largely avoid Qena, not because they fear it *per se*, but because most seem strangely oblivious to its existence.

Luxor

Few places capture Egypt's ancient heritage more than Luxor. Now a city of approximately 150,000, Luxor is located about 740km (460mi) south of Cairo. The capital of ancient Egypt during the 11th dynasty and particularly during the New Kingdom, to the ancient Egyptians, Luxor was known as Waset, or No, meaning simply "the city." The Greeks called it Thebes. Luxor is best known for both Karnak and the smaller temple of Luxor (both on the east side of the river). On the west bank are numerous other royal mortuary temples and tombs. Major temples include the Ramesseum (which moved the 19th-century English poet Shelley to write "Ozymandias") and the temple of the 18th-dynasty Queen Hatshepsut. The Valleys of the Kings and the Queens are large royal necropoli which include the tombs of such pharaohs as Tutankhamen, Thutmose III (the Napoleon of Ancient Egypt), Ramesses III, IV and VI, Horemhab and the conveniently closed tomb of Seti I.

A city of contrasts unlike any other, Luxor encapsulates the duality of Egypt. As with many other places in Egypt, there is a strong mix of the antediluvian and the modern. Even the street names, which carry such disparate concepts as Sharia al-Karnak and Sharia Television (not surprisingly a tourist strip) bespeak this duality. This is not the only contradiction inherent to Thebes, however. The final division is a matter of geography and turf. It is an ancient, and fairly well known, truism among Khem's supernatural population that the west Nile banks belong to the undead, while the east is the province of the wolves. Now often ignored by Egypt's larger supernatural population, this old arrangement is still in force in the deserts surrounding Luxor. Strangely, this arrangement has held more-or-less intact for millennia, not because of any formalized agreement, but simply because gûls who cross over to the east bank are liable to be reduced to bloody giblets by the nearby Red Talon sept, while Garou who pass to the west simply disappear. Of course, given that the Red Talons infrequently visit the town proper, the Luxor city limits are nominally safer for vampires to visit for brief periods of time (provided they are not caught).

Despite this apparently neat territorial division, given the confluence of forces here, Luxor is a train-wreck waiting to happen. The city and the surrounding desert contains strongholds for groups as diametrically opposed as the Setite Fire Court, the Red Talon Sept of the Howling Sands, and the semi-abandoned — but still potent — Sept of the Midnight Sun (for millennia the home of the leadership of House Wiseheart). Without a large human population to act as a buffer (as in Cairo), Luxor has played host to numerous bloody melees in the past and, given recent events, another major confrontation is just a matter of time. It is unknown whether the Al-

Gama'at al-Islamiyya's massacre of 57 tourists in 1997 was solely an act of human evil or if it somehow reflected the machinations of the town's supernatural community.

Luxor is also Egypt's royal necropolis *nonpareil*. Even visitors who are not particularly adroit at spotting the restless dead may feel themselves watched. Although the ancients once saw the spirits here as comparatively benign, in recent centuries, and especially since the recent great upheaval in Duat, the necropolis' population has become increasingly threatening. The surrounding Penumbra is unlike anywhere else in Egypt. Strange alien shadows and cold spots from the nether regions of Duat impinge on the more familiar Umbral terrain. While not the Shadowlands proper, both Silent Striders and Silver Fang members of the Ivory Priesthood alike have nevertheless long cited Luxor as the place where the two realms come closest to touching. Indeed, even less necromantically inclined Garou have been known to stumble into the realms of the restless dead here, never to return. The realm is riddled with Banes (some truly ancient), but is also home to various totemic spirits of the Wyld, most notably those affiliated with the Falcon's brood.

Luxor in the World of Darkness has also been covered in **Giovanni Chronicles III: The Sun Has Set**; this is a Vampire-centric work, but may be of some use to Storytellers.

Esna

Esna is a busy farming town, probably most famous for housing a Greco-Roman temple to the god Khnum. According to at least some Garou traditions, particularly those of the ancient Warders, the ram-headed Khnum (a creator-god who fashioned the bodies of both gods and mankind upon his potter's wheel) was a highly puissant Weaver spirit, perhaps even on the order of a minor Incarna. True or not, there seems to be little supernatural activity here these days.

Edfu

Along with sugar and pottery, the people of Edfu largely make their living from the tourist trade; a quick look at its west bank illustrates why. The Temple of Horus is the largest pharaonic (albeit Ptolemaic) temple in the nation. Constructed several thousand years after many of the temples in nearby towns, it nonetheless claims a truly ancient pedigree, as being built on the very site where Horus and Set allegedly clashed. While those who follow the Falcon totem consider it a holy place, it is reputedly even more revered by the Shemsu-heru and, as such, most Garou and Fera alike are wise enough to give it a respectful distance. Despite this, the town recently became the center of a minor stir when a Silver Fang anruth claimed that he saw a large gathering of the Talons of Horus, a great flock of falcon-spirits, circling in the nearby Penumbra. This

rumor, though unconfirmed, seems particularly auspicious to the Fangs, some of whom see it as a sign that the time has come to take complete control of their nearby Luxor caern.

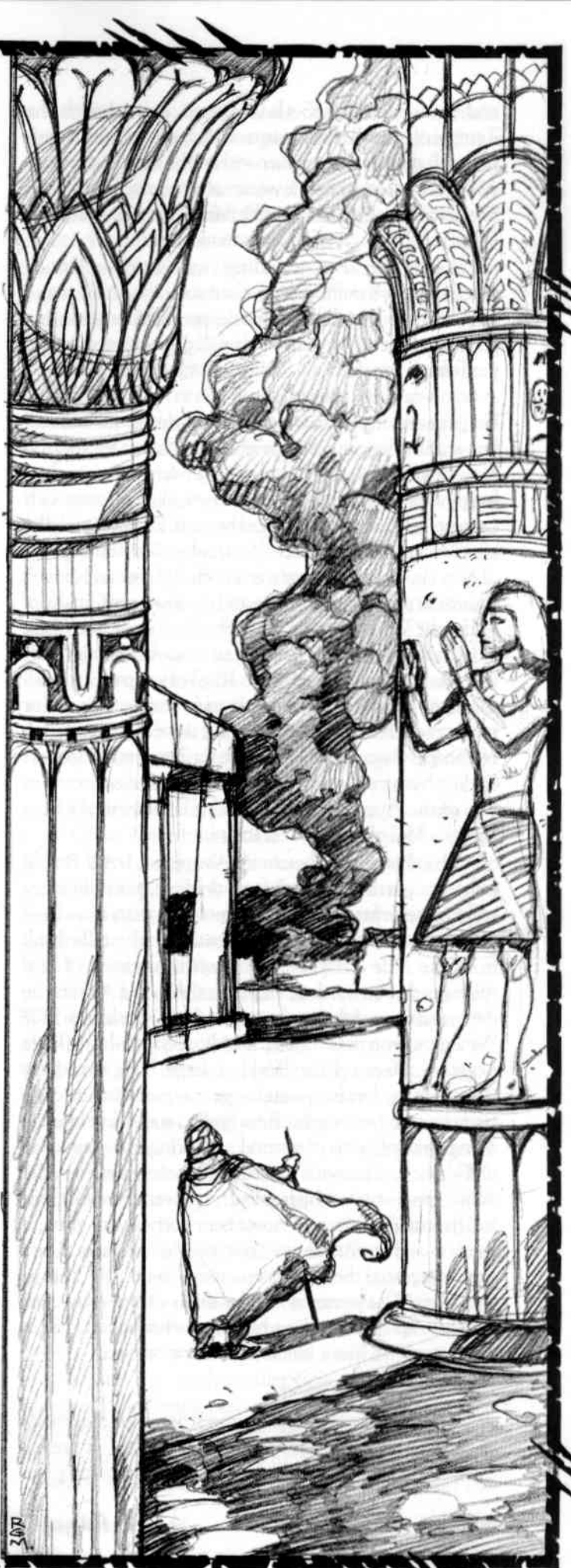
Kom Ombo

Situated about 40km north of Aswan, Kom Ombo is a heavily irrigated farming community, peopled by both fellahin farmers (mostly corn and sugarcane) and a large population of Nubians displaced when their ancestral homelands were flooded during the building of the Aswan Dam. It is also a place of profound mystical significance. The Temple of Kom Ombo, erected in worship to the hawk-headed Horus and the crocodilian Sobek, is one of the strangest in Egypt. Completely symmetrical in every aspect, the left side of the temple is dedicated to Horus while the right venerates Sobek. Erected at a scenic bend in the Nile, it is currently a major tourist attraction. Rumors have it that the Mokolé have again begun to pass through here, though no one seems to know for certain.

Aswan

Located about 40km south of Kom Ombo on a scenic stretch of the Nile near the first cataract, the modern city of Aswan has a rich history and appears to have a promising future. During the pharaonic age, Aswan (then called Sunt) was both a major trading center and a garrison town for the Egyptians — and later the Greeks and Romans — who used it as a staging area for invasions into Sudan, Nubia and Ethiopia. Caravans of camels and elephants came to Aswan with their precious cargoes of gold, ivory, spices and slaves. Today Aswan appears to be little more than a comfortably lethargic tourist town, cashing in on its ancient history. Modern hotels house tourists who come to see the Isis and Kalabasha temples, the 6th Century Coptic Monastery of St. Simeon, and the two nearby dams that have caused so much controversy. Back alley suqs sell tourist trinkets including, unfortunately, stuffed crocodiles hunted in Lake Nasser. There are two main islands near Aswan. The first is Elephantine Island, named either for its granite pachyderm-like humps or for the elephants that once passed this way. The second, Kitchener's Island, named for the British consul general of Egypt, was transformed by him into a botanical garden.

Several kilometers south of Aswan is the British Aswan Dam, while another 6km below is the much larger High Aswan Dam and Lake Nasser beyond. During the great flooding that accompanied construction of the High Aswan Dam, many of the countryside's surrounding antiquities were either moved by a massive UNESCO operation or lost forever. One of those saved is the Temple of Isis, which now resides on Agilika Island between the two dams. This temple is allegedly where Sobek returned part of Osiris' body to Isis (after Osiris had been murdered



and dismembered by Set). Of course, even though the Temple of Isis still remains intact, the potent Bubasti den-realm that once drew power within the temple confines now lies beneath the Nile waters on the temple's original site, the submerged island of Philae. What use, if any, the Mokolé have made of this site remains a mystery.

Aswan's status as a trading city continues, though much of today's traffic is of an illicit sort. Aswan is a major nexus for the Egyptian drug trade, perhaps not surprising given that the city also hosts a small population of entrepreneurial "modernist" Setites. Nor, unfortunately are Aswan's days as a slaving center behind it, though traffic has gone underground. It is public knowledge that one can buy a young boy or girl in neighboring Sudan for twenty-five dollars; the serpents and other traders are more than happy to help find such unfortunates work and homes with corrupt "sponsors" in Egypt and beyond. Despite its idyllic appearance, Aswan is headed for trouble. Beside the spawn of Sutekh, it has also attracted both Bubasti and Simba (due to its proximity to Sudan and the southern Citadel of Midnight Waters, see below). The Simba warrior Black Tooth passed through here at least twice before his death and was known to harbor a good deal of antipathy toward the local Bubasti. Perhaps most importantly, Aswan (or more precisely, nearby Lake Nasser) is the last great home of the Egyptian Mokolé — but for how much longer? Endron has a small satellite office here to oversee construction of the Apophis Pipeline, and it is increasingly clear that the Mokolé are first on their hit list.

The Penumbra between Aswan and the Sudan border is particularly rich and verdant, possibly more truly representing Egypt's ancient past than anywhere else along the Nile. Leopards, cheetahs and gazelle drink from the Nile shallows, along with hundreds of bird spirits and even herds of elephants. Around Aswan the dams and the nearby city appear as flashing, electric blue Weaver constructs, but strangely seem to have little negative affect on the Wyld at large. The two dams dominate the landscape and appear as vast, natural cliff-faces teeming with spirit flora and fauna. Additionally, along strange veins of natural appearing metal ore, the cliff/dams seethe with electricity elementals from the dams' generation of hydroelectric power. Explanations for the local Weaver's apparent beneficence vary, though the prevailing sentiment is that the Mokolé have somehow integrated the disparate constructs into their spirit paradigm. The same cannot be said of the newly constructed Apophis Pipeline, however, which cuts through the Penumbra like a black and cancerous scar.

Lake Nasser to Sudan

The Nile flowed virtually unrestricted for thousands of years of human history, but some people, it seems, cannot leave well enough alone. In the last century the

Blowing the Dam

In a reality not relegated solely to the World of Darkness, the potential destruction of the High Dam, however likely or remote, means that much of Egypt lives under the Sword of Damocles. Indeed, few other countries in the world face the possibility of such total destruction. One of the world's largest structures, the High Dam has a volume about 17 times that of the Great Pyramid at Giza. Meanwhile Lake Nasser itself averages 9.6 km (6 mi) wide and extends upstream 499 km (310 mi) — about 30% of which is in neighboring Sudan. Obviously, if someone actually succeeded in destroying the High Dam, the resulting catastrophe as the lake came crashing through the Nile Delta would be almost unparalleled in its loss of life, property and historical antiquities.

Although many opposed it when it was first constructed, even in the World of Darkness there are few that would profit by destroying the dam. Some of the more radical Red Talons have been known to contemplate somehow destroying it as a truly efficient way of returning at least some of the Earth to a wilder state by cleansing a portion of the Egyptian wilds of the cursed humans once and for all. Of course even the bloodthirsty Talons are cognizant of the consequences of such a genocidal act, and cooler heads among them realize that no matter how many monkeys die in the prevailing flood, eventually they would be back. The Mokolé are similarly split about the costs and benefits of destroying the dam. Most of them recognize that the dam had a positive benefit by breathing new life into their Nubian Wallow (see below). A small faction within their ranks, however, believe that — whatever its apparent modern benefits — the dam has irretrievably altered the paths of memory once represented by the seasonal ebb and flow of the Nile.

Almost everyone else has a vested interest in keeping the dam standing. The Storyteller should note that destroying the dam (and wiping out virtually all of inhabited Egypt) would be a gross departure from real world events. Such an action would invite an immediate and draconian response from supernatural agencies as diverse as the Setites, the Technocracy and the Glass Walkers (but to name a few). Storytellers who thrive on this sort of high drama may want to entertain such an event. More traditional Storytellers, however, may prefer to roundly discourage any player characters that entertain such a notion. (Let them concentrate their efforts on destroying the fictive Apophis Pipeline.)

British, and later the Egyptians, built two great dams around Aswan to regulate the Nile and to put more of the region under cultivation. While these efforts succeeded, and provided Egypt with a generous supply of hydroelectric power, the dams have also caused no end of troubles. The British constructed the Aswan Dam above the first cataract at the turn of the 20th Century. At the time it was the largest structure of its kind in the world, but the later High Dam dwarfs it. It's a well-known truism in Egypt that the last crocodile north of the dam was killed (and no doubt stuffed) by a British officer about this time. Lake Nasser is the only known habitat left to the Nile crocodile in Egypt, and as such is the last great refuge for the Mokolé.

Encouraged by the success of the first dam, in 1960 the Nasser government started work on the much larger High Dam. This was controversial in the world at large, both for the destruction it would wreak on the nation's antiquities and because its construction indirectly sparked the Suez Canal Crisis. Despite this, the dam was eventually built with Soviet aid and by 1971 Lake Nasser had drowned numerous archeological sites. UNESCO and the Egyptian government worked to save some of them, but other important sites were lost forever, including several Bubasti dens. The dam's construction also led to the forced resettlement of some 100,000 Egyptians and Sudanese Nubians. There are more than a few groups, supernatural and otherwise, that wouldn't mind seeing the dam destroyed. Of course, the down side to this is that the accumulated water stored behind the dam would be enough to sweep most of the Nile Delta into the Mediterranean if this happened. The rock-cut temple at Abu Simbel about 280km south of Aswan is the last of the great temples before one reaches the Sudanese border.

Eastern (Arabian) Desert and Sinai Peninsula

Foreigners often think of these regions together, though they are distinct. Constituting the northeastern fifth of Egypt, the Mediterranean borders them on the north and the Red Sea to the south. The Gulf of Suez and the Suez Canal separate the two regions from each other.

The Eastern Desert and Red Sea Coast

The Eastern Desert is part of the greater Sahara and runs the entire length of Egypt's eastern border, from the Mediterranean in the north to Sudan in the south. Its eastern and western boundaries are flanked by waterways: the Nile and Lake Nasser to the west and the Red Sea to the east. Across the Sea, the desert peers out at Saudi Arabia. Alternatively called the Arabian Desert or the Eastern Highlands, the Eastern Desert contains the Red Sea Mountains and has many peaks that rise to more than 1,830 m (5,925 ft), with its highest peak, Jabal Shayib, reaching 2,183 m (7,161 ft). Most of the desert is barren

and inhospitable, though some of the lower mountain slopes along the Red Sea are grass covered after the winter rains. The Arabian Desert is inhabited by nomadic tribes such as the Maaza (who arrived from Arabia in the 18th Century), and the Ababda and Bisharin (both of Hamitic stock). The nomad population mostly lives by herding or by trading. No major cities or towns are located in the desert. Since ancient times the desert has been a source of porphyry, a hard igneous rock. Petroleum, iron ore, manganese, and granite also occur in the region. These days there is a heightened military presence, both here and in Sinai, due to the area's proximity to Israel.

Unlike the inhospitable interior, the Red Sea Coast is the most rapidly developing area in Egypt. There are a number of cities and towns along here, including Zafarana, the oil town of Ras Gharib, Gemsa, Hurghada (a tourist mecca and the region's primary boomtown) and the phosphate mining town Port Safaga. While development has had obvious benefits for the economy, it has not been without its disadvantages. Environmentally the greatest impact has been on the Red Sea's rich coral reefs. Both dumping and irresponsible divers have damaged as much as 80% of the reef, though even in the world of Darkness there have been efforts to stem the damage due to the desire to maintain the reefs as a major tourist attraction. Indeed, Endron has largely been kept out of the Red Sea drilling business by its corporate competitors (with an invisible partner in the form of a local Glass Walker syndicate). Other tentacles of the Wyrms have managed to entangle themselves in the region's commercial base, however — most notably Kauket Mining, a two-times removed subsidiary of the American based Harold & Harold Incorporated — which has set up shop in Port Safaga.

There is a confluence of other forces here as well. With big money to be made in increased tourism and the rapidly growing population base, the opportunities are almost too good to pass up, particularly since some of the country's older supernatural powers have, for one reason or another, been seemingly slow off the mark moving into the region. The Talons, of course, consider the entire Eastern Desert theirs, and after thousands of years few things have occurred to disabuse them of this notion. This is partly due to their ferocity in defending their turf, but also because — at least until the 20th Century — there have been few agencies, supernatural or otherwise, with much interest in the barren desert region. The Talons have two caerns of vastly different potency in the Arabian Desert. The first is the Sept of the Howling Sands near Luxor while the much smaller Sept of Hidden Water occupies a wandering oasis some 30km southwest of the city of Suez. Even in once timeless Egypt, however, things change. In coastal cities like Hurghada, outsiders, mostly European syndicates, have moved in to make some fast

money off the booming tourist trade and the vices that accompany such good times.

The Arabian Umbra

The Arabian Desert's Penumbra has long been problematic for shapeshifters, as even the usually Wyld-savvy Red Talons will attest. Rife with highly unpredictable Wyld-spirits and other creatures, the Arabian Desert (and particularly the Red Sea Mountains) is the reputed home of the Simurgh. The Simurgh is an enigmatic companion to the Griffin totem, but also cousin to the fey Chimera totem of the Stargazers. The totem holds province over dreams and prophecy, and Garou who sleep in the eastern Umbra are prone to vivid and occasionally prophetic dreams. The region as a whole is said to have gates to the Umbral Flux realm, the Dream Zone, the Aetherial Realm (mainly from the region's mountainous areas) and possibly even Arcadia Gateway (see *Umbra*).

In places the Penumbra's sands are by turns light or dark blue, and airts tend to turn in on themselves, meandering aimlessly or fracturing abruptly, leaving travelers in all sorts of unenviable predicaments. Even the least of the desert's Wyld spirits, dancing color threads/clouds and the like, are apt to dazzle and confuse. While the region's inherent wildness has prevented some more traditional Wyrminions like Pentex and the Black Spiral Dancers from gaining much hold here, it spawns some truly bizarre Banes all its own. Some have seemingly little substance, but are merely fearsome apparitions. Others, are truly deadly, such as hosts of Dream Banes and, far more dangerous, the Aslynthi — a vicious form of psychomachia with a spider's body and human facial features. These frighteningly sentient and wicked Banes are divided into a sorcerer and a warrior caste, and are thought by some to be related to the Ananasi or the Eastern Kumo. The warriors are black, wire-haired nightmares and a match for even the most accomplished Ahroun. Those of the sorcerer caste are more delicate, translucent and beautiful, and delight in torturing their victims. Both groups are capable of "flying" along invisible webs strung through out the region's aerial climes. The Aslynthi have appeared in the Arabian Umbra with disturbing frequency of late. Another interesting denizen of local lore is a singular entity, a djinni-like creature known as the Father of Smoke. Garou who have encountered this spirit have variously described it as a benign spirit of the Wyld (possibly one of Chimera's brood) or as a particularly potent Bane of the Dream Maker category (see *Book of the Wyrms*, 2nd Ed.).

Whether it is the cause or the result of the Eastern Desert's strange environs, the Eastern Tower is the most enigmatic of the four spires, surpassing even the elusive northern tower in mystery. Indeed, it is known only as a rumor to the Garou, though questing Stargaz-

ers of the World Tree camp are said to have reached it (though not to have returned). Its traditional anchor point in the Penumbra is a transient circle of stones southeast of Safaga. Of course, the Garou are not the only parties interested in this gate....

Hurghada

Situated along the Red Sea coast about 325km south of Suez, the boomtown of Hurghada was until recently a sleepy fishing village. While the town's population is still relatively small (about 40,000 people), there are often twice that many tourists in town. Not long on ancient history, the area still has a few sights such as the Roman Mons Porphyrites (mountain of porphyry) and the nearby Gebel Abu Dukhan (Father of Smoke). The town itself has become highly Westernized with numerous hotels (more than anywhere else in Egypt except Cairo), bars, trendy shops, dive-clubs (including submarine tours of the reefs) and discos with names like Cha-Cha and La Bamba to serve the area's mostly European clientele. The town has gained the reputation as a "party town," which means that, despite Islamic law and local customs, Hurghada has become a center for drugs, alcohol and vice.

Supernatural interest in the region has increased accordingly. The Glass Walkers realized they had a good deal with the region over 30 years ago, but since then word of the area's growth (and potential profits) have gone far beyond Egypt's borders. A human syndicate backed by a coterie of particularly vicious and brash young European vampires has made inroads into local profits of late. There are indications that this vampire pack has a working relationship with the Black Spiral hive in Port Said and things are getting ugly. Of course, both sides have many problems they must overcome. For the gûls it is necessary to curtail their hunting activities in the still small town (they mostly keep tightly controlled "herds" of humans about them for this purpose), lest they pop the tourist bubble. Meanwhile the Glass Walkers must contend with the fact that the region is seemingly devoid of caerns (the Red Talons have, not surprisingly, shown little interest in sharing). The Glass Walkers have largely ameliorated this problem by employing a private helicopter that they use to shuttle between the coast and more Gnosis-rich areas.

Ras Gharib

A miserably polluted oil town, visiting Garou may be surprised to learn that it is not a base for Endron (given the area's poor environmental record, the conglomerate needn't bother), but is rather under the auspices of the EGPC and more traditional oil companies. The town has the usual assortment of villagers and transient oil workers, some of whom can be tough customers in their own right. Workers from Ras Gharib and other nearby

industrial towns like to relax by coming into tourist towns like Hurghada to mix with the tourists and, sometimes, to cause trouble. Just because the town has no Pentex interests hardly means that it is free of Wyrmtaint. In fact the entire town is a Hellhole with extremely unpleasant Banes—including H'rugglings and, allegedly, a mating couple of Drattosi—living in its sooty Umbral environs. One of the primary executives within the corporate oil structure is Gamal Ragab, a potent independent fomori of the Ferectoi breed. He has made the town a refuge of sorts for other independent fomori, the more human looking of which hold various positions in the drilling operation. Enjoying his autonomous status, Ragab has worked to keep Endron out of town and may even attempt to dissuade visiting Garou from shutting him down by throwing them information about the conglomerate's operations elsewhere.

Port Said and the Suez Canal

Modern Port Said was built in 1859 on a narrow spit of sand between Lake Manzala and the Mediterranean Sea. Straddling the divide between the Eastern Desert and the Sinai Peninsula, it is a bustling trade center at the eastern most tip of the Nile Delta, about 175 km (110 mi) northeast of Cairo. It has a population of approximately 500,000 and is the administrative headquarters for the Suez Canal. Its deepwater outer harbor is the principal fueling station for passing ships and it handles a large part of Egypt's export trade in cotton, rice and salt. The principal industries are fishing and the manufacture of chemicals and tobacco products. The city is also a popular summer resort. Bereft of the ancient history found in much of Egypt, in many ways Port Said is more reminiscent of mid-sized new cities throughout the world, with all the good and bad that this entails. Mosques, modern office buildings, factory complexes, 19th Century British manses and squalid slums make the city a varied and somewhat surreal experience.

Until very recently Port Said was home to a strangely fastidious and benign Ratkin family, but all that changed two decades ago. Following a skirmish between the Ratkin and Endron, the bolthole was abruptly invaded by one of Egypt's two Black Spiral packs. Reshaping the bolt hole to their own purposes, the Black Spiral Hive of the Boiling Sands now exports terror throughout Egypt and has become particularly troublesome to the Last Stone pack in Damietta (though the hive has its own problems, as detailed below).

Suez

Mostly destroyed during the 1967 and 1973 wars with Israel, today Suez shows little outside indication of damage, but the war scars run deep. Mostly a smoky, industrial city, Suez is a crossroads at the southernmost tip of the Red Sea

and the southern mouth of the Suez Canal. Despite a recent facelift, the city can be crudely (and with exceptions) divided between the industrial business sector and a large tangle of back-alley slums. The business sector is mostly clean and modern, if austere; the docks are busy day and night, handling tankers, luxury yachts and Muslim pilgrims en route to Mecca. The slums on the other hand are some of the most dangerous in Egypt, mostly owing to a largish family of Ratkin who moved into the city after the last war.

If the rats in Cairo are corrupt and insane, the Ratkin of Suez seem to be nothing short of pure evil. The Suez bolt hole in the Penumbra swarms with thousands of diseased rats and, if one dares tread deeper, is connected with the Scar, the Umbral domain affiliated most closely with the worst aspects of industrialism. The rats of Suez also hold power in nearby Port Taufiq (see Sinai, below). Suez's rodent leader is Chethetho, a former Knife Skulker of some

The Suez Canal

The Suez Canal flows from Port Said in the north and passes by several cities (Qantara, Ismailia and the Great Bitter Lake) to Suez in the south. The canal has been the flashpoint for international tensions since it was first started in 1854. In 1875 the British became the largest shareholders in the Suez Canal Company, thereby setting the stage for decades of direct and indirect British rule. After WWII the canal became a major artery for oil and a lynchpin in Cold War strategy. Nasser's nationalization of the canal in 1956 sparked the invasion of Egypt by Britain, France and Israel. In recent years tanker traffic and revenues have declined as a result of competition from oil pipelines, and the mysterious sinking of an Endron tanker in early 2001 didn't help matters. Blame for the incident has been widespread, with suspects as disparate as Islamic terrorists, Endron itself and (in supernatural circles) Damietta's Last Stone pack.

Sumed Pipeline: The Sumed pipeline is an alternative to the Suez Canal for transporting oil from the Persian Gulf region to the Mediterranean. The 200-mile pipeline runs from Ain Sukhna on the Gulf of Suez to Sidi Kerir on the Mediterranean. Considered a major "choke point" in world oil supplies, the closure of the Sumed Pipeline would add greatly to transit time and cost of oil. This vulnerability is one of the stated reasons leading to Endron's construction of the Apophis line. The Arab Petroleum Pipeline Company (APP) owns the Sumed pipeline, a joint venture between Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the U.A.E. and Qatar.

repute before she became enamored with Lord Thurifuge, the Maeljin potentate of disease. Needless to say, neither less corrupt Ratkin nor Garou have dared set foot in the city in years. Chethetho has recently formed a loose-knit coalition with both the Bone Gnawer Maneaters in Cairo and the Port Said Black Spiral Dancers in an aggressive plan to make the entire Suez Canal zone free of Gaian Garou.

Sinai

The Sinai Peninsula is a rocky plateau of burning desert that connects Egypt to Israel. Rich in history, portent and faith, the Sinai Peninsula constitutes much of what is referred to generically as the Holy Land, with sites important to Christians, Muslims and Jews alike. Here the holy books record that Moses received the 10 Commandments at Mt. Sinai. It was also in Sinai where Mary, Joseph and Jesus supposedly rested during their flight from King Herod, and it was through here that the Arab General Amr brought Islam to Africa. Hence, with so many holy spots at stake, it is little wonder that all three religions have felt free to kill in order to control the region. From the Crusaders to, far more recently, the bloody wars between Egypt and Israel, the Holy Land has long been the sight of fierce bloodshed.

Under Egyptian control since 1982 — albeit with a UN Multinational Force and Observers group (MFO) to help keep the peace — Sinai, like many other places in Egypt, has undergone major changes in the last few decades. The Egyptian government, in order to create more arable land and to relieve overcrowding in the Delta, has begun a massive program to irrigate parts of the peninsula, building paved roads and desalinization plants. Incentives have been offered to move to the region (in many cases dislocating the 14 Bedouin tribes who have called the region home for centuries) and, of course, the entire realm has become a major destination for tourists and pilgrims of many faiths.

Geography: Sinai is, to understate the matter, striking territory. Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia all border Sinai to the east, though Jordan and Saudi Arabia don't actually touch Egypt, but peer at it from across the narrow Gulf of Aqaba. The northern coast, from Port Said to the Israel border, is largely desert but lined with palms. The top 60% of the peninsula consists mostly of desert and dry wadi beds, with swampland along the coast. Unlike the hard reaches of the Western Desert, Sinai's interior is not entirely barren, but hosts a delicate, and increasingly endangered, ecosystem. This is particularly noticeable when, after the winter rains, seeds that have lain dormant for years suddenly bloom, draping entire plains in a spectacularly brief mantle of green. Almost the entire lower 40% of the peninsula consists of jagged reddish-brown mountains.

Among these are Mt. Sinai and Gebel Katherina (the highest mountain in Egypt and the purported resting-place of Saint Catherine, the martyr of Alexandria).

The peninsula's population centers are primarily coastal, though a slender net of small desert and mountain towns is strung together throughout the interior by a tenuous system of roads. Starting with Qantara in the region's northeastern corner, sparse coastal towns along the Mediterranean include Bir al-Abd, swamp-side Al-Arish and Rafah (which borders Israel and the Gaza Strip). Thereafter, working south and west, the towns of the northern desert consist of the Suez city of Ismailia, Bir Gifgafa (near the Khatmia Pass), Bir Hasana, Bir ath-Thamada and Quseima (near the Israeli border). Many of the interior roads are mostly or exclusively used by the Egyptian military. About one third of the way down the Sinai's western border is Port Taufiq. From near here runs Route 33, a desert highway that divides the region almost neatly into north and south. The highway passes towns such as Nakhl and Tamad, and ends at Taba at the apex of the Gulf of Aqaba. A point of contention between Israel and Egypt until 1982, Taba borders both countries and Saudi Arabia as well. Several kilometers south of Taba is Pharaoh's Island, a site famous for a fortress built by Crusaders in 1115 and subsequently captured by Salah ad-Din.

South Sinai is almost completely mountainous and even more thinly populated than the northern deserts, except along the coast which mirrors the Eastern Desert's Red Sea Coast in its development. Starting with Port Taufiq and running south, Sinai's east coast towns along the Gulf of Suez include the oil town Ras al-Sudr, the regional capital El-Tor, and the booming tourist town of Sharm el-Sheikh (host to several peace conferences) at the region's southern tip. Finally, the region's west coast towns along the Straits of Tiran and Gulf of Aqaba (all across from Saudi Arabia) include both tourist towns and, strangely, Egypt's only true nature preserves. Running south to north, these are the tourist towns of Nabq and Dahab (and their similarly named preserves) and the town of Nuweiba.

Supernatural Sinai

Given its zealous monotheist history, Sinai is not particularly hospitable to the Garou nor the undead, but far less so to the latter category. Set's curse against the Striders simply does not stretch into the Peninsula, though whether this is due to the land's holy status, because it lies beyond the Eastern Tower or for some other reason is up for debate. Whatever the reason, both the cessation of Set's curse and the region's high incidence of True Faith (making it virtually devoid of the undead) have made Sinai a haven of sorts from which some Striders launch expeditions into their homeland. Of course, simply because there are no vampires, this hardly means the land is safe. Unfortunately, what may have once existed in the way of caerns

here have long been either depleted or snatched up by the region's largish mage population, many of whom have strong designs for the region — plans that brook little interference from the Changing Breeds. Hence, most of Sinai's shapeshifter population tends to be transient.

Besides expatriate Striders, the region's thin Garou population consists mainly of Children of Gaia, visiting Stargazers and the occasional stray Red Talon. The east coast tourist towns of Dahab and Sharm el-Sheikh share some of the booming (mostly Western and Israeli) tourist business found on the Red Sea coast. Dahab in particular has been unfavorably compared to Daytona Beach in Florida, and is known as a corridor for the drug trade. Seemingly devoid of supernatural inhabitants until recently, it has become of late a retreat in which Cairo's few non-cannibal Bone Gnawers have set up shop. There are other points of interest for visiting Garou, though these are more likely to be dangerous than rewarding. Port Taufiq, a suburb of sorts for the city of Suez (and similarly decrepit), is also largely dominated by the Suez Ratkin. Nearby *Oyun Musa* (the Springs of Moses), however, is apparently a chantry for theurgic magi, some of whom have come into conflict with the rats and who may prove useful short term allies in breaking Chethetho's hold on the two port cities.

The peninsula's Penumbra has some particularly interesting phenomena. The spectacular plant blooms after the winter rains, as seen in the mundane world, are as nothing compared to the almost frightening profundity of plant growth sometimes witnessed in the Penumbra. Almost as soon as the skies darken and the rain begins to fall, the low mountain reaches and coastal planes spring forth with greenery as if viewed through time-lapse photography. Almost as suddenly, a vast panoply of animal spirits — some indigenous to the realm (including gazelles, rock hyraxes and the like), as well as species long extinct or wholly alien — appear in abundance, only to disappear days or even hours later as the plants die once more.

The Penumbra adjacent to the southern mountains is a place of Wyld air spirits, and rumors speak of hidden Anchorheads between here and the "Cavern of Sokar" (see below), an Umbral domain sacrosanct to several avian totems. Rumors of a lost Stargazer caern surface about this region from time to time, but so far with little proof to back them up. In fact the one consistently rumored caern is also home to Fara'un Shark (literally the Eastern Pharaoh), one of the most powerful and wicked of the ancient Shabti. The skin and bones of past trespassers in her mad dominion decorate various passes in the razor sharp mountains.

Western (Libyan) Desert

The Western Desert is Egypt's largest and most barren region. It is also, with the possible exception of the Nile

Delta, the most dangerous. Except for a few oases it has virtually no human settlements (less than 1%) and is punctuated by geological formations that are, in a word, "bizarre." Among certain mystic circles, the Western Desert is also considered a stronghold for the elder darks that ruled the world before the pharaohs or even before humanity itself. Described variously as the burial place of the mythic Second City (home of the oldest, pre-Antediluvian vampires) or even as a resting place for the Wyrms itself, such fanciful stories aside, there is no denying that an ancient and murderous intelligence resides somewhere beneath the desert sands. No one knows the real truth behind the region; dark rumors and whispered innuendo are the rule of the day. The greatest Bubasti kuashas and the wisest lore-masters among the wolves know little; even the Setites avoid it like they would the morning sun and have their own dark rumors of what lies in wait out there.

While such legends may seem like paranoid ramblings to newcomers, the truth is that the whole region seems to lie in silent wait for supernatural creatures. Ironically, the few human settlers who live here seem far safer than more "awakened" visitors. Occasionally Garou and Fera have dared this desert. Those who go there seeking answers typically run into one of three ends: Some wander aimlessly or even live here for short periods, finding nothing at all and reporting the dangers (and rumored rewards) of the region as greatly exaggerated. Others come back mad, unable to give a coherent account of their experiences, or do not return at all — swallowed up by the desert. The only lasting exception to this rule, at least from a Garou perspective, are the Silent Striders who work around the cursed central desert and make their way along forgotten paths to the Citadel of Western Fire near the Libyan border.

The Qattara Depression

One of the lowest places on the planet, some 133m (436 ft) below sea level, the Qattara Depression is a nearly impossible quagmire of sand, salt lakes and marshes covering about 18,100 sq. km, an area only slightly smaller than nearby Israel. Navigation here is difficult (as both the Allies and the Axis learned during WWII) and, although the soft, marshy ground is indicative of water, it is highly mineralized and most of it is not fit to drink. Attempts have been made to make use of the region, including several hydrosolar projects, which would involve excavating a channel from the Mediterranean and letting the seawater into the desert. So far these plans have come to naught and the one organization to actually begin construction, Endron, swiftly discovered the lesson learned by previous supernatural visitors to the region.

For a period during the early to mid-90s, the corporation ambitiously sunk money and human resources into the region. Then, during a tension fraught week in 1997 (not widely reported in the press), the company received

a number of frantic calls, dispatched (and lost) a First Team and several other key operatives, only to finally abandon almost \$250,000,000 dollars of equipment to rust in the marshes. Meanwhile, some Bastet believe the main reason for all this frenzied activity to develop the region can be spelled out in one word—Swara. About 20 years ago some reports surfaced that cheetahs were returning to the region, mainly owing to the fact that it contained ample small game but was virtually devoid of human settlement. Rumors that the Swara accompanied these developments similarly circulated in more rarefied circles. Consumers who remember Endron's "Put a Cheetah in your Engine" campaign of a few years back might be somewhat cynical about the conglomerate's motives in this region—if only they knew about it. Of course Endron has never been one to walk away from an investment and, after the retirement and subsequent suicide of its last regional manager, the company seems prepared to try again.

Oases

There are several major oases (Siwa, Farafra, Dakhla, Bahariyya and Kharga) which account for the only human settlement in this part of the country. To relieve overpopulation in the Delta, the government has encouraged people (mostly landless fellahin) to settle these isolated green spots, and have dubbed the region centering on the Kharga: Al-Wadi al-Gedid or the "New Valley." Some folks have taken the bait and a few of these spots have become outright touristy. The government has built roads to these areas so getting there isn't that difficult. As some Bubasti and Garou have discovered, it's leaving that's the problem.

Bahariyya: There are several small towns here, the largest of which is Bawiti (population 30,000). One interesting feature of this area is Black Mountain, a flat-topped hill with the remnants of a WWI British outpost. Fera who have investigated the town have found little to suggest supernatural activity in this oasis of late (despite rumors of a European vampire who hunted here during and after the Great War), but as with most things in the Western Desert, such reports are hardly definitive.

Dakhla: Fertile Dakhla is one of the main food sources in Egypt, producing rice, wheat, mangoes, olives and dates. There are two main settlements here, the old town of Mut and Al-Qasr, with about 75,000 inhabitants around this oasis all told. By turns squalid and picturesque, large parts of the old city in Mut have been used as a dump. This became a positive asset to a small pack of Cairene Bone Gnawers who, fleeing infection and subsequent bloodshed from the Jackal Fever in 1998, sought out Dakhla for the reputedly miraculous healing properties of its waters. What happened next was, depending on whom you hear it from, a senseless tragedy or a comedy of errors. The Bone Gnawers, failing to find balm in the healing waters, ran afoul of no less a personage than the Simba Black Tooth



who had come to the oasis for reasons unknown after a failed encounter with the Lake Nasser Bubasti. What little chance there was of a peaceful encounter was shattered when the mysterious murder of one of Black Tooth's tribe drove the proud Bastet to slaughter the Bone Gnawer refugees to the last cub; the Garou would not go unavenged. Ironically this chance encounter infected the seemingly unstoppable Black Tooth and his pride with a plague so virulent that, while finally cured, some believe was contributory to his eventual death. Since then, neither Bastet nor Garou have shown much interest in Dakhla.

Farafra: Almost dead center in the Libyan Desert, this is the smallest of its oases and its main town, Qasr al Farafra, has a population of 2800 (mainly Bedouins). It's almost completely isolated from the outside world and there are unknown supernatural agencies interested in keeping it that way. Whether these are centered in the old Roman ruins around the spring baths, or from the so-called "white desert" (Sahra el-Beida, an alien-looking region of bone-white rock formations shaped by wind erosion), something has staked out this oasis as its own and has no interest in sharing. Among the Garou and other Fera, Farafra has taken on one of the darkest reputations in Egypt because it was once the home to a Warder caern known simply as "Ptah's Eye." Situated in reasonable proximity to the Western Tower and believed to draw from a similar reservoir of energies, sometime during the Middle Kingdom it became the focus for the Warder tribe's one attempt to emulate their Strider neighbors and to open a portal to the Dark Umbra. Predictably, the experiment ended tragically and the entire sept disappeared, rumored to have fallen into the City of Hungry Knives (see below). Now a Flying Dutchman legend of sorts has grown around the caern, with sightings reported near and far (complete with gruesome descriptions of screaming, tormented Garou beckoning for help). The truth of such legends, or perhaps the caern's new found usefulness as a fateful lure by its new occupants, remains a matter of much debate.

Kharga: The largest and most developed oasis in the Western Desert, its primary population center is the town of Al-Kharga (population 70,000). Many of the people living here are Berbers, descendants of the original inhabitants, and there are some interesting ruins, including a temple to Amun and 4th-6th Century Coptic necropolis.

Siwa: Appearing like a mirage southwest of the Qattara Depression, idyllic Siwa is the largest oasis in the Western Desert, and the one with the richest history. Alexander the Great came to consult with the oracle here, who (being no fool) confirmed that the Greek general was indeed the son of Zeus and rightful ruler of Egypt. Both the Ptolemaic Pharaohs and Roman conquerors also built structures here. These included a famous temple to Amun, the Mount of the Dead (Roman tombs) and, some allege,

Alexander the Great's tomb — but after that the region saw hardly another Western visitor until British and Italian troops clashed here in the early years of WWII. Today the verdant oasis's mostly Berber population has become only a partially willing host to both foreign tourists and fellahin workers from the Nile Delta. The oasis also has less visible visitors, the most important of whom are Silent Striders who sometimes pass through here to and from their Citadel of the Western Flame, which rests about 50km west of Siwa through hard desert. Of course, stealthy as they are, the Striders' passage through this region has not gone unnoticed....

The Western Penumbra

The Penumbra touching on this desert is by turns either eerily silent or cacophonous as it is wracked by some of the greatest sandstorms in the Tellurian. The silent times can be deceptive and lull unwary visitors into forgetting that the untouched desert is a place of unfettered, primordial Wyld. This aspect is most apparent in its role as the perennial spawning ground of the Khamsin, a great storm-spirit that prowls Egypt's Penumbra. The Weaver has little influence here, but the third member of the Triad, the Wyrn, hardly goes underrepresented. The actual number of Banes living in the Western Desert are apparently few, but those who do live here are so ancient that they do not appear in any of the old lists.

Tuat (The Umbra)

Prior to the rise of civilization, human mages were mostly of the natural variety — experienced with the plant and animal worlds, and the passing of the seasons — but who had not yet codified the world into a complex written corpus. The rise of organized Egyptian magic, unprecedented until that time, lead early Egyptian mages to make hitherto unheard of experiments in the spirit world. The surrounding Umbra became a combination laboratory and painter's canvas. Some experiments were successful and made a lasting contribution to the larger body of classical magic. Others went horrendously awry and their repercussions still reverberate through the spirit world to this day.

First among the culprits in this latter category was the Egyptian search for immortality, a pursuit that lead sorcerers in all manner of directions, pursuing life, death, time and spirit magics. Obviously some of their research was rewarded, as evidenced by the Shemsuheru (who have seemingly based their existence on a metaphysic of the soul different from that found anywhere else in the world) and the enigmatic Ushabti. Unfortunately, the sword cuts both ways and, as early magi gained power and knowledge from the Umbra, so too the spirits gained inroads in the material world.

So, aside from its Penumbra, which has a distinctly Egyptian flavor throughout, how does the Egyptian Um-

bra differ from that found anywhere else in the world? After all, as any experienced Umbral explorer can attest, most of the deeper spirit realms are less local and more universal in scope, touching not so much on individual geographies but concerning themselves with deeper archetypal matters. While this still holds as true in Egypt as elsewhere, the early magics that contained its Penumbra also imprinted some of their features on adjacent realms. The places listed below represent the original twelve domains acknowledged by the Ancient Egyptians; clearly the lists have expanded since then. So, while it is fully possible for an Egyptian traveler to enter realms other than those listed below, the Storyteller should work to integrate such trips into the scenario's motif.

The Four Towers

The true origins and purposes of the towers are obscure. While most occult scholars believe they were built by potent proto-mages at the dawn of the Pharaonic age, others put their genesis much farther back in the mists of time. At least aspects of the four towers exist in the Penumbra, though all four are more truly affiliated with deeper Umbral environs. Seemingly situated in a rough diamond shape at the four cardinal points surrounding Egypt (North, South, East and West), the enigmatic spires also seemingly correspond with other fundamental principles. These include, most notably, the time of day (an important element in Egyptian magic), as well as what would later become the Western elemental traditions of fire, earth, air and water.

Beside their ostensible function as markers to delineate the borders of ancient Khem, many believe that the mages who allegedly constructed the towers did so to contain the havoc Khem's spirit and ghostly denizens might otherwise wreak in an unsuspecting world. Others suspect that the towers were also to direct and possibly amplify Egypt's spiritual energies. Adding to this confusion, some of the towers are built along architectural conventions that belie their ancient past. The east tower, for example, is an Arabesque minaret of a style not seen until less than a thousand years ago, leading some to believe that the towers are far newer than usually claimed, while others assert that they change their outward form with the shifting cultural milieu. Such polemics aside, those shapeshifters who have managed to gain some familiarity with the towers — most notably the Striders in the west and the Bubasti to the south — have done little to penetrate the towers' inner secrets.

East (Earth and Dawn)

At once both the most solid and yet otherworldly of the four towers, the structure known simply as the Eastern Tower represents both the constancy of the earth and the ephemeral nature of dreams. East is the direction of the rising sun and so, by extension, the symbol of birth and new

possibilities. And such are the tales of the eastern spire. Sometimes associated with Yaaru (the 12th Domain listed below), it surpasses even the ethereal North Tower in mystery. Despite many attempts, no Garou has ever been known to reach, much less enter it (though certain Bubasti legends speak of feline visitors from across the seas coming and going as they please). Occasionally Umbral travelers describe seeing visions of the tower, a single slender spire with smooth alabaster walls and a gold minaret standing tall against a desert of blue sands, and dervish's tales conjure images of spectacular treasures dug from the rich earth, and of hidden secrets. The deity most commonly associated with the Eastern Tower is the ancient Egyptian god Min, whom the Greeks knew as Pan. The traditional site for the tower is a circle of stones in the Penumbra southeast of the Red Sea town of Safaga. Visitors to the circle report that the trails that start here, lead not to Yaaru, but to the mid-Umbral fifth domain (the Cavern of Sokar). Recently an increasing number of Banes have used this portal as an invasion route to that realm.

North (Air and Noon)

As elusive as its namesake, the Tower of the Etesian Wind is difficult, if not impossible, to reach, as it only appears in any given location for a short time. Fera have traditionally reported seeing it in the Penumbra near modern day Tanta and it seems to have a certain correspondence with the Sept of the Etesian Wind. A monument to constant movement, it is an elegant, sweeping tower constructed of light blue-gray marble and dark blue lapis insets replete with arcane hieroglyphs. Wider at the base and then tapering upward in a graceful, sail-like arc, despite its apparent weight, the entire tower seems to float cloud-like above the desert sands or Nile waters alike. The direction north is oft affiliated with the noonday hour (and physical activity), and similarly the tower has always appeared only in the full light of Umbral day. It is, hence, disturbing that some local spirits have recently reported seeing glimpses of it at night, lit by scarlet lightning and surrounded by a swarm of Banes.

The winds that perpetually surround this tower vary in intensity, from refreshing coastal breezes to full force Mediterranean gales, though of late the air around it has been filled with soot and the tower's airy marble surface seems blackened and dull. The factious Garou who have made their home in the nearby Sept of the Etesian Wind (see below) have made it their occupation to study the tower's movements. Even they, however, have never managed to enter the tower, which seems to recede eternally away when approached. The key to entering it is a fabled lapis seal embossed with the hieroglyph for air, but its current whereabouts are unknown and fodder for a quest all its own. Nevertheless, the tower seems to impart some of its power to the nearby caern. The spirit companion to

this tower is Amaunet, the Egyptian "goddess" of the northern wind and a remote totem of the Black Fury tribe.

West (Fire and Twilight)

It is little wonder that of all four towers, it is the Citadel of the Western Flame that causes the most fear in those who hear of it. West, after all, is the direction of the setting sun and in many cultures the direction traditionally affiliated with death. An aspect of this tower appears in the Penumbra about 50km south of the Siwa Oasis, but is difficult to find because the region is shrouded by a thick black mist and replete with Death's Breath spirits and sinister shadows, said to be the spirits of the restless dead. Dark and foreboding, the Western Tower sits on an elevated promontory of black granite. The tower itself seems to be carved from the same material, is perfectly square around its base and — at least from any distance — apparently featureless. A low hanging ceiling of dark gray clouds perpetually shrouds its upper reaches.

The Silent Striders, who sacrificed much to take it from its earlier owner, have long claimed the Citadel of the Western Flame as their own. Although the tower has a Penumbral presence, and indeed may be entered from there by those who know how, its substance stretches into other domains. The tower sits on a precipice overlooking the first of the domains listed below (the Great City). From here it marks the beginning of the long night's travel into the realm of the restless dead, and (so the Striders hope) to their Tribal Homeland beyond. The spirit protector of the Western Citadel is Ienpw — a fearsome canid who reputedly kills any but the Striders who are foolish enough to seek the tower of the dead.

South (Water and Night)

Forever surrounded by a profusion of darkened Nile greenery, in keeping with its name the Citadel of Midnight Waters overlooks a realm of eternal night. Visually the most intriguing of the four towers, this structure dominates the surrounding Penumbra, appearing at once both inviting and ominous. Consisting of an almost fractal conglomeration of flat-plane segments, as if cut from a hundred pyramids by a mad op-artist, its orange-gold sandstone surface is smooth as glass but with thousands of sharp, faintly glowing corners. This jagged, geometric appearance is softened, however, by a multitude of large and small waterfalls, pouring down its sides and into the dark Nile waters at its foot.

Situated along the Penumbral Nile just over the modern Sudanese border, in ancient times the Southern Tower was affiliated with Dedun, the Lion-headed god of wealth and increase (and more obscurely with Satis, the horned archer goddess and guardian of the Nubian border). And certainly it cannot be denied that the Bastet have long held controlling interest in this tower. These

nights it is the Bubasti who hold dominion here, ruling like latter-day pharaohs over the primitive humans whose reed huts dot the surrounding Umbrascape. Until a mere 150 years ago, however, it was the Simba who held sway over the tower. Indeed, it is said that Sakhmet herself once ruled the surrounding Penumbra from here.

The circumstances surrounding the transfer of re-gency over the tower differ, depending upon to whom one listens. The Bubasti claim that the Simba cowardly abandoned the tower in the wake of colonial imperialism. The Simba, meanwhile, maintain the Bubasti took the tower by trickery, offering to oversee it while the Simba dealt with pressing matters in the African interior, but then usurping it. In fact, one would not be too cynical in supposing that, occasional statements to the contrary, the Bubasti have no interest in returning the realm to its "rightful owners." The conflict between the two Bastet tribes has intensified over recent decades. Shortly before his death, the Simba warlord Black Tooth visited Ananka, the Bubasti sorceress currently ensconced in the tower, for three nights. The substance of their conversation remains a mystery. Like the other towers, the Citadel of Midnight Waters holds a deeper Umbral correspondence, in this case with the aptly named Cavern of the Life of Forms (see below).

The 12 Hours of Night (Domains)

Egypt's Penumbra has already been described in depth, but Khem's relationship with the spirit world goes far deeper than these surface environs. According to such ancient sources as the *Am-Duat*, the *Book of Gates* and the *Pert Em Hru* (commonly known as the *Book of the Dead*, but more accurately translated as "Coming into Light") there are twelve regions of the spirit world, one for each hour of night. These legends describe the Celestine Amun Re's journey through night to be rejuvenated the next day. In this legend, the sun-god battled the serpent Apophis and was helped along his way by various gods and spirits including, of all entities, Set — one of the few benign actions attributed to the vampiric snake-god. (Of course, the true tale of Sutekh's involvement in this cycle may differ from published legend.)

Amun Re's journey, from beginning to end, was reputedly grueling even for a god. Certain fools and mystics believe that treading the hours of night in the order traveled by the Celestine would afford the seeker great insights, possibly even godlike powers. Since Re's time, however, the broad road between the domains has become fragmented (partially through the meddling of human sorcerers) and, if anything, even more treacherous. For lesser creatures, following the Celestine's path would be sheer folly, though there are those who have tried. Most shapeshifters and other denizens of Egypt's Umbra, however, must be content to travel to one or

two domains, and not in the order traveled by the sun god. Some of Egypt's 12 domains may be familiar, even to foreign Garou, while others are only found within the country's spirit borders. An aspect of the Nile appears in all twelve domains, though it varies vastly in size and importance. In some domains it constitutes almost the entire realm, while in others it is a mere trickle.

Gates, Guardians and Goddesses: For each of the realms listed below, tradition holds that there is a sebkhet (a gate, literally a "fiery door") through which one must enter or leave. These vary greatly in appearance; some are obvious while others are cleverly hidden. Many sebkhet have not seen a Garou pass through them in their aeons-long histories. The gates listed below are not necessarily the only ways in and out of each domain, but they are the only ones currently within the province of Garou knowledge. In keeping with nigh universal magic precepts, each realm has a male and a female principle: a serpent guardian (a male symbol, though the guardian is not always a serpent) and a "goddess of hours" (who served as both an avatar of, and titular ruler over, the realm). In all likelihood, both serpent and goddess are/were major Jaggling spirits or at most minor Incarna rather than gods. Since few of these gates are open to the Garou or Fera, however, the truth remains debatable. Further, things have changed since the age of the pharaohs. Spirits have migrated, kingdoms have risen and fallen, and the old gods, if gods they were, have largely passed beyond. Opportunistic spirits have flooded in to take up residence where once the old gods ruled.

The Twelve Realms

1. The Great City

What was once called the Great City of Osiris is now a barren gray stone plane hung heavy with clouds that ever threaten, but never deliver, rain. A place of bleak cold winds, hidden pitfalls and sickly stagnant water, it is thought by many to be the front doorstep to the Abyss. Yawning, bottomless pits dot the landscape in a haphazard fashion, but there are no true landmarks. Nevertheless it is easy enough to tell direction. On one horizon is a fiery orange glow, while in the opposite direction is a thin band reminiscent of a pleasant desert sunrise (the Sub-Planes of Dispersion and Solidification; see below). Intermittently the pits belch forth a screeching, black Bane-wind. Those caught up in this storm are torn at by debris, chill talons and mocking alien laughter. Some so assaulted are unfortunate enough to be hurled bodily into the stormy skies and spirited back to the spirit-wind's source beneath the earth. It is said that these winds emanate from Re-Stau (the "City at the Pit of Whirling Forces"), an abyssal city of black spires and pain. Few travelers, however, are interested in investigating the winds' origin and so the

city remains an enigma. The domain's guardian serpent was simply named Guardian of the Desert; the hour goddess was once the none-too-subtly named "Splitter of the Heads of Osiris' Enemies." Neither of them has been in evidence here for millennia, however, and have seemingly long ago moved to realms beyond.

Sebkhet (He of the Hidden Name, Osiris): Reachable from the Penumbra with little effort (once one has gleaned the merest secrets of the Western Citadel), there are still few Garou who willingly enter this gloomy realm. After all, who seeks death? The entrance is merely a twin outcropping of dark stone. It is far easier to leave through the first horizon, a great miles high curtain of fire that springs effortlessly into full view after a short walk. This is the Sub-plane of Dispersion and to pass into its fires is to die. Whether this death is permanent or not is the only issue. Local Striders know a ritual taught by the caern totem lenpw that allows for a temporary cessation of body functions (the heart stops, the character doesn't breathe, etc.) and allows one passing through the fire a chance of resurrection. This fire leads to the realm of the restless dead. The other horizon is the Sub-Plane of Solidification (rebirth) and reputedly represents entry into a paradisaical realm, perhaps best known to Garou as the Summer Country. This horizon, however, eternally retreats from those who seek it; if any shapeshifters have gained paradise in this fashion, they have never returned.

II. Field of Wernas

A broad, sweeping desert that seems to stretch out infinitely in every direction characterizes this domain. In truth it is merely several hundred kilometers across, but those who walk in a straight line inevitably end up retracing their steps. A realm of fire, air and earth, the Nile appears as only the merest trickle through this realm. Unrelentingly hot, gusty and dry, the air packs a particular punch and visitors soon become hyper-oxygenated unless they breathe shallowly or take other precautions. Along with great dust storms, the occasional firestorm sweeps across the realm, devouring anything flammable in its path. The realm knows only eternal daylight, though the giant red Umbral sun that beats down on it travels a spiral orbit that sometimes brings it closer to the perimeter, casting some areas into twilight. At the realm's center is a great city of translucent crystal.

The city's architecture is clearly Pharaonic in style and embroidered with odd hieroglyphs depicting themes both familiar and strange. The streets are broad stone boulevards that may once have handled ample traffic, but the only sound here now is that of the driving wind. Shouts to attract the attention of any inhabitants echo unheeded into the distance. The buildings' interiors are bright, spacious and flooded with light, but also stripped bare of any treasures they may once have contained.

Given the buildings' translucent nature, even the deepest cellars are not enough to completely shut out the sun's all-pervasive light. Because of this, there are some that believe that this was once a home realm (or at least a resting spot) for the Celestine Helios himself.

First appearances aside, the realm is not abandoned. A host of elemental spirits are ubiquitous here, especially those of air and fire. They are of an insular sort and generally ignore newcomers. If the visitors contact them, initial reactions will range from curious to blasé to hostile. The fire spirits are somewhat more accepting of visitors, while the rare water sprites are (understandably) almost without exception paranoid and hostile. The controlling authority in this domain has been for millennia its hour goddess (an ostensibly benign, if volatile, entity known as "Wise Guardian of her Lord"). Although remote and often distracted by the great whorl of the desert fire and winds, the hour goddess will in time notice visitors and deign to contact them. She is friendly toward those whom she perceives as "aligned with the light," while less so toward those she deems as "skulkers in shadows." (Her reasoning in such calculations, however, is seemingly capricious.)

The goddess' citadel is a high, invisible spire with a richly appointed penthouse that oversees a panorama of the entire realm. The goddess subsists solely on an amber draught distilled from fire and wind, and perceives those who need such sustenance as water as less than perfect — though she will endure such failings for a short period of time. She will give hospitality, advice and aid to those whom she deems worthy, but her tempestuous moods make an extended stay quite dangerous. She will call upon Intense of Flame, a great fiery red serpent who lives in the sun, to incinerate (or at least expel) those whom she perceives as hostile or as overstaying their welcome.

Sebkhet (Intense of Flame): It is possible to reach this realm from almost any Penumbral desert environ, but only during the heat of day and usually after an epiphany engendered by a fevered period of wandering. The gate to both enter and leave this domain is a large glass hoop filled with flame.

III. Field of Grain (The City of Hungry Knives)

Despite its name, which conjures up images of lavish banquet tables and hospitable fellahin, upon arrival seekers of this realm will instantly realize that they have fallen victim to the forces of irony. The field of grain in this instance is a metaphor for human souls, and the "harvest" a great and bloody reaving. Although some Umbral scholars call this domain by its less euphemistic title, the City of Hungry Knives, other Garou may know it by yet another name — Malfeas. In fact, the Field of Grain is a tiny sub-basement of that realm, an obscure corner overseen by no

Maeljin duke in particular. The domain's nightmarish topography incorporates elements from both modern and ancient Egypt; gore-spattered temples and pyramids, desecrated mosques and more modern edifices exist in a rambling hodge-podge, often appearing semi-collapsed or partially submerged into the ground. Narrow streets and blind alleys host random atrocities, as the realm's spirit populace, Banes and luckless spirit victims (drawn by the realm's black gravity over the millennia) pursue an endless horror show that began when man first murdered man. The random nature and near mindlessness of the cruelty here may seem to some more reminiscent of the Atrocity Realm, but those caught up in the Field of Grain's harvest may rest assured that their suffering serves a greater purpose.

The Nile here is brackish and in places choked with bodies. Great swarms of angry flies blot out what meager light is given off by the domain's intermittent Balefires and the sickly red star that watches over the region like a baleful eye. In addition to the usual assortment of Banes and victims found in other Malfean realms, the domain's most bloodthirsty murderers are also its only legal authority (if such a phrase has any meaning here). Known as the Neket or "harvesters," these fomori have pale, diseased skin stretched over muscular frames. Their armor is black and dangerously spiked, and their faces are covered by sinister animal masks, most typically those of hawks, cats or jackals. Armed with barbed whips, cruelly serrated blades or arcane flame weapons, they see torturing the domain's wan human-like spirits as little challenge and are happy to welcome more stimulating prey. Newcomers are likely to be dragged to the realm's center, a great steel pyramid ringed with razor wire and lit by sodium vapor lights. Here, prisoners may expect to have their flesh torturously flayed from their bones, their pain and dying screams feeding the great Balefire that gives life to the realm. Less fortunate captives can expect to first meet the realm's goddess of hours.

The realm's hour goddess is a horror sometimes called "Slicer of Souls" or more simply Ammit. She is seemingly an Incarna, although whether a fallen Maeljin Incarna, a recently-ascended Jaggling, or some other sort is in question. Her form is a parody of the devourer of Egyptian legend, the crocodile/lion/hippopotamus monster that devoured the hearts of the unworthy deceased. Ammit rules from her black steel throne guarded by a trio of Nexus Crawlers and displays a hatred for all living things, including, it seems, her fellow Malfean overlords. The ancient magics that divided the Egyptian Umbra into its component parts also pinched the realm off from the rest of Malfeas and the Umbra at large. As a result, the realm is a great psychic sink, toward which many horrors fall, but from which few escape. Ammit feels the Fields have become "provincial

and out of step," without the dubious sophistication of the greater courts. She believes that if the toxic fire that sustains her realm can be stoked high enough, then she might burn down the barriers that hold her here and take her place once more as a full Duchess of Malfeas. The realm's guardian serpent is called Stinger. Blinded by a Garou hero long ago, the bone-ridged leviathan lives curled beneath the city, growing larger each century with rage and poison. It dreams solely of destruction and exists even beyond the control of the hour goddess.

Sebkhet (Lady of Nourishment): The Black Spiral Hive of the Thrashing Serpent has a window upon this realm, though ostensibly none but its leader, Hgienkad, dares use it. It is unknown what relationship Hgienkad has forged with Ammit, but since he can evidently come and go without hindrance (where even she cannot), one may assume the worst. Unfortunately, given Malfeas's increasing proximity to the Near Umbra, it is also quite possible to find one's way here from other realms as well. The gate itself is a jagged wheel of begrimed iron, inset with repulsive hieroglyphs depicting scenes of torture and degradation.

It is much easier to enter the Fields than to leave, though at least those who do not belong here (that is, visitors who do not give into their basest instincts) have at least a chance of escape. The exit, at least so local lore maintains, is the Gate of Dua (irreverently named for an ancient god of toiletries), a sewer-like sluice in the lowest bowels of the city sewers. The gate is said to lead to the eighth domain, the City of the God's Sarcophagi. In the distant past Bane armies sought to invade that silent realm, but as none have ever returned, the gate is now mostly feared or forgotten. Gregor, a quasi-benign aspect of the Cockroach totem, lives in the sewers and will guide selected prisoners out for a price.

IV. Cavern of the Life of Forms

A realm of perpetual darkness, life and sultry Nile heat, this domain surrounding the southern Citadel of Midnight Waters has spawned much controversy about its true nature. Theories fly thick and fast, counting it variously as a Bastet homerealm, a portion of the Flux Realm or even an out of the way aspect of Pangaea. Whatever the case may be, in this domain the cat is undisputedly king. Here things are as the Bastet believe they once were, where the human monkeys live deprived of their precious technology, alternately fleeing from, or paying homage to, their feline rulers. Physically the domain appears much as the Nile did prior even to the age of the pharaohs. The river here is powerful and life giving, with every possible species of animal (many extinct elsewhere) along its banks.

The Cavern of the Life of Forms is aptly named, though caves here are few. Visiting this plane is what one might call a Gestalt experience, and there have been those

who have compared it with the parable of Plato's Cave (though the realm's name far pre-dates the philosopher). Whether it is the eternal night or Wyld energies that suffuse the realm, an accurate reading of the terrain, even for the usually wilderness savvy Fera, is difficult. Shadow shapes and false forms move through the darkness here, and every inhabitant (including visitors) seems to have a shadowy twin. This doppelganger has its own separate existence, never wandering far from its caster, but rarely interacting with him either. The genesis of these shadow forms is a mystery even to long-time residents.

Humans comprise the bottom half of the social equation here. They are roughly divided between Neolithic hut-dwellers that inhabit a series of small villages along the banks, and the even more primitive "reed-men" that live a furtive existence of hunting and gathering along the Nile's more remote tributaries. The hut-dwellers display a certain degree of sophistication, with a rich oral folklore, mostly revolving around their creation by the felines who live in the nearby citadel (though they seem to have little memory of the realm's previous Simba leaders). They also display surprisingly adept crafting sensibilities, though strict tribal laws prescribe harsh punishments for written language or weapons other than the most basic sort used for hunting and fishing. Some of their holy men have crude shamanic powers, and act as local headmen and interpreters of the Bubasti's laws.

The hut-dwellers have never seen Garou before and may mistake them for "Dakat" (Banes), reacting to them with fear, obeisance or violence, depending on the situation. The hut-dwellers have little reason to complain. They are largely unmolested (as long as they don't wander too far) and food is plentiful. They have a certain contempt for the "unlearned" reed-men and are eager to display their superior knowledge. The reed-dwellers are hostile to the hut-dwellers and felines alike, maintaining that the entire realm was once theirs and that one day their god (a great serpent known only as "Flame Face") will drive the invaders from their lands. The reed-dwellers are adept with traps and natural poisons, and not above performing human (or feline or lupine) sacrifices to hasten their god's return.

The realm's goddess of hours is Ananka, a centuries-old Bubasti sorceress who fashions herself after the original hour spirit. Ananka rules both her human and feline subordinates as a goddess should, wielding an arsenal of pleasure, pain and elan. Eminently civilized, she will welcome stimulating guests (even "dogs") to her court, as long as they are entertaining and do not threaten her position. Ananka's sophisticated but decadent court is rich in pleasures for those whom she deems cooperative. The court's current retinue includes nine Bubasti and a number of specially trained hut-dwellers, chosen for their beauty and compliance. Ananka is also somewhat knowledgeable about surrounding domains and has agents in

Ta-Mera; she would make a useful ally to those who can overlook her imperious ways and the faint scent of the Wyrms that pervades aspects of her court (though not her personally). This domain once shared its guardian serpent, Flame Face, with the eighth domain (City of the God's Sarcophagi). After departing that realm in the wake of its fiery near destruction, the serpent solely guarded the Cavern of the Life of Forms until the disappearance of its original goddess of hours during the Middle Ages.

Sebkhet (One of Action): A southern Nile realm, this domain can be reached from a number of riverside portals (simple reed-laden bends in the river) in the Penumbra south of Aswan. There is also a gate between here and the temple in Bubastis, though hostility between the southern and the northern Bubasti makes its use a rare occurrence. Finally, portals from this realm lead to both the sixth and eighth domains. Ananka is disinclined to share such knowledge without compensation (though she may also do so to hurry troublesome guests on their way); the reed-men are also aware of this portal but do not have the means to use it.

V. Cavern of Sokar

Occupying the lower reaches of the Aetherial Realm, the Cavern of Sokar is a rocky, jagged domain with elements similar to both the Sinai and Red Sea mountain ranges. Here, as it was of old, the Wyld supplies the realm's creative spark, the Weaver brings order and stability, and the Wyrms perform its once sacred task of entropy, grinding down the old to make way for the new. So it had been with this realm for millennia, but things have changed of late. Egypt's rapid corruption by the Wyrms and increasing traffic in the Eastern Desert has opened this hitherto rarely visited realm to corruption. It is a simple matter of familial resonance that the corrupt Wyrms of the outer world has had so little difficulty converting the original Wyrms where it has found it. Banes from the Eastern Desert and beyond have most frequently used the East Tower gate to enter this realm. As the Red Talons and other Garou have increasingly kept watch over the East Tower, however, many Banes have taken to entering the domain through a sky bridge opened for them by the Sinai-based Shabti — Fara'un Shark.

The Wyrms' invasion has not gone unchallenged, however. The Children of Karnak, warrior spirits of the Falcon's Brood (see **Axis Mundi: The Book of Spirits**), have ruled over this domain for time out of mind, and battle the Wyrms with bloodthirsty delight. Unfortunately, of late the number of Banes has become too large for even them to easily handle. Normally appearing as hawk-headed humans, reminiscent of the god Horus, the Children of Karnak may also take on more fully human or hawk forms. A Weaver friendly spirit, they move about on large solar-sailed barges and employ an odd form of at

once advanced and archaic weaponry (swords capable of throwing electrical arcs or great shipboard parabolic mirrors that emit coherent heat beams). The regal spirit warriors have had occasion to ally themselves with both the Silver Fangs and Glass Walkers in the past, and will welcome any assistance against the corrupting outside influences of the Wyrms. Beyond the Children of Karnak and invading Banes, the realm is populated with various Wyld spirits (most prominently those of air and fire), and Elethoi (a proto-Wyrm spirit; see Appendix II). Far below the high mountain aeries of the falcon warriors are human emanations, who live variously as cliff or valley dwellers. The technology level of these inhabitants is largely medieval, though repositories of higher Weaver tech appear in caches throughout the realm. A great river, presumably an aspect of the Nile, flows distantly at the mountain's roots, but is largely ignored by the skylords.

The hawk-people's leader is also the realm's goddess of hours, a puissant warrior-queen known alternately as Sokari or, more fancifully, as Her Lady of Continuity. It is said that she was once as others of her kind — a spirit creature who had taken on the coarser attributes of flesh, feather, muscle and bone — but after sustaining fatal injuries in an ancient conflict, her soul was transferred to a mechanical doppelganger of her old form. This Weaver construct — fashioned from dark iron, brass and silver — is powered by an internal furnace said to be the essence of the domain's guardian serpent (Eye of Flame), who voluntarily sacrificed himself to preserve the hour goddess. The resulting dual-entity is a nigh peerless killing machine only narrowly checked by a disciplined but injured psyche. Fire glints behind her raptor's mask and Sokari shows a definite imperious disdain toward those who do not share her warrior ways. The Children of Karnak are nevertheless worthy allies.

Sebkhet (Lady of Continuity): The gate to this domain is the circle of stones frequently given as the Anchorhead to the Eastern Tower. Similar, but less well-known, Bane held sky bridges lead here from the Penumbra overlaying the southern Sinai Mountains.

VI. Deep Water

A great river realm of vast waterways and low palm fringed islands, the Nile here springs out in a thousand deep radial tributaries, passing under sun and moon and through subterranean caverns long forgotten. A humid, sleepy realm of deep waters and deeper memory, the psychic undercurrent here is immense and palpable to the most mercurial minds. It is said that a shadow of every ship (from Cleopatra's barge to modern tankers), every fish, body and secret that has ever floated down the river has passed through at least a tributary of this realm. Deep Water is also the home of the once plentiful Mokolé. It is no secret that the keepers of memory are not as they once were; their

numbers have dwindled, casualties to time, hunters and environmental degradation. Nevertheless, it is here, to this great domain-wide wallow that they come to find solace and fortitude in the slow, healing pulse of the river.

Deep Water is Pangaea, or at least a small backwater portion of it, and has remained fundamentally unchanged over the millennia... until now. The intense disruption of the Nile by the Aswan Dams, however beneficial in other ways, has wrought changes in the Nile realm. The center of the realm has become a great, cold sink of indeterminate depth and character. The cold lake seems more like one would expect in the uppermost latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere than the sun-drenched Middle East, and is host to great black serpents and a race of pale-skinned island dwelling humanoids whose sinister long-boats hunt for suchid prey even beyond their dark lake. Given that their icy home is almost certain death for the cold-blooded Mokolé, these "cold-men" need have little fear of reprisals from their would-be prey while in its waters.

Some of the crocodiles feel that the positive effects felt by the Lake Nasser Wallow are at the expense of their native realm, and that eventually the cold waters will spread like poison throughout Deep Water's farthest tributaries. Perhaps, they ponder, things might be different if one of their goddesses of hours, a succession of Mokolé women,

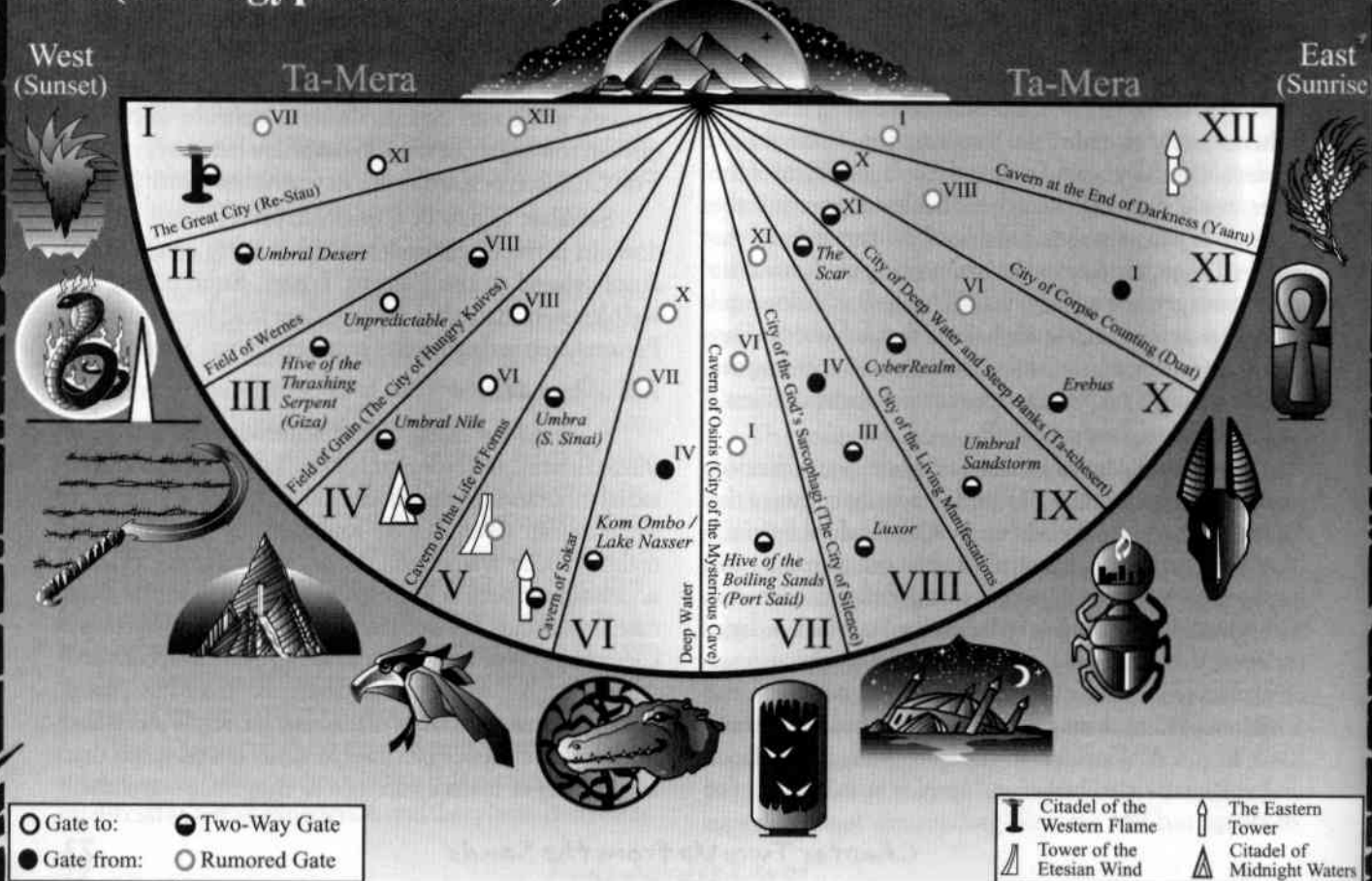
each simply titled "Proficient Leader," were still here. The last of this line was murdered at the dawn of the 20th Century, however, and the domain's guardian "serpent" (in reality a great green-eyed crocodile named Darting of Eye) has retreated from the affairs of the wallow. Rumors that the ancient suchid is the child of Sobek himself surface from time to time, but even the oldest Mokolé do not know for sure. Said to remember the Nile sun setting on the construction of the pyramids, and the sibling squabbles of Set and Osiris, the great crocodile may well be one of the oldest creatures on the planet. Now, however, he retreats farther and farther into old memories, some say he is dying.

Sebkhet (Throne of Her Lord): Deep Water is reachable by secret waterways from Kom Ombo or from the great wallow below lake Nasser. There are tales that Deep Water has a subterranean connection to the Cavern of Osiris and the Silent Strider homerealm, but if so, only Darting of Eye remembers it.

VII. Cavern of Osiris (City of the Mysterious Cave)

A wholly subterranean realm of stygian caverns, glowing red crystal formations, near bottomless pits and even deeper secrets, it is, perhaps, fortunate that little is known of this domain. Named for the beneficent god of the underworld, the realm's long-time residents are

Tuat (The Egyptian Umbra)



anything but benign. The monstrous Vhujunka (see **Book of the Wyrms**) have long been a troublesome enigma to the Garou; the City of the Mysterious Cave may well be the first recorded instance where shapeshifters encountered the monsters. Over 4,000 years ago, during the tumult of the 6th Dynasty, the Garou and Bubasti received panicked entreaties from the Mostabi, a cultured humanoid Weaver race who lived in the subterranean domain. Invaders had appeared among them, not as a massed army, but appearing in groups of one or two, capturing citizens in glowing nets and disappearing just as swiftly. The Mostabi, never large in number, were in imminent danger of extinction.

Wishing to deny the loathsome invaders a toe-hold from which they might stage further invasions, the Silent Striders, Warders (perhaps, also moved by a desire to examine firsthand the technology of both the Mostabi and the invaders) and Silver Fangs heeded the call. Traveling to the underground realm in search of glory and honor, the Garou found only ignominious defeat as their expeditionary force lost over half its numbers in a single night. It is also apparent that both the Simba and the Bubasti launched comparable expeditions with similarly disastrous results, though a Bubasti sorcerer finally succeeded in closing the gate to the realm. Since then, only scattered tales over the millennia have reminded Egypt's Fera that this domain ever existed.

This blessed state of ignorance lasted until some 20 years ago when the Ratkin of Port Said opened an ancient black stone portal deep beneath their city. Almost immediately various members disappeared, only to return hideously transformed. Maddened with pain and hunger, they attacked their former nest mates. The Port Said Ratkin did not have to worry about these invaders for long, however. Shortly thereafter a pack of Black Spiral Dancers invaded the weakened bolthole, renaming it the Hive of the Boiling Sands. Fortunately, even now the Vhujunka rarely travel beyond the environs of their great crystal caves—at least as far as the Garou know. Their reemergence is currently a secret known only to the Port Said Spiral Dancers, but even so, strange rumors of a major Wym eruption centering on Port Said have circulated among the Garou. The realm's hour goddess was called Repeller of the Snake (perhaps for her role in aiding Amun Re against Apophis) while its Guardian Serpent was named Hidden of Eye. Neither of these entities has been heard from in millennia, however. Perhaps the Vhujunka ate them....

Sebkhet (Gleaming One): Port Said's Ratkin population opened up the only known Penumbral portal to this domain. Their problem has now, fittingly, become a problem for their assassins in the Hive of the Boiling Sands who have spent a good deal of time and effort to reseal the gate. There are also tales

that this realm connects with a gate in the deepest fissures of the first domain and Re-Stau (the "City at the Pit of Whirling Forces").

VIII. City of the God's Sarcophagi (The City of Silence)

Egypt's oldest legends speak of a great city surrounded by a desert of gold sands—a city of jeweled towers and verdant fields, inhabited by a proud and learned people. In the legends of Amun Re's descent into the Underworld, it is said that the sun god often took this hour in his arduous journey to rest in the splendid court. Here he gathered his strength in preparation for the dark and eternal grappling between him and Apophis that lay between here and the dawning hour. Whether the sun god created the domain for this purpose or whether its inhabitants simply reaped the benefits of his largesse, the ancient city was said to be about as close to paradise as one could hope to come. Unfortunately, it also became a parable for the fall that oft follows pride and ambition.

The pharaoh of that ancient realm, whose name has since been expunged from all records, sought to claim the sun god's powers for his own. Going against even the desires of his prophetess queen in his mad quest for godhead, the pharaoh made common cause with Apophis and other demons, imprisoning his wife in the blackest reaches of the void to prevent her from warning the god. When Re rested in his great bed, the demons fell upon him, sealing him in a coffin of a thousand nights. The Celestine was not to be so easily contained, however. Bursting forth in a nova of fire and wrath, he destroyed not only his jailers, but his unbridled conflagration also lay waste to the once beautiful domain. When his fury finally cooled, the sun god knew remorse for his actions and, in a typically dubious act of divine justice, found the realm's one survivor (the imprisoned queen), and turned her into a serpent, setting her to tend the deserted realm.

Now a desolate but undeniably beautiful domain of moonlit silvery sands and expansive mirrored plateaus of fulgurite glass, the City of Silence is a sorrowful place of profound quiet. Nothing moves here save the moon and a tranquil, black Nile. Glistening cyclopean ruins stick out here and there from the sands in mute testimony to the once vibrant domain. Its only sentient inhabitant is Meretseger, its goddess of hours and guardian serpent rolled into one. (The realm once had another guardian serpent named Flame Face, who also guarded over the fourth Domain. After Amun Re destroyed this realm, however, this solar serpent spirit departed this realm forever.) Appearing as a pale-skinned woman in black robes, a massive black cobra or as an amalgam of both, Meretseger is a near-Incarma whose age and power may even entitle her to the title of goddess. Although she abhors minions of the Wym, whom she deems responsible for her realm's destruction,

this does not mean she is necessarily well disposed toward other interlopers who intrude on her solitude.

In times past armies have attempted to invade the City of Silence. These have been either fortune-seekers in search of the great treasures said to still reside beneath the desert sands, or Banes seeking to defile its pristine silence. Their bones now lie mingled with the desert sands, undisturbed except when called upon to defend the realm from new invaders. At but the merest command from the goddess, the skeletal remains of humans, Banes, shapeshifters and others too numerous to identify rise wraith-like from the sands. The eerie servants of the cobra-goddess do not make a sound and the desert swallows up even the loudest screams of their victims by the next dune. Not all is lost for those who visit this forlorn realm, however. Vengeful when provoked and remote by inclination, Meretseger is neither capricious nor cruel. A tutelary goddess, she quite possibly knows more about the Egyptian Umbra than anyone else and is disposed to aid those who show the proper comportment (silent and respectful trumps loud and brash). Although she professes no hatred for the sun, she is particularly likely to aid those somehow connected with the moon.

Sebkhet (Red-Hot): Several gates lead to this realm, though the most notable is a ring of glowing silver that appears under the full moon in the Penumbra adjacent to the Valley of the Kings near Luxor. (Unfortunately this is right in the heart of Setite territory, so those seeking this gate must be wary.) A gate from the Field of Grain also opens here, but a powerful spell largely prevents Banes from passing into the City of Silence, almost instantly reducing them to silver dust (though the spell does not work against fomori or other Wyrms spawn); Meretseger's servants swiftly dispose of any survivors. Other gates include a passageway to the fourth domain and a mostly forgotten portal to the Dark Umbra.

IX. City of the Living Manifestations

Gloomy, oppressive and soulless, "The City" (as it is known to the human emanations who call it home), is a smudge of steel gray, sandstone brown and neon beneath an eternal brown canopy of blowing sand. A geometric maze of glass and steel pyramids, modernized Arabesque minarets (complete with advertising), windowless industrial revolution era factories and futuristic office complexes arranged with little rhyme or reason, this diminutive but densely populated domain consists of approximately 400 city blocks bounded by a vast desert panorama. Howling winds whip the surrounding desert here into an endless sandstorm, limiting even the most basic exploration outside of the city. Within the city proper, things are only slightly better. The winds here are slower, but there is still sand almost everywhere, only slightly ameliorated by the fleet of street sweepers

who unceasingly shuttle about the city streets like snowplows trying to deal with a heavy snowstorm.

The City was not always this way. Once an orderly manifestation of the Weaver, it was a shimmering oasis in the desert along a steady aspect of the Nile. Of late, however, the City has fallen victim to one disaster after another. Perhaps 30 years ago — if time has any meaning beneath eternally brown skies — the Nile burst its banks, first flooding the surrounding plains and then almost as precipitously dwindling to a dry wadi bed. (The only water available to the city is from a great cistern and has been recycled a thousand times, but even so a little more is lost each year.) Shortly thereafter the "Great Storm" engulfed the horizon and has blown unabated since that time. The city's leaders, perhaps at first in a well-meaning attempt to ensure the City's survival, declared martial law. Over time the City became a semi-successful autarky and its ruling coalition a business elite called the Scarab Consortium. Promising order and safety, even the consortium, however, has been unable to protect their workers as the City slid into the war zone between the Scar and the CyberRealm.

The Scarab Consortium is largely decentralized among a thousand office buildings, factory sites and substations. Its primary output is geared toward two ends: survival (weapons, factory farming, construction and reclamation) and luxuries used to reward the most prolific producers. A true meritocracy, the productive are rewarded while the "work-shy" are cast to the bottom of the social order, denied shelter, protection or the barest necessities of life. Unfortunately not everyone can keep up the pace and burnout is near epidemic. The Consortium's primary headquarters is an Art Deco/Arabesque structure emblazoned with a great gold scarab — a gleaming alabaster Xanadu built for corporate efficiency and graceful living. Surrounded by a bulletproof glass dome, the vast and heavily patrolled complex interior is a mixture of gold, obsidian and brilliantly polished sandstone. Housing a vast bureaucracy, shopping plazas, fashionable restaurants, ubiquitous security cameras and even a running waterfall, it also accommodates the City's ruling elite. Nominally a multi-party system reminiscent of contemporary Egyptian government, the Consortium consists of connected "shareholders" who represent little beyond maintaining the security apparatus and forwarding their own agendas. The prime power within the Scarab Consortium is Fara'un Khephera.

Fara'un Khephera is a cybernetic organism constructed from nigh indestructible ceramic composites. Effortlessly wielding a panoply of Weaver Charms, he is conspicuously free of the Wyrms. More than anything else reminiscent of a giant shabti figure with an Anubis-jackal's head, he is predominantly bone white, but adorned with hieroglyphic etched segments of lapis and gold, and draped in deep purple robes. Rarely venturing among his

human followers, it is unknown whether Khephera is really one of the millennia old Ushabti or a more modern construct (perhaps a potent Weaver spirit). Appearing shortly after the sandstorm began, he was initially blamed for the City's misfortune, but swiftly took power through force and has since worked to ensure the City's survival, gaining a near divine status. Despite his lupine appearance, Fara'un Khephera is no more inclined to show leniency toward Garou intruders than is the rest of the security apparatus, but is at least pragmatic enough not to anger potential allies (or pawns) out of hand — a wise precaution given the City's current siege status.

The Consortium's security force is armed with advanced firearms at least on par with those found in the physical world, and special-ops units have advanced weapons gleaned from the CyberRealm. Even so, when the City undergoes incursions from the CyberRealm, the Scar or the surrounding desert, its defenders often find themselves outmatched. Gates of flashing electrical light appear in the midst of the city's streets, disgorging inhuman horrors that either directly attack the local citizenry or, more frequently, each other. Weaver spirits from the CyberRealm — Pattern-Spiders, attack geomids and the like — are common sights here, as are a variety of Banes (especially Scrags) from the Scar. Fortunately for the City's inhabitants, these spirits are mainly involved with attacking each other; much of the damage is "collateral," though the Banes show a propensity for abducting locals. Unfortunately the surrounding desert has its own Bane population as well, great shadowed bat creatures that intermittently descend from the maelstrom, grabbing citizens and flying away with them into the choking skies. Given these brutal conditions, people here live virtually subterranean lives, rarely venturing outdoors. A system of tubes transport people from building to building, but even these security measures are hardly impregnable. A propaganda loop blares continuously on private televisions and the city's ubiquitous communal displays to maintain order and boost morale.

The City's inhabitants are at least familiar with the existence of Garou (and their vulnerability to silver) from the few Glass Walkers who have passed through here in the past. Unfortunately these encounters have been less than friendly, though thankfully silver is in limited supply. A visiting "CyberWolf" was captured and executed last year for, allegedly, poisoning the water supply; his actual guilt was less than clear. Visitors of any sort are seen with suspicion, if not downright hostility. The citizens of this once paradisiacal oasis remember little before the storm; the only remnants of the realm's hour goddess (Adorer) and guardian serpent (Earth Tusk) are as mythical guardian figures, now appearing most prominently on a popular animated children's show broadcast in both English and Arabic.

Sebkhet (Exalted in Veneration): The City may appear as a faint outline through the howling winds of any Penumbral sandstorm. The City also leads to the Scar and the CyberRealm, though its inhabitants do not know how to access these gates.

X. City of Deep Water and Steep Banks (Ta-tchawet)

True to its name, the Strider homerealm consists of a mighty aspect of the Nile, perhaps second only to that found in the Mokolé homerealm. Shrouded from the rest of the Umbra, only Owl and a few of the tribe's oldest members know the spirit trails here. Exiled from their Umbral homerealm, even as they were banished from Egypt by Set, many Striders are now hardly even aware of its existence. Any Garou who drinks from the Nile here, known locally as the River of Life and Death, heals all wounds and restores his Gnosis, gaining also a great sense of peace; Wyrms spawn who drink from the river here die. The moonlit realm resembles Ancient Egypt. Great pyramids, temples and obelisks also dot the surrounding desert, some holding secrets forgotten even by the banished Striders.

The ancient "wolf god" Wepauwet is a unique entity, a "Garou mummy" who has undergone the rites of the Shemsu-heru. Sporadically appearing in this realm to welcome the most worthy of seekers, he remains a major, if remote, pillar of the tribe's heart and soul in Egypt. The other two long-term residents of this realm are Natifa Wheel-Dreamer and Sekhet Wheel-Dancer, Silent Strider sisters who came to Egypt in the 13th Century and mastered two great tribal artifacts, the Wheel of Ptah and the Eye of Kadir. Transmuted into creatures of pure spirit, they have lived for centuries as keepers of an Umbral aspect of the Great Library of Alexandria, a place said to hold some of the greatest secrets of the ancient world. After the Great Maelstrom, however, both sisters have been exiled from their homerealm, rendering them outcast from their domain as is their tribe from Egypt. As with so many things about the two sisters, the nature of their banishment remains an enigma. (See Umbra: The Velvet Shadow and Axis-Mundi for more information on these Garou).

A common belief among those Striders who have sought out this realm is that when Set banished them, he also gained a toehold here and even now may haunt its more tenebrous regions. Given the legend of Nephthys, it is difficult to wholly refute this tale. Other servants of the Wyrms have certainly invaded outlying portions of the Strider homerealm. Scorpion and viper Banes hide in the sands, and sandstorms with winds strong enough to tear the hide off a Garou guard certain passes with frightening intelligence. The hour goddess was Beheader of Rebels and, because she has not appeared for millennia, some

Striders believe that she was none other than Nephthys herself. The avenger-goddesses' potential resurrection may bode well or ill for the Striders' attempts to reclaim their home realm. The Guardian Serpent was named Binder. A great leviathan shaped from inky blackness, it is said that it was difficult to tell where he ended and the Nile began.

Sebkhet (Sacred): Traditionally there has only been one way to reach the homeland without a guide. The Gift: Gate of the Moon cast in the Near Umbra with the homeland defined as its destination (difficulty 10) would open a pathway which would, after an arduous journey, lead the questing Strider here. Of late, even this method has been increasingly unreliable and just as likely to lead the seeker to fatal dead ends. The Striders who have studied Egypt extensively believe that an easier way is possible. The path from the Citadel of Western Fire through Duat is a beginning, though hardly less dangerous. These seekers believe that a more permanent sebkhet may be opened to their homerealm from anywhere in the world if the tribe can only finally overcome Set's curse. A Garou who travels the Nile in this realm will eventually pass through gates leading to other realms, including the silver rivers of Erebus, Deep Water and Duat.

XI. City of Corpse Counting (Duat)

Distant and yet strangely omnipresent throughout the Egyptian Umbra, the City of Corpse Counting is a thinly veiled euphemism for the Dark Umbra. It is also called the Shadowlands or, in Egypt, the Kingdom of Sands. The realms of the dead are vast beyond any mere domain and stretch far beyond Egypt's borders. From the gate here, Garou visitors could theoretically visit almost anywhere in the Shadowlands, but realistically any Garou's chances for survival here are small and decrease as time goes by. The recent Great Maelstrom knocked Egypt's formerly exalted necropoli back to the Stone Age. Even the Striders know little of what is currently going on here. The once stable Kingdom of Sands has largely disintegrated into warring factions and horrific specters haunt the chill landscape. When the dead go to war, the living are well advised to stay far away. In times past there was a path through Duat to the Strider homerealm, but it has been lost for centuries. Of late some Striders have passed into this realm in search of the old road, but none have returned. The hour goddess was called Repulser of Rebels and its guardian serpent was named Effluent One. Even the Silent Striders, however, know little of their true nature or whether they still exist.

Sebkhet (Hidden of Access): The only path to Duat known to the Garou is from the Citadel of the Western Flame and The Great City, though a forgotten portal leads here from the City of Silence, and Umbral travelers may also inadvertently wander here from the great necropolis of Luxor.

XII. Cavern at the End of Darkness (Yaaru, The Summer Country)

Known as Eden, the Elysian Fields or by a hundred other names, in Egyptian myth, Yaaru (also Iaru and Aalu) is a place of profound peace. Most commonly represented as a vast field of wheat, Yaaru is situated in the east where the sun rises, and is also sometimes described as a group of islands. Yaaru is a place where heroes go after their life's work is done. Many have sought this blessed place and perhaps some have even found it, though, if so, none have returned to lead others to this promised land. The hour goddess — Beholder of the Beauty of Re — was reputedly a benign entity skilled in healing and ancient lore. There were supposedly two guardian serpents at this gate, He of the Dawn and Enveloper.

Sebkhet (Sacred of Power): The gate to enter this plane is traditionally reachable through Duat (at least Amun Re did so), though it is also visible as the Sub-Plane of Solidification (rebirth) in the first domain. Knowing this, however, is not the same thing as reaching here; both gates are maddeningly elusive. Unfortunately some ancient texts also refer to Yaaru as "The Field of Grain," a mistranslation which can lead seekers to tragic results. Yaaru is often considered a realm of dreams and high magic, the place of the D'jinn. Hence, some Garou have posited that it may also be reached from the East Tower, though no substantive evidence has ever been put forward to support this theory.

Caerns

Egypt was once rich in spiritual energies and caerns here were common. For centuries, however, these old caerns have lain fallow or been subsumed by magi or other Fera. Since the Garou's renewed interest in the 19th and 20th centuries, however, there has been fierce competition for remaining caerns. Most of these are now lower powered, having long since been depleted of their old magics by time or greedy magicians. In some cases foreign tribes have been forced to adapt to caerns where there are strange, native totem spirits. Given Egypt's dearth of Garou, many of the septs listed below are not fully staffed. Where a position within the caern's hierarchy is not listed, it is because the sept does not have enough qualified members to fill the position. Needless to say, this places such caerns at a distinct disadvantage; if they prove worthy, visiting Garou may be temporarily or permanently offered a position.

Sept of the Bloodied Stair

Caern: Alexandria, Kom ash-Shuqqafa catacombs

Level: 2

Gauntlet: 4

Type: Enigmas and Rage (Retribution)

Totem: Tsetse Fly

Tribal Structure: Black Fury

Established during the Ptolemaic era by Greek Furies, this Alexandrian caern's seminal moment may well have been when its members gave refuge to a pack of "White Howlers" during the Roman era. The Howlers, who had recently gone over to the Wyrms, betrayed this act of friendship. Invading the caern and enslaving the Furies, the newly rechristened Black Spiral Dancers sowed the wind and soon reaped the whirlwind when the Furies broke free and avenged themselves by burying their attackers in the catacombs with naught but hunger-spirits for company. Since then, the sept has remained particularly closed-off and security-conscious to the point of paranoia. Certain trusted women of other tribes are allowed, however (for example, Ballah Freedom's Get of Fenris packmate, Mary Land-Rises-Up, is a regular visitor). Rumors that the sept has also long had a non-aggression pact with the local undead is vociferously denied, but seems at least possible given the sept's longevity. Despite this, the sept has long been very aggressive in battling other Wym-spawn throughout the region. In recent years the pack has "liberated" some military ordinance from the army, making it the best-armed caern in Egypt.

Personalities: Theophano (Sept Leader; Black Furies, Homid, Philodox), Fatima Snake-Charmer (Caern Warder; Black Furies, Galliard, Auspice), Ioannis Tomb-Breaker (Master of the Rite; Black Furies, Homid, Galliard), Cassia Nova (Gatekeeper; Black Furies, Homid, Theurge), Ballah Freedom (Keeper of the Land; Black Furies, Homid, Ragabash), Ruth Face-to-the-Skies (Master of the Challenge; Black Furies, Homid, Ahroun)

Sept of Whispering Shadows

Caern: Dar al-Salam Slum

Level: 3

Gauntlet: 3

Type: Urban

Totem: Rat

Tribal Structure: Bone Gnawer (Hungry Streets Pack)

The slum surrounding this caern is ironically named; Dar al-Salam means the "residence of peace" and speaks the concept of heaven for the righteous. In the wake of the Jackal Fever, the Bone Gnawers of this pack have endeavored to make the area a Hell on Earth for the already wretched slum-dwellers. Turning on people who were once both friends and family, the Sept of Whispering Shadows has closed in on itself. While not openly professing their new "understanding," the pack has warned Garou of other tribes, foreign or native, to enter the slum at their peril. Visiting Bone Gnawers are another matter. Bone Gnawers who go on too long about Gaia are seen as misguided, but Meat-Pudding or the pack's front man æ

the ever affable Rashid Cellphone æ will slyly intimate to more open-minded visitors that their Theurge, the hag Shusha, has some secrets she might share....

Next to the Red Talons of the Arabian Desert, the Sept of Whispering Shadows is the largest pack in the region. The brutal and humorless Khaled al-Islambouli acts as the caern's Warder and strong arm. Meanwhile Shusha's granddaughter, a nimble thief named Amal, secretly vomits up the flesh her packmates feed her. The twin catastrophes born by the Jackal Fever and the almost overnight corruption of the caern's totem (now an immense nest of Wym-tainted feral rat psychagonea) have made this place as dangerous as any Black Spiral Dancer hive. At the center of this mess is Shusha, who believes that at last she understands what the caern has been whispering to her all this time.

Personalities: Meat-Pudding (Sept Leader; Bone Gnawers, Metis, Ahroun), Khaled al-Islambouli (Caern Warder; Bone Gnawers, Homid, Ahroun), Shusha (Master of the Rite; Bone Gnawers, Lupus, Theurge), Quari Filth (Gatekeeper; Bone Gnawers, Homid, Ragabash), Khaled al-Islambouli (Keeper of the Land; Bone Gnawers, Metis, Auspice), Amal (Master of the Challenge; Bone Gnawers, Metis, Ragabash)

Sept Shagarat al-Durr

Caern: City of the Dead

Level: 2

Gauntlet: 4

Type: Leadership

Totem: Rat

Tribal Structure: Bone Gnawer

The City of the Dead is unique, an urban graveyard that houses both the living and the dead. Stretching for nearly 6 kilometers (4 miles) along Cairo's eastern edge is a vast funerary complex of domed mausoleums, mosques and monasteries. The cemetery is divided into two sections south and east of the Citadel. The eastern cemetery — more-or-less safe for tourists by day — contains the more beautiful architecture and spacious streets. The southern burial ground, however, is a far different proposition. The southern City of the Dead holds the remains of Egypt's earliest Muslim rulers and has been staked out by a mysterious entity that has managed to limit access to the area by the Garou and the undead alike (see *Cairo by Night* for more details). The often-ignored northern corner of the necropolis, however, is undeniably Garou territory.

Situated in an abandoned mosque several blocks north of the Mausoleum of Shagarat al-Durr is a caern named for that commoner queen. Born a slave in the 13th Century, this iron-willed Bone Gnawer Kinswoman climbed the ranks through marriage, intrigue and murder to become the only female Muslim sovereign in

history. Her short-lived reign ended when she was beaten to death and fed to the dogs, or at least so goes the legend—her Bone Gnawer descendants are not so sure. Rumors that she was Embraced and now wanders the city as one of the undead are a persistent sore spot for non-corrupted Gnawers who would wish to see her soul at rest. Needless to say, if she does still wander the city, she has been wise enough to avoid her former kinsfolk.

The Bone Gnawers who inhabited this caern before and after her death may not be nobles, but their nobility shines through in their actions. Longtime protectors of Cairo's poor, the Bone Gnawers of this small caern had the will and the means to resist the Jackal Fever, where their opposite numbers in the Sept of Whispering Shadows did not. Now the formerly allied caerns wage a war to the death, one which the dwindling Sept Shagarat al-Durr seems ill-suited to win. The diminutive sept is currently operating with neither a Keeper nor a Master of the Challenge. Other notables in this caern include the physically deformed but kindly giant Ajaj Long-Shadow; the quixotic Mustafa Rain-Bringer; and Mersekhnet Tomb-Song, a tale-weaver with a wealth of knowledge.

Personalities: Father Last-Secret (Sept Leader; Bone Gnawer, Homid, Theurge), Ajaj Long-Shadow (Caern Warder; Bone Gnawer, Metis, Ahroun), Mersekhnet Tomb-Song (Master of the Rite; Bone Gnawer, Homid, Galliard), Mustafa Rain-Bringer (Gatekeeper; Children of Gaia, Homid, Theurge)

Sept of the Healing Dawn

Caern: Qena (Temple of Dendara)

Level: 2

Gauntlet: 4

Type: Solace

Totem: Starlight

Tribal Structure: Children of Gaia

The Temple of Dendara was built to the goddess Hathor and is rumored to be where Sakhmet was restored to her more benign persona. Once controlled by the Silent Striders, during the early 20th Century it again became the one caern in Egypt (aside from the remote Sept of the Western Flame) where the tribe could find rest and regain Gnosis. The reasons for this lucky turn of events remain obscure, but are most likely tied to the reemergence of the caern's totem spirit. This unique dual caern restores Gnosis by night and heals wounds by day. Those who rest here feel a profound sense of peace, but it is not a lulling sensation. Guests who stay here find themselves re-energized and ready to take on new challenges. The sept currently lacks a Master of the Challenge and is actively looking for honorable and trustworthy applicants. A cohesive caern, if not overly powerful in battle, the keepers of the healing dawn seek



mostly to remedy the land's ancient ills. Besides Exalted-of-Gaia and Jesal Voice-of-the-Sands (both of whom appear in the next chapter), the sept's membership includes the unflappable Ahmed Night-Sands, and the mute and haunted Baha Toils-by-Night.

Personalities: Ahmed Night-Sands (Caern Warder; Children of Gaia, Homid, Ahroun), Jesal Voice-of-the-Sands (Master of the Rite; Black Fury, Homid, Philodox), Exalted-of-Gaia (Gatekeeper; Children of Gaia, Metis, Galliard), Baha Toils-by-Night (Keeper of the Land; Silent Strider, Metis, Philodox)

Sept of the Solar Barge

Caern: Heliopolis (Central Cairo, Qasr al-Baron of-fice complex)

Level: 4

Gauntlet: 3

Type: Wisdom

Totem: Khopesh

Tribal Structure: Glass Walker, though other guests may come here to discuss business.

Once a temple to Thoth and a potent Silent Strider sept, this powerful caern was abandoned and lay fallow for centuries following the Strider's banishment. Sketchy evidence suggests that the site hosted a chantry of hermetic magi for a time, but, if true, they disappeared without a trace by the 17th Century. During the late 1800s the caern was "discovered" by the Cairene Glass Walkers who have controlled it through the present, despite complaints by the caern's original Strider owners (though to be fair, the Striders haven't used the caern in over 2,000 years). Most of the Glass Walkers here are Westernized to some extent, though this doesn't mean they've abandoned their faith. The Sept Leader, Leila Veil-Shredder, is a holy terror, even to her packmates, most of whom chafe under her imperious whims (though the Garou tradition of hierarchy has so far kept the sept's male membership in line). Even so, Leila would have been gone a long time ago, if only she wasn't such a cagey and capable leader.

Other sept members include: Ra'id New Prophet who mixes technology and faith; the *usually* reasonable Abu Zeid, who owns a private security force engaged by the rich and powerful; and Haytham Eyes-Across-the-World, who manages the Moon Bridge while distributing anti-government information on the side. Besides Leila, the sept's only other prominent female member is the unpredictable Nadir Night-Wire, a more traditional Islamic feminist, but one who nonetheless maintains an upper class abstinence from the veil in all but the most ceremonial circumstances. When she can be bothered, Nadir is the only member of the sept capable of reigning in Leila's more capricious actions. The other members of the sept are too young or otherwise ill-suited to take the caern's long empty position of Master

of the Challenge. Leila is grooming an adept young Spanish Philodox named Maria Net-Harper for the position æ much to the dismay of her male packmates.

Personalities: Leila Veil-Shredder (Sept Leader; Glass Walkers, Metis, Ragabash), Abu Zeid (Caern Warder; Glass Walkers, Homid, Philodox), Ra'id New-Prophet (Master of the Rite; Glass Walkers, Homid, Galliard), Haytham Eyes-Across-the-World (Gatekeeper; Glass Walkers, Homid, Theurge), Nadir Night-Wire (Keeper of the Land, Glass Walkers, Homid, Ragabash).

Sept of the Western Flame

Caern: 50km West of Siwa Oasis

Level: 1

Gauntlet: 4

Type: Stamina

Totem: lenpw

Tribal Structure: Silent Strider (Semi-abandoned)

Faintly powered by the Citadel of the Western Flame near Siwa (see above), this caern is, at best, an unreliable way station for passing Striders. Still, the banished tribe is in desperate need when visiting its homeland and will take what it can get. In the physical world the caern's center is little more than a 100' long rocky scarp with a hieroglyph representing Anubis etched into its surface. In the Penumbra this outcropping becomes the base for the Western Tower. Despite centuries of study, the Striders have never been able to tap but the smallest of energies from this awesome monolith. Perched on the edge of the dangerous first domain, this caern, while solely in the possession of the Silent Striders, is nonetheless abandoned most of the time. The only regular inhabitant of this caern is the wolf spirit lenpw, though many visiting Striders have made it a point to make the pilgrimage here.

Sept of the Howling Sands

Caern: Center near Luxor with the entire Eastern Desert claimed as its bawn.

Level: 4

Gauntlet: 3

Type: Wyld

Totem: Khamsin

Tribal Structure: Red Talon

The great Sept of the Howling Sands is the largest in Egypt, though not so large as they once were. One of the oldest and most potent caerns in Egypt, the protection and energies imparted here partially explains the tenaciousness of Egypt's Red Talon population. Located in a hidden cave 20km east of Luxor, the sept's center contains both a natural spring and a great fissure that seemingly stretches into the center of the Earth. From here intermittently erupts the Khamsin, a great Wyld totem both feared and respected by the Red

Talons. A Moon Bridge from here also connects the caern to the Bawn surrounding the Red Talon's much smaller East Desert caern, the Sept of Hidden Waters.

Buried-for-Later, the pack's leader, gained his name a few years ago when an Endron First Team made the mistake of trying to hunt the Red Talons in their place of power. The young Ahroun tricked the men and their machines into a place of sink-sand and howled mirthfully as they disappeared from sight. Along with the mendicant Dark-Sands-Shriek and the vicious Fears-no-Poison, these three Ahroun form the backbone of what may well be the strongest pack in Egypt. Stars-in-River is an alpha-female and has fur so gray it almost appears silver. She has been to the cities and is sister to Buried-for-Later, advising him on the ways of rivers and men. The pack benefits greatly by having not one, but two Theurges. Whines-for-Water may not be at home in the desert, but he is learning and has brought some valuable insights from his native Europe. Left Behind is fully detailed in Chapter Three.

Personalities: Buried-for-Later (Sept Leader; Red Talon, Lupus, Ahroun), Dark-Sand-Shrieks (Caern Warder; Red Talon, Lupus, Ahroun), Stars-in-River (Master of the Howl; Red Talon, Lupus, Galliard), Secrets-in-Sand (Gatekeeper; Red Talon, Lupus, Ragabash), Left-Behind (Keeper of the Land; Red Talon, Lupus, Theurge), Bloody Eyes (Master of the Challenge; Red Talon, Lupus, Philodox)

Sept of Hidden Water

Caern: A wandering oasis in the Arabian Desert

Level: 1

Gauntlet: 4

Type: Wyld

Totem: Khamsin, Zorilla

Tribal Structure: Red Talon

Usually located about 30km southwest of the city of Suez, this tiny oasis caern appears only during periods of adequate rainfall (mostly November through March), but nonetheless gives the Red Talons an important toehold in the northern Arabian Desert. A seemingly permanent fixture at this caern is a zorilla-spirit (zorillas are small skunk-like animals). Not so much a totem, but a nominally allied spirit, the zorilla guides wolves to the wandering oasis via its scent trail. In return for not being eaten, the zorilla also watches over the caern while the pack is away, but generally stays out of sight when the wolves are in residence; Red Talon play can be a bit rough. Even the pack's most impulsive cubs, however, have realized that bullying the zorilla carries the risk of a spraying which, unless vigorously treated, lasts for weeks (the dangers and social stigma attached to one so marked are obvious).

Personalities: See Sept of the Howling Sands, above.

Sept of the Midnight Sun

Caern: Temples of Karnak (Luxor)

Level: 2 (Potentially 5)

Gauntlet: 4

Type: Wisdom

Totem: Benu (Phoenix)

Tribal Structure: Silver Fang (Semi-abandoned)

At the northern end of Luxor are the Temples of Karnak, a sprawling complex of temples built over a span of about 1,500 years. Originally erected to the sun god Amun over a great nexus of spirit energies, the temple was once the place of power for House Wiseheart. The Silver Fangs and their pharaonic Kin held sway over the caern for millennia, despite their ups and downs in fortune pertaining to the Egyptian throne. All this ended in one night. While the actual events surrounding this event are hazy, even to the tribes involved, it is believed that the recently banished Striders — desperate to find a caern that would feed their need for Gnosis — were beguiled into betraying the Silver Fangs to the undead. Set's masterstroke in this matter both eliminated the Silver Fang threat and cemented the Striders' curse in one fell swoop. Even to this night, Garou who are attuned to the Shadowlands may see a ghostly pack of Silent Striders wandering the temple halls.

Only now is House Wiseheart considering a focused attempt to retake their caern. Assisted by his loyal steward (Casper De La Serna), Koyla Blood-of-Iron, officially holds the position of Master of the Rite and is here to cast the ritual that will bring the caern fully back to life. He is so weakened, however, that a young initiate of the Ivory Priesthood, Sefaru Pale-Fingers, is learning to cast parts of the rite in his stead. Unfortunately, Sefaru has been much changed since he saw that beautiful young girl (the childlike ancient vampire Neferu) while wandering the forbidden western bank. The pack's other Theurge, Siham Colder-than-Death, is a highly proficient and calculating elder of the Ivory Priesthood. Aware of what is at stake æ no less than the possible resurgence or extinction of House Wiseheart in Egypt æ she is serious about keeping Koyla alive, but is as yet unaware of Sefaru's schemes. She spends most of her time trying to re-open the caern's great Moon Bridge (the Fire Way). The pack's Keeper of the Land is an eminent Ukrainian archaeologist named Ivanava who assists Siham in uncovering the caern's lost secrets.

The pack is currently "traveling light" and has neither a Caern Warder (a dicey proposition in Luxor, especially given the pack's lack of an Ahroun) or a Challenge Master. This is a mission more of stealth than of combat, but given Sefaru's conversion, the time for hiding may soon be at an end. In such a case,

Koyla and company will be badly outmatched by the Setites of the Fire Court, unless the Red Talons (or visiting characters) choose to intervene. In keeping with its name, vampire's who enter this caern are scorched as if exposed to the light of day. For more details on this caern, see **The Sun Has Set (GCIII)**.

Personalities: Casper De La Serna (Nominal Sept Leader; Silver Fangs, Homid, Ragabash), Koyla Blood-of-Iron (Master of the Rite; Silver Fangs, Homid, Galliard), Siham Colder-than-Death (Gatekeeper; Silver Fangs, Homid, Theurge), Ivanava (Keeper of the Land; Silver Fangs, Homid, Galliard)

Sept of the Second Night

Caern: Asyut

Level: 1

Gauntlet: 4

Type: Enigmas

Totem: Sphinx

Tribal Structure: Open

The now sizable town of Asyut was once home to the cult of the wolf god Wepauwet and is the first recorded gathering place of the Silent Striders in Egypt. Hence, its caern is ostensibly the oldest in Egypt and quite possibly one of the oldest still existing caerns in the entire world. Impressive though this distinction may be, it is dwarfed by the legend that an even older, and far more potent caern (the Caern of the First Night) is rumored to be hidden in the surrounding Penumbra. Along an industrial strip, and easily overlooked, is a small suq with a golden sign reading: *Mahfouz's Antiques, Curios and Curiosities*. These nights the caern æ if you can still call it that æ has seen better times. It is miserly in how it doles out its limited energies, but its distance to the Qena caern makes it a viable emergency stop.

The caern is open to Garou of any tribe and its on-again, off-again status has left it with only one permanent resident, Mahfouz Eye-of-a-Thousand-Fathers, who describes himself as its Keeper of the Land. This wizened archaeologist and Stargazer Theurge may well know more about Egypt's history than any other Garou. Mahfouz hopes to find the underlying Caern of the First Night, but so far his fifty-year quest has only uncovered tantalizing riddles. In any case, he is adamant that if the caern is ever discovered, it must be returned to the Striders. Eminently polite, Mahfouz likes visitors (as long as they don't stay too long) and may even let his guests poke around a bit "maybe you will find something I missed," (though it is fairly obvious he holds little hope for the exercise). He doesn't advertise his services, but Garou who stumble across him will find him a font of information.

Sept of the Etasian Wind

Caern: Tanta

Level: 3

Gauntlet: 3

Type: Urban

Totem: Amaunet

Tribal Structure: Open, predominantly Silent Strider

Egypt's Garou can ill-afford to lose this precariously held caern, which has more Moon Bridges to foreign destinations than every other caern in the country combined (owing to the caern's physical and mystic correspondence to the Northern Tower). The importance of this caern has been underscored on a number of occasions by would-be invaders, who sought to take the caern as a beachhead for adventures into Egypt and the rest of the Middle East. The sept is open in both membership and responsibilities, though a Fury has held the position of Gatekeeper since time out of mind (usually passed down from mother to daughter) in order to appease the caern's totem spirit. The tribal affiliation of the other office holders has revolved with the centuries. A major transit point for traveling Garou, it is the most visited caern in Egypt.

Currently this sept is without a leader; their last one was killed by a Wyrn corrupted mage in the mid-90s. The sept's Warder, Omar One-Leap, is filling his murdered uncle's role, but chafes under his dual responsibilities (the fact that he is a Strider and must travel to an allied caern outside of Egypt to regain Gnosis doesn't sweeten his disposition). A somewhat erratic personality, he was once married to the sept's first and only female Master of the Rite, Badr-al-Dujja. Predictably, disastrously they produced a Metis child together. Even though the child was stillborn, the perceived disgrace tore the couple apart in a volley of mutual recriminations.

Omar's family has watched over the caern and tower for centuries, and he is now trying to recruit someone to displace his wife as Master of the Rite (not surprisingly, so far no one has volunteered to walk into this hornet's nest). The conflict within the caern reflects the darkening skies without; their packmates fear they may destroy the caern in their hatred for each other. Other members of the caern include: Jamila Old-Darks-Passing, a very westernized Black Fury who returned to the tower after her mother's death; Rifrai, the taciturn but level-headed younger brother to Omar; and the proud Meles Ayad who manages to fulfil his role as Master of the Challenge, despite being blinded by Port Suez's Ratkin.

Personalities: Omar One-Leap (Caern Warder and temporary leader; Silent Strider, Homid, Ahroun), Badr-al-Dujja (Master of the Rite; Silent Strider,

Homid, Ragabash), Jamila (Gatekeeper; Black Fury, Homid, Theurge), Rifai (Keeper of the Land; Silent Strider, Homid, Philodox), Meles Ayad (Master of the Challenge; Bone Gnawer, Homid, Ahroun)

Sept of the Last Stone

Caern: Damietta

Level: 2

Gauntlet: 4

Type: Strength

Totem: Ichneumon

Tribal Structure: Open

Damietta was a major battleground during the Crusades and here a native Garou caern battled to the last defender against Wyrms fetid agents amongst the crusaders. Disappearing for centuries at a time and then sparking back to life when most needed, today this caern houses the Sand's Mystery Pack, what may well be the most diverse and activist pack in Egypt (or as less charitable members of other packs call them, "the suicidal misfits"). Eschewing the go-slow approach to Egypt's vampire population and fearlessly engaging other Wyrms-spawn on their home turf, the pack has shamed Garou of stronger packs out of their lethargy. From hunting a paranormal serial killer near Alexandria, to taking on Endron and chasing dreams in the Eastern Desert, the pack has recently paid for its daring with the death of two members.

The sept's leader is Simon Twice-Back, a former member of the Whispering Shadows sept, who resisted the dark hungers unleashed among his packmates. Now, angered by his former packmates' corruption, he has set out on a mission to destroy the cannibal faction. Unfortunately, other tribes seem to have little stomach for rooting the Bone Gnawers from their subterranean stronghold. The Sept of the Last Stone is not nearly powerful enough to do the job on its own and may approach visiting Garou for help. The pack is small and every member has a formal responsibility. Besides Thom Mind-of-Mirage (detailed in the next chapter), the other members of the sept include: the carefree Jumanah Whirling-Light; the ever-questing Kemal Endless-Road; and the ambitious Zainab Silken-Roarer.

Personalities: Simon Twice-Back (Sept Leader; Bone Gnawer, Homid, Ahroun), Jumanah Whirling-Light (Caern Warder; Uktena, Homid, Ragabash), Kemal Endless-Road (Master of the Rite; Stargazer, Homid, Galliard), Thom Mind-of-Mirage (Keeper of the Land; Fianna, Homid, Philodox), Zainab Silken-Roarer (Master of the Challenge; Shadow Lord, Metis, Ahroun)

Black Spiral Hives

Hive of the Thrashing Serpent

Hive: Near Giza

Level: 4

Gauntlet: 3

Type: The Void

Totem: Apep

Tribal Structure: Black Spiral Dancers

In 1941, when Rommel's Korps invaded Egypt, a pack of Black Spiral Dancers following the carnage took note of a strange Umbral disturbance and investigated. What they discovered was a cabal of "enlightened" humans, siphoning off energies that, by rights, should belong to the Wyrms. In less than three hours the Dancers decimated the mages' chantry. The Hive itself is an inverted pyramid, almost completely buried in the sands. There are four entrances to the Hive, one on each corner of the pyramid. Only the southernmost, however, leads to the lower levels. The other three drop the visitor into a long corridor with no way out, and long-term wanderers may find themselves in the Fields of Grain (see above). The bottom of the pyramid holds a stone altar that doubles as a gateway to the Fields of Grain and to numerous other hives throughout the world.

Besides Hgienkad (detailed in the next chapter) and the serpent-addled Soo-Telk, the hive's all-male membership includes the sadistic Shrieks-Like-Tortured-Woman and the oily Black-Blood-of-Earth who owns a wildcat drilling operation in the Eastern Desert. (He has clashed with Endron on more than one occasion.) The twisted Hagath has had dreams in which he has contacted the fallen Maeljin Ammit — dreams that don't bode well for Hgienkad's future. Whose-Name-Must-be-Forgotten is a recent addition to the pack. A former member of the Sept of the Howling Sands and the older brother of Fears-no-Poison, the far-ranging Ragabash became trapped in a sentient pool of oil in the Arabian Desert Penumbra. When he emerged, he understood all manner of new things about the world. Still inexperienced in the ways of the Wyrms, he wishes to share his newfound wisdom with his former pack.

Personalities: Hgienkad (Hive Leader; Black Spiral Dancer, Homid, Theurge), Shrieks-Like-Tortured-Woman (Hive Warder; Black Spiral Dancer, Homid, Ragabash), Soo-Telk (Master of the Rite; Black Spiral Dancer, Homid, Theurge), Hagath (Gatekeeper; Black Spiral Dancer, Metis, Theurge), Whose-Name-Must-be-Forgotten (Hive Keeper; Black Spiral Dancer, Lupus, Ragabash) Black-Blood-of-Earth (Master of the Challenge; Black Spiral Dancer, Homid, Ahroun)

Hive of the Boiling Sands

Hive: Port Said

Level: 3

Gauntlet: 3

Type: Toxins

Totem: Whippoorwill

Tribal Structure: Black Spiral Dancers

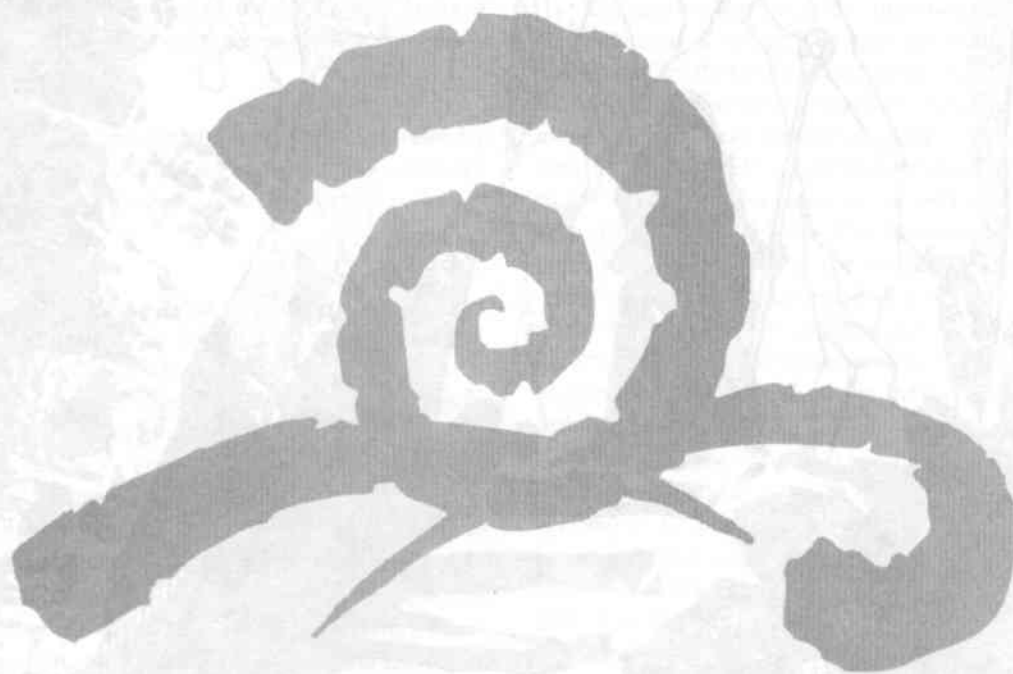
Formerly a nest for Port Said's once large Ratkin population, the Hive of Boiling Sands has become a major source of concern to those who know of it. About 20 years ago the nest was invaded by a Black Spiral Dancer pack who murdered not only the city's Ratkin populace to the last member, but incredibly their totem as well. The invading Black Spiral Dancers have paid a price for their crimes. The hive contains a portal to the Cavern of Osiris (see above), a realm inhabited by the Vhujunka. Two of the Black Spiral pack were tortured to death by the realm's denizens before the pack's Theurge was able to partially reseal the gate. The Hive of the Boiling Sands is a proficient, if not extraordinary pack. Its recent losses have led to a shake-up in the ranks, and its ceaseless rivalry with the Hive of the Thrashing Serpent and its war with the Sept of the Last Stone have limited its effectiveness of late.

The Hive Leader, Mansura Riposte, is a handsome and somewhat dashing figure, if you can overlook the sadistic madness in his eyes. A longtime operative for Pentex, he has recently severed ties with the corporation in order to drive up his value with them. Pentex is working to increase their presence in Egypt (and Africa as a whole) and needs all the friends it can get. Nekhbet Sands-Beneath-the-Door is a complete mystery, a Lu-

pus avatar of the Wyrms who has stalked Egypt in various incarnations for thousands of years. Not an actual member of the hive, more an unofficial totem, his only verbal contact has been with Shania, who milks this fact for all its worth. The disturbingly likeable Shania Tuhamy is invaluable to the hive, a recently converted Silent Strider who still maintains her good standing within the enemy camp. Born a Coptic Nubian and schooled in Paris, the ebony-skinned ex-Strider raises a lot of eyebrows on the streets of Port Said with her motorcycle and torn jeans. Reading as Wyrms-tainted rather than corrupted because of a fetish given to her to further her disguise; she nevertheless is careful about whom she approaches in fear of being discovered.

The hive's Gatekeeper, Necho, is a wretched rat-like creature who seems more at home in the water than on land. The Ragabash spends much of his time away from the hive, swimming the Nile (he hates the sterile Suez Canal). Vile even by Black Spiral standards, his favorite activity is skulking among the reeds and watching the young children come out to bathe in the river. Friedrich Web-Whisperer is a Swiss millionaire who controls a vast media empire through his European Kinfolk. He is biding his time with the hive while looking to expand his media conglomerate through pawns in Cairo.

Personalities: Mansura Riposte (Hive Leader; Black Spiral Dancer, Homid, Ahroun), Nekhbet Sands-Beneath-the-Door (Hive Warder; Black Spiral Dancer, Lupus, Theurge), Shania Tuhamy (Master of the Rite; Black Spiral Dancer, Homid, Philodox), Necho (Gatekeeper; Black Spiral Dancer, Metis, Ragabash), Friedrich Web-Whisperer (Master of the Challenge; Black Spiral Dancer, Homid, Galliard)





Chapter Three: Wolves of the Desert (The Garou)

Overview

Egypt holds comparatively few Garou. The land is, of course, the tribal home to the Silent Striders, but few if any choose to live here. Many of the other tribes avoid the land out of respect for the Striders... or fear of sharing their fate.

This section presents information on the activities of the thirteen tribes in Egypt, as well as the names and Traits of some of the country's noteworthy werewolves.

Black Furies

"O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women that they should cast their outer garments over their bodies (when abroad) so that they should be known and not molested" (33:59).

— The Qur'an

Islam, the dominant religion of Egypt, has a very equalist attitude towards women — in theory. However, mention the words "Middle East" — and with it, images of the humiliating veil, female circumcision, abuse, legally sanctioned murder, and a culture that treats women as second-class citizens — and the reaction from any Black Fury will likely be rage. Indeed, it would seem that the tribe would be scarcely able to contain their anger long enough to even assess the situation in the Middle East.

For some of the more militant members of the tribe, this is true. However, the tribe has roots in Egypt dating back to the Ptolemaic dynasty, far predating Islam, and the Furies

refuse to watch their sisters suffer one moment longer than necessary. Often, however, the price of change is restraint, as the Furies must swallow their Rage in order to aid Muslim women in whatever way they can. As a result, few Ahroun of the tribe make their homes in Egypt.

The greatest challenge the Furies face in the region isn't the treatment of women, but getting around the years of indoctrination that the women are given. The tribe is faced with an enemy they can't overpower quickly, one that exerts more influence than any living being — tradition. Traditionally, men hold the power and women do not. However, this is a tradition the Furies know well and have worked against in many other lands. The Amazons of Diana quietly teach the true writings of the Qur'an to Muslim women, trying to make them understand that the misogyny that warps their faith can be curtailed and destroyed. The more violent members of the camp rarely stay in the area for long — they are either found out by their enemies or become disheartened and leave.

However, the treatment of women is hardly the only reason the Furies have to come to Egypt. The ancient land is home to countless artifacts and lost treasures, and who knows how many could be useful to the Garou — or should be locked away forever, away from prying human archaeologists. The Freebooters camp, therefore, makes occasional forays into the Egyptian desert, often accompanied by Silent

Striders who do not wish to see their heritage placed on display in a museum or used in a profane rite by a vampire.

As a tribe, the Furies control only one caern in Egypt, although the Mistress of the Rite at the Sept of the Healing Dawn is an Elder Fury. She does not leave the caern often, but happily acts as mentor to any member of her tribe (or any Garou willing to listen to her) who visits the caern.

Noteworthy Furies in the region include Ruth Face-to-the-Skies, a vocal detractor of the veil and wanted by human authorities across Egypt; Ioannis Tomb-Breaker, a rather infamous Freebooter and thief; and Ballah Freedom, a Ragabash with contacts (and Kinfolk) that allow her to help Egyptian women brave enough to ask for aid.

Jesal Voice-of-the-Sands

Position: Mistress of the Rite, Sept of the Healing Dawn

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Philodox

Tribe: Black Furies

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

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Expression (teaching) 4, Primal-Urge 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Crafts 3, Etiquette 3, Melee 1, Leadership 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 4, Linguistics 2, Occult 4, Rituals 5

Backgrounds: Ancestors 3, Allies 4 (former students)

Gifts: (1) Breath of the Wyld, Scent of the True Form, Sense Wyrm, Truth of Gaia; (2) King of the Beasts, Stare-down; (3) Coup De Grace, Tongues, Wisdom of the Ancient Ways; (4) Scent of Beyond, Take the True Form; (5) Assimilation

Rank: 5

Rage: 4; **Gnosis:** 6; **Willpower:** 7

Rites: (Accord) Cleansing, Contrition; (Caern) Badger's Burrow, Caern Building, Moot Rite, Opened Caern, Opened Sky, Shrouded Glen; (Death) Gathering for the Departed, Lasting Glory; (Mystic) All, plus the Rite of the Sacred Gift (see the Storytelling chapter); (Punishment) Ostracism, Hunt, Shattered Soul, Stolen Wolf, Voice of the Jackal; (Renown) All; plus any other rites the Storyteller deems appropriate for a Rank 5 Mistress of the Rite.

Fetishes: Veil of Gentle Words (Level 5, Gnosis 8): This veil resembles a normal veil worn by many Middle Eastern women. When activated, however, it blocks out the effect of the Curse for one hour per success. During this time, the veil can also simulate the effects of the Gift: Blissful Ignorance on command.

Image: When seen without her veil, which is seldom, Jesal is a heavyset Middle Eastern woman in her mid-forties. She has gentle, brown eyes and moves with a slow, deliberate manner.

She favors traditional Middle Eastern dress, and is very forgiving of Garou who criticize her for following the tradition.

Roleplaying Notes: The veil is the tool of the oppressor? That's a bit like saying that a hammer is a tool of an abuser. Possibly so, but it's *meant* as the tool of a carpenter. You are adamant about learning the true and original meaning behind traditions — like the veil — before dismissing them outright. You are strong in your way, and are the oldest and best-respected member of your sept. While you don't court respect, you do accept it, and have been known to end rivalries between younger Garou simply by shaming them.

History: Jesal was born in Jordan and raised in a strict Muslim household. As she grew up, she began reading the Qur'an and wondered about the true purpose of the veil and whether or not some of the current practices were truly sanctioned by the Prophet. When she questioned her parents about this, they shamed her for her temerity and she quietly demurred. Her First Change came upon her without blood or rage — in the wake of horrible nightmares, she found herself in Lupus form, crying for the moon.

Over the years, Jesal ran with no less than three different packs and held sept positions all over Africa and the Middle East. During this time, she tried to incorporate her understanding of Islam into her newfound spirituality as a Garou. While members of her tribe ridiculed her unmercifully for her insistence on wearing the veil, she stuck to her belief that her veil guarded her modesty and helped her shut out distractions. And, given the vast knowledge of rituals and mysticism she has accrued over the years, perhaps she was right.

Jesal has acted as mentor and surrogate mother to a number of young Garou, both in her tribe and otherwise, and could assemble a fairly impressive cadre of Garou in a short time if she found the need.

Bone Gnawers

"I said there was no food. I didn't say there was nothing to eat."

— Calhoun, Ravenous

Egypt's densely packed population has more than its share of poor, hungry, and destitute citizens. And, true to form, the Bone Gnawers have bred with these unfortunates for generations. In the slums of Cairo, where few other beings save the Ratkin would dare to venture, the Bone Gnawers eat, and eat well.

The Maneaters, more a secret, disgusting society than a camp within the tribe, wasn't always the tribe's strongest arm in Egypt. The plague of 1998 changed that, however.

The plague, a strange ailment consisting of horrible boils and skin deformities, swept through Egypt's cities in the sticky summer months of 1998. The plague carried with it tremors, hot flashes, and insatiable hunger for meat. It killed scores of Egypt's poor and ran nearly the length of the Nile before dying out (or spreading to other countries — that remains to be seen). If the disease ever spread to the more gentrified citizens, a serious outbreak

was never reported. In fact, by the time such agencies as the CDC and USAMRIID discovered the severity of "Jackal Fever" and investigated, the survivors had recovered and the dead were buried. However, the disease left behind another danger.

While the cities' Garou were resistant (if not fully immune) to the disease, they still felt its symptoms, including the strange craving for flesh. While few if any cases of cannibalism were reported among humans (by the time the craving reached that point, the humans were too weak to act upon it), the Garou were not so lucky. A werewolf in the throes of the fever still retained the ability to shapeshift... and to Rage.

Entire packs of Garou, mostly Bone Gnawers and their wolf Kinfolk, roamed the dirty streets searching for prey. Their most common victims were other sufferers of the disease, too weak to flee. Eating their flesh only intensified the hunger. Eventually, the Garou's regenerative powers cured the disease, but by that time, a good many of Egypt's Bone Gnawers had grown... comfortable with their new food source.

This horrible development probably would have been discovered by the Glass Walkers if not for the intervention of another sect of cannibal Garou — the Eaters of the Dead. The renegade Silent Striders and the de-

ranged Bone Gnawers now work together in several cities, hunting "special" prey — vampires, other shapeshifters, and any other supernatural being with brains to rape and flesh to devour.

Many of the non-Maneater Gnawers in Egypt have begun to suspect trouble, but are largely afraid to ask for help for fear of bringing down retribution upon the entire tribe. For their silence, they are rewarded by forced conversion or death in the gullets of their tribemates. One Ahroun in particular, Meat Pudding, is highly aggressive in pursuit of food — and allies to share it. His pack, Hungry Streets, makes a point of finding any new Bone Gnawers that arrive in Cairo as soon as possible and gauging their reactions to consumption of human flesh. Based on that reaction, the decision is made to convert them, conceal the truth from them, or eat them.

While Meat Pudding licks his chops, other Bone Gnawers stalk Egypt's streets as well. Laughing Oded, a Galliard who can pass for a hyena in Lupus form, runs with a hyena pack around the outskirts of Al Jizah. Quari Filth, Ragabash and Rat Fink extraordinaire, ventures into the trash heaps of Egypt and comes out with sensitive information



he claims is gleaned from trash spirits. Meanwhile, Father Last-Secret, an Elder Theurge and one of the few untainted Bone Gnawers remaining in Cairo, searches for a way to cure his tribemates of their affliction.

Meat-Pudding

Position: Alpha of the Hungry Streets pack

Breed: Metis

Auspice: Ahroun

Tribe: Bone Gnawers

Physical: Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 2 (4/5/5/4)

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

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

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

Skills: Leadership 2, Stealth 3, Survival (slums) 4

Knowledges: Occult 2, Rituals 1

Backgrounds: Allies (wild dogs) 3, Totem 1

Gifts: (1) Create Element, Falling Touch, Primal Anger, Resist Toxin; (2) Curse of Hatred, Odious Aroma

Rank: 2

Rage: 8; **Gnosis:** 4; **Willpower:** 3

Rites: Talisman Dedication

Fetishes: None

Metis Deformity: Musk

Image: Meat-Pudding, a survivor of Jackal Fever, is hideous. His face is covered in still-healing boils and pockmarks, and he drools constantly. He usually wears only a long coat (as it is the only thing he's bothered to dedicate), but sometimes steals clothes from his victims. His stench, between the musk he secretes and his breath, is so overpowering that his pack often wonders why he bothered learning the Odious Aroma Gift at all.

Roleplaying Notes: You gained your name by reducing a fomer to a bloody pulp. Who knew it would also describe your chosen food? You believe that the disease showed you the way it should be — Garou towering over humans on the food chain. Your pack required some convincing, but they came around. Now all you have to do is convert the other Garou in the city to your way of thinking (and eating) and you can give the Leeches a real challenge as dominant predator.

History: Meat-Pudding was born to a mated pair of Bone Gnawers, both of whom died in the plague. Glad to have a deformity that didn't hamper him much (most Bone Gnawers stink, after all), Meat-Pudding plans on leading the tribe, at least in Cairo, someday. The plague nearly shattered that dream, but he survived, albeit by breaking the Litany. His illness sapped his stamina and left him weaker than before, but he is still a determined and deadly force in Cairo's slums.

Children of Gaia

"This land used to be lush and green. It seems hard to believe, but it's true; once upon an age the Nile was cleaner, the soil more fertile, and the desert didn't reach as far. There could be no better sign of hope than to restore the land to that health and vigor — but I regret to say that you won't bring such a welcome change by drenching the dunes with blood."

— Mustafa Rain-Bringer, Child of Gaia Theurge

The Children of Gaia have walked the desert roads for centuries. In the dark ages, they counseled those who would listen with words of peace and understanding, and continue to do so to this day. When war comes to Africa and the Middle East, so come the peacemakers. And for the first time in years, things may be looking up.

Oh, to be sure, the problems are decades from resolution. The Wyrn's forces still stalk the Egyptian night, and the vampires stalk the cities like great spiders. The environmental disasters of the Middle East continue, and who knows what effect they might have on the surrounding waters and countries?

But the Garou have allies, now. The ratification of the Ahadi has granted them the right to finally ask forgiveness of the Fera, and more, to ask their aid. The dominant religion brings fervor and problems of its own, but the Children have been following and studying such religions since their inception. The most peaceful of Gaia's warriors feel they definitely have a place in Egypt. The Patient Deed, in particular, rejoices at the potential unity of the Changing Breeds in Africa and feverishly works to preserve it. The Imminent Strike, likewise, sees potential in Buries-the-Dead's recruitment call.

The tribe's greatest strength in Egypt is the Solace caern in the Sept of the Healing Dawn. The Children of Gaia have tended the caern since its creation, and the current leadership, while it balks at using a caern of Solace as a war platform, is happy to aid the Striders in any way it can. The Rite of the Sacred Gift — created by the tribe and known only to them and Jesal Voice-of-the-Sands, the Master of the Rite of the Healing Dawn caern — is a secret weapon against Set's Curse. It allows the Children to share their Gnosis with other Garou, thus allowing the Silent Striders some form of rest within their homeland. This rite cemented the close alliance between the Children and the Striders years ago, and the peacemakers are pleased to help the wanderers in their slow journey towards reclamation.

One point that the caern's leaders bring up — in closed meetings, of course — is what might happen if the Striders do manage, somehow, to break the curse. Will they then have to give up the caern? Doing so would serve as a great symbol of the tribe's ongoing commitment to honor and decency, and yet, how could the Striders, homeless for so long, be trusted to maintain such an important place? On the surface, the Children all agree that the caern should

belong to the Silent Striders, and yet, some younger members murmur that if the tribe has kept the caern hidden and safe for so long, why change this unnecessarily? One of these Garou is the caern's Gatekeeper.

Other Children have gained reputations in Egypt, however. Among them are such notables as Ahmed Night-Sands, warder of the Healing Dawn caern and named for his cool, quiet demeanor; and Mustafa Rain-Bringer, a Theurge who firmly believes that if more of Egypt can be made fertile, the land's spirit will be healed.

Exalted-of-Gaia

Position: Gatekeeper of the Healing Dawn caern

Breed: Metis

Auspice: Galliard

Tribe: Children of Gaia

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

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Expression 3, Primal-Urge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Performance 3, Survival 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 1, Linguistics 1, Occult 2, Rituals 4

Backgrounds: Ancestors 2, Pure Breed 3

Gifts: (1) Call of the Wyld, Create Element, Mercy, Mother's Touch; (2) Burrow, Luna's Armor; (3) Dazzle, Song of Rage
Rank: 3

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

Rites: (Accord) Cleansing; (Caern) Opened Bridge, Opened Caern

Fetishes: Fetish of Office (Level 1, Gnosis 4): Allows the wielder to communicate directly with the caern's totem.

Metis Deformity: Silver Sensitivity (silver does one additional health level of damage per turn of contact; Gnosis losses for carrying silver objects are doubled; takes one health level of damage/turn of contact with silver even in Homid)

Image: In Homid form, Exalted-of-Gaia is a tall, willowy blond with pale blue eyes. Years of living at the caern have darkened her skin somewhat, but she is still unmistakably white. In her preferred Lupus form, she is a pure white-furred wolf, and is often mistaken for a Silver Fang by strangers.

Roleplaying Notes: You are new to the caern's leadership, and have yet to be truly tested as Gatekeeper. You are young, vivacious, and much healthier and more attractive than most metis... unless the slightest bit of silver is within 20 feet of you. Still, you are eager to fulfill your role as Gatekeeper, and, while you probably wouldn't admit it, the prospect of having to give up the caern angers you. How many other caerns, after all, would let a young Garou, let alone metis, even attempt to prove herself in this position? It simply isn't

fair to ask you to step down; thank Gaia it hasn't happened yet, because you're not at all sure what you'd do.

History: Exalted-of-Gaia's parentage remains a mystery to her, but her appearance, pure and noble bearing, even her name (which she does not remember earning) suggests Silver Fang blood. The Children of Gaia raised her from infancy, and for a time, her metis deformity was assumed to be mental, as she had no outward ailments. Then, on her Rite of Passage, a wrestling match with another Garou nearly killed her. The reason, she discovered, was a crippling allergy to the silver klaw that her opponent wore (sheathed, no less!). She joined the Healing Dawn caern as Moonwalker for a time, but when her mentor, the previous Gatekeeper Mohammed BrightPromise died defending the caern, she was the only Garou remaining who knew the proper rites for the position. Thus far, she has carried herself well, but the sept leaders worry about her inexperience. Exalted-of-Gaia, of course, is eager to prove herself.

Fianna

"Drunken Irish louts and raucous parties? Not in Egypt, my son. No, here, most of us are English, and most of us are wondering what in hell we're still doing here. White folks get looked at crossways, yeah, but if the natives find out you're from England then the words 'Black Saturday' come up, and they get brave real quick."

— Vincent Laughs-Loud, Fianna Ahroun

Fianna in Egypt are usually looking to get out. The tribe has issues in its own homelands that need to be addressed, after all, and the reception they tend to receive from both the native humans and Garou is none too friendly.

Not without reason, of course. England's occupation of Egypt brought British Fianna (and their Kinfolk) to Egypt in the late 19th century. While the Fianna tried to be somewhat more polite to the locals than their human brethren, it didn't always help. As one native Bone Gnawer put it, "You can 'Respect my territory' all you want, but you're still here, aren't you?"

The Muslim Brotherhood had already been pursuing guerrilla warfare against the British for years before Black Saturday. During that time, Fianna found their Kinfolk being targeted frequently, and even the Garou themselves occasionally fell victim to assassination attempts. This led the tribe to wonder exactly who was selling information to the "terrorists," something that nettles their descendants to this day.

Today, the tribe retains a small presence in Cairo and Alexandria, but controls no caerns in Egypt. Many of the Fianna who were present (or whose families were present) during the troubles of the 1950s have left for Europe. Those who remain do so for one of two reasons: the vampires and the fae.

Those who remain to combat the vampires typically take their cues from Buries-the-Dead, using whatever

governmental and military contacts might remain to whatever advantage they can. However, the cause of fighting Egyptian vampires, however noble, does little to keep the Fianna in a hostile country for long. The strange native fae, however, are another matter.

When the Fianna arrived in Egypt, they discovered that use of the Faerie Kin Gift brought aid from strange beings in robes and turbans, who commanded powers similar in effect but highly different in execution than the fae with whom they were familiar. As the British occupation worsened, the Fianna discovered that the Gift became less reliable, until finally, after Black Saturday, it stopped working altogether. The strange native fae, who or whatever they truly were, had no covenant with the invaders and ignored them thereafter — until Thom Mind-of-Mirage came along.

A young Philodox born to a pair of Kinfolk who stayed in Egypt even after the occupation ended, Thom joined a pack — the Sand's Mystery — in 1989. The pack's exploits have not brought them the fame and glory they might have wished, but Egypt's Galliards might spin the tale of the night they met the Blue Sands eshu. Lost in the desert after a battle with a ninety-legged Bane, the pack stumbled towards what looked like an oasis — and found it already inhabited. The people who sat the water's edge looked at the Garou, some of whom were plodding through the desert in Hispo form, and cleared them a space. Thom, after drinking, realized that they resembled the strange fae that had shunned his people for some years and made overtures of peace and contrition. The strangers did not acknowledge the gesture, but all dipped their hands into the water and anointed their faces with it, and turned to stare at the Garou.

The next thing the Sand's Mystery pack knew, it was standing on a sand dune, with the Alexandria skyline visible in the distance.

Since that time, Thom has spent all the time and energy his pack will allow on finding these beings and allying with them. He calls them the "Blue Sands eshu," but even he cannot recall where he heard the name.

Other important Fianna who brave Egypt's harsh realities include Vincent Laughs-Loud, an Ahroun whose father died in the Black Saturday riots; Jonah Eyes-of-London-Skies, a Philodox who left his sept in England after siring a metis pup; and the Galliard Louis Past-to-the-Light, a former Oxford student (and occasional companion of the Uktena explorer Henry Shines-on-Secrets) who searches for hidden truths in Egyptian history.

Thom Mind-of-Mirage

Position: None.

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Philodox

Tribe: Fianna

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

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Expression 2, Primal-Urge 1, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Crafts 1, Drive 1, Performance 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Computer 2, Enigmas 3, Linguistics 1, Rituals 2

Backgrounds: Ancestors 2, Pure Breed 3, Resources 1 (dwindling trust fund)

Gifts: (1) Faerie Light, Persuasion, Scent of the True Form; (2) Brew, Glib Tongue; (3) Faerie Kin

Rank: 3

Rage: 3; **Gnosis:** 3; **Willpower:** 6

Rites: Rite of Accomplishment

Fetishes: None.

Image: Thom is tall and lithe, with ginger colored hair and light brown eyes. He dresses simply and comfortably, and superstitiously carries at least one pound in his pocket, which he refuses to spend.

Roleplaying Notes: You get accused of being spacey quite often, but the truth is that you're always thinking. You're much smarter than people give you credit for, it's just that you need time to puzzle out your ideas, which means that the quick-acting Garou don't always have the patience to put up with you. Just lately, though, the fire's been lit under your butt, and since you've recently attained the rank of Adren, you've been pestering your pack alpha to try and find the oasis where you met the Blue Sands eshu. If your new Gift works on them, as you feel it should, you'll be able to talk with them and maybe smooth some things over.

History: Born to Kinfolk parents in Alexandria, Thom Marsden found his early life surreal. He lived in an exotic land and was treated like a prince in his house — and a leper elsewhere. When the change took hold, his mentor advised him that the Curse might have been responsible for his treatment during childhood, but Thom guessed that being English had more to do with it. Whatever, he thought, on to bigger and better things.

His time with the pack has been fulfilling, and the pack stays realistic: they aren't going to be the ones to prevent or win the final battle, but they might well be there on the field. Since the encounter with the eshu, however, Thom wonders whether his destiny — and that of his pack — might be slightly more exciting than they'd guessed.

Cot of Fenns

"Honestly, I could give two shits about the politics around here. Jews and Muslims killing each other, the occasional Christian preaching or starting shit. Whatever. I know how to show respect to my god so he'll understand.

"Tell you what, though — the Muslims I've talked to have this belief that if they die in battle, their souls reach Nirvana or

something. I don't quite catch the language, but I can definitely get behind the spirit!"

— Johnny Full-Clip, Get of Fenris Rotagar

The Get has few representatives in the Middle East, but their numbers increase almost monthly. As a war zone in which to prove oneself, Egypt is rapidly rivaling the Amazon for the Fenrir's attention.

Whether as foreign mercenaries or descendants of German colonists, the Fenrir maintain a small presence here. On the whole, they don't care for the Striders' plight or the pillaging of ancient tombs. What they do consider important is the activities of the Wyrms in Egypt, and this they find in abundance.

While the native Egyptian Garou are often glad to have warriors flocking to their banner, the Get of Fenris worry them. The tribe's long history of leaping face-first into any conflict they can find is all very well in the Amazon, away from human eyes (and armies!), but in the delicate political powder keg that is the Middle East, indiscriminate acts of violence may well alert the human authorities to the presence of the Garou. After all, who knows how many military officials the Leeches have enslaved? It's all very well for the Get to fight and die for Gaia in Egypt — they don't have to pick up the pieces afterwards!

The Fenrir, however, don't put too much importance on the region. They scoff at the Striders' claims of all-powerful monsters beneath the sands, and claim that Set's conquest of the tribe is proof that the Striders are too flighty to oversee a protectorate. The Fenrir claim to see Egypt as a place for young warriors to learn about combat, human folly, and high explosives.

The truth of the matter is often more complex. Egypt threatens the Get of Fenris. The Impergium and the War of Rage were not pursued with the same vigor here as in most of the world (and certainly the Get's tribal lands). The Ahadi requires Egyptian Garou — native or visitor — not to make war on the other Fera, which strips the Get of their ability to rely on traditional means of diplomacy. Forced to re-evaluate the possibilities, certain Fenrir are beginning to consider that glorious, bloody, wild conflict might worsen the situation here, and improving conditions requires learning the history and culture of the region — and then asking, "What can we do to help?"

On the whole, this is not a tactic the Get relishes.

To be fair, some of the tribe has risen to the occasion. The lupus Ahroun Basks-in-Fafnir's-Breath, for example, has made several attempts to meet with the Red Talons at the Sept of Howling Sands, trying to bolster their ranks. The slight, physically unimpressive Theurge called Mary Land-Rises-Up works alongside her packmate, the Black Fury Ballah Freedom, in an ongoing quest for women's rights. Meanwhile, the gruff and war-scarred Galliard Greg Tales-from-the-Trenches runs guns (and sometimes fetishes) to interested buyers. However, the Get with the

greatest hope for Egypt is a very young, very recent arrival — Heckles-the-Wyrm.

Heckles-the-Wyrm

Position: None.

Breed: Metis

Auspice: Ragabash

Tribe: Get of Fenris

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

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

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

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

Skills: Crafts 2, Drive 1, Firearms 4 (slingshot), Stealth 3

Knowledges: Linguistics 1 (Norwegian — Heckles speaks Arabic, but very poorly, and does not read it at all), Occult 2, Rituals 1

Backgrounds: Ancestors 3, Pure Breed 3

Gifts: (1) Blur of the Milky Eye, Resist Pain, Scent of Running Water, Sense Wyrm

Rank: 1

Rage: 3; **Gnosis:** 5; **Willpower:** 7

Rites: Rite of Binding.

Fetishes: Slingshot (Level 2, Gnosis 6) — Upon activation, a stone fired from the slingshot will glow eerily and emit shrill, maniacal laughter, serving to frighten and distract a foe (or at least irritate the hell out of them). Heckles also binds various spirits into the stones via the Rite of Binding, so it isn't uncommon for him to fire stones that emit foul smells or momentary patches of darkness.

Metis Deformity: Clawless — Heckles is incapable of inflicting claw damage in any form and runs at three-quarters speed over smooth ground in Lupus or Hispo forms (he has little traction).

Image: At first glance, Heckles appears thin and weak. This is half true. He is thin, but fairly wiry, and could hold his own in a straight fight were it not for his lack of claws. He is blond and fair, being Norwegian by birth, and commonly wears a headdress and scarf to stop himself from burning.

Roleplaying Notes: You used to be young, brash, and arrogant. You're still young, but much of the arrogance has been smacked out of you. You were brought up to believe that Garou were a dominant species, and dominance is best showed through force. However, you aren't able to do that as easily as the rest of your tribe, which often leads them to believe that you are weak. You aren't weak, of course, just strong in different ways. It makes you wonder how many other metis have been passed over for being subtly strong, and, by the same token, whether the other Changing Breeds were too "weak" to survive, as you've been told, or if the Garou just chose the playing field best suited to them.

History: Heckles-the-Wyrm was born to a Get of Fenris mother and an unknown father in Norway, in a sept controlled by Silver Fangs. Growing up on a glacier without claws taught the young metis to be resourceful and quick, and abuse from older Garou gave him a sharp tongue and smart wit. After his Rite of Passage, he found himself being urged to leave the sept, but had nowhere else to go.

Stories had found their way to his sept, however, regarding a Garou in America in much the same position as Heckles. A metis as well, this Get had made a name for himself trying (however unsuccessfully) to atone for his Ancestors' deeds in the War of Rage. Following some prompts from his Ancestors, in the form of visions and dreams, Heckles discovered that he and the American Get (called Dane Praised-of-Fenris) were actually distant cousins, and that their family line had sired an embarrassing number of metis over the years. Originally, Heckles had planned to journey to America and meet Dane, but news of the Ahadi beckoned him to the Middle East. He now resides in Luxor, technically under the protection of House Wiseheart, but is attempting to find other Fera in order to "improve relations." He would make a loyal ally — or an unwitting pawn — to whatever being he finds first.

Glass Walkers

"The next ball of fur who calls me urrah gets his ass handed to him, and I don't give a donkey's balls what tribe he's from or how they've suffered!"

— FIGMO, Glass Walker Philodox

While the vampires conduct obscene rituals in the bowels of Egypt's cities, and the Bone Gnawers survive in their own ways, the Glass Walkers are thriving. At least, they vehemently insist that they are.

The Walkers have taken an interest in the Middle East for hundreds of years, and watched eagerly as Arabic culture gave rise to advances in astronomy and medicine far ahead of many other lands. When much of the tribe crossed the oceans, and then the plains, as the Iron Riders, some of them went east instead. What they found simultaneously shocked and intrigued them.

To be sure, Egypt had a rich culture and cities that could serve as homes for the urban Garou. But those cities contained spirits the likes of which the werewolves had never seen. Scout Banes like great serpents, city elementals who walked the streets clothed in flesh, and ever-growing borders — there was potential here! The Walkers investigated and became comfortable in Egypt's cities, battling the inevitable Wyrm-taint they found, and learning what they could.

Years later, the Glass Walkers are entrenched in Egypt's industry and have been battling the Leeches (largely unsuccessfully) in a cold war with no sign of victory in sight. Their promise to restrict human technology to human cities, made so many years ago, has been taken out of their hands as humans spread their Weaver-touched toys into the deserts and beyond. (Besides, as the Red Talons are quick to point

out, if the cities keep growing, it soon won't matter if the Weaver is contained within them, for all the world will be one great city!) While some of their Kinfolk have become wealthy (and extended that wealth to the tribe), the Glass Walkers cannot shake the feeling that they prosper in Egypt — that they exist in Egypt — because someone or something allows them to do so. Naturally, this paranoia does not reflect well on the businesslike Garou, and so they rarely discuss it. The fear surfaces in other ways, however.

The Glass Walkers of Egypt are more militant than most. Business partners of Glass Walker Kin (and, periodically, the Kin themselves) are subjected to Gifts such as Sense Wyrm, Truth of Gaia, Sense the Unnatural, and subtle screening via whatever fetishes the tribe can find. When supernatural influence is detected (which, of course, is rare) the tribe pursues it aggressively, calling in interrogation tactics from the tribe's organized crime arm. Most times, of course, they end up scaring some poor dupe half to death, but once in a while, they get lucky and find a vampire's servant or a budding fomor. These occasional "successes" only prove to the tribe that some far greater conspiracy is at work.

This hysteria might be curbed if the tribe had allies to talk them down. However, they have begun to alienate the other Garou that brave the cities, demanding that they prove their loyalty and good will through increasingly absurd means. The Bone Gnawers, having found their own way to survive, thumb their noses at the Glass Walkers. The Children of Gaia, who would be perfectly willing to help if they knew the Walkers needed it, have yet to see the scope of the problem. And the Silent Striders, who for some time availed themselves of Glass Walker hospitality and assistance, now are asked to jump through so many hoops before receiving aid that they don't feel it's worth their time. (Samir, the usually verbose Galliard Who Speaks 'Til Sunrise, best sums up the current attitude of the Striders towards the Walkers: "Fuck 'em and their neighbors, too.")

If the cities' Garou are disgruntled towards the Glass Walkers, the rural Garou are downright hostile. Dark-Sand-Shrieks, the Warder of the Sept of the Howling Sands, decided some years ago that a Glass Walker entering the bawn of the caern was to be treated as a foe, regardless of his bearing and apparent intent. While this vicious policy has never been put to the test (the Glass Walkers feel they have better things to do than traipse through the desert), all involved are aware of the implications. Even if the two tribes never actually fight, their bad blood creates a dangerously wide foothold for the Wyrm's forces, and this fact feeds the Glass Walker's paranoia.

Certain Glass Walkers stand out above their peers. Haytham Eyes-Across-the-World, a Theurge and unparalleled hacker, works feverishly to secure the Glass Walkers' Internet connections from spiritual interference. FIGMO, a Philodox who experienced his first change very late in life (age 19) while on active duty in the U.S. Army is currently AWOL and hiding out in Al-Faiyum (his name is a military acronym meaning

"Fuck It, Got My Orders"). Ra'id NewProphet, an Urban Primitive, attempts to introduce young Muslims to the concept of "Gaia", focusing on the passage in the Qur'an that states, "And spend in Allah's cause and let not your own hands contribute to your own destruction and persevere in doing good..." The most powerful and famous Glass Walker in Egypt, however, is unquestionably the Don, Leila El-Sabeei, known to the Garou as Veil-Shredder.

Leila Veil-Shredder

Position: Sept Leader (Sept of the Solar Barque)

Breed: Metis (presumed; actually homid)

Auspice: Ragabash

Tribe: Glass Walkers

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

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5 (3/2/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

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

Skills: Drive 2, Firearms 3, Leadership 4, Melee 2, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Computer 3, Investigation 3, Law 2, Linguistics 3 (Arabic and Japanese, among others), Medicine 2, Occult 1, Politics 4, Rituals 5, Science 3

Backgrounds: Allies 3 (corporate), Contacts 5, Resources 4

Gifts: (1) Blur of Milky Eye, Control Simple Machine, Open Seal, Persuasion, Trick Shot; (2) Obscure the Truth, Power Surge, Sense of the Prey, Stare-down; (3) Data Flow, Gremlins, Reshape Object; (4) Attunement, Luna's Blessing, Whelp Body; (5) Chaos Mechanics, Thieving Talons of the Magpie

Rank: 5

Rage: 5; **Gnosis:** 5; **Willpower:** 9

Rites: (Accord) Cleansing, Renunciation; (Caern) Opened Caern, Shrouded Glen; (Mystic) Binding, Becoming, Questing Stone, Spirit Awakening, Talisman Dedication

Fetishes: Spirit Whistle



Metis Deformity: Allergic to Sunlight: Leila's skin and eyes are extremely sensitive, and she suffers a +3 to all Physical and Social difficulties while in direct sunlight, as well as a -2 on Rage rolls.

Image: Leila is an athletic Arabic woman in her late 30s. She has jet-black hair without a single streak of gray, which she keeps cut short. Her brown eyes are intense and unwavering, and most people caught in her gaze find themselves squirming in discomfort. She dresses in expensive business suits and absolutely refuses to wear a dress.

Roleplaying Notes: You know the rumors. You don't care. You built your fortune from the ground up, and you will be damned if anyone is going to take it all away, even if they *have* been manipulating human society since it began! You see your tribe as nicely self-sufficient, and if anyone gives you grief — Bone Gnawers, vampires, Red Talons, whoever — you'll make them wish they'd never crossed the Veil-Shredder. You are vocally outspoken on women's issues, and are suspicious of men of all races, but especially Arabic. This could be called a form of chauvinism, but you prefer to think of it as a sort of defense.

History: Leila is a woman of many secrets. Her true parents are among them, as is the reason for her passionate hatred of the veil. How exactly she assumed command of the Middle Eastern branch of a major medical supplies company is another strange circumstance, but she did.

Leila's promotion to Vice President of International Affairs shocked the company, but shocked the Garou even more. Not only was Leila a woman gaining power in the Arabic world, but she was a metis moving in human circles effortlessly! At the tribe's request, she joined a pack, quickly assumed command (another surprise), and kept her packmates close to her as "consultants" during her travels. Leila's pack, recently disbanded after a successful (if not widely publicized) victory in the Sudan, has caused trouble for Magadon Pharmaceuticals all over the world, and made a name for itself as a group of successful Monkeywrenchers.

After she attained the rank of Athro, Leila returned to Egypt and took a keen interest in her sept's leadership. When the sept leader died, she challenged for the post and won. The sept's policies changed, gradually, growing more and more paranoid until they reached their current xenophobic levels. Meanwhile, Leila pursued her own agendas, apparently with some degree of success, judging by her good humor in recent weeks.

Exactly what Leila is up to stumps most Garou. Among the paranoid Glass Walkers, though, a terrible rumor has surfaced. Certain members of the tribe have noted their Don's sexual appetites: she is well known for taking men to her bed, quietly, and exhausting them. She is also rarely seen during the day, claiming that her job requires her to travel extensively. At night, however, she is typically vivacious and refreshed. All this, plus the fact that she has never spoken of her young life, leads some to wonder if she is indeed metis...or Garou at all. (See the Storyteller's Chapter for more information on Leila and her plans).

Red Talons

"We have guarded these sands for many moonrises. The Silent Striders fled before the might of the Curse, and we laughed at them then, for we did not understand what it meant to be hunted."

"We understand this now."

— Bloody Eyes, Red Talon Philodox

The Red Talons in Egypt have never wavered in defense of their caern, and have kept the Leeches out of their protectorate for centuries. While they share the plight of their brethren the world over, they retain much of their pride and power, and believe themselves to be true to their ancestor's wishes.

This attitude only goes to show how much the tribe has lost in Egypt.

More than one hundred years ago, two Red Talons — both Theurges — mated and produced a metis cub. The family was cast out from the tribe and wandered the desert, trying desperately to reach another caern before dying of exposure. As it happened, that would have been preferable. The Garou were captured by the Setites and kept chained and tortured for sport in an unholy temple. Eventually, all three — mother, father, and cub — were murdered by the Leeches.

Had any other Theurge been present at the time of their exile, she might have been gifted with a sign from Gaia, a warning not to banish this family. Their family line carried with it the strongest ancestral connection to the Progenitor Wolf in Garou history. And now, so many years later, the tribe is feeling the loss.

The Sept of the Howling Sands is dying. Slowly but noticeably, the life spans of the Garou and Kinfolk of the sept have grown shorter. Mental decay sets in much earlier in life than it should, and ritemasters are hard-pressed to perform their duties correctly. What's worse, the Red Talons' connection to their ancestors has grown steadily

weaker. The soul of the caern is dying, and no matter how fervently the Master of the Howl entreats its totem, no succor is forthcoming.

Theories for this tragic turn of events vary, of course. Some Red Talons believe that the curse upon the Silent Striders is somehow "bleeding" onto them, and have urged that no Strider be allowed within the bawn of the caern. Some do not try to guess the cause, but slip into Harano and die even sooner. And some few, who have heard the stories of the Banished Pack, wonder what they took with them besides their deformed child.

The tribe in Egypt is concentrated chiefly near the Sept of the Howling Sands and concerns itself with keeping the gûls out of their borders and trying to breed enough Garou to keep the caern alive. Wolves do not survive well in deserts, so the Talons have taken to breeding with jackals. This may be partially responsible for the lack of communion with their ancestors that the tribe is currently facing, but the sept's leadership is adamant that the Talons be the only Garou to defend the caern. This attitude keeps the Talons within the bawn and away from humans, so Egypt's Talons are generally less aggressive in their outlook on humans (though by no means more permissive — intruders are dealt with harshly).

The caern's leadership, Warde included, may have decided to exclude other tribes from their sept, but one ranking member of the sept has other ideas. Left-Behind, the Keeper of the Land, has taken to meeting with the Get of Fenris Ahroun Basks-in-Fafnir's-Breath secretly, trying to think up strategies for revitalization of the caern. So far, they have been unable to do so.

Other Red Talons in Egypt take action in their own ways. Bloody Eyes, a Philodox who believes that the Talons should ask for help in re-vitalizing their caern, makes repeated petitions to the elders to that effect, but spurns Left-Behind as a weakling. Fears-no-Poison, a vicious Ahroun who gained her name by eating scorpions patrols the desert as the strongest of the sept's Guardians. And Whines-for-Water, a Theurge and recent addition to sept, whimpers incessantly of missing his native European forests.

Left-Behind

Position: Keeper of the Land, Sept of Howling Sands

Breed: Lupus

Auspice: Theurge

Tribe: Red Talons

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

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

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

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

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Rituals 3

Backgrounds: None.

Gifts: (1) Beast Speech, Mother's Touch, Sense Prey, Spirit Speech; (2) Sense the Unnatural

Rank: 2

Rage: 4; **Gnosis:** 7; **Willpower:** 5

Rites: (Accord) Cleansing, Contrition, Hunting Ground; (Mystic) Spirit Awakening, Summoning, Weeping for a Vision

Fetishes: None.

Image: In his breed form, Left-Behind is a scrawny, red-brown runt, more jackal than wolf. In his human form, he is barely taller than five feet and skeleton-thin. He has thin, red-brown hair and a burnt-looking complexion. His Crinos form is emaciated and comparatively weak, and he avoids it in favor of the slightly more agile Hispo form.

Roleplaying Notes: Taken for granted, underestimated and generally shoved about, you are rapidly getting tired of it all. If your human form weren't so pitifully weak, you'd take to the cities and see how the *urrah* would treat you. You allowed Basks-in-Fafnir's-Breath into the bawn of the caern because he treated you like an equal, and the two of you are going to hatch a brilliant plan to save this sept's soul. Any day now, you'll think of it.

History: Born the runt of the litter, Left-Behind received his name by slipping down a steep dune and very nearly becoming a vulture's lunch before Bloody Eyes, his older and stronger cousin, drove the bird off. It came as no surprise that Bloody Eyes bred true, but Left-Behind's First Change was an amusing shock. Upon reaching the rank of Fostern, Left-Behind petitioned for the post of Keeper of Land, and the elders decided that the least important Garou in the sept could well fulfill this unimportant position.

Left-Behind and Bloody Eyes have a simmering rivalry that Left-Behind is completely powerless to pursue. Bloody Eyes, for his part, would be quite shocked — not necessarily unpleasantly — to discover his worthless cousin so fervently trying to aid the caern's spirit.

Shadow Lords

"My task is to find and end corruption within the Garou Nation. I have tracked down and slain traitors on three continents, and no fewer than a dozen septs credit me with identifying plots to destroy them from within. Now, my superiors have asked that I turn my attention, and the attention of my subordinates, to Egypt."

"I hardly know where to begin."

— The Unlidded Eye, Shadow Lord Philodox and investigator for the Judges of Doom

The Middle East brims with soldiers, most of which fight with fanatic loyalty. The Garou of the region are typically no different, and only require a leader. The Silver Fangs of Egypt, pitiful remnants of House Wiseheart hiding in Luxor after the decimation and corruption of their caern

in Russia, are in no shape to lead Egypt's Garou. The Silent Striders are making a comeback, true, but the curse on their heads lessens their effectiveness. The Glass Walkers are well established, but rumors of corruption abound (and besides, who but *urrah* would follow *urrah*?). But, not to worry — the Shadow Lords have arrived.

In truth, the tribe has maintained a small presence in Egypt for several decades. Ever since the Silent Striders began dropping hints about the wondrous fetishes at risk of Wyrms corruption beneath the desert sands, the Lords have been sure that some members of their tribe keep tabs on the country. Recently, however, the tribe has begun taking a more active role in Egypt. This activity is partially in response to the military campaigns of Buries-the-Dead and Walks-With-Might; while the Lords don't really believe that even such resourceful Garou can do much more than annoy the Leeches, they do recognize that with every bloody battle, discarded resources lay ready for the taking.

Another focus for the tribe is the few caerns that remain in Gaian hands. The Healing Dawn caern, as a caern of Solace, is seen as a perfect place for the Children of Gaia, and the Lords have little use for it. However, the personnel of that caern, particularly with regards to the Rite of the Sacred Gift, intrigue them. The tribe has tried several times to beguile or threaten the Children of Gaia into teaching them the rite, to no avail.

The Sept of the Howling Sands is not a high priority for the Lords, simply because they assume that the Red Talons are capable of maintaining their lands (which is usually true). However, a Shadow Lord speaking to the well-intentioned (however naïve) Fenrir Ahroun Basks-in-Fafnir's-Breath might discover the Red Talons' plight. Such a Shadow Lord could certainly gain some renown within the tribe by investigating the caern, though not without some risk.

The most visible Garou to the Shadow Lords are the Glass Walkers and the Silver Fangs. The Lords assume that the Fangs are doddering and senile, as well as being whipped and discouraged by their experiences in Russia. (This is largely a misconception; see the Fangs' write-up below.) The Lords make no assumptions about Leila the Veil-Shredder and her tribe, however.

The fact that Leila, a metis and an Arabic woman, managed to claw her way past the glass ceiling and assume virtual command of not only her corporation and her tribe in Egypt impresses the Lords to no end. (In fact, some Ragabash of the tribe have joked about asking her to trade up.) However, recently a Shadow Lord Kinfolk who happens to work in the same field as Leila contacted his nephew with an interesting bit of information. Leila's company has been looking out for a new building, ostensibly to house a large production facility. The sites that she has chosen for consideration, however, are inconveniently located and rundown. The Shadow Lords considered what this might mean, and have determined that either Leila truly is losing her mind (and all available

evidence points to the canny Elder being in complete control of her faculties) or the Lords simply do not have enough information to make sense of this development.

At present, their investigation is slow. Since some Glass Walkers have responded to Buries-the-Dead's call to arms, the Shadow Lords have sent their own delegates as well. The hope is that the youth of both tribes may talk freely, shedding some light on Leila's machinations.

Confrontation may be sooner in coming than that, however. The Judges of Doom have sent a representative to Egypt, looking for traitors and spies. The Unlidded Eye, an Athro and skilled interrogator, is slowly meeting with sept leaders in Egypt. He has not yet met with Leila, preferring to give her time to get worried, but plans to do so soon. Meanwhile, any given Shadow Lord could be his ears, and any murder of crows might hide one of his Stormcrow spies.

The Unlidded Eye is a visitor to Egypt, but several important Shadow Lords make their homes here. Zainab Silken-Roar, a metis Ahroun, is a Lazarite crusader trying to drum up support for her cause in the Middle East. In the smaller towns of Southern Egypt, you might find Song-of-the-Shen, a Hakken Shadow Lord Galliard on a mission to discover the fate of his former packmate — and the powerful fetish the Stargazer carried. And, in the darkest corners of the dirty city of Cairo, the Theurge missionary Jibril Clean-Hands attempts to bring light, as befits a member of his camp.

Unlidded Eye

Position: Judge of Doom, diplomat of the Garou Nation

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Philodox

Tribe: Shadow Lords

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

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4 (details), Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 2, Subterfuge 5 (pushing buttons)

Skills: Drive 1, Firearms 2, Leadership 3, Melee 1, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Computer 1, Investigation 4, Law 2, Linguistics 2 (Italian and French as well as English; he usually conducts interrogations in the Garou tongue), Occult 4, Politics 3, Rituals 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Kinfolk 3, Pure Breed 4, Resources 3

Gifts: (1) Aura of Confidence, Fatal Flaw, Interrogator, Persuasion, Scent of the True Form, Truth of Gaia; (2) Call to Duty, Luna's Armor, Staredown (3) Direct the Storm, Summon Stormcrow, Wisdom of the Ancient Ways; (4) Roll Over, Take the True Form

Rank: 4

Rage: 5; **Gnosis:** 4; **Willpower:** 8

Rites: (Accord) Cleansing; (Mystic) Questing Stone, Silence; (Punishment) Hunt, Ostracism, Stone of Scorn, Voice of the Jackal; (Renown) Shame

Fetishes: Metronome of Truth (Level 2, Gnosis 6): This device, which resembles an ordinary wooden metronome, is the Unlidded Eye's favorite interrogation tool. When activated, it will tick continuously, adding +1 to the difficulties of any mental roll made in the room (including Subterfuge rolls made to lie convincingly). This difficulty modifier increases by one every half-hour (cumulative) to a maximum of +4.

Image: The Unlidded Eye is a short, stocky man in his 30s. He has dark hair, fair skin, and a gaze that wavers between sympathetic indulgence and flesh-crawling cruelty. He always dresses well, and though he usually appears completely at rest, he never allows himself to relax entirely.

Roleplaying Notes: You are personally responsible for the deaths of 14 traitorous Garou. You are absolutely convinced that they all deserved their fate and that the interrogations you performed revealed the truth. Nonetheless, you detest that your job is necessary. You wish you could explore your wolf side more — day after day you feel it slipping away from you as you travel by plane instead of moon bridge, car instead of on your own paws. All of this makes you even harder on traitors: if the Garou would just do as the Litany commands, you wouldn't have to chase them all over the world!

History: The Unlidded Eye has not used his human name in years, and any of his subordinates who use it within earshot of other Garou are soundly cuffed. Born in New England, the Eye underwent his First Change at age 13 and demonstrated a knack for extracting the truth from captured foes while running with a pack. The Judges of Doom recruited him, and he quickly rose through the ranks of the Garou until finding his post as a diplomat and Judge.

When conducting interrogations, the Eye learns everything he can about the accused and uses it to best advantage. Usually, that means pushing buttons until the Garou frenzies (which the Eye can curb with his Gifts, if necessary) and then renewing the questioning with new aggression, exhausting the accused into telling the truth. One tactic the Eye does not use is lying — he considers lying to obtain the truth the worst kind of hypocrisy.

Silent Striders

"The question is, 'Why Egypt?' After all, most of us aren't really Egyptian. Oh, some of us look it, but mostly that's because we're from surrounding areas, the Middle East, and so forth. A lot of Striders the world over talk a great game, but you wouldn't get them near their homeland in a tank. So why are any of us here? After so many centuries of getting our heads handed to us, why now, when messengers are needed so many other places?

"Couple reasons, really. First off, a couple of stand-up Garou in the tribe — and I'm thinking chiefly of Buries-the-Dead and Walks-With-Might — said 'enough's enough' and went to war. Walks-With-Might's got some really heavy hitters behind him, some of whom aren't Garou at all. Buries-the-Dead has

forgotten more about killing Leeches than I'll ever learn, so even though I've never heard of the two of them together at the same time, they're a major two-pronged attack on this country's woes. Anyway, it's not just that they're leading by example, they're asking for help. Buries-the-Dead in particular, I've heard from very reliable sources, has something large going down soon, and wants Garou to help — rank's not a concern, just competence.

"The other reason, well, that's a really touchy subject among the Striders. Seems the brain-eaters — you know, the crazy Garou that think they can gain wisdom by eating the brains of whatever stumbles their way? — have discovered a way around the Curse. That's right, the members of our tribe who skirt the Wyrn's edge, so to speak, found a way to dance around our tribe's greatest shortcoming. And you'd better believe, the rest of us don't trust this new development any farther than we can spit a camel.

"So for one reason or another, there's more of us in Egypt lately. And it's been hell, but damn it, it's good to be home."

— Samir the Jackal, Galliard of the Silent Striders

The once-native Egyptian Garou want their homeland back. The Eaters of the Dead consume the brains of their foes, searching for forbidden knowledge to help them break the curse. The Harbingers race across the deserts and through the filthy streets of Cairo, carrying news and coordinating plans. But the camp with the most influence in the long-abandoned land of Khem is the Dispossessed.

Attitudes in the camp range from wishing to reclaim Egypt as Strider territory to attempting to find a new home. All of the Dispossessed, however, have a deep and abiding hatred for the Setites. After all, even the Wendigo still control caerns in their precious Pure Lands, as much as they might complain of usurpation! The Striders cannot rest in their own homes, thanks to Set's curse.

The situation may well be worsening. The Eaters of the Dead have, according to rumor, found a way to sidestep Set's curse, taking what the land will not give them by eating their victims' souls as well as brains. Reportedly, by consuming the brain of a supernatural being, or even an especially strong-willed human, the cannibal can accrue the Gnosis that the curse denies him.

How long this has gone on and who discovered it is unknown. The Striders have begun to investigate, however, and thus far, the results have been maddening. The culprits elude their pursuers in the filthy cities of Cairo and Alexandria, aided, some suspect, by the Bubasti (who have much to gain by the knowledge in the skulls of other night-folk) and perhaps even the inscrutable Ratkin. Some Garou refute these claims, stating that the scent left at the scenes of the devourings is unmistakably Garou... though not necessarily Strider.

If the cities are dangerous, the deserts aren't much better. Very few unspoiled caerns dot the Egyptian landscape, and Striders are loath to rest at any of them, for fear of attracting the Soul-Drinker Banes to a holy place. These Banes also stalk the Umbra, and, at night, the physical

realm, searching for unwary Striders. No matter where they roam, Egypt is inhospitable to its rightful guardians.

And yet, the Striders have not given up hope. Among the Dispossessed, new leaders have emerged to give the tribe new hope. One such leader, of course, is Walks-With-Might, one of the founders of the Ahadi. Another warrior, slightly less famous but just as effective, is Buries-the-Dead.

Buries-the-Dead, an Ahroun, has made it her personal mission to destroy as many of the Leeches as possible. She leads a war pack into the cities, searches out the vipers, and scatters their ashes high. Her strength lies in her sheer ferocity and tenacity; she refuses to be drawn into the vampires' political machinations (as far as she knows). She does not bargain, and has never yet granted a Leech's plea for mercy, no matter what it dangles in front of her. She and her war pack make frequent use of the Healing Dawn caern as their home base, returning to regain Gnosis and make plans, as well as participate in moots and rites, before striking out again for more serpent blood.

The rest of the tribe, of late, seems infected by the energy of these Garou. For the first time in centuries, the prospect of retaking Egypt from the serpents, or at least making a dent, seems possible. The tribe in Egypt — and Africa in general — is gearing up for a conflict of epic proportions, and Garou of other tribes are not far behind. Some Theurges within the tribe warn against moving too quickly, however. After all, the vampires have lorded over the land for countless years. Who knows what change they may have wrought, and how those changes may affect victorious Garou?

Other notable Striders include Hejira, a lupus-born Ragabash who specializes in leading enemies into ambushes; Samir the Jackal, the Galliard Who Speaks 'Til Sunrise; and Damien Mourns-the-Dead, a young Theurge intent on learning the tribe's history, searching for a loophole in the curse.

Buries-the-Dead

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Ahroun

Tribe: Silent Striders

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

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

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

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

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Crafts 1, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Leadership 3, Stealth 4, Survival (desert) 4

Knowledges: Computer 1, Enigmas 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics 3, Medicine 1, Occult 3, Rituals 2, Vampire Lore 4

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Pure Breed 2



Gifts: (1) Falling Touch, Inspiration, Sense Wurm, Silence; (2) Jam Technology, Sense Silver, Spirit of the Fray; (3) Adaptation, Reshape Object; (4) Attunement, Dam the Heartflood *

*This Gift can only be used on a supernatural creature with a Blood Pool, who gains power from that blood (vampires, ghouls, etc. — even Ananasi). The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Medicine (difficulty of the target's Willpower). Each success prevents the target from spending any Blood Points, for whatever purpose, for a full turn. A werewolf may use this Gift only once per scene against a given target, but multiple Garou may use this Gift on a target once each. Strider packs armed with this Gift are among the fiercest gûl slayers known to the Garou.

Rank: 4

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

Rites: Moot Rite

Fetishes: Klaive of Purity (Level 4, Gnosis 7): When activated, this fetish makes the wielder immune to mind or soul-corrupting powers for one turn per activation success, so long as the wielder is in no way breaking the Litany by her actions. It also prevents the wielder from ever succumbing to the vampiric Embrace; if this is attempted, the fetish's owner dies painlessly and the fetish shatters in a blazing nimbus of sunlight.

Image: Buries-the-Dead is slightly over five feet tall, and unlike many Silent Striders, is muscular rather than lean. She has olive skin and short, black hair, and is never without a cane or walking stick (which she may Reshape into a stake at a moment's notice). She smiles often, refusing to allow the horror of the End Times dim her spirits. While in Egypt, she wears the veil, for two reasons. First, it arouses fewer suspicions, and second, it covers the scars that mar her throat and neck.

Roleplaying Notes: Difficult as it is to prove, you believe you are making progress. The Leeches may continually spawn more, but that only shows their fear. You have been met with bribes, threats, assassination attempts, the slaughter of Kinfolk, pack members, and all forms of serpentine magic, and you meet it all with a smile. The serpents cannot cause you to lose hope, for you know you are doomed to die beneath a vampire's bite — and that your klaive will avenge you.

History: Buries-the-Dead was born in Cairo in 1963. Her First Change left three young vampires scattered to the winds, as well as several peace officers unlucky enough to fall under the gûls' influence. The Silent Striders found her and smuggled her out of the country to America, where she formed a pack and stalked Leeches on the streets of New York, Detroit, and Miami before returning to Africa. While her war is on all vampires, she recognizes that she can do the

most for (and expect the most help from) her tribe by concentrating on Egypt, so for the last several years, she has roamed the country, leaving only piles of ash and bloodstains to mark her passing.

Silver Fangs

"Imagine this: You're a knight in the Crusades. For the sake of argument, we'll say you're Muslim. You're feeling great, because your particular battalion or whatever just stomped on the infidel invaders really badly, and you and your pals are just doing the mopping-up. So you round a bend, and there, in a little stone house, dug in like ticks, are three Christian soldiers. Now, you don't know it, but behind that door, hidden in that house, they've got the Shroud of Turin, a big chunk of the True Cross, and, I don't know, a signed note from Jesus saying 'To Peter: Sorry I missed you, see you soon, pick me up a beer on the way to Calvary.' Now, exactly how much luck do you think you'd have getting those knights to surrender by yelling out, 'Hey, you guys are fucked, come on out and surrender and we'll do what we can about getting you home safely?'"

"Sometimes, honor's not all that's at stake. So no, you can't come in to see him, and, excuse me for saying so, ma'am, but I don't really care what sept you're from or how much money you've got. I don't mean to suggest your intentions toward Kolya-rhya aren't honorable, but it's not a chance I'm willing to take."

—Casper De La Serna, Silver Fang Ragabash of House Gleaming Eye and Steward to Kolya Blood-of-Iron, speaking to Leila the Veil-Shredder

The Silver Fangs in Egypt are nearly all refugees. Most of them belong to House Wiseheart, the contemplative line ruled by King Tariki. The King himself, however, has been gone on an extended Umbral quest for some months now, and the destruction of his House's forces in Russia will likely come as an unpleasant surprise when (if) he returns.

After the destruction of the Aral Sea caern, the some of the Fangs retreated to the Middle East, hoping to find help at the Sept of the Midnight Sun in Luxor. To a point, this worked: two of the house's (and the tribe's!) greatest assets are safely out of Russia.

One of these assets is a fetish of great power in a very innocuous package. It is a small clay jar containing a fine, blue powder. When mixed with the blood of a Garou hero of great enough stature (the Silver Fang legends state that the hero must belong to their tribe, but this is not truly the case), the powder becomes suitable for use as paint. If this paint is then applied to another fetish, the fabled Portrait of the Bogatyrs, an important sign will be revealed to Garou about the Apocalypse. At present, the Garou do not know where the Portrait is to be found — legends place it somewhere in the treasure hoard of a great beast in Russia — but at the moment, the Fangs are grateful to have the paint intact.

The other important reason that the Fangs of Luxor receive no visitors and keep an extremely low profile is Kolya Blood-of-Iron. The mighty Silver Fang Galliard is a

Grand Elder, and knows virtually every rite the Garou have reason to use, including the Rite of Caern Building. A mighty warrior for Gaia in his younger days, he served as Master of the Rite for the sept of the Aral Sea in Russia before the caern's destruction. During that battle, he suffered a wound that defies all magical and natural attempts at healing, and lies stricken at the Wiseheart lodge at the Sept of the Midnight Sun in Luxor, attended by Casper, his steward and trusted friend.

The recovery of a Grand Elder from the brink of death would make a strong rallying point for the Fangs, and both Casper and Kolya are well aware of this. So, however, would his death, and the Fangs suspect that the Shadow Lords might well twist the situation to their advantage if they knew of Kolya's condition. Likewise, while the Leeches are not as strong force in Luxor as in other Egyptian cities, Kolya is fairly sure that should his location and status become public knowledge, his lodging might be destroyed by "terrorists" in short order.

As a result, Casper, ever resourceful, has made deals with the Silent Striders. In exchange for their services in hiding the fallen Galliard, he promises the tribe the full support of Kolya and the Silver Fangs upon Kolya's recovery. Having a Grand Elder of the Silver Fangs at their side would certainly strike fear into the Leeches' unbeating hearts, so several of the Striders are doing their best to mislead any possible investigators. Also, whether they know it or not, the Red Talons of the Howling Sands do their part to keep enemies away from Luxor simply by patrolling the Temple of Karnak so vigilantly. In short, Casper has done a reasonably good job in a bad situation.

Leila the Veil-Shredder, however, is proving a thorn in his side. She aided the Silver Fangs in reaching Egypt unmolested, and therefore knows where Kolya is being kept. She has shown up unannounced on several occasions asking to speak with him. Casper, who is aware of her odd reputation (not to mention doggedly loyal to his friend) has turned away her ploys of threats, bargaining, and appealing to the Fang's desperate situation. However, since Casper doesn't know what she wants with Kolya (and Leila won't say), the steward has begun to wonder if the ruthless Glass Walker Don won't just sell what she knows to the highest bidder and be done with it.

Luxor is not the only city that boasts Silver Fangs among its Garou, however. Some young Renewalist Fangs, eager to show that their tribe's prowess in battle is undimmed, have arrived to fight alongside Buries-the-Dead. Likewise, the Ivory Priesthood shows its face in Egypt occasionally, often in the form of a representative of King Tariki on some mystical errand. It seems the Priesthood and the Silent Striders share a common concern for the strange condition of the Duat in recent months.

The Ahadi, while celebrated by many of the tribes, is a cause for concern for the Fangs. After all, many of the

Fera hold them responsible for starting (or at least allowing) the War of Rage, and the charge isn't entirely false. Whatever a Fang's personal feelings on the War, none of them are too keen to take on an angry Mokolé. The Changing Breeds of Egypt, however, do not always extend their good will toward the kings of the Garou.

In addition to Casper and Kolya, two other Silver Fangs are noteworthy among Egypt's Garou. Siham Colder-than-Death, a Theurge and Ivory Priestess, looks after House Wiseheart's interests in Egypt. Of late, she has begun to express concern for the king's well-being and is considering sending a pack of Garou to find him. Meanwhile, a young man who knows only that his name is Kasim wanders the streets of Al Jizah, unable to remember his true name — Blinding-Claws, a Silver Fang Ahroun — since an encounter with a human spellcaster left him an amnesiac.

Kolya Blood-of-Iron

Position: Former Master of the Rite, Aral Sea caern

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Galliard

Tribe: Silver Fangs

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

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

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

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

Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Medicine 1, Occult 4, Politics 3, Rituals 5

Backgrounds: Ancestors 4, Kinfolk 1, Pure Breed 5

Gifts: (1) Call of the Wyld, Eye of the Falcon, Falcon's Grasp, Master of Fire, Mindspeak, Persuasion, Sense Wyrm; (2) Empathy, Reason, Word of Honor; (3) Song of Rage, Talons of Falcon, Tongues, Wrath of Gaia; (4) Ignore Death Blow, Mindblock, Shadows by the Firelight; (5) Paws of the Newborn Cub; (6) Renew the Cycle

Rank: 6

Rage: 6; **Gnosis:** 7; **Willpower:** 8

Rites: Any and all rites in Werewolf Revised and the Werewolf Player's Guide, plus several that are known only to the Silver Fangs — Kolya is one of the greatest ritemasters of all time! In addition, he knows the Silver Record from memory.

Fetishes: Balm of Restful Sleep (Level 1, Gnosis 4): In a testament to how driven and skilled he really is, Kolya created this fetish *after* sustaining his apparently incurable wound. The balm allows him to remain in Glabro form even as he sleeps; without it, he would surely slip into Homid form and die from his injury.

Image: In Homid form, Kolya is a tall, strong, Russian man in his early 50s. Years of fighting well (read: intelli-

gently) have kept him remarkably healthy; amazingly, he has not one Battle Scar! In his wolf forms, his fur is a shimmering, luminous silver-white. Currently, he wears Glabro form full-time.

Roleplaying Notes: Why Gaia chose to spare you during the battle, you do not know. You always knew your death would come in battle, but somehow, over the years, you simply avoided it. Now, you are laid low, and only your desire to die as a martyr (or at least a hero!) rather than in some ignominious bed in Egypt keeps you alive. You are aware that if you can rise like the Phoenix from this apparently fatal setback, you can inspire your tribe — and all Garou! — to take arms and fight with renewed vigor. You only hope you live long enough to see the outcome.

History: Born in St. Petersburg in 1949, Kolya was raised by a family that made a great show of their loyalty to the Communists. Beneath it all, however, they told their young son stories of how much nobler the country was under the Tsars, and how much better it would be if they returned. Young Kolya never truly believed it, thinking his parents were rose-tinting their youth. But when the KGB arrived to take them away, Kolya found his very real link to the Tsars, much to the dismay of the secret police.

The Silver Fangs took him away and made arrangements to keep his family safe. Kolya, meanwhile, hated himself for doubting his parents and immersed himself in the stories of the past. His Garou name came when his mentor, rising one morning to find the Cliath still poring over the written accounts of old battles, commented that his charge must have "blood of iron to remain awake so long!"

Ironically, it is this same determination that is saving Kolya from death now. After the battle at the Aral Sea, during which the Elder was stabbed with a Black Spiral Dancer's Baneklaive, he lay in the snow for nearly eight hours, knowing that sleep meant death. Finally, his young friend Casper found him, and spirited him away, first to Europe, then to Egypt. Now, the fallen hero waits for one last chance at glory before passing on.

Stargazers

The great lion asks

But his questions fall upon

Deaf ears and sand. Why?

—Gabriel Shining-Gold, Galliard of the Klaital Puk

The recent split from the Garou nation has had a very unfortunate and unexpected result for the Stargazers. They have apparently lost the support of one of their favored totems, the enigmatic Sphinx. Ever since their departure, Sphinx has grown more difficult to summon and even more cryptic than usual (if that is possible). Stargazers are discovering that his riddles often have no answer, or answers that are so esoteric and obtuse that even the most enlightened of the tribe cannot guess them. This, of course, is crippling to any Stargazer who fails to guess a riddle, as they quickly



obsess upon finding the answer and refuse to admit that, perhaps, the only solution is to give up.

No one land ever held a great number of Stargazers until the recent defection. Now, with the tribe largely collected in the Beast Courts to the east, Egypt has its fair share of Stargazers questing for Sphinx's agenda... or forgiveness.

The way is not easy, of course. Language and religious barriers, as well as native supernatural beings, bar the Stargazers' path. In Egypt, where the Sphinx should be easiest to contact, he is still elusive, often dropping hints and leading would-be petitioners into encounters with dangerous enemies or infuriating Bubasti. The riddles continue, and the tribe, usually so quick to recognize puzzles as paths to enlightenment, is beginning to wish the totem would get straight to the point for a change. This doesn't seem likely, however.

Reactions to Stargazer visitors are mixed. Opinions on them vary, but many Garou view them as deserters. While the Ahadi is reminiscent of the Beast Courts to a point, it lacks the formality and the tradition of the hengeyokai's practices, and the Stargazers feel anything but at home along the Nile. However, some members of the tribe are native to Egypt and the Middle East, and do try to aid their cousins from the East. Sadly, even these werewolves remain ignorant as to the meaning of the Sphinx's most recent, most maddening riddle.

Among the country's few Stargazers are Gabriel Shining-Gold, a Galliard poet and seeker; Kemal Endless-Road, a Philodox who believes that an anchorhead to an unspoiled, pristine Realm lies somewhere in the desert; and Nita Sirocco, an Ahroun who follows the destructive sandstorm as her totem.

Gabriel Shining-Gold

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Galliard

Tribe: Stargazers

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

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Expression (poetry) 4, Primal-Urge 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Crafts 1, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Kailindo 2, Performance 3, Stealth 2, Survival 1

Knowledges: Computer 2, Enigmas 3, Investigation 1, Linguistics 3, Occult 2, Rituals 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Pure Breed 4

Gifts: (1) Balance, Mindspeak, Persuasion, Sense Wyrms; (2) Surface Attunement

Rank: 2

Rage: 4; **Gnosis:** 2; **Willpower:** 6

Rites: Spirit Awakening, Summoning, Talisman Dedication

Fetishes: Spirit Stones (Level 1, Gnosis 5): Three small stones in a leather pouch. Successful activation grants the user the Gift: Spirit Speech for one scene.

Image: Gabriel is light-skinned and has chestnut hair, but Arabic features. He typically wears blue jeans and loose-fitting shirts, and always has a scarf or sash to wrap around his face for desert journeys.

Roleplaying Notes: You are young, cocky, and happy to have made it this far without a pack. Someday you intend to visit the Beast Courts, but first you want to find out what's happening with the Sphinx. You're no Theurge, but you know that longtime allies don't just abandon their supplicants without due cause. If the Stargazers have offended the Sphinx, then damn it, they deserve to know how!

History: Born to Kinfolk parents — one American, one Saudi — Gabriel grew up on a military base. On his 13th birthday, a strange, song-like howl from the desert called to him, and before he knew it, he was running towards it on four legs. He still stays in contact with his parents, mostly by letters and email. He is far too restless to stay in one place for long, which is part of the reason he has never joined a pack. He is discovering how dangerous Egypt can be, however, and is considering trying to round up other lone Garou and inspire them to join him on his quest — no easy feat, given the popular attitude towards his tribe.

Uktena

"Younger brother does not agree with those of us who travel abroad and breed with new people. He does not see our pursuits of history and culture in other lands as worthwhile. He scoffs when we discover new Banes to fight, new treasures to study, new magics to work."

"He also wonders why the Wyrmscomers are similarly disinterested in our people's woes."

— Henry Shines-on-Secrets, Uktena Theurge, defending his travels at a moot

The Uktena have some native Egyptian members to their name, the products of breeding among the Bedouin and desert people. However, their numbers are easily the smallest of any tribe in Egypt, other than their Wendigo cousins.

To be sure, though, Egypt has much to offer the curious Uktena. From the time that Striders began their campaign to find support by leaking news of fetishes beneath the sands, the Uktena responded. Often, an Uktena (or an Uktena pack) will venture into Egypt only long enough to complete a quest for some sacred relic, and then return home. While there, however, they would sometimes breed with the native peoples, and over time, a small band of Kinfolk appeared among the desert folk.

Today, the Uktena sometimes ally with the Silent Striders and Children of Gaia in battling vampires and liberating fetishes, but with varying motives. Some are motivated by concern and sympathy for the Striders. Some few have heard of and wish to learn the Rite of the Sacred Gift. And the Banetenders feel that if great evil truly does rest beneath the sands, their camp should be the ones watching over it (a point that the Striders are by no means prepared to argue).

By far the most visible member of the tribe in Egypt is Henry Shines-on-Secrets, an explorer and archaeologist. He is well known to the Garou of the Healing Dawn caern, and frequently sits at Jesal Voice-of-the-Sands' knee to hear her stories. He is not a permanent resident of Egypt, but he will often recruit American packs for short ventures, as he does not run with a pack himself.

Other important Uktena include Biting-Storm, a lupus-born Ahroun of with unquenchable Rage; Jumanah Whirling-Light, a Ragabash dancer with a silver laugh to match her wicked klaive; and One-Proud-World, a Galliard who trades stories of faith and wisdom with the Egyptians.

Henry Shines-on-Secrets

Position: None.

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Theurge

Tribe: Uktena

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

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

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 4 (climbing), Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Expression 1, Primal-Urge 3, Streetwise 1

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Crafts 3, Drive 3, Firearms 2, Melee 2, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Knowledges: Archaeology 4, Enigmas 3, Investigation 3, Law 1, Linguistics 4 (smattering of different languages), Medicine 2, Occult 4, Rituals 2, Science 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5 (Henry has friends everywhere), Ancestors 2, Contacts 5 (and he seems to know everybody), Resources 3 (various grants from universities, plus his salary as a professor)

Gifts: (1) Persuasion, Mother's Touch, Sense Magic, Sense Wyrms, Shroud, Smell of Man, Spirit Speech; (2) Coils of the Serpent, Messenger's Fortitude, Spirit of the Bird (3) Reshape Object, Secrets

Rank: 3

Rage: 2; **Gnosis:** 7; **Willpower:** 6

Rites: (Accord) Cleansing; (Caern) Opened Caern; (Mystic) Questing Stone, Spirit Awakening, Summoning

Fetishes: Henry is typically found carrying at least one fetish, but rarely keeps them around. He claims that having fetishes distorts his ability to hunt down new ones, and finding them is important thing for him.

Image: Henry is a light-skinned Native American in his mid-30s (though he looks younger). He is slender and trim, and crackles with energy. He is at ease in nearly all social situations, and has avoided cultivating his Rage to make sure that humans are as comfortable as possible around him. In Lupus form, his is a red wolf with a brown streak down his muzzle. In Crinos form (which he avoids if at all possible), the brown fur covers his head.

Roleplaying Notes: You will never have time to see and do all that you want, and being part of a pack would only slow you down. You are not at all a loner, however, and are happy to have company on your expeditions — just as long as the Rage-filled Ahroun stay away from you when you need to ask locals for information. You gain your wisdom uncovering new fetishes and lost secrets instead of by performing rites and interpreting visions, and Gaia willing, you'll be doing it for a long time to come.

History: Henry was born in Michigan and dove headlong into history and mythology as soon as he was old enough to understand the stories. While searching through the Mammoth Caves in Kentucky with a friend, a sudden rockslide

caused a cave in. Finding his friend trapped behind a rock, Henry pushed, desperately trying to free him, until suddenly the rock slid aside easily. His friend fainted at the sight of him, but Henry, now in Crinos form for the first time, dug his way out.

Being Garou did not stop Henry from attending college and obtaining degrees in Archaeology and Folklore. His Ph.D. is pending at the moment (he spends too much time doing fieldwork to finish it, but plans to get around to it someday), but his reputation more than makes up for it. At the moment, Egypt is his land of focus, and he plans to find a willing pack and go searching the desert near Luxor to discover the truth of the rumors surrounding the region.

Wendigo

"Accept my apologies and my pity, cousin, but not my aid. We are needed in our own lands."

— Nawautin, Wendigo Galliard

At present, there are no Wendigo in Egypt. While it is conceivable that one might venture to Khem, perhaps as a member of a pack assisting Henry Shines-on-Secrets, it isn't very likely.



Chapter Four: Storytelling in Egypt

The land of Khem is rife with plots and counterplots, and a Storyteller can extrapolate an entire chronicle from the information presented in this book. This chapter contains information for the Storyteller's eyes only, clarifications on the plans and motives of some of the important Storyteller characters from Chapter Three, and descriptions (and game mechanics) for Set's Curse and the Rite of the Sacred Gift.

Behind the Scenes

Many of Egypt's Garou are acting in what they feel are the best interests of their country and Gaia. Some of these Garou have admirable goals: Gabriel Shining-Gold's quest for the Sphinx and Buries-the-Dead's war on the vampires, for example. Others have goals that are perhaps acceptable, but the means used to reach them perverts their ends (Meat-Pudding's "crusade" to strengthen the Garou enough to oppose the vampires on a large scale might be more palatable were he not using human beings as his new source of protein). And then, some of the machinations of the Garou are hidden to all but a select few....

The Eaters of the Dead

This repulsive society of cannibals within the Silent Striders discovered long ago that by consuming recently-dead brains, they could gain the knowledge within. Only a few short years ago, an unnamed Eater theorized that somewhere, a vampire's brain might hold a clue to ending Set's Curse. So, a tacit hunt began among the society to find a vampire of sufficient age and of Egyptian descent.

In December of 1999, they found her.

She was skulking through the streets of Mexico City, calling herself Consuela. Unlike many Leeches of her age and power, she did not involve herself in grandiose schemes and manipulations. Perhaps she only wanted to be left alone. The Eaters of the Dead did not ask, but ambushed her, tore her unliving flesh, and subdued her. They then tore her skull open to feast upon her brains. That privilege went to Kameel Thoughtrunner, an Athro Theurge who had consumed vampire brains in the past and was accustomed to the strange cravings and visions it brought.

The sheer amount of knowledge in her head surprised even him. "Consuela," known in life as Kiya, had only recently returned from her Egyptian homeland. She had walked the earth for centuries, having become a vampire during the French invasion in 1798 under the fangs of one of the invaders. Never caring much for the company of others, she had studied the long history of her native land and how the vampires had infected it. She managed to accrue quite a bit of knowledge over the ensuing years, and her death provided the Eaters of the Dead with enough information about the leeches of Egypt to journey there and dodge the notice of the resident vampires. However, the one piece of information she carried that meant the most was a rumor, a bit of oral lore passed down to her by one of the creatures under whom she studied. That tidbit was the final line of Set's Curse in the original tongue.

Using that fragment as a starting point, the Theurges of the cult began to assemble a rite that would allow Silent Striders to absorb Gnosis from their victims instead of knowledge. The only requirement was that the victim had to have a certain degree of will, which meant that virtually any supernatural being was fair game. The "Mocking the Serpent" rite, as the Eaters have come to call it, has since been used most commonly in Egypt, but some Eaters of the Dead living elsewhere find it a somewhat more expedient means of regaining Gnosis than meditation.

With the rite adding a potent weapon to the Eaters' arsenal, some of them remained in Egypt, nominally to battle vampires. More likely, they wished to capture the Leeches for the knowledge in their brains. In any case, the Eaters of the Dead recently discovered the awful truth about the Bone Gnawers: the Maneaters are slowly but steadily taking over the tribe in Egypt. Rather than become outraged (after all, it isn't as though the brain-eaters are squeamish), the Silent Striders made them an offer. The two cults would aid each other: the Bone Gnawers using their superior knowledge of the streets to help find and procure victims for the Eaters, and the Silent Striders would help the Maneaters avoid investigation from their tribe and from the Garou Nation as a whole.

The most disturbing thing about this partnership is how well it is working. Over the last several months, the cannibal Garou have been responsible for deaths of werewolves, vampires, and even the occasional Ratkin. If someone begins to investigate a disappearance, he risks meeting a very gruesome fate... and of course, one way or another, no body is ever found.

The Eaters of the Dead, it should be noted, do not serve the Wyrms (at least they don't think they do). Many of them are quite dedicated to stamping out the

Wyrms' forces in Egypt and elsewhere, and feel that if the Leeches have stolen their tribe's ability to regain Gnosis, they are perfectly justified in stealing it back. Unless the Eater of the Dead in question has fallen to the Wyrms (see the Rite of Dormant Wisdom, below) he will not normally perform that rite or the Rite of Mocking the Serpent on a non-tainted Garou; many refuse to do so on ordinary people, choosing those that have "sinned against Gaia" instead. The Maneaters and the Eaters of the Dead agree, however, that to prevent the rest of the tribes from discovering too much, drastic measures must sometimes be taken.

Cairo

Cairo is a city at war. It is, for the most part, a cold war—the Garou have neither the numbers nor the leverage to stage a full-scale assault on their enemies. However, although the streets of Cairo do not erupt nightly in bloodshed, the war rages on. The Garou strike the Leeches down when they find them, scattering their ashes to the wind. The vampires, in turn, stage covert attacks on the werewolves, seeking to drive them from the city. The Bone Gnawers are split into two highly unequal factions. Meat Pudding and the Maneaters dominate the tribe in Cairo (and in fact most of Egypt), while Father Last-Secret knows well that something is horribly wrong with his tribe and seeks answers. Meanwhile, the Ratkin grow more paranoid beneath the streets and sometimes attack lone Garou. The Wyrms have influence here, far beyond what it exerts in the rest of Egypt.

Pestilence

Cairo has lost more people to plague and disease in the last 1000 years than any European city. Banes of sickness scurry about the Umbral streets, attaching themselves to Gaian and Weaver-spirits and slowly infecting them. Nearly three centuries ago, a Bubasti called HarshGaze began to study the pattern of deaths that the diseases left and was astonished to find that it seemed to follow a cycle. HarshGaze studied this phenomenon for most of his life, and when his time came, his Kinfolk son swore to continue the study.

Over the next three hundred years, through invasions, plagues, battles with Leeches, and other dangers, HarshGaze's family line has kept careful track of disease outbreaks in Cairo. The most recent major outbreak, of course, was Jackal Fever (see sidebar). The current investigator of disease is a tekhmet called Sashet (see Appendix One for details on this young Bastet). She has determined that disease and death (and the Bane activity associated with both) do indeed follow a rise-and-ebb pattern in Cairo. The pattern, however, only repeats itself every 75 years or so. Jackal Fever represents an apex in this pattern, and if the

pattern stays true, it should be followed by a number of minor outbreaks within the next few years.

Sashet's family has also studied the lore surrounding diseases, of course, and one legend in particular. A being called the "Maiden of Plagues" figures prominently into a number of tales passed down by the Bastet, and even appears in some Garou legends. What exactly this "Maiden" might be — a spirit, a vampire, or something even worse — is beyond the knowledge or experience of the young Bastet.

The Maneaters

As Jackal Fever began its spread in Cairo, the Bone Gnawers began their degradation here as well. While violation of this tenet of the Litany is by no means an exclusively Egyptian problem, nowhere in the world do so many Garou in one city partake of human flesh.

Meat-Pudding, the metis Ahroun described in Chapter Three, is the undisputed leader of Cairo's Bone Gnawers. His decisions and rulings are often carried out in other cities, as well, giving him more power than he probably realizes. He often rationalizes his horrible eating habits with the excuse that as soon as he regains his strength, he will lead an assault on the creatures of Cairo's sewers (see *Beneath the Dirty Streets*, below). Charging down a hole after a serpent, one of his packmates advises him, is unwise, but Meat-Pudding seems strangely unfazed. He says that he believes that as long as he and his pack are "strong enough", they can survive whatever they find in the sewers. As proof, he points to the fact that several of his tribemates have made scouting forays into the underground and have returned with nary a scratch.

The other prominent Bone Gnawer in Cairo, Father Last-Secret, is worthy of mention because he is the *only* member of the tribe in Cairo who isn't a Maneater (barring any character belonging to a player, naturally). An Elder Theurge, Father Last-Secret is frantically trying to find aid from someone who will help him cure his tribemates without killing them out of hand. He knows that punishment is in order, but knows also that Jackal Fever played a significant role in his tribe's corruption (having suffered the disease himself). He treads very lightly and avoids the sewers, trying to find some way to cleanse the Bone Gnawers. Of late, he has considered leaving the city and traveling to Luxor to seek help from the Silver Fangs, or Alexandria to ask aid from the Black Furies there. He unfortunately does not know of the caern of Solace, which is probably his best chance for success.

The Rats of Cairo

The Ratkin skulk through Cairo, simmering with Rage as in other countries. Here, though, they have

Jackal Fever

This disease began its spread in Cairo in mid-July 1998. It stayed chiefly contained in the slums of Cairo initially, but spread to other cities up and down the Nile before slowing down late February 1999. Health officials, including USAMRIID and the Center for Disease Control, as well as the World Health Organization, are researching the disease and have created a possible vaccine. No true numbers are available for how many victims the disease claimed, as many of the sufferers were homeless and died without record.

The virus is carried and contracted by mammals. It can be spread by transfer of bodily fluids (including drinking from the same water source) and, more commonly, by bite. Early symptoms include high fever, sweating, blurred vision, and abdominal pains (2 to 3 days after infection). As the disease progresses, the victim becomes short of breath and often suffers delusions, commonly of being hunted or followed (1 week after infection). The aggression and craving for meat leading many sufferers (of all species) to feast on carrion that gives the disease its name also appears at this stage (10 days after infection). Feeding on the flesh of something already infected by the virus is often fatal — if the victim gives in to his cravings, he typically dies within a few days (about 2 weeks after infection). If he can resist and rest, he will eventually recover from the disease. Assuming the victim stays rested and well hydrated, and doesn't eat diseased flesh, the disease takes approximately four weeks to run its course. Hospital care, of course, would shorten that time, but many of the victims, as stated, received no care whatsoever.

Shapeshifters are not immune to Jackal Fever, not even Ratkin. However, while they suffer the worst effects of the symptoms, they do so at an accelerated rate. A werewolf infected with Jackal Fever feels sick within hours, and by the end of the second day is craving flesh. A Ratkin must resist eating carrion within 12 hours of infection. In either case, if the shapeshifter can stave off his hunger until the disease runs its course (less than a week), he will not suffer any long-term effects. However, if the shapeshifter gives in and eats, psychological damage almost always ensues. Garou become addicted to human flesh, while Ratkin suffer slightly more bizarre effects (see below).

Those infected by Jackal Fever exude a strange aura and register very faintly to a Garou using the Gift: Sense Wyrm. Jackal Fever is not a natural disease, and its origins can be traced to the creature(s) in Cairo's sewers (see *Beneath the Dirty Streets*).

special reason to be angry. Their people suffered from Jackal Fever as well, and the survivors have been... changed. Many of them find themselves crawling from the sewer in the dead of night, with no memory of what business brought them there. Likewise, Gifts and rites that involve disease work almost too well for Cairo's Ratkin of late. Sometimes a wererat hears sounds or see shadows caused by otherwise unseen forces, but does not feel troubled. At other times, the smallest noise sends a Ratkin into mindless frenzy, either fleeing into the night, or attacking the source of the disturbance tooth and claw. Something is slowly poisoning the minds of the Ratkin, and, like the hunger that afflicts the Bone Gnawers, the poison began with Jackal Fever.

The fact that even the Ratkin, the masters of disease, were not immune to Jackal Fever isn't widely known among Egypt's werewolves. The wererats seemed able to shake off the effects better than Garou, and in most of Egypt, the plague left only questions. However, in Cairo, the Ratkin seem to retain some of the insanity from the disease. Most if not all of them suffer from a cyclical madness. It begins with increased paranoia and aggression, making the wererats extremely dangerous to anyone that crosses their path. Over the next week, their Rage builds, and they spend most of their time in Rodens form, searching out freshly dead meat. The cycle culminates in a vicious frenzy, during which the Ratkin attack anything that ventures too near, feasting on the remains of the intruder. The Ratkin are then granted a few weeks of normalcy before the cycle begins again. During the height of the madness, the Ratkin "lose time" and are unaware of their actions, except that they often awaken with blood on their claws and lips. Entreaties to their totem are often met by Bane attacks, but Ratkin of Cairo are aware that something is pulling their collective string. While this infuriates most of them, some raise the point that perhaps Gaia is simply keeping them on task — they were, after all, designed to cull the humans' numbers.

The Bone Gnawers are not affected by the cycle of madness, but then, most of them seem to be afflicted by the hunger at all times. They apparently know nothing of the Ratkin's plight. It is significant to note, however, that no Maneater has been attacked by a Ratkin in Cairo to date, and the two groups seem to avoid each other instinctively. Untainted Garou, however, are not so lucky. One werewolf, a survivor of a crazed wererat attack, found himself unable to heal the wounds they inflicted without help. It seems that whatever is influencing the Ratkin grants some degree of favor.

Buries-the-Dead

The bloody-minded Ahroun Silent Strider, as mentioned in the Chapter Three, has recently sent word out across the world (often by making use of her

Harbinger tribemates) that she is planning an important campaign in Egypt. Slowly but steadily, the Garou trickle in. While Buries-the-Dead does not meet with all of them personally, one way or another they find their way to the Healing Dawn caern. There, Ahmed Night-Sands, the Warder, tells them of Buries-the-Dead's intention: to destroy the Leeches of Cairo.

To be sure, such a venture would be costly. The Ahroun does not expect all that join her crusade to survive. She does, however, believe that victory with "acceptable" casualties is possible. Her plan involves using any Garou who join to their fullest potential — the street-savvy Bone Gnawers, the methodical Glass Walkers, the swift Silent Striders — no gift (or Gift) should be overlooked. She believes that by overcoming tribal biases, the Garou can take the nights back from Cairo's vampires.

That involves finding them, however. As stated, Cairo's vampires are notoriously hard to track, and no Garou can understand why. One theory is that Set's Curse protects his unholy spawn, but since all Garou (not just Silent Striders) seem equally impeded by this obfuscation, that explanation seems lacking. Another popular story is that the vampires have ruled the cities for so long that they are "in tune" with the city's spirit and it hides them. The Glass Walkers and other urban Garou find this idea most distasteful, and point out that no interrogated vampire has ever professed any understanding of the spiritual "truth" of the world (as the Garou see it). The reason for the vampires' stealth is described below, but Buries-the-Dead is unaware of any situation in Cairo's sewers.

Through various intelligence sources, she has learned of the highly aggressive behavior of the Ratkin in Cairo. She also knows that the Eaters of the Dead operate (or have operated in the past) in Cairo and feels that, disgusting though they may be, they will not impede her. She also feels that when the battle starts, she can count on the Bone Gnawers for aid. In this last assumption, she may well be horribly wrong.

Buries-the-Dead is looking for competent Garou, preferably already joined as a pack. She feels that the best strategy in fighting gûls is to rely on a pack, but without speaking, and a true pack can often do just that. While her effort isn't nearly as organized as that of Golgol Fangs-First in the Amazon, she is rapidly becoming a "War Chief" of sorts, and younger Garou of many tribes are looking to her, especially those who have some grudge against vampires. She gladly accepts volunteers, and cares little for rank — in fact, she would prefer younger, more creative werewolves to older warriors who are set in their ways. Vampires, she says, thrive on predictability. The best thing a vampire hunter can be is surprising.

Buries-the-Dead is not without her detractors, however. Leila the Veil-Shredder, although she rarely comes to Cairo, has asked Buries-the-Dead to stave off her campaign until the Glass Walker can accomplish "a very important goal, important for your cause as well." Since Leila won't divulge the nature of the goal, however (see below), Buries-the-Dead is running out of patience. Any Egyptian Glass Walkers who side with her, however, do so against the wishes of the Veil-Shredder, which can be a dangerous proposition. Likewise, Father Last-Secret, the untainted Bone Gnawer striving to heal his tribe in Cairo, is terrified of what might happen if Buries-the-Dead begins her attack with the Bone Gnawers still afflicted. He isn't sure that his tribemates would help, and some days he wonders if the hunger might drive them to attack the crusaders. However, he dares not interfere, for he fears revealing the truth to Buries-the-Dead.

Exactly when the Ahroun will begin her attack is undecided. She concedes that it will be soon, and it will be marked by a great moot at the Healing Dawn caern to ask the spirits of Khem for aid in the venture. Buries-the-Dead herself plans to take on the most dangerous part of the mission — invading the sewers — with only a handful of qualified (and higher-ranked) warriors. She has seen visions of her own death under the fangs of a vampire (and that vampire's subsequent destruction from her klaive) and does not wish to doom too many of the young warriors in the process.

Beneath the Dirty Streets

The reason for the chaos in Cairo is beneath the city streets. The sewers of Cairo host a number of vampire parasites, not unlike most other large cities. Many of Cairo's Ratkin also make their homes in the underground (or at least find themselves visiting often), as do a strange cult of Freakfeet fomori. Something is down there with them all, however, acting as a leader. No Garou has ever seen it; indeed, no Garou could even confirm its existence if pressed. But even the most depraved Maneater seems to understand that beneath the streets, something is awake and hungry.

The exact nature of this threat is unknown. Many Egyptian Garou, eager to pin any visible evil on vampires, say that an ancient Leech rests in a deep pit, bloated on the blood its followers bring. Others speculate that a monstrous Bane slithers through the tunnels, infecting and corrupting anything it contacts with diseases of the body or mind.

Whatever the true nature of this being, it apparently favors the vampires greatly. Many Garou have noticed that Cairo's leeches are hard to track, to the point that not even Gifts such as Sense of the Prey work reliably. The truth is that the being beneath the city offers protection

to the leeches — by entering the sewers, the vampire "washes" himself of any tails, physical or supernatural. Any Gifts previously used on the vampire are cancelled, as are other forms of supernatural tracking.

The sewers are also mostly free from conflict: Maneaters sometimes venture below to "test the waters", but none have been attacked. Other (that is, untainted) Garou are not so lucky, and may find themselves attacked by anything from the hideous Freakfeet to crazed Ratkin if they brave the sewers. Few do, however. While the Maneaters and the Eaters of the Dead seem to understand that something unspeakable rests beneath Cairo, both groups have too many secrets to keep to simply run off telling other Garou.

While the Eaters of the Dead and the Maneaters do indeed work together in Cairo, Kameel Thoughtrunner has lately begun to suggest that the alliance with the Maneaters is ultimately unhealthy. He asserts that they have come under the influence of the "Maiden of Plagues," apparently some ancient disease-goddess (he is unaware of the Bubasti Sashet and her research into the matter, at present). As evidence, Kameel points out that the strange, misshapen fomori that skulk beneath the streets stay more or less to a circular territory as though guarding something within. The "Maiden of Plagues," suggests Kameel, is not necessarily a vampire, but is the force behind the disease and the cannibalistic madness that follows it. The other Eaters of the Dead point out that the Maneaters do have an interest in the sewers, and perhaps in the "Maiden of Plagues" (or whatever squats under the city), but their interest lies in destroying it. Besides, fomori and vampires are rarely bedfellows. Kameel retorts that the knowledge imparted to him by Kiya/Consuela more than qualifies him to make some assertions about Cairo's underbelly, but for the moment, his tribe isn't listening.

The force beneath the sewers holds a measure of influence over any current or former sufferer of Jackal Fever, including the Maneaters and the Ratkin. It has enemies of its own, and not just among the Garou, and sometimes uses the Ratkin and the Maneaters to strike at them. The Eaters of the Dead remain largely outside of its knowledge, but if an Eater of the Dead were to consume the brain of an infected Ratkin or Garou, it could well claim the Silent Strider as well. A concerted assault on Cairo's vampires, which is exactly what Buries-the-Dead has in mind, might force it to tip its hand and send the Maneaters and/or Ratkin to hinder the Ahroun. Cairo is a powder keg, and the fuse rests beneath the streets. A premature spark could set it off, causing the cold war that Cairo has been until now to suddenly erupt into violence. A young pack poking around in the wrong place could well provide that spark.

The Veil-Shredder

Leila El-Sabeei, better known as the Veil-Shredder, has become the center of a whirlwind of rumor, speculation, fear, and even hostility. While no one has voiced their suspicions (yet), her carnal proclivities and her almost exclusively nocturnal lifestyle, combined with the fact that despite her claims to be metis, she knows not one Gift commonly taught to the breed, to say nothing of her almost supernatural charm all point towards Leila being something far different than she seems. In fact, some among the Garou suspect that she is a servant of the Wyrms, perhaps a Black Spiral Dancer. Some even fear that she is an Abomination, a blasphemous union of werewolf and vampire.

These suspicions could not be more wrong.

It is true that Leila is *not* a metis. She was born the child of a male Glass Walker and a human mother, and raised among Egypt's poor. She endured endless psychological abuse from her mother, who viewed her as a child of sin. She also grew up with a simmering hatred for the way Muslim women are treated (as she sees it) and the veil that they are forced to wear.

At age 13, her mother took her to a doctor to be circumcised. The doctor's knife bit into her, and she bit down on her own arm, refusing to scream. As the pain intensified, her vision clouded and she saw the room as a stinking abattoir, the floor crawling with bloody scorpions. In that moment, she felt Rage wash over her, and she changed for the first time. No one left the building alive, not the doctor, not his waiting patients, not even Leila's mother.

What exactly Leila did in the years between her First Change and her ascendancy to the head of the medical supplies company that currently employs her is a mystery. She has confessed to spending some time in Europe and the United States, but exactly how she attained her position remains unclear. Those unfortunate enough to have earned her ire, however, acknowledge that she has a true gift for blackmail, and collects favors like a demon. Her employer's board of directors has fielded many questions about Leila, but they always give vague answers about her being a "vital asset" to the company and dodge the issue. Leila clearly holds something over them, individually or collectively, but exactly what is unknown. The truth behind her allergy to sunlight, whether real or a red herring to draw attention from her true goals, is likewise a mystery.

Regardless, Leila is a woman of great power and drive. Her energy and passion are focused clearly on one goal, and it is this end that drives her to make repeated attempts to meet with Kolya Blood-of-Iron and to visit the Healing Dawn caern. This goal also drove her to learn as much about the rituals of the Garou as possible,



and to use her company's funds to purchase a parcel of land that is totally unsuitable for building. Leila wants to create a new caern in Alexandria, a caern of Wisdom.

Leila was not always so focused. In fact, after her First Change, a Glass Walker discovered her and spirited her out of Egypt into Greece. There, she grew up with her tribe, traveling with a pack and often acting as a spy or scribe. At age 18, she visited the Greek island caern of Miria, controlled by the Black Furies. The caern amazed her. She had visited caerns before, of course, but nothing as beautiful as this. While there, her troubled mind felt calmed, and she begged the Black Furies to teach her how to open her own caern. For the most part, they chuckled at the pup that wanted to learn such a powerful rite, but they did acknowledge that it was possible for Garou to create caerns. They also explained why it wasn't done more often — the Rite of Caern Building was quite likely to kill the ritemistress, and usually attracted Banes and other Wyrms-creatures to boot. Leila left the island with a goal — to open a caern in her native country.

While her goal is noble, her motives are perhaps not as pure as they could be. Leila had little understanding of Muslim culture when she left Egypt, and her abusive mother twisted what knowledge she did have. Leila's childhood was a constant barrage of insults and reprimands, and in her heart of hearts, she wavers between extreme self-doubt and a desire for vengeance on what she sees as a horribly chauvinistic culture. The Black Furies on Miria (and Jesal Voice-of-the-Sands in Egypt) tried to curb this somewhat, but Leila's true motivation for building a caern has more to do with her own need for self-worth and control than for serving Gaia.

At present, all that stands between Leila and her goal is the Rite of Caern Building. She knows of only two Garou in the country that know it: Kolya and Jesal Voice-of-the-Sands. Jesal and Leila got off on the wrong foot when they met; Jesal's religious tolerance clashed with Leila's burning hatred for the veil. While the two are now on speaking terms, Jesal, ever cautious, has decided to get to know Leila better before teaching her anything (especially such an important rite!). Kolya, for his part, might consent to see Leila, but his friend and guard Casper De La Serna does not allow him to take any visitors at all.

If Leila ever does manage to learn the rite, she plans to choose her moment carefully. She realizes that the Rite of Caern Building inevitably draws attention from minions of the Wyrms, and that using the rite in a city is a very dangerous proposition. To that end, she is considering some massive distraction on the night of the ritual — perhaps even some damage to the Aswan High Dam, which would create massive flooding all

along the Nile. In any event, she will certainly assemble as many Garou as possible to act as guards. This is her dream and her ultimate goal, and she will be damned before leaving anything to chance.

While Leila keeps much of her time and energy focused on learning the Rite of Caern Building, she finds time for other pursuits. As mentioned in Chapter Three, she has a legendary sexual appetite, and the status of "Leila's libido" has been jestingly tied to the moon phase; as the new moon grows near, she becomes less accessible and more distracted. She rarely seduces a man without evoking Animal Attraction in him; she finds it much easier to dominate men when their every thought is focused on her. She does occasionally meet men who are so chauvinistic and pig-headed that they attempt to dominate or hurt her. Whether these men are in some way tainted or are simply lashing out against a woman they find threatening, Leila does not care. Men who offend her rarely see the light of day again.

The Ahadi

After the death of Black Tooth, the mad Simbaking, the shapeshifters of Africa formed a pact called the Ahadi. While Africa's Changing Breeds never suffered from the War of Rage as much as those of other lands, a certain amount of mistrust was always present between the Garou and the other shapeshifters. Now, however, a few of the Breeds have learned to coexist in harmony, and have even mustered the courage to ask aid of each other.

The Breeds

All of the Changing Breeds still surviving have members in Africa — and possibly in Egypt — save one. The Gurahl do not often venture beyond their own lands, and finding a werebear in Egypt would be strange indeed.

Many other Fera make their homes here, however. The Ahadi has affected all of them in different ways. The Bubasti and the Mokolé are described in Appendix One; the rest of the shapeshifters are discussed here. After each section, the Storyteller is given some suggestions on how best to use the shapeshifter in an Egyptian story, whether as a player character or Storyteller character. A word of warning: the Fera each have their own unique outlooks on the world, each other, and (especially) the Garou. The Ahadi makes interaction in Egypt possible, but certainly not necessary. Use the other Changing Breeds with caution and respect, and not as a way to make your players slap their foreheads and mutter "Oh, God, s/he's an Ananasi."

Ajaba

The werehyenas have much to avenge. Their people were slaughtered and scattered to the four winds by

Black Tooth and his Endless Storm, and many Ajaba hate the Bastet (and the werelions in particular) with a frightening passion. Now that Black Tooth is dead and the Endless Storm dispersed, the Ajaba are creeping back to their tribal lands, trying to regroup and rebuild. The densely populated Egyptian cities make for good meeting places for the few living "choosers of the slain."

Despite the Ajaba's intense (and well-deserved) grudges, it was the Ajaba queen Kisasi who began engineering the various alliances that eventually led to the Ahadi. Kisasi went first to the Mokolé, then later to the Swara, Bagheera and even a few Simba who despised Black Tooth nearly as much as she did. She was also the one to suggest bringing the Garou — warriors with a stained past, but Gaia's finest warriors nonetheless — into the fight against Black Tooth.

Now that the despotic Simba king has been overthrown, Kisasi finds herself in an unusual position. She is one of the figureheads of the Ahadi, a living symbol of the wronged Fera who have set aside their grudges to cooperate as Gaia originally intended. But in this role, she is also resented by many of her kin, who believe that many more Simba deserve to die before the scales are even. Several Ajaba living abroad have come home to Africa upon news of Black Tooth's death, only to find to their disgust that one of their own now sits among other Bastet as if nothing happened. Feeling further betrayed, many of these malcontents make their way to Egypt, where they are a wild card waiting to fall one way or another.

Storyteller Notes: If a Garou were to encounter an Ajaba, he might expect to hear horror stories about the slaughter of the werehyenas by the Simba and long diatribes about how the cats are not to be trusted. An Ajaba Contact might be an excellent way to put the War of Rage in perspective for the Garou. A werewolf who feels angry with the Bastet for their treatment of the Ajaba had best be prepared for accusations of hypocrisy if he ever voices those concerns to the werecats — but at the same time, the Ajaba are living proof that the werecats have no room to talk when they claim the Garou are the only shapeshifters proud and mad enough to attempt genocide.

Ananasi

The werespiders regard Africa as a sacred place, and no country on the continent is without at least one member of the breed, Egypt included. Indeed, the fact that they are not the dominant bloodsuckers in Egypt is a hard fact for them to accept, and they are watching the Garou's campaign against the vampires with a great deal of interest. In Cairo, where so many of the Ovid are tainted, influenced, and poisoned by the creature beneath the city, the Ananasi remain true to

their purpose. They watch, plan, and strike in accordance with their Queen's wish. Their Queen has thus far been silent on what her children should do when the Garou finally begin their assault on Cairo's vampires, and the Ananasi's individual views vary. Some favor helping the Garou covertly, some would rather see the vampires repel the Garou, and some assert that the best course of action is to let both sides destroy each other and pick up the pieces afterwards.

In any event, the Ahadi is interesting to the spider folk, but by and large, they hold no illusions about the way the Ovid see them. Revealing oneself to another shapeshifter, especially a werewolf can be inconvenient at best and fatal at worst, and the werespiders don't like unnecessary risks.

Storyteller Notes: It is conceivable that an Ananasi, controlled either by a player or the Storyteller, would make overtures of peace to a pack of Garou "in the interest of unity among the Breeds," probably citing the Ahadi. The werespider's reasons for doing so could be anything from genuine desire to learn about and aid the Garou to wishing to use them to further the Ananasi's own ends. This plot device would work especially well on a young, well-meaning Garou who wishes to atone for the War of Rage somehow (such as Heckles-the-Wyrm in Chapter Three).

Bastet

The Bubasti are by far the most populous tribe of Bastet in Egypt, and they are discussed in more detail in Appendix One. However, other members of the Folk call the land of Khem home as well.

The Simba tread lightly anywhere. Their tribe is known best among the Bastet (and, to a lesser extent, all the Killi) for producing the genocidal king Black Tooth. This insane creature reduced the Ajaba to a handful of individuals scattered throughout the world and brought down famine and plague on anything foolish enough to oppose him. Now, after his death, his tribe is trying desperately to find a way to recapture their dignity. Apologies do not come easily to the Bastet, and the werelions owe several.

The Bagheera occasionally visit Egypt, as well, though not frequently. Egyptian legend includes at least one panther goddess, as mentioned in Chapter One. Any werepanther in Egypt probably has a specific reason to be there, rather than a general curiosity about the land.

Finally, the Swara may have one or two members in Egypt. As the only Bastet able to enter the Umbra with any degree of ease, the werecheetahs are Folk most likely to investigate the strange phenomena in Egypt's spirit world (see below).

Storyteller Notes: A loose pride of Bastet could certainly act as characters for players, or as foils for a pack of Garou. Likewise, the Ahadi makes cooperation between the two breeds much more likely, especially with the Leeches acting as a common foe. However, the Bastet and the Garou will always be uneasy around each other to some degree — cats and dogs, after all. To the Garou, Bastet seem promiscuous and aloof, not to mention maddeningly vague (they often tell stories couched in such thick cultural references that no meaning is conferred unless the listener takes *everything* in context). Likewise, to the Bastet, the Garou seem brutish, short-tempered, and bloodthirsty. Any story involving both Breeds should be tense — and possibly very fulfilling.

Corax

The Corax have never exactly lost touch with the Garou, and in fact still aid them occasionally in other parts of the world. Still, the Ahadi made headlines with the wereravens, so to speak. Walks-With-Might, the Silent Strider who helped found the Ahadi, is never without a Corax “escort,” whether he knows it or not. Other Corax fly throughout Africa, looking for hard evidence of different shapeshifters working together, so as to spread hope to other countries (and to try to get the rest of the world to follow suit).

One thing that no one (not even Buries-the-Dead, surprisingly) has clued in to yet is that the wereravens commonly know a rite that creates sunlight. If Buries-the-Dead ever discovers this, she will assuredly begin soliciting help from any Corax she can find. Assuming she can get some of them to help her, she might just have the secret weapon she needs to bring the Leeches down.

Storyteller Notes: The wereravens don’t hold the same grudge against the Garou that most other Fera do, so a Corax in an otherwise all-Garou pack isn’t totally out of the question. However, Corax hold no illusions as to their abilities in combat (minimal). It’s entirely possible that a Corax would simply follow a pack without ever revealing herself, simply watching and occasionally drinking eyes (Corax can consume the eyes of corpses to get brief glimpses of their lives). The pack might eventually notice that there’s a big raven watching them... and that ravens aren’t native to Egypt.

Nuwisha

Neither coyotes nor the Nuwisha’s human Kin are native to Egypt. As such, few of the world’s 100 Nuwisha walk Egypt’s soil. And yet, sometimes a terrorist attack will go horribly awry, explosives detonate prematurely, guns refuse to work, and so forth. The deadly pranksters are everywhere, if not for long, and Egypt is no exception. In particular, the Breed

Nagah

The wereserpents are not dead, despite what the Garou (and indeed almost all of the Fera) believe. Egypt was a stronghold for them, and as the War of Rage never reached the levels it did in Europe and the Americas, the Nagah survived. However, neither this hidden strength nor the Ahadi make them any more willing to reveal themselves to the other shapeshifters at this point. They watch and they judge, and strike when the time is right. Cairo, in particular, attracts their attention, and some of Meat-Pudding’s tainted tribemates in other cities have already met their “judgment.” Even so, the Nagah concern themselves with those targets that they deem would not be punished for their acts without Nagah involvement. If the Nagah notice a group of werewolves on the trail of a criminal like Meat-Pudding, they may call off any plans of their own to assassinate the Maneater and let the werewolves take care of their own.

Though it breaks Nagah law, a few might even go so far as to offer some anonymous tips to the hunters....

respects the Silent Striders for knowing when to get out instead of fighting a losing battle and falling as the White Howlers did, and they are glad to see the Egyptian Garou making any kind of progress.

The Ahadi at first made them laugh, for any Nuwisha who heard about it simply assumed that another was behind it. Further investigation revealed that no, this pact really was made by the Garou, the Bastet, and the Mokolé, and it seemed to be working. The wercoyotes don’t know whether to laugh or rejoice at this news, so they usually do both.

Storyteller Notes: Nuwisha are often capable of impersonating Garou, one way or another, and they are highly unpredictable. If a player is up to the challenge and you think it might make for an amusing story, have him play a Nuwisha disguised a Garou, perhaps even a member of an established pack (this works especially well if the pack’s totem would agree to be in on the “joke”; totems of Cunning like Raven, Raccoon, and (of course) Coyote would probably love it).

Ratkin

The local Ratkin have been discussed in the Antagonists chapter as well as above. It bears noting, however, that most Ratkin feel that the Ahadi is a sham and do not trust the Bastet or the Garou. The paranoid and volatile wererats will not approach Garou without an extremely good reason (such as to lead

them into a trap). Mixing Ratkin and Garou characters is not recommended; too much bad blood still exists between the breeds.

Rokea

The weresharks occasionally do go ashore; some of them even decide to live on land. Since Rokea are born exclusively of shark stock, they typically know nothing about surface life. Thus, religious and cultural practices seem very alien to them. Customs such as "prayer" and "fasting" confuse them (a being willingly going without food? Ridiculous!) and they are quick to dismiss such behaviors as silly and irrelevant.

Any wereshark in Egypt is likely to be found along the northern coast of the country, by the Mediterranean Sea. While land-dwelling a Rokea (known as a "betweenner", since they live between the land and the sea) might choose to inhabit Egypt, it isn't very likely that he would know much about the battle with the vampires, or the land's history, or the Ahadi.

Storyteller Notes: Rokea don't have the same history with the Garou that most of the other Breeds do, but when they do meet, the results are usually still bloody. Mixed groups of Garou and Rokea are strongly discouraged; the Breeds are simply too alien to each other for cooperation to be truly feasible. However, a pack of Garou stumbling across a slew of Rokea hunting down a betweenner might make for an interesting story, especially if the Garou are not native. Remember that Cairo is a power keg waiting for a spark? A battle between werewolves and weresharks might well provoke a strong reaction from the city's other supernatural inhabitants.

The Umbra

As mentioned, the spirit lands of Egypt are unpredictable and strange. Foreign Garou are often caught unawares by the Umbral deserts, and even natives know enough about the spirit realms to expect the unexpected.

The Collapse

Following the Week of the Midnight Sun (see Chapter One), the mages of Egypt panicked. Whatever the truth of Sakhmet's goals, the bloody swath that she cut through ancient Egypt frightened the willworkers and some of them set about trying to make sure such a slaughter was never repeated. Recognizing that the lion-goddess had received much of her power from the sun, and that she was as much spirit as flesh, the mages began trying to bind the spiritual aspects of the moon and sun to the spirit world. In a time before the Gauntlet was strong, they were trying, for all intents and purposes, to raise it.

It didn't work, not the way they'd planned. The Umbral sky loosed fire upon them whenever they entered the Shadow and tried to work their spells. Watchful Garou and Bastet also opposed their attempts, and for years one spell after another went half-completed in the spirit realms. Slowly but surely, the spirit world began to change.

Whereas before the sun only lit the Umbra with soft, ambient light — rarely actually rising, and certainly not in time with the Realm's cycle — now it began to follow the same pattern as the physical world. The mages' attempts to codify the Umbra were succeeding, in a strange sort of way. The cycle of day and night, unknown in the Umbra, was slowly beginning. Naturally, the Garou found this unacceptable.

The Silent Striders, together with the precursors to the Ivory Priesthood and the fierce Red Talons stormed the chantries of the most troublesome mages. As their homes were invaded and splattered with blood, the sorcerers desperately tried to finish their magics and send these beasts back into the spirit world whence they came (or so the mages had decided). The spells, again, were only half-finished, but still potent. The Umbra surrounding the Nile collapsed on itself.

The tragedy spread like a tidal wave out into the desert, the Umbral sky falling and the land sinking. The collapse lasted for moments only, and then, suddenly, all was right again. The moon shone in the Umbral sky, the sun appeared only during significant celestial events (though his light shone a bit more brightly than before during the Umbral day) and the surviving mages made no further attempts to "fix" the Umbra.

But the damage was far from over. The aftereffects of the collapse were far-reaching indeed, and continue to this day.

The Spirit Desert

A Garou (or indeed any shapeshifter) stepping sideways in Egypt might witness a number of odd occurrences. Below are some of the more common ways that the Umbral desert plays tricks on visitors.

Shifting Sands

The sands are not constant. The dunes roil and move like ocean waves, rising and falling to some nameless rhythm. This makes navigating the dunes nearly impossible without some means of staying on course, such as the Rite of the Questing Stone or the Gift: Umbral Tether. Add 2 to all difficulties relating to staying on course or finding one's way in the Umbral desert.

Also, the sand's sudden movement can be dangerous. If the Garou is standing on a dune that, for whatever reason, sinks, shifts, or rolls, have the player roll Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 6). If the roll fails, the charac-

ter goes sprawling. If the player botches the roll, the character is *under* the dune and begins to suffocate.

Eclipse

While the sun no longer rises in the Umbra, the moon sometimes hides herself. Occasionally, the spirit-moon disappears completely, leaving the Umbra pitch black. Characters without a light source are unable to see and must navigate with other senses or step back into the physical world. Even with a light source, staying in the Umbra during such an eclipse is dangerous; Soul-Drinker Banes and other unpleasant spirits can see light miles away and usually assume it means food.

Note that while Garou who have seen this phenomenon refer to it as an "eclipse," there is no evidence that another body blocks the moon. She seems to simply disappear from the sky, without so much as a glimmer of light. Thus far, these "blackouts" seem to have no pattern to their appearance.

Dark Paths

Egypt is a land widely associated with dead and the afterlife. The lands of the dead — often called the "Duat" in Egypt and the "Shadowlands" elsewhere — are closer to the Umbra than the Garou reach here than in other countries. Sometimes, like Khepri Leaps-the-Dunes, a werewolf might find herself wandering the halls of the Duat after taking a wrong step in the Umbra.

Whatever the state of the Egyptian Shadowlands in years past, it is now a desolate and dangerous place. Storms whip through the Duat, carrying hideous, misshapen Banes with them, and these creatures attack with abilities unfamiliar to the Garou. The very storms themselves can injure Garou (in game terms, any character in Egypt's Dark Umbra receives 2 to 8 dice of damage each turn without proper shelter, which in the desert is rare indeed. This damage is considered lethal, and can be soaked normally). The underworld is a highly dangerous place, and few Garou would enter it willingly.

Willingly or no, however, Umbral travelers in the desert sometimes find the sands around them growing darker and roiling more noticeably. As they walk, the screams of the damned begin to echo across the desert. If the character is native or has any reason to know about the underworld (most Silent Striders do, for example) allow the player to roll Intelligence + Enigmas (difficulty 9). If the roll succeeds, the Garou realizes that she has stumbled down a path to the lands of the dead.

To return without incident, the Garou must exert her own spiritual might (the player spends a point of Gnosis) and attempt to re-enter the "normal" Umbra. The player rolls Gnosis as if stepping sideways. The difficulty is equal to the local Shroud (the Gauntlet separating the Duat from the living world; typically

lower in areas touched by death: cemeteries, haunts, morgues, etc., but never very high in the desert). If the player succeeds, the Garou re-enters the Umbra. If not, the Garou is trapped in the Duat until she can escape. Escape from the Duat might be as simple as waiting and trying again, or the Garou might find herself unable to leave until she finds a special gateway back, perhaps leading into a story similar to Khepri's experience (see the Legends of the Garou) in the lands of the dead. In any event, the Storyteller has full control over when a Garou might accidentally begin the walk to the Duat.

Spirits Made Flesh

Most spirits can Materialize, but are limited by their Gnosis score versus the local Gauntlet. This doesn't seem to be the case in Egypt. Here, Jann scurry down city streets during the day, while at night, Soul-Drinkers comfortably wriggle into the material world as a snake sheds its skin. Some Theurges consider this anomaly to be one more effect of the Collapse, while others feel that the ancient land simply breeds spirits who are mighty enough to overcome the Gauntlet more easily.

Whatever the metaphysical truth behind it, the Storyteller should assume that any spirit can Materialize regardless of the difference between its Gnosis and the Gauntlet. Most spirits will only Materialize when it suits them, of course, and some spirits are limited in other ways (Soul-Drinkers only Materialize at night, for example).

Systems

This section contains full descriptions and game mechanics for several rites which are uncommon or unknown outside of Egypt, as well as how Set's Curse affects the Silent Striders.

Rites

Three rites are described here: the Rite of Dormant Wisdom, which the Eaters of the Dead use to absorb knowledge from their victims; the Rite of Mocking the Serpent, which they use to absorb Gnosis instead of wisdom; and the Rite of Sacred Gift, a rite developed by the Children of Gaia to aid their Silent Strider brethren.

The Rite of Dormant Wisdom

Level Four Mystic Rite

Only the Eaters of the Dead ever learn this rite, and only they would ever practice it. This loathsome ritual allows the user to steal knowledge from the dead (or still-living) brain of an individual. The target can be long dead, so long as the brain isn't fully decomposed. The ritemaster and his aides, if any, perform a brief ceremony around the corpse, and then the ritemaster tears open the skull and devours the brain. The wisdom thus gained is conferred upon the de-

vourer only, but the aides are on hand to inscribe any ravings he might start spouting as memories from the deceased take hold (which happens often).

Garou perform this rite at great risk to their souls. If a character practices the Rite of Dormant Wisdom (i.e., acts as ritemaster) more times than his permanent Gnosis score, he becomes a servant of Foebok, the Urge Wyrms of Fear. To all outside appearances, he does not change, but he will begin acting in the Wyrms' interest (and the Gift: Sense Wyrms will reveal as much).

System: The ritemaster must roll Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 9). The number of successes indicates how completely the memories are transferred (one success might grant one useful bit of information or the corpse's most recent memories, while five grants the victim's life in vivid detail). Botching this roll destroys the ritemaster's mind, sending him into a Wyrms-frenzy from which he never recovers (this is another reason that the rite is never performed alone). No supernatural powers can be learned by this rite (the character cannot absorb the victim's Gifts, if he knew any) though rites can be.

This rite works on humans (including mages and other "supernatural" humans) and vampires,

although the vampire must be immobilized before the rite is performed. If the ritemaster spends a point of permanent Gnosis, the rite can be used on a Garou or other shapeshifter.

The Rite of Mocking the Serpent

Level Three Mystic Rite

Though slightly easier to use than the Rite of Dormant Wisdom, this rite is still only taught to Eaters of the Dead, and typically only those who plan on traveling to Egypt. The rite allows the practitioner to absorb Gnosis from his victim's brain instead of knowledge.

This rite functions on any being with Gnosis (any shapeshifter, some Kinfolk, even some fomori), any being with an understanding of magic or the supernatural (mages, most vampires) or any sentient being of especially strong will (anyone with a Willpower score above 7). Eaters of the Dead prefer to use this rite on tainted individuals such as Black Spiral Dancers and, of course, vampires. When running low on Gnosis in Egypt, however, more than one Brain Eater has chosen to inflict the Delirium on a small group of people and capture the one who seems to keep his head the best. While the cult is loath to use the rite on Garou, it does sometimes happen.



System: This rite is similar to the Rite of Dormant Wisdom in execution. The ritemaster kills or immobilizes his prey and consumes the brain. A Wits + Rituals roll (difficulty 8) is required. The number of successes equals the amount of Gnosis the Garou can absorb, up to the victim's current Gnosis (if applicable) or Willpower (if the victim has no Gnosis). While Mocking the Serpent is "safer" to use than its parent rite, it still carries risks. A Garou who uses this rite to regain Gnosis a number of times equal to his own permanent Gnosis consecutively without regaining Gnosis in another way loses the ability to do so. Thereafter, the Garou can only regain Gnosis by means of this rite.

The Rite of the Sacred Gift

Level Three Mystic Rite

This rite, known only to the Children of Gaia (and Jesal Voice-of-the-Sands) was developed centuries ago in an attempt to combat Set's Curse. It simply allows one werewolf to shunt his Gnosis into another. In theory, this rite could be used to transfer Gnosis to or from Fera as well, but this has never been attempted (at least not to the knowledge of anyone living).

The rite is simple enough to perform: the ritemaster drinks from a cup, lifts it up and utters a blessing, and then, while still holding it, tilts it so that the recipient can drink. If the cup leaves the ritemaster's hands at any time during the rite, the ritual is disrupted and the Gnosis lost.

System: Whoever controls the ritemaster must roll Wits + Rituals (difficulty 7) and spend the Gnosis that she wishes to grant the recipient. A botch indicates that the ritemaster has dropped the cup of water and that any Gnosis she spends is lost (and may well attract local Soul-Drinkers). As long as the roll succeeds, the recipient absorbs the Gnosis and adds it to her pool (to a maximum of her permanent score, of course).

Set's Curse

"By the names I have spoken, O Lupines, I curse you. I place my mark upon you, that you shall be forever severed from thy dead fathers and mothers. I damn you with my touch, that never again shall you rest in the lands of thy people. May the names of your ancestors be forgotten, and may their ghosts fade from hunger in the Duat. As I was cast out, so then shall you be exiled, voiceless and lost forevermore."

— Set's Curse on the Silent Striders

This mighty curse has prevented the Silent Striders from reclaiming their homeland for millennia. The tribe has tried for centuries to break the curse, and attitudes within the tribe range from rage to hope to bitter acceptance. The curse prevents them from resting in their homeland — this seemingly simple curse manifests in a number of unpleasant ways. The Silent Striders

experience horrible nightmares while sleeping in Khem; the only place this is lifted is at the caern of Solace, and even then their dreams aren't pleasant. Striders often awaken fearful and drained from sleep, and even resting without sleeping usually leaves them edgy.

In game terms, the curse primarily affects the Striders' ability to regain Gnosis. No Silent Strider may regain Gnosis by meditation or the Sacred Hunt while in Egypt. Likewise, even if a Strider finds a spirit sympathetic enough to bestow him with Gnosis, the mystical energy slips away during the transition (spirits seem to understand this and typically refuse to grant any Garou Gnosis in Egypt). The only two methods for a Silent Strider to regain Gnosis while in Egypt are the Rites of Mocking the Serpent and the Sacred Gift, described above.

Also, the curse prevents the Striders' ancestors from aiding them. Exactly what happens to the ancestor-spirits of the tribe that they cannot return to aid their descendants is unknown, but contemplating it brings a cold shudder to the Striders. In recent years, rumors have surfaced of young Striders who have been contacted by their ancestors, but older Striders regard this as fancy or possible trickery by the Wym.

The nightmares mentioned above have no specific game effect, but usually make it impossible to regain Willpower by sleeping.

The Soul-Drinkers are not specifically mentioned in the curse (or not in the translation with which most Striders are familiar) but their ability to sniff out members of the tribe marks them as a probable "by-product" of Set's Curse.

Lifting the Curse

Of course, fighting against Set's curse and finding a way to lift it from the tribe is one of the loftiest goals for any character, Silent Strider or not. In any chronicle taking place in Egypt, particularly one involving one or more Strider characters, it's very likely that one or more characters will take it upon themselves to try finding a way to break the curse.

Suffice to say, this should not be an easy thing to do.

Set's curse involved the names of basically every living elder of the tribe at the time, a ritual of exceeding potency, and the power of an undead being so mighty that he was for all intents and purposes a god. The curse has effectively lasted for millennia, and only a few Striders have ever managed to slip out from under its power in all that time — and even they remained subject to the curse's greater effect. The young Strider Bennu has actually been able to channel her ancestor-spirits as other Garou do, but even she became subject to nightmares when first setting foot on Egyptian soil. (She was quickly withdrawn by her elders back to

"safer ground"; they were unwilling to risk bringing her into Setite territory if she seemed at all vulnerable.)

What would it take to break this curse? It might require the destruction of Set himself, which would be all but impossible to exact, even if he could be found — vampires grow stronger with age, and Set has been in existence for a long time. It might require locating each of the ancestor-spirits named in the curse and purifying them one by one — a quest that would certainly require extended journeys into the inhospitable realm of the dead to find each of the scattered spirits. Some Striders even believe that a pack who makes the ritual journey through all twelve houses of the Duat in sequence might prove themselves worthy of the power to break the curse — but, of course, nobody has ever survived making the journey even halfway. Storytellers are encouraged to make the quest to lift Set's curse so difficult that it looks impossible on paper — only the bravest, wisest and most skilled should have even a chance of success.

And if they succeed? Obviously, such a pack would be immortalized in the Silver Record and praised by entire tribes of Garou, to begin with. The ramifications for the Silent Striders, however, are more complicated. Even if the Striders are once again able to settle in Egypt, they probably don't have the numbers to reclaim their old territory from the other forces at work here. To properly resettle their land would require the resources of the entire tribe — many of whom likely wouldn't care to drop their present concerns and move to a land where they aren't comfortable living. And, of course, the last time a tribe decided to make a concerted effort to reclaim their homeland, they wound up starting a fiery controversy and reducing the Garou Nation from thirteen tribes to twelve.

For all these reasons, it's highly recommended that breaking Set's curse not be entered into lightly. Such a feat shouldn't count as a story — it deserves to be the focus of an entire chronicle. The characters should suffer, push their abilities to the maximum, and incur severe losses on such a quest — if it's any easier, the players probably won't appreciate the sheer magnitude of the feat should they succeed.

Storytelling in Ancient Egypt

Obviously, the appeal of running a game in Ancient Egypt itself, before the Silent Striders' exile, is incredibly powerful. Regrettably, there simply isn't space in this book to provide a proper background for such a chronicle. The Egyptian culture lasted for thousands of years, involved a multitude of gods and

survived multiple wars — only a few of the reasons that there isn't room here to do it justice.

Thankfully, Ancient Egypt has been such a romantic subject throughout the years that there's plenty of reference material available. A quick web-search should turn up a multitude of titles dealing with the subject, from scholarly encyclopedias of information to massively illustrated books on everyday life aimed at the casual reader. These titles can tell you far more about portraying Egypt in days gone past than we can. However, there are a few things specific to the Egypt of the World of Darkness that you might do well to consider.

- **Belief in the supernatural:** Nearly everyone, from pharaoh to peasant, believes that supernatural forces exist and exert influence in the lives of mortals. A character who openly displays a Gift might be identified as a servant of some god or other, which can be good, bad, or highly inconvenient.

- **No Veil:** The Veil is not yet in place, or at least not to the same degree. Depending on where the chronicle takes place along the timeline, the story might take place during the Impergium, which would give the players a chance to explore how their characters would react to being given the task of culling the human herds. Likewise, remember that the Mokolé also enforced the Impergium in some places.

- **Divine Right:** The pharaoh rules because he is the sun god incarnate. *Everyone* knows that. Voicing differing opinions will bring down derision and possibly even reprisals on the characters in short order.

- **Magi:** Many magical traditions began in Egypt, including a faith-based tradition that flourished during the rule of Akhenaten and the precursors of hermetic and alchemical traditions. Obviously, several true magi might be among the practitioners of these arts. Such magi had a tendency to believe themselves the true shepherds of human society, and would likely look poorly on inhuman beast-creatures daring to pass judgement on humanity.

- **Tribal Mixes:** There are reasons for Garou other than Silent Striders to be present in an Ancient Egypt chronicle. The Egyptians were prominent traders, and came into contact with other cultures from around the Mediterranean. Black Furies, Bone Gnawers, Children of Gaia, Silver Fangs and Warders would all be potential characters for a historical chronicle.

- **Fera:** The War of Rage did not bloody Egypt's soil to the same degree that it did the rest of the world's. The Bubasti, the Mokolé, and perhaps even the Ratkin might work with a Garou pack for short missions, to say nothing of the possibility of sub-Saharan Fera. Mixed packs were never the norm, not even in ancient times, but the Breeds were still on speaking terms.

- **Ancestor-spirits:** Obviously, the Ancestors Background provides ample opportunity to play out a chronicle over generations of time, as the players take on the role of their original characters' descendants and continue to benefit from the originals' wisdom. Of course, Silent Striders in such a chronicle will be at a disadvantage should the storyline reach or pass the time of Set's curse.

Story Seeds

- **Court Intrigues:** Ramesses the Great sired over 100 children. The politicking that must have gone on between the sons vying for the throne is staggering to consider. Now, what if one (or more) of the sons were Silver Fang Kinfolk, while one or two more were ghouls under the command of Set's brood? Killing a prince of Egypt is not an easy proposition for anyone, and besides, once one side has thrown down the gauntlet by spilling blood, the other side becomes more willing to do so. What might the Garou do to see their families on the throne — for the good of Egypt, of course?

- **After the Fall:** The times directly after Set's victory and the laying of his curse would make for interesting roleplaying. The characters could discover (if they are Silent Striders) exactly what the curse has done to the tribe — Ancestors' voices fade away, the Sacred Hunt brings no nourishment, etc. They could decide to scout ahead for a place for the tribe to go, and play the role of Moses, leading their people out of Egypt. Or they could decide to stay in their homeland and die fighting for it.

- **War!:** Egypt has seen its share of invaders and war. The Hyksos, the Greeks, the Hittites and others all warred with the Egyptians (again, the timeline gives a good idea of when these events occurred). A caern of Garou might well fall in the path of battle — as might a wallow of Mokolé or a Bastet's den-realm. The Garou might be recruited to help preserve a holy place from human folly, or they might be asked to find help from the other Breeds or another tribe.





Chapter Five: Children of Apep (Antagonists)

Pentex (Endron Oil)

Pentex has always had a problem expanding their operations in Africa, due primarily to its watchful Fera population. Egypt, on the other hand, has long been fair game and Pentex's premiere subsidiary, Endron Oil, has maintained a Cairo branch for decades, with subsidiary offices in Tanta, Aswan and Port Said. Egypt is a focal point in the world energy market and has staked much of its future on oil; Endron has been more than happy to help the government exploit its rich reserves. Existing somewhere between the status of a plum-assignment and a death sentence, an upper-management position with Endron-Egypt is rich in rewards and the potential for advancement, at least for those who can survive it. While in the past a Siberia-style assignment for executives marked for early retirement, since Pentex's reorganization in the 1990s the conglomerate has put a new emphasis on its emerging African markets. Endron has given its Egyptian office over to its best and brightest, with unprecedented resources at their disposal. This hasn't saved the last two CEOs from ending up as cat-chow or wolf-kibble, but the corporation has made slow and steady progress and now stands at the brink of a major breakthrough — if it can survive.

Rather than an inexorable process toward preeminence, Endron-Egypt's history has been a dangerous slog, a war of attrition against the native Garou and other Fera with casualties on both sides. Initially the corporation played it safe, buying subsidiary franchise rights under the aegis of the EGPC (Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation) and maintaining a pristine environmental record. During this time it tied itself so

successfully to the ruling NDP through bribes and blackmail that the government would now be hard-pressed to eject the conglomerate. By the time Endron's enemies knew what was happening, the company already had a firm financial and political foothold with an extensive drilling infrastructure in place. Playing hardball, the company then proceeded to sideline much of its competition through blackmail, murder or sabotage, ironically forcing out at least one major competitor by staging an environmental disaster and leaving its oil fields open to attacks by "Islamic Eco-terrorists."

Endron came out in the open in the late-1970s, by which time it had several major oil and natural gas fields, and off-shore drilling platforms spread throughout the region. By the early 1990s its Apophis Pipeline and other showcase projects were well underway. In one sense the company may well have become a victim of its own success. By expanding its operations it has drawn many Garou to Egypt. Besides the assassination of several key-personnel, the corporation recently had to face a major public-relations disaster when one of its tankers mysteriously sunk in the Suez Canal, bringing shipping through that vital artery to a near dead standstill for almost two months. (The Egyptian political opposition is still furious and isn't buying spurious tale of a terrorist's bomb, while other companies are pursuing legal action.) That, paired with the loss of a major hydrosolar project in the Qattara Depression, has cut the company's profits to a razor-thin margin. Now that the Apophis Pipeline has gone on-line, however, the company stands to reap major rewards for its shareholders.

natural gas fields include the Champollion-5 and Champollion-6 fields in the Nile Delta near Rosetta. The company has parlayed these into major petrochemical ventures including a polypropylene plant in Alexandria and a joint venture with Rainbow Plastics in Helwan. Its greatest future growth, however, may well be from areas offshore from the Nile Delta. Initial seismic survey work and exploratory drilling off the delta have indicated significant reserves.

The current CEO of Endron-Egypt is Frederick Mercer. A protégé of Kiro Yamakazi, he was promoted (or kicked downstairs) from Endron's Far Eastern operation as the result of a clash within the board of directors. Highly experienced with bizarre non-Western Fera, he has so far increased Endron-Egypt's profits while strengthening its security protocols, and working to repair relations with the nation's two Black Spiral packs and elements within its vampire population. Along with their resistance to the Delirium, the bulk of Endron's security forces have been issued with silver and toxic rounds; there are currently two First Teams operating in Egypt. Mercer has also taken advantage of his contacts with Yamakazi to bring several Project Odyssey telepaths into his service. These have been very useful from both an intelligence and an assassination standpoint, and have made Mercer, at least for the time being, virtually unassailable within the corporate hierarchy.

Secondary Operations

Following the old adage about how once a camel's nose is in the tent, the rest will follow, several other subsidiaries have followed Endron to make modest inroads in Egypt. Magadon has long had an interest in Africa, focusing primarily on the rainforest "Hot Zone" southwest of Sudan (spawning ground of such amusing little viruses as Ebola Zaire). While not a primary production center, Cairo is a useful base camp for the company. Under the name Hearst Pharmaceuticals (named for the Hearst Papyrus, an ancient medical text), the subsidiary includes both an office complex and a testing facility. During the outbreak of Jackal Fever, its kindly white-suited doctors were an odd-looking fixture in the Cairo slums, handing out medicine and taking samples. Magadon didn't initiate the outbreak, but they were there to capitalize on its findings. The current operations manager for Magadon is an Englishman named Richard Marklen, who, unbeknownst even to his superiors, is a Wyrn tainted bio-mage of considerable ability.

Rainbow Incorporated has ridden Endron's coattails in the emergence of Egypt's growing petrochemicals industry and holds the dubious distinction of being the most toxic industry in the already polluted Helwan suburbs. Under the less-than-competent management of its cocaine-addicted regional manager, Anwar Khaled, the inefficient factory has consistently posted a fiscal deficit. It has been cited three times by the country's ineffectual environmental agencies, but shows no sign of closing its doors. Harold and Harold has controlling interest in Kauket Mining, and has a series of mines riddling parts of the Red Sea Coast with a central office in Port Safaga. Besides dumping toxic mining waste into the nearby sea, Kauket has introduced the concept of the company town to the

The Apophis Pipeline

Over the past 15 years the company's major goal has been the construction of the Aswan-61 Pipeline with its attendant mining and refining facilities. Drawing its nickname ("Apophis") from the ancient snake demon that attacked Re on his nightly expedition into Duat, Aswan-61 is over 300km longer and almost twice as wide as the aging Sumed pipeline. The bottom line is supposedly profits, but as with everything Endron does, there is a deeper motive. So, even as Endron touted the incalculable benefits of the pipeline to the nation's economy, their true intention quickly became clear to the nation's shapeshifters. As oil began to flow in the physical world, a black poison began to seep from the pipeline and into the surrounding Penumbra. Now, while seemingly observing rigorous environmental standards in the physical world, this constant leak is slowly poisoning the Nile's spirit aspect in several realms.

During construction various assassination and terrorist incidents slowed development, but now that the oil is flowing it will be twice as hard to behead the serpent. It would be impractical for the company to guard every mile of the pipeline, though an electrical fence keeps most curiosity seekers at a distance. Additionally, a nasty breed of Oil-Bane (see Appendix II) travels along the pipeline in search of prey and can give interfering shapechangers more than they bargained for. More to the point, however, blowing up the pipeline will just release a devastating amount of oil into the environment and, unless the pipeline is completely destroyed, individual breaks can be quickly and easily repaired (though not too quickly). The company may take its fair share of the blame for such an incident, but will just as likely garner goodwill as a victim of terrorism. Beside, its pockets are deep enough to absorb the damage, and a major oil-spill may be what they have planned all along....

region. As the primary engine driving the economy in several small towns, its socially experimental Texan CEO, Frank Walton, has worked to shock-inject Western-style luxuries/vices such as alcohol and television into the rural Muslim townships. Finally, no tourist's visit to the land of the pharaohs would be complete without a burger and fries. O'Tolley's and other American style franchise restaurants have spread throughout most Egyptian cities like weeds.

Shabti (pl. Ushabti)

When it came to death and the afterlife, the Egyptians were definitely of the mind that you *could* take it with you. For the pharaohs, one important element in this process was the placement of ushabti, small figurines placed over the dead pharaoh as servitors and protectors in the afterlife. As works of art, they range from the exquisite to the pedestrian, and are often shaped like crocodiles, cats, warrior humans and the



like. Although the majority of ushabti were little more than just a nice figurine and some wishful thinking, some of the pharaohs had real sorcerers at their bidding, men and women with power over the forces of life, death, spirit and time. The pharaohs wanted more than simple beast-spirits to guard over them. Usually the chosen guardians were slaves, picked for their loyalty, beauty, fighting acumen or some other skill the pharaoh felt he could not do without in the afterlife.

The process of creating such a guardian spirit from the individual so "honored" was both gruesome and agonizing, involving the forcible distillation of the person's soul into the figurine. Once accomplished, however, the Shabti took on a semi-corporeal spirit existence independent of the figurine. Created with one purpose in mind, and left to flounder between life and death for millennia, some of the Shabti simply faded with time. Others followed their masters into the Shadowlands or oblivion never to return, and still others were destroyed. But with a human intellect and millennia to think, to scheme and to rebel, some forged their own destinies.

While there are tales of comparatively benign Ushabti, spirits who used immortality to transcend their unfortunate beginnings, others are wicked or insane with powers equaling those of the most powerful Jagglings or elder vampires. Highly individualized creatures, they have no collective opinion on the other supernatural creatures within Egypt; individual Shabti have wholly different opinions on Garou, Bastet, gûls and the Shemsu-heru, based solely on their personal experiences and inclinations. There are several Ushabti active within Egypt's borders. The Sinai based Fara'un Shark (literally the Eastern Pharaoh) is detailed below. Other potent Ushabti include Inyotef the Prophet, Tetisheru Eye-of-Cat, Kekhen the Scorpion and Mereneith the Mad. Despite their individual power, the Ushabti are a dying species and have been designed as NPCs for an ongoing Werewolf campaign, not for use as player characters.

Powers and Limitations: Shabti use spirit Charms and seem equally adept with those of the Weaver or the Wyld; Ushabti who align themselves with the Wyrms also have access to Bane Charms. Ushabti are intelligent, subtle and versatile entities, and are particularly dangerous to the Garou because they can travel so freely between the Umbra and the physical world (all Ushabti have the Charms: Appear and Materialize). Further, because they were first built to serve the deceased pharaohs, Ushabti can see and communicate with the restless dead. Finally, because of their mystical construction and the thousands of years they have had to perfect themselves, Ushabti are able to exceed the five dot level in both Attributes and Abilities, much in the manner of older vampires.

The Ushabti have their weaknesses, of course. Because they were often created for one sole purpose, they tend to be somewhat one-dimensional in their methods and goals, breaking out of ancient patterns only with great difficulty. They are few in number and rarely trust each other enough to work in concert. A Shabti's continued existence is wrapped up in its shabti figurine and he must guard it closely lest it be destroyed

or held hostage. The Ushabti are also not a factor outside of Egypt because the Four Towers form a barrier that prevents them from leaving the country for long. (Ushabti lose 4 Essence points each day they remain beyond Egypt's borders, and regain it at only one point per day once they have returned.) Faced with a problem quite the opposite of that experienced by the Silent Striders, the Ushabti have set about building a national power base and look forward to the day when they can walk abroad in the world at large.

Fara'un Shark (Queen of the East)

It was just a single glance, a chance encounter really. The aged pharaoh being carried toward his deathbed saw the slave girl, so fragile, small and full of life. "Bring her hence, that I may know life just once more, before the darkness falls," coughed the aging king. The trembling child was brought forward and so pleased was the pharaoh by her beauty that it was decided that she would never leave his side, but instead spend eternity serving him in his royal death chamber. And so, as the king breathed his last and was prepared for his burial, the king's sorcerer saw to it that the serving girl underwent preparations of her own.

Her youthful body ceremoniously cleansed in a bath of milk, the slave girl was then bound in bandages of linen, and lowered into her cold black sarcophagus. Suspended between life and death and hunger for a seeming eternity, the girl's spirit eventually emerged from its icy coffin and into the larger prison of the lightless burial chamber. There was no sign of the pharaoh's spirit, though in time the ravenous slave girl found his body and devoured it. Over the coming eternity she learned every inch of the burial chamber by touch, including the great serpent mirror. Her only companion in the eternal darkness of the chamber, the mirror exuded a faint blue mist that provided her only meager light source. Over time the Bane in the mirror ate away at the Shabti's flesh, and in return it whispered tales of the passing centuries in the surrounding lands and fed her hunger for vengeance against the world that had forgotten her. When the tomb robbers broke into the chamber 1,800 years later, they did not have a chance....

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 0/5

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 6, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 6, Empathy 5, Expression 4, Intimidation 6, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Etiquette 5, Melee 5, Leadership 5, Performance 4, Stealth 4, Survival 5

Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Investigation 5, Linguistics 5, Medicine 6, Occult 6, Politics 4

Backgrounds: Allies 5 (Banes), Contacts 5, Fetish 5, Resources 5

Charms: Access Caern, Agony, Airt Sense, Armor, Break Reality, Call for Aid (Banes), Corruption, Disorient, Dream Journey, Hide, Insight, Materialize, Open Sky Bridge, *Rav-
ening Mist, Reform, Shapeshift, Umbrastorm

*Rav-
ening Mist — A sentient Bane-spirit trapped in the serpent mirror has partially possessed the Ushabti. Driving her to eternal hunger, the Bane mist devoured her flesh and now seeks out other victims. At Fara'un Shark's command, the mist leaves its permanent home in her chest cavity, flying out of her mouth and eyes to envelop its victim. Within this chilling mist, sharp talons rip at their target, attempting to flay the skin from his bones. The victim of this hideous assault must make a contested Gnosis roll against Fara'un Shark. For each success the Shabti scores over the victim's Gnosis, the victim takes one point of non-soakable aggravated damage. This devastating assault costs 4 Essence a turn and can only be used against one target at a time. The mist also allows her to cast the Charm: Shapeshift, provided she has some fresh human flesh to serve as raw materials. This version of Shapeshift only allows the Shabti to regain her former shape and lasts one week per success (Gnosis roll, difficulty 6).

Rage 9, Gnosis 10, Willpower 8, Essence 32

Image: Fara'un Shark still has the beautiful face that first won the pharaoh's admiration. Below the neck, however, her body is wholly skeletal, denuded of flesh or sinew, and lit by a ghostly blue mist punctuated with white sparks. The Eastern Pharaoh usually hides this beneath an ornate robe or sews new, albeit temporary, flesh taken from the bones of her victims.

Roleplaying Notes: The world outside changed during the 1,800 years of your imprisonment, but not nearly so much as it has in the past century. When you first emerged from your tomb you sought to place Egypt under your thumb, but even with your newfound power there were far too many powerful enemies. In defeat, you followed the old slave's exodus route to the so-called Holy Land and here you have carved yourself a spirit kingdom of sorts in the high Sinai Mountain passes, a realm as stark and unforgiving as you are. Even here, however, modernity now encroaches on your silent contemplation, but the Wyrms who spoke to you from the old mirror has finally given you the wisdom you have sought; you now know your purpose in the scheme of things. The aerial realm known as the Cavern of Sokar has long avoided scrutiny, but now the Wyrms' minions are on the move. They lack only one thing — a leader.

You seek two things — the first is a permanent replacement for your skeletal body, thus ending your hunger. Whether that body is of flesh or something else is of no matter to you. Your second goal is to finally take firm hold of your own destiny. To the first end, you serve the Wyrms, who has promised that once you do its bidding in this matter, it will restore that which it has taken from you. As for your second goal? It is best not to think on it too much, but not even the Wyrms know everything about you. The Children of Karnak, spirits once held sacred by the self-same pharaoh who imprisoned you, have guarded the realm for thousands of years, but their time is near an end. Their leader, Sokari, has cast off the weakness of flesh in her metal body, a matter of more than academic interest to you. You have found purpose again and have a small army of Banes at your command; woe betide those who stand in your way.

Storyteller: Fara'un Shark's Sinai mountain retreat is a Level: 3 Caern of Visions (the only known Caern in the Sinai) and may be quite useful to the Garou if they are able to convince the Shabti to vacate it.

The Black Spiral Dancers *The Hive of the Thrashing Serpent*

Hgienkad, the only remaining member of the pack that captured the Hive so many years ago, rules it completely. While he is not loud or overtly vicious, he has still entertained only two challenges to his leadership over the years. Both challengers are still alive, and serve as Guardians to the Hive (Hgienkad will not let them serve in any other position). Neither will speak of what happened during the challenges, but the haunted, horrified look they wear is a good deterrent against further challenges to Hgienkad's rule.

The Umbra

Since Hgienkad is, as mentioned, the only surviving member of the pack that "liberated" the Hive from the humans, he is only one who knows how to access the pocket realm. The mages apparently had some skill in the Umbra, because they fashioned a strange Umbral domain only reachable (to Garou, at least) by stepping sideways while standing on the altar while reciting a certain chant. The realm itself seems to be superimposed on the pyramid, and is the shape of a true pyramid. When Hgienkad found it originally, it was stocked with books and magical trappings, most of which the Dancers destroyed. Over time, they remade it more in keeping with their own mystical philosophies (and Banes of varying strength now spawn there as a result), and it is here that Hgienkad insists all challenges take place. As a result, the Dancers of the Thrashing Serpent Hive are slightly more careful than most of their brethren about challenging each other, for the realm scares the hell out of them.

Hgienkad, over the years, has discovered that the realm contains gateways to several highly unsavory places. For one thing, a moon bridge opened from the pocket realm can connect to any Hive on Earth (as far as Hgienkad knows, at least æ he's sent emissaries to Hives halfway around the world without hindrance). However, the Wyrms demands its due æ any traveler using the bridge to or from the realm must sacrifice a point of Gnosis as a toll. The sacrifice is voluntary, but the only Dancer who ever refused (the Ahroun of Hgienkad's old pack) was sucked off the moon bridge by a sudden whirlwind and hasn't been seen since.

The realm also connects to a blasted wasteland that Hgienkad originally (and incorrectly) assumed to be the Near Umbral Atrocity Realm. A visitor in the realm might eventually get his bearings by looking up æ and seeing the Earth far below him. An especially lucky visitor might also get a visit from Apep.

Hgienkad, after long years of observation, has come to following conclusions. First, the pocket realm was meant for travel and storage purposes, nothing more. Second, the

"Apep's Wasteland" realm, as the Theurge has come to call it, was designed to house the great serpent-spirit Apep and keep him captive; apparently the mages did not relish the idea of the beast loose in the Penumbra near their home. Third, if Apep were released, he might well destroy the Hive out of sheer rage. In light of these theories, Hgienkad decided long ago not to free Apep, even though he feels he could do so. Instead, he keeps the massive serpent bound by the promise that as soon as he finds the proper rites to undo the human's magics, he will free Apep. Apep, in return, provides the caern with energy in the form of Gnosis and acts as its patron spirit. Not exactly a totem of Cunning, sometimes a Dancer performing the Opened Caern rite will receive Strength or Rage instead of Gnosis. Hgienkad rarely allows his followers to perform the rite, however. He's afraid some idiot will muck it up and free Apep accidentally.

Apep

In Egyptian mythos, Apep was a monstrous serpent who sought to swallow the sun and was fought off by Re and (of all people) Set. According to legend, he did occasionally succeed and cause a solar eclipse, but these victories were always temporary. Eventually, Re destroyed him and cut his body up into pieces, scattering them to the sands.

In truth, Apep was much more than a mindless brute. He was a powerful spirit in service to the great Serpent Incarna. After Set placed his curse on the Silent Striders, Serpent lost much of her support among the Garou (though Mokolé and the Nagah still respect her). Many of her more violent servants, including Apep, were lured into the Wyrms' fold. Apep, given freedom to destroy what he would on Earth, coiled around a pyramid and forced it into the ground with such force that it inverted itself. Heady with power, Apep chose that site as a holy place of his own, and went about causing problems for the Changing Breeds all over Africa until finally retreating into the Far Umbra, hoping to find a way to swallow the sun permanently.

Many centuries later, a group of human mages discovered the site and tapped the power radiating from it. This had the effect of summoning Apep, and, in a panic, the mages forced him into what they referred to as a "horizon realm" and locked him in. They stayed in the pyramid,

The Totem Is Apophis?!

Astute readers will notice that the Greek rendering of Apep is Apophis, and that Apophis is occasionally used as a synonym for the Wyrms itself, or for a vastly greater power than the Apep presented here (such as in *World of Darkness: Midnight Circus*). The two beings, however, are not the same. Just as an owl-spirit that acts as a pack totem is not the Owl, the great spirit that acts as totem for the entire Silent Strider tribe, the Apep which lies trapped in a realm and serving as totem for the Hive of the Thrashing Servant is not the mighty bane-totem that bears the same name.

making it their chantry, in order to guard the monster they had unwittingly unleashed, and did so for several decades before Hgienkad and company showed up.

Apep is not the wisest of spirits and probably would, if he could escape, destroy the temple and anything in the area. He might or might not allow his liberators to escape.

Bastards of the Thrashing Serpent

Hgienkad, the Hive's leader, is detailed below. Some of the other important Dancers at the Hive include:

Shrieks-like-Tortured-Woman: This Ragabash serves as a kind of master of the Guardians; he performs many of the same duties that a Gaian Warder would. He received his name from the horrible screech he emits when leaping into battle.

Soo-Telk: The highest-ranking Theurge in the Hive (below Hgienkad, of course), Soo-Telk is a devoted worshipper of Sutekh. During his first wanderings on the Black Spiral, he received a vision that the serpent god would rise from the sands and lift the Hive to glory as the sun went black. Upon emerge, he tried to utter the god's name, but was too disoriented to say it correctly; his name is the result. Soo-Telk feels that Hgienkad is not paying proper tribute to Sutekh, but is far too intelligent to voice these concerns.

Libraaj: This "Dancer" is not truly a member of the Hive. He acts as messenger and go-between for the Hive of the Thrashing Serpent and other, lone Dancers... or so he says. The truth is that "Libraaj" is a Shadow Lord called Jibril Clean-Hands, a member of the Bringers of Light camp. He realizes what a dangerous game he plays, and has not, to date, entered the Hive. Hgienkad is aware that the messenger is hiding something, but has never bothered to investigate the matter. Jibril visits the Hive very rarely, but would like to get a good look at the interior, so as to bring strategic information to other Garou and possibly destroy the Hive.

Hgienkad

Position: Leader of the Hive of the Thrashing Serpent

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Theurge

Tribe: Black Spiral Dancers

Physical: Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/5)

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Crafts 3, Etiquette 2, Leadership 4, Melee 3, Stealth 4 (sneaking up), Survival 4 (desert)

Knowledges: Enigmas 4, Linguistics 3, Medicine 2, Occult 4, Rituals 5, Wyrms Lore 5

Backgrounds: Ancestors 3, Personal Totem (Apep) 5

Gifts: (1) Bane Protector, Master of Fire, Sense Wyrms, Shroud, Toxic Claws; (2) Blood Omen, Ears of the Bat, Jam Technology, Terrify; (3) Burning Scars, Dagger of the

Mind, Pulse of the Invisible (4) Call Elemental, Grasp the Beyond, (5) The Malleable Spirit

Rank: 5

Rage: 4; **Gnosis:** 8; **Willpower:** 9

Rites: Any and all rites that the Storyteller requires, most of which are blasphemous perversions of Gaian rites.

Fetishes: Shadow Mirror (Level 5, Gnosis 7): This small, circular mirror holds a shadow-spirit, and grants the wielder some disturbing powers. Upon successful activation, the user may enter shadows as though stepping sideways, emerging from any shadow not more than (user's activation successes x 10 in yards) away. The user re-emerges on the next turn, regardless of how many successes are achieved on the "shadow-stepping" roll. The user must emerge from a shadow in a location he has seen before, and if the user is familiar with the location, may use the fetish to appear in a strategic location (-2 difficulty to an attack following use of the fetish). Hgienkad, of course, knows the Hive like the back of his hand and commonly creates a Shroud around his enemies and then uses the fetish to appear, strike, and vanish before anyone knows what's happening.

Image: Hgienkad's age is unknown and indeterminate. He appears to be in his late 30s, most of the time, but sometimes, after a visit with Apep, he appears much younger. He is tall and lithe, with dark skin and hair, and maleficent fire behind his eyes. His voice is clear and gentle, and he never speaks above a conversational tone (even in Crinos form, he communicates with soft growls).

Roleplaying Notes: You have led this Hive for decades, and time has lost meaning to you. You aren't quite sure how it is that you're still young and healthy, but if the Wyrms still has work for you, so be it. Besides, you aren't finished with this place yet. When you've had your way, you'll be able to channel Apep through a shadow and then return him to his prison. Then all you have to do is open a shadow to that disgusting caern of Solace....

History: Hgienkad is over 80 years old, and remembers little or nothing of his life before becoming Garou. He believes that he was not born to his tribe, but if he is a fallen Gaian, neither his appearance nor his Gifts betray his former allegiance. He rules the Thrashing Serpent Hive quietly but unquestionably, and brooks no challenge to his authority. He absolutely forbids fights to the death among his followers, however, and the punishment for killing another Black Spiral Dancer is to be fed to Apep.

Notes: While Hgienkad has not belonged to a pack in years, he has taken Apep as his personal totem. Once per day, Hgienkad may call upon the great serpent and increase his Strength and Stamina to 5 (in Homid form) for one scene. Afterwards, he is ravenously hungry and must consume at least five pounds of flesh within an hour or enter a brutal frenzy and feed on the first living thing he sees.

Vampires

The Leeches present the longest standing, most dangerous threat in Egypt. Over the course of thousands of years,

they have been responsible for the deaths of Garou and Kinfolk, the destruction of caerns, and the expansion of the cities. While their command over human culture and mores is certainly formidable, and they often employ arcane magics against which the Garou have little defense, the most frustrating thing about them seems to be their ability to disappear without a trace, often to the point that not even the Gift: Sense of the Prey can track them reliably.

Some werewolves are aware that vampires divide themselves up into "familial" factions similar (in some ways) to tribes. Some few Garou even know that many Egyptian vampires follow Set, the god of darkness, as a totem of sorts. These "Followers of Set" have plagued Egypt since the time of the Pharaohs, and, if the legends are true, Set is actually the progenitor of the bloodline.

Whatever the truth of the matter, a Garou who wishes to fight vampires in Egypt had best do so in a pack and tread carefully. The cities are, as usual, the areas of worst infestation. However, Cairo in particular nettles the Garou.

Since Black Saturday (and the supernatural events that the riots hid), Cairo's vampires have been very aggressive in policing "their" city for Garou. Only the Bone Gnawers maintain any sort of presence there, and given the current state of the tribe, this is probably not cause for reassurance. While other Garou do visit the city, any who stay too long might find themselves being stalked and then "softened." The vampires have, apparently, learned that werewolves are not foes that die easily as but they do die. Therefore, a common tactic is to send assassin with automatic weapons, typically under the guise of terrorism, to assault the Garou. These assassins typically know nothing or next to nothing about their employers, so even if the Garou capture them, they have nothing to reveal. More often, however, the assailants attack and then flee, leaving the Garou wounded and bloody on the busy streets. This treatment is often worsened by bombings and other acts of war, until the Garou die, retreat, or prove so obstinate that the vampires are forced to resort to using silver. Silver ammunition is expensive and difficult to make, but the vampires know its lethal effect on werewolves.

Mages

Although few Garou know it, the recent past has been hard on the human mages. Those few werewolves who do have contacts within the so-called "Traditions" have heard stories of a war lost and a terrible storm in the Umbra. This only acts as proof that the mages are mad; although the Weaver's webs still make Umbral passage difficult, no Garou has seen a storm of such proportions anywhere in the world.

Egypt has its fair share of willworkers, and the Garou are by no means their friends. Ancient stories tell of sorcerers discovering pathways to the Duat and trying to widen them, or trying to open gateways to the Umbra and having the spirit realms crash back upon them. These disturbances make themselves known even millennia later, and the Garou, when faced with the strange, shifting landscapes of the spirit-desert or the sudden darkness that comes over the Umbral sky,

Advice

Hey, cub. You want to know about vampires, quick and dirty? I know; Buries-the-Dead probably gave you her "caste" speech, right? No, no — I'm not trying to disrespect her! She's right in all she says! It's just that sometimes she forgets to give some real, practical, advice. So, here's a few tips.

First, develop your senses of smell and hearing. You *cannot* rely on sight when fighting vampires. Two reasons for that; one is they tend to go invisible when you fight 'em directly, the cowardly shits. The other is that if you stare at them too much, they can hypnotize you. No shit, one gesture and you're ready to die for 'em. And believe me, if you turn on me during a fight with a vampire, I'll gut you then and there and sing your dirge later.

Second, you know the old stake through the heart thing? I've heard it works about half the time, *maybe*. Sometimes it paralyzes them, but just as often it just pisses them off. You want to stab them with something? Use a klaive with a sunbeam-spirit bound into it. That gets their attention right quick.

Third, try not to bite. This is something you might not be able to avoid, but there's two problems with sinking your teeth into undead flesh. First off, their blood's often poisonous. Second, if you bite them, lots of time they can bite you. Use claws or weapons, not teeth, if at all possible, and take advantage of our reach in Crinos form.

Finally — and here's a piece of advice I'm taking from Buries-the-Dead herself — don't talk. Not even in the Garou tongue. If you're with a pack, learn to play off each other's strengths and take the corpse down hard and fast. If you're alone, don't mutter to yourself or even howl. It doesn't matter if you don't think they can understand you. Everything you do or say is information to them, and all we want them to know is that we're mindless, bloodthirsty monsters. Plus, if you talk, they might talk back, and then you might find yourself making deals. Here's a history lesson: *Every single time* we've tried to deal with the Leeches, they've stabbed us in the back. Vancouver's Garou lost at least one caern because they trusted the vampires, and similar things have happened in other countries, too. Bottom line: Don't talk to the enemy. No "common foe" crap, either; I don't care if they're having Black Spiral problems in the sewers. That's their problem. We're here to kill vampires, and if the Dancers get in the way, fine, take them out too. But deals with the devil are always rigged.

Remember all that, and you might just live. If not... see you in Amenti.

— Samir the Jackal, The Galliard Who Speaks 'Til Sunrise

growl and curse the meddlers (see the Storytelling chapter for more information on the Egyptian Umbra).

The mages of today are indeed barred from entering the Umbra. They have other concerns, however, not all of which are totally alien to the Garou. The vampires pose a threat to the spell-casters, and sometimes the Garou will find themselves blessed by lucky coincidences, often in the form of aid arriving sooner than expected, pursuers becoming lost, or prey running down blind alleys. Some particularly learned Silent Striders or Children of Gaia will then offer up a howl in thanks to the "Subtle Ones" or "Ahl-i-Batin," to the confusion of their foreign packmates.

Certainly, however, not all mages look favorably upon Garou. The old caveat regarding the Awakened — that they seek to drain caerns dry of their power — is often repeated when dune buggies approach the Sept of the Howling Sands or the Healing Dawn caern. And while the Red Talon's response to human visitors is predictable, even Ahmed Night-Sands, the calm and understanding Warder of the Healing Dawn caern, agrees that the caern of Solace is too important to risk.

For the mages' part, however, they feel they have a right to investigate the wonders of Egypt. The courts of the pharaohs held just as many willworkers as Garou and Kinfolk, and, like the Silent Striders, several groups of mages trace their roots to the land of Khem. The Temple of Karnak holds mysteries that no werewolf could ever understand, and the Red Talons have, more than once, caught humans in the Temple who summoned lightning and fire when cornered.

While they won't speak of it openly, the Bone Gnawers have also had a historic ongoing conflict with humans who seem to be mages. Ritually scarred and shaved bald, and always carrying razor-sharp daggers, this cannibal cult stalked the dirty Egyptian streets visiting punishment on those who offended their deity. These mages proved dangerous even to werewolves. Often, a member of this crocodile-worshipping cult could change a pool of water into a bottomless prison or drive a victim mad with visions of darkness and teeth. Also, although the mages should stand out (all of them being bald, clean-shaven, and covered in scars), they seemed to be able to hide from Garou packs very effectively. The fact that most poor communities would not betray the mages suggests that they commanded some form of loyalty. However, for the last few years, the Gnawers have seen little to nothing of these enigmatic cultists. The running theory among those Gnawers who care (which is to say, not the Maneaters) is that when Jackal Fever ravaged the population, it took care of this cult as well.

Ratkin

"Fucking hell," growled StenchTooth. "Another one." The rat in his pocket squeaked nervously and scuttled down his trousers to look at the body. Then it's form rippled, and Slutty Sameera stood there in Homid form.

"Yick!" She kicked the body gently. "His brain's been scooped out!"

StenchTooth knelt and picked up on of the corpse's hands. "Blood under the nails." He licked the palm. "Sweaty. Not cold yet. Hmph."

"Who's doing this?" asked Sameera, reaching into the corpse's pocket. She squealed in delight as she found his wallet still intact.

"Dunno," muttered her companion. "But it ain't us. And the claw marks around his head make it look like he got dogpiled."

"Thought the doggies had rules," chirped Sameera.

StenchTooth stood, quickly. Something had moved behind him. "So did I," he said quietly.

The Ratkin are not friends to the Garou in any country. In Egypt, however, a combination of factors has fed the fire.

The Ahadi is, to the Ratkin, a joke. The Ratkin know what the Garou mean by "cooperation." That means, "I'm the big dog, so you do what the hell I say." The Children of Rat are having none of it. They have survived quite well in Egypt for a number of years now, and are not going to expose their throats to the Garou just because (especially because!) the cats thought it was a good idea. The werewolves are now arriving in Egypt in greater numbers, and the country's Ratkin (particularly in Cairo, for reasons discussed below) are feeling very paranoid that it might have something to do with them. After all, didn't a virulent disease just sweep through the slums of Egypt? That rather suggests Ratkin aggression, and although to date no Plague Lord has come forward to claim credit for Jackal Fever, that doesn't mean the Garou won't seek retribution (especially if the current state of the Bone Gnawers becomes public knowledge). The Ratkin, of course, are aware of the Gnawers' new eating habits, and have lost a number of Kinfolk to the Maneaters' hunger.

But the Maneaters are not the only source of fear for the Ratkin. The larger cities have seen increased violence towards supernatural beings of all stripes — Changing Breeds, vampires, mages — and the Ratkin have no idea why. All they know is that bodies turn up with the heads removed or cracked open, and the brains nowhere to be seen. While the concept of consuming a being's brain to gain his knowledge isn't entirely lost on the Ratkin, the only creatures strong and coordinated enough to carry on this kind of campaign for any length of time are the Garou — and this makes the Ratkin justifiably nervous.

In Cairo, a whole other situation is developing. Communications between the Ratkin of Cairo and other cities has become sporadic and, in some cases, ceased altogether. While some Ratkin outside Cairo fear for their brother's lives, a more frightening explanation has been offered. Jackal Fever began its spread in Cairo, as did the "brain-hunter" murders. Egypt's Ratkin are wondering if their Cairo brethren have fallen under the influence of something unspeakable.

What this all means to the Garou is that any Ratkin they encounter will likely be hostile. In most places, the Ratkin will simply avoid the Garou unless they feel they can gain some edge by hindering them. In Cairo, at least one Garou has been assaulted by several frenzied Ratkin, and, though he survived, the wounds they inflicted bled freely for days and left him weak and drained. He described the rats as "relentless — possessed, even." He has no idea how right he is.

Appendix One: Cat and Crocodile

Both the Bastet and the Mokolé commanded worship at various times in Egyptian history, much more so than the werewolves. Bubastis, in fact, served as the capital of Egypt for a time, a fact that still brings a smug smile to the faces of the shadowcats. The oasis-city of Crocodilopolis saw crocodiles kept in special pools and revered as incarnations of the gods. The modern world, however, is less than kind to these creatures and their changing kin.

The Mokolé

The dragon-folk in Egypt belong mostly to the Mokolémbembe stream (though a visiting Makara would not be out of the question) and the Champsa (Nile crocodile) varna. They can be found in one of three places: the clutch near the Aswan High Dam, the ruins of Crocodilopolis, and Oogleforp.

The great Nile crocodiles no longer swim the Nile. The Aswan High Dam in southern Egypt radically altered the land and the lifestyle of the Mokolé. The Black River Shore clutch, the only true clutch remaining in Egypt, sits on the banks of Lake Nasser. Sand's-Last-King crowns the clutch, and he is ailing. While younger Mokolé do indeed protect the clutch, a new Crowned has not been born. The members of the clutch see this as a terrible omen for the future.

The Ahadi has given the Mokolé some cause for hope, however. While many of them still mistrust the Garou, the death of Black Tooth and the promise of unity among the Bête stirs some of the dragon-folk from inactivity at last.

One Egyptian Mokolé in particular, called Long-River-Runs, lives in Al-Jizah and makes frequent visits to the ruins

of Crocodilopolis. She sometimes swims in the Nile after dark and sits on the banks trying to focus in on an elusive part of her Mnesis.

Long-River-Runs carries the memories of the Mokolé called Sabah in Garou legends, the werecrocodile who advised and aided Khepri Leaps-the-Dunes on his way to the Duat (see the Legend of the Garou). She has not yet been able to fully access these memories, she only knows that at some point in the far-flung past, a Mokolé helped a Garou with a task and now that Garou's descendants owe a favor to the Mokolé — more, that one such descendant could help the dragon folk reclaim the Nile. To date, however, Long-River-Runs has not remembered the full story, nor would she know where to begin looking for a descendant of Khepri if she did remember.

As Long-River-Runs may yet discover, the matter is complicated by the fact that Silent Striders have no contact with their ancestors. Any Silent Strider with Egyptian blood (which could theoretically be any member of the tribe) could be a descendant of Khepri. Such a Garou would probably be Pure Bred, but even that isn't necessarily true. Long-River-Runs feels the Memory will tell her when she finally encounters the Garou she is meant to approach about the debt.

Because the Memory has revealed that a werewolf will be able to help the Mokolé reclaim the river, Long-River-Runs has decided that destroying the Aswan High Dam is not the avenue to pursue, as some of the more direct Mokolé have suggested. Destruction of the dam would flood the Nile, leading to extensive damage and loss of human life in the riverside cities. While some extremely bitter Mokolé

might not balk at this, most of the dragon-folk are wise enough to realize that although the dam is interrupting the Nile's cycle, destroying would simply swing the unnatural balance in the other direction, and many innocent people would die. The dragon-folk have no desire to feed the Dissolver by flooding the river. There must be another way.

The members of the Black River Shore clutch near the Dam, however, have other concerns. While the Dam has opened the way for Banes and Dissolver-minions of all stripes, something swims the waters near the Dam that is neither Kin nor friend to the Mokolé. A No-Sun of the clutch, Unseen-in-Shallow-Water, insists that the vampires are responsible and that destruction of the Dam is the only way to purify the land, unpleasant as the effects may be. While he is not a Crowned, he is gaining support in the clutch, and when Sand's-Last-King passes into the memory of Gaia, Unseen-in-Shallow-Water might well become the leader of the clutch. If he does, the repercussions for anyone living near the Nile (which is much of Egypt's population) might be most unpleasant.

Long-River-Runs

Position: None.

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Warding

Stream: Mokolé-mbembe

Varna: Champs

Physical: Strength 3 (7/6), Dexterity 3 (2/1), Stamina 3 (7/6)

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2 (0/0), Appearance 3 (0/0)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 1, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Primal-Urge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Crafts 2, Drive 1, Stealth 1, Survival 3

Knowledges: Computer 1, Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2, Rituals 2

Backgrounds: Allies 3 (the Oogleforp clutch), Kinfolk 1 (sisters), Mnesia 3, Resources 2

Gifts: (1) Inspiration, Mother's Touch, Sense Moon; (2) Clap of Thunder, Stinking Breath

Rank: 2 (Oogleforp)

Rage 4, Gnosis 5, Willpower 6

Rites: (Accord) Breeding; (Death) Last Communion; (Wallow) Feed the Wallow, Illuminated Wallow, Save Hatchling

Fetishes: None.

Image: In human form, Long-River-Runs is called Monah, and is a lovely Arabic woman in her late 20s. She does not wear the veil, preferring to wear comfortable, casual clothes (which are often dusty or muddy). In suchid form, she is a 10-foot Nile crocodile. In Archid form, she retains her crocodilian shape (and buoyancy) but is much longer (nearly 35 feet!) and manifests a cluster of spikes on her tail and a poisonous bite.

Roleplaying Notes: You had two upbringings: the Muslim upbringing your parents gave you, and the one the Hem-Ka Sobk gave you at Crocodilopolis. The scarred warriors knew — somehow — of your impending Change, and prepared you for

Mokolé and the Vampires

The traditional Mokolé greeting — "Sun sees you" — should give a good indication of the dragon-folk's attitude towards the Leeches. Mokolé do not bargain with the Leeches the way that the wolves have been known to do. In fact, if a Mokolé discovers that a werewolf or a group of werewolves (such as the Black Furies in Alexandria) have made any kind of deal with the cadavers, they might well be disgusted enough to sever any ties with those Garou.

For their part, the vampires have stories about "dragons" and "dinosaurs" in the Nile, and they fear these creatures far more than they fear the Lupines. To a vampire, even the most placid and gentle Mokolé is a rampaging beast, the Sun's fury incarnate. The dragon-folk do not try to present any other face to the vampires.

it. You love your parents for providing for you, and your sisters for understanding your new life. You are looking forward to finding the werewolf who will save your people, but truly hope it will happen soon. The crocodiles have suffered much.

History: Raised by unknowing Kinfolk, Monah journeyed to the remains of Crocodilopolis with her family while still a child. There, the Hem-Ka Sobk noticed her, and explained (to the best of their knowledge) what she was. She returned to the oasis periodically over the years to hear their stories, and when they were old enough, her younger sisters came with her. Both of her sisters witnessed her First Change, and were awestruck by the magnificent creature that Monah became. Now all three girls are adults, and Monah works as a schoolteacher in Al-Jizah. She is not a member of the Black River Shore clutch, but is on good terms with the Mokolé there and has learned much from them. She spends much of her free time on the banks of the Nile, searching the Memory for a clue on how to find Khepri's descendant.

Storyteller's Note: Any Silent Strider could, in theory, be a descendant of Khepri, including any of the Striders mentioned in this book, or even (here's a thought) a player's character. The character need not know anything about Khepri or the Dam, or have any inkling on how to "save" the Mokolé, because the Striders are, after all, cut off from their ancestors. If Monah attaches herself to a character and starts asking for recompense for Sabah's aid to Khepri, this is likely to confuse (and hopefully intrigue) the Strider in question. But if there is no way to verify her feeling, how does the Garou know he is truly a descendant of Khepri? And honestly, does it matter, so long as he can somehow help the Mokolé?

Bubasti

The shadowcats once bred with the wild Kyphur cats, in the days before Sutekh and his spawn came to Khem. They were proud creatures, breeding with the nobility of Egypt. Indeed, a strong bloodline in the tribe — the strongest Egyptian family of Bubasti Kin remaining — claims descent from Isis

herself. The cats ruled in Bubastis, punished the proud and the ungrateful, and drove back the forces of darkness.

Since the coming of Sutekh, they have found darkness to their liking.

It wasn't an easy change. The Bubasti, so they say, were once colorful and bright like their feline kin. Centuries of skulking in unclean places and hiding from the vampires have changed the tribe, however. Now, although they breed with servals and caracals (both of which are small, tawny-colored wildcats), all Bubasti are midnight-black in all feline forms.

The Bubasti disdain the Silent Striders for leaving. As they see it, Set cursed them to a fate far worse than the Garou. The leeches stole their feline Kin from them, slaying most of them, but keeping some alive and immortal, bloated on unclean blood. Sutekh may have damned the Striders to eternal wandering, but at least they have their honor and their Kin, if not their ancestors. The Bubasti *cannot* leave Egypt; they are bound by a mystical law that they cannot and will not explain, that forbids them from abandoning their home. Although some shadowcats may travel abroad, the seat of the tribe's power is and always has been the land of Khem... right in the serpent's nest.

The tribe nearly died out in recent history, but the series of occupations and invasions in Egypt in the 19th and 20th centuries gave the tribe a much-needed boost. While be-

fore they had only mated with Egyptians, the Bubasti realized that their blood was growing thin. As a result, now it is not uncommon for a shadowcat to be Caucasian in Homid form. Regardless, all Bubasti think of themselves as Egyptian.

The tribe is spread throughout Egypt, most living the cities, some dwelling in the smaller towns. A half-handful maintain Den-Realms in the desert. Overall, less than 60 Bubasti exist worldwide, most them in Egypt. The Bubasti realize their precarious position all too well, and hide in the shadows, searching for hidden lore on the vampires. The subjects they favor are unpleasant to say the least — disease, summonings, and plagues, to name a few. The shadowcats are interested in any secrets that might give them an edge over the vampires.

Over time, the Bubasti have learned much, but always at a price. Some shadowcats are capable of using not only Gifts but also esoteric human magic. This makes the Bubasti, small and unimpressive compared with many other shapeshifters, capable of some very surprising feats. (In game terms, the Storyteller may allow Bubasti to make use of the hedge magic paths found in *Sorcerer Revised*, or design spells for the shadowcats to use. These spells resemble rites in that they take time and preparation to use successfully. Bubasti tend to favor summoning, cursing, herbalism, and alchemical magics.) However, this power carries with certain disadvantages. Most Bubasti of rank 2 or higher smell faintly of the Wyrms to anyone sensitive to such things. The taint isn't as pronounced or pungent as it would be on an active servant of the Wyrms, but is noticeable to



the perceptive (difficulty 9 on Sense Wyrms). The shadowcats recognize this problem, and it is one of the reasons that they have not sought aid from the Silent Striders more actively. For centuries, the cats have operated alone and in secret, cut off by Set's Curse and the War of Rage from the Garou, and by geography from the other Bastet.

Recently, however, things have been looking up for the tribe. The Europeans helped the tribe sustain its existence, and the Ahadi means that, although they have yet to do so, the Bubasti can ask aid of the Garou (who, for all their disdain, they recognize as the world's finest warriors) in ridding the land of the leeches. The Striders would do well to join forces with these werewolves — the ruling elders of the tribe (six in all, collectively called the kheper) are functionally immortal. Thanks to a Gift learned countless years ago, these Bubasti can send their souls out of their bodies when it comes time to die, only to inhabit (or, more accurately, steal) another being's body to begin life again. This Gift might well seem in opposition to Gaia's plan, but this pseudo-immortality has taught the Bubasti patience rivaling that of the vampires.

This patience is evidenced by the ongoing research conducted by HarshGaze's family. As stated in Chapter Four, the responsibility of studying Cairo's diseases has been passed down for generations. Sashet Davis is the current student (see below for more detail on her). This young tekhmet is not the only Bubasti in Cairo, but she is by far the most visible. This is deliberate.

Sashet is a lightning rod, meant to smoke out Leeches. Specifically, she is meant to draw out the vampires holding the last remaining Kyphur cats prisoner. Someone — a Bubasti, Kinfolk, or Jamak (spirit) — watches Sashet at all times. Any meetings she takes are carefully recorded. The kheper hope that she will find some clues as to the whereabouts of the tribe's feline Kin, and are willing to sacrifice her to find them if need be.

Sashet Davis

Position: None.

Breed: Homid

Pryio: Night

Tribe: Bubasti

Physical: Strength 2 (2/3/4/1), Dexterity 3 (4/6/7/7), Stamina 2 (2/3/3/3)

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3 (3/1/1/3), Appearance 4 (5/1/0/0)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 1, Athletics 1, Dodge 1, Intimidation 1, Primal-Urge 2

Skills: Drive 1, Etiquette 3, Firearms 1, Melee 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1

Knowledges: Computers 3, Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 3 (English, French, Latin, Egyptian), Medicine 3, Occult 3, Politics 1, Rituals 2, Science 4 (diseases)

Backgrounds: Contacts (medical) 2, Kinfolk 2, Pure Breed 1, Resources 2

At What Cost the Kyphur?

The Followers of Set do indeed have captive Kyphur cats locked away. These animals, bloated and twisted from years of captivity and vampire blood, have swollen to huge proportions and barely resemble the sleek, beautiful hunters of ancient Khem. While a rumor among the Bubasti states that for a price, the leeches might allow a shadowcat to mate with one of these beasts, the werewolves would hardly know how to ask, even if they were willing to pay whatever was asked.

The elders know that, in the end, the quest to find the Kyphur will end in a symbolic victory at best. The creatures have been forced to live centuries beyond their lifespans, and may not even be able to reproduce anymore. However, even if the Kyphur could no longer act as Kinfolk to the Bubasti, the kheper wish them free of the serpent's clutches. They insist that it is a matter of tribal honor; more likely, it is a matter of simple pride. The haughty Bastet, even after so many years, hate that the Leeches got the better of them, and are willing to risk lives simply to put the bloodsuckers in their places.

Gifts: (1) Banish Sickness, Lick Wounds, Scholar's Friend, Sweet Hunter's Smile

Rank: 1 (Tekhmet)

Rage 4, **Gnosis** 4, **Willpower** 5

Rites: (Kuasha) Speaking of the Name; (Moon) Warding

Fetishes: None.

Image: Sashet stands 5'9", and, like all members of her tribe, is slender and lithe. She has shoulder-length black hair, and pale skin (from her father's side). She has intense, luminous green eyes and dresses as well as she can afford.

Roleplaying Notes: You remain watchful at all times, and keep an eye to the poor. You never know when a new disease might spring up among them, and then your work begins anew: cataloging, classifying, recording. You are fastidiously clean and disdain the lower classes for not at least bathing periodically — surely there's some way to do it, even on the streets! You bear the weight of your unpleasant responsibility well, but you often wonder when, after so many years, all the knowledge your family has accumulated will become useful.

History: Born in Al-Jizah to an Egyptian mother (Kinfolk) and an English father, Sashet was raised from a very early age to be a student. When the First Change came, her great-aunt, a Bubasti from Cairo, took her away and taught her as a *kuasha* (mentor). After her yearlong apprenticeship, Sashet remained in Cairo to carry on her family's work. In this, she excelled — she has a brilliant head for research and data analysis knows more about virology than some doctors. Although she holds no degree of any kind, Sashet is on good terms with a number of people in various medical fields (including a doctor employed by OmniMed, the company for which Leila the Veil-Shredder works).

Appendix II: Spirits of the Land

Although Islam is often described as a rational, anti-mythic religion, the Muslim world is full of invisible and often predatory spirits. In many places the supernatural is taken as daily fact among much of the general population. Even though Egypt is in many ways a sophisticated and cosmopolitan country, visiting Garou may still find the average person more inclined to believe in the existence of the supernatural than do the jaded citizens of the industrialized West. A number of familiar Totem spirits have a strong foothold here (Owl, Falcon, Rat, Crow, Cockroach and their broods are most accessible), though others are more remote or maintain no presence here at all. Foreign Garou may find strange, but vaguely familiar, spirits here; this state of half-recognition is mutual. After centuries of absence, many spirits do not remember the Garou and old pacts lie dormant or broken. Some of the oldest spirits known to the Garou still exist in Egypt. A number of the spirits listed below, especially those associated with animals, vary in size, intelligence and temperament. The Storyteller should feel free to use the templates below to customize her own variations. Because of corruption by the Wyrms, many of the spirits below also have Bane counterparts.

Cobra

Capricious and dangerous, though not necessarily evil, the cobra has gained a dark reputation in Egypt because of its supposed relationship to Set. In reality, serpent spirits range from simple animal spirits, to wicked Banes such as the Soul-Drinkers (see below), to wise and benign tutelary spirits versed in arcane lore. Tutelary serpents are rarely the masters of more than one kind of lore, but in that one niche they have few peers. Cobra spirits differ little from their animal counterparts in appearance, varying mainly in size and color. Some are little or no larger than normal serpents, while legendary cobras from the Deep Umbra may be 100' long or even larger. The attributes given here are for a serpent of average size and power.

Rage 5, Gnosis 6 (Tutelary serpents have Gnosis 9), Willpower 6, Essence 17 (20)

Charms: Airt Sense, Hypnotic Stare*, Poison Bite*, Reform (Larger or more powerful serpents may also possess one or more of the following: Armor, Healing, Break Reality and Open Moon Bridge. Tutelary serpents may have the Charm: Acquisition)

***Hypnotic Stare** — If the cobra can catch its victim's eye prior to striking, the victim must make a contested Willpower roll or be frozen for one turn per success scored by the serpent. In any case, this state ends the turn after the cobra strikes. This Charm can only work on one target at a time.

***Poison Bite** — Along with its normal damage, the serpent makes a contested roll pitting its Rage against its opponent's Gnosis. The serpent's bite does one non-soakable point of damage a turn and lasts one turn for each success it scores over its victim. Injecting its poison costs the cobra a point of Essence.

Scorpion

Despite scorpions' malignant reputation elsewhere, the ancient Egyptians had a more balanced view, attributing them with both positive and negative traits. Perhaps best known in ancient mythology are the seven "Scorpion Kings" who once served the goddess Isis. Scorpion spirits often have a keen sense of justice (or retribution) and are prized for their usefulness as assassins or as guardian spirits, though some will not sting women due to their association with Isis. Scorpion spirits appear little different from their animal counterparts, varying mainly in size and color. Some are little or no larger than normal scorpions, while some deep desert specimens may be 60' long or more. A loathsome variety of Banes known as Blood-Scorpions are attracted to severe human suffering and are typically about a foot long, covered in blood and may travel in swarms of fifty or more. The attributes given here are for a guardian spirit of average size and power.

Rage 6, Gnosis 6, Willpower 5, Essence 20

Charms: Airt Sense, Armor, Disable (poison), Hide, Iron Will (Blood-Scorpions have the Charm: Blighted Touch.)

Notes: The seven Scorpion Kings who once served the goddess Isis are still said to exist in deep Umbral desert regions. Associated with both justice and vengeance, these seven potent Jagglings are: Petet, Tjetet, Matet, Mesetet, Mesetetef, Tefen and Befen. In one legend all seven scorpions loaded their poison into one of their stingers to avenge a wrong. Naming all seven scorpions in a special ritual is the only known way to render the poison harmless.

Ichneumon (Mongoose)

Although the ancient Egyptians had a wide range of beliefs involving snakes, the fact remained that poisonous snakebites were of deadly concern. A favored protector, especially among royalty, was the ichneumon or "pharaoh's rat." Faster than a striking cobra, fierce and loyal, the ichneumon spirit lives to kill serpents and as a totem will extend its protection

to an individual or an entire pack. Mongooses live communally in underground burrows, taking turns caring for the young, watching for predators and hunting for food. Often several will work to battle a single snake. Unfortunately ichneumon is not discriminating in what snakes it kills and may have to be physically restrained if confronted with a benign serpent entity. (The mongoose must roll Willpower, difficulty 8 or attack.) Mongoose spirits range in size. Most are no larger than their physical-world counterparts, while some rarer specimens may grow in size to deal with the larger varieties of snake spirits. Certain ichneumon wear favors (jeweled collars or the like) given to them by grateful past charges. The attributes given here are for a small mongoose-spirit.

Rage 6, Gnosis 6, Willpower 6, Essence 18

Charms: Airt Sense, Desert Sense (see Forest Sense), Healing, *Neck Snap, Tracking

***Neck Snap** — If the mongoose gains three or more successes when attacking, it is able to rapidly shake its target, possibly breaking its neck. Beyond its normal Rage damage, the mongoose rolls an additional three dice of Rage which cannot be soaked. This maneuver costs the mongoose a point of Essence.

Khamsin

The Khamsin is a rampaging storm spirit that prowls Egypt's Penumbral deserts like a ravenous beast. Between March and April the khamsin blows in the Western Desert at wind speeds up to 150 km per hour. In the spirit world this speed may well double, and the Khamsin may travel the Eastern Desert and other Umbral desert realms as well. The Khamsin is a creature of the moment and is born anew each time it blows with no memories of past storms. It has no sentience as such, only the need to smash and rend the insignificant creatures that get in its way. Those who take Khamsin as a totem, as have the Red Talons of the Sept of the Howling Sands, may move about largely unhindered within the storm. From a distance the Khamsin appears as an immense, mile-high tidal wave of sand. Occasionally hollow eyes or a great yawning mouth may appear against the background of the storm. Visibility once swallowed by the storm varies from a few inches to a few feet.

Rage 10, Gnosis 10, Willpower 8, Essence 275

Charms: Airt Sense, Lightning Bolt, Open Sky Bridge, Short Out, Sandstorm (equivalent to Umbrastorm)

Khopesh

One of the oldest known synthetic Weaver spirits, Khopesh "The-Spider-With-Legs-Like-Sickles," is a unique entity, a hieroglyphic Pattern Spider who is a

master of written languages, enigmas and codes. Undoubtedly one of Cockroach's brood, Khopesh's true origins nevertheless remain obscure. Khopesh himself claims to have been the heart scarab for no-less a personage than the vizier, architect and mystic Imhotep, but given Khopesh's propensity for self-aggrandizement, this statement need not be taken at face value. Khopesh has several forms. One is as a simple spider hieroglyph, appearing on stone steles, papyrus rolls or computer screens. In the Penumbra the Pattern Spider may appear as a smoky shadow shape containing a maddening whorl of letters, numbers and pictographic forms. Khopesh is inextricably linked with his lapis and gold "heart scarab" spider-figurine (currently under guard in the Sept of the Solar Barque), and will cease to exist if the figurine is destroyed. Overly impressed by his own uniqueness and intelligence, Khopesh can be somewhat sardonic toward those he considers his intellectual inferiors (practically everyone), but will nevertheless loyally serve those who protect his heart scarab and provide him with ample academic stimulation.

Rage 4, Gnosis 10, Willpower 8, Essence 35

Charms: Airt Sense, Control Electrical Systems, Materialize, Short Out, Solidify Reality, *Translate

***Translate** — Khopesh can translate virtually any language or code, provided he sees enough of it. Using this Charm pits the spirit's Gnosis against the difficulty of the text (ranging from difficulty 6 for a relatively well-known language, to difficulty 10 for the most complex encrypted codes or alien languages). This Charm can only be tried on the same piece of information once a scene. Khopesh tends to sulk when stumped.

Phoenix (Benn)

It is said that the Celestine Re had two eyes that took on their own avatar forms and did his bidding. His left eye became the goddess Sakhmet, his divine instrument of destruction and retribution. It was with his right eye, representing wisdom, that he saw the error of his ways and recalled the avenger goddess. His right eye was the Falcon Totem and more specifically its aspect as the eternally resurrected phoenix. Known in Egyptian lore as the Benu bird, it was alternatively pictured as a fiery heron or a falcon, and symbolized the rise of life against the eternal forces of death and entropy. The phoenix is best summoned by burnt offerings at sunrise or sunset, and will converse only as long as the sun's light is visible on the horizon (disappearing with full night or day). The phoenix is the totem spirit for the Sept of the Midnight Sun, and the Silver Fangs hope that it will soon light the way to their eventual return to power.

Rage 7, Gnosis 8, Willpower 8, Essence 30

Charms: Airt Sense, Blast Flame, Cleanse the Blight, Create Fires, Healing, Insight, Reform, Open Sky Bridge, Swift Flight

Ienpw

A great spectral hound over 8' high at the shoulder with a sleek jackal-like head, Ienpw appears to be made of dark mist with only two lighted chinks for eyes. It is always deathly cold near Ienpw and he exudes a scent of decay. As long as the Citadel of the Western Flame has existed, this great black wolf has been its guardian. The Silent Striders have controlled the tower longer than any other and, given their apparent similarities to its guardian, perhaps this is just. Ienpw has never been known to speak (he has on occasion communicated things telepathically through images), and so keeps his council on why he behaves as he does. Nevertheless the Striders have found him a useful guardian and guide. Those wishing to gain access to the tower have destroyed Ienpw in the past, but the black wolf has always returned in time. Ienpw may be placated by bringing him something at least three days dead to eat, though this is not enough to gain entrance to the tower if one is not a Silent Strider. The rumor that Ienpw swallows live cats whole is *probably* just a rumor spread by the Striders to discourage Bubasti trespassers.

Rage 9, Gnosis 9, Willpower 9, Essence 60

Charms: Access Caern, Airt Sense, *Descent into Duat, *Desiccation, Hide, Reform, Tracking

***Descent into Duat** — As with the Silent Strider Rite: Descent into the Dark Umbra, this Charm allows Ienpw to open a one-way portal to or from the Dark Umbra. This Charm costs 2 Essence.

***Desiccation** — With but a glance, Ienpw can speed up the aging process in a living target, touching her with decay. Ienpw contests his Rage against his target's Gnosis (or Willpower - 2 if the target doesn't have Gnosis). The number of successes he scores over his opponent's roll are subtracted from her three Physical Attributes. If the number of successes is not divisible by three, excess successes are subtracted first from the target's dominant and then her secondary Physical characteristics. This Charm costs two points of Essence and its effects last one day per success. This Charm cannot be cast on the same target twice in succession.

Banas

Wyrmspirits of many stripes inhabit the Middle East. Blood-covered scorpions haunt the doctor's offices where young girls are circumcised. Psychomachiae hover above pious Muslim warriors as they strap explo-

sives to their bodies. And, of course, the machinations of Pentex spawn no small number of Umbral horrors.

Soul-Drinkers

Do not call upon your Gnosis in the desert. Ever. Especially at night. It's a little like hanging a bloody shirt in a tree in the woods. You might not attract anything — but if you do, it's going to be hungry.

— Samir the Jackal, the Galliard Who Speaks 'Til Sunrise

One of the more common breeds of Banes in Egypt is not at all recent. The Soul-Drinkers, as they have come to be called, have existed for centuries, stalking the Umbral deserts by day. At night, they materialize and hunt for their chosen prey: the Silent Striders.

Rage 5, Gnosis 4, Willpower 6, Essence 15 (but possibly higher if the Bane has fed recently)

Charms: Gnosis Drain*, Tracking (Silent Striders from any distance, or any being with Gnosis if that being actively employs Gnosis within a half mile)

***Gnosis Drain:** The Soul-Drinker must first succeed in a Willpower roll (difficulty 5) to hit its target. Draining Gnosis requires an extended, resisted roll (spirit's Rage vs. Garou's Gnosis). Each success in excess of the Garou's results in one point of Gnosis being sucked away and added to the Bane's Essence. Also, Soul-Drinkers can automatically drain any "spare" vessels of Gnosis, including water enchanted via the Rite of Spirit Brew.

Image: Soul-Drinkers resemble asps, and range in size from harmless-looking, two-foot long snakes to twenty-foot monstrosities, depending on how much Gnosis they have consumed recently. All Soul-Drinkers have long, slender fangs that are faintly iridescent in the dark.

Background: The origins of the Soul-Drinkers lie in the far-flung past. Exactly what spawned them originally is unknown, but the Garou tell tales. One such tale suggests that the Soul-Drinkers were the unholy spawn of Set and Nephthys before her demise. Another suggests that the spiritual children of Serpent felt betrayed both by the Garou and their mother, and turned to the Wurm. And at least one Garou has suggested that the Banes are the ghosts of the Nagah, come to take revenge on their murderers.

Whatever their origins, a few hard facts about them can be stated. They possess the ability to Materialize, but only at night. During the day, they roam the Penumbra. They attack by latching on to Garou and drinking their Gnosis. Their favorite "meals" seem to be Silent Striders, whom they can sniff out and track from any distance. They will attack Garou of other

tribes and other Fera as well, but only if they are hungry, and only if no Silent Striders are available.

One of their worst traits, however, is the company they keep. Soul-Drinkers can smell Garou (or, indeed, any being with Gnosis). As a result, larger Banes and other Wyrmspawn sometimes follow Soul-Drinkers to find Garou. So, while a Soul-Drinker by itself is not a great threat, it behooves a Garou who sees one to watch his back very carefully, lest a pack of Black Spiral Dancers or a powerful Bane be following the spirit.

Jann

Ahmed stared down at his feet. His ankles and soles had become tough and callused, and his toes were purplish and swollen, as though rotting. He wiggled his big toe on the left foot, and found the toenail felt loose. Slowly, deliberately, he reached down and gave it a gentle tug. It came away in his fingers. Beneath the nail was a hollow filled with stringy, green-white strands of flesh...

Ahmed sat up in bed, heart pounding. He looked at his wife and reached to wake her, but could not bring himself to do so. He stepped out of bed, unrolled his cloth, and knelt to pray again to Allah to release him from these horrid dreams.

In the dark places in his mind, a spirit watched, already planning the next nightmare.

Jann are small, weak-looking Banes with insidious power over dreams. While they can do little in a straight fight with a werewolf, their power to enter and control nightmares makes them very dangerous indeed.

Willpower 5, Rage 3, Gnosis 8, Essence 16

Charms: Peek, Possession, Nightmare Control*

***Nightmare Control:** Once a Jann successfully possesses a host, it can assert control when the host falls asleep (and at no other time). The Jann delves into the host's subconscious and dredges up whatever horrors it can find. Like any dream, the nightmare is couched in symbolism, but the symbolism used is so disturbing that the victim awakens feeling violated even if he doesn't understand the dream. The unfortunate person loses a point of Willpower upon awakening. He may regain this Willpower if he deciphers the meaning of the dream (using the Dream Interpretation system in *Werewolf Revised*, difficulty of the dreamer's own Manipulation + Enigmas, at least 5 successes required before victim sleeps again).

If the Jann possesses and uses this Charm on a werewolf, the situation is much, much worse. The Garou must roll Gnosis at a difficulty of his own Willpower as though stepping sideways. If he succeeds,

he plunges into a Dream Realm of his own making — aided by the Jann, of course. The Bane can alter and control facets of the nightmare, as with a human — but as the werewolf can actually die during the nightmare, the stakes are much higher. Even if the Garou survives, he loses a point of Willpower as described above. Again, the nightmares are created out of the victim's own fears and memories, they are simply amplified to disturbing levels by the Bane.

A human being drained of all Willpower by a Jann may become a fomor, often with the powers of Nightmare Command or Umbral Ties. A werewolf thus drained is simply lethargic and whipped, and much more susceptible to losing the wolf.

Image: Jann appear as tiny humanoids, no more than a foot tall. They range in color from deep blue to blood red, and have mouths of wicked, needle-like teeth. They rely on stealth to hide them from Garou, as they have little in the way of direct defense.

Background: The word "Jann" refers to a malevolent Middle Eastern spirit (as opposed to Jinn, who may be harmful or benign). These Banes are thankfully rare, and have yet to be encountered outside of the Middle East. They typically choose a target and stay with him until he is drained of Willpower, then move on. Occasionally, they will complete the possession and create a fomor, but this is uncommon; apparently, they relish the ability to feed off of a variety of nightmares. Werewolves are special prey to them, however, as they offer a much more vivid show in which the Jann has greater and more vicious control.

Octani (Oil Banes)

These sinister black Banes vary in size and viscosity and are, unfortunately, increasingly common in Egypt and other oil-producing states. Generated when an animal or other living creature is poisoned by oil, these loathsome Banes most often poorly mimic the shape of the creature(s) to have died in the oil slick. Like an iceberg, over 90% of these Banes lurk beneath the desert sands with only the smallest trickle of oil (if that) to give away their position. Fossil fuels like oil come from decomposed and fossilized organic matter. Banes of this nature speed up this process a million-fold and seek out victims to add to their mass, dissolving and transmuting even a large carcass with astonishing speed. Some oil Banes can grow to great size in this manner and there are even tales of entire oil fields consisting of just one Bane. The attributes given here are for an Oil Bane of average size and power.

Rage 6, Gnosis 7, Willpower 4, Essence 17

Charms: Airt Sense, Blighted Touch, *Dissolution, Liquefy (Larger Octani can cast Umbraquake)

***Dissolution** — This is the Charm whereby the Bane absorbs others into its mass. After a hit using Willpower, the Bane rolls its Rage against its opponent's Gnosis. Each success represents a point of fully soakable but aggravated damage, as the unfortunate victim watches part of his body absorbed into his foe's oily mass.

Notes: Because of their viscous nature, oil Banes are largely resistant to physical attacks (half damage rounded down). Fire does the job of destroying them nicely, though battling a burning Octani has perils all its own. Fire reduces the Bane's Essence by five each turn until it seeps back under the ground or is destroyed. Physically dispersing an Oil Bane simply divides it into lesser independent entities.

Dakat (Elethoi and Dactoi)

In the far reaches of history, before the unrestrained activities of the Weaver bound and maddened it, the spirits of the Wyrms performed a very different task than they do today. Fulfilling the role of constructive entropy, the Wyrms and its minions ground down the old to make way for the new. It has been millennia since the Wyrms has fulfilled this benign purpose in the Penumbra, but in certain backwater realms attached to Egypt there are still vestigial aspects of this original "Wyrms of Balance." The spirits that serve this Wyrms may be considered the primordial predecessors of today's Banes, fearsome and dangerous to be sure, but without the active malignancy that characterizes contemporary Banes. The two "Dakat" (to use the Bastet term) listed here are elemental counterparts, the ethereal Elethoi indigenous to the Aetherial Cavern of Sokar domain, and the mud dwelling Dactoi found in the prehistoric rivers of Deep Water.

Dactoi

This ponderous mud-dweller lives in the Nile shallows of Deep Water, though they may infrequently appear in other Umbral rivers as well. In ancient times it was the Dactoi's job to grind-down living and dead river matter into a rich, life-giving loam. The great segmented behemoths look more than anything else like Silurian era scorpions or trilobites, and measure anywhere between 20-50 feet in length. Heavily armored along the back, it is the bottom of these creatures that one must beware. Their undersides are lined with hundreds of toothless mouths surrounded by sharp wiry bristles that they use to swiftly break up their meals. The resulting puree is then vacuumed into

their stomachs to be later expelled as fresh spirit-matter. The slow-moving creature propels itself using a combination of body-undulations and compressed water shot in jets from its backside. The great scavengers are neither sentient nor even particularly aware, though they are attracted to sudden movements in the water. Capable of short, swift movements to capture distressed prey, the dull-witted giants are nevertheless ill suited to defend themselves against the Mokolé who occasionally feed upon them.

Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Willpower 4, Essence 20

Charms: Armor, Flood, Noxious Gas

Elethoi

The eerie calm at the center of the storm, the deathly silent Elethoi are the opposite of the noisy wind creatures that crash around them. Sentient and far craftier than their river-bottom counterparts, these avatars of the void seek out areas of extreme climatic opposition (storms) and then devour any errant winds that wander into their vicinity. So potent are these spheres that a few of them could devour even a major Umbral storm in little time. As the Wyrms has sought to expand its influence in the Aetherial Realm, it has found these proto-Banes remarkably receptive to its overtures. In return for their services against the Children of Karnak and other enemies, the Wyrms has given the Elethoi access to the greater Penumbra. Elethoi are without form of any kind, but can be detected by the absence of visible climatic features —

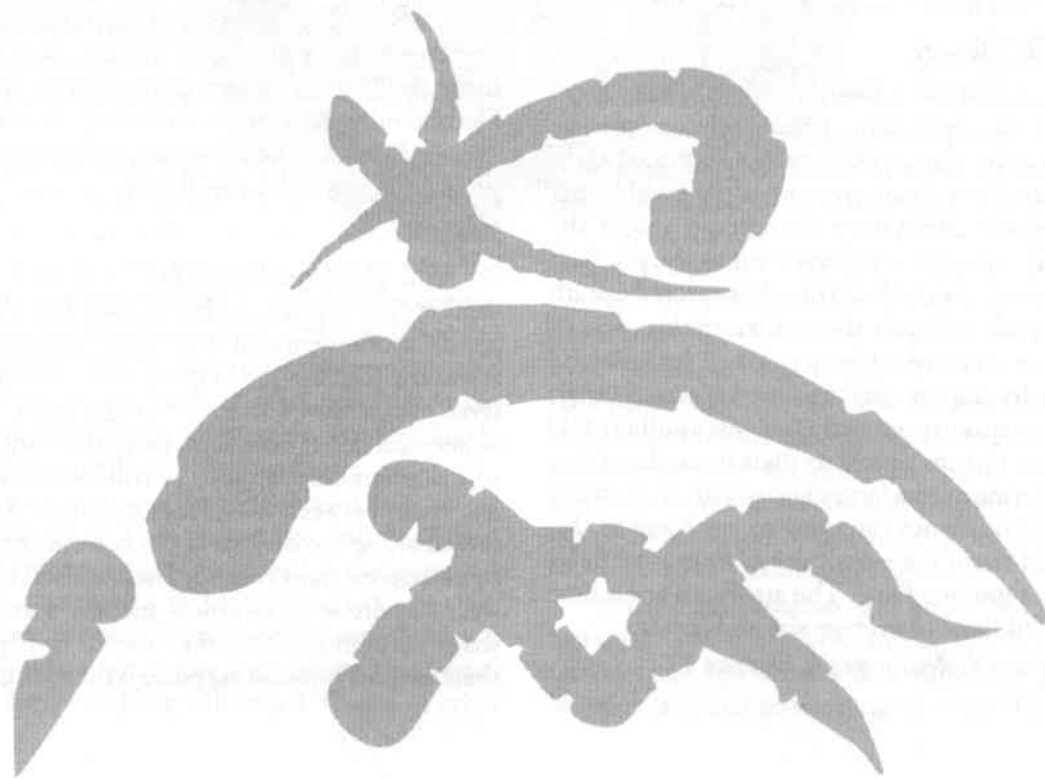
clouds, smog, sandstorms, etc. — that churn around their sphere of influence (much in the way that energy crackles on the event horizon of a black hole). An Elethoi's sphere of influence is a 10' diameter sphere per point of Gnosis. By manipulating their "mass" against the surrounding atmosphere, Elethoi can create wind gusts for attack, defense or escape, but at twice the Essence cost of conventional air spirits.

Rage 6, Gnosis 8, Willpower 8, Essence 22

Charms: Airt Sense, *Asphyxiate, Create Wind, Reform

***Asphyxiate** — Any wind that enters the area inhabited by the Elethoi dies down immediately, while any wind spirit simply dies. Air spirits lose an amount of Essence equal to the Elethoi's Gnosis per turn until they are devoured, escape or the Bane is full. Similarly, the Elethoi may steal the breath from any creature that needs to breathe. The Elethoi rolls its Gnosis against that of its victim, who takes one non-soakable point of damage per success scored by the Dakat. This continues each turn until the victim dies or escapes; fortunately regaining this damage is almost instantaneous once the target can breathe again. An Elethoi cannot devour an amount greater than its permanent Essence, but must digest its airy meal at the rate of one stolen Essence/health level per hour.

Notes: Less substantive than the air itself, Elethoi are wholly immune to physical attacks, but Gifts or magic fetishes affect them as usual.



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