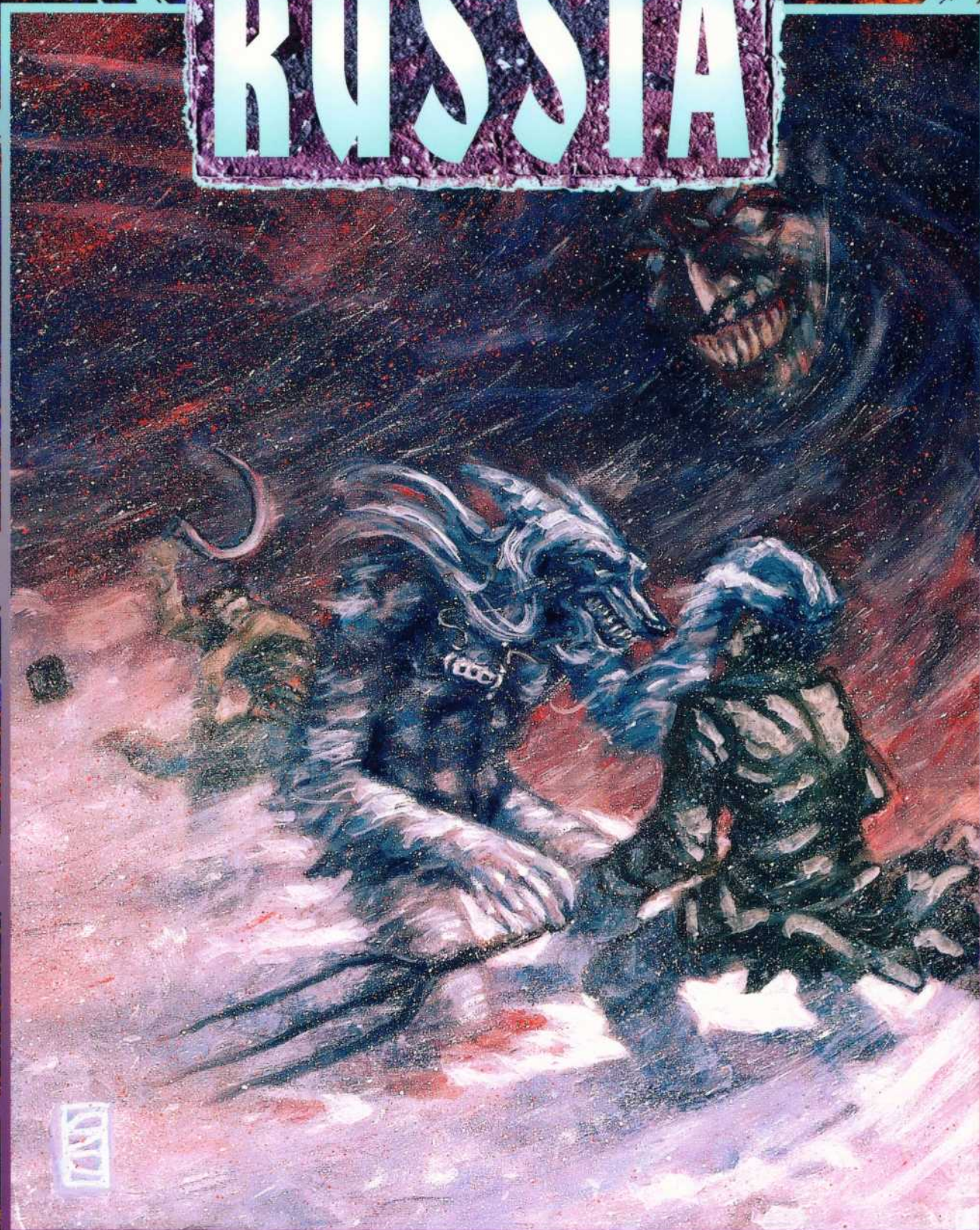


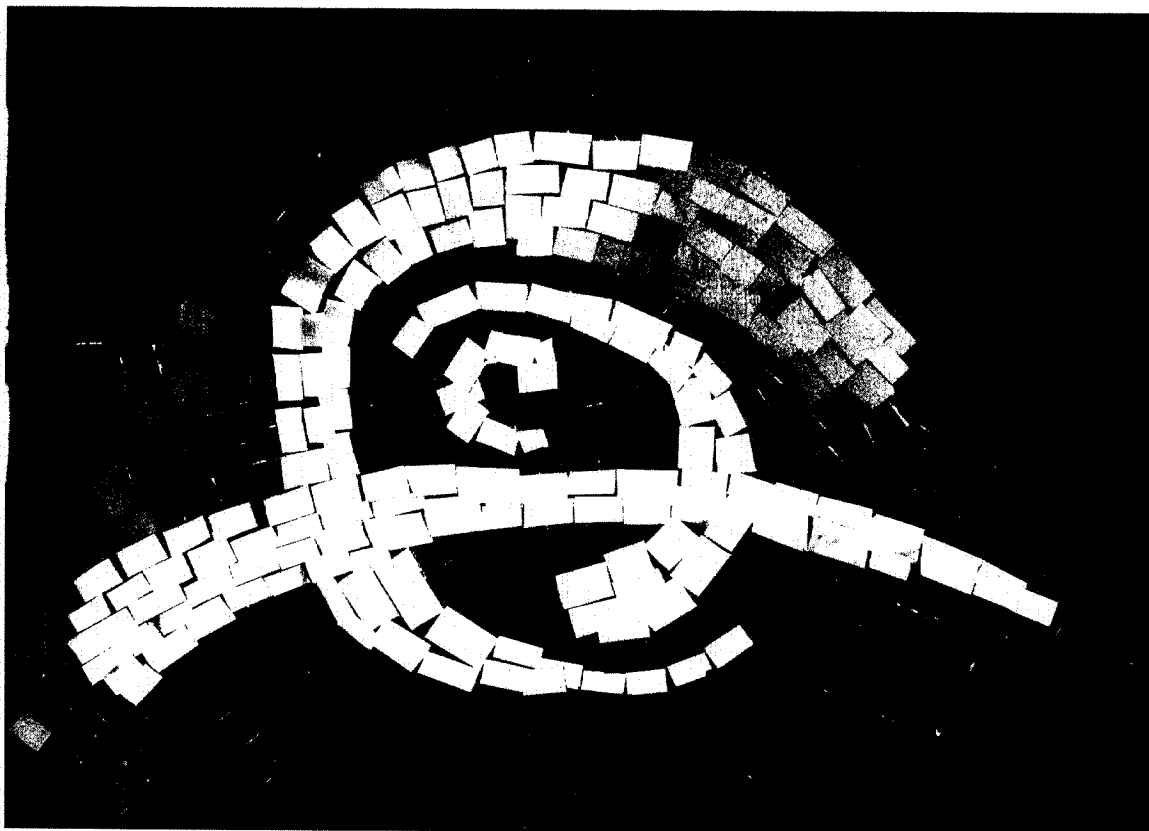
# Rage Across RUSSIA



*A Regional Sourcebook  
for Werewolf: The Apocalypse™*



# Rage Across RUSSIA



*The War Against the Wyrn*  
by David Key & George Neal



MECHANIKA



# The Tale of the Firebird, Tsarevich Ivan and the Gray Wolf

*Long ago, the Garou were tied to the nobles of this land. They would help us, and we would watch over them. This is a tale of those times, before the Leeches and the Communists destroyed the old way of life. It is a story of a time when we were almost friends with the humans.*

Once upon a time, there lived a mighty Tsar, a noble Silver Fang. He had three sons, but to his sorrow, the wolf did not breed true in any of them. The oldest was Tsarevich Dimitri, the second was Tsarevich Vasily and the third was Tsarevich Ivan.

The mighty Tsar had a magnificent palace with a garden so beautiful it must have been blessed by Gaia herself. All kinds of beautiful flowers, trees and shrubs grew in his garden, but the Tsar's favorite was a tree that bore golden apples.

The Tsar noticed one day that many of his apples had been picked during the night. He found out that every night, while the court slept, the Firebird, totem spirit of the Silver Pack, flew into his garden and picked as many apples as she wished.

He called his sons to him. "My beloved sons," he said, "the Firebird has been stealing my golden apples. If one of you captures her alive, I will give that son half my kingdom while I live and the other half upon my death."

His sons answered together, "We will try to capture the Firebird for you."

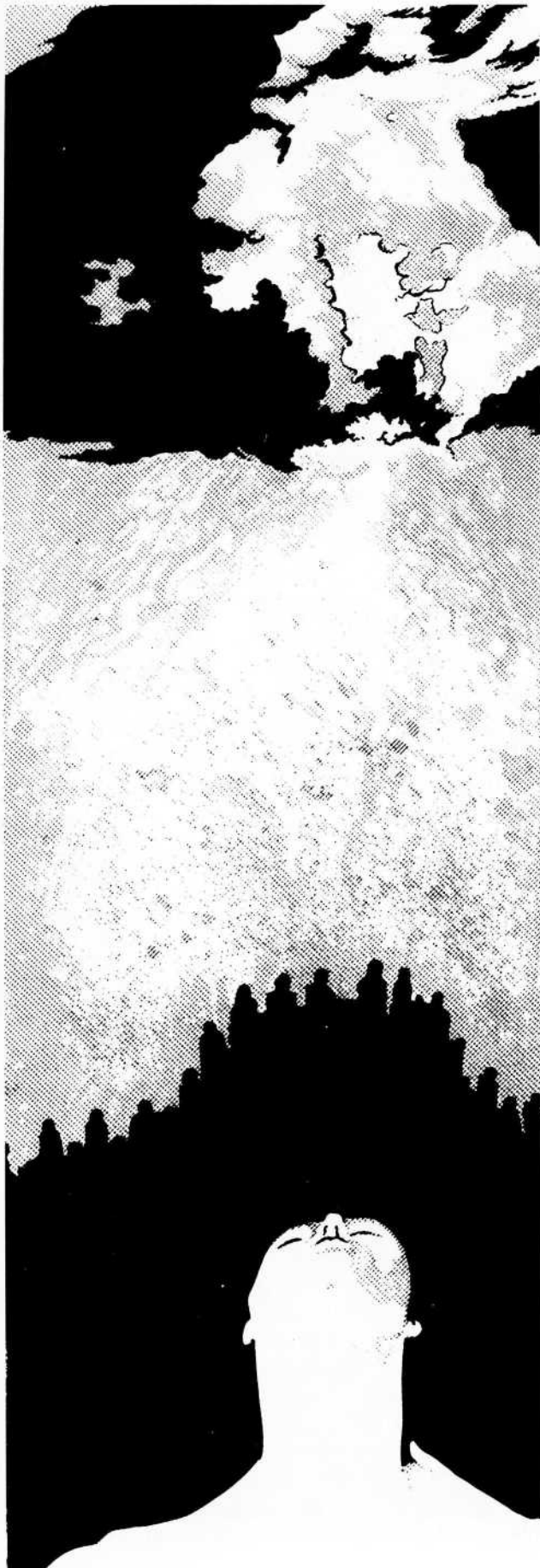
The first night, the eldest son went into the garden to keep watch. He sat near the apple tree, and as the night wore on, he became very drowsy and fell asleep. While he slept, the Firebird flew into the garden, picked some apples and flew off.

In the morning, the Tsar asked Dimitri if he had seen the Firebird. He answered that she had not come into the garden that night.

The next night, Vasily went to keep watch in the garden. He also sat under the apple tree, and in several hours, he fell asleep. While he slept peacefully beneath the tree, the Firebird slipped into the garden, picked a great number of apples and flew away. The next morning, the Tsar asked whether Vasily had seen the Firebird. Vasily answered that she had not come into the garden that night.

The third night, it was Tsarevich Ivan's turn to keep watch over the tree. He sat beneath it for several hours and nothing happened. Then, suddenly, the entire garden was illuminated by a radiant golden light. The Firebird flew overhead. Her eyes sparkled like huge crystals and her wings were golden flames. She perched upon the apple tree and began to partake of the golden apples. Tsarevich Ivan stole up to her softly and tried to catch her. Although he





could not hold her, he was able to seize her tail. As the Firebird tore herself from his grasp, one beautiful, luminous feather remained in Ivan's hand.

In the morning, Ivan went to his father and gave him the feather of the Firebird. The Tsar was very pleased that his youngest son had finally succeeded in getting at least one feather. He took it into his chamber. When it was brought in, the entire room glowed as though it was lit by thousands of candles.

From that time on, the Firebird did not come into the garden, but the Tsar became obsessed with the idea of keeping her in his palace.

He summoned his three sons to him and asked them to go out and find the Firebird.

The two eldest sons were filled with envy that their younger brother had succeeded in obtaining a feather from the Firebird's tail after they had failed completely. After obtaining their father's blessings, they set out together on their quest. The Tsar tried to keep his youngest son in the palace while the two older brothers were gone, but he could not persuade Ivan to remain, so the Tsar finally granted his youngest son his blessing. Ivan then chose a horse from the stables and rode out from the palace.

Whether he rode for a long time or a short time, whether the distance was a short one or a long one, no one knows, but he rode until he came to a large open field. In the middle of the field was a tall pillar, and on the pillar were the following words:

"Whoever goes from this spot on the road straight ahead will be hungry and cold.

"Whoever goes from this spot to the right will be safe, but his horse will be killed.

"Whoever goes from this spot to the left will be killed himself, but his horse will be safe."

Tsarevich Ivan read the inscriptions and rode off into the right, thinking that even though his horse might be killed, he would be safe and could find another horse.

He rode for three days. On the third day, a great gray wolf appeared and asked him why he had come this way. "You knew your horse would be killed," the wolf said. And so saying, the wolf devoured Ivan's horse and ran away.

Ivan wept for his horse and continued his journey on foot. He walked and walked until he was exhausted. Just as he was about to sit down and rest, the gray wolf appeared again. The wolf had recognized Ivan's noble ancestry and told Ivan that he felt sorry for him. "I am very sorry for eating your horse," he said, "but I will make it up to you. If you climb on my back, I will take you wherever you wish to go."

Ivan told the gray wolf the purpose of his journey. Hearing this, the wolf ran much faster than any horse. When night fell, they came to a stone wall.

"Climb over the wall," the wolf said, "and into the garden. There you will find the Firebird in a golden cage. As you grab the Firebird, be careful not to touch the cage. If you do, you will surely get caught."

Ivan climbed into the garden where all was as still as death. He took the Firebird out of the cage, but before he left the garden, he thought to himself that it was very foolish to leave the magnificent golden cage. Where would he put the Firebird? He went back for the cage. The moment he touched it, there was a great cry. The guards woke up and chased Ivan across the garden. When they caught him, they immediately led him before their Tsar, Dolmat.

The Tsar was furious with Ivan and berated him for trying to steal the Firebird from his garden.

"Who are you, and where do you come from?" the Tsar asked.

"I am the son of Tsar Vyslav. Forgive me for walking in your garden, but the Firebird has been stealing golden apples from my father's garden every night. That was why I came to take the Firebird away."

"Young man, if you had come to me and told me your story, I would have given you the Firebird. But since you came under the cover of night and tried to steal her, you have acted with disgrace. You have disgraced yourself and your entire family. I will, however, give you a chance to save your family's honor. I will give up the Firebird if you will retrieve something for me..."

"Go to the Thirtieth Kingdom beyond the Twenty Nine Lands and bring me the horse with the golden mane from the Kingdom of Tsar Afron. If you succeed, you may keep the Firebird. But if you fail, I will proclaim before all of the Tsardoms that you are a thief!"

Ivan went to the gray wolf and told him everything. The wolf proceeded to berate him for not listening, for trying to take the cage even when he had been warned against it. Finally, the wolf relented and told Ivan to sit on his back. He would take him to the horse with the golden mane.

Ivan climbed onto the back of the gray wolf, and the wolf took off as fast as lightning. The wolf ran until night fell, and they arrived at the royal stables of Tsar Afron.

"Listen closely this time," the wolf said. "You can easily go into the stables and take the horse with the golden mane, but do not touch the golden bridle hanging on the wall. Please, be careful this time!"

Ivan entered the stables, took the horse and began to leave, but when he noticed the golden bridle hanging on the wall, he could not resist taking it. The instant he took the bridle, an alarm was raised. The stable boys woke up at once and chased him across the stable. When they captured Ivan, they brought him before Tsar Afron, who questioned him just as Dolmat had.

"Young man," said Tsar Afron, just as Dolmat had said, "if you had come to me and told me beforehand what you wanted, I would have given you the horse with the golden

mane. However, since you came stealthily, under cover of night, I should proclaim your dishonor in all the Tsardoms! I will, however, give you a chance to pay for your crime..."

"If, Tsarevich Ivan, you travel beyond the Thrice Ninth Land to the Thrice Tenth Kingdom and bring back the beautiful Princess, Elena the Fair, I will forget what you have done."

So Ivan went back to the gray wolf again and told him everything that had happened. Again the wolf berated him for not listening, but he finally agreed to take Ivan where he wished to go.

Tsarevich Ivan mounted the gray wolf's back, and the wolf ran as fast as an arrow. In a very short time, they arrived in the Kingdom of Elena the Fair. Reaching the golden fence that surrounded her palace and garden, the wolf asked Ivan to sit down.

"This time, I will steal the Princess. Go back along this road and wait for me beneath the green oak tree."

Ivan did as he was told. The gray wolf sat near the golden fence and waited there until Princess Elena took her walk in the garden with her ladies in waiting. When at last Elena entered the garden, the gray wolf quickly jumped over the fence, caught the princess and ran to the place where Ivan was waiting.

Tsarevich Ivan joined Elena on the back of the gray wolf, who then darted away towards Tsar Afron's Kingdom. No matter how fast the Princess' guards pursued the wolf, they were unable to catch him.

During the long ride back to Afron's kingdom, Ivan and Elena fell madly in love. When they arrived at Tsar Afron's kingdom, Ivan knew that, in spite of the fact that he loved the Princess dearly, he would have to lead her to the palace and given her up to the Tsar. At that thought, he grew exceedingly sad and wept bitterly.

Ivan told the wolf of his love for the Princess and begged for his help once again. The wolf agreed to help him and told Ivan his plan.

"I will transform myself into the beautiful Princess. Then you must take me, in the guise of Elena, to Tsar Afron. He will give you the horse with the golden mane, for the Tsar will think that I am Princess Elena. Later, when you are far away on the horse with the golden mane, I will ask the Tsar to let me walk in the open field. It will be easy to escape."

Ivan told the real Princess Elena to wait for him outside of the town. The wolf transformed himself into the Princess, and Ivan took him to the Tsar.

Afron was delighted when he saw the Princess and gave the horse to Tsarevich Ivan. Ivan immediately mounted him and galloped away. He picked up Elena at the appointed place, and they rode off towards the kingdom of Tsar Dolmat.

Meanwhile, the gray wolf, in the guise of the beautiful Elena, lived with Tsar Afron for one day before he begged to be allowed to walk in the open fields. Tsar Afron, so in



love with Elena that he could deny her nothing, granted her that wish. As soon as the wolf got to the open field, he shifted back to his wolf form and escaped from the kingdom.

Tsarevich Ivan rode with Elena next to him and was so taken with the beautiful princess that he completely forgot about the gray wolf. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, the gray wolf appeared and told Ivan to ride on his back and let the Princess ride on the horse with the golden mane.

As they approached Tsar Dolmat's kingdom, Ivan begged the gray wolf to transform himself into the horse with the golden mane so that he could keep the real horse. The wolf agreed and changed himself into the golden-maned horse, upon which Tsarevich Ivan rode into the palace grounds of Tsar Dolmat, leaving Elena in the green meadow to await his return.

Tsar Dolmat was overjoyed to see the beautiful horse. He wine and feasted Tsarevich Ivan and, after two days, gave Ivan the Firebird in the golden cage, as he had promised.

Tsarevich Ivan took the Firebird, returned to where he had left Elena, and together they mounted the horse with the golden mane and set out for Ivan's homeland.

Back in the kingdom of Dolmat, the Tsar decided the next day to ride on his golden-maned horse in an open field. When he mounted the horse and attempted to spur him on, the horse threw him, changed into the gray wolf and ran off.

The gray wolf overtook Tsarevich Ivan and told him to mount him and let the Princess ride on the horse with the golden mane.

They continued on their journey. When the gray wolf brought them to the spot where they first met, he made one more request.

"Climb down from my back. This is the spot where I tore your horse in half, and this is the spot where I have brought you back safely. Now you have the horse with the golden mane; mount him and go where you have to go. I am no longer your servant." Thus speaking, the gray wolf ran off and Tsarevich Ivan set off with his beautiful Princess.

He rode with her until they were close to his own land. They were so tired that he reined in the horse with the golden mane. The two dismounted and lay down to rest under a tree. Ivan tied the horse to the same tree and put the cage with the Firebird by his side. The two lovers spoke tenderly to each other and fell asleep.

While they were sleeping, Tsarevich Ivan's brothers Dimitri and Vasily passed that way, returning empty-handed from their own journeys. Seeing the horse and the Firebird in the cage near their sleeping brother and the Princess, they decided to kill Ivan and take his treasures for their own. Dimitri drew his sword, stabbed Ivan through the heart and then hacked his body into small pieces. He then woke up Elena, who realized that Ivan was dead. She was terribly frightened and began to weep bitterly.

Dimitri put his sword to Elena's throat and commanded her to tell the Tsar that they were the ones who had

captured the horse and the Firebird. If she spoke, they would kill her as swiftly as they killed Ivan.

Elena was so frightened that she promised to do as they commanded. They left for the palace of Tsar Vyslav.

Tsarevich Ivan lay dead for thirty days. One night, the gray wolf came upon his body. He wanted to revive him, but he could not. At that moment, the wolf saw a raven and her two young start to swoop down to eat the Tsarevich's body. The wolf hid behind a bush. As one of the young ravens began to eat Ivan, the wolf leaped out from behind the bush, grabbed the young raven and threatened to tear him in half. The raven's mother flew to the ground and said to the wolf, "Oh, gray wolf, do not touch my young child, for he has done nothing to you!"

"Mother Raven," the wolf said, laughing, "if you had asked me for the body of my friend, I would have gladly given it to you and your children. But as you came so stealthily, under cover of night, you have angered me. However, I will not harm your child if you will retrieve something for me..."

"You must fly beyond the Thrice Ninth Land to the Thrice Tenth Kingdom and bring the water of death and the water of life to him. Then I will let your child go."

This she promised to do, and on the third day, the raven returned with two vials of water and gave them to the wolf.

The gray wolf sprinkled the water of death on the body of Tsarevich Ivan, and immediately the parts of his body grew back together. He then sprinkled the water of life on the body, and Tsarevich Ivan stood up.

"I have slept for a long time," he said.

"Yes," answered the wolf, "you would have slept forever had I not brought you back to life!"

"Your brothers killed you as you slept. They have taken the Princess Elena, the horse and the Firebird. You must hurry home. I suspect one of your brothers will not be able to resist marrying the fair Princess!"

And, in fact, Vasily was to marry Elena the Fair that very day.

Tsarevich Ivan rode back to his father's palace and found that the wedding had already taken place. The guests were just starting on the wedding feast. When Ivan entered the feasting chamber, Elena saw him and sprang up from the table. She ran to him and kissed him, crying out, "It is Prince Ivan who is my beloved bridegroom, not Vasily!"

When Tsar Vyslav asked her what was meant by this extraordinary turn of events, Elena told him how the two elder brothers had threatened her with death if she told him the truth, how they had killed Tsarevich Ivan and stole the golden-maned horse and the Firebird.

At this, the rage blazed up in their father's eyes. His humanity melted from him, and he stood before them in Crinos form. Of those there, only Tsarevich Ivan and the Princess Elena did not cower from Vyslav's wrath as he slew the dishonorable Dimitri and Vasily.

Returning to his human form, the Tsar sent out word to the Garou that the gray wolf, an outcast from the tribes, was to be restored his rank for aiding Vyslav's son. No more would the gray wolf wander the land alone, barred from the succor and company of his kind. For his aiding his Kin, he was accepted as a member of the Thirteen Tribes.

As for Tsarevich Ivan and the Princess, they lived happily ever after. One of their children bred true, and in time, he became one of the Silver Fangs' greatest heroes.



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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to the people of Russia and everyone who believed we could actually pull this thing off.

# Rage Across RUSSIA

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# Introduction: Mother Russia

*For the Motherland's Sake, Go Forward, Heroes*  
— I. Toidze, Soviet Russian Political Poster

Listen closely, my child, and guard well the secrets you are about to learn. I am going to tell you of your forefathers and your children. I will tell you of the despair they now face. Long and glorious is the history of our kind within the Motherland. Our blood is found in the line of tsars and nobles, as well as the greatest warriors of the steppe. You can claim kinship, my child, with the mightiest of the Cossacks. This nobility and heritage is something that you must pass on to your children.

You must also know that there are many things in legend that are true. Heroes and demons, witches and werewolves—all of these must find a place in your mind, for they are as real as you are. Before you say I am insane, listen to what I say. Perhaps, if you listen well, the madness of the flock will not fall upon you.

There is so much I must teach you, and so little time. While your father has been keeping you safe, my pack and I have been fleeing the hunt. I did not want to leave my family or my lifemate, but your father and I knew we had to keep you safe until you were ready to take your part in the war.

Realize that the Garou are real, and although you lack our power, you are of our blood. You are Kinfolk, and someday in your line, the wolf may breed true.

## *The Folly of Pride*

I must tell you of the pride and folly of the Garou of Russia. We were given the duty of controlling the flock in the Motherland. We protect Gaia, the spirit of the earth, from the rising tide of humans. For years, we alone among the Garou were able to fulfill this task. Our kind in the area now known as Europe would call upon us in their time of need, and we would come. We even kept the mighty Baba Yaga in check, and, in the end, we thought we had destroyed her. We of the Motherland grew proud, and that pride brought us low. In our pride, we failed to tend to the needs of our flock, and they fell to the corruption of the Wyrms. Our blood was removed from the throne, and Gaia began to scream in her anguish. Still, in our pride, we did not seek the aid of those who might have helped us.

## *The Price of Pride*

Without guidance, the flock grows. By supporting that growth, Gaia suffers. They strip her skin and lay open her body for shale and coal. The woodlands of our origin hold only stumps where the men have passed. The land itself is now burned and despoiled where the Wyrms-born chemicals are poured, and the folly of human science makes itself known.

When Gaia suffers, the Garou suffer as well. The pride of the Children of the Motherland is known by the others of our kind. Even the Wyrms know. It tempts the most prideful of our kind and often leads them from the true Way. As Kinfolk, you must help us guard against this. Because of our former greatness, the Wyrms takes great joy in bringing us low. Only strength of will can help us resist the lies of the Wyrms.

Even now, our pride seems to have no end, for we lose face if we ask help outside our sept. Even within our sept, the foolish laugh at those who require assistance outside their own pack.

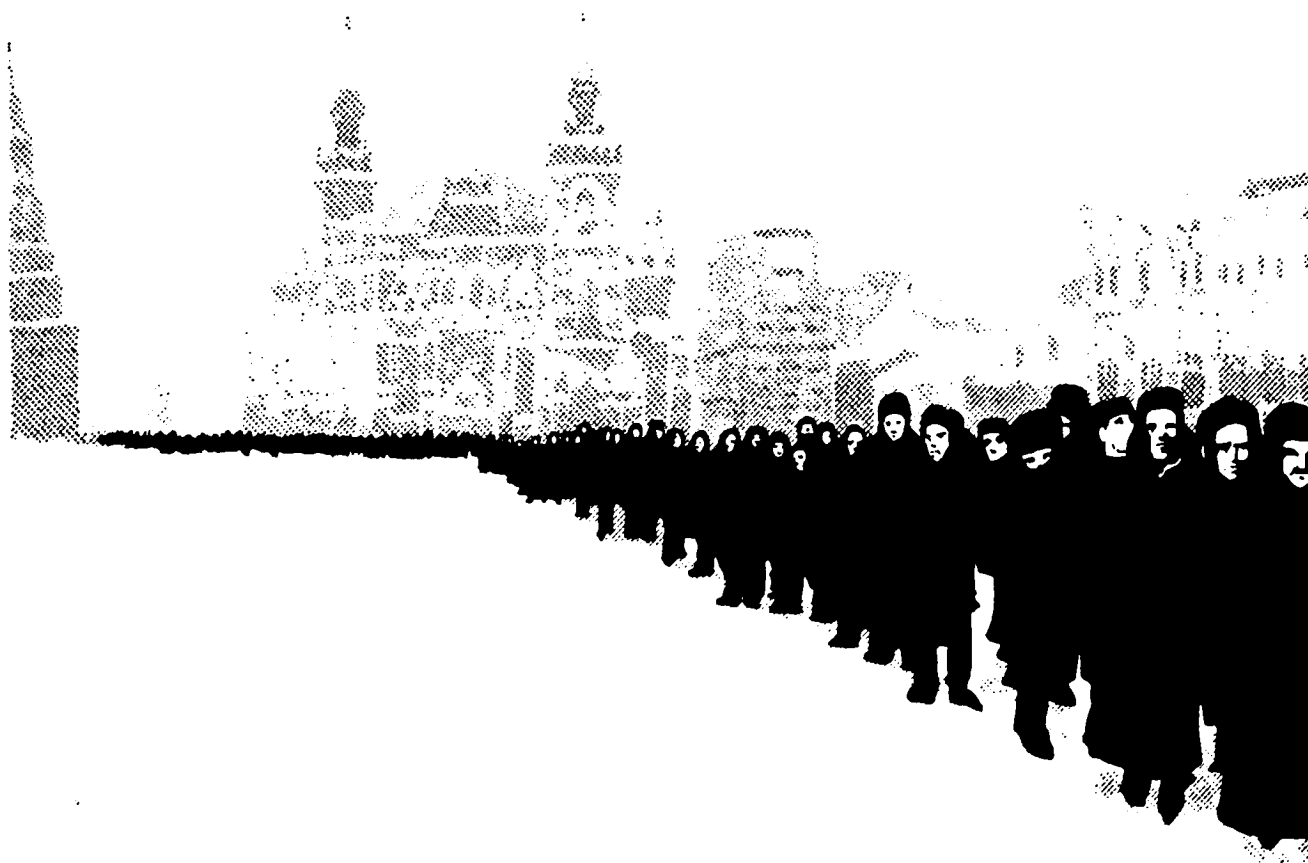
## *The Wyrms Rises*

Beginning in the 1800s, agents of the Wyrms began sowing the seeds of discontent in Russia. Eventually, this discontent bred rebellion. In 1917, any hopes we might have had for maintaining our hold on Russia through the

royal family were dashed. The Bolshevik Revolution was many things to many people, but to the us, it was the first in a long line of defeats. Agents of the Wyrms controlled the new government and our culture. Everything that had once aided our mission was lost. The old legends were refuted, and we were forced underground.

As Russia modernized, we found it harder to act. Ties with Kinfolk were broken, and many of our children were never taught the Ways. The great wolf packs that once roamed the countryside were driven further into the wilds. Their numbers dwindled as the humans encroached. Waves of humanity swept over our territories. Our sacred grounds were entombed in the glass and steel of their Wyrms-ridden cities. For the first time in our history, we looked upon the face of fear.

Human expansion despoiled the land. Wyrmsholes fester in the land, and creatures creep forth to bring the age-old battle to our homes. Greater and more ferocious creatures hunt the wild lands each night, and a powerful force draws the very life from our caerns. The shadow of the Wyrms falls upon our land, forcing even our best Theurges to struggle to reach the Umbra. We fear that this shadow takes the form of our ancient enemy, the one we thought was destroyed. If this enemy is back, if Baba Yaga once again walks the Earth, we may be the first to know the true meaning of the Apocalypse. Where she treads, we can be sure that the Koshchie, the Talon of the Wyrms, will soon follow.





## Hope

So hear me now, my child. If one of the breed comes to you, do your part. Heed their words, and aid them if you can. The war has come to us, and it might be decided by the actions of Kinfolk like yourself. Our hope lies with Kin like you. The next generation must not have our pride or repeat our folly. I fear that if we do not work together, we are all damned.

Again I must leave you, my child, but I do so out of love. If the fight is not carried on now, we will leave you nothing but the torment of the Wyrms and memories of a better time.

## How To Use This Book

*Rage Across Russia* is intended for use with **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**; it incorporates elements from **Vampire: The Masquerade** as well. While the stories and ideas contained within this work are intended for Garou characters, the majority can easily be adapted for use in a **Vampire** chronicle.

Russia is an enormous country, one where many types of werereatures have lived. Garou are the only lycanthropes living there today in great numbers. Rumors of a Gurahl stronghold in the far northern reaches of Siberia are greatly exaggerated. Other shapeshifters do live in Russia, but with the exception of the Siberian Corax, most are very hard to find.

In the Gothic-Punk world, Russia is a dangerous place. Even with the Soviets gone, people still vanish. Questions remain unanswered, and for most people, it is safer that way. The quickest way to disappear is to ask questions. Not even supernatural beings are immune: Garou, vampires and mages are just as likely to become victims.

What is Russia to the Garou? In the eyes of many, it is one of their greatest failures. Indeed, some believe that the first battles of the Apocalypse will be fought here. The outcome of these battles may determine the final course that the Apocalypse takes.

Russia is the ancestral home of the Silver Fangs, and it is one of their greatest failures. In the few years since the Russian Revolution, the country has become thoroughly corrupted by the Wyrms; few Garou care to speak about this. The Garou in Russia, led by the Silver Fangs, fight on in silence against the growing power of the Wyrms. By doing this, they may very well have damned themselves, and possibly the rest of the world.

When did this silence start? The Garou of Russia are proud. Their protectorate was one of the last to fall to "human progress." This has given them cause to believe that they can win this fight on their own. This attitude can easily find reinforcement. However, the Garou of Russia do not fully understand what they face. If they did, they could not possess what little hope they retain.

Outside of Russia, the majority of Garou seem to have given up on ever rescuing the land from the clutches of the

## Other Werewolf Books

*Rage Across Russia* refers to many things introduced in previous **Werewolf** sourcebooks. The following books will be helpful in running a Russian campaign: *Werewolf Players Guide*, *Book of the Wyrms* and *Umbral: The Velvet Shadow*. In addition, the Silver Fangs' greatest Russian caern is detailed fully in *Caerns: Places of Power*. While this is not required for play, it will come in handy for stories involving the Sept of the Crescent Moon.

Wyrms. They have heard little, if anything, from the Garou who dwell within, and, with the fatalism of a dying race, they seem to have accepted that Russia is beyond their reach.

There are some tribes who have not accepted the loss of Russia. Their curiosity drives them to attempt infiltrating Russia to discover the truth. So far, none of them have returned from these endeavors. They are all blocked by the Shadow Curtain, a dark shroud in the Umbral that blankets the whole of Russia.

Those who study such things state that the appearance of the Shadow Curtain corresponds to the fall of the Iron Curtain and wonder about the connection. Spirits that have managed to pass beyond the curtain bring back chilling news. The native Garou fight for their own survival against almost certain destruction by forces unknown. They are in desperate need of assistance, but in their pride, they refuse to ask for it.

There is glory to be found in Russia, but whether anyone will live to claim it is anyone's guess. One need only look about the landscape to see the touch of the Wyrms in Russia. It is apparent in the halls of political power. It is obvious in the apathy, paranoia and corruption that was the mark of everyday life during the Communist days of Russia. The corruption persists even now. The Maeljin Incarna brought their own special brand of suffering to the land and people in ways that were impossible in the more open societies of other nations. The vampires that used to control Russia never realized that the environment they created was a spawning ground for a power they neither understood nor controlled.

Welcome to Russia. The Wyrms are waiting.

## Theme: Whose War Is It?

By far, one of the principle themes of this book is conflict. Russia is a place where the environment has been almost systematically devastated. There is much the Garou have to do to stop the Wyrms from encroaching on the soil and soul of the land. They must root out and destroy the source of the evil — but one problem remains. What is the source? Is it truly the witch, Baba Yaga, as many claim? Or is Baba Yaga actually trying to save the land, unaware of the greater horrors she unleashes?

The conflict in Russia is one in which almost anyone could be the enemy. It could be a witch hiding in a nearby village, the vampire that lives down the street or even your own Sept Leader. Betrayal, manipulation and corruption are central plots whose roots may be found throughout Russian history.

Lack of knowledge is a central theme as well. In Old Russia and the Soviet Union, knowledge was a two-edged sword, one that could cut the person who wielded it as easily as it cut his enemies. Staying quiet kept people safe. That strategy still works today. Despite their politeness and friendliness, Russians are very reticent when asked about dangerous topics. Finding information without the right contacts can be very difficult.

## *Mood: The Hand of Darkness Encroaching*

The mood in Russia is one of gloomy despair and fear, tinged perhaps with a tiny glint of hope. Mother Russia is dying. Her Garou have felt the iron hand of oppression upon themselves and have witnessed it among the humans. They have felt the fear of the flock and have gone into hiding because of it. Many have died over the years, and their virtually useless sacrifices color the thoughts of many more.

Because of their retreat, the Garou could do little but watch as decades of neglect by the Communists led to the ruination and contamination of the land, rivers and air. Some fought, some died, but a few banded together to unleash their rage in epic conflict. The few times this occurred, the death toll was legendary. By the end of Stalin's regime, the spirit of both Russia's people and the Russian Garou were crushed.

The Garou have been oppressed, and now that they have freedom, a new enemy is rising. As it prepares to push them down yet again, many are driven to the point of Harano. Others have found new strength in their fight against the destruction of the land. Some have even allied with the powers of darkness to prevent it. Despite its seeming war with the Garou, it has shown that it seeks the cleansing of the damaged land as much as any Garou.

Russia is a place of war. Conflict rages on a number of fronts, and in many cases, it is very hard to prove decisively who the enemy is. Despair waits for those who must make dangerous choices. It becomes clear that a decision must be made, and fear of the consequences of the wrong choice weighs heavily on the minds and hearts of the greatest of Russia's Garou.



# The Garou and Their Kin

Despite all the efforts of the Wyrms and other forces in Russia, the Garou remain. They have survived numerous attempts to destroy them. The reason for this is simple: they have the assistance of the Kinfolk, the unsung relations of the Garou.

Kinfolk have played an important part in the Garou's survival in Russia. They have even held Russia's throne, where they ruled the great empire with the Garou in the background. In Russia, Garou and Kinfolk are family, and they are quite protective of each other.

When the Impergium ended, the Garou ruled the area that would become Russia through their Kinfolk. The Kinfolk ruled according to Garou wishes, holding Russia back while the Industrial Revolution shook the rest of the world. Thus was the influence of the Wyrms delayed in Russia, until a man named Peter ascended to the throne.

Peter was Kinfolk, but he held that the beliefs of the Garou and the others were outdated. Through his efforts, the backwards nation of Russia began to modernize. This empowered the Glass Walkers, and the influence of the Eastern European Shadow Lords also increased.

Despite this "betrayal", the Garou continued to value their Kinfolk. These "not-quite-Garou" could walk undetected among men and among the Garou's enemies. They also had access to political powers the Garou did not and could utilize rituals and fetishes gifted to them from their "family."

Among the various social stratas in Russia, Kinfolk of the various tribes may still be found. The blood of the Silver Fangs, Black Furies and Shadow Lords can be found in the descendants of the Russian aristocracy. Those of Cossack lineage may possess the bloodline of these tribes, along with the heritage of the Get of Fenris and the Bone Gnawers. Kinfolk of the working class may trace their lineage to any tribe of Russia, and some Russians with Gypsy backgrounds might be carrying the blood of the Children of Gaia, the Uktena or perhaps even the Fianna.

Kinfolk gave Russian Garou an edge and helped them to survive the years of the purges, many of which were directed not only at "enemies of the state", but also against the Garou. It is by Kinfolk that the blood survives, and the Garou of Russia acknowledge this fact.

## Wolves in Russia

With its size and vast wilderness, Russia is home to one of the largest indigenous wolf populations in the world. These wolves find food in the abundant herds of wild and domesticated hoofed animals. In Russia, wolves benefited from internal instability. Efforts to control them met with little success, despite some of the extreme methods used.

Overall, the population of wolves in Russia seems linked to times of trouble.

In the 20th century, wolves followed in the footsteps of humans, penetrating into the taiga of Siberia and the deserts. This expansion of the range of the wolf led to an expansion in the range of the Garou. Western Russian werewolves, such as the Silver Fangs, Red Talons and Shadow Lords, followed the migrating packs and came into contact with the Russian Wendigo and Uktena, who were tied closely to the small wolf and native populations who already lived there.

The wolf population peaked to approximately 150,000 prior to World War II. Control measures instituted after the war resulted in the killing of over 40,000 wolves in Russia (along with no small number of Garou, mostly Red Talons and Wendigo). The population soon dwindled to between 60,000 and 70,000 wolves. However, in the 1980s, a new increase, corresponding to the internal economic crisis, began.

Overall, wolf attacks on humans, whether by healthy or rabid wolves, are extremely rare. In fact, many of the reported cases of wolf attacks are actually in response to the effect of the Delirium on humans witnessing Garou attacks.

It is interesting to note that Russian wolves live much closer to humans than their western counterparts. This is because the Russian people tend to leave fewer deer or caribou for them. Wolves range particularly close to humans and livestock in the agricultural regions of the country. During the latter half of the 20th century, wild game became more prolific, and new populations of wolves developed in the Russian forests. Recently, though, Russia's difficulties have led to greater human depredation of wild and game animals. Thus, the wolves have again begun ranging closer to humans and cattle.

The Russian government, in an attempt to cover up its own corruption and incompetence, found a new enemy. This was encouraged by the Shadow Council of Brujah vampires, who were beginning to tie the wolf population to the nearly stable population of Garou.

Hunting methods for wolves in Russia are virtually identical to those in the United States, except for the practice called flag hunting. Using this method, a rope of colored flags is used to cordon off an area of the forest in which wolves are hiding, confining them to one area while the hunters search. Russian methods of wolf control also include the extermination of pups in dens, limited use of poisons and, more recently, hunting from aerial gunships and motor vehicles.

In many cases, the vampires provided special ammunition, such as silver and incendiary rounds, especially if a hunting group was going into a region known to be a Garou haunt. Predator control in Russia has taken its toll on the Garou, particularly the Red Talons, who would often attack hunting parties. These counterattacks were often quickly dispatched as soon as the humans brought weapons with silver and incendiary ammunition to bear.



As times change in Russia, the centralized efforts at eliminating wolves are being replaced by the older, poorly supplied methods. While the hunting of wolves took a serious toll on Garou, wolves seem to be doing relatively well, especially in the face of looming economic and social collapse within Russia.

## Source Material

More novels have been written on the subject of the Cold War with the Soviet Union than perhaps any other topic involving Russia. These may prove useful, at least if you want an idea of the way the Russian military worked or inspiration for an espionage campaign. A number of books on Russian politics and people can be found in your local library. Movies can be helpful as well, especially when describing the locales in your game. Fiction, non-fiction, periodicals and films are listed below.

## Books

*The New Russians*, by Hedrick Smith, is a good background source related to the roots of Russia's problem. It contains a great deal of useful information about the people of Russia, their politics and the internal problems faced by their nation.

*Russians as People*, by Wright Miller. While this is an older publication, it contains a good overview of the Soviet people without delving too far into the politics.

*The Soviet Union* (Fourth Edition), by Vadim Medish. A good overview of the ethnicity, climate, geography and political structure of the Soviet Union.

*Ten Days That Shook the World*, by John Reed. Reed was an American journalist and member of the American Communist party who escaped to the Soviet Union after being indicted for treason during the Red Scare following WW I. He was buried beside the Kremlin Wall in Moscow with other Bolshevik heroes. The book describes the Bolshevik Revolution.

*The Other Side: How Soviets and Americans Perceive Each Other*, by Robert English and Jonathan Halperin of the Committee for National Security. Soviet and American perceptions of each other through books, movies, media coverage and political propaganda.

*Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History*, by Charles Halperin. The time of the Tatar Yoke.

*The Formation of Muscovy 1304-1613*, by Robert Crummey. Moscow's rise to power in Russia.

*Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel*, by John Scott. First-hand account of Stalin's industrialization and the First Five Year Plan in the industrial city of Magnitogorsk ("Magnetic Mountain").

*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Exile in Siberia under Stalin.

## Fiction:

*Rusalka*, *Chernevog* and *Yvgenie*, by C.J. Cherryh, form an excellent series set in Old Russia. They contain a great deal of folklore and a good story.

*The Brothers Karamozov*, *Crime and Punishment* and *Notes from the Underground*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky. All literary classics and must-reads for anyone truly interested in an in-depth study of the Russian people and their trials and tribulations.

*War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy. Considered one of the greatest novels of all time; if you have the time for this one, you may want to try it.

*Russian Lacquer, Legends and Fairy Tales* (Volumes I and II), by Lucy Maxym, contains a wonderful collection of Russian tales that, while concise, tell the stories well. The stories are illustrated by pictures taken from Russian lacquer boxes.

## Publications

*U.S. News and World Report* contains exactly what its title suggests. It is excellent for current information about Russia. The issue from April 13th, 1992 contains more information on Russia's environmental problems.

*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*. English language translations of the major stories in various Soviet newspapers.

There are also a number of Russian or Soviet publications, such as *Soviet Life*, *Pravda* and *We*. All three are available in translated form in the United States.

## Movies

*Russia House*, starring Sean Connery and Michelle Pfeiffer. A modern tale of love and espionage set in Russia.

*Gorky Park*, the film adaptation of the novel of the same name, is a murder mystery set in Moscow.

*The Hunt For Red October*, directed by John McTiernan and starring Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin; based on the book by Tom Clancy. The last real Cold War thriller.

*The Russians are Coming* is an amusing film about when East meets West. It is useful for breaking out of the Soviet stereotype, such as the ones depicted in the James Bond films and *Red Dawn*.

*Red Dawn*, directed by John Milius. While this is certainly not the best movie depicting the Russian people or society, it does give a feel for what Russia's Garou are up against. Beware, however. The film represents the absurd paranoia of the later years of the Cold War, almost as if it were a last gasp to prove how important America's stand against the "Evil Empire" was.

There are numerous other movies in the "East Meets West" genre that could prove interesting to those with the time. However, many of these will not be overly useful in running a Russian campaign. It is best to choose carefully.

## *Russian Films*

*Ivan the Terrible* and *Alexander Nevsky*, directed by Sergei Eisenstein. Excellent black and white films depicting legendary Russians. A must for anyone using historical Past Life flashbacks in their game.

*Battleship Potemkin*, directed by Sergei Eisenstein. This film about the revolt of sailors on the Potemkin was a stirring revolutionary statement for Russians. One of the classic early films, Eisenstein revolutionized film editing

and directing techniques. This one is a film school perennial.

*Dersu Uzala*, directed by Akira Kurosawa, is a movie set in the Siberian wilderness in the early part of the Soviet Regime. Its account gives a feel for the territory. The main character, Dersu Uzala, tells a compelling story about the way of life of Siberian hunters and the dying of their culture. While it is directed by Kurosawa, one of the greatest Japanese film directors (and one of the greatest directors of all time), the film was funded by the Soviets.





# Chapter One: History

*Question: Is it dangerous to remember in the USSR?*

*Answer: I do not believe so, but I am not sure that my opinion is shared.*

— Yuriy Afansyev, Director, USSR Institute of History and Archives, 1986

## *The Time of the Tsars*

During the time of the Impergium, and for many years thereafter, Russia's people were nomadic tribes of wandering barbarians. The Slavs, ancestors of the modern Russian people, lived in the northern forests. In those days, it was easy for the Garou to track the wandering humans, and many packs would follow the nomads, keeping their flock under close watch. After the Impergium, the Silver Fangs of Russia reversed their decision. The Garou were charged with two responsibilities: teaching the humans respect for Gaia and protecting humanity from the corruption of the Wyrn.

To this end, the packs chose certain families of humans and either joined them or followed them on their migrations. These were the first Kinfolk families of Russia. Under the guidance of Garou mystics, and through the Kinfolk families, the worship of the Mother Goddess flourished in the land. This religion, along with other ancient beliefs, persisted in Russia even after the country's conversion to Orthodox Christianity.

During this time of nomads, and the subsequent time of the tsars, the Silver Fangs forged their links with the aristocracy. The chiefs and the greatest warriors of the humans were chosen from the flock. These ties would persist as both a blessing and a curse to the Garou.

## *The Russian Empire*

The Chronicles, compilations kept by Russian monks from the 11th century to the 16th century, are a major source of information about Russian history. The most important and the oldest is the *Povest*, or *Tales of Bygone Years*, which is also known as *Nestor's Chronicle*. It tells the tale of Russia, although it is ignorant of the Garou's place in Russian history.

The unification of the Slavic tribes of Novgorod under a Scandinavian chief marks the beginning of the Russian Empire. The chief, called Rurik, was a Kinfolk of the Get of Fenris.

This caused some small strife early on between the Silver Fangs and the Get over just whose flock had the right to rule over Russia. This dispute was finally settled years later



when the Silver Fangs' Kinfolk ascended to the thrones of the tsars.

Rurik's descendants continued to expand the empire. In 882, Oleg, Rurik's successor, moved the capital from Novgorod to Kiev, known then as Kiev Rus. Igor, one of the first rulers of Kiev Rus, attacked Constantinople in 941 and signed a treaty with its country in 944. This began commerce between the Byzantine Empire and the burgeoning Russian Empire.

## Vladimir

Vladimir, the youngest of three brothers vying for the throne, won his position with the aid of the Varangians (the Scandinavians). He continued the previous rulers' practice of subjugating the Slavic people. He is also known for his notorious womanizing and for raping his brother's wife.

In 988, he converted to Christianity. His conversion was brought about by his desire to marry the Byzantine emperor's sister, Anna. The emperor would only permit this if Vladimir converted. By accepting Christianity, Russia became part of Europe. This marriage was also an important political alliance. Vladimir was later declared a saint.

The treaty with Byzantium opened the way into Russia for the Ventrue clan of vampires and attracted the attention of the Tzimesces and Shadow Lords of Eastern Europe and Germany.

The power of the Garou waned as outside forces began turning their attention to the newly formed Russian Empire. The power of superstition and the strength of the old religion faded with the advent of the Russian Orthodox Church. New places of worship were erected on the sites of old churches and, despite Garou efforts, the Church became the greatest cultural force in Russia. The Silver Fang blamed the Get of Fenris for this setback, for Vladimir was a distant Kinfolk of the Get.

The Garou, while they retained some measure of influence in the houses of the aristocracy, could not stop their decline in power as more outside forces established ties within the growing empire. Vampires gained a substantial position among the aristocracy and continually vied with the Garou for influence.

## Kiev Rus

*O Russian land! You are already far beyond the hills.*

— *The Lay of Igor's Campaign: The Omen*

Kiev Rus had three basic political forms — the prince, the Boyars (who formed the oligarchy) and the Veche, the town assembly. The prince was a warrior, merchant and administrator. The Boyars were warriors, landowners and advisors. The Veche, however, was a form of popular government.

Every free male had membership in the Veche. It was strongest in the cities, especially Novgorod. Every town

had a Veche bell. When it rang, everyone would gather around it to discuss major questions. In Novgorod, the Veche was so strong that it had the power to appoint the prince.

In Kiev Rus during this period, the Glass Walkers can first be found, making their mark on Russian history. The power of the Veche in Kiev Rus came from the support of these city Garou, and their Kinfolk families held places in the Veche in various towns across Russia. As powerful an impact as they made here, however, they didn't truly come into power until later in Novgorod. This alternative presented a challenge to the Silver Fangs' own style of leadership, but the Silver Fangs never took direct action.

Towns in Kiev Rus seem to have developed for largely economic reasons. There are estimates that, in the early 1100s, Kiev had 40,000 to 50,000 people, while Novgorod had about 10,000 to 15,000. Commerce seemed to be the dominant economy in Kiev Rus, which was probably inspired by the Varangians' trade route into Greece.

## Yaroslav the Wise

Yaroslav the Wise became ruler after Vladimir's death. By Norse accounts, he was a stingy coward. By Russian accounts, however, Yaroslav was a wise ruler who strengthened the role of education in his country. He was considered to be a great hero because of his campaigns against the Finns, Lithuanians, Poles and the Pechenegs (a race of steppe peoples).

In 1043, he attacked Constantinople. The trade route from the Varangians to the Byzantines consolidated under the control of Kiev Rus. Yaroslav also built Santa Sofia, the first stone church, modeled after the church of the same name in Constantinople. He also aided in the spread of Christianity.

Yaroslav loved religion and devoted himself to it. He translated church documents from Greek to Slavic. He was enthralled by the countries to the south of Russia and slowly became "Slavicized". This is one reason the Varangians were critical of him. Another reason was his close alignment with the Silver Fangs instead of the Get of Fenris. Shortly before his death in 1054, he admonished his sons to live together in peace before they lost their land.

After Yaroslav's death, Kiev Rus entered a period of decline, disintegration and nearly continuous civil war. Vladimir II Monomakh (1113-1125) briefly halted this decline. The aristocracy invited him to rule, but he supported the demands of the peasants and the Church. Upon his death, Vladimir's sons fought for the throne. Kiev Rus broke up in 1132.

## Decline of Kiev Rus

One sign of the decay of Kiev Rus was the breakdown of commercial trading. The three main trading partners were the Greeks, Germans and Persians. However, trade with

Byzantium was cut off in the 11th and 12th centuries by fighting with the Povolotsy steppe people. By the time the trade route was reopened, Byzantium had declined.

It is said that the Silver Fangs cleverly caused the problems with the people of the steppes, knowing it would eventually crack the power of Kiev Rus and the Glass Walkers, but most Garou believe this is giving the Silver Fangs too much credit. They look instead to the Shadow Lords, who are known to have Kinfolk families among the steppe people.

Trade with the Germans in the North Baltic area became especially important after the breakup of Kiev Rus. Persian trade was mainly for luxury items, but this also became difficult due to Asian internal difficulties. Agriculture at this time was done by the slash and burn method, although in some sections, the wooden plow was used.

A sense of history and connection to Byzantium were crucial to Kiev Rus, especially during the Imperial Russian period, which emphasized this ancient connection. The legacy of Kiev Rus included Christianity and the concept of one common land. This concept is expressed in the *Lay of Igor's Campaign*. The land is said to belong to "neither Magyars nor Poles, but grandsons of a common grandfather."

During these times, Garou and vampires would occasionally involve themselves in struggles among the houses, but the majority of the Garou were content to guard their Kinfolk and maintain their watch against the encroachment of the Wyrms. Vampires often became the sudden target of Garou hatred during these years.

## Appanage Russia

The period known as Appanage Russia came after the collapse of Kiev Rus. One of the most powerful cities during this period was Novgorod. The city was a center of trading, especially for fur and wax. It eventually became the Eastern end of the Hanseatic League.

Novgorod was especially notable for its Veche, again supported by Glass Walkers and their Kin. The city had 10 sections, each with its own Veche. The mayor (*posadnik*) was its head elected official. The prince was appointed and had to be approved by the Veche. The prince was not permitted to live in Novgorod, but lived instead in a special section of his own. The prime purpose of the prince in Novgorod was defense — he was essentially a "hired gun".

Next to the head of the Orthodox Church, the Archbishop of Novgorod was the most important person in the Church. The archbishop was also important politically, as he often became the mediator between the prince and the people.

The church was the one source of unity in Appanage Russia. The archbishop was respected by everyone, no matter where he lived. The monasteries also became the major agents of economic expansion and land develop-



ment. When they pushed outward, the peasants followed them.

## The Tatar Yoke

*Not a mighty cloud has covered the sky,  
Nor mighty thunders have thundered:  
Wither travels the dog, Crimea's Khan? —  
To the mighty Tsardom of Muscovy.*  
— "The Raid of the Crimean Tatars"

Russia also faced another crisis at this time. The Mongol invasion, known as the Tatar Yoke, lasted from approximately 1240-1480. Under the Tatars, however, the Church was given nearly full protection from raids and was exempted from paying tribute.

The Grand Prince Dmitrii won the first major victory over the Tatars at the Battle of Kulikovo on the Don River, where Dmitrii won his famous appellation "Dmitrii Donskoi". This victory, largely a matter of prestige, gave the Russians hope that the Tatars were not indestructible. The victory did not shatter the Tatar Yoke, however, as shown by the Tatar sacking of Moscow two years later. Regardless, Moscow began to rise in power.

The Tatar Yoke was secretly supported by the Shadow Lords, who had Kinfolk families among the Mongols. The Silver Fangs demanded that they remove their families from the Silver Fang territories, but the Shadow Lords claimed that they had no control over the Mongols and that there was nothing they could do. Most Garou still do not believe this.

## The Rise of Moscow

*Two Romes have fallen; one stands; a fourth there shall not be.*

— Monk Filofei to Vasilii III, c. 1510, about Moscow

Moscow's victory as the dominant Russian city was assured with the unification of Russia under Ivan III (1462-1505) and Vasilii II (1505-1533). The Tatar Yoke ended under Ivan III, when he refused to pay tribute to Khan Ahmed, leader of the Golden Horde, though the actual power of the Tatar Yoke had probably ended as early as the 1440s.

Ivan III also married a member of the Roman nobility—Sophia Paleologos, the niece of the last Byzantine emperor. The Pope hoped to use this marriage to convert Ivan III to Roman Catholicism. This failed, however, as Ivan hated Roman Catholicism. Sophia legitimized Russia and established a direct line to Byzantium and Rome. This was exactly what the Silver Fangs desired: new royal blood for the line.

Under Ivan III and Vasilii II, Russian territory increased by 300-400% with the annexation of Novgorod, Pskov, Tver and other territories. Ivan III was also the first to use

the title "Tsar", which is a Slavic corruption of the word "Caesar".

Ivan III and Vasilii II were both Kinfolk of the Silver Fangs. The tribe had seized the right of breeding with the bloodline of Rurik. The Get of Fenris were too weak compared to the Silver Fangs to defend their right over their flock. The supreme ascension of the Silver Fangs over the flocks of Russia had begun. However, with the invisible influence of vampires at cross-purposes, the Silver Fangs found it hard to maintain a strong hold over the tsars.

## Ivan the Terrible

*He was fearsome to the enemy, and was always prepared to fight for the fatherland. He was cruel to his subjects given to him by the Lord, being always ready to spill their blood, and both merciless and daring at killing.*

— Prince Ivan M. Katyrev-Rostovsky, *The Book of Annals*

During his reign, Ivan IV— known as Ivan the Terrible— greatly expanded Russian territory, as well as expanding trade to the Caspian Sea and opening trade with Siberia. In 1547, Ivan IV married Anastasia Romanov. The marriage proved to be crucial during the dynastic crisis shortly after Ivan's death.

Ivan IV's reign also included the English and Dutch "discovery" of Russia, which included the establishment of the Muscovy Company, a private British trading company. From 1565 to 1572, Ivan IV earned his title of Ivan the Terrible by killing 9,000 people in Tver and 42,000 in Novgorod.

Ivan was a Kinfolk of the blood of the Silver Fangs. Unlike the majority before him, he was willing to use his ties with the Garou to expand his influence and assert his control over Russia. Ivan used the Garou to support his armies and enforce his edicts on recalcitrant nobles.

Russia moved into Siberia in the 1580s, when the Stroganov family sent approximately 800 people into Siberia in search of fur. This angered the resident Red Talons and Uktena, who cut themselves off from the Garou councils. The Red Talons eventually returned, but the Uktena still have only tenuous contact with the council today.

## Fedor and the Signs of Madness

After Ivan's death, his son Fedor ruled from 1584 to 1598. Fedor, probably mentally retarded, was unable to rule effectively. The Garou whisper that Fedor was the first obvious sign that there was something wrong with the Silver Fang bloodline.

The true ruler of the empire was Fedor's brother-in-law, Boris Godunov. Boris persuaded the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church to create a Russian Patriarch in Moscow in 1589. Moscow then became the only independent Ortho-



dox Church, as the others were under Ottoman control. Fedor was the last confirmed descendant of Rurik. His death in 1598 led to a dynastic crisis and the "Time of Troubles."

Boris Godunov emerged as a leader after Fedor's death and persuaded the Patriarch to declare him Tsar. However, his rule was marred by three years of famine and rumors that Ivan IV's son, Dmitrii, was still alive. Boris Godunov died in 1604, and the people rallied around Dmitrii, who had arrived in Moscow after fighting several battles with Boris Godunov's forces.

## Dmitrii

*Such is the honor which demons render to those who love them.*

— St. John Chrysostom, on Dmitrii's death.

In Poland, Dmitrii had converted to Roman Catholicism and married Marina, a Polish noblewoman. Dmitrii was loved by his people, and was crowned Tsar on July 21st, 1605.

Dmitrii had several problems during his reign, however. His secret Catholicism conflicted with what the Russian Orthodoxy expected of the Tsar. Dmitrii also loved the West, especially the Poles, and wanted to reconnect Russia to the rest of Europe. The Boyars began to perceive Dmitrii as more foreign than Russian. This was reinforced by the

announcement of his marriage to Marina, which scandalized the Orthodox Clergy.

The Silver Fangs could not understand why their Kinfolk had gone renegade until they discovered that Dmitrii was now the Blood Bound ghoul of a Polish Tzimisce vampire. Prince Vasilii Shuysky, a Silver Fang Garou, decided to take direct action to save the tribe's hold on the throne.

Prince Shuysky played on the displeasure of the clergy and others, gathering boyars and commoners to spread rumors against Dmitrii. His pack infiltrated the palace guards. Despite repeated warnings, Dmitrii refused to believe that Prince Shuysky was anything but loyal.

Dmitrii also ignored the rumors of an assassination plot. Shuysky's group spread the word that the Poles were going to murder the Tsar. In the confusion, they carried out the assassination themselves. Dmitrii fought to resist and, at one point, attempted a jump of over a hundred feet in an attempt to get help. He fell to the street below.

The people, who loved Dmitrii, killed 2,000 Poles that day in Moscow. Shuysky was then able to convince the people that Dmitrii had been an impostor. Dmitrii's body was publicly displayed.

The Silver Fangs had not realized that Dmitrii's master had acted the night before. Dmitrii was now one of the undead— a vampire. Sightings of his body caused great

consternation among the people. Some claimed to have seen it moving out of ditches and off platforms.

Superstitious Muscovites attributed these sightings to black magic. To combat the force of evil in their midst, irate citizens captured the undead body. It was burned, and the ashes were fired out of a cannon pointed toward the West. It appeared as though Dmitrii's one night of immortal existence had come to an end.

## *A Series of Crises*

There were a number of other crises, especially after Vasili IV's death. Civil war broke out, followed by a war with the Poles and Swedes. There was also a second and a third "false Dmitrii".

Unknown to the populace, however, these "false Dmitriis" were the actual Dmitrii. Despite the best efforts of the citizens of Moscow, Dmitrii had faked his supposed death. Vicissitude and Obfuscation allowed him to make further attempts to regain the throne. In every instance, the Silver Fangs found him and chased him off. It is commonly believed by the Silver Fangs that Dmitrii was finally destroyed by a Silver Pack of the Garou.

The Boyars decided the only way to end the crises was to put the son of the Polish King Sigismund, Wladyslaw, on the throne. The Poles invaded in 1611. This was another plot by the Polish Tzimisce. Although his plot with Dmitrii failed, he tried to gain control through Wladyslaw. This also failed.

Calm was restored with the election and coronation in 1613 of Michael Romanov as Tsar, ending the dynastic crisis. The Silver Fangs were once again in charge.

## *Peter the Great*

The rise of Peter the Great led to the territorial expansion of Russia and its establishment as a European power. Peter moved the capital to Saint Petersburg, known as a window on the West and a gateway to Europe.

This sudden expansion of Russian power led to a great influx of foreign interest, especially in Europe. Seeing a new opportunity, a number of vampires from the aristocratic clans entered Russia and established themselves. They quickly moved to gain Peter as a pawn, but he managed to outmaneuver them on all counts. By the same token, he was able to manipulate the Garou, notably the Silver Fangs and Shadow Lords, into assisting him.

Under Peter, the Russian Empire truly became a reality. During Peter's rule, and the expansion of Russian knowledge and industry, the Glass Walkers once again gained prominence. Another player also entered the picture. As the amount of industry increased, the Wyrms slithered into Russia.

## *A Period of Weakness*

Following Peter's rule, the throne of Russia suffered a period of weakness. The various hidden factions tried to impose themselves on rulers too incapable of holding up under pressure. Eventually, the Ventrue placed Catherine II, known as Catherine the Great, on the throne of Russia.

Silver Fang power waned during her reign, and the Garou all but declared war on the vampires. The Kindred were now quite well entrenched. The Silver Fangs' focus on the vampire problem led them to neglect the business of keeping the aristocracy in control.

Seeing Russia's potential future problems, the Children of Gaia assisted Catherine's grandson, Alexander I, in taking the throne. Alexander began a series of reforms, but they were abandoned in the face of the Napoleonic Wars.

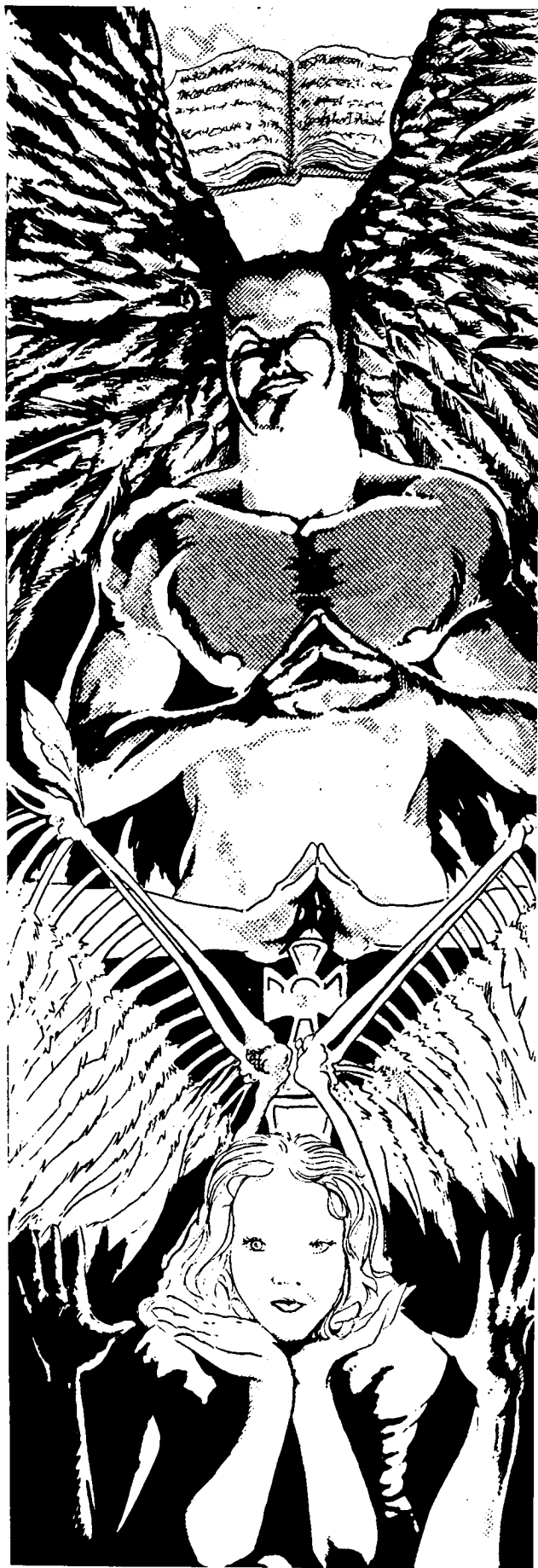
Throughout the many wars of the 19th century, the Ventrue were able to manipulate the Garou into fighting each other, inadvertently causing them to neglect the real threat.

Discontent spread among the intelligensia of Russia. Nicholas I, reacting to a near revolt, laid the groundwork for oppression: a secret police, censorship and the elimination of dangerous material from school texts. Nicholas began a campaign against education programs and intellectuals. None of the groups involved in Russia, whether vampire, mage or Garou, attempted to stop him. In the halls of power and the halls of learning, the Wyrms began its slow insinuation. The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th saw the end of the Russian Empire.

What the Garou did not and could not know was that Nicholas I was the pawn of a newly formed group of mages: the New World Order convention of the Technocracy. Their work was so subtle that none of the Garou today know these mages even exist. The years that followed in Russia were also tainted by New World Order intervention from on high, culminating in the worst atrocities of Stalin. Indeed, some suspect that Stalin was actually a mage of this convention.

The rulings of the nobility and the tsars fomented revolutionary activities. The ascension of Nicholas II, a well-intentioned but weak ruler, opened the door for other players, such as Rasputin, the "mad monk", who sought to manipulate the tsar through his wife and her concern for her hemophiliac son, Alexis. There are a number of Kindred today who claim to be Rasputin; one of them is a Malkavian in Russia and the other is a Nosferatu in Berlin. Who can say which one of them is telling the truth?

There were other players in the bid for power. The Brujah vampires' interest in revolution was tempered only by their anger. The Bone Gnawers, the Garou children of the oppressed serfs, supported the revolution, submitting themselves to slavery. In the midst of these movements, human revolutionaries struggled to make Russia a better place.



## The Tunguska Blast

On June 30th, 1908, an explosion occurred near the Tunguska River in the Tungus region of Siberia. The blast was about 500 miles northwest of Lake Baykal and 250 miles away from the town of Kirnsk. The explosion leveled all of the trees in a 20 mile radius. At least until 1960, one could still see evidence of the event: the trees knocked down were all burnt on one side and faced away from the center. No crater has ever been found.

There has never been a good explanation for the Tunguska blast. A number of theories have been advanced. The core of a comet might have hit the surface of the earth. A passing UFO might have had a tragic accident. Some theories even postulate a miniature black hole hitting the planet. These theories are all wrong.

The Garou are closer to the truth. The Uktena may know what happened, but they have no desire to share their knowledge. Other Garou believe that something went wrong with one of their rites. This is partly correct.

In actuality, the blast was the result of an epic battle between a Yakut Dreamspeaker mage and Trevero, a draconic Zmei who had broken the magical bonds holding him there. The mage eventually won the battle. An Uktena performed the ancient, almost forgotten rite to bind Trevero again.

## Revolution

*The workers have nothing to lose in this but their chains. They have a world to gain. Workers of the world, unite!*

— Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

*To win their own freedom,  
they wanted to escape their serfdom.*

*They hurled their words like arrows against their lord,  
and I wonder about those who approve of such a horde.*

— Prince Ivan Khvorostinin (c. 1603), *Autobiographical Verses*

With the decline of the tsarist period in Russia and the waning power of the tsars, it should have come as little surprise to the Garou that times were about to change. However, it did come as a surprise, and the Garou were unable to either stop the changes or even slow them down appreciably. Indeed, the Bone Gnawers were partly responsible for the Russian Revolution occurring in the first place.

In 1917, an uprising against the aristocratic leaders of Russia took place. This uprising was supported by the clan of vampires known as the Brujah. The vampires meant to use the revolution to avenge themselves upon the Ventrue and Toreadors. These clans were seen as responsible for maintaining the country as one of the last feudal, aristocratic nations in the world.

Oddly enough, despite attempts by Cainites from other nations, the Brujah found themselves on the winning side. The Bolsheviks, supported by the Bone Gnawers, took



control and began establishing a new society in which equality for all was to be the watchword.

With this Revolution, the traditional Garou power in Russia broke down. When the Bolsheviks moved in, the Brujah and Bone Gnawers were with them. The Brujah fell to fighting among themselves as they worked to manipulate Lenin and the other leaders. The major factions of Brujah in Russia destroyed each other.

At some point, early in the Communist control of Russia, Lenin realized that there was some sort of "Shadow Council" in Russia and set about manipulating it to his own ends. He managed to play the Brujah against one another while gaining substantial power himself.

## *The Brujah Council*

The Bone Gnawers quickly lost control of what they had helped create. The Brujah found out about the Garou ties to the aristocracy, Kinfolk living among the peasants and the extensive organizations of the Gangrel, Ravnos and Nosferatu vampires fairly quickly. Just as quickly, they moved to convert or eliminate them. Many Ventrue found their interests in Russia suddenly unprofitable. The Malkavians reveled in the chaos. The Garou who had helped bring about the revolution tried to break the tenuous grasp of the Brujah, but the Bone Gnawers were not crafty enough to second-guess or outmaneuver the vampires.

A civil war followed the Bolshevik takeover. Bolsheviks fended off competitors attempting to take power. Using this as a smokescreen, the Brujah carried out a war of their own against those who would oust them. They still turned against each other. The disorganization of the Garou took its toll, and many died. Silver Fang Kinfolk ties were lost as the Bolsheviks, now under shaky Brujah control, moved to eliminate the remnants of the aristocracy. Nicholas II, the former Tsar, and his family were executed. Supposedly Nicholas' youngest daughter, Anastasia, escaped, but the mundane world has no verification of this rumor. In actuality, the Silver Fangs secreted her out of Russia by Moon Bridge to live quietly with Kinfolk elsewhere in the world.

Facing resistance from the populace and opposition from leaders and intellectuals, Lenin began to institute a series of measures designed to set the Communists firmly in power. The Brujah, also uncertain of how to deal with their flagging attempt at Utopia, and unwilling to admit it, turned against Lenin. In 1924, they arranged his death. Leon Trotsky was to have replaced Lenin, but Stalin, with assistance from the Ventrue and Toreador, arranged for Trotsky's exile and seized power for himself.

## *Stalin*

*Not merely for a time have I, Misery-Luckless-Plight,  
attached myself to you;*

*I shall labor with you to your very death!*

— *Misery-Luckless-Plight*, anonymous Russian poem, 17th century

Political dissension became one of the greatest crimes in the Soviet Union. Dissidents could expect either exile or execution. Under Lenin, and later under Stalin, people began to disappear.

Stalin decided that modern industry was what the Soviet Union needed to compete with the rest of the world. Industrialization began, heedless of the potential consequences. The Brujah allowed this corruption to occur, while the Garou struggled uselessly to avert it. The forced industrialization and collectivization that was carried out under Stalin was extremely costly to the Garou, who eventually lost too much and faded into the background.

The Wyrms began to slowly reach out further and sink its tendrils into the Motherland. The Garou, weak from purges and the hunters, could do little to stop it. Those who opposed the Brujah or the Communists' plans ended up exiled or dead. In some cases, those who fought against the state faced fates worse than death.

Wyrms taint and infestation spread, and many Garou were afraid to act, fearing to bring down the hand of the Cainites that had shattered their power so recently. In some instances, the Garou acted and were successful, with Soviet leaders none the wiser. But in other situations, Garou moves were anticipated and countered. Like everyone else in the Soviet Union, the Garou were oppressed. Many came to accept the hand that fate had dealt them. Others fought and died with the nobility of true Garou. Some, however, sought to consolidate their forces, build their strength where the Wyrms and its agents couldn't reach them and infiltrate the lairs of their enemies. They waited in hiding for the right moment, a time when they could take back what had been theirs.

The Revolution left the Garou of Russia weak and disorganized. Never before had they faced an enemy as implacable as the idealistic vampires who were unaware of the corruption they nurtured within their country. Never before had they faced a concerted effort by humans and vampires to eliminate them. However, the Garou gained allies in unexpected places as the oppression of the new regime continued.

# The Great Patriotic War

*No one is forgotten, and nothing is forgotten.*

—Olga Bergholz, epitaph on the statue of Mother Russia at Piskariovskoye Cemetery, St. Petersburg

Many Westerners have no idea of the scale World War II took on the Eastern Front. These figures will give some idea: the D-Day invasion force (June 6, 1944) consisted of three airborne divisions and five infantry divisions. The Germans launched the Battle of the Ardennes (the Battle of the Bulge) on December 16, 1944, with 20 divisions and five in reserve. This included 970 tanks. At the time of the crossing of the Rhine (spring 1945), the entire Anglo-American force in Europe consisted of 85 combat divisions.

On the other hand, at the outset of the Battle of Kursk (Operation Citadel), the Germans fielded 570,000 men, or about 38 divisions (with 15,000 men in each division), 2500 tanks and SPGs, 10,000 field guns and 2000 aircraft. This was pitted against 977,000 Soviet soldiers (approx. 65 divisions), 3300 tanks, 20,000 field guns and 3000 aircraft.

At the beginning of Operation Kutuzov (the Soviet drive on Orel), the Soviets fielded 1,286,000 men (approx. 85 combat divisions). This was equivalent to the number of Anglo-American combat forces in Europe. In 1943, the Germans had 20 divisions in the West (including Italy) and

200 divisions in the East. By 1944, only a third of their troops were in the West. Two-thirds of their troops were needed on the eastern front.

Regardless of these facts, the Western battles have taken precedence in history. Everyone has heard of D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge, but few know of the Battle of Kursk or Operation Kutuzov.

Fifty-five million people, military and civilian, died in World War II. Twenty million of them were Soviets. One-tenth of all Soviets died. Most Westerners have no comprehension of what this really means. In St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) there is a graveyard for the victims of the siege of 1941-1944. There are about 900,000 people buried there in common graves. Each grave has 50,000 bodies in it.

The total Soviet death count for World War II was somewhere between 15 and 20 million people. The United States lost 350,000.

After the heavy losses of the "Great Patriotic War", Stalin killed 20 million more people in his purges and in gulags.

## Monuments

Most cities in Soviet Europe were designated "Hero Cities" for their sacrifice in the Great Patriotic War. Each city has a hero city monument with an eternal flame. Eternal flames are common in Soviet Europe. In Byelorussia,



the village of Khatyn was completely destroyed by the Nazis. It now stands as a monument to all Byelorussians killed in the Great Patriotic War. There is a marker at every spot where a house used to stand. There are rows of blocks standing as a testament to the destruction of the war. Each block is marked with the name of a village and a vial of dirt from that village. These represent all the other villages destroyed in Byelorussia.

Khatyn also has a memorial square. One corner holds an eternal flame symbolizing the one out of every four people in Byelorussia who were killed by the Nazis. Each of the other three corners has a tree, symbolizing the lives of the three out of four people who survived.

Many other cities also have monuments. The largest free standing statue in the world is in Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad). A woman, standing atop a hill, holds a sword aloft in victory. This commemorates the Battle of Stalingrad.

## *Garou During the Great Patriotic War*

*They died for the Russian land.*

*The grass withered from sorrow,*

*and the saddened trees dropped earthward.*

— *The Lay of Igor's Campaign: The Russian Defeat*

The sociopolitical upheaval of World War II did not leave the Garou of Russia untouched. The Garou's contribution to the war was mainly in aiding partisan operations. Regardless of Garou involvement, the sacrifices and victories of the Russian people in the war were almost entirely their own.

Partisan activities in occupied Russia were very severe and caused the German invaders no end of difficulties. The 10,000 partisans that took part in the Battle for Moscow are credited with destroying 18,000 Germans. Between August and November of 1943, partisans in Byelorussia destroyed 1,828 trains and locomotives and blew up 72 railway bridges. One historical account claims that from 1941-1944, Byelorussian partisans killed 500,000 Germans, including 47 generals and the German high commissioner of Byelorussia.

Byelorussia was the center of partisan activity. It did not act alone. At the same time, Ukrainian partisans were reported to have killed 460,000 Germans. The Garou leapt from shadows to tear Nazi soldiers limb from limb, and the Germans grew to secretly fear these "partisans."

The Russian Garou resistance front, largely run by Bone Gnawers and Glass Walkers, had nothing to do with Hitler's own partisans, the "Werewolves." While there were German Get of Fenris on Hitler's side, they are still despised by descendants of the Russian Get in the Varangians for their role in the war.

The war was a trying time for the Russian people. One of the many reasons Bone Gnawer Kinfolk are so loyal to their many Garou cousins is the work those Garou did for them

during the war. During the siege of Leningrad, there are many reports of people peeling wallpaper and eating the glue. The only reason many residents survived such practices was the assistance the Bone Gnawers, who used their Gifts to process the non-nourishing and often poisonous items into real food.

## *The Shadow Years*

Garou division at the onset of the revolution and opposition to industrialization led to the shadow war instigated by the Brujah.

It is quite possible that the Brujah saw the Garou as pawns of their hated Ventrue enemies; then again, they could have seen the Garou as an independent force. Either way, the werewolves had made enemies. This also led to the shadow war that has played between the Garou and the Brujah since the years following the Russian Revolution.

Many Soviet leaders, despite what they proclaimed publicly, were greatly interested in the supernatural. Secret research was conducted. Although none can say what was truly discovered, numerous papers on psychic phenomena and UFOs have come out of the Soviet Union. Some Soviet researchers actually accumulated proof of the existence of such things as vampires and werewolves, but that knowledge was quickly suppressed whenever the Brujah or Garou discovered it. The KGB had a secret internal division specifically created to deal with supernatural threats, an organization similar to the F.B.I. Special Affairs. "Supernatural threats" included Garou. Backed by vampires and other shadowy forces, the KGB began hunting the Garou.

Perhaps the Garou of Russia became afflicted by the emotions of the Urge Wyrms, or perhaps they truly did not see what needed to be done. Until 1986, the Garou were largely a silent force in Russia, with the exception of their partisan aid in World War II. Many coexisted with the humans in cities or on the edges of civilization. Others fought against the pervasive influence of the Wurm as the Brujah attempted to bring about the utter destruction of the Garou, unknowingly despoiling the Russian environment and corrupting its people with toxins and urges.

The Brujah were corrupted by the Wurm deep in their silent idealistic hearts. Unlike Pentex or the Black Spirals, the true leaders of the Soviet Union were not corrupted by one Wurm, but by all three. Thus, the influence of the Wurm came to pervade almost all of Russia as the Brujah remade the country in their own image.

Eventually, the Wurm became so deeply rooted in some areas of the Soviet Union that not even the greatest heroes of the Garou could not tear it out. In these areas, the Black Spiral Dancers secretly built their caerns. Like all other Garou, they hid from the eyes of the secret leaders, especially when vampires tended to classify all Garou as "enemies of the state."

The Black Spirals helped many environmental disasters along, and the Garou directed their energies against them.



If they could not reach the head of the snake to kill it, perhaps they could batter at its body.

## *The Garou Plight*

Some Garou, together with their Kinfolk, managed to infiltrate the Brujah-controlled government. Most of these insurgents were Glass Walkers, Bone Gnawers or Children of Gaia Kinfolk. The Children of Gaia took it upon themselves to work within the system, educating the powerful of the Soviet Union to prevent the spread of such Wyrmm-ridden technologies as atomic reactors and nuclear weapons. They failed. Reactors were built and weapons were detonated on the soil of the Motherland. The spirit of the land cried out, and the Children felt the sting of hate. The Red Talons howled in anger. Their cries rose above the more moderate voices in council. The Children of Gaia were exiled from Russia.

The Red Talons, however, were not the Garou responsible for this decision. The Shadow Lords goaded the Red Talons into taking action against the Children, and many members of both tribes were slain. The Children of Gaia who remained in Russia had the aid of the Glass Walkers. Some members of that tribe are now actually Children of Gaia.

The Garou of Russia have paid a price for their pride, and still will not admit their mistakes. They still refuse to seek help outside of Russia. Although things appear to be getting better for them at the moment, there are strange plans in the making. Things are not always what they seem in Russia. At the national level, the Garou have regained a small semblance of control from Boris Yeltsin, thanks to the diligent support of the Glass Walkers' Kin. Active opposition to the Garou's attempts at cleaning up Wyrmm-ridden areas has ceased, and recently the Garou have been finding aid in unexpected areas.

However, as the Garou become more active, so do the agents of the Wyrms. Caerns have been attacked and overrun by mysterious creatures. Survivors describe them as beings straight out of legend. These creatures are generally thought to be the materialized forms of certain Banes, but no one is quite certain. When the Garou move in to retake a captured caern, they find it empty and powerless. Where the Wyrms has struck, magic has been lost irretrievably. This is unusual, as places of power captured by the Wyrms are normally corrupted into its image.

The draining of the caerns is not the only mystery. It has proven next to impossible for anyone of Garou heritage to leave Russia. Moon Bridges will not open to caerns outside of the Motherland, and the Umbra has darkened. The spirit world is now harder to reach.

Lastly, many of Russia's Garou are still afflicted by one or more of the Urge Wyrms, although they are not aware of it. The Maeljin Incarna maintain active interests in Russia, setting the touch of their masters on the hearts and minds of all. Not even Gaia's defenders are safe.



# Timeline of Russia Since the Beginnings of Communism

- 1848 —Karl Marx publishes the "Communist Manifesto" in London.
- 1861 —The beginning of the "Era of Great Reforms," in which all Russian serfs are freed from bondage.
  - The Bone Gnawers become more active in the politics of the Garou.
- 1902 —V.I. Lenin, in exile, writes a revolutionary pamphlet entitled "What is to be Done?"
  - A number of Bone Gnawer leaders seize upon Lenin's ideas and form a sept, based in Moscow, known as the Sept of the People's Will. This experimental sept follows the social teachings of Marx.
- 1905 —After a popular uprising in St. Petersburg, Tsar Nicholas II establishes the Duma, the first Russian parliament.
- 1914 —August: Beginning of World War I.
- 1917 —March 2: Abdication of Nicholas II.
  - The Silver Fangs and the other aristocratic clans move to stop the impending revolution, but their methods prove unable to stop what has begun, especially since the revolution proves to be backed by a number of forces, including Brujah and Bone Gnawers.
  - November 7: Bolsheviks seize power.
  - December 7: Creation of the Cheka, later known as the KGB.
- 1918 —March 3: Brest-Litovsk peace treaty with Germany.
  - July: Bolsheviks defeat anti-Communist opponents to become the single ruling party.
  - July 17: Nicholas and his family are executed.
  - Lenin nationalizes the economy, private trade is barred, and collective farming is instituted.
  - The Garou begin to lose ground with the defeat of the anti-Communist forces. Even the Bone Gnawers begin to realize that what they began might be going out of control.
- 1922 —April: Stalin elected general secretary of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.
  - December: Founding of the U.S.S.R.
- 1924 —January 21: Death of Lenin.
- 1929 —January: Stalin's rival Leon Trotsky is expelled from the U.S.S.R.
  - April: The beginning of Stalin's Five Year Plans.
- 1930 —The beginning of the Great Purge. Stalin orders the death or imprisonment of untold millions of Soviets.
  - The Garou war with Stalin, but lose even more ground as the Brujah, despite their misgivings, step in and support him.
- 1933 —November 16: Diplomatic relations established between the United States and the U.S.S.R.
  - Limited contact established by the Glass Walkers with Garou outside of Russia.
  - August 23: Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed, insuring peace between Germany and Russia. Secret protocol divides Poland in half, grants Baltic states and Bessarabia to USSR.
  - September 1: German invasion of Poland. World War II begins. See the "Timeline for World War II on the Eastern Front."
- 1940 —August 20: Assassination of Trotsky in Mexico.
- 1946 —March 5: Winston Churchill makes Iron Curtain speech.
  - The Cold War begins.
  - Clampdowns result in the restricting of Garou movements, and the eventual loss of much outside communication.
  - Children of Gaia begin attempting to prevent the Soviet government from developing atomic weapons.
- 1948 —October 10: Launching of the Soviet's first guided ballistic missile.
- 1949 —April 4: N.A.T.O. formed.
- 1953 —March 5: Stalin dies.
  - September: Nikita Krushchev succeeds Stalin as the first secretary of the Central Committee.
- 1955 —May 14: Warsaw Pact is signed.
- 1956 —February: Krushchev criticizes Stalin's reign of terror.
  - October: Soviet forces quell uprising in Hungary.
  - The Children of Gaia's failure to prevent Soviet development of atomic weapons leads to their forced exile under the fangs of the Red Talons.
- 1957 —October 4: Soviet Union launches Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite.

- 1961 —April 12: Voskhod, the first manned space vehicle, is launched.
- Talks between Krushchev and President Kennedy in Vienna.
- August: Berlin Wall is erected.
- 1962 —October: Krushchev's decision to place nuclear weapons in Cuba touches off the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- 1964 —October 14: Krushchev ousted from Communist Party; Leonid Brezhnev assumes control.
- 1968 —August: "Prague Spring" movement in Czechoslovakia is stopped by Soviet Forces.
- 1971 —May: President Nixon visits Moscow. First Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty signed.
- September 11: Krushchev dies.
- 1975 —Soviet - Cuban intervention in Angola.
- 1979 —December: Soviet troops invade Afghanistan.
- 1981 —December: Various demonstrations lead to the declaration of martial law in Poland.
- 1982 —November 10: Brezhnev dies.
- November 12: Former KGB chief Yuri Andropov assumes power.
- 1984 —February 9: Andropov dies.
- February 13: Konstantin Chernyenko takes office.
- 1984 —March 10: Chernyenko dies.
- 1985 —March 11: Mikhail Gorbachev becomes General Secretary of the Communist Party.
- 1986 —Gorbachev begins process of reforms. Glasnost (political openness) and Perestroika (economic reconstruction) begin.
- Garou begin to slowly become active again, although by now, the forces of the Wyrms are entrenched.
- Boris Yeltsin becomes a Politburo member.
- 1987 —December: Gorbachev and Reagan sign a treaty limiting intermediate range ballistic missiles in Europe.
- 1988 —Gorbachev creates a full-time parliament and multicandidate elections.
- October: Gorbachev named President of the U.S.S.R.
- 250,000 Soviet troops are withdrawn from Eastern Europe.
- 1989 —April: Gorbachev purges the Central Committee of hard-liners.
- May 26: Yeltsin wins Moscow seat in the election for the new Congress of People's Deputies.
- Fall: Popular revolutions oust Communist regimes in Eastern Europe.
- November: The Berlin Wall falls.
- Soviet troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan.
- 1990 —Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia declare independence.
- Baba Yaga rises from torpor and begins to manipulate her pawns into position for a conflict with the Brujah council.
- July: Yeltsin and other reformers leave the Communist Party.
- December: Eduard Shevardnadze resigns as foreign minister.
- 1991 —June 12: Yeltsin becomes the President of Russia in its first popular election. Through him, the Garou regain a small measure of the control they once had.
- July: Warsaw Pact is disbanded.
- A small caern in a forest held by the Red Talons is attacked and captured. When a party is gathered to retake it, the area is found abandoned and the caern is found powerless. This is the first of the caerns to fall.
- August: Hard-line coup against Gorbachev fails and leads to the eventual disintegration of the U.S.S.R.
- A painfully slow reconciliation between the Bone Gnawers and the ruling tribes begins. Garou activity in Russia begins to step up in response to various pressures.
- 1991-1993 —Various events and internal troubles lead to the resignation of Gorbachev. Russia becomes one of the largest countries to be classified as having Third World status. The problems of forming a capitalist system without an industrial base capable of dealing with the new demand for consumer goods proves extremely difficult for Russia to surmount.
- The Garou of Russia discover that there is a new, powerful force in Russia, and move to deal with it in various ways, as well as warring with the powerful Wyrms spirits that corrupt the land.
- Late 1993 —After a conflict with Parliament results in the death of a police officer, Yeltsin brings in the military and has the parliament building shelled. The parliament surrenders and Yeltsin dissolves it, assuming emergency powers.

## *Timeline of World War II on the Eastern Front*

- 1939
  - September 1: Germany invades Poland.
  - September 17: Russia invades Poland.
  - September 27: Poland surrenders.
  - November: U.S.S.R. annexes the western Ukraine and western Byelorussia.
  - November 30: Soviets invade Finland.
- 1940
  - March 12: Soviet-Finnish war ends; Finland cedes territory.
  - June 15: Soviets occupy Baltic States.
  - June-August: Annexation of Northern Bukovina, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.
- 1941
  - June 22: Operation Barbarossa begins. Germany invades Russia.
  - September 8: Siege of Leningrad begins.
  - Garou attacks on German troops assist in reducing the force that strikes at Leningrad. The Russian Get of Fenris war with the German Get.
  - September 17: Germans capture Kiev.
  - September 30: The drive on Moscow begins.
  - November 8: Germans enter Crimea.
  - November 9: Leningrad siege tightens.
  - Bone Gnawers do their best to help the besieged humans survive by feeding the hungry with what they can scrounge through their Gifts.
  - December 6: Operation Typhoon, Soviet counterattack at Moscow, begins. German offensive halted.
- 1942
  - May: Soviet Union signs a treaty with Great Britain, joining the Allies against Germany.
  - June 25: Germans take Kharkov.
  - July 1: Germans take Sevastopol.
  - July 23: Germans take Rostov-on-Don.
  - August 9: Germans take Caucasus oil fields.
  - August 23: Germans reach Stalingrad.
  - September 23: 90% of Stalingrad in German hands.
  - November 19: Operation Uranus, Soviet counteroffensive at Stalingrad, begins.
- 1943
  - December 16: German attempt to relieve Stalingrad fails.
  - January 31: German 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad.
  - February 16: Russians retake Kharkov.
  - March 14: Germans re-retake Kharkov.
  - July 5: Battle of Kursk.
  - August 5: Russians take Orel/Belgorod in Dnieper River drive.
  - August 23: Russians re-re-retake Kharkov.
  - September 24: Russians retake Smolensk.
  - November 7: Soviets recapture Kiev.
  - November 28: Tehran Conference between Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill.
- 1944
  - January 27: Siege of Leningrad lifted.
  - April 10: Russians retake Odessa.
  - May 9: Russians retake Sevastopol.
  - June 22: Operation Kutuzov, the drive to retake Byelorussia, begins.
  - July 28: Soviets enter Poland.
- 1945
  - January 17: Soviets capture Warsaw.
  - February: Yalta Conference between Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill.
  - February 13: Soviets capture Budapest.
  - April 13: Soviets capture Vienna.
  - April 27: Soviet and US forces meet at Torgau.
  - May 2: Soviets take Berlin.
  - May 8: Germany surrenders.
  - May 9: Soviets take Prague.
  - July: Potsdam peace talks divide Germany, Berlin, and most of Europe into Western and Communist blocs.
  - August 8: Soviets declare war on Japan.
  - August 15: Following the Americans' dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan surrenders, ending World War II.
  - The Garou are horrified by the method with which the war ends, as the world is gripped in nuclear fear for the next decade, fueling the Cold War and feeding the Wym.

## *Wolves and Cosmonauts*

On March 18, 1965, Voskhod 2 launched into space, showing the world humanity's first space walk. On March 19th, Voskhod 2 returned to Earth with its crew, Alexei Leonov and Pavel Belyayev. The cosmonauts fell into the Ural Mountains when their re-entry rockets failed. They landed a thousand miles off-target and were stranded in deep snow for a day and a night before recovery craft found them. During this time, they were threatened by wolves who were apparently kept back only by the feeble fire the crew started in their craft.

The wolves that found them were actually Lupines. A pack of Red Talons found the capsule and debating fiercely over whether to kill the humans. Finally, one faction won out. The Red Talons thought it was a poor idea to attack humans trying to leave the planet.

## *Russia Today*

Gorbachev's rise to power led to a new era in the Soviet Union. Perestroika and Glasnost became the new watchwords, and the entire world looked on as the "Evil Empire" slowly opened up and westernized. Slow progress towards the reduction of nuclear weapons and military forces proceeded, despite occasional setbacks over the American desire to implement the Strategic Defense Initiative.

When George Bush became the President of the United States, progress towards good relations between the East and West continued. However, in the Soviet Union, reforms were beginning to have another effect. People demanded more changes. The Soviet government was pressured to act faster. Gorbachev was unwilling to let them proceed too quickly for fear of losing control. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Republic of the Soviet Union, pushed for more reform. Yeltsin and Gorbachev came into conflict numerous times.

In 1991, the Soviet Union was gripped by another revolution as a group of hard-liners from the Communist Party attempted to wrest control of the country from Gorbachev. The Brujah backing the Communists were behind the entire plot and played their hand in an attempt to draw out the forces manipulating Gorbachev. This plot failed. These elder Brujah were destroyed by Gorbachev's master—the dreaded Baba Yaga. As a result of the coup, Gorbachev had lost popularity, while Boris Yeltsin gained a great deal of support. Further events led to the splintering of the Soviet Union into the Commonwealth of Independent States, an autonomous collection composed of the various former Republics.

Gorbachev soon stepped down, and Yeltsin was eager to take his place. Russia became a democratic nation, and the Cold War was over. A new war, however, had begun. Russia was a nation again, but the degree of reform necessary and the events of the past few years virtually ruined its economy. Shortages of basic commodities were common.

The ruble was nearly worthless, and the food situation was worse than ever.

Now unemployment threatens the nation on an unprecedented scale, and people long for the days of old, when the government guaranteed each citizen a job, food, health care and a place to live.

Violent crime is increasing. On the streets of Moscow, teenage girls consider prostitution a glamorous career. Some factories are too broke to pay their workers, giving them manufactured goods instead. Workers are forced to sell these goods or trade them for food. Industry's productivity has fallen to levels below those of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

For the ethnic Russians and Slavs, their death rate now exceeds their birth rate, and their population is actually shrinking. Suicide and attempted suicide rates are up, as are incidents of organized crime. Resentment directed against citizens who have actually managed to succeed under the current conditions has worsened. On the horizon, there is little hope. Even the young turn to crime and obsessive trading of new and used merchandise.

The attitude of hopelessness is exactly what Baba Yaga desires. When the time comes, it will make people more open to her desires. This attitude is also strengthens the Wyrms and its minions. Their efforts to corrupt the people and land of Russia have redoubled with the new changes. The influence of the Urge Wyrms may be seen just by walking down a city street and looking into the face of each person you pass. Russia has become a land of despair, ripe for the pickings of Cainite and Wyrms alike. Both groups have begun to move, and the Garou are too disorganized to work cohesively against them.

Baba Yaga is sly. She can see how these others, the Black Spiral Dancers, want to lay waste to the land. That is not her goal; the Hag wants the people prepared for her ultimate goal, not destroyed or contaminated by whatever it is that has tainted the land in her absence. She will use them until they cannot be used any more. Then they will be destroyed.

## *Society*

Russia was the largest of the 15 republics that once formed the Soviet Union, a country that once possessed one-sixth of the world's land mass. As far back as the Napoleonic Wars, Russia has been the area's traditional seat of power. The former Soviet Union stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea and encompassed 12 time zones. The official census of 1979 counted over 100 languages native to the Soviet Union.

Gothic-Punk Russia, while resembling the real Russia in many ways, is a more extreme place. The ravages of the past can be seen in the eyes of the populace. Devoid of challenge, the Russians walk past each other like zombies. They walk as if they were alone in the world, ignoring everything else. Each citizen follows her own agenda,

completely oblivious to what might happen to others in her path.

Five hundred years of domination, first under the Czars and then under the Communists, has worn thin on the people of Russia. The sense of community overwhelms the needs of the individual, and the assumption that each Russian is merely part of the whole predominates. From the American viewpoint, this extreme sense of community borders on the deranged. The conditions for Russians who lived under the Communists were not much better than that of the serfs who lived under the Czars.

Hopes of freedom led the serfs to revolt, first in the Kerensky Revolution of February 1917, and then again in the October Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Famines and general discontent lead to the revolution, and the Communists promised to change the harsh living conditions. The promise was never truly fulfilled.

To truly understand the Russians of the modern World of Darkness, you have to understand that mental and physical freedom is an unknown concept to many citizens. The simple pleasures of life have long been denied or repressed. The sudden ecstasy of freedom leads to many of the chaotic problems that dominate the lives of the typical citizen.

Only when personal contact has been established does the once-blank face of the typical Russian change to that of a helpful friend. A Russian will be kind and courteous and will try and help persons as best he can, but only if forced

into the situation by direct contact. Foreigners are, of course, the exception. A foreigner is the Russian equivalent of walking trader. Some things that are taken for granted in Westerners' lives are absolute luxuries to Russian citizenry, and often common Russians will make contact to trade. Russians do love to talk, though, and are especially interested in learning about the West. They will be glad to talk about Russia with Westerners.

## Lodging

There are two types of hotels in Russia: the new and the old. The difference is striking. New hotels are often multi-level high-rises with fancy names like "Europeiskya" or "Metropole." These hotels exude an air of respectability, style and power. Each floor of a hotel is served by a *dezhumaya*, traditionally placed there to monitor the activities of the hotel patrons. The *dezhumaya* are still present in many of Russia hotels, both grand and common.

Hotels are sources of cheap traditional food. Foods such as Beef Stroganoff and Chicken Kiev are well known. Russians have a love of simple heavy foods and soups. Sausages made from horse meat and cabbage are very common and, depending on the locale, so is caviar and fish.

## Food

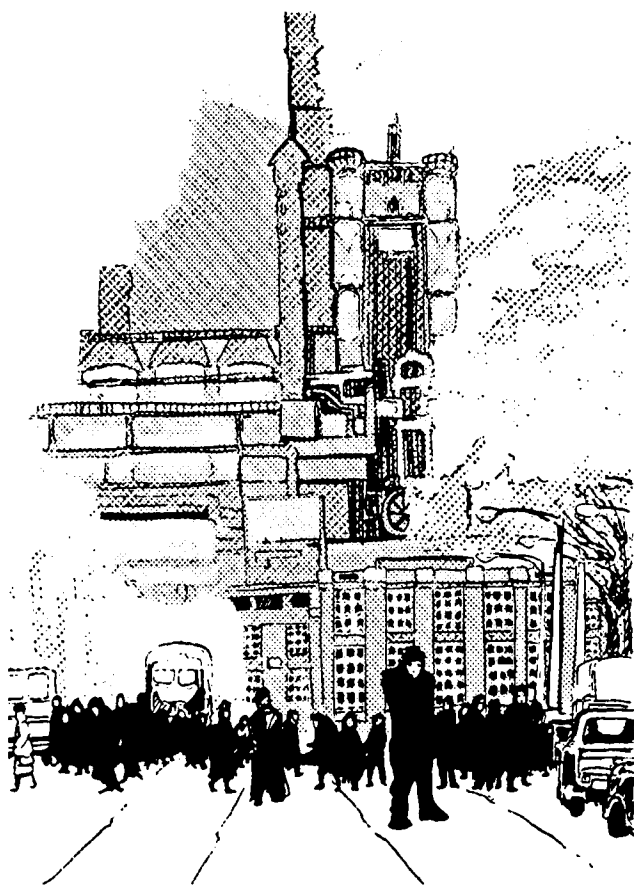
Russians have a love of good drink and toasting. Often at banquets, there are dozens of toasts, and sometimes a few guests will spend the night sleeping under the table. Russians, although hardy drinkers, are for the most part intelligent: often parties with large amounts of alcohol are tempered with heavy appetizers that soak the effects of the alcohol.

Alcohol, often considered a staple in the lives of the average Russian, has, of late, been more difficult to acquire. Since the late 1980s, the government has tried to curb the consumption of alcohol, but the rate of deaths and problems caused by alcohol are still fairly high and getting worse. Authorities have actively begun patrolling the cities in search of drunks and habitual problem cases, but the numbers are hardly reducing. Russians have a great number of illegal stills and homebrews, and the flow of alcohol is hardly curbed by the efforts of the government.

## Commerce

Entrepreneurship dominates the streets of Russia. Small business sell everything from cigars to Pepsi-Cola. The small businesses compete with the larger, once state-owned stores. Capitalist enterprises are booming, including the McDonald's franchises that have become more abundant since the fall of Communism. Large companies are now free of state ownership. Smaller businesses are often held under the thumbs of local mobsters.

Every corner is dominated by at least one peddler's stand. The Black Market, which at one point was highly forbidden, has moved out onto the corner. Articles from capitalist





## *Pronunciation*

In general, Russian words are pronounced exactly as they are spelled. If a word has been transliterated correctly, the only problem is deciding which syllable to accent. Unfortunately, there are no good rules for placement of stress. Normally, the stress is learned as the word is learned. The pronunciations of some well known cities are:

Moscow (moskVA)  
Irkutsk (irKUTSK)  
Odessa (oDESsa)  
Kiev (Klev)  
Novgorod (NOVgorod)  
Novosibirsk (novosiBIRSK)  
Magnitogorsk (magnitoGORsk)  
Rostov (rosTOV)  
Riga (RIga)  
Murmansk (MURmansk)  
Vladivostok (vladivosTOK)  
Tashkent (tashKENT)

nations predominate. The Black Market has legitimized itself since the fall of communism, and these stands are the remnants of a network that once rivaled the state-run department stores.

The original Black Market has shifted. Although it was once the purveyor of illegal goods, the abolishment of Communism has made most of the goods they once sold legal. The true Black Market has begun widespread sales of illegal drugs and has flourished since the fall of Communism. Although strong in the international drug trade before the fall of communism, the overall extent of crime in Russia was unknown to outsiders and many insiders until only recently.

## *Language*

The Russian language is still basically the same one that was spoken before the Rise of Communism. Although certain American terms have been added to supplement the language, the only major noticeable change has been the elimination of the words "mister" and "mistress" and the consolidation of terms that once had both male and female forms. The word now used for "mister" has been replaced. The word for "comrade" is used formally in official capacities, and the informal word for "citizen" is used in day-to-day conversations.

However, with the "fall of Communism," disputes over language and ethnicity are now common in Russia and the other former republics. Debates over "official" languages have become especially severe.

Russians have one other peculiarity that distinguishes them from the rest of Europe. Russians often introduce themselves by including the Christian name of their father

## *Russian Names*

The following list of common names can be used by players with native characters.

### **Male with diminutives:**

Aleksandr - Sasha (alekSANDr - SAsHa)  
Aleksei - Alyosha (aleksEI - alYOsHa)  
Boris - Borya (boRIS - BORya)  
Viktor - Vitya (VIKtor - VITya)  
Vladimir - Volodya (vlaDImir - voLOdya)  
Vyacheslav - Slava (vyacheSLAV - SLAva)  
Yevgeni - Zhenya (yevGENi - ZHENya)  
Ivan - Vanya (iVAN - VANya)  
Mikhail - Misha (mikhaIL - MIsha)  
Nikolai - Kolya (nikoLAI - KOlya)  
Pyotr - Petya (PYOtr - PETya)  
Sergei - Seryozha (serGEI - serYOzha)  
Yurii - Yura (YURii - YURa)

### **Male names without diminutives:**

Andrei (andREI)  
Oleg (oLEG)  
Pavel (PAvel)

### **Female names with diminutives:**

Aleksandra - Sasha (alekSANDra - SAsHa)  
Anna - Anya (ANna - ANya)  
Valentina - Valya (valenTIna - VALya)  
Varvara - Varya (VarVARa - VARya)  
Galina - Galya (gaLIIna - GALya)  
Ekaterina - Katya (ekteRIIna - KATya)  
Elena - Lena (eLEna - LEIna)  
Irina - Irya (iRIIna - IRYa)  
Maria - Masha (maRIya - MASHa)  
Natalya - Natasha (naTALya - naTASHa)  
Olga - Olya (OLga - OLYa)  
Sofya - Sonya (SOFYa - SONya)  
Tatyana - Tanya (taTYAna - TANYa)

### **Female names without diminutives:**

Vera (VERa)  
Nina (NIIna)

at the end of their name. This suffix is known as a patronymic. For example, Vladimir Sergeevich means "Vladimir, son of Sergei" and Irina Sergeevna means "Irina, daughter of Sergei". Two Russians will rarely omit the patronymic when speaking to each another unless they have been good friends for a long time. On the other hand, when Russians have known each other for a long time, or when speaking to children, they will often use the more familiar diminutive form of the name. For example, Irina becomes Iria, Aleksandr becomes Sasha, and Maria becomes Masha.

This, combined with the fact many women do not change their maiden names after marriage, can lead to confusion among identification of relatives.

## Customs

Russians often greet each other with hearty handshakes. Russian men often greet good male friends with three kisses on the cheek, and females do the same to other females. Men kissing women as a greeting is considered vulgar and looked down upon. Casual contact between members of the same sex as an indicator of friendship is not as taboo as it is in America. Contact is limited though, and often only good friends will walk hand in hand together.

Russians often exchange gifts with visitors, and it should not be uncommon for visitors to either receive or give gifts as they enter another person's house. American gifts are highly prized. Although they are usually not expected, they are greatly appreciated.

Gifts are not just exchanged in the home, however. Gifts can be exchanged anywhere people are meeting. The Garou have been very influenced by this practice, and visiting Garou, Russian or foreign, usually exchange gifts at a caern.

The former Communist system led to the abolishment of many religious holidays. Many of the holidays are celebrations of particular groups or events from the past. As such, most of the holidays from the former Soviet Union have been lost or replaced. The wave of religious rebirth has led to the reinstitution of several Christian holidays, including Easter and Christmas, which were abolished under Soviet rule. May Day is the most important holiday in Russia. It occurs on May 1st and is celebrated with large parades and great festivities.

## Ethnic Groups

Numerous ethnic groups are represented in the population of Russia. The single largest group is the Slavs, forming almost 75% of the population, which contains the Great Russians, the Ukrainians or "little Russians," the Belorussians and a large number of Poles.

The next largest group is the Turko-Tatar ethnic group, believed to be the descendants of the 13th and 14th century Mongol invaders. This group is composed of the Crimean and Kazakh Tatars to the west of the Urals, and the Baskir, Chuvash, Tatar, Yakut, Oirot and Altai peoples to the east.

The third largest ethnic group is the Japhetic peoples, which is composed of the Chechen, Kabardian, Balkar and Cherkess peoples. Fourth largest is the Finno-Ugrian group, which is closely related to the Hungarian and Turkish peoples. Other ethnic groups represented in Russia are the Jews, Mongolians, Greeks, Gypsies, Koreans, Kurds, Chinese, Czechs and Arabs. An ethnic group in the northeast, the Chukchi, is believed to be related to the North American Indians.

## Human Politics

Internal politics in Russia are marked by a great deal of corruption, graft and backstabbing. Ascension to leadership in the former Soviet Union generally involved a great deal of maneuvering to better one's position while trying to bring down one's enemies. Political battles in the halls of the Kremlin could sometimes last for years.

Under the communist system, every possible aspect required in the running of the country was bureaucratized. For example, where the United States has something like 12 regulating agencies, the Soviet Union had 40 or more. The government suffered from overspecialization. Everything was centralized. It also suffered from a great deal of corruption and stagnation and was susceptible to the whims of the powerful.

Until recently, the Russian legislative bodies suffered from the effects of years of high level leadership striving to reduce its effectiveness. It had become virtually a rubber stamp committee for the Party Leader. This handicap, and the bureaucratization, were moves by various Brujah intended to throw the others off-track. While this resulted in the eventual stagnation of Russia as the system became too heavy to haul itself up, the intrigue that went on when it came time to change leadership became highly intense. Vampires, mortals and the occasional Garou agent vied for the control of new Party Leaders.

Sudden illnesses and retirements were not uncommon in Soviet politics. Take, for example, the method by which the coup against Gorbachev was carried out. He was detained in his dacha and an announcement of his illness was made.

All of this has recently changed. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the resignation of Gorbachev, Russia has become an experiment in a democratic, free market society. It is an experiment that often seems doomed to failure. Russia's economy is in shambles, faith in the government is at an all time low, and forces within the government have stood in the way of progress.

Boris Yeltsin recently disbanded the Russian Parliament, claiming that it is impeding him in setting up Russia's recovery. In actuality, the hag Baba Yaga is feeding his thoughts with visions of a new Russian Empire, one with Yeltsin as a new Tsar. She wants things the way they were, and an autocracy is only the beginning.

## The Kinfolk

Kinfolk are the eyes, ears and hands of the Garou in human society. Without them, the Garou would not have been able to maintain control of Russia for so many centuries. Indeed, the Kinfolk unified Russia under a single flag long ago, creating a method by which the Garou could administer and protect one of the largest nations in the world.

Even now, in these troubled times, the presence and assistance of the Kinfolk has allowed the Garou to grasp at the tiller of the foundering ship that is Russia. Yeltsin now addresses his nation and tries to save it from the internal pressures that threaten to destroy it. The aid of loyal Glass Walker Kinfolk in the government is supporting him.

Some tribes say that this is merely a move by the Glass Walkers to begin their own bid for dominance in the contest between the Silver Fangs, Shadow Lords and Get of Fenris. The Glass Walkers maintain that they were in the right place at the right time and were willing to do something. What they will accomplish by this move remains to be seen.

The Glass Walkers do not know that Yeltsin is a puppet of the dreaded Baba Yaga. While the tribe uses their contacts with Yeltsin to stay one step ahead of the other Garou, the Hag uses him to anticipate and deal with the moves of her foes. She allows him a token of free will, but all major endeavors are subject to her whims. The conflict between Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament was an action orchestrated by the Hag to demoralize her enemies. It is intended to show the Garou just how powerful her hold on the land and its leader is.

## Playing Kinfolk

While changing shape and running around in the woods fighting creatures from our nightmares is all fine and dandy, there is another side to Russia. There are still things that Kinfolk can do that Garou cannot, and things that Kinfolk can do that humans cannot. Kinfolk are immune to the Delirium. They do not exude rage or animal attraction, but they can learn and use magic, psychic abilities and rituals. Being mortal, it is also very difficult for some supernatural creatures to detect them.

Kinfolk can do many things Garou either couldn't or wouldn't do. They can hold public office, lead people and generally exert an influence over the human world that Garou cannot achieve.

The possibilities in a game where players roleplay Kinfolk are numerous: political intrigue, subtle horror, Cold War espionage within the supernatural corridors of power and even vampire hunting. This last option, however, is extremely dangerous, for few vampires are not in some way under the control of Baba Yaga. The Hag does not like mortals who injure her "grandchildren."

The **Vampire** sourcebook *The Hunters Hunted* gives many details on running a game in the World of Darkness with mortals as the heroes. Further details on mortals are available in the 2nd edition of the *Vampire Player's Guide*.



# Mages in Russia

## The Mythic Age

*Spin me back down the years  
And the days of my youth,  
Close the lace and black curtains  
And shut out the whole truth.*

— Jethro Tull, "Thick as a Brick"

In the distant mists of memory, heroes called the Bogatyrs defended the people of Russia from scourges like the Zmei and Baba Yaga. These warrior-mages served King Vladimir I like Arthur's knights. Each had a different superhuman power— great strength, far-sight, inhuman prowess in battle and so on. Their love for Mother Russia was unquestionable. Some left their families or even killed them to show their devotion to the land. According to legend, it was the Bogatyrs who brought Baba Yaga down and sent her into torpor.

Sadly, these magickal figures are long since gone. Each one has met a tragic ending. Over the centuries, the deeds of the Bogatyrs have been largely forgotten, save for the hushed tales told on wintry nights.

Whether the Bogatyrs were mages of the Celestial Chorus, a mighty pack of Silver Fangs or a confederation of the two is a matter of dispute. The Silver Fangs claim these warriors as their own, sneering at the suggestion that mere humans could love the land so much. Many Celestial Chorus mages who remember the Bogatyrs refute the idea that such magnificent heroes could possibly have been mangy werewolves. With the Bogatyrs long since dust, the question will probably remain unanswered.

When Baba Yaga spitefully opened the door for Christianity in Russia, displaying an act of vengeance against Durga Syn, the Celestial Chorus took the opportunity to consolidate their power in the Motherland. Over the centuries, the church hunted the *volshun*, the ancient Earth-worshippers, often with help from the Chorus. The irony of the Chorus' holy mission in Russia remains a secret to this day.

Over the centuries, Chorus mages within the Russian church fell out of favor with many others of the Traditions. The Russian church maintained a strong grip on the Tsars, and the Chorus guided their vision of Ascension through the rulers' hands. Though the peasantry was oppressed, they remained faithful to the church, and their faith prospered. Through differences of doctrine, a long-standing dispute with the Order of Hermes, and the hubris that came with their power, the Russian Chorus cut their ties with the other Traditions outside of Russia, while hunting down Dreamspeaker and Verbena *vedna*, or witches, within the country. These activities did not make the Russian Chorus popular with the Traditions as a whole.

As the Mythic Age ended, the Chorus moved to preserve their power. With the widespread ignorance and supersti-

tion among the Russian peasantry, mages were able to retain a firm hold on the popular conception of reality. The church mages and their *vedna* enemies stood longer in Russia than in most of the rest of the world.

## The Technocracy

Peter the Great paved the way for the Technocracy. By bringing science and reason into Russia, Peter captured the imagination of his subjects. With Peter came the Guild, an older version of the Syndicate, and the Hippocratic Circle, forerunners of the Progenitors. As the Tsar set scientists to the task of bringing Russia "up to date", the Technocrats made their influence felt. Across the land, Paradox crept into once-secure bastions of magickal power. Although the mages were able to retain their influence into the 20th century, the power of the Chorus waned while the Technomancers grew strong.

Technomancers brought their greatest influence to bear in the years preceding World War I, while the other mages threw their influence behind the tides of revolt. The final revolution, however, smashed the influence of magick in the Motherland for decades to come. The Progenitors were expelled from Russia following the Revolution. Their theories were denounced as "counter-revolutionary." The other mages were forced further underground by the Communists' atheistic doctrine. Both factions were shut out until Stalin's reign. Although the Technomancer's ideals ruled Russia's imagination, the Technocracy remained hidden until World War II.

It is said that Stalin had the strong support of the Technocracy; some even speculate that he was Awakened himself. Whatever the reason, the dictator evaded attempts by Russian Brujah, Garou, Tradition mages and simple Sleepers to forge the iron might of the Soviet machine. The next fifty years would see Russia dominated by Technomancer ideals and the crushing might of industry gone mad.

## The Present

*Humanity goes forward, perfecting its powers. Everything that's unattainable now will someday become familiar, understandable; it is only that one must work and must help with all one's might those who seek the truth.*

— Anton Chekov, *The Cherry Orchard*

Baba Yaga had assistance in constructing her Shadow Curtain. When she consolidated her power, Baba Yaga sought out a powerful Celestial Chorus Chantry, one striving to recapture the church's influence as communism fell away. With a few false miracles, she won their attention. When a statue of the Blessed Mother wept tears of blood, the awestruck mages gathered the tears. When the Blessed Mother commanded them to drink of her tears, they did. Soon, Baba Yaga had a Chantry of Blood Bound mages at her disposal.

She appeared to several Verbena *vedna* as well and commanded them to raise the power of the land. With the unwitting help of these mages, combined with her own sorcerous might, Baba Yaga cut off the Motherland from the rest of the world. The wells of lifeforce, the Nodes, have also been cut off, resulting in the horrific deaths of dozens of mages caught in their Horizon Realms over Russia. As the Quintessence to these Realms is cut off, Horizon Realms powered strictly by Russian Nodes fold up, wither and ultimately disappear.

The Technocracy is in a panic over these developments. Four major Constructs have lost contact with the world-wide network, and smaller Chantries within Russia itself are silent as well. The internal chaos in the former Soviet Union has thrown the Technocracy into disarray; they would give much to find out who or what is behind this outrage.

The Traditions do not fare much better. Mysterious reports of miracles within Russia have drawn the attention of the Celestial Chorus, but no details have been forthcoming, and the Tradition as a whole is beginning to worry. Verbena and Dreamspeakers with contacts in Russia have heard similar reports, but nothing more. In Chantries across the world, mages are beginning to wonder...

Within Russia, many of the remaining mages are either rejoicing over a new age dawning for the Motherland or fleeing for their lives. Baba Yaga will brook no interference in her plans. Inside the borders, her pawns stalk the Technomancers, the mages who would further poison the land. Underground *vedna* and surviving Technomancers have banded together in some places for mutual survival, while mages under Baba Yaga's sway aid her in a new Path towards Russia's Ascension.

The might of the Bogatyrs is sorely needed now.





# Chapter Two: Geography

*Not a single hectare of land should be left unsown.*

—Vasily Yefanov, Soviet Russian Political Poster, 1931

Russia, formerly the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, is the largest component of what was once the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It extends from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the former republic of Kazakh and the People's Republic of China in the south, and from the Byelorussian and Ukrainian former republics in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east. Russia covers an area of 6,609,000 square miles and has a population of approximately 200,000,000 people.

Russia is a land of diversity, encompassing a great variation of climactic and geographic features. In the northern areas of Russia, treeless arctic plains, called tundra, are prevalent, while in Siberia, swampy, coniferous forests called taiga are found. The southern parts of Russia consist of steppes, and the central portion is marked by a forested belt. Russia is divided into eastern and western portions by the Ural Mountains. The eastern portion is larger by far and contains the area known as Siberia.

Major rivers of Russia include the Volga and Don, located to the west of the Urals, and the Yenisei, Amur, Lena and Ob rivers located to the east of the Urals. Climactic conditions range from the subtropical shores of the Black Sea to the permanently frozen Arctic latitudes.

Russia contains one of the highest concentrations of mineral wealth in the former Soviet Union. It produces 40% of the iron and coal, mined in areas of the Ural Mountains and Siberia, and 20% of the petroleum, found

primarily in the Black Sea basin, the Ural Mountains and some areas of Siberia.

Central Russia is principally agricultural, and the republic contains approximately 70% of the grain-growing area of the former Soviet Union. The central agricultural region is marked by fertile black soil on an almost treeless plain.

The areas around Moscow and Leningrad contain the majority of Russian industry, and the northern regions of the country support timber and agricultural industries, principally livestock and flax. The basin of the Volga River supports large-scale industry and farms and contains numerous mineral deposits. Southern Russia supports wheat and tobacco, heavy industry and subtropical agriculture. The Aural region supports mining and heavy industry, and the eastern sections of Russia contain large forests and rich soil that is still largely unexploited.

For its size, Russia sports a relatively small population. There are vast ranges of open country and extensive wild areas. Siberia, for example, is largely unpopulated, especially in the northern reaches. Russia sports a vast ecological system, one where caribou, wolves, bear, moose, wild boar, deer, eagles and numerous other creatures play a part. Snow leopards and tigers hunt side by side with bears and wolves. Because of its size and its diversity of climates, Russia supports animal and plant life representing a broad range of ecosystems from subtropical to arctic.

## Change and Upheaval

The changes going on right now in the former Soviet Union are often unpredictable. By the time this book reaches the shelves, political affiliations and whole regions may have changed, especially considering Boris Yeltsin's recent (as this is written) disbanding of the Parliament. The map provided here represents only the most basic information, such as the location of major caerns and cities, and some republics. Before running a Russian chronicle, the Storyteller should consult a recent atlas or read current periodicals to get the most up-to-date changes in Russia.

## The White Nights

The White Nights occur every June in Russia during the summer solstice. North of St. Petersburg, the sun remains in the sky for two to three weeks. Many festivals and celebrations are held during these times.

It is during these times, obviously, that the Kindred are at their weakest. They are forced to sleep for two to three weeks while the Garou can run about unhindered. The vampire hunters also come out during these times. Members of the Inquisition, along with the Orthodox Church, take to the streets to hunt down the sleeping Kindred.

The most powerful and experienced vampires of Russia have learned to either take a vacation south during the White Nights or hide where they cannot be found.

## Eco-Disasters

*No other great industrial civilization so systematically and so long poisoned its air, land, water and people. None so loudly proclaimed its efforts to improve public health and protect nature while degrading both. And no advanced society faced such a bleak political and economic reckoning with so few resources to invest towards recovery.*

— Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly, Jr., *Ecocide in the USSR*

Environmental catastrophe has become widespread in Russia as the most pervasive legacy of Communism. In the former Soviet Union, some 290 million people breathe poisoned air, eat poisoned food, drink poisoned water and often bury their sickly, poisoned children without knowing the truth about their deaths.

The Russian peoples are only now discovering the extent of what has been done to their country in the name of progress. Sadly, there is little they can do, as the country lacks the resources necessary for environmental clean-up of the degree required; the people are too disorganized and poor.

So many problems exist that stopping any of them could make up a chronicle, or at least a story, in and of itself. The following list of Russian environmental problems exempli-

fies the situational horror that exists without even playing up the supernatural.

- Approximately 70 million Russians breathe air contaminated by pollution that is at least five times the normally "acceptable" limit for dangerous chemical content.

- At least 130 nuclear explosions took place on Russian soil. Most were conducted for geophysical investigation, to create underground pressure in gas and oil fields or simply to move earth for the building of dams. The extent of damage done to the land, water, people and wildlife is unknown, but is certainly great. Near two islands of Novaya Zemlya, nuclear reactors and other radioactive wastes were dumped into the sea.

- Each day, approximately 920,000 barrels of oil are spilled in Russia, equivalent to one Exxon Valdez disaster every six hours. During construction of oil pipelines, shutoff valves were installed every 30 miles instead of every three so that construction would take less time. A break can spill up to 30 miles worth of oil. In Siberia, one pool of spilled oil is six feet deep, four miles wide and seven miles long.

- The Siberian forests are disappearing at the rate of five million acres per year, rivaling the destruction of the Amazon Rain Forest. This damage results from pollution and indiscriminate clear-cutting, principally by foreign companies, in soil that is unforgiving of such practices.

- The Chernobyl disaster alone contaminated more than 50,000 miles of territory.

- In the Ukraine, 1300 tons of beef contaminated by the Chernobyl disaster have only recently been buried.

- Most of Russia's nuclear reactors are old. Many were built in the same style as the Chernobyl plant. The situation is such that the pressure to keep the plants operating overshadows concern about their safety.

- Some areas of Russia have suffered mysterious outbreaks of illnesses. A recent anthrax epidemic is one example. Russia is known to have extensive stores of biological and chemical weapons developed during the Cold War; recent problems could have led to unsafe disposal practices.

- Millions of acres of farmland have been depleted by erosion or poisoned by the indiscriminate use of pesticides. Also, 30 percent of all foods were found to contain hazardous pesticides.

- On the Baltic Sea, factories dump untreated cooling and cleaning fluids and tons of industrial waste. In northern Siberia, thousands of gas flares burn, sending huge clouds of black smoke rolling across the Siberian forests.

- In Estonia, one of the former republics, two kindergartens were built on top of radioactive waste dumps.

- In certain areas of Russia, the breast milk of some mothers is contaminated with pesticides.

- The Volga River, long known as Russia's river of plenty, is dying. A plethora of dams, power plants, chemicals and sewage has turned it into one of the world's most polluted





rivers. The shores of the Volga are crowded with factories, dams and hydroelectric plants. It exists in the heart of what was the Soviet military-industrial complex, and the factories have been polluting the river for years. Some 3000 factories drop approximately 10 billion cubic yards of contaminants into the river each year. Damming has greatly slowed the river, and pollutants have a tendency to accumulate in the eight manmade reservoirs along the river's course or settle into the riverbed and its delta. In some areas, chemical concentrations have reached 100 times the accepted levels. Seventy percent of the fish in the Volga contain mercury, and the sturgeon, the source of Russian caviar, is slowly becoming extinct.

- The former Soviet Union had one-tenth as many automobiles as the United States. The amount of auto pollution was equal to 67 percent of the auto pollution in the United States.

- A large percentage of Russians, especially in the factory belts in the Ural Region and western Russia, suffer from respiratory ailments stemming from the level of pollutants in the atmosphere.

- At various levels of the Russian government, there is reluctance to admit that there is a problem.

## *The Urals Disaster: The Forbidden Zone*

*We crossed a strange, uninhabited and unfarmed area. Highway signs along the way warned drivers not to stop for the next 20 to 30 kilometers. The land was empty. There were no villages, no towns, no people, no cultivated land. Only the chimneys of destroyed houses remained.*

— Soviet emigre's account of 1961 drive into Ural Mountains.

In February 1958, at the city of Kyshtym-40 (a city built as part of Stalin's drive to get a nuclear weapon), an accident occurred at a nuclear waste dump. According to reports, reactions from the shallowly buried waste caused a massive explosion which spread radioactive debris over a large area. A region stretching about 100 miles eastward (downwind) from Kyshtym was affected. MVD troops, the forerunners of the KGB, moved in and sealed the area. The population was not allowed to leave. Food and water were brought in for them until transportation was readied, but by that time, most of them had spent a month in the contaminated area.

After the people were evacuated, the troops shot all of the farm animals, burned all of the villages and bulldozed the rubble into huge mounds. Several hundred villages and farms were destroyed. Over ten thousand people may have been affected by the fallout.





To this day, signs in the area advise passing vehicles to drive through the area quickly with their windows up.

## ***Nuclear Gulags***

*Emigre Konstantin Simis had been a defense lawyer in the Soviet Union before he came to America; one of his clients had escaped the death penalty only to be sent to a uranium mine. Reflected Simin: "Radiation performed the same sentence in six months, a year, a year and a half — the sentence is the same."*

— Oberg, *Uncovering Soviet Disasters*

One Soviet estimate claims that from 50,000 to 100,000 premature deaths occurred in the first decade of the Soviet nuclear program. These were just among the workers. Another class of people also suffered: Stalin set up nuclear gulags, where prisoners with life sentences would mine uranium without protection (at Moscow-10, Tura-38, Sverdlovsk-39 and Chelyabinsk-40). Radium mining took place at Ukhta.

Near Kyshtym (see the Ural Disaster, above), unprotected prisoners helped in the cleanup of the 1958 disaster, fencing in 100 miles of a contaminated river. Slave labor from Camp YaV-48/6 was used at nuclear weapons facilities at Chelyabinsk-40, while labor from Camp YaV-48/7 was used at the Kyshtym uranium enrichment plant.

In the Dzhershinskiy district of Novosibirsk, prisoners from Camp 91/8 were used at a weapons factory. Furthermore, at Olga Bay and Shamor Bay (both on the Sea of Japan), at Cape Medvezhiy on Novaya Zemlya and Vaygach Island, near Frunze, at Zeravshan, Bekabad and Leninabad, over 22,500 prisoners from Camps UYa-64/2, /4, /6, /8, /9 and /37 were used in various fuel enrichment plants. Over ten thousand of these workers were hospitalized, probably for bone marrow collapse.

Other facilities existed at Margilan, Fergana, Leninsk, Rudnyy, Aksu, Goznyy, Totma and Cherepovets. At Borovoye, an open uranium mine was worked. This list could continue on interminably, as it probably already has. There was little hope for victims of this practice. The prisoners tried to strike at the Zeravshan mine— the KGB shot them.

## ***Lake Baykal and the Aral Sea***

Lake Baykal is the deepest freshwater lake in the world. The poisoning of Lake Baykal is one of the largest ecological disasters in the world.

The Aral Sea is a huge watershed for its area. It has been drained by far too many irrigation systems. Boats lie in dry sand miles from water. The salinity of the water is far too high to support any useful life. The sea has dropped over 46 feet, and the surface has shrunk by 40 percent. This has changed local rainfall patterns, raised temperatures and increased the Earth's atmospheric content of salt and dust by more than five percent.

The Soviets have effectively destroyed the ecosystems of both areas.



None of the environmental problems listed above are manufactured for the purpose of this book. All are real, and that knowledge should make campaigning in Russia all the more horrific. In the Gothic -Punk world, the situation is worse. The majority of problem areas are infested by Banes, whether Smog Banes, Oil Banes or Radiation Banes. They are there, and their masters are not far behind.

See Chapter Five for more information on Banes and Wyrm devastation.

## Caerns

There are a number of caerns in Russia, and a large number of septs. Many of these are very large septs with large protectorates. Given here are the most powerful caerns and septs in Russia. All of these can be used for the setting of a chronicle or story, or the Storyteller can use these for guidelines in creating their own septs. Each of these is administered by a single tribe, as are the majority of the caerns and protectorates in Russia.

Please note that the order in which the caerns are given are alphabetically by controlling tribe, beginning with the Black Furies' Blood of the Sea Sept and ending with the Wendigo's Sept of the Siberian Wilds.

Each caern has two Gauntlet ratings; the one in parentheses is the current Gauntlet under Baba Yaga's Shadow Curtain.

### *Blood of the Sea Sept*

**Caern:** located near an unpopulated region on the eastern shore of the Black Sea

**Level:** 4

**Gauntlet:** 3 (1)

**Type:** Wyld

**Tribal Structure:** Black Fury, but open to others by invitation

**Totems:** When the Black Furies came to Russia, they were led to the shore of the Black Sea by Pegasus and were charged with preserving the Wyld there. Various spirits of the Wyld and water dwell nearby as well.

The caern here is of the Wyld, and its focus is the ever-changing, rippling currents of the Black Sea itself. This is the largest Black Fury sept in all of Russia, and they violently guard their caern from everyone, including other Garou. In fact, other Garou are welcome only in special circumstances, and only then under the strict supervision of the Furies.

As news of the drainings and attacks on caerns spreads, the elders of the sept have moved to close it to the outside and shore up its defenses.

## *Sept of the People's Will*

**Caern:** Gorky Park in Moscow

**Level:** 3

**Gauntlet:** 4 (5)

**Type:** Visions

**Tribal Structure:** open, but currently administered by Bone Gnawers

**Totems:** The Bone Gnawers who assisted with the Bolshevik Revolution established this caern under the guidance of a spirit of the people. The spirit who assisted the Gnawers is much like a City Father, only it represents the egalitarian principles of Communism. The Bone Gnawers of the Sept call it "Marx", but its true name is unknown.

There is no actual organization to the caern; everyone, upon setting foot in the Sept of the People's Will, is equal. All decisions are made by the group. Forcing leadership is discouraged, sometimes violently, as is pressing one's rank. Although the sept is predominantly Bone Gnawer, all Garou are welcome as long as they do not violate the implicit rules of the sept.

### *White Sea Sept*

**Caern:** located on the shore of the White Sea, some distance from the city of Archangel

**Level:** 2

**Gauntlet:** 4 (5)

**Type:** Stamina

**Tribal Structure:** Children of Gaia, but open to Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers

**Totems:** Unicorn is close to her persecuted children at the White Sea Sept, and it is from her that they draw their stamina to resist and survive. It is the only sept remaining in Russia that is controlled by the Children of Gaia. The White Sea Sept was established long ago by the Children when they followed their Kinfolk from Finland.

The sept maintains as close a contact as possible with their Kin in Finland, but the recent limitations on outside communications has worried them greatly.

Only a few Glass Walkers, Bone Gnawers and Stargazers know of the existence and location of this caern, which was used by the Children of Gaia in secret as a place of contemplation and testing.

### *The Sept of Fafnir's Brood*

**Caern:** a cove on the Baltic Sea near St. Petersburg (Leningrad)

**Level:** 3

**Gauntlet:** 3 (4)

**Type:** Rage

**Tribal Structure:** Get of Fenris, but other Garou are grudgingly allowed entrance

**Totems:** Fafnir's Brood Sept was established by the Get of Fenris following the siege of Leningrad during the Sec-

and World War. After the siege, Fenris himself led a small pack of his Get to an area on the shore of the now polluted Baltic. There, the spirits of those who had died in the siege had gathered; their anger sought release. The Theurge of the pack, Gorman Stonefist, channelled the anger of the spirits and created the caern.

As a caern of Rage, tempers flare high here, especially in light of the Wyrmspawned devastation that characterizes the Baltic Sea and much of the surrounding area. The Get are waiting to strike, and their rage might lash out in any direction.

Other Garou are grudgingly allowed entrance into the caern, but they must tolerate the disparagements of the Get. Oddly, Silver Fangs who enter are not subject to abuse of this kind, although they may find themselves in an occasional fight.

### *Sept of the Learning Hall*

**Caern:** Moscow University in Moscow

**Level:** 2

**Gauntlet:** 4 (5)

**Type:** Wisdom

**Tribal Structure:** This caern is jealously guarded by the Glass Walkers.

**Totems:** Oochityel, the Scholar

The Glass Walkers of Russia have long maintained a link to learning, for the technology the Glass Walkers love so

much stems from this learning. Thus they have a long history of being involved in Russia's universities and technical institutes.

Their sept consists of all of the Glass Walkers of Moscow and meets in the lecture halls of Moscow University. The caern is the university itself, and its totem spirit is the combined essence of the thoughts of all the learned who have passed through the halls. The Glass Walkers know this spirit as Oochityel, and its purview is knowledge.

The Glass Walkers guard their sept jealously. Other Garou will be allowed entrance, but will be monitored.

### *Winter Forest Sept*

**Caern:** a glade deep in the forest of northern Siberia

**Level:** 4

**Gauntlet:** 3 (4)

**Type:** Fertility

**Tribal Structure:** This is a Red Talon caern, and only lupus Garou are allowed to enter. Other Garou often find it dangerous to approach it.

**Totems:** Stag led the Red Talons to this place of power. He told them that as long as the land remained pure and fertile so that the spirits could graze, those who guarded it would remain pure and fertile, with many herds to feed them.

Pegasus has been seen grazing in the glade and has led more than one Black Fury lupus to the area to find a wolf





mate. This has brought about an arrangement where Red Talons receive all the male children born of the Furies.

### **Thunderstrike Sept**

**Caern:** located in the western foothills of the southern Ural mountains

**Level:** 3

**Gauntlet:** 4 (5)

**Type:** Strength

**Tribal Structure:** In theory, the caern is open to all; in reality, the Silver Fangs and their supporters are simply not welcome.

**Totems:** Grandfather Thunder holds power here and endows his children with the strength of his thunderbolts. His storm crows are always circling the caern and give warning to the Warder when trouble comes.

Typhon also holds some power here. He is the totem spirit of several packs operating out of the caern. Though a lesser spirit than Grandfather Thunder, Typhon has been known to take a more active role in the affairs of its followers. Recently, little has been heard from Typhon, though his packs still come here for moots and rites, and they continue to grow in renown. (See the Appendix for more details.)

### **Sept of the Crescent Moon**

**Caern:** hidden in the Ural Mountains

**Level:** 5

**Gauntlet:** 2 (3)

**Type:** Kingship

**Tribal Structure:** Open to all, but the Silver Fangs are supreme here

**Totems:** Falcon

This is one of the most powerful caerns in Russia. It is a caern of Kingship, which means that the natural order of Garou society tends to impose itself on visitors and dwellers alike.

A more complete write-up of this caern may be found in the sourcebook *Caerns: Places of Power*.

### **Sept of the Crystal Mind**

**Caern:** a crystal grotto beneath a mountaintop temple, near the Mongolian border.

**Level:** 4

**Gauntlet:** 3 (4)

**Type:** Enigmas and Wisdom

**Tribal Structure:** The sept is controlled by the Stargazers, but they will allow anyone entrance provided the visitor is honestly seeking inner wisdom.

**Totems:** Chimera revealed this caern to the founders of the sept through dreams. Appeals to this totem in the caern are almost always answered. The answer often takes the form of an obscure omen, requiring great skill with Enigmas to decipher.

Other totems also hold some sway here. Sphinx has led packs from all over the world to this caern to seek knowledge. The children of the Sphinx are always welcomed by the Stargazers and are given free run of the caern.

With the troubles plaguing them, many of the Children of Gaia in Russia have found their way to this caern. They have brought their totem, the Unicorn, with them. The addition of Unicorn's attention to the caern has been welcomed by the Stargazers who ward the caern. Because of the hospitality shown to its children, Unicorn has vowed to help Chimera protect the place.

### **Sept of the Spirit Stone**

**Caern:** a small Yakut village located in the taiga of Siberia

**Level:** 3

**Gauntlet:** 4 (5)

**Type:** Gnosis

**Tribal Structure:** Uktena ward this; it is closed to everyone but Stargazers.

**Totems:** Uktena helped to provide this resting place for its children. In the world of Russia, there is so much lore and so many creatures to be recovered that the Uktena's job is never ending and always pressing. Because of this, Uktena



led his children to this place of rest, hidden well in the Siberian forest.

### *Sept of the Siberian Wilds*

**Caern:** hidden deep within the arctic northeast of Russia, roughly 70 miles inland from the Bering Sea.

**Level:** 2

**Gauntlet:** 4 (5)

**Type:** Will

**Tribal Structure:** Exclusively Wendigo

**Totems:** Wendigo has made its presence known here to protect its children. It did not lead its children here, yet if this is to be their home, the spirit will give them its blessing and help them if it can.

Winter Wolf showed the Wendigo tribe this place of power. In their journey through the wastes long ago, the other tribes had given up and returned to safer and easier grounds, but the Wendigo tribe had no home to which they could return. They carried on their search, though they were in danger of starving. Seeing them and admiring their courage, Winter Wolf came to them and lead them to this place of power. When they had reached safety, Winter Wolf said to them, "Know now that your mind can sustain you even when food cannot; here you should come to replenish that which food cannot restore."

In exchange for showing its children the wisdom of will, the Wendigo spirit has been willing to take a second seat to

Winter Wolf in this place. This has also led several of the Wendigo packs to choose Winter Wolf as their totem.

### *Umbrascape*

There is a cloak over the Umbra in Russia, a spirit curtain that was placed there by some unknown force. This curtain darkens the Umbra, worsening all perceptions and hiding the horrors that might lurk there. It also makes the spirit realm harder to reach from this side, although it is easier for spirits to reach into this realm. Even in the Umbra, actions are more difficult, and abilities and Gifts are harder to use.

The appearance of the Russian Umbra betrays the many years that the Weaver and the Wyrn exerted their influence over the country and its people. Most cities and urban areas appear as collections of featureless buildings connected by rusting pipes and machinery. Gray spirits move listlessly through these wastelands. Rarely can such things as Glens be found, and these normally exist on the edge of, or are surrounded by, stagnation and decay. Some buildings, such as cathedrals and other mostly pre-communist structures, appear as areas of color in the grayness of the Russian Umbra, for these are places where corruption and stagnation have been unable to take hold. In the unblighted countryside, the Russian Umbra appears much the same as anywhere else.

The Penumbra in Russia is a study in vast contrast. The untamed wilderness is a home to powerful spirits and





Wyldlings of many sorts. The forests are lovely, and their beauty can make the most stone-hearted of Garou feel Gaia's power, bringing tears to their eyes. The colors are brilliant, and it is not rare to feel a gentle breeze from a wind spirit as you sit under the leaves of a great tree and discuss weather with a forest spirit. The landscape resembles the Earthly land, with all the good points accented more fully by the spirits that tend such things.

The Umbral landscape is not all beauty, however, for it resembles the land in other ways. Large areas have been decimated, leaving pollution Banes where wind spirits once walked or flew. The spirits of trees soon become foul Blight Children. The Leshii forest spirits become twisted, disgusting looking creatures, violent to all who approach them.

In certain areas, the fabric between Earth and the Umbra has begun to weaken due to the devastation. Malevolent spirits wander in and out of the world without knowing they have changed location. Mortals who wander into these areas are rarely found again. If they are eventually found, they are always insane.

In the areas of environmental devastation, the population of Banes can be too great to comprehend. The danger for Garou in these places is far greater than the mere loss of life. These places act as addictive corrupting influences.

The cities are perhaps the most horrific of sights, and one always knows when one is approaching a city in the Umbra. The presence of the Weaver extends far outside the cities themselves, and before the city can be viewed, the stagnation can be sensed. Geometric patterns begin to form outside the cities and even the ground begins to look like a carefully laid mosaic of finely structured patterns. Spirits natural to the area take the forms of dark automatons, emotionless and unfeeling.

The cities themselves are works of the most horrific gothic art. The buildings are all dingy gray geometric shapes made of some featureless material that appears partially alive. Some buildings are interconnected by series of pipes that turn and twist with no recognizable pattern. These range from one building to the next, forming a maze of barriers in the streets. People walk about like zombies without the slightest hint of expression on their faces.

Only within the few cathedrals or warm homes can friendly spirits still be found in the city. The Bone Gnawers claim many friendly spirits exist, but are simply hiding.

## *The Shadow Curtain*

There is a great spiritual barrier placed upon Russia. It is called the Shadow Curtain. This "wall" prevents communication outside of the country and strengthens the Gauntlet.

The Shadow Curtain also prevents travel outside of Russia's Penumbra. No Garou can reach the 13 Near Realms from Russia, nor can they easily reach Dream (although they still dream, it is harder to control dreaming). The only exception to this is the Scar. At certain

times, when wandering the Penumbra around a Russian industrial site, a Moon Path to the Scar can be found. Brave Garou may then enter the Scar in an attempt to reach the rest of the Near Umbra. Good luck.

This great magical tapestry was erected barely a year ago by Baba Yaga, who arose from torpor in 1990 and immediately began to destroy her opposition. This includes every kind of spiritual or magical being, whether Garou, vampire or mage. Only those in her thrall are spared, and they are only puppets whose usefulness will eventually come to an end.

The Curtain serves her interests for now by preventing the Garou from gaining aid from outside. It also prevents mages from freely using their magick, for they cannot easily reach their Horizon Realm Chantries anymore. (For more information on the Shadow Curtain, see Chapter Four: Enemies.)

## *Stepping Sideways*

The following guidelines apply while in the Umbra:

- Spirits are not hampered by the Curtain.
- All Perception roll difficulties are normally one higher (to a maximum of 10).
- The Gauntlet is raised by one in all areas (to a maximum of 10).
- Spirits can, in areas of a lower Gauntlet, force their way into the material world (the ability to Materialize is no longer required). Their chance of doing this is equal to the spirit's Willpower against the area's Gauntlet + 4. Use the Stepping Sideways chart to find the time it takes to pass through the Gauntlet. This costs the spirit five Power points in addition to the normal Materialize cost.
- All Gifts and Ability roll difficulties, including combat, are increased by one.



# Chapter Three: The Tribes of the Moon

*There was a time when nothing really mattered,  
There was a time when there was nothing I didn't know,  
There was a time when I knew just what I was living for,  
There was a time and the time was long ago,  
There was a time and the time was so long ago,  
And I never really sleep anymore...*

— Meat Loaf, "It Just Won't Quit"

Despite various attempts to wipe them out, the Garou in Russia have survived. Each tribe has at least one sept in the area of the former Soviet Union, and many of them have more. Today, there are nearly a thousand Garou spread throughout the land, from the western borders of Poland to the edge of the Bering Sea. The most populous tribes are the Silver Fangs, Bone Gnawers, Glass Walkers and Get of Fenris. They are followed by the Shadow Lords and Black Furies, then the Uktena and Wendigo.

The Red Talons, once as numerous as the Silver Fangs, have lost nearly half their numbers. Silent Striders and Stargazers are rare, as few of their number remained in Russia when the Iron Curtain fell. The Fianna are one of the poorest represented tribes in Russia, but there are a few — very few — and most of them are immigrants. The Children of Gaia were exiled, and now number less than half their previous number in Russia.

There are a number of other werereatures throughout the country. In the Russian Far East, among the Siberian tigers, a few Bastet Khan may be found. In the far north and the wilds of Siberia, Gurahl sleep or lumber about, and in

some cities, the rare Ratkin prowls. Flying overhead, wherever there is news to be had or food to scavenge, the Corax gather.

## *Garou Politics*

Among the Garou, internal politics have begun seething as the Silver Fangs' role in Russia wanes, due, the other tribes believe, to their reputed madness. Nonetheless, the Fangs of Russia are stronger than in the West, as Russian nobility was well noted for breeding outside their lines, especially with other royal families, and not merely Russian ones. But the rumored madness still exists and is taking the Fangs slowly; apathy and stagnation are as prevalent among them as among humans.

The Get of Fenris and the Black Furies are the two tribes who are closest to the Silver Fangs, but between them, old enmities often flare. Both groups are aware of the Silver Fang decline, and both are working to prevent it, but their pride prevents them from working together. While the Get and the Furies strive to determine how to restore or replace

the Silver Fangs, the Shadow Lords take great pains to advance their own interests. It has become obvious that they intend to wrest control of Russia's Garou from the Silver Fangs, but, with the majority of the tribes against them, they have little hope of success.

Who will replace the Silver Fangs if they ultimately fail or are irredeemable? The Get of Fenris? The Black Furies? In truth, neither tribe wants the leadership of Russia. The Russian Get are so closely tied to the Silver Fangs that they cannot imagine taking power from them, and the Furies believe themselves underequipped for the position of leadership in a land as large and diverse as Russia.

Perhaps it is time for the Bone Gnawers to take a stand. Unfortunately, they are virtually shunned among the higher ranks of Russian Garou, even though they are one of the most populous tribes. Much of the animosity stems from the part the Gnawers played in the Russian Revolution, inadvertently causing the rise of vampiric power over the government. The Bone Gnawers are a potent force, allied with the Glass Walkers and the remaining Children of Gaia. The Bone Gnawers have the clearest insight into the needs of the nation and its people, and they more attuned to the problems of the Garou in Russia than any other tribe.

The Glass Walkers are hiding and protecting the few Children of Gaia that remain and are closely tied with the Bone Gnawers. They tend to ignore the more aristocratic tribes, although there have been numerous communiqués between their leaders and the Shadow Lords.

This has caused concern among the other tribes, for a Glass Walker/Bone Gnawer/Shadow Lord alliance would be a powerful thing. The Glass Walkers know nothing of a supposed three-way alliance; they seek only to use the Shadow Lords to help locate who or what is behind the recent strangeness that has plagued Russia.

Stargazers and Silent Striders have virtually absolved themselves from Garou politics. The Stargazers in particular seem content to sit by and observe, speaking only when directly questioned. As for the Striders, the majority have disappeared, and those that remain seem to be waiting for some great occurrence. In actuality, both groups are deeply involved in finding out exactly what is going on behind the scenes in Russia. More than any other tribe, they are placing themselves in great danger.

The Red Talons, oddly enough, have become one of the most vocal tribes in the council, balanced against the Wendigo and Uktena's virtual withdrawal to the deepest wilds. They raise their voices in a howl of war, futilely trying to unify the Garou into a concerted assault on humanity, attempting to force the secret power in Russia to reveal itself so they can sink their fangs and talons into it.

While most of the other tribes see the Silver Fangs as failing, the Fangs see themselves as biding their time and holding on to what they have. They do not want to risk open war until they can identify the enemy. A vast amount of information passes into the hands of the Silver Fangs, and despite many dreadful events, they continue to wait,

trusting that their name and howls will be enough to rally the other tribes behind them when the time comes.

The few Children of Gaia remaining in Russia have virtually merged with the Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers in an attempt to masquerade as members of these tribes. They do, however, keep track of their own pups and maintain their own identities beneath the facade. Their long-term goal is to save the Garou of Russia from themselves.

## Black Furies

It may seem odd that the Furies are fairly well represented among the Garou in Russia. Long ago, they were invited into Russia by the Silver Fangs to carry out the distasteful job of enforcing the Impergium. Most Furies settled in the southern regions, especially in the area of the Caspian Sea. The only Black Fury caern in Russia is found nearby along the edge of the Black Sea and guarded by the Sept of the Blood Sea. However, the Furies maintain a presence at almost every major caern in Russia (except the Get's and the Children of Gaia's). There they do what they have always done: defend the Wyld.

Members of this tribe in Russia maintain a strong sense of sisterhood, and loyalty among the Furies knows no bounds. Black Furies are expected to aid one another, especially in the face of the recent adversities.

Politically, the Black Furies are allied with the Silver Fangs, but this alliance grows more tenuous with each passing day. The Furies strongly oppose the growing power of the Get of Fenris and the Shadow Lords. They also fear the growing importance of the Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers. The Black Furies, more than ever, are having to fight for equality of position within the caerns they help to protect.

As the Silver Fangs decline, the Black Furies have been in a panic over who will rise to replace them. They are not overly impressed by any of the Russian Garou, not even deeming themselves worthy for reasons unknown to others.

Recently, some Furies have come to see the merit of the radical Red Talon plan. This has caused internal strife within the tribe. Despite the fact that the Get are the only other Garou that will stand so staunchly behind the Silver Fangs, the Black Furies are at odds with the Get. Since the Get favor the Red Talon plan, the Black Furies will not offer public support for it.

## Septs

There is one major Black Fury sept in Russia, the Sept of the Blood Sea, but there is at least one Fury in residence at each of the major caerns. There are 35 Black Furies at the Black Sea caern, and 40 more Furies spread throughout the other caerns.

## Stereotypes:

**Bone Gnawers:** They may be the downtrodden, but they had no excuse to rebel against their leaders. Look at what has happened!

**Children of Gaia:** Our unfortunate cousins were right in promoting peace between the tribes of the Garou, but they carried their beliefs too far. They forget that Gaia's most powerful method of cleansing is a raging storm.

**Fianna:** Their men are worthless, disorderly drunkards, rakes and rogues who are more interested in satisfying their egos and appetites than saving even one pup from the Wyrms. There are only a few of them in the Motherland, and thank Gaia for that.

**Get of Fenris:** These ineffectual, unruly, swaggering braggarts need to be taken down a few notches. Although they will never admit to error, we grow tired of having to take care of their mistakes. Were we not both allies of the Silver Fangs, we would teach them a lesson.

**Glass Walkers:** These city wolves are too close to the enemy to see how it encroaches on them. Because of this, they are not to be trusted.

**Red Talons:** Our wild sisters and brothers are noble in their fierce integrity and are best left to their own counsel. They have been the most poorly used of any of the Garou, no matter what the Bone Gnawers say.

**Shadow Lords:** Although their methods are different, they are worse than the Get. Their history in this country proves them to be a great danger to our tribe. Their arrogance could prove to be their destruction.

**Silent Striders:** Mysterious loners can be helpful, but they spend too much time travelling and not enough effort in fighting the Wyrms.

**Silver Fangs:** They are our leaders, and perhaps the noblest of the Garou. Their lack of direction alarms us. We fear for their future, but see little that we can do.

**Stargazers:** They spend too much time in contemplation and not enough in action. However, they have given valuable advice in the past and, therefore, should not be disregarded.

**Uktena:** More mysterious in some ways than the Glass Walkers. They keep to themselves and walk a spirit path that few of us can see.

**Wendigo:** We admire them for their spirit, but they should spend less time retreating and more time searching for a way to defeat our enemies.

## Mother's Pride

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Nature / Demeanor:** Alpha / Caregiver

**Attributes:** Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 3, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 5, Primal-Urge 4, Melee 4, Leadership 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Enigmas 4, Occult 3, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Contacts 2, Kinfolk 3, Past Life 4, Pure Breed 1, Resources 2

**Gifts:** (1) Falling Touch, Inspiration, Razor Claws, Sense Prey, Sense Wyrms; (2) Curse of Aeolus, Spirit of the Fray, True Fear; (3) Combat Healing, Silver Claws; (4) Stoking Fury's Furnace, Venom; (5) Gorgon's Gaze

Rage 7, Gnosis 7, Willpower 10

**Rank:** 5

**Rites:** Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of the Unveiled Glen, Rite of Praise, Stone of Scorn

**Fetishes:** Tears of Gaia, Pine Daggers, Elk Tooth Necklace, Moonwatch

**Image:** In Lupus form, Mother's Pride is a middle-aged wolf. Streaks of gray shine through her fur. In Homid, she is an average-looking woman of above average build. Her face shows her middle age, but her eyes and hair tell a different tale, a tale of countless years filled with hardships and lost dreams.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Mother's Pride is a wise and disciplined leader on the field of battle. She is also protective of her young. Pride has fought a long, hard campaign, and her dreams have gone up in flames. Gaia hurts, and she can do so little. Beneath her despair lies the heart of a warrior waiting to be unleashed.

**Background:** Pride is the leader of the Blood of the Sea Sept, a position she has held for a number of years. She has been through a lot, fought many battles and done many great things. Now she is growing tired. Even though there are still battles to fight, she may not be able to rise to the challenge. Were it not for the fact that the other sisters at the caern demand her attention, she would step down and perhaps become Warder.

## Tatiana

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Nature / Demeanor:** Alpha / Competitor

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

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 5, Subterfuge 3, Animal Ken 3, Firearms 2, Melee 4, Leadership 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Pure Breed 3

**Gifts:** (1) Heightened Senses, Inspiration, Sense Wyrms; (2) Curse of Aeolus, Spirit of the Fray; (3) Visceral Agony  
Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Willpower 9

**Rank:** 3

**Rites:** Gathering for the Departed, Moot Rite, Rite of Cleansing





**Fetishes:** Stone of Luna (Level 5, Gnosis 7; this fetish is a moonstone in which a Yua Hua spirit is bound— see the Appendix for stats. When activated, the markings on the stone will rise off, forming a small shimmering ribbon of light with a blue and gold aura. The Yua Hua will then open a Moon Bridge to a destination from two to fifty miles away. The Bridge usually exits in a copse of trees. Since this fetish relies on a Gaffling of Luna, it is susceptible to lunar madness. During the new moon, this fetish should be activated with extreme caution, for there is a 60% chance that it will open the Bridge to a Wyrn-tainted location.)

**Image:** Tatiana is a beautiful, medium-sized wolf with a glossy black coat, full ruff and five silver streaks beginning at her forehead and travelling down her back. In Homid form, she is an absolutely gorgeous, raven-haired young woman with pale skin, green eyes and Greek features, more beautiful than an ancient Greek statue. Those who are perceptive will recognize that part of her beauty lies in the cold, killer glint of her eyes.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are a thoughtful and exceptional pack leader, viciously protective of your pack and always the first to enter battle. This form of leadership has endeared you to your pack, who exhibit undying loyalty to you both in combat and at moots. You are well aware of the effect your appearance has on people, especially men, and you are often annoyed by it. Because of this, you treat all men with extreme derision.

**Background:** Long before Tatiana's birth, her family moved to a small fishing village in Crimea. The Turks had invaded their home near Constantinople. Because much of her family died in the migration to Crimea, her Kinfolk were overjoyed when the First Change came upon Tatiana. She was then recruited by her grandmother, a Black Fury, and trained in the Ways.

She has been given the responsibility of guarding the Sept of the Crescent Moon with her pack and has done very well so far. She and her pack have lost only one battle, and they staunchly refuse to speak of the incident.

## *Athena "Windchaser" Remov*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ragabash

**Camp:** Freebooters

**Nature / Demeanor:** Competitor / Show-Off

**Attributes:** Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 3, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (1/0/3/3), Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Expression 2, Primal-Urge 2, Subterfuge 2, Animal Ken 2, Melee 2, Stealth 4, Survival 2, Enigmas 2, Investigation 1, Occult 1, Rituals 1, Kindred Lore 1

**Backgrounds:** None

**Gifts:** (1) Heightened Senses, Open Seal, Persuasion, Shroud

Rage 5, Gnosis 4, Willpower 6

**Rank:** 1

**Merits / Flaws:** Immune to Wyrn Emanations, Animal Magnetism / Overconfidence

**Rites:** None

**Fetishes:** Fang Dagger

**Image:** In Homid, Athena is a stunning, shapely and tanned Greek girl with long black hair and green eyes. In Lupus, she is a long, sleek black wolf with white highlights in her facial area.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are insatiably curious. Enough said.

**Background:** Athena was an orphan on the streets of Leningrad until two years ago. She found it easy to use her looks to get by, especially since she was an early bloomer. She spent time as a prostitute until the Black Furies took her away from that life and showed her what she truly was. Athena easily took to her new life and has since proven herself to her tribe. She does not, however, share the common Black Fury sentiment regarding men.

## *Bone Gnawers*

The Bone Gnawers claim areas of rural and urban squalor as their homes. They are as common in Russian cities as they are in the former cooperatives. The present condition of urban life in Russia causes the loss of many Gnawer pups before they undergo their First Change, and the occasional pup is born with the taint of the Wyrn. The otherwise soft-spoken Bone Gnawers are being driven to rage.

The Bone Gnawers are a Russian enigma. They date back to the time of the Impergium in Russia and have always been the ones to speak for the downtrodden, the serfs and the slaves of the nobility.

The Russian Bone Gnawers trace their lineage from these folk and the wolves that dwell on the fringes of human habitation. They are different here than in Europe and the West, both in characteristic and temperament, but there is one thing that they share with their brethren: a deeply ingrained sense of survival. In Russia, survival is often directly dependent upon silence. Of all the Russian tribes, the Bone Gnawers are the most reticent.

Few other Russian tribes retain the Kinfolk connections that the Bone Gnawers claim. They are tied to the peasant and working class of Russia as closely as the Silver Fangs and the Shadow Lords are tied to the aristocracy. Russia's Bone Gnawers are the descendants of the masses that the communist revolution was supposed to free. In fact, the majority of Bone Gnawers supported the Bolshevik Revolution, and the idea of equality espoused by the Communists has become ingrained into Bone Gnawer thought.

The Gnawers in Russia are as knowledgeable about survival as their western brethren, though most of them have not lived as street people or homeless—at least, until recently. If the communist leaders did anything, they kept people housed and fed. Survival for Russia's Bone Gnawers took on a whole different meaning. Food was available, and everyone worked. People failing to work were sometimes incarcerated by the authorities. The members of the tribe did their best to avoid this. In jail, one's Garou nature might be revealed.

The Bone Gnawers of Russia are different than they are in other parts of the world: they have been fed better, are cleaner and have kept their opinions to themselves. However, as Russia has begun to resemble some nations in the west, the Bone Gnawers have changed as well, resembling their western brethren more and more.

Russian Bone Gnawers have the closest ties to the centers of population and the common folk. The problems that affect the working classes and lower classes of Russia tend to find their way into the Bone Gnawer population as well. They suffer from the urban and suburban tragedies that have befallen numerous areas. Many have had to eke out a living under appalling conditions of pollution, are poisoned by chemical dumping and radiation or are tainted in some fashion by the pervasive influence of the Wyrms.

Until recently, most of the efforts of the Bone Gnawers to cleanse the Wyrms' poisons have been largely unsuccessful. Now, however, they have begun receiving assistance from the Glass Walkers and other unknown sources. The two tribes of urban Garou have formed close ties, and the loose organization of the Bone Gnawers has been strengthened by the need to unify. This is an alliance that could accomplish much, and with the problems that they face, the Bone Gnawers are one of the few tribes in Russia that possesses the motivation and the numbers to actually carry the fight to the Wyrms.

Oddly, none of the Bone Gnawer caerns have suffered from the mysterious losses of power that many other Russian caerns have encountered. There are many who believe

that the Bone Gnawers have been corrupted by the Wyrms and point to their caerns as evidence. While it may be true that the Bone Gnawers are more likely to suffer from corruption than many of the other tribes in Russia, in general, they are set more firmly against the Wyrms and its agents than the other tribes, even though they see themselves as embroiled in a hopeless fight.

Though often disregarded, there can be no doubt that the Bone Gnawers represent one of the most potent political forces among the Garou of Russia. For now, the Bone Gnawers are silent, debating the merit of the Red Talons' plan. Their opinion means a great deal to the Silver Fangs, though most of the other tribes look upon them with contempt.

## Septs

Each Russian city that houses workers or common folk is the domain of the Bone Gnawers. Their protectorates rarely extend beyond the boundaries of the city or town in which the sept dwells. Caerns are generally located in fields or parks, wherever toil has helped to shape the land. Gorky Park, in Moscow, is a major Bone Gnawer caern. Nearly a hundred Bone Gnawers compose the Sept of the People's Will at the Gorky Park caern.

They also maintain caerns and septs in St. Petersburg and Kiev, with a few small caerns scattered in other cities; they share many of these caerns with the Glass Walkers. A few of the protectorates of these septs extend into the countryside near their home city. There are perhaps another hundred Bone Gnawers spread throughout the country.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** They consider themselves to be the champions of the downtrodden, but they kowtow to the imperialist Silver Fangs. They are no allies of ours.

**Children of Gaia:** Poor, misguided purveyors of peace. They will be remembered as allies in our quest for equality.

**Fianna:** We know little of these. What few there may be in Russia do not seem to serve any real purpose, but we will not turn them away.

**Get of Fenris:** More agents of the imperialists. These warlike buffoons should be removed from the Motherland.

**Glass Walkers:** While they do not espouse our ideas of equality, the Glass Walkers are honest allies and have been a great deal of help to us.

**Red Talons:** They are uncivilized and cling to the old traditions of dominance. Rather than changing with the times, they seek to destroy everything that does not fit with their idea of the "natural order."

**Shadow Lords:** As imperialist pig-dogs go, these are the worst. Support the Silver Fangs and their lackeys if you must, but do nothing for the Shadow Lords.

**Silent Striders:** They are wanderers who do not fit within the system.

**Silver Fangs:** Tsarist and aristocratic leaders of the Garou. Their ideals would turn us all into their serfs, and this must be avoided.

**Stargazers:** Mystics and fortunetellers in a world that no longer needs them. They are excellent arbitrators, but their philosophy does not match our own.

**Uktena:** Backwards folk who cling to spiritualism and practice questionable arts. They should be shown the error of their ways and brought down the path we follow.

**Wendigo:** They are much like the Uktena, but are more violent in attitude.

## Nicholas Zukeine

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Theurge

**Nature / Demeanor:** Director / Conniver

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 4, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Primal-Urge 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3, Animal Ken 2, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Leadership 3, Performance 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Computer 3, Enigmas 3, Investigation 3, Occult 3, Politics 3, Rituals 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Contacts 4, Kinfolk 2, Resources 1

**Gifts:** (1) Cooking, Mother's Touch, Persuasion, Spirit Speech, Scent of Sweet Honey; (2) Command Spirit, Sight from Beyond, Jam Technology; (3) Beg, Umbral Sight; (4) Ultimate Argument of Logic, Spirit Ward; (5) Survivor

Rage 9, Gnosis 8, Willpower 9

Rank: 5



**Rites:** Rite of Contrition, Rite of Cleansing, Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of Becoming, Rite of Binding, Ritual of Summoning, Gaia's Vengeful Teeth

**Fetishes:** None

**Image:** In Homid, Nicholas is a tall man with short-cropped black hair and a petrifying gaze. His Lupus form is able to halt a pack at a glance, in spite of his ragged pelt and stooped posture.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You were one of the staunch supporters of the Communist Party. You still believe that the system can work; you were brainwashed by it all long before your First Change. It was just a case of the wrong people being in charge. You try to keep your sept quiet and orderly.

**Background:** Nicholas was a rather disgruntled member of the Communist Party during the last years of Stalin. He firmly believes in the teachings of Marx and Engels and has helped to maintain the Sept of the People's Will as a living example of their standards. As elder advisor, many Garou look to him for advice, and Nicholas advises.

## Petrov Koldar

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Galliard

**Nature / Demeanor:** Survivor / Competitor

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 2 (4/5/5/5), Charisma 2, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Primal-Urge 1, Streetwise 5, Animal Ken 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Linguistics 2, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Mentor 1, Totem 2

**Gifts:** (1) Beast Speech, Cooking, Mindspeak, Persuasion

Rage 6, Gnosis 4, Willpower 6

Rank: 1

**Merits / Flaws:** Jack-Of-All-Trades, Immune to Wyrms Emanations, Moon Bound / Banned Transformation (Silver), Low Self-Image

**Rites:** None

**Fetish:** None

**Image:** In Homid, Petrov's clothes make him look like a bum— worn out military jacket, boots with holes in them, threadbare pants and a duffel bag just as scruffy as the rest of him. In Lupus, he looks more like a mutt, but a friendly one.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Look at you, you have to be the most pathetic werewolf there ever was. Take, for example, your trouble with women. I mean, you couldn't get a date with the Elephant Man's sister! And some fighting machine you make! Just let there be some silver in the area, and you can't even shift. Good thing almost no one has silver in the gutters. But all the same, it's a better life than nothing, and one of these days you'll show them.

**Background:** Recent events in Russia left Petrov without a home. He has been a Garou for a while, but his lack of confidence has prevented him from rising far. He spends a good deal of time at the Sept of the People's Will, for he feels like he's accepted there, and he can go there unnoticed.

## Children of Gaia

The Children of Gaia were the voices of calm and serenity in the councils of the Russian Garou, but they have become the pariahs, the outcasts and the damned of the Garou. They did not fall to the corruption of the Defiler Wurm, but were consumed by the hatred (and envy) of the Red Talons. Now there are few of them remaining in Russia, and they are accepted only by Bone Gnawers and Glass Walkers, and they owe their survival to them. The Children of Gaia are considered exiled by the majority of Garou in Russia.

The Children of Gaia were once the religious leaders of Old Russia, nurturing the religion of the Mother Goddess among the humans. Even after the coming of Christianity, the old religions and superstitions died hard. Indeed, some say they never died; practice merely shifted from the public domain to private life and continued unabated. The tribe has a long tradition in Russia. They were the ones who established the network of Kinfolk that has been so fruitful for the Garou.

However, in an effort to stop the rampant destruction of the Russian environment, the Children of Gaia lost a vital struggle, resulting finally in the detonation of nuclear weapons on Russian soil by Russian people. With this defeat came a loss of face among the Garou, for the other tribes had chosen, against their better judgments, to follow the Children of Gaia's plan to control the humans. When the Children's methods failed miserably, to tragic consequences, the rage of the Red Talons was unleashed. The Children of Gaia are no longer the voice of compassion within the tribes, for they now have no voice at all.

The defacement of the tribe was so complete that many Children were exiled from their caerns. The Red Talons were quick to capitalize further upon the Children's weakened condition and began secretly hunting them. The Children went underground. Many went to live in safety with their long-established Kinfolk. With the aid of the Glass Walkers, who were sympathetic to their plight, the Children of Gaia set up a strong underground information network. They now keep track of both the Wurm and the Red Talons, though none can say which the Children hate more. It is said that they have spies in the caerns disguised as members of other tribes; if that is true, those Garou are in true danger if they are discovered.

## Septs

The few Children of Gaia that remain in Russia are loosely tied together in a community of common knowledge. They live among the septs of the Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers, or among their human or wolf Kinfolk, depending on where they have settled. The Children of Gaia maintain one caern in secret on the shores of the White Sea near Archangel. There are 20 Children at that caern, and there are 25 Children hiding elsewhere throughout Russia.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** They are noble hunters working for Gaia, and would likely support us if we tried to return to the councils of Russia.

**Bone Gnawers:** Many believe them to be misguided by the teachings of the human named Marx. However, their ideas of equality are an ideal from which we all benefit, and their plight is terrible to behold.

**Fianna:** These rogues can reduce tension with their banter and promote cheer with their music and dance. If only there were more of them in the Motherland.

**Get of Fenris:** Warriors and berserkers. They are the allies of the Silver Fangs, and if for nothing else, should be respected for their dedicated spirit. Their tact is, however, another matter.

**Glass Walkers:** The most adaptable of our kind next to the Bone Gnawers. They are our only true allies in all of Russia and could perhaps be the ones to bring about change.

**Red Talons:** The plight of our forest brothers saddens us, but we find it hard to forgive them their savagery. The spirits of our fallen Kin cry out, and the Talons have made a special place for themselves in the Realm of Atrocity.

**Shadow Lords:** Villains all. This tribe has the worst characteristics of Eastern European nobility. Their ways threaten to destroy us all.

**Silent Striders:** These travellers often bear important news, and they are quite useful for carrying messages. But they also carry a deep secret. What is it?

**Silver Fangs:** Our leaders. They allowed the Red Talons and the Shadow Lords make war upon us, but they are our leaders, and we must support them. If only there was another choice.

**Stargazers:** Of all the Garou, these mystics value knowledge, peace and spiritualism as much as we do. Strange that their voices were silent when we needed them the most.

**Uktena:** Walkers of the Umbra, binders of spirits. There is much we can learn from each other. However, they have a tendency to delve into mysterious and arcane forces instead of dealing with the threats of the human world.

**Wendigo:** Cold hearted warriors of the Siberian forests. The Wendigo could be of great assistance to the Garou if they could be persuaded to come out of their self-imposed exile.

## *Alyosha Lyubou*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Philodox

**Nature / Demeanor:** Caregiver / Caregiver

**Attributes:** Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 5, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Empathy 5, Expression 4, Instruction 4, Primal-Urge 3, Animal Ken 2, Drive 2, Melee 3, Leadership 4, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Enigmas 3, Law 4, Linguistics 3, Occult 5, Politics 3, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** Allies 1, Contacts 2, Kinfolk 3, Resources 4

**Gifts:** (1) Mother's Touch, Persuasion, Resist Pain, Scent of the True Form, Truth of Gaia; (2) Calm, Luna's Armor, Strength of Purpose; (3) Dazzle, Tongues, Wisdom of the Ancient Ways; (4) Cocoon, Unicorn's Grace; (5) Halo of the Sun

Rage 6, Gnosis 6, Willpower 10

**Rank:** 5

**Rites:** Rite of Lasting Glory, Rite of Cleansing, Rite of Contrition, Rite of Caern Building, Voice of the Jackal, Rite of the Fetish, Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of the Opened Bridge

**Fetishes:** Silver Sword

**Image:** In Homid, Alyosha is 6' 6", with a motherly look of caring and compassion. She has blond hair and compassionate blue eyes.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You believe that fighting and competing is the Wyrms way, not Gaia's. There must be peace.



Each slash of claw on flesh brings doom to Gaia. The right ways must be taught.

**Background:** Alyosha is still young, but has managed to achieve leadership of the White Sea Sept. She was born in Finland, where she became one of Avar's Chosen, a camp of Garou who travel the world with a message of unity between humanity and the Garou. She came to Russia to spread the word, but upon seeing the poor state of the Children of Gaia there, she chose to stay and help them recover.

## *Bringer-of-Light*

**Breed:** Metis

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Nature / Demeanor:** Visionary / Judge

**Attributes:** Strength 5 (7/9/8/6), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 4, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 2, Driving 2, Firearms 2, Leadership 3, Performance 3, Stealth 2, Enigmas 2, Occult 1, Rituals 2

**Backgrounds:** Kinfolk 1

**Gifts:** (1) Sense Wyrms, Inspiration, Mother's Touch, Razor Claws; (2) True Fear, Luna's Armor; (3) Heart of Fury

Rage 6, Gnosis 5, Willpower 7

**Rank:** 3

**Merits/Flaws:** Mixed Morph, Calm Heart, Venus Rising / Driving Goals (Unite the Garou), Mark of the Predator

**Fetish:** Harmony Flute

**Rites:** None

**Image:** In Homid, Bringer-of-Light is a six-foot slab of muscle. His Lupus form is almost as large as his Hispo, with a chilling stare that unravels the rage in the most savage of beasts.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Unspeakably calm, you always attempt to promote cooperation between warring factions. However, you will not hesitate to resort to force if necessary. Your name comes from a vision you once had, a premonition of being one among many carrying torches of unity into the chaotic Russian night.

**Background:** Bringer-of-Light was born at the White Sea Sept. His mother, a Garou, died giving him birth, and he was raised by the sept leader. Lyubov instilled in him a love for his enemies, along with her own goal of eventually uniting the tribes of Gaia and humanity. This goal has become Bringer-of-Light's reason for being.

# Fianna

The great dire wolves of Ireland are perhaps the most poorly represented tribe in Russia. The Fianna have no political power in Russia and have never made an effort to establish themselves there. The few that can be found are either footloose individuals with an abiding wanderlust or brave lone wolves who have settled in the region. Some can be found among the Gypsies that travel the countryside.

## Septs

As the Fianna have no central organization in Russia, they have no caerns or septs here.

## Stereotypes

The Fianna that can be found in Russia have many of the same stereotypes about the other tribes as the Fianna everywhere. See *Werewolf Players Guide* for a list of the Fianna's opinions on the other tribes.

## Screams-of-Nightmares

**Breed:** Metis

**Auspice:** Philodox

**Nature / Demeanor:** Caregiver / Lone Wolf

**Attributes:** Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 5 (7/8/8/8), Charisma 5, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 5 (4/0/5/5), Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Expression 4, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 3, Melee 5, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Enigmas 4, Medicine 3, Occult 2, Rituals 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Contacts 5, Resources 3, Kinfolk 2



**Gifts:** (1) Sense Wurm, Shed, Resist Pain, Resist Toxin; (2) Call to Duty, Howl of the Banshee, King of Beasts; (3) Awaken Beast, Eyes of the Cat

Rage 9, Gnosis 6, Willpower 10

**Rank:** 3

**Metis Disfigurement:** Blackened Eyes (lose two Perception dice whenever looking at something in twilight or darkness, but gain one die to Intimidation— you unnerve people when you look at them.)

**Rites:** Rite of the Opened Caern, Rite of Cleansing, Rite of Summoning, Rite of the Fetish

**Fetishes:** Translator's Ear (Level 3, Gnosis 7; a silver earring embedded with a diamond that allows the wearer to hear and comprehend any conversation within 100 feet, even in another language), Fang Dagger

**Image:** In Homid form, Screams-of-Nightmares is a middle-aged man with short reddish-brown hair. The irises of his eyes are a dark black. In wolf form, he is a huge, blood-red wolf with black streaks across his shoulders. In both Homid and Lupus forms, he wears an earring in his left ear.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Your stare unnerves people. You want to be friends with everyone you meet, but you are afraid that you will scare them away. You skulk around in the dark, hoping that the darkness will hide your flaw. You are very lonely. You often write poetry to human females, but are too shy to confront them, fearing that they will brand you a beast.

**Background:** Screams-of-Nightmares was born to a Fianna and a Silent Strider. The Strider, his father, was slain, and Screams was raised by his mother, a Fianna gypsy. He has made a name for himself, although he is considered a Ronin by the Russian tribes.

## Get of Fenris

The Get of Fenris have long been a part of Russia. Their dedication to the war against the Wurm and their ability to recognize superior battle leaders has always been a great asset. It was Rurik, one of their Kinfolk, who created the Russian Empire, setting off a period of rivalry between the Get and the Silver Fangs. The issue was breeding stock: whose Kinfolk would rule the throne. The Silver Fangs eventually won the conflict; the Get backed down. True to Lupine form, the Get of Russia fell into the role of second wolf, and now have a long tradition of following the Silver Fangs into battle. Their tenacity is marshalled by the tactics of the Fangs.

Over the years, the nobility and pure breeding of the Fangs greatly impressed the Get, and they now support the Silver Fangs' leadership without question. It is said that none of the tribes grieve as deeply for the problems facing the Silver Fangs as do the Get. If this is true, they have let no other Garou see their grief.

The Get of Fenris supported the plan presented by the Red Talons for dealing with the nuclear crisis, but the



influence of the Silver Fangs has had a tempering effect upon them. As the madness of the Silver Fangs worsens, the Get of Russia have taken it upon themselves to fulfill the obligations of their chosen leaders. This brings them into almost direct conflict with the Shadow Lords and the Red Talons, with whom they would normally sympathize. The majority of the Get take on these responsibilities without question, and, in fact, go to great pains to maintain the illusion that the Silver Fangs are still in control. This illusion is so complete that even the Silver Fangs do not realize the extent to which the Get have assumed their responsibilities. If there is a leading tribe in Russia now, it is the Get, and only they know it. The problem is that they do not want the position and do not see anyone as worthy of it.

Russia has changed the Get of Fenris, much as it has changed every tribe of Garou that has set foot on it. True, the Get are still bloodthirsty warriors, but their rage has been tempered by the need to survive and the nobility of the Silver Fangs. Now that the Get have had to shoulder some of the responsibilities of leadership, they have discovered that wisdom is not something unnecessary to them. The Get of Fenris have learned temperance.

## Septs

There were once a number of Get of Fenris septs located in northern Russia near the seacoasts. That number dwindled to only three as the Get of Fenris were drawn away to care for caerns normally guarded by the waning Silver Fangs. One of these caerns has recently fallen prey to the mysterious assaults and drainings that have plagued virtually every other Russian tribe. This is a great insult to the Get, and they greatly desire to learn the secret behind the drainings.

Of the remaining two caerns, one is located on the northern coast across from Novaya Zemlya, where it provides the main defensive force against the Black Spiral Pit there. It is guarded by the Arctic Axe Sept, composed of 35 members.

The other caern is located near St. Petersburg on the coast of the Baltic Sea. It is guarded by the Sept of Fafnir's Brood, which is composed of 40 Get. Throughout the rest of Russia there are 30 more Get, most of them guarding Silver Fang caerns.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** These willful bitches of war are often our rivals, but they do respect the Silver Fangs, and that, if nothing else, shows that they are not all bad.

**Bone Gnawers:** The most useless of the tribes in Russia! They brought the Wyrms upon us and themselves. Why should we help *them* get rid of it?

**Children of Gaia:** They have been exiled! The few that might remain are worthless to us. This is war. We do not need peacemakers.

**Fianna:** These rogues tend to appear and disappear like the Gypsies they travel with. They are one of the most unreliable tribes in Russia.

**Glass Walkers:** They claim to "understand" and "control" the cities. If so, why do they not purge the Wyrms taint from them? Perhaps they are not so powerful as they make us out to be.

**Red Talons:** A sad group of warriors whose time looms on the horizon. They are one of the only tribes in Russia worth saving.

**Shadow Lords:** Bastards all! They seek to oust us and our rightful rulers, the Silver Fangs. When the time comes, we will destroy them if they will not bow.

**Silent Striders:** They are too few to be of much help to us.

**Silver Fangs:** The only tribe worthy enough for us to follow. The Silver Fangs are our lords, and we must do all that we can to save them... from themselves, if needs be.

**Stargazers:** They think too much. They should learn to fight like real Garou.

**Uktena:** We don't understand them at all, nor do we try. There are too few to really affect the situation, although they seem to be quite able to deal with spiritual threats.

**Wendigo:** Excellent fighters, but they don't understand that in order to win, they must take the battle to the Wyrms.

## Anton Nordenskald

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Nature / Demeanor:** Bravo / Bravo

**Attributes:** Strength 5 (7/9/8/6), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 3, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 5, Animal Ken 3, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Leadership 4, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Occult 3, Rituals 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 5, Pure Breed 3

**Gifts:** (1) Heightened Senses, Inspiration, Leap of the Kangaroo, Razor Claws, Resist Pain, Sense Prey; (2) Spirit of the Fray, Halt the Coward's Flight, Snarl of Predator, True Fear; (3) Combat Healing, Cat Feet, Heart of Fury; (4) Stoking Fury's Furnace, Clenched Jaw; (5) Song of the Great Beast

Rage 9, Gnosis 6, Willpower 9

**Rank:** 5

**Rites:** Rite of Cleansing, Rite of the Hunting Grounds

**Fetishes:** Scar Fetish (Level 5, Gnosis 8; each success on the activation roll adds one extra soak die against any type of wound, including aggravated damage. This scarified tattoo appears as a medieval shield.)



Rage 3, Gnosis 8, Willpower 6

**Rank:** 1

**Merits/Flaws:** Charmed Existence/Compulsion (petty theft), Notoriety, Overconfident

**Rites:** None

**Fetishes:** Collar of Innocence (Level 4, Gnosis 8; a small leather collar that, when activated in Lupus form, makes the wearer appear to be a small, harmless puppy.)

**Image:** In Homid, Fang Jumper is a simple, nondescript man with large curious eyes. His only memorable feature is the way he looks around constantly. In Lupus, he usually appears as a puppy.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are a jester among an arrogant warrior race. You are also one of the luckiest people alive. You get away with so much that you've stopped wondering when it's going to finally catch up to you. You aren't even aware that you tend to swap the belongings of those people around you. Life is so amusing; there always seems to be chaos everywhere you look.

**Background:** Fang Jumper is an anomaly. As a pup, he wandered into a Get of Fenris caern at the time of his First Change. He is also a good-humored Get of Fenris. However, his sense of humor is one that tends to get him in trouble with the other members of his tribe. He has been through everything the Get can put a pup through and has come out smelling like roses every time. Most of the Get want him to be somewhere else, and so he has travelled a lot since his Rite of Passage.

## Glass Walkers

*The beauty of nature is in the wealth of the nation!*

— Vytautas Kaushinis, Soviet Lithuanian Political Poster, 1962

The Glass Walkers long ago brought "modern" ideas to Russia, supporting the rise of the city-states and ousting the traditional power of the princes, who were usually Silver Fang Kinfolk. The Glass Walkers helped the towns to institute an early form of democracy, called the *Veshe*. The Silver Fangs still ruled Russia, however, and the Glass Walkers always found it to be an uphill battle to improve the commercial interests of their cities.

Because of their unconventional ways, many of the tribes consider the Glass Walkers an unwelcome burden upon the area. Their accomplishments often meet with derision, only to be grudgingly accepted as indispensable years later. But the accusation stands in Russia more than elsewhere— "the Glass Walkers walk only towards the Wyrms."

This could not be farther from the truth. It is simply prejudice against the Glass Walker's city ways that causes this opinion among the Garou. While the Glass Walkers have little say among the Garou councils of Russia, they virtually control many of the cities now that the Leeches no longer hold sway.

**Image:** In Lupus, Anton looks like a cross between a gray northern wolf and a timber wolf. He has a number of scars crossing his pelt, but one seems to occupy a place of honor on his shoulder (his Scar Fetish). He is getting more gray with his age.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Anton is the Sept Leader of the Fafnir's Brood Sept. He rules absolutely and enforces his dictates personally. He has never lost a fight, and is beginning to think that the only thing that can beat him is time.

**Background:** Anton is a grizzled old warrior. He fought against the Germans in World War II when they sought to invade his home in the lands near Leningrad. He has never been defeated, for he is as smart and wily as he is powerful. Unlike many of his berserker kin, Anton favors hit and run tactics over true frontal assaults. He wants to stay alive, and he wants his tribesmen to survive.

Recently, Anton has started tentative overtures towards the Black Furies, acting against the advice of the majority of the other elders at Fafnir's Brood Sept. He has begun to feel that the two tribes' continual conflict is pointless in the face of greater troubles.

### Fang Jumper

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Ragabash

**Nature / Demeanor:** Competitor / Jester

**Attributes:** Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 2 (4/5/5/5), Charisma 2, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Primal-Urge 5, Streetwise 2, Animal Ken 2, Stealth 5, Survival 2, Enigmas 2, Occult 2, Rituals 1

**Backgrounds:** Resources 1

**Gifts:** (1) Blur of the Milky Eye, Leap of the Kangaroo, Open Seal, Resist Pain

Only the Children of Gaia welcomed the Walkers when they arrival in Russia. For this act of kindness, the Glass Walkers feel they owe a debt and have gone to great lengths to protect the now-persecuted Children. Recently, they have worked together with the Bone Gnawers on various projects. Many say that the coalition between these two tribes forms the single most powerful alliance in Russia. If this is true, they have yet to reveal their intentions.

Many Garou are concerned that the Glass Walkers are the only tribe whose ranks have increased noticeably with each passing year. Many also wonder why, like the Bone Gnawers, the Glass Walkers have lost no caerns to the mysterious drainings. The leaders of the Shadow Lords, Black Furies and Get of Fenris have been leaning on the Glass Walkers in council, trying to get them to disclose a secret that many feel they must know.

## Septs

Glass Walker septs exist in the major cities of Russia, primarily to the west of the Ural Mountains, in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev and even in some towns throughout Russia. They share some of these caerns with the Bone Gnawers. Their caerns are located in places of learning, politics and manufacturing and are generally moderately powerful.

The Sept of Learning Hall is composed of 40 members, and there are 65 more Glass Walkers in the cities and towns of the land.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** Impressive in both skill and appearance, but not very social. They tend not to trust us, so watch out.

**Bone Gnawers:** One of the only tribes to live beside us in the cities. We have a profitable alliance with them, but our ideological differences could prove to be a problem eventually.

**Children of Gaia:** They were one of the first tribes to accept us when we came to Russia, and we owe them a debt for that. Help them when you can, especially if you can anger the Shadow Lords while you're at it.

**Fianna:** There are too few of them, and few of them deal with us. Those that do, however, are easy to get along with — as long as you keep an eye on your valuables.

**Get of Fenris:** Brutish, hulking killing machines kept in check only by the waning power of the Silver Fangs. Keep an eye on them, and plan on their doing something stupid and violent.

**Red Talons:** They should learn to change with the world rather than expecting the world to change for them.

**Shadow Lords:** An interesting group. They seem quite anxious to get us on their side. While they would make useful allies, assisting them in taking power from the Silver Fangs is about as appealing as a root canal.

**Silent Striders:** Probably the best, most reliable messengers in Russia. The mail system in this country certainly isn't useful. We need them.

**Silver Fangs:** They claim to lead the Garou of Russia, but we haven't seen a lot of leadership lately.

**Stargazers:** We could learn a few things from them, and they could learn from us.

**Uktena:** Their mastery of the spirit world is intriguing, but they are exceedingly hard for us to approach.

**Wendigo:** They so rarely come to the cities that it is difficult to figure them out. Best to avoid them for now.

## Boris Tsergov

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Theurge

**Nature / Demeanor:** Maker / Perfectionist

**Attributes:** Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/7), Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 4 (3/0/4/4), Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Leadership 5, Repair (Computers) 3, Stealth 2, Computer 4, Enigmas 3, Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Occult 3, Rituals 5, Science 4, Area Knowledge (Moscow) 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Contacts 3, Resources 5

**Gifts:** (1) Control Simple Machine, Persuasion, Sense Wurm, Spirit Speech; (2) Command Spirit, Cybersenses, Heat Metal, Jam Technology; (3) Control Complex Machine, Data Flow, Disquiet, Elemental Favor; (4) Attunement, Phone Travel; (5) Feral Lobotomy

Age 7, Gnosis 10, Willpower 7

**Rank:** 5

**Rites:** Rite of Contrition, Ritual of the Questing Stone, Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of Binding, Rite of Spirit Awakening, Rite of Becoming, Ritual of Summoning, Rite of the Fetish

**Fetish:** Surge of False Energy

**Image:** In Homid, Boris is the model of a University Don. His suit is never less than impeccable, his tie is always straight and his expensive shoes are always clean. He reeks of money tastefully spent. There is something compelling about his beautiful face and manicured hands. His Lupus form has gray fur with a very fine network of silver lines running through it.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are the head of the Sept of the Learning Hall, which is based out of Moscow University. You tend to use all of your resources to accomplish any goal you have. You also work on only one project at a time, but you always give that one project your full attention.

**Background:** Boris has been the head of the sept for a while now and all but owns the university. He is currently throwing all his abilities and resources at identifying the new, mysterious force in Russia. He is tracking down all information he can get and verifying it rigorously.

## Ellison Cortaud

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ragabash

**Nature / Demeanor:** Jester / Gallant

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 2, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Primal-Urge 3, Streetwise 2, Drive 3, Firearms 2, Repair 3, Security 4, Stealth 4, Computer 2, Enigmas 1, Science 2

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 1, Resources 2

**Gifts:** (1) Control Simple Machine, Open Seal, Scent of Man; (2) Heat Metal; (3) Control Complex Machine, Data Flow, Invent

Rage 3, Gnosis 5, Willpower 7

**Rank:** 3

**Rites:** None

**Fetish:** Phoebe's Veil

**Image:** In Homid, Ellison appears as a young man of average build with light brown hair and gray eyes. In Lupus, he is a moderate sized brown wolf with a black mask and socks.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are a sneak. Not the kind who manipulates people, but the kind who gets into buildings at night. The challenge of breaking through security is your greatest joy in life. You are almost compulsive in planning break-ins. Listen to the people around you and mark potential enemies and allies. Trust no one until they prove their trust.

**Background:** Ellison figured that the upheavals in Russia would allow the perfect opportunity for acquiring wealth — by stealing it. The problem was, Ellison didn't understand much Russian and found it hard to operate in a country of people as private and close-mouthed as he was.



Ellison was soon marked by a Bone Gnawer shortly after an incident in evading the police. The Bone Gnawer, Petrov Koldar, led him to Gorky Park where Ellison made his first Garou contacts. He was introduced to the Glass Walkers of Moscow and is currently travelling to various caerns in the company of a small pack. Only one member of the pack knows English.

## Chases-After-Dreams

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Philodox

**Nature / Demeanor:** Lone Wolf / Cub

**Attributes:** Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 2 (4/5/5/5), Charisma 3, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 1, Primal-Urge 2, Subterfuge 2, Leadership 4, Repair 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Computer 5, Enigmas 1, Investigation 2, Rituals 2, Science 2

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Resources 2

**Gifts:** (1) Truth of Gaia, Heightened Senses, Control Simple Machines; (2) Cybersenses, Jam Technology

Rage 3, Gnosis 3, Willpower 3

**Rank:** 2

**Merits / Flaws:** Fast Learner, Computer Aptitude / Soft Hearted

**Rites:** Rite of the Opened Caern

**Fetishes:** None

**Image:** In Lupus, Chases-After-Dreams is a slim, dark gray shape with very little to call attention to his presence. In Homid, he is tall man who crouches to appear less threatening. He doesn't look complete without a computer in his hands.

**Roleplaying Notes:** As you grew up, you had an inexpressible feeling of incompleteness. No matter what you were doing, you were always sad. Then came the day of the Change. You were taken in by your tribe, and you encountered your first piece of electronics, a cellular phone with extras. You were almost instantly entranced. You have never been the same since.

**Background:** Chases-After-Dreams' mother was born an experimental wolfbeing held by Moscow University. He spent the majority of his time in captivity until his First Change, when his tribe came and took him away. He has since learned much about the new and fascinating world of humans, and has done a great deal to advance himself in the eyes of the other Glass Walkers, who originally viewed him as an idiot child.

# Red Talons

The Red Talons were once one of the most important tribes of Russia, second only to the noble Silver Fangs. But that has changed drastically in recent years. The Soviet government, controlled as it was by the Brujah vampires, instituted a measure to eliminate the Garou once and for all. Under the guise of protecting the people and livestock in outlying regions, a "great war on wolves" was instigated.

Wolves were trapped and poisoned. Hunters killed them from helicopters. The Garou were being killed by an enemy they could only rarely fight. Many were machine-gunned down from hovering 'copters, and attempts by the Garou to turn the tables on the hunters met with only limited success. The principle Garou victims of the hunt were the Red Talons and the few Wendigo that dwell in Russia. But the sudden, rapid decline in the wolf population is something that all Garou must mourn.

Because of their major losses, the Red Talons have become politically active. This change of style surprised many of the Garou, and the vigor with which the Red Talons went at their chosen task was astounding. The tribe adopted the same philosophy for politics that they maintained for war: complete destruction of the opposition. The opposition in this case happened to be another Garou tribe, the Children of Gaia, who were driven into exile, hounded by the fangs of the Red Talons.

The Red Talons are the voice of genocide in the councils of the Garou, advocating a return to the Impergium in Russia. Their arguments are so vehement, and their evidence so convincing, that they have almost won the support of the major tribes of Russia. Only indecision at the higher levels and liberalism among the younger Garou have prevented the Red Talons' plan from becoming reality. The Glass Walkers have been in constant opposition, and many Red Talons fear the reputed alliance between the Glass Walkers and the Bone Gnawers.

## Septs

There are few Red Talon septs left. As their numbers were ravaged by the war on wolves, they were unable to defend their caerns against the mysterious drainings. The Talons have lost four caerns to the drainings, more than any other tribe. Even with aid from the Get of Fenris, the number of caerns held by the Red Talons has dwindled to one.

The Winter Forest Sept guards this last caern in Siberia. The sept is composed of 40 Talons, the Garou who have survived the war on wolves and the drainings. There are maybe 25 more Talons wandering throughout Russia.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** We share with noble sisters. We like to run with them.

**Bone Gnawers:** Rrrr. It their fault Wyrms come to Motherland!

**Children of Gaia:** They fail! They die! That all we say.

**Fianna:** Who? We not know them.

**Get of Fenris:** True Garou. They angry like us!

**Glass Walkers:** They wrong! Wyrms taint! Why not anybody see this?

**Shadow Lords:** They lie. We not trust them anymore.

**Silent Striders:** Never here when needed. Always leaving. Not right.

**Silver Fangs:** They leaders. Show your throat to them! But they too lazy. Need to act!

**Stargazers:** Strange.

**Uktena:** They play with spirits. Bad spirits. They in danger.

**Wendigo:** We call them brothers. They lose family like us to humans. They will kill humans with us.

## Tundra Runner

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Galliard

**Nature / Demeanor:** Survivor / Director

**Attributes:** Strength 5 (7/9/8/6), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/7), Charisma 5, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 5, Primal-Urge 5, Animal Ken 4, Leadership 4, Survival 3, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** Past Life 2, Pure Breed 3

**Gifts:** (1) Babble, Beast Speech, Call the Wyld, Leap of the Kangaroo, Resist Pain, Sense Prey; (2) Beast Mind, Call the Wyrms, Sense the Prey; (3) Cat Feet, Song of Rage; (4) Avalanche, Quicksand; (5) Gaia's Vengeance

Rage 7, Gnosis 8, Willpower 10



**Rank:** 5

**Rites:** Moot Rite, Rite of the Departed, Rite of Wounding, The Hunt, Rite of the Totem, Rending of the Veil

**Fetishes:** Gnostic Bag

**Image:** In Lupus, Tundra Runner is an overwhelming red wolf. His claws are prominent, but his fangs are subdued enough that he can speak well. His Homid form has flaming red hair, but no other truly distinctive features; he very rarely takes Homid form.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are an angry wolf, and your patience is running out. When your goal is in sight, then you can play the game of quiet and calm, but until then, you must work with all your might to restore your tribe.

**Background:** Tundra Runner is 43 and has been the top Alpha of all the Red Talons in Asia for 20 years, a feat not matched in a dozen generations. He knows he is outgunned and outmatched, but he is the best leader available. The Soviet pogrom on wolves has reduced the tribe drastically, and he will do anything in to get revenge for this, even sending spies into human society.

## *Tears-at-Flesh*

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Nature / Demeanor:** Predator / Judge

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 1, Manipulation 1 (0/0/0/0), Appearance 4 (3/0/4/4), Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Primal-Urge 2, Animal Ken 2, Melee 4, Stealth 3, Enigmas 2, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Mentor 1

**Gifts:** (1) Heightened Senses, Razor Claws, Scent of Running Water

Rage 10, Gnosis 5, Willpower 5

**Rank:** 1

**Merits / Flaws:** Huge Size / Dark Fate (will be killed by humans), Dark Secret (killed a Homid Garou during his Rite of Passage)

**Rites:** None

**Fetish:** Far Bite (Level 4, Gnosis 8; this is a Scar Fetish depicting a pair of fangs with wings. It is carved onto Tears-At-Flesh's shoulder. When activated, it allows him bite anyone within line of sight. He must spend one Gnosis point for this.)

**Image:** In Lupus, Tears-At-Flesh is a strong wolf with a streak of blood across his fur (Tears-at-Flesh decorates himself with the blood of his slain enemies).

**Roleplaying Notes:** Humans are like mice. They scurry around in fear, and occasionally you eat one.

**Background:** Tears-at-Flesh is quite possibly one of the angriest Garou in Russia. He frenzies at the slightest opportunity. Some elders believe he is the rage of all Garou given form and made flesh. Most believe that he should be monitored and controlled.

They do not know that on his Rite of Passage, with a pack of Red Talons and Wendigo, he slew one of his homid packmates. So far, no one knows his secret.

## *Shadow Lords*

The Shadow Lord's Eastern European roots have made them almost as influential in Russia as the Silver Fangs. Only the Silver Fangs' alliance with the Get of Fenris has prevented open conflict between the their tribe and the Shadow Lords. It is well known that the Shadow Lords want the position held by the Silver Fangs, and they have even openly admitted this. This, along with the arrogant pride of the Shadow Lords, has long been a point of tension in Garou politics.

With the Silver Fangs suffering from a seeming state of degeneracy that even their ancient allies the Get of Fenris cannot deny, it seemed clear that the Shadow Lords would finally have the leadership they long sought. However, the diligence of the Get in defending the Silver Fangs, as well as the sudden emergence of the strong political front of the Red Talons, has caused the Shadow Lords to bide their time. Perhaps, they think, the new strife will make it all the easier for them to assume control at a later time.

The Shadow Lords seek any possible advantage over enemy and ally alike, often using contrived situations to increase their worth in the eyes of the other Garou. They are envious of the Glass Walkers' seeming control over the strange new spirits of industry, and they have given power to them in return for their knowledge. The Glass Walkers have spurned them so far, which has raised the ire of the Shadow Lords. But they know a good thing when they see it, so they wear the face of conciliation—for now.

## *Septs*

Shadow Lord septs are located primarily in the areas to the far west of Russia, close to eastern Europe. There are only two caerns, but these two caerns are fairly powerful and very well guarded. One of the caerns is located in the Ukraine, on the border with Romania, and is guarded by the Brooding Sky Sept, composed of 30 Shadow Lords. The other caern, in the southern foothills of the Urals, is guarded by the Thunderstrike Sept, composed of 25 Garou. There are about 20 more Shadow Lords throughout Russia.

The Thunderstrike Sept has already fended off an attack by whatever force has been draining the caerns. They claim to know who or what is behind the attacks, although they refuse to divulge that information, hoping to use it to further their own ends.



## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** They could pose a danger to our plans if they cannot be converted. If they do not bend, they will be broken.

**Bone Gnawers:** They are one of the most numerous tribes in Russia, and this could make them useful allies. If they will not accept us, then we may have to force them to see our point of view.

**Children of Gaia:** They have been eliminated from the picture. It is good that we saw the potential for trouble with them and moved to eliminate it through the graces of the Red Talons.

**Fianna:** A wild card that must end up in our hand or be eliminated from the deck.

**Get of Fenris:** Along with the Black Furies, the Get could prove to be one of the greatest obstacles to our ambition. They must be converted or removed from the picture.

**Glass Walkers:** They have things that we want. They would make useful allies, especially because few other tribes will have anything to do with them.

**Red Talons:** Useful tools. It is doubtful they have figured out that we used them as a weapon against the Children of Gaia. We will probably be able to manipulate them into raging against our other enemies as well.

**Silent Striders:** They know something they are hiding. Something must be done to ensure their loyalty.

**Silver Fangs:** Our rivals, the ones whose power we must break in order to assume control and lead the Garou against our enemies. Their madness makes them as dangerous to themselves as to others, something that can work in our favor.

**Stargazers:** They are a mystery to us, but our stand is clear. They will help us or be destroyed.

**Uktena:** Their mastery of the spirit world is something that we need, yet nothing we have done has convinced them to pass their knowledge on. They refuse to even assist us.

**Wendigo:** In order to get these ghosts of the cold wastes to aid us, we must first lure them from the deep forests and earn their trust.

### Alexander "Sasha" Volkav, "Father-Night"

**Position:** Sept Leader

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Galliard

**Nature / Demeanor:** Confidant / Director

**Attributes:** Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 5 (7/8/8/8), Charisma 2, Manipulation 5 (4/2/2/2), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4



**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 5, Primal-Urge 4, Streetwise 3, Drive 3, Melee 4, Leadership 4, Survival 3, Enigmas 3, Politics 4, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 5, Kinfolk 5, Resources 4, Allies 3

**Gifts:** (1) Fatal Flaw, Sense Wyrms, Smell of Man, Razor Claws; (2) Clap of Thunder, Distractions, Inner Strength, Stare-down; (3) Paralyzing Stare, Reshape Object; (4) Bridge Walker, Open Wounds; (5) Obedience, Shadow Pack

Rage 7, Gnosis 9, Willpower 8

**Rank:** 5

**Rites:** Rite of the Opened Caern, Rite of Totem, The Rending of the Veil, Rite of the Phoenix

**Fetish:** Sword of Granite (Level 5, Gnosis 6; this is a two-handed sword made of granite; when thrust into the ground, all persons within 15 feet sink into the ground two feet per activation success. For every two feet, the victim needs four success on an extended Strength roll to break out. Vampires with Earth Meld can exit anytime they want, but must spend a full round doing so.)

**Image:** In Homid, Sasha stands six feet tall and walks with a mild limp. He has long black hair, green eyes and an elderly look. He appears wiser than his physical years. In Lupus, he is a large black wolf with a multitude of minor scars and five major scars that appear to have been made by a single slash from some ungodly huge monster.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are tired. When you were a cub, you fought well and saw your friends die. When you reached middle age, you were chosen as part of the Silver Pack, but again your friends died. You are past your prime, and you know it. The problem is that no one else does. You will teach the young the ways of battle and lead for now, but the time approaches when you will step aside to let a new pack lead the fight.

**Background:** Sasha is a man who has grown old before his time. Many of the things he has seen and done weigh heavily upon him. He has all but relinquished his place as the leader of the Thunderstrike Sept, and he is planning on retiring to become Warder eventually. He is tired of the power games the Shadow Lords play, but does not discourage them. The part he played in the exile of the Children of Gaia still haunts his dreams.

## **Eduard, "Sun-Curser"**

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Philodox

**Camp:** Society of Nidhogg

**Nature / Demeanor:** Predator / Survivor

**Attributes:** Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (4/5/5/5), Charisma 2, Manipulation 5 (4/2/2/2), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Awareness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Intimidation 1, Primal-Urge 2, Subterfuge 1, Drive 2, Etiquette 1, Firearms 3, Leadership 1, Performance 2, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Law 1, Linguistics 2, Occult 4, Politics 1, Rituals 2

**Backgrounds:** Past Lives 4

**Gifts:** (1) Aura of Confidence, Fatal Flaw, Persuasion, Scent of the True Form

Rage 3, Gnosis 3, Willpower 5

**Rank:** 1

**Merits / Flaws:** Lack of Scent, Bad Taste, Common Sense, Eidetic Memory / Overconfident, Short Fuse, One Eye (right), Mark of the Predator, No Partial Transformation

**Rituals:** Talisman Dedication, Rite of Cleansing, Rite of Binding, Rite of Summoning

**Fetishes:** None

**Image:** In Homid, Sun-Curser sports a black goatee and has penetrating gray eyes. In Lupus, he is an impressive black wolf with massive shoulders.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You want the sun out of your life. It breaks up the clouds and weakens your power. You consider all others as being below you and manipulate them in an offhand manner. You are all that really matters. Those Wyrms creatures are still an uppity lot; better send some more pawns to get rid of them.

**Background:** Eduard is a young but impressive Garou. He has always hated the light of the sun and believes himself to be inextricably linked to the night. Since before his First Change, he has loved the velvet blackness that covers the land when the sun drops below the horizon. He underwent his Rite of Passage at the Thunderstrike Sept in the Ural Mountains and quickly became the leader of a newly-formed pack. It is almost his time to advance again, but he has done a few things that, if discovered, could hurt his respected reputation. Sometimes a creature comes into his dreams and whispers of a world without light. He has told her things, and she has promised him rewards.

# **Silent Striders**

The Silent Striders have no real organization in Russia. The Striders in Russia are often found with the Gypsies, wandering from caern to caern, seeking news and passing on what they know. Recently, however, little contact with this tribe has been reported, and it is believed that the Silent Striders have been forced underground.

In the past, the Silent Striders provided much of the information that travelled between caerns, and they never involved themselves in the political machinations of the other tribes. They sought information instead, and bartered their services as couriers for the secrets of the tribes.

They spent time with the Gypsies of Russia, and became tentative allies of the two vampire clans that are closest to the Gypsies, the Gangrel and the Ravnos. From these clans, the Striders learned much of what they passed on to the other tribes, but the Striders learned too much. Through their vampire contacts, they discovered that Baba Yaga had arisen. And soon, Baba Yaga discovered these curious Garou who asked too many questions.

They know that Baba Yaga is somehow behind the force behind the Shadow Curtain and the draining of the caerns, and they are aware that she has seven Generals who command her minions. They do not know the names or faces of these Generals. What names they have heard are scarcely believable, for they are out of legend. The Zmei were destroyed a millennia ago, and Koshchei was just a story, wasn't he?

Now there is a hunt on against the Silent Striders, and they must be very careful who they meet, for Baba Yaga's eyes are everywhere. If anyone has a chance of getting out of Russia past her minions, it is the Striders, but they may be too few and the opposition too numerous.

## **Septs**

The Silent Striders meet once a year, during the celebration of the fall equinox at a random location determined at the prior year's meeting. They do not maintain actual septs in Russia, nor do they control any caerns. It is doubtful that any Strider will appear at the selected site this year, for the risk is too great.

There were once nearly 30 Silent Striders in Russia. Now, 20 are left, thanks to Baba Yaga's hunt.

## **Stereotypes**

**Black Furies:** True warriors of the Wyld. Respect them or avoid them, but know that we need them in this coming battle.

**Bone Gnawers:** They are different in Russia, quite different. However, the Bone Gnawers are as adept at surviving hardships here as they are in the rest of the world. Perhaps we can use their aid.

**Children of Gaia:** The Children of Gaia seem to be gone, but we know they aren't. If they have any plans, they must work carefully and quickly.

**Fianna:** Be careful, for many of them roam with the Gypsies. Let them not see us, for they will always tell tales, and these tales will fall to dangerous ears.

**Get of Fenris:** They are self-destructive, but strong. Their stamina and strength will be needed.

**Glass Walkers:** This is a tribe perhaps better at adaptation in Russia than the Bone Gnawers. Who else has taken the cities of the humans and made them their domain? Avoid them, however, for their cities have too many eyes.

**Red Talons:** They are mindless in their rage, and it has nearly destroyed them. We can do nothing.

**Shadow Lords:** They consider themselves our saviors. We consider them arrogant. Can their arrogance be used as a weapon?

**Silver Fangs:** The Silver Fangs are surely going mad. They sit in their caerns and watch as the world passes them by. If only we could warn them; all paths to them are guarded.

**Stargazers:** Perhaps they will see our clues and realize the danger.

**Uktena:** We will need their aid; if only we could reach them safely.

**Wendigo:** They are a tribe worthy of respect, but I fear they will not aid us when the time comes.

## **Natasha Ferdman, "Moon Chaser"**

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ragabash

**Nature / Demeanor:** Rebel / Gallant

**Attributes:** Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/7), Charisma 4, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 4 (3/0/4/4), Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 4



**Rage Across Russia**

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 5, Primal-Urge 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4, Animal Ken 2, Firearms 2, Leadership 2, Stealth 3, Computer 1, Enigmas 4

**Backgrounds:** Resources 3, Contacts 3, Kinfolk 2, Pure Breed 4, Past Life 3

**Gifts:** (1) Blur of the Milky Eye, Persuasion, Speed of Thought; (2) Blissful Ignorance, Jam Technology, Summon Talisman; (3) The Great Leap, Silence

Rage 6, Gnosis 8, Willpower 8

**Rank:** 3

**Rites:** None

**Fetish:** Mirrorshades (Level 1, Gnosis 7; this is a pair of American mirrorshade sunglasses that, when activated, produces a mirrored surface on the inside of the glasses that will allow the user to step sideways with ease. The shades reduce all Gauntlet difficulties by 2, and the user does not need to stare into a reflective surface.)

**Image:** In Lupus form, Natasha is a sleek, quick wolf with jet black fur and deep, soulful eyes. In Homid form, she is a striking, beautiful woman standing 5' 6" tall. She has shortly cut black hair.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You used to be a happy and carefree wanderer. That has changed. Now you are paranoid and always looking over your shoulder. Being hunted does that to you.

**Background:** Natasha came to Russia shortly before the recent problems. She is a traveller who has been all over the world and desperately yearns to leave Russia for other parts, but she also feels a responsibility to warn the native Garou. Who should she approach? How can she be sure anyone she approaches is not working for the Hag?

## **Anubis Farstrider**

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Nature / Demeanor:** Lone Wolf / Reluctant Garou

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 2, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Primal-Urge 4, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Stealth 1, Computer 1, Linguistics 1, Medicine 1, Rituals 1, Science 2

**Backgrounds:** Fetish 3, Mentor 2

**Gifts:** (1) Smell of Man, Razor Claws, Speed of Thought, The Falling Touch

Rage 5, Gnosis 3, Willpower 6

**Rank:** 1

**Merits / Flaws:** Huge Size / Persistent Parents, Animal Musk, Strict Carnivore, Sign of the Wolf

**Rite:** None

**Fetish:** Fang Dagger

**Image:** In Homid, Anubis is olive-skinned, with heavy Slavic facial features. He is immense, gives people the

creeps and can barely pass for human in Homid! In Lupus, he is the largest jackal ever seen.

**Roleplaying Notes:** This whole Garou thing stinks. You don't like it one bit. If you can ever get back to your hometown, you'll settle down and never stray.

**Background:** You had a good life at home; mom and dad were devoted and understanding. Then came that nightmarish night that you were kidnapped on the way home from school in your Polish border town. That was the most horrible night of your life. To start with, you Changed. You went from being the second biggest kid in your group of friends to an immense monster. Now, you always smell, have all the signs mom ever told you about for werewolves, can't eat vegetables (maybe this isn't so bad) and are just plain huge!

You couldn't go home to mom in this condition, but she was so worried, and as best you know, still is. Just to make that night worse, something attacked the pack as you were crossing the border and killed almost everyone. It was fast; you never saw it come or go. You got taken in by another sept, but now you can never stay in one place too long. Gotta keep moving, doesn't matter where, so long as it isn't here. But you are quite willing to take something with you, and you can almost guarantee delivery.

Anubis took his name from some books he read in the library. He doesn't want to be a Garou, he just wants to return to his normal life. The Garou of Russia that know him accept him, and even like him, although his tendency for not sitting still for long has lost him a few friends. Unknown to him, an agent of Baba Yaga's Army of the Night is watching him and reporting his movements. He is not ready to strike yet; he might still learn something that could be used.

## Silver Fangs

The Silver Fangs are the oldest tribe in Russia, and their history is inexorably linked to that of Russia. In the days of the mighty barbaric hordes, Silver Fangs were the leaders, helping other tribes keep the population of humans under control. It was the Silver Fangs who implemented the Impergium, showing clearly that they held the best control over their flocks.

As the years passed, the Silver Fang grew in power, but also in pride. Even the failure of the Impergium did not stain the Fangs' great egos. Not only did they have their flocks under control, but they had the Wyrms on the run in Russia. They had even managed to defeat and trap the greatest minion of the Wyrms ever, putting Koshchie in a spirit prison where he could no longer spread the Wyrms' influence. And as modern times approached, they were still proud of their achievements. Was not Russia, the greatest nation in the world, still free of the cancer of industrialization?

Then disaster struck, taking many forms. With pride to elevate them, the Silver Fangs had far to fall. The obsession

with keeping their bloodline pure eventually bred recessive genes into their children. Members of the tribe who saw impending disaster created a great uproar within the Silver Fangs. Then, while the Garou were so occupied with politics, the minions of the Wyrms struck. History records this as the Bolshevik revolution; the Garou record it as the fall of the mighty.

Not only did the Silver Fangs lose control of their flock, but the Brujah clan of vampires assumed a near total political control of Russia. If this were not enough, the Silver Fangs found themselves on the losing end of a defensive war. The vampires rapidly plunged the country into industrialization, heedless of the environmental destruction this unleashed. What was once the greatest success of the Garou soon became the world's largest environmental disaster area.

In pride, the Silver Fangs refused to reach out to the other Garou for help. Now the entire nation suffers for this pride. The other Garou are only now beginning to realize the folly of their greatest tribe, and the Silver Fangs fear the humiliation to come. For the first time in history, some of their number have turned to the Wyrms, and this shames the tribe further. As if this were not enough, rumor has it that the most ancient enemy of the Silver Fangs, Baba Yaga, has once again arisen. The Silver Fangs fear the worst, for they feel they are no longer strong enough to handle the responsibility of so many tasks.

Despite everything, the Silver Fangs remain dominant in Garou politics in Russia. Their voices are always heard, and nearly always respected, although whispers in council speak of the large role the Get of Fenris play in keeping the Silver Fangs in power.

The Silver Fangs are very indecisive in council, which has reduced their actual influence among the other tribes. Garou speak of a time when events such as the Red Talons' action against the Children of Gaia would have resulted in swift retribution by the Silver Fangs. But to this date, the incident has received only minor attention. Silver Fang moots have degenerated into lectures about the history of the Garou, and hopelessly optimistic views are expressed regularly.

Between the closest allies of the Silver Fangs, the Black Furies and the Get of Fenris, there is a great deal of tension. This tension grows as the power of the Silver Fangs wanes in favor of the Get. In the wings, the Shadow Lords wait for a chance to make their own move towards leadership among the Russian tribes, a fact well known among the Garou.

The attitudes of the Russian Silver Fangs are divided. There are at least three factions, possibly more. A few favor action; they want to do something to take the war to the Wyrms, but they are undecided as to what tactic to take. They are restrained by those who are content to simply hold on to what they have until some opportunity comes along. What the opportunity is, they will not say, simply asserting that all Garou will recognize it when it comes. Another

group lives in the past, glorying in history and past exploits, disregarding the present. The numbers of this last faction are growing as the Silver Fangs spiral into madness.

## Septs

The Silver Fangs are one of the oldest and most prolific tribes in Russia. Most of the stories of heroes concern them. They control the most powerful caerns, the largest protectorates and the legendary septs. The Silver Fangs have lost one caern of late, but they acknowledge it as a weak caern.

The largest and most legendary sept, the center of the Garou councils, is the Caern of the Crescent Moon, hidden deep in the Ural Mountains. This caern is home to nearly 30 Silver Fangs. There are close to 70 Silver Fangs spread throughout the rest of the country, either in charge of their own small caerns or guests at caerns guarded by other tribes.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** They are among our greatest allies. If only they could learn to get along with the Get of Fenris.

**Bone Gnawers:** We resent the fact that they caused the downfall of our tsars, but we shall not punish them for this, as long as they recognize us as their true rulers.

**Children of Gaia:** It is sad that they are gone, but their failure could not go unpunished. At least, so I believe...

**Fianna:** An amusing little group of mendicants. They are without peer as entertainers. It is sad that there are so few of them in Russia.

**Get of Fenris:** They are our warriors, surpassed only in reliability by the Black Furies.

**Glass Walkers:** We believe that they know something we do not, and if this proves to be the case, their arrogance will not go unpunished.

**Red Talons:** It is a sad fate that has befallen the Red Talons, but their recent political activity is troubling. Could it be that we are losing some measure of control?

**Shadow Lords:** Upstart pups who will be dealt with when the time comes. They think we have grown too weak to be a threat to them. They couldn't be more wrong.

**Silent Striders:** Strange Garou, but they are excellent messengers and spies. They do seem to know secrets that will not disclose. We will ask them the next time they come to us.

**Stargazers:** Excellent councilors who know that their place is to advise, not command.

**Uktena:** Very knowledgeable in the ways of the spirit, but not so in the realm of politics.

**Wendigo:** Powerful warriors. If they would only come to council, I'm sure their demands could be met.

## Chases-Street-Demons

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Nature / Demeanor:** Bravo / Survivor

**Attributes:** Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 5 (7/8/8/8), Charisma 3, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 4, Animal Ken 3, Melee 5, Leadership 3, Stealth 4, Survival 5, Investigation 3, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Kinfolk 3, Allies 3

**Gifts:** (1) The Falling Touch, Leap of the Kangaroo, Razor Claws, Resist Pain, Sense Wyrms; (2) Awe, Scent of Sight, Sense Silver, Spirit of the Fray; (3) Combat Healing, Heart of Fury, Wrath of Gaia; (4) Ignore Wound; (5) Luna's Avenger

**Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Willpower 9**

**Rank:** 5

**Merits / Flaws:** Ambidexterity / Overconfident

**Rites:** Rite of the Opened Caern, Rite of Fetish

**Fetish:** The Twin Swords of Lothair (Level 6, Gnosis 8; a pair of swords which must be wielded Florentine style (one in each hand); if either sword is used separately, it will bury in the ground up to the hilt. The swords have several special powers, the least of which is the ability to store up to eight points of Rage within them. They can also produce a Clap of Thunder if they are crossed in the air in the form of a cross above the head of the wielder. When activated, the swords cause aggravated wounds.)

**Image:** In Homid, Chases stands a little over six feet tall and has long flowing silver hair with black stripes. In Lupus, he is a long silver wolf with black ears and a black striped tail.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are strong-willed and overbearing. You are not calm; "brash" should be your middle name. You are not a wolf of few words. You talk and brag to others without end. If you weren't the best, then someone might shut you up. But then, you are the best, so what you do isn't really bragging— you're really just educating those around you.

**Background:** Chases-Street-Demons seemed to have been born a hero. He gained his fetish, as powerful as it is, on his Rite of Passage, and although he was quite inexperienced in the ways of sword combat, he learned quickly. His name stems from the fact that during his Rite of Passage, he chased down and destroyed a car. Now he spends his time either travelling across Russia or standing before the wall of heroes at the Caern of the Crescent Moon, forever hoping to see himself on it.

## Nicolai Predatelski

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Nature / Demeanor:** Director / Judge

**Attributes:** Strength 5 (7/9/8/6), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 5 (7/8/8/8), Charisma 2, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5



**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Drive 2, Firearms 4, Melee 3, Leadership 2, Stealth 4, Survival 2, Investigation 4, Medicine 1, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Kinfolk 1, Pure Breed 2

**Gifts:** (1) Razor Claws, The Falling Touch; (2) Heart of Fury, Stare-down, Spirit of the Fray, True Fear; Rend Reality (special Black Spiral Dancer Gift)

Rage 8, Gnosis 6, Willpower 9

**Rank:** 2

**Rites:** Moot Rite, Gathering for the Departed, Ritual of the Questing Stone, Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of Passage

**Fetishes:** Tears of Gaia

**Image:** In Homid form, he is an attractive young man with platinum blonde hair and an unsettling, blue-eyed gaze. In Lupus, he is a large, silvery-white wolf with crystal-line blue eyes, powerful and sleek in appearance.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You treat everyone, human and Garou, even elders, with a soft-spoken, angry, contemptuous condescension. Speaking to other Garou seems degrading to you. You believe that they would turn tail and howl if they really knew what was going on. Within your pack, you demand absolute loyalty and will not hesitate to eliminate those who question your leadership.

**Background:** Nicolai is the pack leader of the Crescent Moon's strike team. His pack consists of another Silver Fang, a Bone Gnawer, two Shadow Lords and a Glass Walker. They are the ones who deal with threats that originate in the nearby cities and the factories that dot the Ural area. The entire pack has risen in renown in a very short time. This has both impressed the other Garou of the area and made them wary of Nicolai. He rules his pack with an iron fist, tolerating no dissent and no failure.

Nicolai has a secret. He has begun walking down the path towards the Wurm and has accepted his first Gift from it. This is in return for his assistance in bringing down the Sept of the Crescent Moon. He believes himself to be well along the road to accomplishing this. He intends to advance as quickly as possible in the eyes of the elders of the Ural Caern before destroying it from within.

## *Sings-for-the-Beast*

**Breed:** Metis

**Auspice:** Galliard

**Nature / Demeanor:** Martyr / Autist

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 4 (3/0/4/4), Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Empathy 2, Instruction 3, Primal-Urge 3, Subterfuge 3, Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 2, Performance 5, Investigation 2, Linguistics 2, Rituals 1

**Backgrounds:** Pure Breed 4, Past Life 1

**Gifts:** (1) Call of the Wyld, Create Element, Lament Flame; (2) Awe, Dream-speak

Rage 4, Gnosis 5, Willpower 6

**Rank:** 2

**Metis Disfigurement:** Bestial Reflection

**Merits/Flaws:** Concentration, Fast Learner, Time Sense / Pack Mentality, Wolf Years

**Rite:** None

**Fetishes:** Harmony Flute, Sanctuary Chimes, Spirit Whistle

**Image:** In Homid, Sings-for-the-Beast is always cultured, refined and downright beautiful, but she looks a little older each day. In Lupus, she is a true white wolf, going gray fast.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are a follower. True, you prefer people not to know that you are metis, and you are embarrassed at how fast you are aging, but both of these are products of the purity of your breeding. Since time seems so short for you, you try to be where everything is happening or where people are gathering. You want to teach, but before anyone will listen, you have to be famous. You need glory, so you try to be where it can be found. You are living as fast as you can.

**Background:** Sings-for-the-Beast was the product of a Silver Fang mating with one of the Lost, a Garou who had lost her Kin Fetch and had not undergone the Change. Her mother underwent her First Change shortly thereafter and went through her Rite of Passage while heavy with child. Sings was born, and her father prepared her way in Garou society. She works hard to keep her place and hopes that one day her story will grace the Cliff of Heroes maintained by the Sept of the Crescent Moon.



# Stargazers

The Stargazers have been a part of Russia since the Impergium. They have long been the advisors to the greatest leaders of the Garou, and they can usually be found at the great caerns of Russia. Their presence has remained relatively constant over the years, and while they are not a major power, none doubt their wisdom.

Politically, the Stargazers serve as advisors and councilors to those who make decisions. They do not consider it their place to do anything but advise. Also, while they consider it distasteful, many Stargazers are often called upon to judge conflicts among the Garou.

The Russian Stargazers are mystics, fortunetellers and philosophers. They are seekers after truth and solvers of mysteries. They have taken the place of the Children of Gaia as the voice of temperance on the council. The Silver Fangs universally respect them for their wisdom, but nowadays, they are just as likely to ignore their council as to listen.

It has become an obsession among the Stargazers to find out what is truly going on behind the scenes in Russia, but they feel they must find incontrovertible evidence before presenting their findings to the Silver Fangs. If not, the Fangs will ignore it, and the Apocalypse will come that much closer. The Stargazers are one of the only tribes in Russia that sees the current events in Russia as signs of a storm to come. They are often dismissed as pessimists.

## Septs

The Stargazers maintain a single caern in the Russian Far East, near the Mongolian border. It is located within a crystal grotto beneath a mountaintop temple. There are 15 Stargazers at this caern. There are seven more Stargazers throughout the country. They live among the other tribes at the most powerful or important caerns. Recently, three Stargazers from the Uktena Evergreen Sept were killed when that caern was drained.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** Their useless bickering with the Get only exacerbates all our problems.

**Bone Gnawers:** In trying to achieve equality, they have only succeeded in dividing us further.

**Children of Gaia:** In their search for the truth, they overlooked human nature. I hope they can soon return.

**Fianna:** They must be judged as individuals, for there are too few Fianna in Russia.

**Get of Fenris:** One who uses anger as a weapon can have it turned back at himself.

**Glass Walkers:** They have imprisoned themselves in a Weaver's web, but do not recognize their peril.

**Red Talons:** They will die hating, and they will be mourned.

**Shadow Lords:** There is little place for arrogance in light of the troubles.

**Silent Striders:** They have disappeared from council, and I wonder why. It has always been their way to leave.

**Silver Fangs:** They are too tied to the Litany. Only truth can break their apathy, but where will they find it?

**Uktena:** In their sojourns to the spirit world, they have lost sight of our troubles here.

**Wendigo:** In their retreat from the world, they have retreated from the truth.

## Chien Sun, "Mountain Wind"

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Galliard

**Nature / Demeanor:** Confidant / Visionary

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/7), Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 1 (0/0/1/1), Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3,

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Expression 2, Instruction 4, Primal-Urge 3, Animal Ken 3, Drive 3, Meditation 5, Melee 4, Repair 3, Survival 3, Kailindo 5, Enigmas 4, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Kinfolk 4

**Gifts:** (1) Balance, The Falling Touch, Persuasion, Sense Wyrms; (2) Inner Strength, Jam Technology, Sense Silver, Surface Attunement; (3) Clarity, Disquiet, Heart of Fury, Merciful Blow, Whispering Wind; (4) Questioning; (5) Wisdom of the Seer

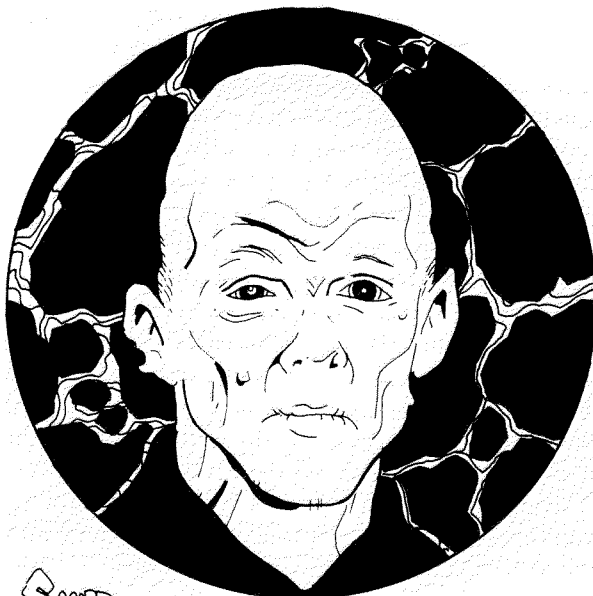
Rage 6, Gnosis 8, Willpower 10

**Rank:** 5

**Merits / Flaws:** Calm Heart, Ambidexterity / Intolerance (of fighting between the tribes)

**Rites:** Rite of Opened Caern, Rite of Fetish

**Fetish:** Sticks of the Sea Wind (Level 3, Gnosis 8; a pair of combat sticks that must be wielded in tandem; if the user



waits till the end of the round to strike, he receives a bonus strike without a reduction of his Dice Pool or an expenditure of Rage. The user has his normal Dexterity + Melee Dice Pool for this attack. Rage cannot be spent in the same round that this power is used. Damage is Strength + 2, but the damage is not aggravated.)

**Image:** In Homid, Chien Sun is a small oriental man standing just under five foot six. His right eye is milky due to a hit to the head long ago and his right ear is frayed from a bite that never healed. He wears minimal dress, lacking showy decoration or unnecessary features. In Lupus, he is a sleek gray wolf of thin stature with black paws.

**Roleplaying Notes:** The calm warrior, ready to destroy if necessary, but more ready to teach the young and the ill-informed. You teach that patience is the key to life and success. Only through clearness of the mind is true victory possible.

**Background:** Chien Sung trained in the ways of the martial arts before his First Change. Shortly before his Change, a group of mysterious men and women arrived and took him from the monastery. They explained to him that he was to be a warrior for the world spirit, one who would interpret the songs of Gaia through the dances of combat. Chien accepted his new role and welcomed his ability to change shape.

He rose through the ranks of the Garou through dedication and intense work. Now he leads the Sept of the Crystal Mind. He is the chief teacher there and is one of the most qualified instructors of Kailindo to be found.

The recent developments in Russia have been brought to his attention, and they worry him. He is currently working very hard to train the new warriors sent out to spy and fight for the Garou.

## Uktena

The majority of Russian Uktena are strongly tied with the Yakut and Mongolian peoples that dwell within Russia, mainly within Siberia and the Russian Far East. The Uktena are neither prolific nor politically active in Russia. They are too few and too diverse in their interests to band together as yet. In the cold forest of Siberia, the world has not yet fully caught up to the Uktena.

They are an old tribe that is recognized and respected, but they make little effort to further their political ends. Occasionally, their handiwork can be detected at various caerns. The Uktena seen outside of Siberia are generally young and idealistic, but well versed in the ways of the spirit world by their mentors.

Of all the tribes, the Uktena Theurges have the least trouble piercing the Shadow Curtain to reach the Umbra. None of the other tribes understand this, but to the Uktena, it is simple: their totem, Uktena himself, allows them this access. The Gauntlet is treated as normal for the Uktena.

However, there is a dark side to this; anytime an Uktena steps sideways, the chance of detection by one of Baba

Yaga's spirit minions increases. Arbitration of this is left to the Storyteller, but it should still be a risky thing for an Uktena to brave the spirit world.

## Septs

The Uktena in Russia are rumored to control at least one and possibly more caerns located in the wilderness of Siberia and the Russian Far East. Their talents in dealing with matters of the spirit world are often sought out by other tribes, such as the Shadow Lords.

There are 35 Uktena at their major caern, the Spirit Stone, and 25 more Uktena spread throughout Siberia and upper Mongolia.

The Uktena have recently lost a caern, the Evergreen Sept, to the drainings. Fifteen Uktena and three Stargazers were killed. Only one Garou escaped to tell the tale of its destruction.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** They walk the Wyld paths and are astonishing in their righteous rage.

**Bone Gnawers:** Either they have resisted the Wyrms well or it has consumed their souls so thoroughly that none can tell of their corruption.

**Children of Gaia:** Poor, lost children. They sought an enemy without and were brought low by the Wyrms within.

**Fianna:** Though they are different, they bring a fresh point of view to the old ways.

**Get of Fenris:** They should learn to control their rage before it brings them low. We would do well to avoid them.

**Glass Walkers:** Their new approach to the Umbra is fascinating, but their closeness to the Wyrms is potentially dangerous, both for them and for the rest of Garou.

**Red Talons:** They are like angry children, our brothers of the tundra, but they must be thwarted, for they will bring the rest of us down with them.

**Shadow Lords:** The Shadow Lords are the most openly corrupt of us. They must be watched, for the Wyrms wait deep in their hearts.

**Silent Striders:** These Garou are knowledgeable in many secrets, secrets we must convince them to reveal.

**Silver Fangs:** Despite their nobility, the Silver Fangs walk a path that leads to stagnation and ruin. If they are not shown the way out, they will be lost.

**Stargazers:** We share much in common with these wise ones, though our traditions are different.

**Wendigo:** They are the closest to us in both origin and spirit, but their isolation can only lead to sorrow.



## Speaker-to-Mountains

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Theurge

**Nature / Demeanor:** Maker / Visionary

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 5 (7/8/8/8), Charisma 4, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 5, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 5, Subterfuge 2, Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 2 (Garou), Leadership 2, Meditation 4, Stealth 2, Survival 4, Enigmas 4, Occult 4, Rituals 5, Herbalism 2, Spirit Lore 3, Wyrms Lore 1

**Backgrounds:** Past Life 2

**Gifts:** (1) Find Water, Spirit Speech, Sense Magic; (2) Command Spirit, Name of the Spirit, Sight from Beyond; (3) Umbral Sight

Rage 6, Gnosis 9, Willpower 9

**Rank:** 3

**Rites:** Rite of Cleansing, Ritual of Talisman Dedication, Rite of the Open Caern, Ritual of Summoning, Rite of Becoming, Rite of the Fetish, Rite of the Shrouded Glen

**Fetishes:** Spirit Tracer (Level 2, Gnosis 5), Spirit Whistle (Level 4, Gnosis 8)

**Image:** In Lupus, Speaker-to-Mountains is a small dark gray wolf with almost runelike white patterns on her back. In Homid, she is a small, slender young woman of Tibetan ancestry with a long, luxuriously thick black braid.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are reserved in expressing your feelings, but this does not mean that you are quiet. You seem to have a way of making your feelings known without all the useless blabber and screaming that most of the Garou use. Since your practice of spirit weaving has taught you that uncontrolled behavior can be extremely destructive, you strive to remain calm in every situation.

You take your position as pack leader of the caern guardians very seriously. Your pack has protected the Ural Caern successfully, and you are willing to do anything to maintain this flawless record. You honestly believe that whatever has been attacking the other caerns will strike the Sept of the Crescent Moon with great force.

**Background:** Speaker-to-Mountains came to the Ural Mountain caern a few years back and approached the Warder, Grimfang, in hopes of gaining his tutelage. Grimfang saw the potential within the young lupus and placed her in charge of a pack. Her pack consists of five lupus and a homid Silent Strider Ahroun. They are charged with protecting the Umbral Glen that corresponds with the location of the Ural Caern.

## Ivan Bolkov

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Theurge

**Nature / Demeanor:** Reluctant Garou / Cub

**Attributes:** Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 2 (4/5/5/5), Charisma 2, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Primal-Urge 1, Drive 3, Firearms 3, Repair 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Rituals 1, Science 2

**Backgrounds:** Past Lives 4

**Gifts:** (1) Persuasion, Sense Magic, Sense Wyrms, Spirit Speech

Rage 2, Gnosis 6, Willpower 7

**Rank:** 1

**Merits/Flaws:** Mercury Rising, Natural Channel, Mixed Morph / Foe from the Past (Gangrel), Insane Past Life (comes out in the presence of his foe), Notoriety (insanity)

**Rites:** Rite of Contrition, Rite of Cleansing, Rite of Wounding

**Fetish:** None

**Image:** In Homid, Ivan looks powerful, with corded muscles that stand out well from his shoulders, neck and legs. He is always in jeans of some sort (he wears cutoffs to swim or work out), and he also likes to wear tanktops. He acts like a rebel because he refuses to accept what is going on around him. In Lupus, he always appears confused, as if he would rather be elsewhere.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You refuse to be a werewolf. You were raised hearing the traditional stories, and you just don't want to be one of the "bad guys". Unfortunately, there are these voices in your head, and they refuse to leave you alone. The worst one is absolutely nuts, but you can't do anything about it. They say you are a "Theurge", but you don't want to deal with it. Too bad you seem to be good at it. When you watch another "Theurge" perform a ritual, the new knowledge burns into your memory like a branding iron searing a mark into soft flesh.

All in all, this is a very painful life; you came to Siberia to get away from it, but the voices are still here. There is some other psycho that keeps trying to kill you; he says that you betrayed him centuries ago.

**Background:** Ivan was not meant to be a Garou. He entered the Red Army before his First Change and was kidnapped by the Uktena towards the end of his first year of service. He wanted to be a soldier and have a normal life, but all of that has changed now. Normalcy is impossible.

One of his past lives is a reasonably powerful Theurge who crossed a powerful vampire. The Theurge eventually died. The vampire did not. Now the vampire, who is one of the lieutenants in Baba Yaga's Army of the Night, is after his old rival's descendants.

Ivan's elders feel that they have done all they can in trying to adapt him to Garou life. If he can not survive, then so be it.

## Wendigo

Ages ago, when it was still possible to easily cross between North America and Eurasia via the Bering Strait land bridge, a number of Garou from the Wendigo tribe returned to the lands of Siberia. They spread across the land, breeding with the wolves, the Yakuts and the Chukchi people.

They have never actually contended with the Silver Fangs for dominance, for the two groups were separated by the Ural Mountains. During the time of Russian industrialization, the Wendigo retreated far from any human habitation and were the least affected by the changes that marked the beginning of the twentieth century. Later developments, and the expansion into the Siberian lands by the Soviet industrial machine, led to such developments as the hunting of wolves using helicopter based gun platforms — special ammunition was supplied, of course, by the "people" in power who knew the real reason for the hunting of the wolves. Since the Wendigo had been out of contact with civilization for so long, they had no idea of what they were up against, and the hunting took a far greater toll on them than on any other tribe except the Red Talons.

There are few Wendigo left in Russia, but there is a rumor circulating among the more learned Garou of a hybrid line related to both the Silver Fangs and the Wendigo.

Neither the Wendigo nor any hybrid tribe are politically active in Russia. The Wendigo keep to themselves, fiercely guarding their lands and caerns from human and Garou alike. If such a hybrid tribe exists, it is small, has little power and is, as yet, unrecognized by the Garou population.

Russia's Wendigo are a small, very potent force. They control one small area of Siberia, and woe betide any who try to enter it without their permission. They are adept at survival in the icy wastes, masters of animalistic combat and controllers of powerful spirits of the snow and ice.

## Septs

The Wendigo have one caern, complete with sept and protectorate, located near the shores of the Bering Sea. There are 30 Wendigo there. From here, they will attack any minion of the Wyrms or, indeed, anyone who gets too near. They have not been attacked as yet, nor do they know of the attacks on other caerns. It is possible that their isolationism will prove to be their downfall.

## Stereotypes

**Black Furies:** As warriors of the Wyld, they are without peer and are worthy of our trust. But their disrespect for men could prove to be their weakness.

**Bone Gnawers:** They adopt human philosophies in an attempt to create equality among the Garou. They only create their own doom.

**Children of Gaia:** While they are the most open-hearted of Russia's Garou, they are unable to see the enemies that lurk in our own caerns. That is why they were brought low.

**Fianna:** We barely know them, but they are a happy people.

**Get of Fenris:** We do not truck with the Get. They are too belligerent for their own good.

**Glass Walkers:** The Glass Walkers walk towards the Wyrms.

**Red Talons:** We, too, seek revenge for our hurts, but these wolves are too reckless. Their rage takes them into the maw of doom.

**Shadow Lords:** Nothing good comes from them. They are darkhearted conquerors who seek to exploit us all.

**Silent Striders:** We have become friends, as they are one of the few tribes who are willing to visit our caerns. Still, we haven't seen them for a long time.

**Silver Fangs:** Their failure is clear. Why the others still follow them is a mystery.

**Stargazers:** They spend much time in contemplation, and their spirits are noble.

**Uktena:** They are our brothers, but where we walk the path of war, they walk the path of spirit.

## Blood-on-the-Wind

**Breed:** Lupus

**Auspice:** Galliard

**Nature / Demeanor:** Survivor / Director

**Attributes:** Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 5 (7/8/8/8), Charisma 2, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/2/2), Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 4, Subterfuge 4, Animal Ken 2, Melee 4, Rituals 4, Survival 3,

**Backgrounds:** Familiar Spirit 4, Past Lives 4



**Gifts:** (1) Call of Wyld, Camouflage, Leap of Kangaroo, Sense Prey; (2) Curse of Aeolus, Dreampeak, Eye of Eagle, Sense the Unnatural; (3) Catfeet, Chill of Early Frost; (4) Attunement, Bridge Walker; (5) Song of the Great Beast  
Rage 7, Gnosis 8, Willpower 7

**Rank:** 5

**Merits / Flaws:** Huge Size

**Rites:** Rite of the Opened Caern, Rite of Totem, Rite of the Fetish

**Fetishes:** Fang Dagger

**Image:** In Homid, Blood-on-the-Wind is a tall, dark-haired man with pale features. In Lupus, he is stark white with gray stripes leading from his ears to his tail.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are calm and collected, always ready and always cautious. Stupidity rules the foolish who would rather fight than think, and you will not be part of it. The enemy comes in many forms and surrounds you from all sides. They must be taught their errors. Order will prevail, and when it does, so will Gaia.

**Background:** Blood-on-the-Wind became the leader of the Sept of the Siberian Wilds several years ago when he challenged and beat the former leader. He has brought a new vigor to the Wendigo, but it is a vigor tied to maintaining their isolation from the rest of the world.

## ***Walks-for-the-Lost***

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Theurge

**Nature / Demeanor:** Alpha / Reveler

**Attributes:** Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 3, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Primal-Urge 3, Drive 2, Melee 3, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Enigmas 3, Investigation 1, Occult 3, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Past Lives 3

**Gifts:** (1) Call the Breeze, Persuasion, Sense Wyrms, Spirit Speech

Rage 4, Gnosis 9, Willpower 7

**Rank:** 1

**Merits / Flaws:** Mercury Rising, Natural Channel, Concentration/Driving Goal (find the Croatans), Soft Hearted, Overconfident, No Partial Transformation

**Rites:** Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of Binding

**Fetish:** None

**Image:** In Homid, Walks-for-the-Dead is a fit young man. In Lupus, Walks is a lean timber wolf.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You know you've got a great destiny ahead of you and can't help but be overjoyed. So many around you are just waiting for the Apocalypse, but you know there is a way out. There's gotta be. You lead a whole pack who you have convinced to believe as you do.

**Background:** Walks-for-the-Lost has abandoned his human name in favor of his new Garou one. He is fascinated by the lost Croatan tribe and is convinced that he can solve their mystery. He believes that the Croatan must have left Kinfolk in Russia on their march to the Pure Lands long ago, and if he can find them, he is sure he can revive the tribe.

## ***The Siberakh***

The Siberakh are a hybrid bloodline of Silver Fangs and Wendigo. They are descended from Silver Fangs who saw folly in trying to maintain the purity of their bloodline and bred instead with the Wendigo's flock. They maintain settlements in the wilds of Siberia that appear much like human villages or communes. They refer to themselves as the Outsiders and strictly regulate contact between themselves and the other tribes.

Officially, the Siberakh do not exist. They have no influence on Garou politics in Russia, except within their own areas. Indeed, the only other tribes who are fully aware of their existence are the Silver Fangs and Wendigo. The Silver Fangs deny them, treating them as Ronin. They do not mention them, fearing that it would reflect badly on their lineage to the other Garou. The Wendigo understand the Siberakh's desire to retreat from tribal politics and keep their secret safe.

Some among the Glass Walkers, Children of Gaia and Silent Striders who have heard the rumors of these outsiders believe that they may represent a hope for restoring the Silver Fang tribe. The rumors say that the Siberakh are

paragons of the legendary Silver Fang virtues: nobility, virtue and bravery. It is believed that the native stock from the Wendigo flock invigorates the lineage of these Fangs. A few of the Children of Gaia believe that the Siberakh

could be the best chance for a ruling tribe in Russia, one that will lead the Garou to victory over the Wyrn. If only they could find them...





# Chapter Four: Enemies

## *Pentex and the Government*

*Disaster teaches you a lot — that is true. But these times demand different methods of learning.*

— Geydar Aliyev, chairman of the Accident Investigation Committee

Until a few years ago, Russia had no corporate base of its own. The corporations active within the country could be traced to outside money, and most of that money could be traced back (only by the most resourceful investigators) to Pentex. For many years, Pentex, through its holding corporations, helped the government of Russia remain financially secure while running a virtual business monopoly within the country, allowing them to do business as they saw fit. The reigning Brujah council didn't realize that the numerous corporations they were dealing with were all just tentacles of one octopus.

For the Garou, the result was an ongoing war the likes of which were seen nowhere else in the world. Wolves were hunted by helicopter gunships, and the land was despoiled at a rate difficult to believe. All of this was sanctioned by the government.

It was too much for the Garou to stop. Pentex was winning as they expanded their control of Russian industry. Under the blanket of absolute unaccountability, the Wyr-

tainted corporation helped the Black Spiral Dancers establish Pit after Pit all over the country. Some of the strangest Wyrms caerns in the world are found in Russia now, and this pleases both the Black Spirals and Pentex. The company felt secure allied with the native Black Spiral Dancers. Without their support, the operation would have fallen apart under Garou pressure.

In late 1990, it all came apart. For some reason that Pentex could not understand, the Black Spirals rebelled. This is the first such case in the company's history, and no one could comprehend it. All contact with the leaders of the tribe was cut off. Messengers sent to the caerns either never returned or were so completely insane that there was no point in listening to them.

As if it was an omen, the government started to lose stability at the same time. In a desperate attempt to salvage the government, the ruling council increased opportunities for trade, opening many of the doors Pentex had held shut for so long. In some cases, other companies, many of which were run by vampires of various sorts, were invited into the country. Pentex found itself in economic competition for the first time in Russia.

Sensing the weakness in their opponents, the Garou of Russia rallied and began putting more and more pressure against Pentex subsidiaries. These problems caused Pentex to take a temporary leave of absence from Russia.

With the withdrawal of Pentex money, the government began to collapse faster, and Baba Yaga stepped forth to put down the ailing system. Many companies lost everything in the chaos that ensued, and life became very hard for people in Russia. Pentex was glad to be out of the war zone for once, but they still do not know who or what was behind the governmental collapse and the treachery of their most potent allies. The only lead they have is a person calling himself "The General." They would dearly love to remove this "General's" head.

Pentex is not without forethought, however, and has chosen to bide its time for now. They suspect that when Russia stabilizes, it will once again be in need of potent investors, and Pentex will be there. The megacorps think they will face little resistance when they take up where they left off.

They are mistaken.

## Black Spiral Dancers

The Black Spiral Dancers of Russia never held much power until the revolution. When the Brujah council came to power, they caused so many problems for the Garou that the Thirteen Tribes could no longer devote time to their continual war with the Black Spiral Dancers. When Pentex entered Russia, they did so with the aid of the Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk in the government.

The Black Spirals are responsible for the testing of nuclear weapons on Russian soil. In a brilliant piece of manipulation, the Black Spiral Dancers successfully "planted" some of their Kinfolk as retainers to the Brujah. These Ghouls, who occasionally had the ear of the council, convinced the Brujah that if they did not test the weapons, other vampires would continue to develop them overseas and one day use them against the council. The normally paranoid vampires wondered why they had not seen this sooner and promptly entered the Cold War.

Nuclear testing, accompanied by the environmental devastation of the Pentex corporations, provided several prime locations for Pits. The population of Black Spiral Dancers began to climb steadily. When their numbers had reached a sufficient level, they again took up their war with the Thirteen Tribes. This time, they had the advantage.

The Black Spirals were happy with the situation as it was, yet they could feel something more was to come. In 1990, it did. The eldest Theurge of the Black Spirals, an old lupus called Poison Tooth, was visited in his dreams. The visitor was none other than a Wyrmservant. What else could produce such a monster?

Poison Tooth was in a hut, an impossibly large hut, which seemed larger inside than outside. He sat at the table, and the cat on the floor told him to make himself comfortable. The mistress would see him shortly, as soon as she finished her rest. Then he noticed the Hag. She slept on the stove, though she could hardly fit upon it. Her head hung down on one side and one leg

draped over the other side. The other leg was folded up, and she covered herself with her foot.

As he looked upon her, she opened her eyes and slowly began to unfold her ugly limbs. Her hands dug grooves into the metal of the stove as she rose, and he could see the sharp prongs of jagged metal where she had been laying. She rose to full height, and he knew that even in his most warlike form, he would easily fit into her massive jaws.

As that thought crossed his mind, she smiled, and he saw steel teeth dripping with blood and spittle. His courage faltered. His heart fluttered. She spoke:

"You look at me with such awe. Do you find me pleasing?" The voice carried with it all the malice of a raging Nexus Crawler. The bitterness crept into his soul, forcing him to answer before he had time to lie. His voice made him sound like a pup rather than the most respected of his tribe in Russia, yet he spoke. He had no choice.

"I find you glorious." And he knew she would loathe him — how could she not, as weak as he was in her presence? She smiled again, and her fangs came closer to him. She spoke again, and this time he was certain that somewhere, someone had died horribly to produce the power of this voice.

"Bring your children to me, all your children, and we will revel with your children in a celebration of my glory." Having said this, she allowed him the bliss of her fangs.

He awoke, knowing he would never forget what happened. He also knew what had to be done. Leaving the chicken hut, he sought out another elder of his tribe and brought him to the Hag. Soon, another Spiral felt the bliss of the Embrace. The Black Spirals would follow him, and he would follow her.

The Black Spirals are now one of Baba Yaga's favorite tools. She uses them on every dangerous mission that must be carried out, and she takes great glee in watching them fight. She sees them as an excellent weapon. To keep them happy, she has allowed them the use of her space station, MIR. However, this has recently become the source of some rebellion against her leadership. Perhaps it is time for her to fly up there and explain the situation... or perhaps not. One thing is certain to Baba Yaga: there is only one way to treat an excellent weapon once you are done with it. You destroy it so it may not be used against you.

## Pits

### The Hive of the Unleashed Atom

**Caern:** The Chernobyl nuclear reactor in the Ukraine  
**Level:** 3

**Gauntlet:** 4 (5)

**Type:** Toxins

**Tribal Structure:** Open only to Black Spiral Dancers and other Wyrms creatures

**Totems:** G'louogh, the Dance of Corruption



The Chernobyl nuclear reactor in the Ukraine has become the most recent addition to the Russian Black Spiral Pits. It started as a low-powered caern, but has mysteriously risen in power with every new tragedy that occurs related to the reactor's meltdown in the 1980s. The radiological effects of that disaster are far-reaching, from children born with cancer to the corruption of crops and cattle miles away. The radiation was even carried as far north as Lapland, killing many reindeer and destroying the way of life of the nomadic Sami people. Many Sami had to move to towns or villages for jobs.

Baba Yaga does not like Chernobyl. It symbolizes a poison in her motherland. However, until the usefulness of the Black Spirals has come to an end, she will tolerate the strange activity around the reactor. Should there be another meltdown crisis, however, her anger against the Black Spirals will know no bounds. The Spirals sense this and are very careful not to take their revels too far.

## MIR

The MIR space station, in orbit around the Earth, is certainly the oddest pit the Black Spirals have built. Details can be found in *Book of the Wyrms*.

Baba Yaga has not yet realized just how powerful this caern is, for it provides a direct path to Malfeas, the Lair of the Wyrms. When she discovers this potential threat to her power, she will quickly shut down the caern. If any Garou can discover a way to get such information before her, she will be grateful and spare the messenger's lives... this time.

## The Hive of the Glowing Sea

*Question: How do you tell a man is from the Northern Fleet?*

*Answer: He glows in the dark.*

— Soviet Navy joke

**Caern:** A sunken nuclear sub off Novaya Zemlya

**Level:** 4

**Gauntlet:** 4 (5)

**Type:** Enigmas

**Tribal Structure:** Open only to Black Spiral Dancers and other Wyrms creatures

**Totems:** Kraken

Just off the islands of Novaya Zemlya, nuclear reactors were dumped into the sea. A nuclear submarine also sank here 10 years ago, its reactor forgotten. Now the Black Spirals have taken up residence on the land nearby to be close to their shrine under the sea.

On special moot nights, the Black Spirals swim down below the frigid waves and board the sunken sub, which has been magically sealed and filled with air. There they dance their bizarre and blasphemous rites far from the sight of human or wolf. Each hive member has a fetish allowing him the Gift: Spirit of the Fish.

## Storyteller Warning

The Great Zmei are truly fearsome beasts of immense power. They are beings of an older time, when the energies of the world still ran rampant and Wyld. Indeed, they were once creatures of the Wyld until the Wyrms was corrupted, dragging the Zmei (among others) down with it.

A Storyteller must be very careful when using the Zmei in a game, for they are a challenge to even the greatest pack of Garou warriors; a single Garou does not stand a chance before one. Even though it was the Silver Fangs who drove the Zmei to their slumbers, the traditional dragonslayers of old are not Garou, but mages. High magick and cunning can work where claw and fang are useless.

If the Storyteller is using *Mage* with his Russian game, perhaps the Zmei could represent an interesting challenge. They are corrupted Marauder creatures from before the Mythic Age and are now part of the Nephandi horde. They can stay on Gaia longer than other draconic beings (unlike Ik-Thazai in *Mage*) because of the nature of Baba Yaga's summoning long ago (which makes them immune to Paradox). However, they still need to devour Quintessence—and they get it from Garou caerns. This is the cause of the caern drainings, for the Zmei are digesting the power whole.

Nonetheless, valiant Garou can act against them. How players participate in the defeat of the Zmei is up to the Storyteller. However, the tale should be a hard and dangerous one. The best tactic by far is a group of mages and Garou united against the Zmei, like the Bogatyr heroes of old.

See Chapter Five for story ideas involving Garou characters and the Zmei.

## The Zmei

The Zmei are dragons. They were first summoned to this world long ago by Baba Yaga in her attempt to kill the Nosferatu Antediluvian who had turned her into a vampire. There were seven of them summoned into the world. They are known as the Great Zmei: Goluko, Gregornous, Illyana, Rustarin, Trevero, Sharkala and Shazear. Each of these great creatures resembles their true master, the Wyrms, though some were able to take other forms at will.

For years, even after Baba Yaga entered her slumber, these creatures held sway over large areas of land. People feared to enter what became known as the "dragon lands."

Finally, after much debate, the Silver Fangs of Russia decided that the time had come to rid the world of these creatures. They enlisted the aid of some of their Kinfolk, who had the power to work magic, and went out to slay the great Wyrms.

Except for the destruction of Sharkala, they failed. They were unable to kill the rest of the creatures, who were far more powerful than they originally believed. The death toll mounted as, one by one, the Zmei were bound into magical slumber.

Each time a Zmei was fought, the Silver Fangs would record the combat on the Wall of Heroes in their Ural Mountains caern. The Garou managed to bind all the known Zmei, hiding them in locations remembered now by only the oldest Galliards.

The Garou did not know of all the Zmei, however. Shazear escaped the hunt and has remained awake to this day, except for long periods of sleep to preserve his energy.

During World War II, Gregornous was accidentally awakened. He hid from all contact until he knew his master had risen again. At the bidding of Baba Yaga, Gregornous has managed to find Shazear and awaken Illyana. Presently, the three of them are seeking the others and hoping to wake them.

Clues and portents have told the Garou that these creatures are stirring. At least two packs have failed to return from missions to investigate sightings of "abnormally large Wyrms creatures." In one instance, a survivor came back to the caern telling stories about dragons. The other Garou only laughed. The elders, however, heard the story and now suspect that the Zmei walk again. So far, the missions to check on the sleeping Zmei have been hindered by the need to guard the caerns from the drainings. It has also taken a long time to find those who remember the burial sites of the Zmei. Only Trevero's tomb has been investigated so far, and he is still deep asleep.

The young Garou believe these creatures are simply large Banes and, despite their elders' warnings, the pups are excited about the possibility of hunting them down. The elders know that, soon enough, the pups will learn the truth, and then run in fear.

Yes, the elders are worried, for they know that if the Zmei have been released and Baba Yaga has truly risen, the Koshchei can not be far behind.

## Zmei Powers

The six remaining Great Zmei all share the following powers:

**Fear:** When first engaging with a Zmei in serpent form, a Willpower check is required against a difficulty of 6. Only one success is needed. However, should the player roll more than three successes, her character will enter frenzy and attack. If the player fails her roll, her character is frozen in fear and can do nothing until she makes a successful roll (she can roll each turn). If she botches, then her character will enter a Fox frenzy and flee.

**Regeneration:** The Zmei regenerate at a rate of one Health Level per round, provided that they are still alive at the end of the round. This is similar to Garou regeneration:

a Zmei must roll his Stamina (difficulty 8) to regenerate in combat.

**Rend Reality:** When in serpent form, the Zmei have the ability to travel beyond this world by ripping a hole in the fabric of reality. This costs them a great deal of personal energy, reflected in a loss of five points of Rage, two points of Willpower and one permanent point of Gnosis. Any creature following a Zmei into such a rift must make a Willpower check, difficulty 8, to remain sane. Even if they do make the roll, they will acquire one permanent derangement. Entering a Zmei rift will deliver the Garou to a blasted and barren plain in Malfeas: the true lair of the Zmei. The Zmei must also spend the cost to return to this world.

**Flight:** When in serpent form, all the Zmei have wings and are capable of flight. Their full flight speed is equal to 30 yards + (3 x Dexterity) per round.

**Attacks:** All Zmei can attack with fangs (diff. 5; Str + 4 damage) or claws (diff. 6; Str + 3). They can also strike with a tail lash (diff. 7; Str + 2); if successful, the victim must make an opposed Dexterity roll (difficulty 6) against the Zmei's damage successes. Failure means the victim is knocked to the ground.

Other things of note:

- Due to their size in serpent form, all attack rolls against a Zmei have their difficulty reduced by one.

- Body levels of the Zmei are as follows: ok/ok/ok/ok/ok/-1/-1/-1/-3/-3/-3/-5/-5/-5/Incapacitated.

- In serpent form, a Zmei's scales act as three dice of armor to soak all physical attacks. Zmei scales can soak all forms of damage—even most magical damage that normally ignores soaks (such as damage from the Gift: Bacchantes' Rage).

The seven Great Zmei are listed below:

## Goluko

**Attributes:** Strength 12, Dexterity 6, Stamina 10, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 2, Intelligence 0, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Athletics 5, Alertness 2, Brawl 6, Dodge 3, Intimidation 7

Rage 10, Gnosis 3, Willpower 7

**Powers:** Balefire Blast (Goluko can breath balefire. Roll Dexterity + Athletics, difficulty 6. Treat the blast as a gout of radioactive flame: difficulty 9 to soak, with three wounds taken per blast. These wounds are unsoakable and take twice as long to heal; in addition, any roll on the Battle Scar chart is at +10. This blast costs Goluko one Rage point.)

Radiation (Goluko is radioactive—he even glows in the dark! Those who approach him suffer the effects of this radiation. Anyone within 10 feet of him must make a Stamina roll each turn, difficulty 6, or take low level effects: one wound level, unsoakable.)

**Weakness:** Radiation poisoning is slowly killing Goluko. His scales are falling off in places. Any Garou with a

successful Perception + Alertness roll, difficulty 8, can aim for these locations. The attack difficulty is raised by one, but the damage Dice Pool is increased by 2.

**Image:** Goluko is 30 feet long, in addition to his 15 foot tail. His once-lustrous scales are now a sickly green and are falling off in places. He has mutated warts growing across his belly now, a sign of the radiation disease.

**Roleplaying Notes:** AAAAaaaaaaRRRggghhhHHH! Pain! All is pain!

**Background:** Rage is all that is left of the once great Goluko. His mind has been shattered. When he was bound, the Silver Fangs neglected his resting place in the remote Taimyr Peninsula. It just so happens that remote locations are the preferred sites for modern nuclear testing, particularly underground testings. Not even the force of multiple thermonuclear explosions could destroy the magical bonds that held Goluko. Unable to escape, Goluko writhed in the depths of the earth. Radiation slowly devoured his weakened body.

Once the most passive of the Zmei, Goluko is now nothing but rage. The problem is that the Black Spiral Dancers are trying to raise him with their Rite of Draconic Liberation. See Chapter Five, "The Sleeper Awakens", for an idea of what could happen. If Goluko escapes, the destruction could be on an unprecedented scale. Even Baba Yaga cannot allow that.

## Gregornous

**Attributes:** Strength 10, Dexterity 5, Stamina 8, Charisma 0, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 9, Primal-Urge 4, Subterfuge 5, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Enigmas 5, Linguistics 3, Occult 4, Rituals 4, Area Knowledge (Russia) 4

Rage 7, Gnosis 8, Willpower 10

**Powers:** Hex Scream (Gregornous lets out an ear-piercing scream. As far as the sound can carry—which is a long way, considering the creature's lungs—plants wilt, the earth shakes, buildings tumble and the life force of the world screams back in pain. Mothers miscarry, and calamity strikes. Everyone within hearing range must make a Perception + Empathy roll, difficulty 7. Anyone who fails will be cursed with a calamity: one bad thing will happen. This calamity is up to the Storyteller, but some examples are: the breaking of a character's best fetish, a discovery made by a nearby werewolf hunter, or an afternoon lost in the woods. Gregornous must spend one Gnosis and one Willpower point each time he uses this power.)

**Image:** Gregornous is roughly 50 feet long. His tail alone is 20 feet long, and his scales are as black as soot. His presence causes despair in most who look upon him. His scales do not shine, and looking into his eyes is like staring into the void.



**Roleplaying Notes:** Yes, you are great and powerful, but you are here only to serve the "Little Grandmother." This is true of the other Zmei as well, even if they will not admit it. You may have to show them how to respect their real master.

**Background:** Gregornous was accidentally awakened in a battle between a Technomancer and a Celestial Chorus mage sometime during WWII. The Paradox spirit unleashed during the battle purged the area of any magick that did not conform to the laws of science, including the binding spell that held Gregornous. Gregornous himself was immune to the Paradox's effects, due to Baba Yaga's summoning spell which brought him into the world. Always a clever one, Gregornous laid low, hid in the wilderness and tried to figure out what was going on in the world now.

Of all the Great Zmei, it is Gregornous who desires the approval of the Hag the most. He secretly watched over her resting place for years until she finally rose. He does not remember any existence before answering the call of Baba Yaga; as far as he is concerned, she brought him into existence. He would do anything to protect his "mother", though he does not tell the other Zmei this.



## Illyana

**Attributes:** Strength 9, Dexterity 6, Stamina 8, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 0, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 6, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 6, Primal-Urge 5, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 2, Enigmas 3, Occult 5, Zmei Lore 7

Rage 7, Gnosis 10, Willpower 9

**Powers:** Combustion Word (Illyana speaks one word and all things within 20 yards of her burst into flame — including Garou. Garou must roll their Stamina against a difficulty 9; failure means the Garou takes three wounds. This damage is soakable, but aggravated. The problem is that, for the next 10 turns, anyone within the 20 yard area must make this roll each turn. Any combustible object in range will also burst into flame. Illyana must spend two Gnosis points to use this power.)

**Image:** Illyana is a serpent roughly 65 feet long. Her scales are the colors of the rainbow and sparkle in light.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are quiet and deadly. If someone pushes you too far, or shows a disinterest in your tales, blow them up; they clearly have no taste. If someone asks you about your race, you will gladly tell them. It matters not if they take this knowledge to the grave. They will know the honor of dying to a Zmei.

**Background:** Illyana is the lore keeper of the Zmei. She lives to collect stories about the exploits her brothers. She alone among the Zmei seeks out the company of the others. She alone is welcome to visit any of the Zmei without invitation.

Her greatest passion is the tales of great battle and great deceptions. She is secretly glad that Trevero is not yet awake; she finds him to be poor company.

Illyana alone knows the true record of the fight with the Antediluvian vampire, and she alone knows his resting place (or believes she does...) She has not revealed this to anyone, as it gives her a sense of power she has never before held, and perhaps gives her an advantage should things get really bad.

## Rustarin

**Attributes:** Strength 11, Dexterity 6, Stamina 10, Charisma 1, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0, Perception 6, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Empathy 5, Intimidation 8, Primal-Urge 5, Subterfuge 4, Stealth 3, Leadership 5, Enigmas 5, Occult 4, Linguistics 2, Area Knowledge (Russia) 4, Area Knowledge (Umbra) 5

Rage 7, Gnosis 9, Willpower 10

**Powers:** Commanding Gaze (Rustarin can gaze at a victim and cause him to freeze in place. He will be unable to move for 10 rounds or as long as Rustarin stares at him, whichever is longer. The victim may make a Willpower roll opposed by Rustarin's Willpower. He may not spend Will-

power for automatic successes on this roll. If successful, then the victim can act freely for one turn and every additional turn in which he spends a Willpower point. If he has five successes, then the power is broken and will not work on him again for another week. Rustarin must spend a Gnosis point to use this power.)

**Image:** Rustarin is 80 feet long from head to tail. Her scales are a deep blue, and they shimmer like sapphires. Her eyes are shifting kaleidoscopes that draw others into their gaze.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are in command, let none of the Zmei doubt it. If they do not doubt your authority, others will not question it. Should a lesser creature offend you, eat it. You are eager to show how powerful the Zmei are, for they are your troops, and their power reflects on you and is represented in you. You wield the other Zmei like weapons and, with the exception of Shazear, they are perfect tools.

**Background:** Rustarin is the leader of the Zmei. She uses her skills and powers to impose her authority upon the others. She is a good leader, and none of the Zmei resent her, with the exception of Shazear and Trevero.

It was Rustarin who first answered the call of Baba Yaga, and he told the Hag the names of the others. Rustarin understands what it is that each of the other Zmei respect. She has managed to keep their respect and control them. She does not like Baba Yaga anymore, for she resents the Hag winning Gregornous' loyalties. Rustarin thinks that lesser Wyrms creatures should defer to the Zmei.



Rustarin still sleeps, although the binding is weak. Her location is somewhere in Kazakhstan, near the Aral Sea.

## Shazear

**Attributes:** Strength 9, Dexterity 6, Stamina 9, Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0 (3), Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

**Abilities:** Alertness 6, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 3 (4), Empathy 4, Intimidation 5, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 5, Drive 3, Melee 4, Stealth 3, Computers 2, Enigmas 5, Linguistics 3, Occult 4, Science 1, Area Knowledge (Moscow) 2, Area Knowledge (Russia) 3

Rage 5, Gnosis 6, Willpower 10

**Powers:** Shapeshift (Shazear is able to assume human form. He appears as a very good looking young man in his late twenties. He has black hair, a medium build and gray eyes. The attributes in parentheses above for Shazear in his human form. Shazear also does not incite fear in human form, nor can he fly.)

**Image:** Shazear is the smallest of the Zmei. He is only 40 feet long, including his tail. He is a shadowy gray with reflective scales that look like crystal. His eyes glisten and move with intelligence and cunning.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are the smartest of your kind — the others are morons! Baba Yaga is smart, though, smarter than she lets on. That makes her even worse. You want no part of that. The human cities appeal to you more. They say

the West has even greater cities; perhaps you will go there sometime.

**Background:** After the battle with the ancient Absimiliard was over, the first thing Shazear saw was a nomadic camp of humans. He immediately became fascinated with the little creatures and took their form to get a better look. He liked what he saw and has had a fascination with humans ever since.

Of all the Zmei, Shazear is the most clever and resourceful. He has on more than one occasion tricked the others into doing what he wanted without them realizing it. He is, by nature, curious and insightful.

Shazear escaped the Silver Fangs' hunt of the Zmei because they never knew he existed. He has carefully hidden from them for years, living among humans in their cities. He has some Glass Walkers wondering about him, but has cleverly thrown them off his trail many times.

Shazear has come to love the ways of the little people. Of all the Zmei, he is the most likely to be turned from the path of the Wyrms and back to the path of the Wyld, the Zmei's original heritage. Due to his long sabbatical among humans, he is no longer susceptible to Rustarin's commands or her stare.

Gregornous found him after Baba Yaga's awakening, but Shazear has convinced him that he has only been awake for a few years now; if the other Zmei were to know that he wandered for so many years without trying to free them, he might not survive their anger.

Baba Yaga, though, is the only being he truly fears. He serves her now, but wants out. This isn't for ethical reasons; he just can't stand leashes anymore.

## Trevero

**Attributes:** Strength 15, Dexterity 6, Stamina 12, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 7, Dodge 3, Intimidation 7, Primal-Urge 5, Enigmas 5, Occult 4, Area Knowledge (Russia) 3, Area Knowledge (Umbra) 3

Rage 10, Willpower 8, Gnosis 7

**Powers:** Poison Spray (Trevero can spew a stream of highly toxic green poison from his mouth. He must make an attack roll of Dexterity + Athletics, difficulty 7, and spend one Gnosis point. Anyone hit by this spray takes eight dice of damage; this is soakable. The damage is aggravated and can only be healed by the Gift: Resist Toxin. Trevero can spray as a repeated attack; use the firearm rules from *Werewolf* or the *Werewolf Player's Guide*.)

**Image:** Trevero is the largest of the Zmei. He is 50 feet long, not including his tail, which stretches another 20 feet. His scales, with serrated edges, are the color of fresh blood. To look upon Trevero is to look into the face of rage.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are filled with anger and a hunger for destruction. Why should you stop and talk when your actions can say so much more?

**Background:** Trevero is the strongest of the Zmei in sheer physical power. He loves the concept of destruction and is a servant of the Beast-of-War. He remembers bearing the Maeljin, Hellbringer, upon his back in a war against the Garou in the distant past. He carries this memory and a hatred for the Garou to this day.

When in combat, Trevero is ruthless and will decimate large areas just to catch a single target. When not in combat, he is always looking for a way to get into a fight.

In the year 1908, Trevero broke free from his binding spells. The resulting battle with an Uktena, a pack of Silver Fangs and a mage resulted in the deaths of over 20 Garou nearby and the creation of the Tungusta Blast.

Since the renewal of the Rite of Draconic Binding, Trevero is deeper asleep than he has been in ages. Even Baba Yaga cannot break the spell that binds him. But perhaps there are some unknown forces that could...

## Awakening the Zmei

The binding rites performed to lay the Zmei to rest are all ancient, and their power weakens with each passing year. Already, Gregornous has been freed from his bonds and has released Ilyana. Goluko may follow soon, if the Black Spirals get their way. As for Rustarin, the Zmei are still searching for her. She was the last to be put down, so no one knows where she lies. As soon as she is found, though, the Zmei are sure to figure a way to free her. Trevero is the only one who has little chance of rising soon, as his spell was renewed in 1908. However, the following methods may be able to release him:

**The Rite of Draconic Liberation:** This is a Black Spiral Dancer rite, developed through years of research and pieces of knowledge seized from Garou ancestor spirits who once knew the Rite of Draconic Binding. However, only two Black Spirals know this rite, and they were both devoured by Goluko as they cast it (see Chapter Five, "The Sleeper Awakens"). Whether or not another Black Spiral is around who knows this rite is the Storyteller's decision.

**Paradox:** In some special instances, the effects of Paradox can destroy the binding. Such was the case with Gregornous. However, the rite is, metaphysically speaking, "static" or "coincidental" magick. Only when it has been weakened through years of neglect will Paradox affect it. See **Mage: The Ascension** for more information on Paradox.

**Vampiric Thaumaturgy:** Baba Yaga knows many dread rites unknown to any other vampire. It was she, long ago, who summoned the Zmei into the world. She can also summon them back out. However, she cannot directly oppose the Rite of Draconic Binding. She must indirectly attack it through other means. She knows that, since Garou magic made the rite, Garou magic can undo it. If she can get a Garou to cast a Rite of Caern Opening on the site of a buried Zmei, she is convinced that she can take the power

spent for that purpose and turn it instead towards attacking the Zmei's magical bonds.

The problem is convincing the Garou to create a caern on such a suspect site. As soon as she discovers where Rustarin lies, she will set plans in motion to lure Garou there, where she will plant false evidence of a lost caern. When the foolish Garou gather to build their precious place of power, she will be there to take all the power they send out and use it for her own greater ends.

## The Baba Yaga

*When Russia was young, so, too, was Baba Yaga. As Russia grew in power, so, too, did Baba Yaga. As Russia became corrupt, so, too, did Baba Yaga...*

— Silver Fang proverb

*But you, my beloved, will belong to our mother, the damp earth.*

— Peter Kvashin, "Dear Brother"

There are many tales told in Russia of the dreaded Baba Yaga. Many of these legends conflict with each other. Some Galliards say that if even a few of these stories are correct, Baba Yaga is certainly something to fear. Rest assured, many of the stories are true...

Of these stories, there is one which is sometimes told by those who know more than a little of the truth behind the masks of history. Even this story is suspect; any who could

verify its truth have either perished long ago or no longer speak.

Long ago, when the first seed of corruption was sown in the land of Russia, it was not the Garou who resisted it, but a powerful earth priestess called Baba Yaga. Her magic was linked to the land itself, and the land was Baba Yaga. Baba Yaga used her power to help her people live in harmony with the land and the spirits.

Within the time of Baba Yaga's life, an invisible enemy came to Russia. It was a long time before this evil became known to the people, but he had been preying upon them for a while. Baba Yaga went to confront this evil thing of the night, a vampire who drank the blood of the living. She was startled when she saw him, for he was truly hideous. Never before had she seen such ugliness, and she could not allow it to reside in Russia. She hurled scorn at him, admonishing him for his foul looks and demanding that he leave her lands.

Absimiliard, the first of the Nosferatu clan, was yet again spurned by mortals for his tragic face. He swore that this earth priestess, this Baba Yaga, would regret her remarks. He slunk away from her, letting her believe she had driven him off.

The night of the next moon, he came for her. She put up a great fight, but even her mightiest magick could not slow the night creature's march towards her. She called up the spirits of trees and streams, and the land cried with every step the vampire took. Her hands shone like the sun, burning his dead flesh. The wind protected her, though the vampire ripped trees from their roots to throw at her. The old one withered before her, and his anguished



form burned. He screamed his rage and still she did not let up, for she knew that if she released such a creature, she would die.

The old one only smiled. Then he was gone.

He had vanished without trace. Baba Yaga dared to hope it was her doing, that her magick had destroyed him.

The very animals of the forest then turned against her. The same creatures that had helped her in the past now threw themselves against her. She turned to run, for she had never experienced such betrayal. She ran straight into the vampire's arms and was soon locked in an iron embrace.

Without speaking a word, the old one told her of good and evil. He told her how he had searched the world for one worthy of his power and that he had finally found her. He told her of how she would serve him. Together they would rule Russia. He then gave her death and darkness, pain and new life.

Baba Yaga woke the next night with the old one sitting nearby. She tried to run, but with a single word, he stopped her from leaving. She knew her mind was not her own, and her body no longer coursed with life. She felt her ties to the land begin to weaken. The old one smiled, and she recoiled in disgust.

She reached inside herself and began the Summoning. In her mind, she could feel the land rebel against this, begging her not to do such a thing. Yet all she wanted was the destruction of this vampire who had made her less than human.

The old one did not move. He was transfixed by her words as she called upon the darkness. The Zmei answered her call, stirring in the depths of Malfeas. One by one, they tore through the fabric of reality, descending from the night sky.

At Baba Yaga's command, they set upon the old one, but his cunning far outmatched theirs. As powerful as they were, they were weak from their journey into this world and unwise in its ways. He created figments of himself in their minds and sent them scattering to the far corners of Russia to find her.

Baba Yaga saw this and wept. She knew the vampire would make her his slave, a thrall to his desires. She could not bear to contemplate this. Once more she reached into the darkness, and this time, she brought forth all that she feared.

A pact was made with Koshchei, the Talon of the Wyrms. It was freed by the will of Baba Yaga. Koshchei stepped forward to battle the old one, and Baba Yaga fled in fear. She ran from the maelstrom on the battlefield.

There are no witnesses to the battle, for the very spirits of the local land had been destroyed in their fight to save Baba Yaga the night before. Epics and legends recount glorious blows delivered by both sides, and cunning deceptions made by both contestants. No one knows for sure what happened. All that is known is that Koshchei returned, and Absimiliard was never seen again.

Baba Yaga knew that the old one did not reside in Russian soil, for the land itself told her that. But the land wept, for the great Baba Yaga now owed her existence to Koshchei. That was the pact.

In choosing to fight her fate and resist the vampire, she had doomed the land. Now Koshchei, one of the Talons of the Wyrms, was free in the land. Corruption had taken hold in Russia.

Baba Yaga knew that she could never turn back. She had chosen to live when the time had come for her to die; now she was immortal. She had broken all her vows to the earth, and the earth turned away from her. Baba Yaga lost her powers of magick and gained new powers instead. She knew many secrets of the land, and these would work to her advantage against many enemies in the years to come.

Baba Yaga can still feel the pain of the earth, and she knows that much of this is her fault. She believes she is beyond redemption and plays the part of the ogre. If she cannot be saved, she will rule in her damnation, but deep within her soul, she cries for her loss. She would dearly love to heal her land. This is why she will never hurt a truly innocent person.

Because of her pact, she now owes Koshchei—and the Wyrms. She is working to bring him back from the spells that now bind him, spells placed by the cursed Bogatyrs of old.

She is still one with the land, though the tie is weakened now, and she must rob the land to cast her most powerful spells. She has always seen herself and Russia as one; she sees the new corruption of the land as a manifestation of her own spirit. This revelation hurts her.

However, there are those who whisper that this tale is spread by Baba Yaga herself, so that her enemies will pity her and perhaps falter if they are ever in a position to deliver her deathblow. Whispers tell of how Baba Yaga was not Embraced by the Nosferatu Antediluvian, but rose to power instead through cannibalism: diablerie of her own kind.

Baba Yaga will admit weakness to no one, and she demands respect from everyone around her. If she is not given that respect, she will kill the offender. There are no second chances with the Baba Yaga.

She is fond of children because she sees them as pure. She will not directly attack a child unless it shows some corruption (this includes rude behavior). If the child is corrupt, she will kill it before it can grow to further corruption. She kills most creatures by swallowing them whole.

## *Baba Yaga*

**Sire:** Absimiliard

**Clan:** Nosferatu

**Nature / Demeanor:** Bravo / Plotter

**Generation:** 4th

**Embrace:** 5000 BC

**Apparent Age:** at least 200

**Attributes:** Strength 8, Dexterity 6, Stamina 9, Charisma 6, Manipulation 6, Appearance 0, Perception 7, Intelligence 9, Wits 7

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Brawl 7, Intimidation 8, Subterfuge 5, Animal Ken 4, Etiquette 6, Pilot (Mortar and Pestle) 7, Stealth 4, Survival 6, Alchemy 8, Area Knowledge (Russia) 9, Investigation 3, Linguistics 3, Medicine 3, Occult 9

**Disciplines:** Animalism 7, Auspex 7, Celerity 3, Dominate 8, Fortitude 8, Obfuscate 7, Potence 7, Presence 8, Thaumaturgy 9, Protean 3

**Virtues:** Conscience 0, Self-Control 2, Courage 4

**Humanity:** 0

**Willpower:** 10

**Merits / Flaws:** Eat Food, Mansion (the chicken hut), Occult Library / Monstrous

Cannot harm a totally virtuous person (One who possesses Conscience 5, Humanity 10 and either True Faith 5+ or Golconda)

**Derangements:** Delusions of Grandeur

**Blood Pool / Max per turn:** 50 / 10

**Image:** The most hideous hag imaginable— eight feet tall, four-inch iron claws, sharklike iron fangs, stringy hair, gnarled gray flesh covered in boils, eyes laced with cataracts and a long warty nose.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are the most powerful sorceress on Earth and the ruler of the Motherland. Men, other Kindred and even Garou are cattle to assuage your ravenous hunger (and you are so hungry). You are generally coarse and crotchety, but you hide a terrible cunning within and enjoy playing cat and mouse games with your prey. You respect politeness, and if a lesser being can stand to gaze upon the abomination that is your face and humbly refer to you as “Little Grandmother”, you might spare them... and then again you might not.

**Haven:** Baba Yaga lives in a magical hut, her “chicken hut”. This peasant hovel has two giant chicken legs for walking through the woods, moving anywhere Baba Yaga likes. The inside of this hut is much larger than the outside. Who knows how many rooms it has inside?

**Mortar and Pestle:** Baba Yaga flies about the skies in a large mortar, which she steers with a giant pestle.

## *The Generals*

When Baba Yaga awakened, she refused to believe that the world as she knew it had changed. These pitiful creatures called vampires would not control her land. (How dare they even think it!) No one would doubt her control of Russia—her Russia. Most importantly, she could not let her enemies have the power to fight her.

Baba Yaga declared war on the rest of the world.

She summoned back her immortal minions, the vampires she had sired that were still in the world. She tempted and recruited new servants, both mortal and supernatural. Her power grew.

Once again, Baba Yaga controlled legions of servants. She then divided her servants into groups, and to each group, she appointed a leader. These leaders were the most powerful and loyal of the servants Baba Yaga had at her command. As the groups continued to grow in size, they granted themselves the title of “army” and called their leaders “generals”.

The Generals are some of the most fearsome of Baba Yaga’s creatures. They are never called by their real names; each army calls its leader “The General”. Because of this practice, the Garou mistakenly think that the troubles plaguing them are the work of one person called “The General”. This is an illusion that the Generals wish to maintain.

The Generals work well together; doing otherwise would incur the wrath of Baba Yaga. As with all organizations, however, there is bitterness within them and conflict between them. Baba Yaga allows this because she feels it keeps her troops on edge. They are always looking for the best way to gain her favor.

## *The Army of the Night*

This is Baba Yaga’s main contingent of vampires. They further her political goals and carry out her city-based operations. They also help patrol the Shadow Curtain by controlling the red tape process needed to get over the border.

The Army of the Night is lead by Viktor, a powerful vampire who allows no room for error in himself or others. Viktor was a servant of Baba Yaga before she entered torpor, and his continued loyalty to her has earned him a special position in the eyes of the Hag. His loyalty is unquestioned and unquestioning. Rumor has it that he ripped his own child apart for failing to show the proper respect for Baba Yaga in her absence.

The Army of Night is composed of nearly 25 vampires, including Viktor.

### *Viktor, General of the Army of the Night*

**Sire:** Unknown

**Clan:** Gangrel

**Nature / Demeanor:** Gallant / Conformist

**Generation:** 6th

**Embrace:** 3 BC

**Apparent Age:** late 20s

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 7, Stamina 7, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 6, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 6, Dodge 4, Intimidation 5, Leadership 4, Subterfuge 5, Drive 3, Firearms 4, Melee (Sword) 5, Security 4, Stealth 6, Survival 6, Bureaucracy 4, Investigation 2, Linguistics 4, Politics 3, Garou Lore 2

**Disciplines:** Obfuscate 4, Fortitude 3, Animalism 3, Celerity 4, Auspex 2, Presence 4, Protean 7

**Virtues:** Conscience 1, Self-Control 5, Courage 5

**Humanity:** 4

**Willpower:** 10

**Blood Pool / Max per turn:** 30 / 6





**Image:** A tall, dark man of good build. His body is in perfect shape. His glare is intense and commanding, the kind of gruff official who can bend the rules to his own will.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are old and tired, but you serve Baba Yaga with a zeal reserved for fanatics. Your service to her is the only thing preventing you from going into the earth for rest. If an enemy is not Garou, you show it no mercy. Werewolves, though, should at least be given a chance.

**Background:** Viktor has been Blood Bound to Baba Yaga from a thousand years before her torpor. He has waited all this time to serve her again. He is powerful, and the years have taught him much about combat and survival. He has mastered both.

The only thing that rivals his love for Baba Yaga is his respect for the Garou. In another life, perhaps, he could have befriended them. Despite his orders, he sometimes shows leniency to the Garou in battle. Baba Yaga does not know of this, and she would not be pleased to discover Dmitri's failing.

**Quote:** "That will simply not do, little one. I rule here."

## The Army of Conversion

Known also as the Army of Corruption, this legion is in charge of recruiting new followers for Baba Yaga. All types of creatures can be found under their control: spirits, Banes and werewolves are the most numerous.

This army tests the loyalty of new recruits before sending them to another army for action. They give each recruit a battery of tests designed to determine one thing: loyalty to Baba Yaga. The most powerful or important recruits are Blood Bound by Baba Yaga herself. The final test for recruits is looking into the eyes of the spirit acting as the General of the Army of Conversion. If the recruit is found

disloyal by the spirit, she is ripped apart by the army troops, who then feast on the body.

Elders of the Garou lament the number of warriors who have been lost to corruption in these times. They wonder how this can be. The answer is simple: Baba Yaga does not like the ecological destruction her land has suffered and wants to correct it. To this end, she especially wants to recruit Garou to her side. The Army of Conversion recruiters offer powerful incentives to any who would join. But most of all, they have convinced many Garou that, when the Apocalypse rears its head, Baba Yaga will be on their side. She doesn't want the world destroyed. If she did, how could she rule it? No Garou wants to be on the losing side, and many join the army with hopes of winning.

The Army of Conversion is lead by the spirit known as Typhon. When manifesting in this world, he appears as a black thunderhead with eyes of crackling yellow lightning. Typhon can look into the spirit of those brought before him and know their loyalty to Baba Yaga. This ability has proven very useful to the Hag. She wishes she could do the same for Typhon, for she is unsure of his true allegiance.

Typhon is an Incarna of the Totem family. As such, he is more powerful than his characteristics could reflect. However, he is still of small status as a totem; he has no realm of his own, but must share a portion of Grandfather Thunder's realm.

Typhon is a deceitful spirit who is out for sheer power. To this end, he is playing both sides of the field. Many Shadow Lord packs, impressed with his power, have chosen him as their totem. If the Garou were to discover his actions, they would disown him and even go so far as to retaliate with all they had. If a group of heroes found evidence of Typhon's treachery, and positioned Grandfather Thunder to act against Typhon, Typhon would be destroyed. For Typhon's Totem statistics, see the Appendix.

The Army of Conversion includes, Typhon, two corrupted Garou, three Skrags, one Psychomachia and one Enticer fomori.

## The Army of War

This is Baba Yaga's combat force. They are capable of converging on a location, setting up command channels and assaulting targets in a matter of hours. The army consists mainly of tainted Garou and Black Spiral Dancers. There are also some fomori and Banes. The Army of War, along with the Zmei, is responsible for draining the caerns.

During one of this army's first missions—an attack on a Red Talon caern—a commanding fomor went against Baba Yaga's orders, ignoring her tactical advise. A Black Spiral Dancer, Snaps-at-Shadows, attacked the commander and killed him after her pack was wiped out for the fomor's idiocy. A treacherous Bane immediately reported the "mutiny" to Baba Yaga. Upon hearing the Bane accuse her, Snaps-at-Shadows saw red and went into a frenzy rage, tearing the Bane apart.

When she regained control of herself, she realized in horror that, in her frenzy, she had struck Baba Yaga. The ancient vampire appeared completely unharmed and smiled at Snaps-at-Shadows. Before she could apologize and beg for her life, the Ahroun was rewarded with the command of the Army of War.

The Army of War is made up of five packs of Black Spiral Dancers (31 total), three renegade Pentex First Teams (6 fomori, 9 highly trained humans), one newly formed pack of Garou Ronin (4 total), one Brujah vampire (bound to Baba Yaga) and 10 Ghouls (furnished with blood by the Brujah). Occasionally, Soviet military units are dominated into aiding missions, although the supernatural force is kept out of their sight.

## Army of Despair

This army, if it can be called an army, is the smallest contingent. It is also the most potent. The Army of Despair consists of three awakened Zmei: Gregornous, Shazear and Illyana. The Army of Despair is led by Gregornous, at least until Rustarin is freed.

This army has three primary functions: the draining of caerns, the search for their sleeping brothers and the search for Koshchei's Soul Egg. They have been quite successful at the first task, but a complete failure at the last two.

So far, Baba Yaga has been pleased with the Zmei's caern raiding, but if they do not find Koshchei's egg soon, the serpents may find that Baba Yaga's fangs can penetrate even their thick hides.

## The Army of the Arcane

The Army of the Arcane is the only faction of Baba Yaga's forces that is not vulnerable to internal disputes. The army consists of mages she has converted to her side; most of them are Blood Bound.

They have one major duty: the upkeep and gradual strengthening of the Shadow Curtain. They have also been called upon to aid the Army of Despair in finding Koshchei, but so far, that search has revealed nothing.

Joseph Stranvitch is the leader of the Army of the Arcane. He is a Celestial Chorus mage devoted to old Russia and the power of the Orthodox Church. He has fallen under the thrall of Baba Yaga, and she has convinced him that anything he does for her aids the greater glory and power of the Church. His mind has become so poisoned by this lie that he has summoned a demon called Bezariel, the "Blood Angel," to become the General of the Army of the Void.

Many of the mages in the Army of the Arcane see this war as their perfect chance to break down static reality and allow some dynamism back in. Only Baba Yaga is powerful enough to aid them in this, or so they believe. Baba Yaga does not want this. Defeating static reality would only empower potential enemies of hers.

The Army of the Arcane includes a Chantry of three Celestial Chorus mages (including Stranvitch), one Dreamspeaker mage and a Chantry of four Verbena.

## Tamara Andreeva

**Nature / Demeanor:** Visionary / Fanatic

**Essence (\*):** Dynamic

**Tradition (\*):** Verbena

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Expression 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4, Animal Ken 1, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Leadership 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Herbalism 3, Linguistics 3 (Russian, English, French), Medicine 2, Occult 4 (Verbena magick), Politics 1, Rituals 2 (Russian Verbena)

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Avatar 2, Contacts 3

**Spheres\*:** Correspondence 2, Forces 3, Life 3, Prime 1, Spirit 2

**Willpower:** 7

**Arete\*:** 4

**Quintessence\*:** 10

**Paradox\*:** 6

(\* These are statistics from **Mage: The Ascension**. For simplicity, assume that Tamara's magick allows her to heal wounds (like Mother's Touch) or disease, cast elemental effects like fire, wind or electricity, sense things at great distances, speak with spirits and alter her appearance. Her Dice Pool for these effects is 4 if the effect is "coincidental", i.e., they could conceivably occur naturally, or 3 if the effect is "vulgar" or obviously supernatural. Assume her difficulty for these feats to be 7 or so, depending on what she is attempting. Note that mages tend to avoid "vulgar" magick under most circumstances.)

**Image:** A short young woman of medium build, with swarthy skin, large brown eyes and straight black hair going nearly to her waist. Tamara has a firm, clear voice, and she cuts a more imposing figure than her height would suggest. She dresses in layers of peasant clothing and prefers a more traditionally Russian look to modern Western fashions. Tamara focuses much of her magick through a dagger, a gnarled wood wand or a pouch of herbs which she scatters to the winds. Although only 24, her eyes reflect a wisdom beyond her years.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Years of hiding have taught you to be careful. Strangers are not to be trusted, and secrets must not be freely given away. Cover your doubts with an enigmatic air, implying that you know far more than you actually do. As a Verbena, you have a keen sense of the sacred in the midst of the carnal. Go with your instincts, but always leave an escape route behind you. You have always trusted the spirits of the land above everything else, but now you've found that even they are not to be trusted.

**Background:** Tamara's grandmother, a *vedna* named Andreeva, was taken away by the KGB. Young Tamara swore to carry on the old woman's teachings. Andreeva's coven, the Volinchaya, found her and learned of her potential. Tamara soon Awakened to the possibilities of magick, learned the ways of mages and took her grandmother's mage name as her own. As *Glasnost* loosened the bonds on Russian society, the Volinchaya took up freedom's cause, encouraging local folks to look ahead to a new era while embracing the spirituality of the old Russia... a *very old* Russia.

The coven was hunted by the KGB, but hid out in Siberia. They slowly spread the worship of the Earth, the blood and the spirit. Tamara's oratory skill and natural charisma brought many converts into the fold.

When Grandmother Russia appeared and spoke to the *vedna*, she convinced them of what they must do to aid the Motherland. The cabal channeled their efforts and energies into weaving the Shadow Curtain, watching for outsiders and picking off the occasional KGB agent.

The Volinchaya are popular with the people of their region, but Tamara is uneasy. In her dreams, she sees a twisted shadow land where ghosts haunt the sleep of the weak. Though devoted to Grandmother Russia, Tamara has begun to doubt her coven's actions. If someone can provide Tamara with proof that her actions did more harm than good to the land, she might become a crucial ally.

## *The Army of The Void*

Next to the Army of Despair, this is Baba Yaga's smallest army, but it is growing. It consists of the darkest and most foreign of spirits, all under the command of Bezariel, a demon.

Their task is to capture spirits and suck their energy from them, all for Baba Yaga to consume in her Thaumaturgy rites or feed to her Zmei. It is rare to encounter this army, as it mainly resides and operates on the other side of reality in dark realms of the Umbra.

Baba Yaga is not so foolish as to think her demon does not have its own agenda. She simply works with it for the moment, with the realization that the situation may not last. The demon does its job with enthusiasm and efficiency, but Baba Yaga has not yet been able to divine its own interests.

Bezariel himself is a beautiful creature with a face that commands trust and thoughts of innocence. This simply makes his painful attentions all the worse for his victims. He is never alone and always travels in the company of the four minions he has created. These creatures are called Fades.

They appear as tall, slender, humanoid shadows. Each one wears a dark gray robe and carries a long, slender sword. Although the swords appear fragile, and might break on contact, they have proven to doubters on more than one



occasion that they are combat worthy. Anyone threatening Bezariel will discover just how effective they are.

The Fades can turn invisible any time they choose. Some Garou insist that the Fades do not become invisible, but actually cease to exist. Whatever the case, even when Bezariel is apparently alone, his Fades are near.

## *Bezariel, "The Blood Angel"*

**Attributes:** Strength 9, Dexterity 8, Stamina 7, Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 8, Perception 5, Intelligence 8, Wits 8

**Abilities:** Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Subterfuge 5, Intimidation 5, Melee (Sword) 4, Performance 3, Stealth 6, Survival 4, Occult 8, Torture 9

Rage 7, Willpower 10, Gnosis 10

**Health Levels:** Bezariel has 13 wound levels as follows: ok/ok/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-3/-3/-4/incapacitated.

Bezariel has physical form (Physical Attributes and Health Levels) in the Umbra; he is not a spirit, but a type of creature made of both spirit and matter.

**Powers:** Teleport (Bezariel can move to any place he can see in the blink of an eye. He must concentrate slightly to do so; as a result, any action taken just after teleporting is at +2 difficulty for him. Teleporting takes one action.)

Dematerialize (With one round of concentration, Bezariel can simply cease to exist for all intents and purposes. Only magick, rites or rituals may effect a dematerialized demon.)

Create Fade (Bezariel can create up to four bodyguards. It takes one full day and night to make each Fade. The living body of a supernatural or Awakened creature is required (a werewolf, mage, fomori, etc.; vampires or zombies cannot be used, as they are already dead). The process is exceedingly painful and results in the infusion of certain powers and the removal of all identity and sense of self. Statistics for Fades are listed below.)

Spirit Store (this power allows Bezariel to store the energy from its victims for Baba Yaga. The demon kills the spirit and stores the spirit essence (Power or Gnosis) in a small, glass sphere, which begins to glow once full. It amazed Bezariel that one could simply walk into an Earthly store and purchase hundreds of these valuable glass spheres.)

Detect Essence (Bezariel can detect any spirit nearby that has Power or Gnosis.)

Summon Sword (Bezariel and his Fades can call their swords into existence from nowhere. The summoned sword is very long and thin, averaging five feet in length and one inch in width. In darkness, they glow a pale blue. They are magical and inflict aggravated damage. Bezariel summons a stronger sword than his Fades; his sword does Strength + 4 damage. The sword ceases to exist if dropped or set down, and it cannot be given away. It takes no time to summon a sword.)

Regenerate (Bezariel recovers one wound level per round. He can also soak aggravated wounds with his Stamina.)

**Image:** The most beautiful young man imaginable.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are a master of torture. It is one of the only pleasures left for you. You also enjoy watching others look at you with a mixture of awe and dread. You are dreadful, even more dreadful than they suspect.

You respect Baba Yaga, a creature of evil with a purpose. Perhaps respect is the wrong term. After all, she has the power to kill you, but you will not let that happen.

You always smile your sweetest just as you are about to kill. You are the Blood Angel, the killer with the face of innocence. They have every reason to be afraid...

## *Fades*

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Melee (Sword) 5, Stealth 6

**Health Levels:** Fades do not feel pain of any sort. The result is a Health chart that appears as follows: fine/fine/fine/fine/-1/-1/-1/-3/-3/-3/-5/incapacitated.

In order to kill a Fade, Bezariel must first be incapacitated. Should the Fade reach incapacitated, it will remain so until the next night, when it will arise and begin to regenerate.

**Powers:** Dematerialize, Teleport, Summon Sword

Shadow Meld (a Fade becomes invisible whenever it enters a man-sized or larger shadow; the shadow must be dark.)

Silence (Fades are supernaturally quiet creatures. They make no sound when they walk, and even in combat, no sound is made when a fade strikes a blow.)

Regenerate (Fades recover one wound level per round unless they are in direct harsh light.)

**Note:** Fades are created from the still living bodies of supernatural creatures. They generally have the Physical Attributes of the creature from which they were made. If the base creature has multiple forms, such as a werewolf, it will always appear in its human form and never shapeshift again.

All of Bezariel's Fades are former Get of Fenris Garou. They were unfortunate enough to encounter the demon just after his first visit to Baba Yaga.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You do not speak. You see everything around you. You watch. You wait. When it is allowed, you kill. That is all. To do more is to remember, and to remember is to live it all again. You watch. You wait.

## *The Eyes*

The Eyes keep Baba Yaga informed of everything that goes on. Everything. The Eyes are a group of Baba Yaga's childer and ghouls who are fanatically loyal to her. They are

spread throughout her armies, spying on her followers. They use their powers of information gathering to warn her of any threat. Nothing escapes them. They are supervised by Baba Yaga's own child, Sergei Voshkov, and they are all as ruthless as he is.

Through the use of her Eyes, Baba Yaga keep her people in line and watches her enemies. No one in the world is safe from her spying, least of all the Garou.

## *Sergei Voshkov, The Eye of Baba Yaga*

**Sire:** Baba Yaga

**Clan:** Nosferatu

**Nature / Demeanor:** Fanatic / Autist

**Generation:** 5th

**Embrace:** 1991

**Apparent Age:** 68

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Intimidation 6, Leadership 5, Subterfuge 5, Animal Ken 1, Drive 4, Etiquette 3, Firearms 5, Melee 3, Security 5, Stealth 5, Survival 3, Bureaucracy 3, Investigation 6, Linguistics 5, Occult 1, Politics 5

**Disciplines:** Obfuscate 7, Potence 4, Dominate 4, Fortitude 2, Auspex 4, Celerity 1, Thaumaturgy 1, Animalism 4, Protean 2

**Virtues:** Conscience 0, Self-Control 5, Courage 5

**Humanity:** 1

**Willpower:** 10

**Blood Pool / Max per turn:** 30 / 6



**Image:** An extremely ugly old man who is still in good shape. He hides his face behind an upturned collar, dark glasses and a large hat.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are the childe of one the most powerful vampires on the face of the earth. Your loyalty to your sire is unwavering, because nothing offers you as good an opportunity to wield power as does your current unlife. You are inherently suspicious of everyone who works with you. Only your most trusted agents know anything more than they absolutely need to know. You will allow nothing to stop your dominance of Russia.

**Background:** The shadowy chessboard of Cold War Europe was the stomping ground of many powerful players. In the espionage community, one man bore the mark of distinction. Sergei Voshkov was a premiere KGB agent and easily the most viciously effective spy in the business. With the MI5, the CIA and various other agencies close on his heels, the master spy slid through every obstacle in his way, leaving a wake of disappearances and brutal murders. In an explosive world of brutality and atrocity, Sergei Voshkov was clearly the worst.

Voshkov was already a legendary figure by the late 1980s. Rumors abounded concerning his nefarious exploits. Unfortunately, Sergei never left eyewitnesses capable of relating any information. With the new decade came change—drastic, dreaded change. That damnable Gorbachev kowtowed to the imperialist West and mothballed the mighty KGB. His once powerful vehicle of depravity and terror was no more. Retirement offered little for Sergei Voshkov.

Jaded by his many years in the KGB, little moved Voshkov to emotion. With some difficulty, he retained his dignity when the Hag materialized out of the shadowy corners of his elegant study. In Russia, one hears the tales of Baba Yaga, but that doesn't mean everyone believes them. The stories can be dismissed as Tsarist babble or peasant ignorance, but nothing was going to dismiss the Hag. Voshkov gathered his dignity about him, met her cold malfasant gaze and waited for her deadly iron claws to rend his body.

Instead of an agonizing death, Voshkov received soothing words. She was speaking to him. Her voice permeated his soul with the sound of crushing rocks, but her words gave him purpose. She needed a General, someone loyal to the Rodina. The Mother of Russia called for him to lead the armies of the night, purging the old order and restoring the land to the people. Voshkov's hunger for a purpose consumed him. She offered a new vehicle, despite the horrible cost, that could carry him for eternity. Voshkov became her childe.

Voshkov serves Baba Yaga throughout his travels; he is her Eye. His formidable mortal prowess in espionage and warfare, combined with the supernatural might given him by Caine makes Sergei Voshkov a deadly opponent.

**Quote:** "You cannot hide, comrade. I will always find you."

# The Koshchei

Long ago, early in the war against Gaia, the Wyrms reached into the world to grasp it. The valiant Garou leapt forth as one and gnawed off the Wyrms' hand. The Wyrms screamed and pulled its arm back, withdrawing it through a rift into worlds where the Garou could not follow them. The Garou fell upon the severed hand and tore it to pieces, but they could not destroy it utterly.

As the fingers were bitten off, they squirmed away in different directions, and the Garou split up to chase after them. As each finger was caught and torn some more, the talons came apart. When they touched the ground, they reformed into humanoid shapes, and each one ran off in a different direction. By this time, the Garou were too tired to stay on their trail, and all the talons escaped into the world.

Over the span of the years, the Talons returned to cause trouble. They were primal manifestations of the Wyrms, the physical stuff of its first manifestation in the world of matter, and were thus almost indestructible by any force. But the Garou were able, through great feats and earth magic, to bind them into objects. The Garou still tell the tales of the Talons, scaring cubs around the campfire late at night. They also prepare the cubs for the dreaded days when a Talon might break free of its binding object.

One of the Talons is the Narlthus, the Talon that escaped to the North and terrorized the frozen world. It was finally bound into a star stone fallen from the sky and remains there to this day. However, the stone has come into the hands of the Black Spiral Dancers, who work zealously to free the Talon from its shell. (See *Rite of Passage* for more details.) The Garou say that the Narlthus was the thumb Talon, the claw of the Beast-of-War.

Another Talon, whose name has been forgotten, is carefully guarded by the Sept of Bygone Visions, a Black Fury caern in the Mediterranean Sea. Almost no Garou in the world today knows that it is there, and no one knows which object within the vast horde kept by the sept contains the Talon.

There is debate over the number of Talons; some say there are five, but others argue that, as with dragons, the Wyrms had only four fingers, including the thumb. Regardless, one (or two) Talons have been forgotten by the world.

The final, and in many ways most fearsome Talon, is Koshchei, the First Finger Talon, "He-Who-Points".

As Koshchei escaped into the world, he ran to the East, to the lands that would become Russia. But he was soon found by the greatest of Gaia's children, the Silver Fangs, and they bound Koshchei into a gemstone called the Soul Egg, stopping him from ever travelling the world again.

Time passed, and the world changed. New evil and corruption consumed the lands around Koshchei's egg. Finally, Koshchei felt a summons reach through the darkness, and Koshchei took the offered path and the offered

payment. By the power of Baba Yaga and her betrayal of Gaia, Koshchei the deathless came into the world again.

Koshchei escaped his imprisonment and hurled himself into a battle against Absimiliard, the Nosferatu elder. Although Absimiliard was tired from his battle with the Zmei, Koshchei was not at the height of his powers, having just been released from his entrapment over the centuries.

No one knows the true outcome of that battle. Koshchei was the only one to walk away from it, but rumors say that he and Absimiliard made a deal, a corrupt pact, whereby Absimiliard, who could outlive the earth, would free Koshchei from any successive imprisonment in the years to come. Those who have heard of such a thing shudder to think of this pact, a pact which, if fulfilled, guarantees both the Apocalypse and Gehenna.

Koshchei terrorized Russia for many years, and his legends are still told in tales today. But Koshchei was eventually caught and trapped again by the Silver Fangs and bound again into the Soul Egg.

With the awakening of Baba Yaga, Koshchei has gained a limited form of awareness, though he cannot communicate with the rest of the world. Koshchei knows he is imprisoned, and he knows that Baba Yaga will eventually find him and free him.

If the location of the Soul Egg is discovered, it will still take some time to free Koshchei. However, when he is free, the world is in big trouble. Koshchei is the Talon of the Eater-of-Souls, and as such, he might find a method to resurrect the Consumption Wyrms, which would feed on all the souls of the world. This would be an Apocalypse, indeed.

## Freeing Koshchei

The freeing of Koshchei is almost guaranteed to eventually bring about an Apocalypse by setting off a chain of events that will free the other Talons. The following information is given for the Storyteller, although things should never come to this. It is not advised that the Storyteller allow Baba Yaga—or anyone—to find the Soul Egg. It does not show up on Sense Wyrms or any supernatural senses; it is just a gemstone as far as scrying is concerned.

At any point in the stages below, events can still be prevented by brave Garou and the process can be halted. Pray it is so.

## Stages

### 1. Finding the Soul Egg

The gemstone is in the possession of a small group of Uktena Theurges in Siberia. Their only task is to guard the Soul Gem. They are aware that Koshchei is stirring, although they do know the cause, which is Baba Yaga. It could be too late when they find out. Even the rest of the Uktena do not know where this small sect of Banetenders live, and they will be very hard to find.





## 2. Cracking the Egg

Once the gemstone has been obtained, cracking it is very hard. Once Baba Yaga has it, she can use an ancient spell that only she knows. However, it requires first bathing the stone in the blood of 10 Silver Fang heroes (each of Pure Blood 4 or more). Baba Yaga will overcome this hurdle when the time comes; first, she must find the stone.

There is a second, much simpler, method of cracking the egg, although no one (not even Baba Yaga) knows it. A normal mortal must swallow the gem. This is, in fact, a better method, for no matter how he is freed, Koshchei will need a mortal body to possess. Should the gem be swallowed, he will have one ready.

## 3. Koshchei is Free

Koshchei will need a body. As soon as Baba Yaga has the gemstone, she will search Russia for the perfect body for Koshchei. If this is a werewolf, so be it. The body must be dead, but in perfect condition (freshly dead). When Koshchei is freed from the stone, he will possess the body, and it will become his.

He will still take months to grow to his full power. Nonetheless, he is powerful at all stages. Within the first three months, treat him as a very strong and agile ferectoi. Within the next eight months, his connection to the earth will increase; he will gain the powers of a Wyrn elemental, one every two months, until he commands the abilities of all of them. For the next sixteen months, he will regrow his powers, gaining many Gifts and spirit Charms. At the end of this period, he will reach full power and can no longer effectively be given game statistics.

Should Koshchei be freed without a body, he will take the form of an ugly, short man and will be as weak as a normal mortal. It will take him nine months to grow a ferectoi body and begin the growth stages listed above. During this time, he can be killed easily.

Koshchei can be killed before he reaches full power; he must then begin the process all over again.

## 4. The Empty Egg

Even when free of the Soul Egg, Koshchei is still connected to it. The gem is linked to him in a special way, and anything done to it will affect Koshchei. For this reason, Baba Yaga will hide the gemstone in a carefully guarded place. However, she is afraid that if she kept it on her person, she might lose it. She will hide it in her chicken hut.

Anything done to the gemstone will effect Koshchei, but the gemstone is indestructible, and so Koshchei is deathless. A nuclear blast will not harm the stone, although it would get very hot (uncomfortably so for Koshchei) and radioactive (making him dangerous to others).

Koshchei cannot handle the gemstone himself; if he touches it, he loses his powers for as long as he remains in contact with it. He must trust Baba Yaga to guard it for him.

The only way to ultimately stop Koshchei is to take the gemstone to Malfeas and throw it into the vortex there.

However, once the gemstone enters Malfeas, it will act as a beacon to every Bane there, who will fight to gain the gem themselves. If it can be thrown to the vortex successfully, then Koshchei will be destroyed, regardless of whether he resides in the stone at that time or not.

The gemstone can also be taken to the Abyss, where it will disappear for good—or will it? The Uktena Theurges have debated this for a long time. The Abyss is rumored to be the dormant Eater-of-Souls; if Koshchei is in fact the Talon of the Eater-of-Souls, then throwing the gemstone into the Abyss might be disastrous. No one can say for sure...

### 5. The Chain Reaction

If Koshchei is freed and allowed to gain power, he will begin hunting down and freeing the other Talons. He will find the Narlthus right off, but the others may take him a while. He does not, however, need a powerful rite to free the Talons; he can use his own hands.

Once the Talons are freed, they will begin freeing all manner of Banes (such as the Cataclysm in San Francisco). This activity will probably awaken the sleeping Antediluvians (if they exist). This will bring about one version of Gehenna.

It is not advised that Storytellers let their chronicle get to this point, unless they want to play out one version of the Apocalypse. If the player characters cannot defeat Koshchei during any of the stages, then the Storyteller might want to let them play especially powerful characters for one story, perhaps including the premier Silver Pack of the Garou Nation, who might stand a chance against the Koshchei when others have failed.

## The Vampires

Like the Kindred of Europe, the Russian vampires have organized themselves into strong alliances. However, these organizations have little to do with the Camarilla, Sabbat or Inconnu. Instead, they are loyal to an individual, either Baba Yaga or Durga Syn, or are part of an independent group of separatists.

## Baba Yaga's Forces

Currently, Baba Yaga's forces control most of Russia. They want to isolate Russia from the outside world.

So far, they have managed to gain control over the media. They have prevented any reports of supernatural activity from reaching the western world or from alerting Garou or Kindred outside of Russia to Baba Yaga's plans. *Their control over the media allows them to know many things that happen inside the country.*

They also completely control transportation both into and out of the country, as well as travel within the country. Any Garou, Kindred or mages that try to leave the country suddenly discovers that their transportation will not cross the border. Amazing "coincidences", such as a car throw-

ing a rod or running out of gas, can occur. This is due to the Shadow Curtain.

To ensure that they do not lose their control of the media and transportation, Baba Yaga's forces have been slowly taking over the Russian government by bribing officials and appointing their members to important positions.

## Durga Syn's Forces

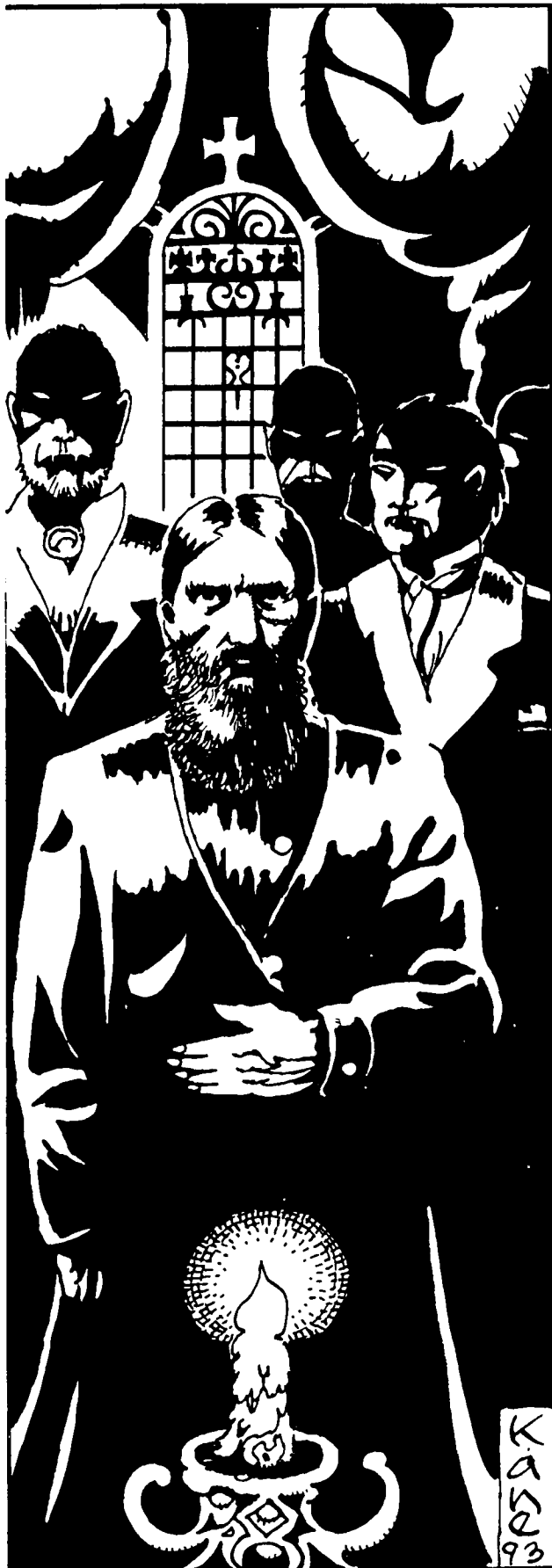
Baba Yaga's main competition for power in Russia is Durga Syn. She has charged her children, the Ravnos, with fighting the forces of the encroaching "Awful Hag". They have been only moderately successful in defeating Baba Yaga's malfeasant horde.

While their illusions are extremely powerful, they are very disorganized. Even with Durga Syn, a powerful leader, the Ravnos are a hard lot to discipline. In addition, their caution and respect for the Land of Russia restricts them from using more destructive methods.

## Separatists

Although the separatists try not to be involved in the war between Baba Yaga and Durga Syn, they really serve the faction that has them under its control. For example, a Ventrue, who was very proud of his independence, served as an infantryman in a skirmish for Durga Syn. He was captured and sent back to the Ravnos for a suicide attack.





Unfortunately, he did not perish immediately, and his vitae sufficed to heal the injured neonates.

Through this Ventrue's fate, they have learned that they are not strong enough to protect their own blood. There is a Russian proverb— "a bird who sits on the fence during a battle gets shot." The Ravnos have found this to be true.

Slowly, the separatists have joined either one side or the other. Their reasons vary, but most either join Baba Yaga to rampage or ally with Durga Syn to hide and hope for a way out of Russia.

## ***Durga Syn***

**Sire:** Unknown

**Nature / Demeanor:** Caregiver / Martyr

**Generation:** 7th

**Clan:** Ravnos

**Embrace:** A.D. 923

**Apparent Age:** 42

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

**Abilities:** Alertness 6, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 4, Intimidation 2, Leadership 4, Subterfuge 4, Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Melee 5, Security 4, Stealth 4, Survival 6, Bureaucracy 2, Investigation 5, Linguistics 6, Occult 4, Politics 2

**Disciplines:** Obfuscate 6, Potence 2, Dominate 4, Fortitude 6, Animalism 6, Chimerstry 6, Thaumaturgy 3

**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

**Humanity:** 7

**Willpower:** 10

**Blood Pool / Max per turn:** 20 / 5

**Roleplaying Notes:** You are responsible for the people of Russia. You must keep them safe from the menace that is Baba Yaga. Even though the Witch's goal is to return magic to Russia, you must oppose her. After the magic has returned, what heinous crimes will the Hag commit? Anything as evil as Baba Yaga must not be permitted to continue its unlife.

**Background:** Long before Baba Yaga entered torpor, long before the forces of Christianity swarmed over the Motherland, Durga Syn served the Mother Goddess and the people of Russia. As she gained wisdom and understanding, she would use her faith to bolster crops in times of draught and ease the cold of the fiercest winters.

Her beauty and power brought Durga Syn to the attention of the ancient hag, Baba Yaga. The Hag was once a former follower of the Mother Goddess, and she schemed to make Durga Syn her servant. Baba Yaga blew her foul, blood-clotted breath upon the land, stunting the crops and ruining the livestock. As Durga Syn struggled to discover the cause of the horrible blight upon the land, Baba Yaga came to her offering the solution. Baba Yaga also offered her the golden apple of wisdom and eternal life. Flattered by the



attention, Durga Syn thanked the Witch for the gracious offer, but said that she could not accept it. Enraged by this slight, Baba Yaga swore to destroy Durga Syn and her

people. The Hag cast a powerful curse upon Durga Syn, sapping her of her beauty and youth.

At Baba Yaga's behest, the armies of the Christians marched over the soil of Mother Russia, crushing the religion of the Goddess beneath their feet. Despite her best efforts, Durga Syn could do nothing to save her Goddess.

The Hag appeared once again to offer her the embrace of immortality. Rather than stand by while a servant of the people was used so cruelly, the Russian Ravnos vampires acted to save Durga Syn from an unlife of servitude to the most vile creature in Mother Russia. Using their predilection for illusions, the Ravnos created a horde of Christian warriors to occupy Baba Yaga's attention. While the Hag dealt with the Christians' attempts at religious conversion, the Ravnos embraced the Durga Syn.

Using her new power to augment her previously potent magick, Durga Syn resisted Baba Yaga's corrupting plans. After Baba Yaga entered torpor, Durga Syn concentrated her efforts on foiling the plans of the Nosferatu.

Quote: "Look past illusion. There you will find truth."



# Chapter Five: Problems and Plots

## Problems

Russia has many problems. The Garou have even more. Like the rest of the world, Russia has pollution. However, the problem in Russia has reached an entirely new scale. Radiation Banes reside near schools. Oil Banes live in lakes of oil many miles across. The Russian environment is one of the worst on the planet. This is the direct result of an ongoing policy of ecocide. If you wish to add a real touch of horror to your game, it should be noted that none of the environmental disasters mentioned in the beginning of Chapter Two are fictional.

Besides the problem with Banes in the area, there are other spirits that roam Russia. The Russian land has long been the home of spirits. In the old days, spirits were of great help to the Garou in keeping the land in balance, but with the spread of pollution in Russia, these spirits have become tainted; many of them now serve the Wyrms.

These are some of the problems the Garou face from day to day. There are also the "regular" problems of Black Spiral Dancers and other Wyrms minions. Russia does, however, have additional problems, many of which are unique.

One such problem is that the caerns of Russia are losing their power. Until recently, no one knew why. This is a great loss to the Garou, because without these places of power, they are at an even greater disadvantage in their war.

The source of these caern drainings is the largest problem presently facing Russian Garou. That source is none other than Baba Yaga. The Garou suspect that she is draining their caerns for power in order to take over the rest of the world. They are only partially correct.

It would appear to casual observers that most the Russian people are all in the thrall of the Wyrms. They have waged an all-out war on their planet, even to the point of dropping atomic bombs on their own soil. This perception of the Russian people as corrupted by the Wyrms is distorted. As with all people, the population of Russia has leaders and, in this case more than most, those leaders are the pawns of the Wyrms.

## Wyrms Devastation

*And not I, Misery, alone, but all my relatives,  
and there is a godly race of them:*

*we are all gentle and insinuating,*

*And he who joins our family will end his days among us!*

—Misery-Luckless-Plight, anonymous Russian poem, 17th century

The following is a list of eco-disasters in Russia and their possible effects on the Russian Garou. The supernatural peril these sites now pose can be the source of many stories. Chapter Two includes a list of the "mundane" eco-horrors.

- The site of the ever popular Chernobyl nuclear power plant is now highly radioactive, and is now the home of



many atomic elementals and radiation Banes. It is also the site of a new Black Spiral Dancer Pit.

- The oil spill in Siberia makes most other oil spills look small. The oil spans an area of almost 28 square miles with an average depth of six feet. It could be considered a lake now. This spill is the result of a rupture in the oil pipeline that runs through the area. The cause of the leak is still unknown.

The oil lake is presently home to one of the largest collections of Banes on the planet. As would seem appropriate, most of these are Oil Banes. However, it is the profusion of other less likely Banes — such as Breeder Banes — that make the area truly an enigma. None know to this date why Banes are gathering there in such numbers.

- The Volga river has always been the lifeline of Russia. It is the primary shipping route, its waters have produced food and humans have worked the river to live. Now the spirits of the mighty river are screaming in agony. The water is now brown with the filth of human waste where clear water once flowed. The fish that are still in the river are not fit to eat. The ones that have been tainted by the Wyrms are even worse. Touching the water of the Volga is risky, although people still work there and even fish there. The water carries numerous diseases in addition to other dangers.

The Garou have been fighting to save this river, but it has done no good. Under the Wyrms' guidance, the river is now home to a great number of creatures that were once

fish, and disease and pollution Banes claim the area for their own. The powerful river spirits that once helped both Garou and humans are now in alliance with the Wyrms, or they are so weak from desecration that they cannot resist corruption any longer.

These are just a few of the environmental Wyrms problems confronting the Russian land and its protectors. The very land of Russia is being defiled by the Wyrms, and the Garou are kept so busy trying to fight it that they are unable to see the larger, coming disaster.

## Vanishings

In the midst of all the problems Russia faces, one that is often overlooked is the frequency of people vanishing. During the communist rule, the KGB was charged with removing all persons considered undesirable. They carried out this task with ruthless efficiency. During the recent turmoil, the number of such vanishings increased greatly. The rate of disappearance has not declined, even though the political situation has stabilized somewhat.

This has not yet come to the attention of the Garou. Many of their Kinfolk are among the missing and this, in and of itself, must soon draw their attention.

The situation is the following: in the time of the communist rule, it was clearly the KGB that was removing undesirables. Now, with the Brujah council gone, the motivating force for the vanishings must be the same force



that ousted them. While it is true that Baba Yaga has, in fact, removed some of the stronger pawns of her opposition, she is not responsible for the mass vanishings that have taken place. Baba Yaga has no reason to make simple peasants vanish.

A few people realize that the power behind the political change is far too busy to bother with such things, suggesting that the cause might be some other agent. This suspected agent is discussed in whispers at the caerns. With watchful eyes, the Garou have discussed the possibility that some of their own people have used the turmoil as a diversion to strike out at the populace of the country. In these whispered conversations, the Red Talons are secretly accused by their brethren of being responsible.

## Drainings

The Sept of the Crescent Moon was buzzing with conversation. A young Garou had recently arrived bearing news important enough that Grimfang, the warder of the caern, had come down from his mountain retreat and spirited the pup away into the cabins of the elders. Word had spread throughout the caern, and most of the Garou had gathered near the moot fires, talking amongst themselves.

Some were mingling, while others stood aloof, keeping their conversations within their own packs. Several Garou who had been at the caern long enough to know noted that all three of Grimfang's chosen packs were present.

Nicolai Predatelski stood somewhat apart from the rest of his pack. Sneering slightly, he surveyed the assembled Garou. Unlike the majority, his pack didn't converse among themselves, but merely maintained an air of superior aloofness.

Tatiana's pack of Black Furies chatted easily among themselves, occasionally casting dark looks at where Nicolai stood. The pack leader, Tatiana, stood out like a sore thumb, as she was easily the most beautiful Garou at the caern.

Closest to the rest of the assembled Garou, Speaker-to-Mountains and her pack looked out of place when compared to Nicolai's or Tatiana's packs. However, when it came to knowledge of the ways of spirits, there were perhaps only one or two Garou at the caern more adept. Speaker herself was deep in conversation with a youngster just out of his Rite of Passage.

The door of the central cabin opened, and Grimfang, wearing Homid form, trundled out. Behind him was Piotr Volk, the Silver Fang leader of the sept, Andrei Bolkowski, the Gatekeeper, and Ivan Sukosin, the Master of the Challenge. The four elders made their way to the fires as conversation died away. When there was silence, Piotr stepped forward. His old but still vital Homid form dwarfed the sinewy, ancient form of the Warder.

In a voice like steel grating on stone, Piotr addressed the assembled Garou. "It fills my heart to see so many of you



interested in news from the world outside our mountain home," he said. "But I fear the news that has been brought is not pleasant words of peace, but grim words of war."

Murmurs swept through the crowd.

Piotr continued, "Our new guest has travelled a great distance to be with us, placing himself in considerable danger. We are fortunate that, unlike some of our brethren, he was able to recognize the better part of valor and flee certain death at the hands of our enemies. This allowed him to come here, and he came bearing knowledge of our foes."

Stepping forward, Grimfang swept his gaze over those assembled. Despite his age, the Warder commanded respect from even the Shadow Lords and Get of Fenris among the gathering. "Our visitor is going to tell his story, and it is a tale of fear. While he is before you, give him the respect you would give Piotr or myself." The old Theurge stepped back as a young homid walked out of the cabin in the company of a nondescript silver lupus, who many recognized as Cries-at-Night.

The newcomer, a young boy, stepped nervously into the light. Cries-at-Night settled down at his feet and gazed around, as if hoping someone would comment disparagingly about the newcomer so as to give her an excuse for violence. No one moved.

Piotr spoke up again, gesturing to the boy. "This is Alexei Petrov. He represents the Stargazers, and it is his story we will hear tonight." The sept leader looked at Alexei expectantly.

Alexei cleared his throat, glanced down as Cries-at-Night nudged his leg, then looked around and slowly began speaking. "I represent the Evergreen Sept, although I might be the last of its members. Only a week ago, I finished my Rite of Passage and became Garou. Following the rite, I was told that it was customary to have a revel. The revel lasted for days, and I may have learned more in those few days than I did on my rite.

"What happened then is confusing. It was almost as if an icy pall had fallen over our hearts. Everything ceased... and then they came.

"I don't know what they were, but they clambered into this world from the Umbra and began to attack. They flew through air and slithered over the ground — they must have been dragons! Other things joined them — vampires, I think, leeches or zombies. I had never seen anything like them. Others appeared, some tearing their way out of the ground itself.

"The initial battle lasted but a few minutes, for many of us were too drunk or tired to fight. We hadn't expected an attack, and we were unprepared for it. I'm certain they had been watching us, for the entire attack was well executed. We never had a chance. Then I saw something that made my blood run cold.

"As the battle raged, I heard a cackling above us. What I saw there allowed the Fox to take me. Not Banes, not vampires — Her! The Baba Yaga! The horrific hag flew

cackling above the battlefield as we fought the invaders. She was borne aloft in a large mortar which she steered with a huge pestle, and I fled from her as I felt her burning eyes light upon me. They pierced me to my soul, and I ran as if the Wyrms itself was on my heels.

"I came back the next day, and there was nothing, no sign that a Garou had ever been at that place. It felt wrong, too, as if the connection to Gaia was gone. The caern had vanished, and my sept vanished with it, so I went searching and ended up here."

Alexei shivered and his head dropped. It was clear that his story was at an end. Cries-at-Night leaned her head against him to comfort him.

Grimfang addressed the gathering, "That is the tale of the Evergreen Sept. I intend to try and contact them, although I doubt I will achieve any success. I suggest we take this pup's tale and learn from it. Whoever or whatever this force is, it is stealing our caerns. They are not content to merely corrupt them — no, they must drain the very essence from them! This must be stopped."

## Communications

*The protection of the USSR state border is very important, an inalienable part of the defense of the socialist Fatherland. The USSR state border is inviolable. Any attempts to violate it are resolutely suppressed.*

— Preamble to the "Law of the Border of the USSR"

The Garou of Russia are loathe to reach to the outside for aid, and in some cases, the Silver Fangs have strictly forbidden any attempts to reach the outside world. However, in areas where the Silver Fangs' hold is not so strong, Garou often attempt to communicate with their kin outside of Russia, or even to leave the country entirely. These attempts are not working. Phone lines have a tendency to go out, as do other communications. Even the Glass Walkers find communications devices non-cooperative. Shortwave radios seem to function normally, but how many Garou are radio operators?

Since the coup, it has become almost impossible for Garou to leave Russia. If they take the normal routes of travel, they are hampered by bureaucracy, flights are cancelled, trains break down, etc. If they go on foot, they are hunted and hounded by spirits at the border; they either die fighting their way out or turn back. Someone or something doesn't want them to leave. Most who try to leave end up vanishing. Those few who have succeeded in crossing the borders inevitably find themselves back in Russia soon afterwards, by some strange coincidence.

It is just as difficult for Garou to enter Russia. The easiest way in is by Moon Bridge. However, travellers will soon discover this to be a one-way trip, as it is impossible to open a Moon Bridge to a location outside of Russia.

Treat all difficulties for travelling into or out of Russia by Moon Bridge as having a 10 difficulty. (Any attempts to

enter or leave should also be roleplayed.) Successfully leaving will result in the character being hunted by persons unknown until she is either killed or returned to Russia. If a Garou enters Russia, she will be watched, especially if she is fairly powerful. The forces guarding Russia's borders are less adamant about supernatural creatures entering Russia than Garou leaving.

The Garou do not know that this situation exists for all beings of supernatural origin. Russia's borders are currently being watched by agents of Baba Yaga. These agents have orders to restrict any and all supernatural beings. Violence is an option, but it is not necessary as long as the message is clear: no one of supernatural heritage will be permitted to enter or leave Russia without special approval. This list includes wercreatures, vampires, mages and fomori.

Baba Yaga enforces this wall, part of her Shadow Curtain, with the aid of mages Blood Bound into her service. Through their magick, amazing coincidences around the borders occur. The Black Spirals also aid the Hag in this by binding spirits to crossroads and along key places through which Garou might try to escape.



## *Introductory Story: Shadow on the Moon*

This is meant as an introductory scene for a chronicle set in Russia. It assumes that the characters are a non-native pack coming to Russia on a mission, unaware that getting out is not as easy as getting in.

This chronicle, like most chronicles and stories set in Russia, is not meant for introductory characters; it is designed for at least Rank Three Garou. Russia is a dangerous place. Many powerful plots take place that will determine the course of the Apocalypse. This story is but the first episode in an ongoing drama.

Welcome to Mother Russia.

### *Setup*

The characters are given the important task of finding out what is going on in Russia. Their elders have entrusted them with the mission of entering the country, finding out what is going on with their Kin and then returning to report. Their findings will determine whether the Garou Nation diverts its attention away from the Amazon War to aid Russia. Nobody knows that the pack may be stuck there for some time.

The characters gather at a caern powerful enough to send a Moon Bridge to the Sept of the Crescent Moons' Ural Mountains caern. The most likely caern would be the Hand of Gaia, at the Finger Lakes in New York State, but the Storyteller is free to use any device that will get the pack to Russia.

If the Storyteller desires, he can give the characters fetishes for their journey as a gift from the elders. They will need all the help they can get.

### *Scene One: London Bridge is Falling Down...*

The Moon Bridge walk seems to take longer than usual. Allow the players some time to get into the lull of endless walking. Once the characters are suitably tired, and reasonably close to their destination, a dark shadow in the shape of a hand comes over the Bridge.

At first, characters will need a Wits + Alertness roll to notice, but the situation soon becomes quite obvious. The clawed shadow wraps around the Bridge and shakes it violently. Everyone needs to make a Dexterity + Athletics roll, difficulty 7, to remain standing.

Finally, the clawed hand pierces the Bridge. The Garou may try to rake it, but it is simply a shadow, a construct of magick, and may not be affected in any way. It continues to crush until it has destroyed the Moon Bridge. Garou must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll, difficulty 6, to avoid being caught in the grasp of the hand as the Bridge crumbles

about them. Anyone who fails must make a Willpower roll, difficulty 8, or lapse into catatonia and the shock of fear as the pack is smothered in the darkness of the void.

As the Bridge collapses, a vista opens up beneath the characters: the ground is several hundred feet below them and their purchase is disappearing fast. All of them begin to fall, even those grasped by the shadow hand, which slowly dissipates, dropping everything in its clutches.

As the characters fall, give the players a hectic scare as the ground approaches fast. Characters with Gifts or fetishes that allow them to fly may use them, but whether they can carry someone else is another matter. Characters suffering from the catatonia inflicted by the shadow hand can do nothing.

Just before they hammer into the ground, the Lune guardian of the Bridge reappears, weak and tattered. It catches the pack with its own semi-materialized form and then dissipates, no longer strong enough to keep itself together. The characters plummet once again.

Thanks to the help of the Lune, their fall has been somewhat broken. They will take only 10 dice of damage when they hit the ground. This damage is aggravated, but soakable.

The pack strikes the ground on the side of a mountain covered with snow. Mountains rise up even higher all about them. These daunting peaks cannot be climbed without equipment. There are no obvious trails off the mountain, but anyone with a successful Perception + Survival roll (difficulty 6) will discover two ledges below, one running to the north, the other to the south. They each require five successes on an extended climbing roll to reach.

## Scene Two

There are two options: the South Trail and the North Trail. Use whichever section applies.

### *The South Trail... The Battle*

After an hour of walking single file along the ledge, the characters come to a break leading to a valley below. The sun went down a half hour ago, but the ledge is no danger as long as the characters take it slowly. Before they reach the break into the valley, characters can make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 9); anyone who succeeds will hear, from far off in the distance, a Call to Succor howl followed soon by an Anthem of War howl.

When they reach the break, they have a vantage point to look into the valley below. There is a battle taking place there. In the clearing, Garou gather in a circle around a central menhir stone, fighting off creatures from all sides. It is obviously a caern under attack, a place in danger of being overrun.

Wyrm creatures of all types run amok on the battle field. Large, multi-headed war Banes crush Garou and seem to ignore their own wounds. Putrid fluids bleed from hundreds of injuries. A pack of Black Spiral Dancers is being con-

tained on one side of the field by Garou, and losses seem to be mounting fast.

At the center of the caern, by the menhir, stands an old Garou defended by the circle of Garou around him. His hands are outstretched and mystical energy crackles around him. His gaze is focused upwards at something, and if characters follow that gaze, they can make a Perception + Alertness roll against a difficulty of 6. If they succeed, they notice something flying across the moon. As the flying shape passes over the moon, a bright light flashes and a howl of defeat is heard below. The old one is impaled on a silver shaft. It runs completely through him and pins him where he stands. Runs-in-Mist is dead.

The Garou below fight on, but now a few of them have frenzied. They tear madly into their enemies and seem to be finally winning.

The characters can try to reach the clearing to aid in the battle. They must roll Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 7) to quickly navigate the snow-strewn, wooded slope. They need 10 successes on an extended roll (three rolls only) to reach the clearing before...

...a chilling roar thunders from the sky. Anyone looking up cannot miss the creature descending from a rift in the Umbra: a dragon. Its snakelike body is huge, and it is held aloft on massive, beating bat wings. Its maw gapes wide, waiting to devour a feast. This is Gregornous of the Great Zmei.

The dark, flying shape flits past the dragon, and streams of energy begin rising from the menhir below. The dragon swallows it up. As its jaws snap shut, everyone can feel the sudden loss of spirit. All Garou in the area feel the draining of the caern as its energy is sucked from the center and into the beast's mouth.

The creature turns away and flies off into the distance, soon lost in the clouds. The dark, flying shape is gone. The Silver Fangs' Howling Wind Caern is no more.

The attack of the Banes and Black Spirals isn't over yet. They sweep in to attack the demoralized Sept of the Howling Wind. They will attack the characters also. Even if they flee, the Banes will pursue as they are spreading out to catch any fleeing Garou.

The Storyteller can now use the scene given for the North Trail below.

### *The North Trail*

Should the characters choose this path, they will walk along a ledge similar to the southern trail. After two hours, the trail ends on a slope, stretching down towards woods. Beyond the trees, a human village can be seen.

They will also see a wounded wolf stumbling towards the woods. It has not noticed them yet, but if they approach it, it will turn around ready to fight. It is Forest-Walker, a member of the Sept of the Howling Wind. She opened a short Moon Bridge (using a Gift) to this spot and escaped the remainder of the battle. She had to run, for clutched in

her Lupus mouth is a wonderful fetish: a Faberge egg containing the soul of Runs-in-Mist, the elder who was struck down in the battle.

When Forest Walker realizes that the characters aren't enemies, she begs them to help her. She explains what happened at the battle and says that she must get the fetish to the Ural Mountain caern, to the north of here, so that Runs-in-Mist's soul can go on to Gaia. She will not say why his soul is in the fetish or why his spirit could not pass beyond on its own. If pressed on the matter, however, she will whisper that Runs-in-Mist had the fetish prepared especially for the battle, for he suspected who their enemy was and anticipated the attack. He believed that, if he was killed, his soul would belong to his enemy; the fetish prevents this, however.

The enemy, of course, is Baba Yaga. She is aware that Runs-in-Mist had discovered true knowledge of her and attacked the caern to kill him. She suspects that he has somehow escaped, though she does not know how. Thus, she has dispatched a pack of Black Spiral Dancers to guard the path to the Ural caern in case survivors try to reach it.

The characters must confront them before they can reach the caern.

## Ongoing Plots

These are simply the introductory scenes of a Russian chronicle. The rest of the story is left to the Storyteller.



There are a few crucial facts to remember: the fetish does contain Runs-in-Mist's soul, and Baba Yaga wants it. It acts as a homing beacon to Banes, and whoever carries it will have to fight to keep it.

The village that the pack can see from the north trail is, in fact, the staging area for the Wyrms used in the battle at the caern. The village is also populated by Silver Fang Kinfolk known to Forest Walker. The Wyrms' minions are in the guise of Soviet military troops on some sort of exercise in the Urals. If the characters are careful enough, they may be able to sneak into the village and gain aid from the Kinfolk.

Another problem is that the land between the Howling Wind Caern and the Sept of the Crescent Moon is the Forbidden Zone, a region of nuclear waste devastation. The accident took place years ago, but who knows what Wyrms' creatures roam this region still? (See Chapter Two: "Eco-Disasters" for more information.)

If the characters can get the fetish to the Ural caern, then Runs-in-Mist's soul can be freed. Before departing, he will tell the Theurges what he knows: Baba Yaga is indeed the new power in Russia, and the Zmei have arisen. Whether the Silver Fangs actually believe this, they will, nonetheless, be hesitant to act. They will want to send the characters off on fact-finding missions to discover if this is indeed true. As exasperating as this inaction is, it will give the pack a good chance to explore the plots seething in Russia.

## Complications

The following complications can be added to the story.

**Lost in unknown woods:** Forest Walker loses consciousness from her wounds and cannot guide the characters directly to the caern. They must choose a direction and hope it is right.

**Combat draws crowds:** The fighting has drawn the attention of the local authorities. The characters will be questioned about what they know, where they are from, why they don't speak Russian and where their passports are. This will bring them to the attention of the vampire in charge of the authorities.

**Another pack lost:** The group encounters another group of foreign Garou in much the same situation, or so it seems. However, these foreign Garou also speak fluent Russian. In fact, they are working for Baba Yaga and waiting the proper moment to strike.

**Umbra rift:** The characters encounter the results of the stress placed on the Gauntlet by the Zmei. There is a tunnel into the Umbra itself. The Gauntlet has a rating of zero, but the area is Wyrms-tainted. On the other side of the tunnel, the characters will encounter what appears to be a Glen. All the spirits, although not obviously Wyrms-tainted, are dishonest and will lie to the pack. They are just pretending to be kind. The tunnel is only temporary.



**Eavesdropping:** The pack encounters a group of enemies (Black Spiral Dancers, vampires, etc.) discussing plans for an upcoming attack on the Sept of the Crescent Moon at the Ural caern. This can put some suspense into the story, as the characters must get to the caern quickly and warn them. Whether or not the plans for attack are legitimate is up to the Storyteller.

## Forest-Walker

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Tribe:** Silver Fang

**Nature / Demeanor:** Lone Wolf / Confidant

**Attributes:** Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6), Charisma 3, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 4 (3/0/4/4), Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Primal-Urge 2, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Leadership 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Enigmas 1, Investigation 1, Medicine 2, Rituals 3

**Backgrounds:** Pure Breed 2

**Gifts:** (1) Inspiration, Smell of Man, Speed of Thought; (2) Jam Technology, Messenger's Fortitude; (3) The Great Leap

**Rank:** 3

Rage 4, Gnosis 8, Willpower 9

**Rites:** Rite of Cleansing, Talisman Dedication, Open Bridge

**Image:** Forest-Walker is a tall, slender, dark-haired woman. Her dark eyes are very expressive and tend to show not only her intellect, but also her sorrow and despair. In *Lupus*, she is a lanky brown wolf with black markings and a black mask.

**Roleplaying Notes:** You do not have time to argue with these newcomers; they must help you and that is all there is to it. Anything less than that is unacceptable.

**Background:** Forest-Walker has lost her pack in the battle and is now alone. Even Runs-in-Mist, her mentor, is gone. If her life has any purpose now, it is to ensure that Runs-in-Mist's soul is delivered safely to the Theurges of the Crescent Moon Sept.

## Story Springboards

Presented here are some story ideas for use in an ongoing Russian chronicle. They can be adapted for play with new characters or experienced Garou.

### Suffering School

The pack encounters a child obviously suffering from a Wyrn-oriented affliction. The child is sickly and misshapen, with signs of a beginning deformity. She lacks energy — she doesn't even laugh — and if viewed from the Umbra, she will appear to be riddled with tiny worms.

After investigation, and a little leg work, the pack will find that the child's school is located on a waste dump. Chemical and radiation Banes rise up to lay their corruptive seeds into the children. Several children have already been infected.

To save the children, the pack must journey into the Umbra and combat the Banes surrounding them. However, even this will not completely cure their affliction: the rot has been planted deep in their spirits.

Only a journey to the Atrocity Realm, in the Near Umbra, can ultimately save them. However, getting from Russia to that realm is almost impossible; the Scar must be reached first (see Chapter Two: Stepping Sideways). In the Atrocity Realm, there is an emanation reflection of the children's school. It is a disgusting place, where classes are taught by cruel Banes rather than kind teachers. Emanations of children cry as the Bane teachers swat them with rulers.

The Breeder Bane that laid the seeds of corruption rests in a pond of chemical slop in the basement of the school. If it can be destroyed, then the corruption will leave the children.

But the corruption will not leave the school, for it rests on corrupt ground. It must be torn down, and the ground must be burnt before the blight will fully leave the area.

The corruption continues even deeper, stretching back to the government level, where the decision was made to build the school on the waste dump. If the characters are





crafty enough, they can find files in the Atrocity Realm school office that will lead them to the real perpetrators. But even this will ultimately lead them to more levels of shadowy evil, and eventually to the source itself: the Seventh Generation. (See *Umbra: The Velvet Shadow* for details on the Atrocity Realm, and *Rage Across New York* for details on the Seventh Generation.)

### *Isn't That...?*

The Garou are minding their own business for once when they see a group of people they recognize as Shadow Lords. These Shadow Lords are known followers of Typhon. The Shadow Lords, not noticing the pack, shift to Crinos, as do their previously unrecognized traveling companions: two Black Spiral Dancers.

At this point, the pack has several options. If they sit and watch, they see the Shadow Lords and Black Spirals enter a building where political reform talks are taking place. Soon, screams and panic ensue as the Delirium causes the humans to go nuts. The Shadow Lords use the confusion to kill a known and popular reform figure.

If, at any time, the pack chooses to involve themselves, the Shadow Lords will respond by welcoming them or, if the characters attack them (rightly so), they will attempt to kill them. Somewhere in all the confusion, the Black Spirals disappear.

If they wait and tell others what happened, the Shadow Lords will have only one thing to say in defense, "Typhon told us to do it." Any further accusations will have to be resolved at the Thunderstrike Sept. The Shadow Lord judges of that sept accept the Typhon excuse as valid, and criticize anyone who doesn't agree, claiming "spiritual persecution". The "guilty" pack will be found without Wyrms taint.

If the characters further investigate, the Black Spirals will try to kill them, as will the Shadow Lord pack. If they survive this gauntlet of attacks, they may discover clues that Typhon has been corrupted and is serving the enemy. What the pack does then is up to them, but trying to get the rest of the Garou to believe this without proof will be almost impossible.

If the pack can provide definitive proof of Typhon's corruption, then the retaliation against the Shadow Lords will be dire indeed, ruining their political future in Russia for some time to come. However, since many Shadow Lords who are not allied with Typhon are joining the hunt, the ruination will be mitigated somewhat.

### *The Sleeper Awakens*

The characters are sent to check on the resting place of a powerful Wyrms creature, something the elders called a Zmei. The elders were awfully closed mouthed about it; they just said to check on it.

The pack travels past the arctic circle to the Taimyr Peninsula and arrives in time to see the end of the rite

which wakens the sleeping body of Goluko, one of the Great Zmei. It immediately devours the two Black Spiral Dancers who led the rite. The other six Black Spirals all flee. It then notices the pack of characters. Now it's time for dessert.

Luckily, Goluko is weak. Describe how the Zmei is shrugging off the effects of his long sleep. His stats are all halved for the next five turns. For five turns after that, his difficulties will all be at plus two. After this, though, he will be fully awake and possess his full powers and abilities.

The window of opportunity allows the pack an opportunity no other Garou will have: the chance (although slim) to kill a Zmei. The problems are as follows: Goluko is 60 yards away; it will take characters at least a turn or two of running to reach him. Characters can, of course, use ranged weapons.

If the characters can even knock Goluko down to half his Health Levels by the time 10 turns have passed, he will flee rather than fight. In this way, the characters may at least survive and have one hell of a tale to tell.

#### **Renown for Killing the Zmei:**

If the characters can actually kill a Zmei, they will become quite famous among the Russian Garou. Renown awards are as follows:

Goluko — 8,000 Glory

Gregornous — 6,000 Glory (possible Wisdom if any cunning or trickery was involved)

Illyana — 5,000 Glory

Rustarin — 7,000 Glory

Shazear — 5,000 Glory

Trevero — 9,000 Glory

### ***Putting Down the Zmei***

The only other chance to stop the Zmei is to perform the same rite on them that was done long ago by the Silver Fang heroes. However, this rite is largely forgotten (even by the Uktena, who used it as late as the turn of the century).

The pack discovers a clue leading to one who knows the rite: a Siberakh. They must find her and convince her to teach them the rite. Her village is in a far eastern section of Siberia and may take a long time to find. The pack's only hope to get a Wendigo to lead them there, but first they must convince the Wendigo of their just intentions. This will require undergoing a test for them, such as retrieving a fetish in the Umbra, which would mean risking a confrontation with one of Baba Yaga's or the Wyrms' minions. If they can successfully retrieve the fetish, the Wendigo will lead them to the Siberakh village.

From there, they must convince the Siberakh to help them. She, too, will require a test of some sort, but this one will be more mentally trying. They must solve a riddle or puzzle before she will reward the rite. Once they get the rite, they must swear not to say where they learned it. They must not even speak of the existence of the Siberakh.



Now, the pack must confront a Zmei and perform the rite. This is the really hard part.

## *The Rite of Dragon Binding*

**Level: 5**

This rite requires at least three participants: a Warrior, a Defender and a Ritemaster. The Warrior (there can be more than one) attacks the Zmei to distract it while the rite is being performed. The Defender (again, there can be more than one) defends any attacks against the Ritemaster so her concentration is not broken; the Ritemaster must put total faith for her safety into the Defender's hands.

Finally, the Ritemaster (there can be only one) performs the rite. She must make an extended roll of Wits + Occult against a difficulty of 7. She needs 23 successes. One roll can be made every turn if the Ritemaster is undisturbed. A botch at anytime means the rite must be started all over again (often fatal, considering the enemy). If the Ritemaster is wounded at anytime, the rite can still continue, but the Dice Pool is lowered as per the Health chart.

During the rite, the Zmei, who knows very well what's going on, will try to take out the Ritemaster, devoting all its action towards getting to her. This is why the Warriors and Defenders must be willing to give up their lives to protect her.

One thing which would aid greatly in this task is the blood of heroes: a Silver Fang with a high Past Life. If one

of the characters fits this description, the Storyteller may allow her to channel an ancestor who put the Zmei down long ago. The Storyteller should only allow the roll when in sight of the Zmei, and then the difficulty is 9. The Storyteller must decide which role the ancestor played: Warrior, Defender or Ritemaster. Each success will allow the character one extra die for various actions against the Zmei:

**Warrior:** add dice to Brawl, Melee or damage (you know a weakness in the Zmei's scales).

**Defender:** add dice to Stamina or Initiative (you can anticipate its actions and act first).

**Ritemaster:** add dice to Occult.

These extra dice can increase a character's Attributes or Abilities past their normal maximums.

If the rite is successful, the Zmei will howl a scream of rage and frustration, only to be cut off in mid-howl as it sinks deep into the earth, frozen in a magical slumber. Nothing (short of a nuclear blast) can release it; even Baba Yaga's magic cannot undo the rite until "ten generations have passed from the earth" (at least 500 years).

It is important to choose the site of the rite carefully, for it will become the burial site of the Zmei.

## *Luring the Zmei*

The characters will probably have to lure a Zmei to the desired site. This can be tough, as they are rarely encoun-





tered without one of Baba Yaga's other armies (such as the Black Spirals of the Army of War).

If the Storyteller decides to run this story, then he should give the pack some help, in the form of other Garou who will distract the Armies while the players take on the Zmei. (The mass combat rules from *Rage Across the Amazon* can be useful for staging a battle in the background.)

If it is still too tough, then one option is for Grimfang, the elder of the Urals caern, to take the part of Ritemaster, allowing the players to get down and dirty with the Zmei. Although the pack's ritualist should eventually learn the rite, the final lesson might be a demonstration by Grimfang.

#### Renown for Binding a Zmei:

In addition to the Glory awards below, characters can also gain Wisdom or Honor, depending on their actions during either luring the Zmei or binding it.

- Goluko — 5,000 Glory
- Gregornous — 4,000 Glory
- Illyana — 3,000 Glory
- Rustarin — 5,000 Glory
- Shazear — 3,000 Glory
- Trevero — 7,000 Glory

### *Who's Buried in Lenin's Tomb?*

The pack hears a strange rumor from a Glass Walker: Lenin is allegedly a vampire. The Glass Walker is normally a reliable source, and certain facts make sense in this light. Why doesn't Lenin's body decay? Oh, they claim there is a "secret potion" which preserves him, but no one has seen this potion or the formula. Does the pack investigate?

Getting into Lenin's tomb at night will be tough, as it is located in Red Square and guarded. If the characters manage to find their way down the granite stairs into the red and gray mausoleum, they can see the remarkably preserved body of Lenin enclosed in a crystal case.

They will see a man in a lab coat walk to the case. In his hand is a bottle: the famous "secret potion" used to preserve Lenin's body. If the pack is hiding, he will proceed to open the case and apply the salve to Lenin's exposed hands and face. When he is through, he will leave the way he came.

If he notices the pack, he is startled and tries to hide the potion. If the characters are in Crinos, he is immune to the Delirium. He will tell the werewolves that he just wants to be left alone. If pressed, he will tell the following story: he is Andrei Zenkovsky, a member of the Society of Leopold, an organization devoted to destroying vampires. He has infiltrated the vampire power structure and managed to become a trusted retainer of one of the vampires. He is

entrusted with the duty of applying the potion to Lenin's body, a potion which is made from vampire blood, along with other preservatives.

He then realizes that this chance meeting with the pack is the opportunity he has been waiting for, the chance to destroy the ruling vampires. He will try to gain the pack's aid in an assault the following night on a Ventrue. He will give the characters the address to the vampire's house outside of Moscow, where a dinner party will be taking place. He will help them to infiltrate the house and kill the vampire.

However, Andrei is actually the ghoul of another vampire, a Toreador who now serves Baba Yaga. He has been waiting for an opportunity to kill the Ventrue, a potential enemy of Baba Yaga. Andrei and his Toreador master will both be at the party, and Andrei will make sure that his Toreador master has a reason to leave the room (and his house) before he helps the Garou in their assault.

If the character let Andrei leave Lenin's Tomb without confronting him, he will not return to reapply the liquid for another month. If they follow him, the path leads to the All Union Scientific Research Institute of Medical and Aromatic Plants. There, in Andrei's guarded office, they can discover the ingredients which make up the secret potion.

There is a veritable alchemical workshop. In a refrigerator, inside a jar marked "V", is the vampire blood.

Investigating the trail further will require either an expert shadowing of Andrei over a period of days or a good spy network. If either of these are possessed, the Garou can trace Andrei back to his Toreador master, an old Boyer prince.

## *Lupus Mysteries*

The vast, unexplored forests of Siberia offer many chances to discover mysteries of nature as yet undiscovered. Much of this region is untouched by humankind; who knows what things of old may still reside here, untouched since the world was young? What laws of nature are different here?

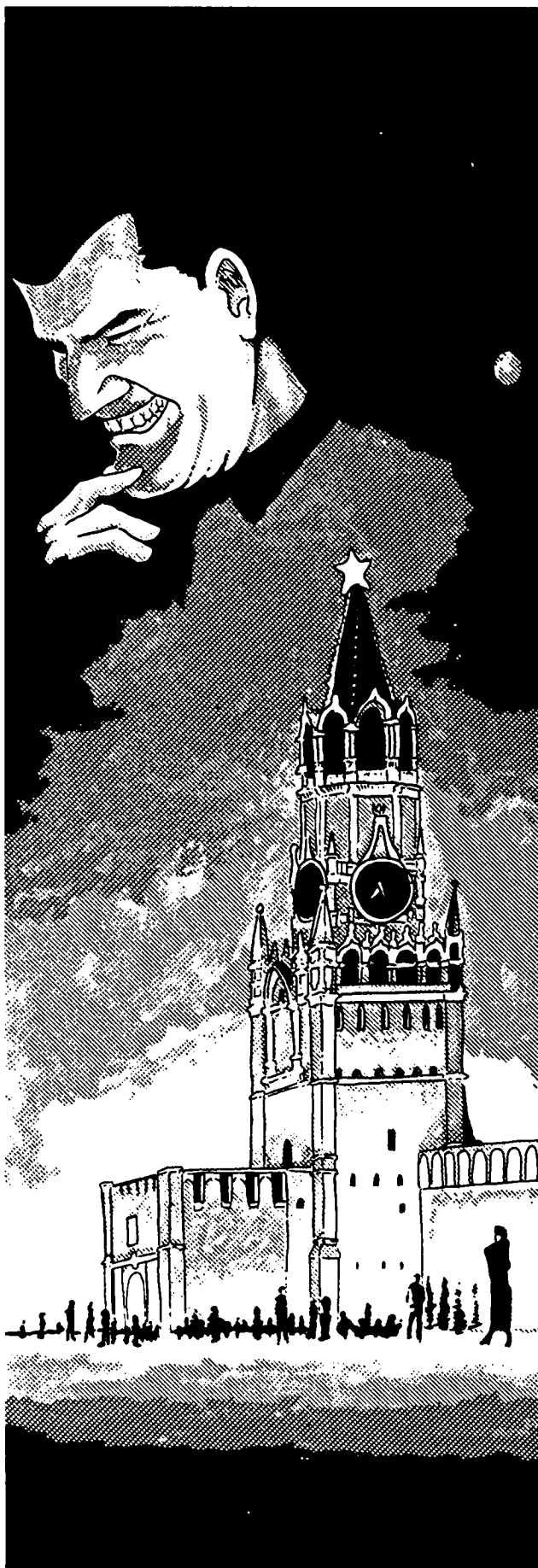
The Red Talons live closest to these woods, and they may know many lupus mysteries unknown to other tribes. This is a good setting for an all-lupus game, where characters can adventure into the primeval forest to unravel enigmas, uncover wonders or fight off humankind's encroachment into this secretive land.

*Ways of the Wolf* gives some ideas for lupus chronicles.

## *Historical Tales*

Russia's medieval history is rich with legend, epic and royal pageantry. It would be a shame not to use it in a game. There are many possibilities:





**Historical Chronicle:** This chronicle takes place entirely in the past, where characters try to ensure the Wyrms doesn't get into Russia. They can be Silver Fang heroes, Bone Gnawers serfs, Glass Walker merchants, etc.

**Mythic Chronicle:** This can take place in the far past of Russia, even back to the Impergium. The characters can be the first heroes to stop the Zmei, or they can be Bogatyr's fighting against Baba Yaga.

**Past Life Stories:** Past Lives intrude on the Garou when they least expect them. Past Lives can be used to provide flashbacks in the game, allowing the characters to play their ancestors in vital moments of history, giving them a visceral feeling for the past. Fight with your ancestors against the Zmei, ride in the army of Alexander Nevsky, rush through the streets with your father's Bolshevik friends in the Revolution, or attack Nazi hordes with your mother's partisan fighting force. The options are endless.

## The Final Word

### Outmaneuvered, Outnumbered and Outclassed

by George "Hucky" Neal

I have experienced the following scenario multiple times, and each time it has resulted in the disruption of an otherwise very good game.

Player 1: "Wait a second, I just hit that thing for more damage than I can take, and you say it's not hurt?!"

Player 2: "Yeah, the same thing just happened to me. We can't hurt it — what's the point? We go through all this trouble and we're gonna die"

Player 3: "Yeah, this sucks." (Followed by laughing)

Storyteller: "Look guys, those are the stats the thing has. That's the way it works, and that's how I'm running it."

The problems here are too numerous to count, but the biggest one is a problem with frustration. When characters feel frustrated for long periods of time, they often start to dislike the game. This can be a potential problem with *Werewolf*, where the mood of the game is set deeply in a sense of futility even in success.

There are a number of ways to deal with it, but in my games I have found the following methods work exceptionally well. I present them for you to look over. Find the ones that suit you best.

One trick is to simply reward people who don't get so wrapped up in the situation that their frustration overwhelms them. If you aren't trying to set a very serious tone for your game, this method works well. However, it can lead to abundant silliness if everyone finally says "ah, what the hell, it's just a game," followed by really silly actions on behalf of player and/or character.

If you wish to maintain the flavor and seriousness of the game, something a little more complicated is often neces-



sary. One thing you may wish to try is to keep the things the characters want to fight away from them. It adds to the frustration, yet it keeps them from feeling that you wantonly slaughtered them. If they keep having to pursue it to fight it, then clearly they want whatever it can dish out.

Along the same lines is the concept of the recurring powerful bad creature. This is fairly standard stuff, but it works. The important part here is to give the characters some say in what happens. For example, if all the thing ever does is attack them, wait for them to attack it, and so on, it's no fun. However, if they deal with it for a long time only to find out it that it betrayed them, insulted everything sacred to their pack and shot their dog... then that's a villain!

The point is, when dealing with powerful characters controlled by the Storyteller, make the players hate the creature enough that they'll go to the ends of the earth just to find out how to hurt it. Entire stories can be built around trying to find a way to kill one thing (see "Putting Down the Zmei" in the story ideas above).

It is important with the recurring villain to have him do just that—recur. Periodically, it should show up and mess with your group, preferably at a time when they feel high and mighty. Have them return home after killing the third-in-command of the bad guys only find a dead body (a girlfriend, mentor, dog, etc.) and a note from their foe saying, "You may have won this round, but I will exact my price." Whatever works is fine, just make sure they never feel apathetic about your villain.

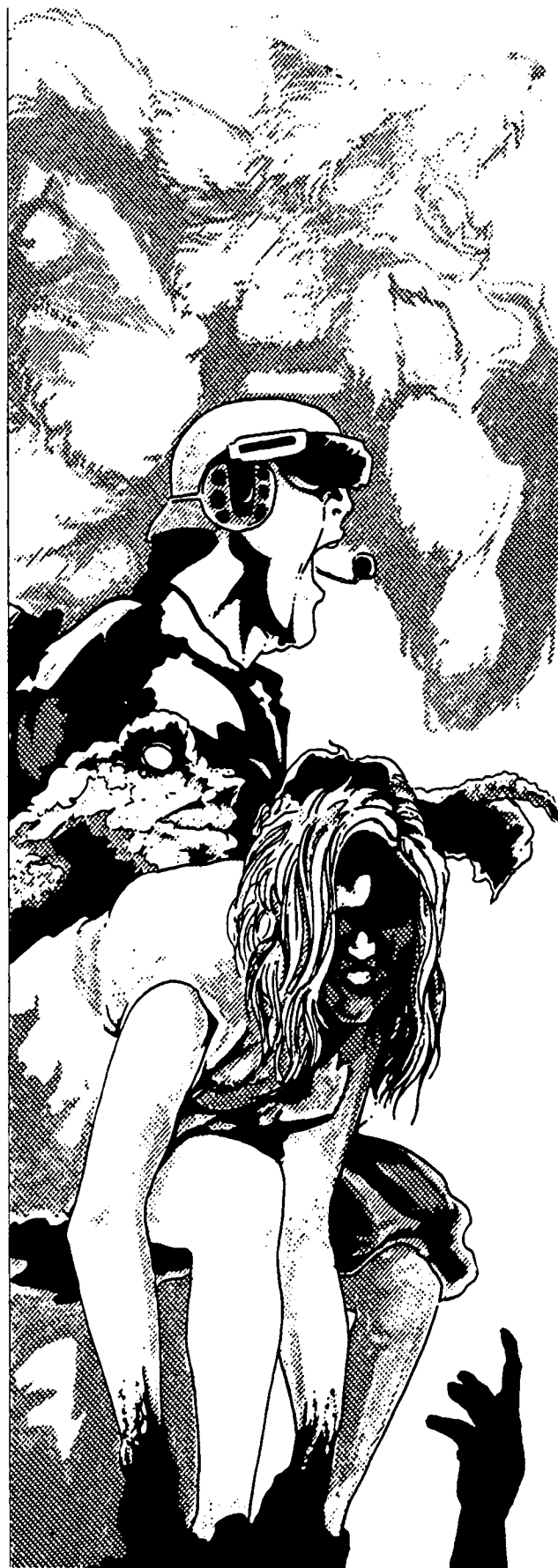
I am also rather fond of planning my stopping points. No matter what happens in my games, I end a session in a situation where the characters are foaming at the mouth to find out what happens next. The cliffhanger ending is a bit trite, but it produces results.

Let players have some kind of clue what they're getting into. If you have a powerful character that they are going to run into that is hostile to them, give them some kind of notice. Have them walk up on it as it rips off the arms of the local Get of Fenris Ahroun or something like that. Subtle methods like stories around the fire and whatnot will work as well, just as long as they don't go into the situation feeling like you baited them into a death trap. If they don't take the hint, then their character's deaths are not on your hands.

The last piece of two-bit wisdom is that powerful creatures should be consistent and believable. A master chess player is not likely to go head-to-head with a pack of werewolves he knows he can't beat. It is frustrating to have opponents handed to you on a silver platter. Clearly, on occasion, the "god in the machine" has her moments, but they should be few and far between, never eclipsing the characters. Should the characters get themselves into a position where you feel like you should pull them out, even though they did it to themselves — make it hurt!

For example, imagine you're in the midst of battle, surrounded by the members of your pack. You're heavily wounded, and your pack is losing. An evil totem spirit hovers above your head. As your warriors are falling, the





totem decides to revel in its power. A voice calls to you. "For your help, though it was unknowingly given, I shall keep you alive this time, but when next we meet, no quarter shall be asked or given." Then the totem sucks the life force from an ally of yours to use as energy for keeping you alive. You've been pulled out of a deadly situation... but at a price.

There are a lot of powerful creatures in Russia, and most of them are hostile to your characters. Providing your characters with a goal, no matter how small, and a sense that they can possibly achieve it (even if the odds are impossibly long) will usually be enough to keep the players going. If it is not, well, try something new!

Safety is for those afraid to live and afraid to die.

## The Final, Final Word

by David Key

There is much afoot in Russia. The Wyrms rear their heads in places once believed to be free of corruption. Baba Yaga, the great witch of legend, stalks the Motherland, consuming those who would oppose her. All seems hopeless, for how can the Garou fight against such a menace?

It is important that the horror of this situation is felt. Without that, the story becomes nothing more than a combat game. That's not what this book is about, although, at first, that is how *Rage Across Russia* might appear. Most of the villains in this book are epic in scope; defeating even one of them is the subject of a chronicle, or at least a long story. They are powerful, and directly assaulting them should be pointless. The majority of them must be outwitted or tricked, and only then can the characters pass on to the next level to confront the evil lurking even deeper below the surface.

Consider also that not all of these characters are necessarily enemies. For example, the Gangrel Viktor is sympathetic to the plight of the werewolves, even though his loyalties lie with the Hag. An interesting story could deal with trying to convert him, or at least tricking him into sinking into torpor and getting out of everyone's hair.

Back to the concept of situational horror: how would you feel standing on the befouled bank of the Volga River, or watching cancerous fish swim in the Baltic Sea? What would cross your mind as you saw the victims of Russia's terrible pollution? Sickly children and dying adults are the legacies of the rapid industrialization of the Communist Era. There is no supernatural villain dishing out toxins to the hapless world like a cook in a cafeteria line, but there is horror. True, it is not the horror of confronting the Great Old One at the culmination of a Lovecraft Story, but it is, in some sense, more real.

A sense of situational horror may be found in the following scenario: in an area where the toxins of the Wyrms tend to kill rather than corrupt, and where the Banes have long since departed, a pack of Garou find themselves assisting a group of humans trying to eke out a living. As the humans die without the Garou being able to save them, or

even fight the force that is killing them, the horror of the situation becomes obvious. The Garou are fighting a hopeless battle. Or is it? What could the pack do to help the humans?

The solutions to situational horror are generally far less obvious than the players expect. The key is to build the situation so that success appears to be impossible without actually being impossible.



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# Appendix: Spirits of Streams and Fields, Hearths and Homes

*"It is best to ask the chair for permission before sitting down."*

—Old Russian Proverb

The Russian people have long believed in spirits. Their lore is some of the richest in the world for stories about spirits, and with good reason. Russia is strong in magic, and this mystic strength is linked to its spirits. Russian spirits inhabit everything from trees and streams to bath houses. The Russian spirits are strong and, in many cases, are able to effect the world around them. These spirits have not always been kind and helpful, but they have always been there.

The current state of many of these spirits deeply bothers Garou Theurges. Where once they could call upon great water spirits to assist them, now their calls go unanswered, or Wyrms-tainted spirits rise instead. Where once the Umbra shook with the power of moving elementals, now those same spirits are harried or unresponsive. As the land was stripped of its power, so were the spirits tied to it.

On the few occasions when a powerful spirit is found, it is clear the price of its power was subservience to the Wyrms. Now powerful water spirits move to drown unwary Garou,

and pups are told of the dangers of the Umbra, not of the allies to be found there.

The Russian Garou know and deal with many types of spirits. Most of these spirits are more neutral than friendly or hostile, at least in the case of those that have not been touched by the Wyrms. Those that have been tainted, especially the Leshii and the Morozhko, are capable of wreaking a great deal of devastation. A creative Storyteller can have a great deal of fun fooling the players when they have to deal with a Russian spirit. Few things are what they really appear to be, and anything can be corrupted by the Wyrms. The world is unpredictable: many things believed to be corrupted by the Wyrms are actually untainted.

These are not the only spirits in the Umbra over Russia. Banes, Weaverlings and Wyldlings may be found as well.

(Note: Some of these creatures can be used as ghosts or faeries, but for ease of play, all mechanics are listed for Werewolf. The Occult ability might be useful for predicting the behavior of these "spirits".)



*Bannik*

## *Bannik*

Rage 5, Willpower 8, Gnosis 8, Power 20

**Charms:** Materialize, Airt Sense, Invisibility, Prophecy

In Russian folklore, the Bannik were spirits of the bath houses; they regulated bathing times and the number of bathers inside. They were skilled at prophecy. When materialized, a Bannik, much like other spirits of the household, appears as a small, dark, hairy creature. Generally, they are attired in peasant garb. Banniks will often be found in the company of a Leshy, especially if bathing times have been violated. If this is the case, the Bannik and the Leshy will materialize and attack the unfortunate violator.

## *Bolotnyi*

Rage 8, Willpower 8, Gnosis 9, Power 40+

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Materialize, Swamp Sense (similar to Forest Sense, but works only in swamps), Cleanse the Blight, Shapeshift, Control Swamp (see the new Charm: Control Forest), Reform

In Russian folklore, the Bolotnyi is the spirit master of the swamps and often lives in the taiga. They are virtually identical to the Leshii in power and appearance. However, the Bolotnyi are more swampy in appearance.

## *Domovoi*

Rage 5, Willpower 8, Gnosis 8, Power 20-40 (depending on the size and cleanliness of the household it protects).

**Charms:** Materialize, Reform, Airt Sense, Invisibility

The Domovoi is a house spirit, the overseer of domestic activities. It is generally beneficial. The Russians believed that keeping the Domovoi happy was essential to the good workings of the household (they are occasionally the ghosts of former family heads). A Domovoi lives in an oven, and will leave if the fire in the oven goes out. He usually appears as an ancient peasant with a long gray beard, or a wretched, gray old man wearing a blue shirt. A female Domovoi is known as a Domikha and is the wife of the Domovoi. Families would often take the embers from the oven of an old house when they moved, so as to bring along the Domovoi. Intruders in a house occupied by a Domovoi will always be attacked.



*Leshii*



**Ovinnik**

## **Dvorovoi**

Rage 7, Willpower 8, Gnosis 8, Power 30

**Charms:** Materialize, Shapeshift (the Dvorovoi can turn into a cat at a cost of 3 Power points), Invisibility, Paralyze

These are similar to the Ovinnik, but inhabit yards or barns. The Dvorovoi was capable of changing into a cat and paralyzing intruders. It appears as a small, dark-haired man with burning red eyes. Despite appearances, the Dvorovoi is one of the various spirits that protects households from thieves or intruders.

## **Leshii**

Rage 8, Willpower 8, Gnosis 9, Power 40+

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Materialize, Reform, Forest Sense, Cleanse the Blight, Shapeshift, Control Forest

A Leshy (plural: Leshii) is the spirit master of a forest. It can shapeshift and alter its size from only a few inches in height to the size of a giant. A Leshy's appearance varies with the area it guards. It can appear as a big walking tree in a forest (like one of Tolkein's Ents), as a brown-skinned, green-haired bestial man on a plain (like a Glabro), or even as a giant on a mountain.

They possess a number of powers over the forest as well as any advantage a particular shape might give them. The Crinos form of the Garou is not beyond their ability.

A female Leshy is known as a Lesovikha.

## **Lugovik**

Rage 6, Willpower 7, Gnosis 9, Power 40

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Materialize, Prophesy

The Lugovik are the spirit masters of Russian meadows. They are virtually identical to the Polevoi; they are actually slightly weaker, transplanted versions.

## **Morozhki**

Rage 10, Willpower 8, Gnosis 6, Power 30

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Materialize, Frozen Breath (cost 1 per die of damage)

The Morozhki are Frost Demons. They are often touched by the Wyrms, but not always. When materialized, they appear as 15 to 20 foot tall creatures with frosted, mangy white fur. A Morozhko has red eyes and lips, long ivory claws at the end of gnarled fingers, and large canines jutting from his lower jaw. When materialized, his teeth and claws do aggravated damage. They are as prone to frenzy as Garou are. They can also spend Rage for extra actions.

## **Ovinnik**

Rage 7, Willpower 8, Gnosis 8, Power 30 (+1 per gift received in the past month)

**Charms:** Materialize, Shapeshift (the Ovinnik can turn into a cat for 3 Power points), Invisibility, Paralyze

Ovinniki typically inhabit barns or grain stores, protecting them from thieves and intruders in return for gifts. Intruders are subject to a gaze attack that induces paralysis. A materialized Ovinnik can shapeshift into a cat as well as its normal form. An Ovinnik generally appears as a short, dark, hairy humanoid being. They hate white horses, and if one is ever brought into its barn, the horse and master would immediately be subject to a violent attack.

## **Polevoi**

Rage 7, Willpower 7, Gnosis 9, Power 40

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Materialize, Prophesy (the Polevoi can see more clearly into the future than most spirits and can deliver more accurate predictions).

The Polevoi were the spirit masters or guardians of the fields. They are oracle spirits, able to perform divinations of possible futures. They appear as humanoids formed of rich, blackened soil and have grass or weeds growing from their heads and bodies. They will assist anyone who pays them tribute: simply give one a crowless cock and several eggs. They are so fond of this gift that they will attack anyone who would harm the person giving tribute.

*Polevoi's picture on page 124*



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## Polevoi

### Rusalka

Rage 8, Willpower 8, Gnosis 8, Power 30 (+ 5 per victim)

**Charms:** Siren Song, Airt Sense, Materialize, Reform, Life Drain

The Rusalki are powerful, dangerous ghosts, usually from the spirit of a drowned maiden. Much like a siren, a Rusalka will lure men to it with song. They are sometimes bound to a tree near the water's edge where they died. They appear as young female humans who obviously died from drowning. Rusalki are often clothed in water-damaged peasant garb. Their eyes betray their hunger for the life they have lost. The majority of Rusalki are creatures of the Wyrms.

### Vodianoi

Rage 8, Willpower 7, Gnosis 6, Power 40 (+ 5 per victim)

**Charms:** Materialize, Reform, Shapeshift, Airt Sense

The Vodianoi of folklore were half-demons. However, the Garou know them as foul-tempered water spirits, often tainted by the Wyrms. They require flesh for sustenance. Vodianoi will sometimes materialize to drown victims. In its natural form, a Vodianoi appears as a bestial humanoid covered in hair, with long horns, clawed paws, a tail and huge toes. Its vaguely human face has eyes that glow like embers. They are quite capable shapechangers, however, and are able to assume the appearance of virtually anything.

They grow older or younger with the waning or waxing of the moon.

### Yua Hua

Rage 3 (7 during full moon), Willpower 7, Gnosis 6, Power 25

**Charms:** Open Moon Bridge (power cost 10), Airt Sense

The Yua Hua (pronounced "youA HOOwah") are Gafflings of Luna, possessing powers similar to a Lune, but not as potent. They look like small ribbons of moonlight with blue and gold auras. They are very sentient, but are subject to the same lunar madness as all aspects of Luna. During the full moon, a Yua Hua's Moon Bridge will connect to a Bane's home 90% of the time.

## Elementals (Major)

Most of these Russian elementals are combinations of elements rather than pure elements.

### Gryaznik

Rage 5, Willpower 9, Gnosis 7 Power 40

**Charms:** Hold (engulfs opponent in mud), Airt Sense, Materialize

These are mud elementals. They appear as large, vaguely humanoid agglomerations of mobile mud.



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## Vodianoi



## Ice Man

Rage 4, Willpower 10, Gnosis 7, Power 40

**Charms:** Freeze, Ice Shards, Airt Sense, Materialize

These are walking ice elementals. They appear as large men apparently chiseled from ice.

## Rock Mouths

Rage 6, Willpower 8, Gnosis 8, Power 45

**Charms:** Gnaw (cost 4 Power points; functions as the Garou Gift), Materialize, Airt Sense

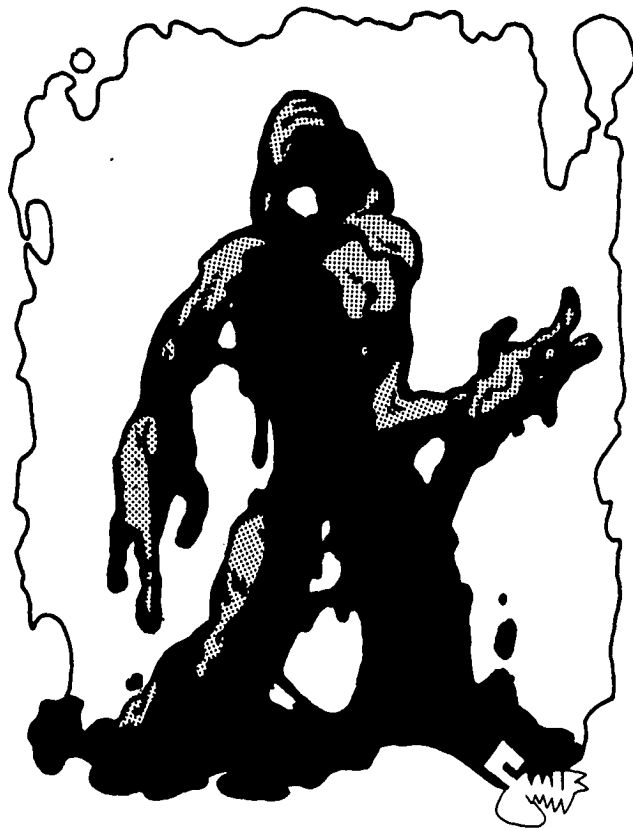
Rock Mouths are Earth elementals. When materialized, they appear as large humanoid composed of stone and dirt.

## Smolnik

Rage 5, Willpower 9, Gnosis 7, Power 40

**Charms:** Hold (the Smolnik can imprison an opponent with its sticky mass), Materialize, Airt Sense

These bizarre elementals are constructed from tar or pitch. Smolniki appear as large, vaguely humanoid agglomerations of mobile tar or pitch. People and things can become stuck in them.



*Smolnik*

## Totems

In Russia, the totem of the Silver Pack is known as the Firebird, or the Zhar Ptitsa, rather than Phoenix. The Legends story at the beginning of this book is a tale concerning Phoenix.

## Typhon

**Type:** War

**Cost:** 5

Typhon is a darker, more violent reflection of Thunder. He is always boiling, storming and hurling lightning from the skies. Yet he is more inclined towards spirit matters than mere rage. Typhon also understands the darker side of interpersonal relations and the storms of passion. He teaches his followers this as well as he can. Children of Typhon can lower the difficulties of seduction or attraction rolls by two. This makes Typhon's children some of the most fertile. His understanding of darker natures also allows his children two points of Subterfuge.

The most impressive thing about Typhon is his willingness and even desire to take part in combat. Any follower of Typhon can spend two permanent Gnosis points and call upon him. The follower must roll his Charisma plus Totem (their own rating, not the pack total) verses a difficulty of 8. If even one success is achieved, Typhon will take part in the battle. The more successes, the greater his participation. With five successes, Typhon will appear and start hurling 10 dice lightning bolts at his foes.

**Ban:** Typhon is still young as totems go; he is still trying to gain power. He requires all of his followers to give him one permanent point of Gnosis.

(Typhon plays an important part in Baba Yaga's hierarchy— see Chapter Four: "The Army of Conversion".)

## Winter Wolf

**Type:** Wisdom

**Cost:** 7

Winter Wolf is the master of survival in harsh conditions. His domain consists of some of the harshest land in the world, and there he has managed to live as a king. He is very in touch with the Wyld; his animal nature is strong and cunning. He is as fierce as any creature can be, yet knows when a hunt should be left to more foolish creatures.

He teaches his children how to endure in harsh conditions, granting them a plus one to their Stamina and two points of Survival. He also shows his children the Wyld within them, granting them an extra level of Primal-Urge and Animal Ken. The greatest gift of Winter Wolf, however, is strength of will. He gives his followers access to three extra points of Willpower per story. To gain this extra Willpower, however, the child must grant Winter Wolf the temporary gift of one Gnosis point.

**Ban:** Winter Wolf asks that during the harsh months, food should be left out for those of his kin who did not find the proper rock under which to dig.

## New Charms

**Control Forest:** This Charm is similar to the Children of Gaia Gift: The Living Wood. The spirit can animate one tree per 2 Power points spent.

**Freeze:** The spirit can drastically lower the temperature in the immediate area. The cost is 3 Power points for every 10 yards radius, and 3 Power points per die of damage; anyone in the area suffers this damage.

**Frozen Breath:** The spirit exhales a breath of bitter cold air. The cost is 1 Power point per die of damage.

**Ice Shards:** The spirit can fling sharp shards of ice at a target. The cost is 5 Power points per 3 dice damage.

**Invisibility:** With this Charm, a spirit can make itself invisible in the Umbra or the physical world (if material-

ized). The Gifts: Umbral Sight and Pulse of the Invisible will not detect the spirit, but Sense the Unnatural and Sense Wyrms will. If the spirit attacks someone, that person can make a Perception + Enigmas roll versus the spirit's Gnosis to perceive it. The cost is 2 Power points.

**Life Drain:** The spirit can drain one Health Level from a target for every 3 Power points spent. The spirit must be in physical contact with the victim.

**Paralyze:** This Charm acts like the Shadow Lord Gift: Paralyzing Stare. The spirit stares into the eyes of its target and rolls its Willpower versus the target's Willpower; the target cannot move for one turn per success. The cost is 5 Power points.

**Prophecy:** The spirit can peer into things to come and tell a questioner one fact about their near future. Generally, these will be mundane events, such as a marriage or inheritance. The cost is 5 Power points.

**Siren Song:** This is similar to the Charm: Suggestion, but the spirit can only lure a target to it through song, not suggesting any other commands. The cost is 5 Power points.

## New Glyphs



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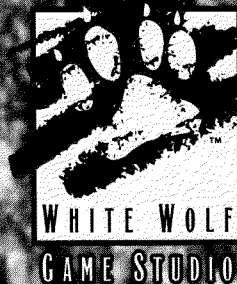
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