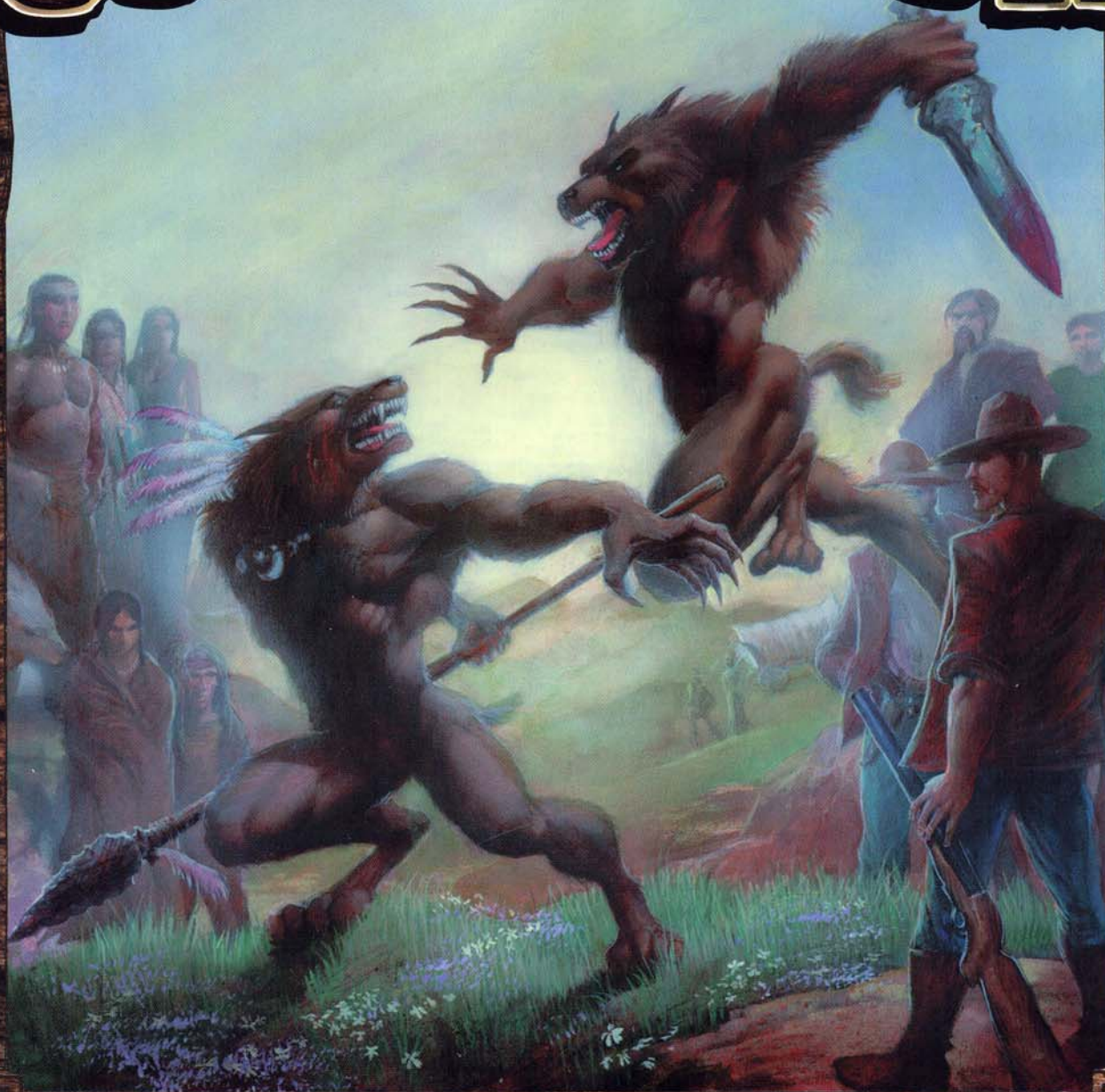


THE WILD WEST COMPACTION™



**A Sourcebook for
Werewolf: The Wild West™**



THE WILD WEST COMPANION™



**By Brad Butkovich, Jackie Cassada,
Ben Chessel, Lon Franson, Brian Glass,
Michael Lee, Robert Martin, Aileen E. Miles,
James A. Moore, Devin Parker and Fred Yelk**



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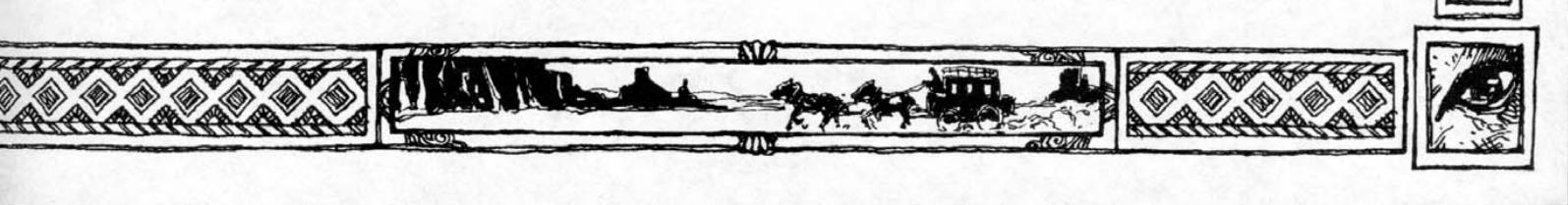




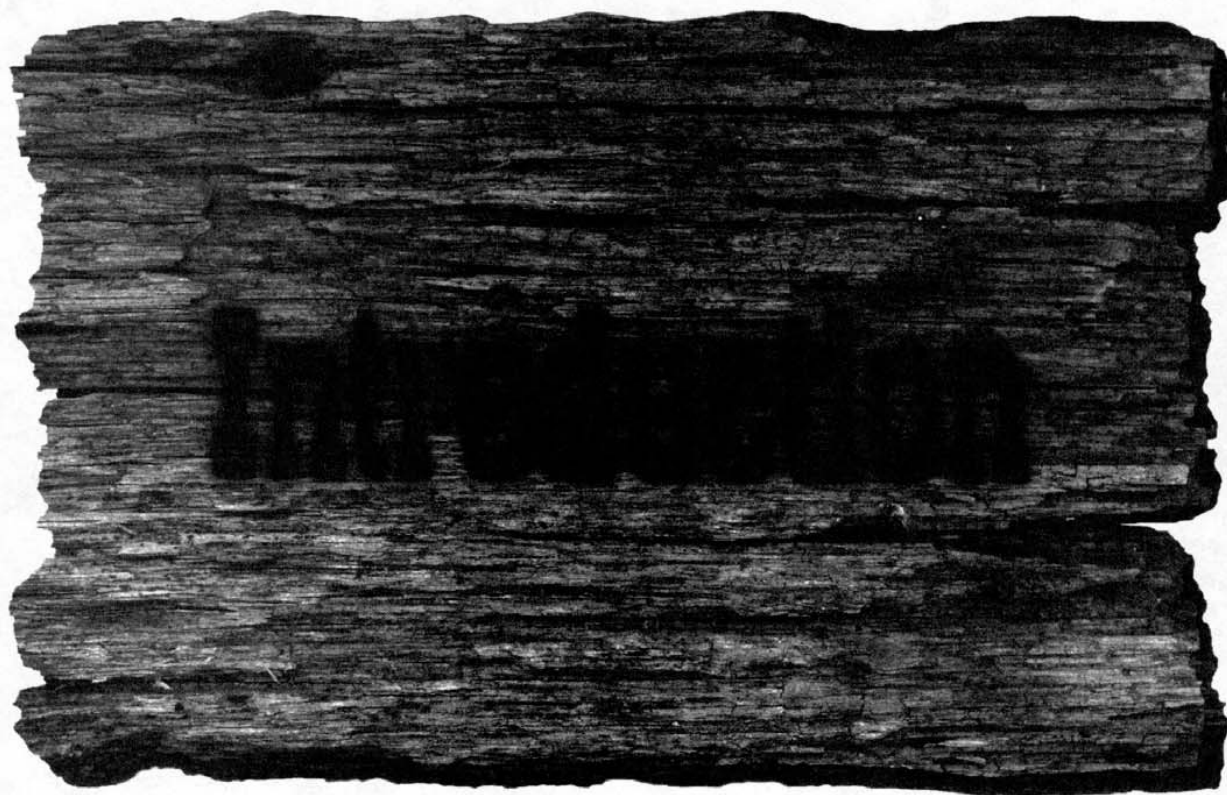
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"Companion" is an odd name for this book. The picture that it paints of the Savage West as a whole is, frankly, not very companionable at all. Enemies of the Garou seem to be lurking behind every tumbleweed or always gathering force just on the other side of the Gauntlet here. There are no blue skies or singing cowboys on *this* frontier, but that's why you need a frontier companion — forewarned is forearmed.

The information in these pages is usable for players and Storytellers alike. A player who chooses to read this book cover to cover, however, should keep in mind that gaining

information about the Savage West or its denizens is not the same as having her character possess or learn that same information. The fact that **Werewolf: The Wild West** is *not* set in the modern world means characters in the game have an understanding of the way the world works that is quite different from our own. A player should decide whether her character would reasonably know the things she gets from this book and what they would mean to the character.

So what's in here that people can read, only to pretend that they haven't? Glad you asked:





Chapter One:

The Savage West offers a thoroughly opinionated view of the frontier as the Garou know it, courtesy of Laughing Manyskins, the possibly familiar Nuwisha trickster (sorry, that's redundant). There are several lengthy sidebars of "objective" history, too.

Chapter Two:

The Storm Umbra addresses the turbulent spirit world of the Savage West. It discusses the varieties of "weather" that exist beyond the Gauntlet, how they affect the physical world, ways to track them down if you want to, and how to escape them when you have to.

Chapter Three:

The Fleshed-Out Character includes Merits and Flaws, new Gifts, tribal weaknesses and Natures and Demeanors.

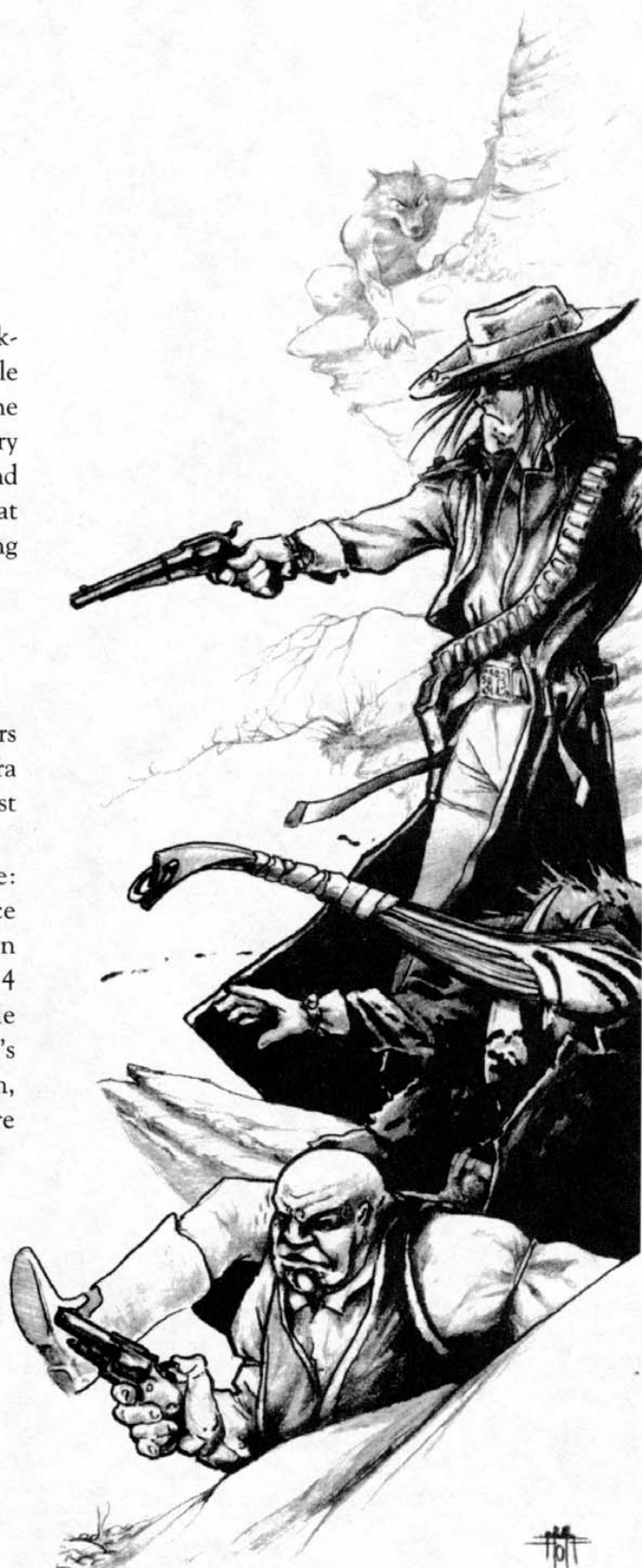
Chapter Four:

The Well-Armed Storyteller provides background on the Storm-Born, who are the terrible progeny of the Storm-spirits that stalk the Savage West. It also contains a frontier bestiary (with stats), filled with creatures familiar and otherwise. Finally, there's a set of mass-combat rules, in case your game somehow is falling short on bloodshed.

Chapter Five:

The Wanderers of Other Trails covers several of the Changing Breeds, the Cáscara (better known as Abominations) and a lost Garou bloodline, the Infeliz.

Finally, two movies you should see: *Barbarosa*, Fred Schepisi's 1982 masterpiece about the costs of living up to your own legend; and *Blazing Saddles*, Mel Brooks' 1974 comedy that contains an uncomfortable amount of truth about the Old West. If it's been a while since you last saw this film, watch it again — its lessons about history are subversive and telling.







Montana Mourning

I looked at the body lying in the remaining shade and felt close to tears. I know how stupid it sounds, getting misty-eyed about a dog, but he'd all but been a member of the family. Now something had come along and torn poor Caesar apart. Not that he'd died without a struggle. There was a lot of blood on his muzzle, and I could see pieces of meat and tatters of fur stuck between his teeth.

Marion wasn't going to be happy, not the least little bit. She'd brought the dog with her when we moved from Connecticut, and he was all that remained of her life before she foolishly agreed to become my wife.

I thought about Marion for a moment as I leaned over the remains of our dog. Not a day went by that I didn't thank God above for my wife, for her sweet smile, her beautiful blue eyes and the long waves of black hair that framed her angelic face. I loved her then and I love her now.

Looking back on the whole sorry affair, I guess it was my doing that killed her. I was the one who wanted to start a new life in Montana, not her. She'd have been content to live the rest of her life in New England, but I needed to escape from the world I knew and find something better, something I could call mine.


I sighed heavily, moved away from Caesar's lifeless form and pulled the blanket from under Morning Glory's saddle. I needed something to carry the body with; she'd want to see him one last time before I buried his wretched form. I found something else when I moved his sagging body. I looked at the metallic gleam of the blade and quickly hid it in the saddlebags on my horse.

All the way back to the house I thought about what could have done that old dog so wrong, and I must confess I shed a few more tears, though I assured myself again and again that it was only the dusty wind causing my eyes to water. Still, I'd avenge him. What was mine was mine, and I meant to keep it.

Marion took one look at Caesar's body and very quietly asked me to bury him by the oak tree near the well. Part of me marveled over her self-control, but most of me wept for the loss of her sweet innocence, stolen in bits and pieces over the last two years.

We'd left Connecticut around the same time the War Between the States started heating up. I had no desire to fire on another man in a fury over something that just plain didn't affect me. I knew in my heart that slavery





was wrong, and I knew in my soul that walking away from the war would shame me in my father's eyes, but I couldn't bring myself to stay. What if I died in the war? What would happen to Marion then? I'm not a coward, but I'm not a man who's willing to die fighting someone else's battles, either.

The trip to Montana wasn't exactly pleasant, but I reckon a bullet through my eye could have been even less comfortable. We rode with seven other families moving to the West — all hoping to find what we were missing. One family turned around after a few weeks, but the rest of us endured. The group wasn't happy with merely getting to Montana and settling on a nice piece of land, though. We felt the need to find the very best land we could, and doing so wasn't quite as hard as most would think. There was land aplenty, and I found a place I could call home after only a few weeks of searching. There was a river with deep banks and several rolling hills. These riverbanks were deep enough to let me know I wouldn't have to worry too much about floods, and the hills afforded some protection from the hot winds blowing out of the west. I figured I could be comfortable enough in that ripe land to not worry while I was building our home.

I didn't ask Marion how she felt about the place; she was my wife and I knew she'd abide by my choices. I also didn't think to ask why someone else hadn't already claimed such a fine piece of land. As I said, there was land to spare.

The house took time, but Marion was patient. I saw the distant look in her eyes and knew she missed her home, but I knew as well that she'd come around in time. I had the homestead finished just in time for Marion to tell me she was with child. For a while, all my concerns faded. I worked at clearing the fields and made a damn fool of myself treating my wife as if she were made of delicate china. I looked at her and saw the mother of my child, and if she seemed a little paler than usual, well, that was just because she was expecting. I kept telling myself that again and again — words to protect myself from my growing fears.

Not much later, I discovered there were Indians in the area. We had a few tense days after I first saw them and they saw us, but it all worked out well enough in the end. We left them alone and they returned the favor.

When the winds from the west started getting colder, I was grateful for the stove we'd brought with us from Connecticut. New England gets cold, make no mistake about that, but the chill in eastern air can always be held at bay by the fire in the hearth and by what blankets you can wrap around yourself. The cold in Montana, however,

is a deeper, harsher thing, almost sinister. The ancient forests of New England weren't there to stop those damn winds cutting across the plains and shearing through every opening, no matter how narrow. By November's end, Marion had a cough that wouldn't leave her alone. By February, she'd lost the child who should have been heir to all we tried to make. From then on, her smile faded to nonexistence, and the mischievous light in her eyes I'd always found so endearing had flickered briefly and expired. The women from the other farms all paid their respects, and the men did their part, too by helping me dig a grave in the worst part of winter. The ground gave very slowly, and the cold numbed our hands and bit deeply into any bared bit of flesh.

Still, I was a man on a quest to make a better life, and I told myself the sorrow would fade. It took time, but Marion seemed more her old self than she had in months by the time spring came around. The crops I'd planted were thrusting from the ground, with delicate green tendrils that reached for the sun and drank deep from its warmth. The air was sweet and clear, and despite our hardships, life went on. It was the dog that brought her around. After so long stuck in the snow and bitter cold, Caesar's exuberance over the rebirth of the land was infectious. He'd run for hours, chasing anything that came too close and even checking on the cattle I purchased — once he figured out what they were and that they wouldn't eat him whole. Marion caught her old enthusiasm again like a flower in the sunlight, and she shone with color and vitality. I looked on, happy for the change in my beloved, all the while mending the winter's damage to the fences and patching the places where the house had failed to withstand the storms and cold.

Everything began to curdle when the Anderson farm burned to the ground. They'd been our closest neighbors in the little valley we called home. There were no survivors. Marion was friends with Amelia Anderson. I joined the rest of the men to help bury the burnt remains.

Three weeks later, the cows died. The ones I owned and everyone else's, too, were torn apart savagely. Whatever killed them worked quickly and waited to strike until I'd moved them to the far pasture. I never heard the sounds of their dying, probably because of the hills that block the worst of the winds.

It was two nights ago when I sent Caesar out after something howling in the woods at the edge of the farm. Marion begged me not to, but I felt I had no choice. If something was out there, we could get killed, unless the dog could protect us. When he didn't come home, I spent the entire next day looking for him. He was, after all, all but a member of the family.

A full day later I found him in the sorry state I already described to you. After I showed him to Marion and buried him, I gathered my rifle and rode to Silas Johanssen's farm. I showed him what I'd found when I located the dog's remains. It was a knife — something I hadn't dared to show Marion, and one that I'd seen on Albert Anderson's hip more than once as we took our turns at tending the herd. Someone had wrapped the blade's hilt in different leather, and there were several trinkets woven into the handle's grip, but I recognized the knife for all of that. Silas did, too.

He shook his head and said, "Wendigo." I nodded, certain he was right. I'm only Kinfolk, but Silas is full Garou, just as Albert had been. I guessed that maybe the local Indians weren't all that friendly after all, and Johanssen mumbled his agreement. He asked if I'd brought any silver bullets with me, and I said that I had. Silas said the time had come to put an end to any threats, and I reckoned he was right. I waited patiently while he changed, growing larger and far more savage. Then he howled a sound that cut through the spring air and echoed off the distant hills. In a few minutes, there were answering calls, and not long after, the pack showed up — towering beasts, some Fianna and some Get of Fenris. All of them were eager for conflict.



The time had come to go to war after all, but at least I believed in this war. I was ready for the consequences of my actions and for any death I might cause. What was mine was mine, and I meant to keep it. As sure as my name is Robert S. Haight, I was ready.

Life in the West (as Interpreted by Laughing Manyskins)

Despite all of the settlers' efforts to "civilize" the areas where they set themselves up, there's always somebody who'd rather see them move somewhere else. The sad fact of the matter is that might tends to make right out west, and for settlers to keep what they claim often requires firearms and a good deal of resolve.

The towns and communities in the territories serve as mutual protection for the settlers as well as for their homes. Everyone needs protection from time to time, and that defense is easier when there are 30 or more other people who'll come running at the sound of an alarm. The fact that somebody soon sets up a mercantile, a saloon or a bathhouse is just a sign that there's





always someone willing to make a fast dollar. So it goes, a few people gather together and settle into whatever area seems nice enough, and the next thing you know there's a town creeping up.

Once the town's in place, it's short work to find someone who'll decide they can do as they damn well please, so long as they've got a pistol in one hand and a shot of rye in the other. Bullets fly and another enterprising soul starts making money by planting dead folk up on the hill. Several level heads get together and decide there ought to be someone to make sure the laws of civilized people are upheld, and then there's a sheriff looking everything over. Who takes his place after some fool shoots him in the face is anyone's guess, but it's likely some scalawag who ain't willing to do any real work.

There was a long stretch of time when that was about as civilized as it got, but that's all changing. There're more people coming west these days. Some of 'em are looking to make a fortune, some of 'em are looking to get away from their pasts. Either way, the end result is the same, so move over and make room for your new neighbors.

Funny thing about people: The more you gather together, the less likely they are to behave themselves like the civilized people they all pretend to be. They start havin' land disputes and arguments about who has the rights to do what.

Take the cattlemen, for instance. They set their cows out on a field and make sure the dumb beasts have enough food and water, then they make sure no lowdown varmints try to take what they claim as their own. But you just watch what happens when they run across a sheep-raising family. One look at those sheep and these "civilized" men lose all rational thought. That grass on the hill is meant for cattle, not for any damn wool-bearing creature that's gonna crop it so low that it won't grow back again. All talk of good Christian values and charity goes straight down the outhouse hole right about then. Perfectly friendly folk grab up guns and explain the facts of life to those sheep people, and then they help them right on out of the territory. Anyone who ain't willing to listen is invited to meet the undertaker, or if times've been lean, the local cattlemen treat themselves to some mutton instead of beef for a change of pace. Fair is fair and right is right, just so long as proper values don't get too inconvenient.

Why would anyone move from where they have kin and come out west? Well, now, that ain't so hard to figure out. I've known a few people who couldn't stand

their kin one way or the other. They'd sooner shoot 'em than spend time with 'em. Hell, most of my own family feels that way about me, which is one of the reasons I've traveled all over the Land. There's other reasons besides that one, though. Ain't there always?

I've known settlers who came out this way to find a new life 'cause the ones they left behind weren't so great to look at. Try workin' in one of them great big factories in the East sometime, sweating like two horny prairie dogs stuck inside a wet sock for 12 hours a day and maybe makin' enough to buy a loaf of bread when you're done. That's almost sure to make you want a change of pace. Some people run from that sort of life, figurin' anything's got to be better. Mostly, I suspect they're right about that. Seems the Europeans believe in two types of people: The haves and the have-nots. If you're not a have, I reckon the best thing to do is start all over where nobody knows that you're a have-not.

It's costly movin' west. Make no mistake about that. I've heard plenty of them eastern folk whining about how much they had to give up so's they could have a go at a new life out this way. Sell your house, sell your furniture and sell anything else you ain't taking with you, and it might be enough to hire a guide worth the trouble and to get a wagon worth a damn loaded down with supplies for the trip. That's another thing about the Europeans from the east: They can't live without their food already waiting for the next six months or so. Me? I've just taken what I need as I needed it. Coyote provides, though he can be a mite on the stingy side when he wants to. Hell, just look at me, I'm nothin' but skin and bone.

What's that? Oh, yeah there's plenty of other reasons. Most of 'em involve getting away with one thing or another. There's plenty of them dark-skinned folk that the round eyes brought here to work as slaves. A lot of them don't take well to that "life." Some of 'em figure they're better off dead or free, and they take their chances. Even more since some of those states to the east decided it weren't right to have slaves. There's people from both sides of that war who figure they'd rather just move out here where the fighting ain't so bad. Plenty more who figure if a few people could find gold in California, they can find more if they just start digging. I guess there's always people who'll sacrifice everything if they think they can get something more in the bargain. It's part of human nature. Lotsa folks already out here figure the best way to handle an ugly situation is to leave it in the dust. There's lotsa reasons for moving toward the sunset.

The People of the Savage West

Our ranch business was going as smooth as that kind of work did in those days, when a band of Comanche Indians attacked our place one night and swiped seventy of our horses. We got on our horses and trailed them to six miles north of San Angelo; here's where the skirmish began, we sure had a bloody fight; Ray, Thompson and four of our other boys were killed. The Negro soldiers from Fort Concho were called in to help us and sixty of them were killed. The Indians were happy over killing the so-called Buffalo Soldiers (meaning Negro soldiers). Johnson was commander at the fort at this time. We killed a good many Indians; we never knew how many. We rounded our horses and got them ready to return to the ranch when the Indians made another attack and got fifty of our horses. During the skirmish I got shot in the hip with an arrow.

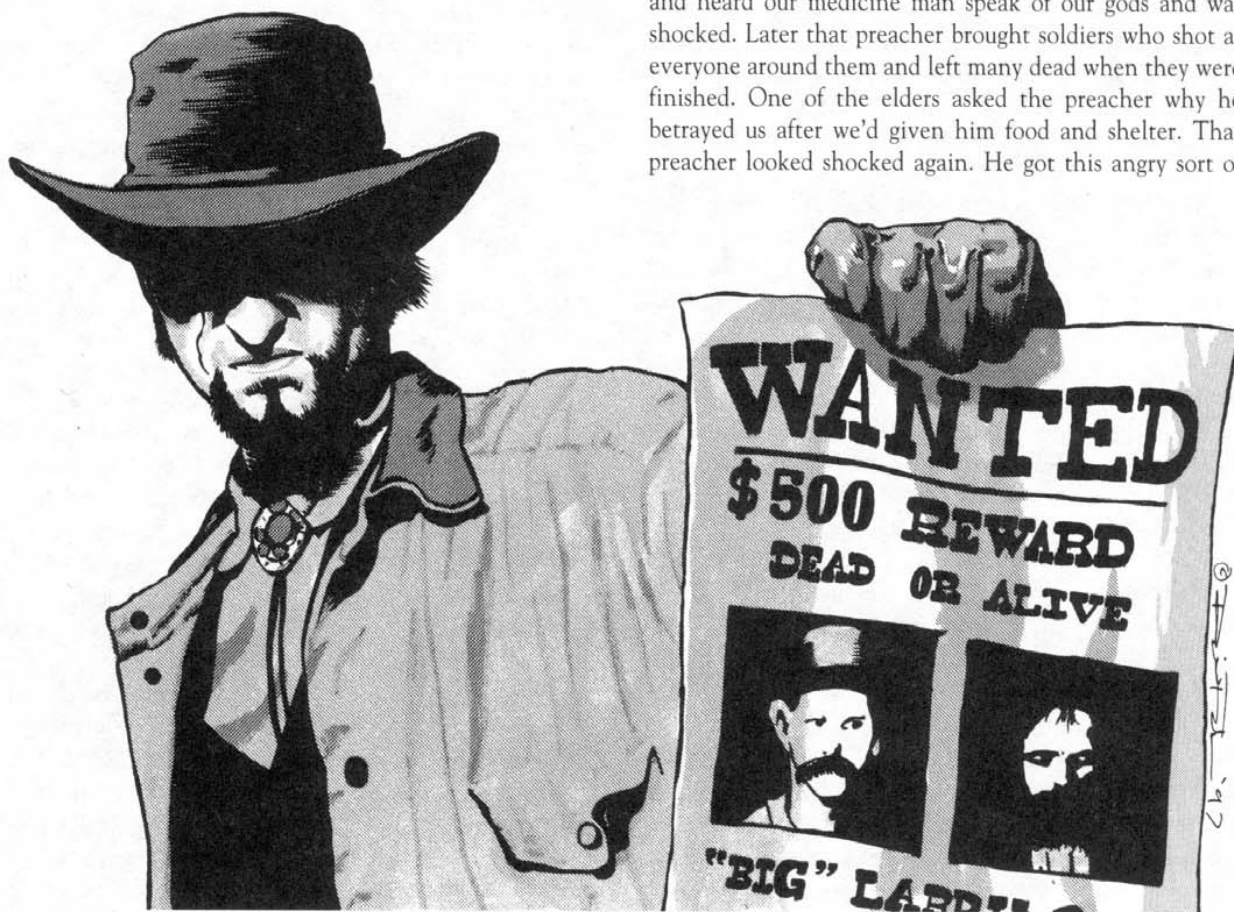
I just didn't figure there were so many kinds of folks who'd find those reasons appealing. Look at the Europeans, by all means, but then look at all the other folks moving in on the territory too.



— Mr. Daniel Boone Sinclair, Jr., from a collection of personal letters

They say the winners in any war get to write the history, so I reckon most everything people in the future read about the West will say the Europeans managed everything on their own. They sure do talk like it's true already.

But that just ain't the way it is, not now and not ever. First, there's the Pure Ones to consider. We've been here for a long time, and we managed well enough without the people from Europe. We just don't need as much to be comfortable as they do, I reckon. I was talking with a Get of Fenris, name of Brandt-Kills-the-Foolish, the other night at Hubie's Saloon. He probably would've never talked to me if I'd looked like my own self, but Coyote gave me certain talents and I use them to my advantage. Anyway, this giant snow-haired brute goes on and on talking about how he and his have a sacred mission to make the world safe for Gaia and to destroy the Wurm wherever it may hide itself. I reasoned that was a fine goal, but what of the people already here? Already protecting the Land? He laughed at that, and he pointed out they couldn't even fight back against the humans coming over from Europe. What match would they be for a real threat?

Listening to that Get made me think of a preacher who came to my village when I was young. He spoke about his god and heard our medicine man speak of our gods and was shocked. Later that preacher brought soldiers who shot at everyone around them and left many dead when they were finished. One of the elders asked the preacher why he betrayed us after we'd given him food and shelter. That preacher looked shocked again. He got this angry sort of





scowl on his face and said he had to do it to save our poor, heathen souls. Less than a month later, there was a new fort where my people had been, and the soldiers were ready to shoot anyone who came too close to the gates.

I had to think about what that preacher did for a long time before I finally understood what he meant. I think he even fooled himself into believing he was right, but what he really meant was it's okay to take what you want, so long as you can justify your reasons. His people wanted the land for a new fort. He used our beliefs as an excuse to take that land. After the fort was established, he sometimes went out and tried to explain his god to my people. We didn't want to hear more of his lies.

That Get of Fenris says his people came here to save us from the Wym. Well, the Wym wasn't showing up too much before his people came along. But you go ahead and try to explain that to him or his if you like. Me? I'll just sit back and watch.

What's that? What did I do to that Get of Fenris? Nothing. Except I bought him another beer. I got no quarrel with the Get. They are what they are. As for me, you shouldn't make too much of what I say. I lie and I exaggerate. It's what I am and what I've always been. I don't mean that all the Europeans come west with that attitude. Very few of them do. Most of them crossed the ocean to the Pure Lands same as they're running west now, hoping to find something better. They all think the air is sweeter on the other side of the mountain. Maybe they're right. I've seen every mountain in this land, and some just seem nicer. But wherever they go, they have to bring their homes with them. It's like they don't know how to build things all new. Or maybe they just don't like doing the extra work.

It's only after they get themselves settled that the troubles begin. Suddenly, what they worked so hard for is more important than what someone else worked hard for. And suddenly, they were here first, and they have the right to defend themselves.

I have never seen people so anxious to have a fight or so willin' to keep shooting after the situation's been resolved. Stranger still, they turn and help each other at the drop of a hat. "Burned your barn down? Be right there with all my spare lumber and a few extra things besides. Your wife broke her hip? Well, don't you fret none, my Emma will be right over to tend to your house and little ones. She'll cook you up some fine food while your woman heals." They all take turns trying to see who can be the most generous.

'Course they usually take a few months to know each other 'fore they get anywhere near that friendly.

And that friendship don't often go to people with a different skin color. They fight the Pure Ones 'cause we tend to live where they want to live. Then they get upset when we fight back. Now don't you go thinkin' all that fightin's been one-sided 'cause it ain't been that way at all. Lotsa our people take offense when you push 'em,

and then they feel obliged to push back a lot harder, and a lot more often. Some of the nations make a point of fighting the settlers at the drop of a hat, not that I can blame 'em too much. If somebody killed my brothers and raped my daughters before killing them, I'd be a mite put out about it, too. Difference is, I try to find the humor in everything. Even in their military.

Military Life

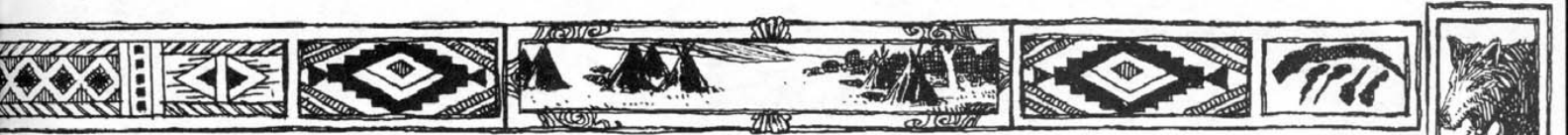
They're real big on soldiers. Don't much matter what sort of uniform they wear, if the soldiers have the right colors on their clothes, they get treated right special. Might be because them boys is so helpful, but I've seen some very scared folks waving politely when the cavalry comes through a town. I've also seen some mighty mean soldiers come along, the sort that'd shoot you as soon as smile. I guess having that much influence makes them soldiers feel powerful after a time — so powerful they sometimes end up givin' themselves over to the Wym. But that ain't what we were talkin' about.

I guess they're just people. But some of 'em act like they walk at the right side of their god. Some of 'em like to think they've earned the right to whatever they want just 'cause they have to fight us savages and make the Land safe for good Christians. Though I notice that don't always hold true for sheep farmers.

But, they do work hard. They go off dressed in their uniforms, likely sweating enough to water crops, and then they don't come back for months at a time. They only come around again when they need supplies. If there's Indians to be found, they look long and hard to find 'em. And when the time comes, they shoot 'em full of lead. 'Course, there's a few that don't take to being shot, so they lose a few soldiers now and again. Most soldiers ain't even old enough to shave, but they go out there and fight like they're told to fight. Between the Pure Ones, the people down Mexico way, the soldiers on the other side of their Civil War and the outlaws they have to hunt down, they do a lot of fighting. They follow their orders and they move around all the time.

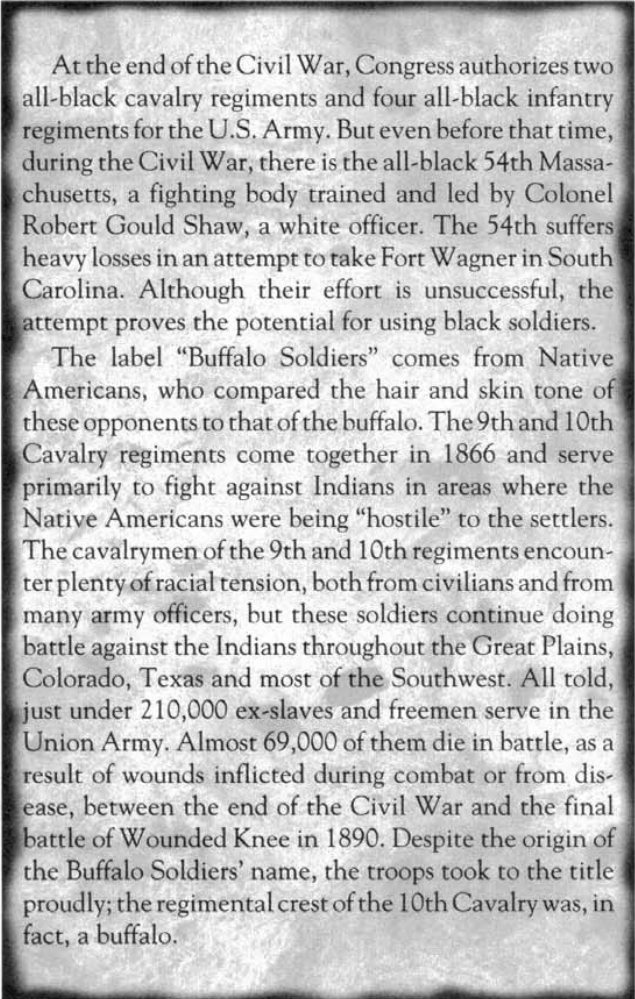
Some of the better ones even live long enough to retire, or to settle themselves out this way. Some of the lesser ones, or those who just can't take what they're supposed to do, run away from the army. They tend not to stay in places where people might find them. But if you know where to look, and I do, they can be downright useful for learning things about the army.

All I can tell you for certain is I wouldn't like to lead the lives they do. I have done so from time to time, when it suited my needs, but I never liked it. Up at the crack of dawn, breaking down your tent and reloading your



supplies. Then, if there's food left, you get a quick breakfast and you get on the move. If there ain't any food left, you hope you've still got some dried meat and bread stashed with your belongings. After a hard day of ridin' on a horse, you get to take care that your animal is well-fed and groomed, then set up camp all over again. The only break in the routine is a chance to shoot at whatever enemy you're supposed to be after and the occasional town with a whorehouse, bathhouse or bar. I had to leave after just a couple of weeks. The smell from those boys got to be too much and I felt sick.

Mind you, the ones I met with were European, so they got treated well. You should meet up with the Buffalo Soldiers sometime. What's that? No, they don't ride on buffalo. We call them that because their hair is like a buffalo's. It's tight and curly and dark. The Buffalo Soldiers get all the dirtiest work, and they almost always get sent after Pure Ones who won't play by the white man's rules. They normally end up hunting down what they want to eat, and they often eat buffalo because it's plentiful.



At the end of the Civil War, Congress authorizes two all-black cavalry regiments and four all-black infantry regiments for the U.S. Army. But even before that time, during the Civil War, there is the all-black 54th Massachusetts, a fighting body trained and led by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, a white officer. The 54th suffers heavy losses in an attempt to take Fort Wagner in South Carolina. Although their effort is unsuccessful, the attempt proves the potential for using black soldiers.

The label "Buffalo Soldiers" comes from Native Americans, who compared the hair and skin tone of these opponents to that of the buffalo. The 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments come together in 1866 and serve primarily to fight against Indians in areas where the Native Americans were being "hostile" to the settlers. The cavalymen of the 9th and 10th regiments encounter plenty of racial tension, both from civilians and from many army officers, but these soldiers continue doing battle against the Indians throughout the Great Plains, Colorado, Texas and most of the Southwest. All told, just under 210,000 ex-slaves and freemen serve in the Union Army. Almost 69,000 of them die in battle, as a result of wounds inflicted during combat or from disease, between the end of the Civil War and the final battle of Wounded Knee in 1890. Despite the origin of the Buffalo Soldiers' name, the troops took to the title proudly; the regimental crest of the 10th Cavalry was, in fact, a buffalo.

It ain't that all the soldiers are bad, but when you're on the wrong side of the war, it sure can look that way. Often as not, all it takes to get a group of soldiers ready for a fight against the Pure Ones is an accusation that one of us took a shine to one of their women. Just like that we go from "poor heathen bastards" to "murderous, rapin' heathen bastards." All they need's the flimsiest excuse and the Army comes riding into wherever we might be set up, ready to kill us all.

Let me tell you something. I don't mind a fair fight. I'm kinda fond of a good bloodlettin' from time to time, but fair don't mean coming into a village at the crack of dawn with torches burning and rifles ready. That happens too often for my taste.

Either way, I don't like the souvenirs some of these bastards go away with. I met a man not more than a month ago who seemed okay to me. We got to chewin' the fat, and he got to braggin' about the "savage women" he'd tamed with his manhood. Well, like I said before, I don't mind a fight, but there's somethin' wrong about that. Still, I figured to let it go 'cause he had information I needed. Mind you, at that particular moment, I was dressed up right and proper in a gamblin' man's clothes, and my skin was a tad paler than his, so I reckon I seemed just fine in his book.

We got into a discussion of the differences between European women and Pure One women. I explained that I've always preferred to have a willing partner and he pointed out that, "Injuns ain't really people at all, just slightly smarter than dogs and better lookin' from time to time." Right around that time, he offered me a cigarette, and he started rolling one for himself. I was gonna say yes until I noticed the tobacco pouch he was using. The pouch was made from what looked like fine leather, but the shape was strange. When I mentioned that, he proudly pointed out that he'd made it from the left breast of a "squaw who didn't feel it was the right time for romance." He had taken her breast to make his point, but because he was feelin' charitable, he left her alive.

We discussed the matter long enough for me to know that he was talking about my cousin, who now has twin sons from their night together. After I'd finished my drink and said my good nights, I waited for him outside. I was feelin' merciful, so I left him alive. But I gave his penis and his tongue to my cousin. This proud fellow was a soldier when he raped my kin. I don't think he's much of anything but a beggar these days. I'm wanted in Nebraska for that particular crime, but there weren't no witnesses and I was wearing a different skin at the time anyway.

All of the soldiers ain't that bad, but sometimes it's hard to tell the good ones from the nasty ones. I just kill 'em when the mood strikes me.



The Farming Life

Farmers are a special sort of folk. It takes a lot of hard work and a love of the Land to make a go at living their way. They have my respect, and most I know won't bother farm people unless they do something stupid. I've seen a lot of strong men and women fall to their knees from exhaustion as the sun went down and get right back up with the sunrise to go back to working their fields.

Lot of these people spent everything they had to get their land and to build their new homes. Then they work the ground and break themselves pullin' the big rocks out of the earth and cutting the Land so they can put down seeds and grow what they want. Lots of people get bitter from that sort of work, but most of the farmers seem content with their lot.

In my travels, I've had a chance to stay at many farms. Most people are hospitable, and they'll find you a place where you can sleep and grant you a meal and a ladle or two of their hard-earned well water without a single complaint. Most the time, I stay for an extra day if the weather looks like I can pay them back with a little help in the fields, and you'd think I was one of their Christian saints by the gratitude they express.

They work hard and they fight against the Wyrms despite how they treat the Land. When the winter comes and the fields die, they prepare themselves for when the ground awakens again, and they live off the foods they've nurtured from the Land.

'Least the good ones do. There's some whose farms seem to do very well in the worst places, who manage to grow fat while those around them starve. Some of them farmers serve the Wyrms, and when I pass them, I make sure to note where they are so I can tell the right people about what these folks've got buried in the ground and what they use for fertilizer. The Wyrms are partial to those who nourish the soil with death and offer their neighbors in exchange for a good crop.

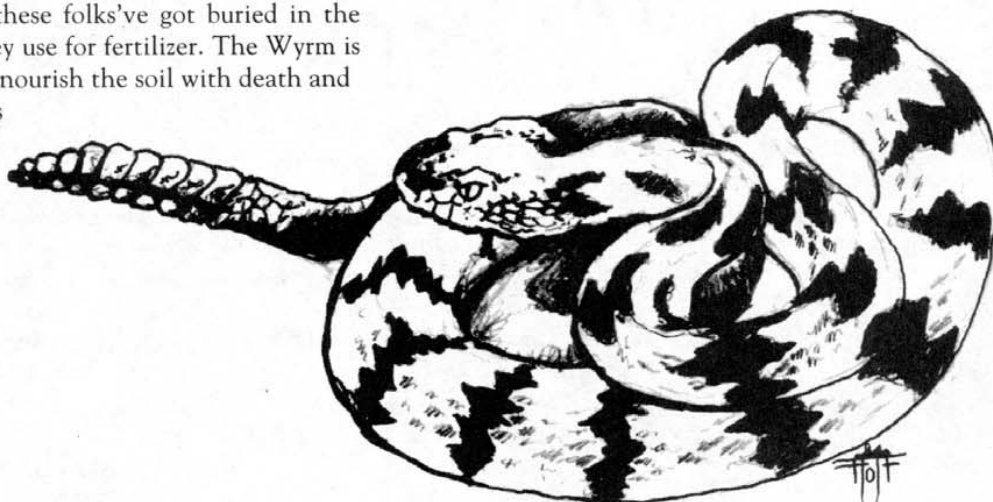
The Cattlemen

They call themselves "cattle barons" and act as if they're doing the world a favor simply by existin'. They raise their cows and bulls, turn out milk and meat for the Europeans and hire dozens of men to work for them while they sit back and reap the rewards. They are hard, bitter men who believe they have the right to take land from others in order to feed their animal herds.

I don't understand the way these people think. Earth Mother gave us the buffalo and said, "These are for you. Eat what you need and leave the rest in peace." And we complied, grateful for the food we received. The Europeans come, see the buffalo and kill them by the hundreds. Then they replace them with their cows and eat the cattle, while leavin' the buffalo to rot.

For people whose only claim to fortune is raising cattle, they sure do take a lot of liberties. Something eats one of their cows, they hunt down every predator on four legs like it was a holy war. Them bastards've got bounties on wolves, coyotes, pole cats and would likely put one on prairie dogs if they thought it'd do any good. They need more land for their cows, so they encourage buffalo hunting and call on the soldiers to kill off any Indians that might be around, just in case. They terrorize or outright kill sheep herders 'cause the sheep crop the grass too low for their uses.

That's just the cattle barons, of course, but I ain't too fond of the men who work for 'em, either. They ain't doin' anything but their jobs, I'll grant 'em that, but what they do is kill the Land as sure as the Storm Eater does.



They work hard and they live hard, but they don't think about what they're doing. They call themselves "cowpunchers," but I've never seen a one of them actually hit a cow. What sort of name is that, anyway? Like I said before, I tend to get around. Just to make sure I knew what I was talking about, I worked one summer as a cowpuncher at the Bar T Ranch. Byron Talbot was the man in charge of the place and he paid a fair wage, I'll grant him that, too.

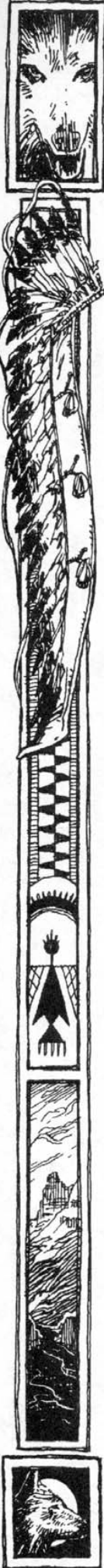
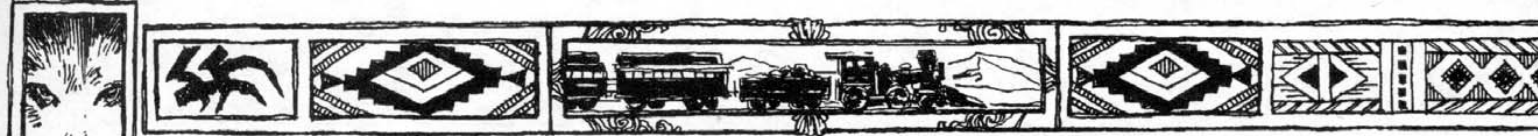
But in the time I worked there, I was up every mornin' at sunrise and watched the herd the whole day. My main job was to keep the dumb animals from stepping over the side of a cliff or into a nest of rattlesnakes. I've never seen dumber animals in my life. In my time, I had to help brand the cows — a disgusting process that Europeans find necessary 'cause they can't trust their own neighbors and kin. I helped birth a calf that didn't want to come out, and I rebuilt more fence than I knew there was in the world 'cause the damned beasts kept getting stuck in the barbed wire and then they'd tear whole sections of fence down in a panic. I can't blame 'em

though 'cause the damn stuff cuts you to hell, I can tell you that from experience.

There was a cook who prepared meals at the ranch, and there was a wagon for water. Same old coot traveled with us when the time came to move the herd. It took three weeks of guiding the cattle to Denver for auction, and during that time, the damned things stampeded twice and came close a dozen other times. Look at 'em cross-eyed and wag your tongue and I swear the blamed herd goes crazy. I saw one boy, not more than 12 or so, try to guide them away from a dry riverbed and back onto the trail when they got ornery. That boy and his horse got trampled by so many cows that there weren't much more than bloody meal left of 'em.

I got plenty of respect for the hard work the cowpunchers do, but I still ain't too fond of 'em. My guess is the people they work for are probably responsible for about half of my people's problems. The "barons" are just too damned greedy about tryin' to make sure their precious cows don't get hurt, scared, thirsty or hungry. Or maybe just too damned greedy in general.





PRESCOTT

Railroad Workers

Following the latest figures of the year 1875, as given by The San Francisco Chronicle, there are 130,000 Chinese in California — 30,000 in the city of San Francisco alone. Says the same paper at the same time: "Whatever industry they have attacked they have captured; whatever they have attempted they have mastered; whenever there has been an encounter between them and our own people, they have come off victorious. And these are said to be the very offscouring of the Chinese ports. If then such results come to us from contact with 130,000 of their lowest grade of intellect, what shall be the measure of their success when free intercourse, open ports, and the attractions of foreign commerce pour upon our shores the numbers they can spare from their 400,000,000 of population? When their leading men, with subtle intellects, come in conflict with our plodding minds? Who shall dare say which is the superior race until the conflict is over? Every contest between ourselves and the Chinese hitherto has been to them a victory.

— Walter M. Fischer, *The Californians*
Damnedest thing I ever saw, the railroads. You can look at them people laying down the wood supports and the steel rails and think they're never going to get anywhere, but when you look again, they've moved over the next hill and they're still going strong. Have you seen the railroad workers? They're some powerful men. Not that they look all that different. Only a few of 'em are bigger than average, and most of 'em are sorta lean, like they ain't had a good meal in a year or so. But they are strong and they are driven. I've seen men of every color — excepting only red, but I suspect you could find a few Indians out there, too, if you looked hard enough — working together and driving spikes into the ground with a solid fury. From a couple of miles away you can hear the sound of them working, like the sound of buffalo on the move, but with a metallic ring that doesn't sit well in the heart.

Of all the signs that the Storm Eater has risen and begun to rape the Land, only mining and the railroads strike me with fear. No mountain, no valley nor river is safe from the railroads. Those lean, hard men build bridges to cross the rivers and valleys, and they tear mountains aside if they get in their way. Hundreds of men, working as hard as anyone I've ever seen, many of them



coming from distant lands and working in silence as they drive their way across the Land.

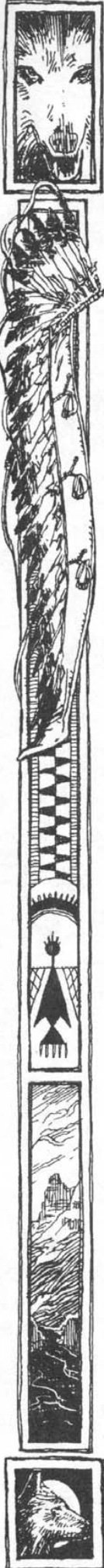
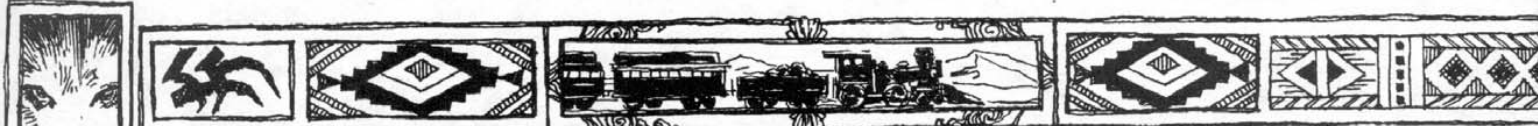
How can they do this thing and feel no remorse? They call what they do progress, even as they destroy everything in their path. No sooner have they built a new part of their railroad than one of their great iron horses, bellowing out gout of filth that rise to the sky, comes along hauling great boxes of food and water, along with more of the steel rails and wooden ties. They have dozens of men moving ahead of 'em, scouting out where there might be trouble with the land or the Pure Ones, and signaling the men in charge of carving these great scars across the Land. If a tribe stands in their way, the Europeans come with rifles, sometimes with soldiers, and drive the people away. Those who won't move are killed and left to rot.

And still these men come and use their hammers to plant steel tracks in the ground. When night falls, they rest 'cause they're too tired to do more than eat and sleep. They rest in the same clothes they work in, until the fabric is as stiff as leather. Only the Chinese bathe whenever they can, and even those strange people manage to clean themselves only when there is a river or lake nearby.

I've seen these men work themselves to death, dropped by exhaustion or burnt up with fever — all for pieces of paper or coins of gold. I've seen men lose their legs or arms to a badly timed hammer swing or a dynamite charge that was bigger than anyone planned. Or sometimes just to bad luck, like a man I saw who was standing too near a stack of their steel rails when it came tumbling down. Once the men who wait to handle accidents have tended folks' injuries, the wounded are paid again and left to fend for themselves — to live or die as they're able.

When the railroads come to towns, there's a celebration, and the workers rest for a day or so, drink liquor, find women to sleep with and finally bathe. Then they're on the way again, working just as hard as before. I wonder if they'll be happy when they've finished their great railroads, these men who work so hard to build them. And when I see them drivin' their spikes into the ground, sweat spilling freely from their bodies, I wonder who is truly the master: the men or the machines they build the rails for.





The Chinese

One of the least heard about but strongest sources of racial tension in the Savage West is the influx of Chinese immigrants. Where the Indians and the blacks have troubles, there is violence on both sides. The Indians do their fair share of slaughtering, and the freemen and ex-slaves make their point in the Civil War and afterward with the same sorts of weapons and tactics the whites had used.

Not so for the Chinese. To the settlers and to government officials alike, the Chinese are an enigma. When someone attacks them, the survivors merely report what happened and go about their business. There are no vows of vengeance, nor do the offended parties seek justice if the local law enforcers opt not to help.

Their very silence makes the Chinese seem more alien than nearly anything else the settlers encounter along the way. The customs of the Chinese — wearing hats in the presence of persons they would honor, reserving the place on their left for the most important people and a level of polite silence unheard of in the western world — confuses and often enrages the settlers.

Despite their presence in the U.S., the Chinese still hold to many of their native beliefs, including not adjusting well to other people. The Chinese tend to stick together, living in crowded quarters, despite a great deal of available land. While they are normally meticulous in their grooming, some of their clothing habits seem exceedingly strange to outsiders. Allowing their women to wear pants, for example, is seen as something of an affront to the sensibilities of most

people in the U.S. at the time. To make matters worse, the “heathens” don’t believe in one god for the most part, and they have no desire to learn about Christianity.

Despite these differences, the Chinese work diligently and seldom complain about the hard labor in the mines, or on the railroads. They apply themselves so well, in fact, that hard feelings arise when they prove to be more efficient than other groups of workers. Many whites presume hard work to be the lot of ex-slaves, but when the seemingly delicate Chinese come along and work just as hard as the blacks, many of these same Caucasian workers resent such effort — despite the fact that the whites receive better pay than anyone else.

Animosity between the whites and the Chinese can get very ugly, but their encounters sometimes take a surprising turn. When a white man assaults a Chinese worker, the worker seldom fights back, but when an Oriental does retaliate, the end result is often a much bigger man lying in a pool of his own blood or nursing a shattered arm. Despite these tensions, though, the Chinese endure, build their own communities in the U.S. and import their wares from China here.

And if, from time to time, an abusive white man suddenly disappears under unusual circumstances, the continuously placid expressions of the “Coolies” belie any possible connections between past assaults on the Chinese and such vanishings.

Miners


There’s fools, and then there’s *fools*. Miners are the sort needing special emphasis. Point at a spot on the ground and tell one of these people that there’s any sort of metal under the dirt, and they’ll start diggin’ like their life required that metal more than food.

Every time someone finds gold or silver in the hills, or even flakes of the stuff in some river, a new town of Europeans grows up like a mushroom from the ground. And almost as fast as a mushroom, too. Boomtowns they call ‘em. I call ‘em shitholes. In a week’s time, you’ve got 200 or more people climbing into those hills, looking for the gold or whatever. And then they come back to whatever town is nearby and do their best to spend what they’ve earned.

Like as not, while they’ve been diggin’ a saloon or five has popped up, and a bathhouse or two, and a dozen or so whorehouses. I think those places are the best for seeing the settlers as they truly are. They throw their hard-earned money away on women, booze and whatever else they can find, then they fight each other over any insult. The towns grow so fast that there ain’t any real law worth noticin’, unless a couple of business people decide to pay someone to be the law.

Once in a while, somebody finds a proper lode and starts getting a little smarter and waits ‘til he’s made a good strike before he tells anyone else. By then, he’s got him some hired guns, and he’s got some of the great big digging machines to cut the ground open. Then he hires people to do all the digging for him,





and he hires others to keep *them* people honest. Miners go into the holes in the ground and look for shiny metals that make someone else rich. They dig all the precious metal from the ground, and sometimes they dig so deep they make the ground above them collapse. You can hear the people screaming from a mile away when that happens. Everybody says how horrible it is that so many people died. And then they start digging all over again.

That's how the worst of the boomtowns come to be. Men workin' themselves to the bone for good pay and then coming into town to spend that pay on nice clothes or whatever strikes their fancy.

Along come the gamblers. These folks make their living at games of chance and reap their rewards from fools who think they can win in a card game against somebody who knows the cards better than he knows his own reflection. Not far behind the gamblers come the gunslingers, looking to work for the person who'll pay them enough to kill anyone who needs killin' or hopin' to get a job as the sheriff of the boomtown. Wherever the white men go, there are those who work and those who feed off the workers. What a strange people they are.

Craftsmen

There's a good number of folks these days who specialize in one form of work or another, making what could be just a job into an art form. Some work with leather and make the harnesses and tools for others to use. Some work with steel and craft weapons, horseshoes and all sorts of contraptions. Others work with glass or stone, but all of them take to their work with a passion. I don't reckon I've ever seen any of the Pure Ones handle one type of work that well, especially since there's so many things a man needs to do to make life work properly. What's the point of making horseshoes if you can't tend to a horse? Once, I'd've said there wasn't no purpose. These days, I've seen what the Europeans can accomplish and the speed they achieve by working on only one thing at a time.

Any town worth its salt has a smithy, a leather crafter working on tack, a baker, a tailor, and a dozen other little jobs that no one wants to do, but that they can pay someone else to handle for them. It's a strange way to work, but it seems to suit the Europeans just fine.

They even have folks these days who build their houses for them, so they can go on makin' their all-important money and spending it.

The Changing Breeds and the Second War of Rage

Of course, some folks ain't *just* folks. Coyote bein' the lover of variety that he is, he's got all kinds of shapeshifter children to do all kinds of jobs for him. From what I already said about me and the Corax and the Wendigo and the Get, it might seem that the Changing Breeds are getting along pretty well, but that'd be a blind man's view. There's a second War of Rage happening, and only a few of us were smart enough to get out before the serious battles began.

The Garou, both the Europeans and the Pure Ones, have decided that this Land is theirs. Anyone else who interferes is as good as dead.

The Pure Lands were spared from the first War of Rage. No one over here ever had a problem with someone deciding they were more important than everyone else. Oh, there were disagreements from time to time. We Nuwisha could tell you a thousand stories of the problems and disputes we've caused and the ones we've settled as well. But they never went as far as those going on right now. They never came close.

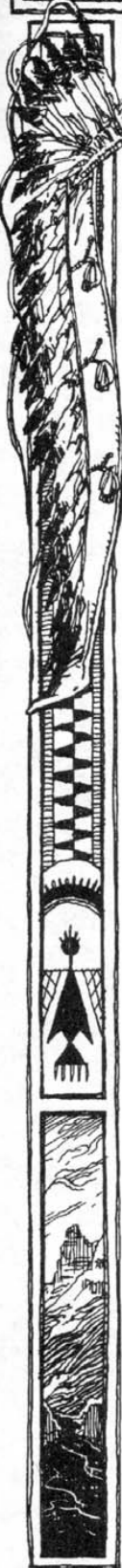
Ananasi

The Ananasi are the ones suffering the most. Nobody ever liked them to begin with 'cause they're scary as all hell and mean enough to make a werewolf think twice about whether or not to enter their territories. For the record, making a werewolf stop and think about anything is an accomplishment, so you should understand just how mean that makes the werespiders.

There's been bad blood between the werespiders and the Garou for a very long time — mostly because they both think they're too good to be bothered with anyone else's rules. They've had fights throughout history, whenever they met up. That wasn't so bad in the past, but over the centuries, the troubles have gotten worse.

During the first War of Rage, most of the Ananasi were destroyed, at least as far as the Garou are concerned, and who am I to make them open their eyes? The werespiders in Europe were crushed under the weight of the Garou — slaughtered and punished because they didn't think the werewolves had any right to push the werespider Kinfolk around. The werewolves disagreed and made their point with fangs and claws.

But over here, and especially on the continent of South America, the Ananasi are still strong. The



werewolves are already trying to fix that little oversight on their part. They've made a point of killin' as many of the werespiders as they can, and the werespiders have started fighting back.

Have you ever seen an Ananasi in combat? I'm not known to be scared of too much, but I don't think I'd ever want to tangle with one of them. There was one time, about a year ago now, when I saw three of the Iron Riders try convincing one of the Ananasi it was time to move on to a new place. That was in Louisiana, and there's more of the werespiders there than most people ever want to think about. Anyway, I didn't much like that group, so I gave the eight-legger warning that they were coming. He nodded his thanks and I went off to watch what happened from a distance.

The Garou showed up in their human skins, and they tried being about as reasonable as most Europeans, meanin' they said, "Get the hell out of here," and then acted shocked when the werespider told them they should go off and rape each other. Next thing you know, one of 'em's got a klaive shoved halfway through the werespider's chest. Only, he didn't cut anything more than the shirt on the man. When the knife struck, the Ananasi's chest just sort of flowed like water and then it ran up the fool's hand and flowed over his arm. In less time than it takes to explain, that Garou was covered in tiny black widow spiders. He died about an hour later, when the poisons in his body finally decided they'd made him twitch and moan long enough. Long before he died, though, both of his friends were moving from this world to the next. See, they forgot that Ananasi sometimes run in packs, too, and they never saw the others 'til after the spiders had dropped from the trees and started spinning webs.

There's no love lost between the Garou and the Ananasi, but some claim the Ananasi aren't even capable of love, so that don't much surprise me.

Bastet

Ain't too many of the Bastet over here, and I reckon that's a good thing. Just like most of the Pure Ones, they ain't been takin' the Garou attitude too well. Sadly, they keep trying to fight instead of trying to make themselves scarce. The Garou got numbers on their side, and the two Breeds have always gotten along like cats and dogs to begin with.

There's a lot of bad blood between the Indians and the Europeans anyway, but this ain't helpin' a damn bit. I'm almost afraid we're gonna see the Bastet of America go the same way as the Camazotz. But I hope not.

Camazotz

You ever hear of the werebats? No? You know why? 'Cause there ain't any proof left that they ever existed. They supposedly called themselves the Camazotz, and they were always the weakest and smallest of the Changing Breeds. My grandfather used to say when Coyote made the Camazotz — if he really did make them, that is — that Coyote must've been joking.

If they ever existed, they're gone now. I've heard that the Garou killed most of 'em in the first War of Rage and Spaniards killed the rest over here. Story is the 'bats never got as far north as Texas, and there was only about a dozen of 'em in Mexico and maybe a few more south of there.

Gone. Destroyed completely by outsiders who couldn't understand that they were peaceful, by all accounts. The Camazotz were called "the Messengers of Luna" when they existed. They were supposed to work as Luna's voice here on Gaia. If they were ever really here, I guess the Garou didn't like the way they sang.

Corax

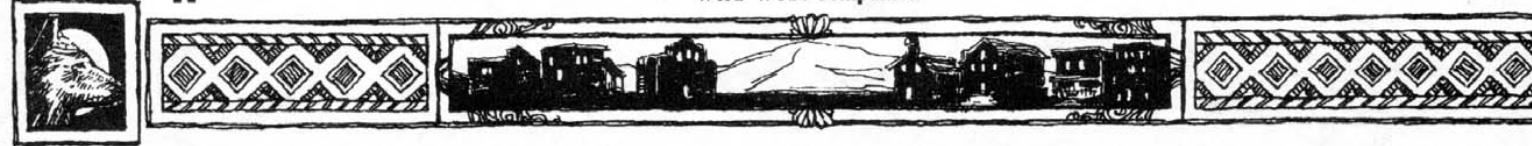
The wereravens are smart, almost as smart as us. They keep sticking their noses in and warnin' everyone on both sides about what the others are doing, then they flap away and watch what happens. They've had a bit more luck than I have in stopping this foolishness, but not really enough to matter in the long run.

I hope they stay smart enough to live through this, but I have doubts.

Gurahl

The werebears are still going strong, but I don't reckon that can last much longer. They're slow to anger, but they're getting there. They've been mistreated by the Garou since the first, and the hunters out there shootin' their Kinfolk dead ain't makin' it any better for them.

I can't say as it's true, but a Corax told me not long ago that some of the werewolves are hunting the Gurahl while the werebears hibernate. Guess that's the easiest way to handle the affair. Wouldn't be much of a fight any other way 'cause the Gurahl could whup the Garou in a one-on-one fair fight any day of the week. Mind you, that seems to be the biggest advantage the Garou have in any case: They don't fight one-on-one, they fight in packs.



Garou

What can I say about the Garou that you don't already know? They're here, and I don't reckon they plan on goin' anywhere for a while. It's getting ugly right now, what with them fightin' each other and then takin' the time to whup the hell out of every other Changing Breed. I don't see how they manage to have that much energy, myself.

The way most of these folks talk, you'd think the War of Rage was long in the past. Hell, you'd think they'd learned their lesson from the last one, but it ain't so. This War of Rage just ain't as well-organized as the last one. They haven't really set out to destroy everything that ain't a human or a Garou, it's just happenin' that way.

There's a group of the Garou called the Black Spiral Dancers. They gave themselves over to the Wyrms a while back, and I don't reckon they much like the rest of their brethren. They'd just as soon roast 'em alive and feed on the remains — I know 'cause I've seen 'em do it a few times.

Lotsa folks don't think there's all that many of 'em around, but I know different. They're here, but they know how to hide themselves. Ever been out in the forest late at night and heard what sounded like birds talkin' to each other? Well, that's all fine and good, except that the birds you hear are the sort who like to work in the daytime and sleep when the sun sets. 'Bout half the time, it might just be the whole gang felt the need to chatter. The rest of the time, it's likely the Dancers lettin' each other know what's goin' on in their territory.

There don't look to be that many left right now, but I'll explain why that is in a minute or so. Yes, I know you want to know now, which is why I'll get around to it in my own time. I like seein' you fidget.

Nuwisha

My kind's got rules we follow, too, and those rules say there're only a handful of us on Gaia at any time. I'm one of 'em. I can't speak for the others, but I can tell you I hate what I've been seeing. I ain't gonna sugarcoat it, neither. We got more ugly shit flowing down to the ground these days than anyone needs to see. We got vampires, a second War of Rage, Garou with attitudes, and the new European religion: Industrialization. Yep. I called it a religion. Anything takes off as big as that has and means so much to so many is a religion in my book — just not a clean one. Humans have decided, right or wrong, that everything they see is theirs for the taking,

and there ain't a thing bein' done about it.

I tried. I worked hard to see that the Wyrms couldn't get past the Mississippi, but I didn't do so well. I got cocky and stupid. That's just the way it is with me and most of my kind. I challenged and defied everything that came my way, and I got my ass kicked a dozen or so times for it. I won a few, but I lost just as many. I didn't like the odds no more, so I quit playing. Now I'm just back to watchin' what happens and messin' with the ones who really deserve it.

I did my part. I hid the kibas from stupid Garou, and I helped protect the special places from the Wyrms, too. But I failed in my goal. Some things are inevitable, like Luna showing her face and hiding it away again, or like the tide of people washing over the Pure Lands and leavin' a trail of filth and pain behind them to mark their way. I sound bitter? Well, I am bitter. I am angry and disappointed. On the other hand, I have so many new playmates that I have trouble deciding where to start. It's my way. Accept it or don't, it makes no difference to me.

Ratkin

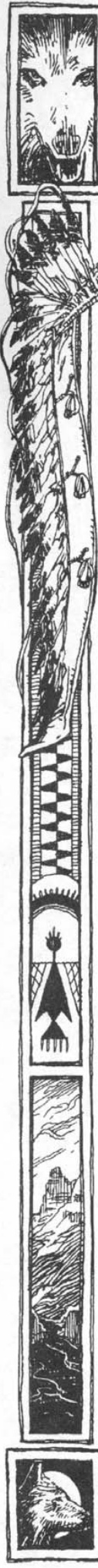
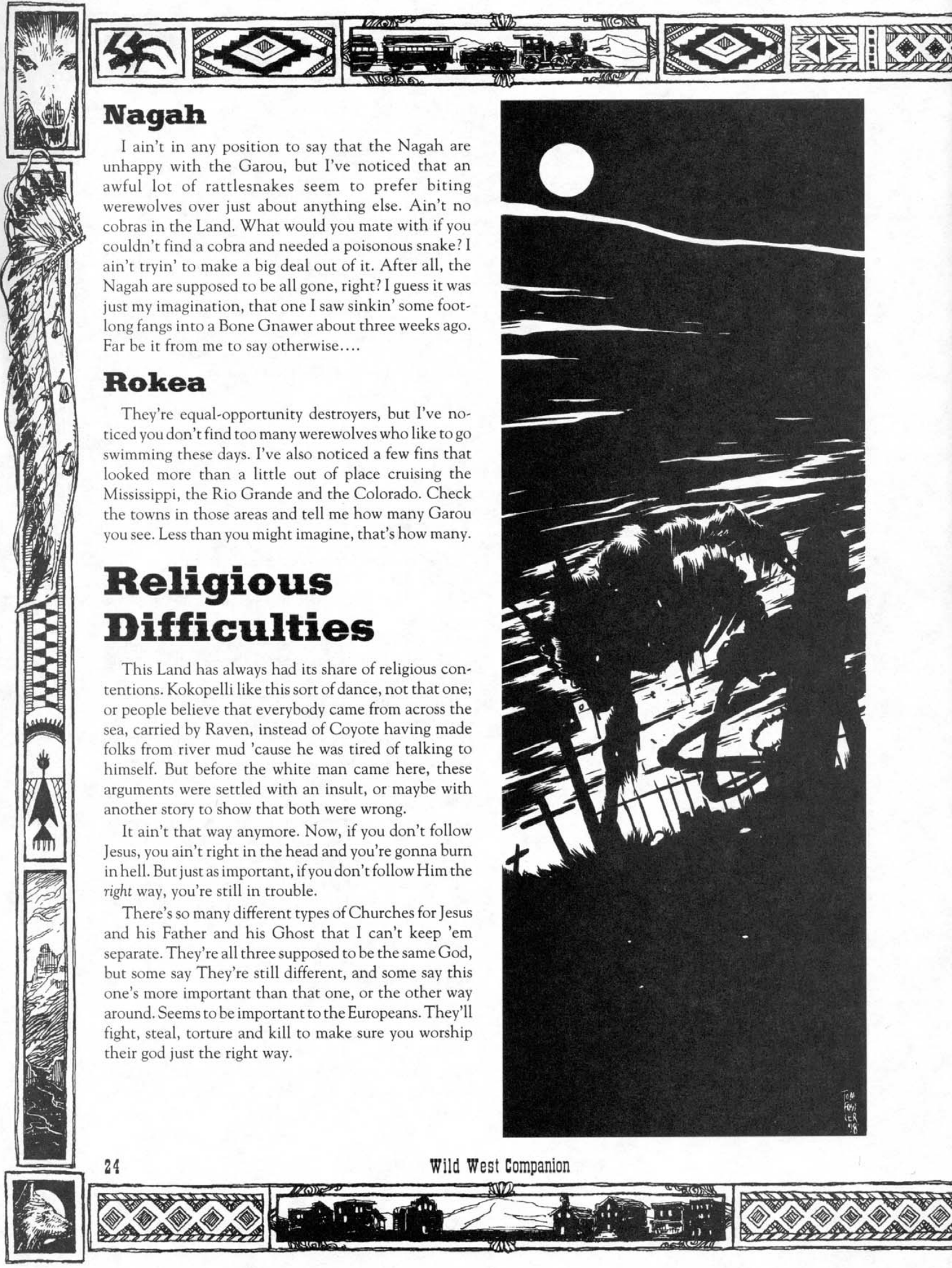
The wererats are a little bitchy about this whole conflict thing. I think it has something to do with the werewolves treating them like vermin. They go about their business, stealing what they want, eating what they will and shitting where they please, then along come the Garou getting upset with 'em and killing off the rats wherever they see 'em.

But the rats are still doing okay, so far. They've had a few strange mixes coming out of mingling with the local populations, though: On Coyote's name, I saw a Ratkin not long ago who had a squirrel's tail when he changed over to his man-rat form. I saw another who looked suspiciously like a mink. Maybe they're trying to save all the other rodents from the trappers, or maybe they just don't like the quality of rats left behind when the Garou and humans get done with a place.

That's okay, but the first time I see a wererabbit, I'm spreading the word far and wide. The way rabbits get to mating, the Ratkin that breeds with them could take over the whole world.

Mokolé

You don't see too many Garou relaxing down in Florida or Louisiana. Can you guess why? I'll give you a hint: Mokolé are Earth Mother's memory, and they remember the first War of Rage very well. I don't think they like the Garou anymore. Not that I can really blame them.



Nagah

I ain't in any position to say that the Nagah are unhappy with the Garou, but I've noticed that an awful lot of rattlesnakes seem to prefer biting werewolves over just about anything else. Ain't no cobras in the Land. What would you mate with if you couldn't find a cobra and needed a poisonous snake? I ain't tryin' to make a big deal out of it. After all, the Nagah are supposed to be all gone, right? I guess it was just my imagination, that one I saw sinkin' some foot-long fangs into a Bone Gnawer about three weeks ago. Far be it from me to say otherwise....

Rokea

They're equal-opportunity destroyers, but I've noticed you don't find too many werewolves who like to go swimming these days. I've also noticed a few fins that looked more than a little out of place cruising the Mississippi, the Rio Grande and the Colorado. Check the towns in those areas and tell me how many Garou you see. Less than you might imagine, that's how many.

Religious Difficulties

This Land has always had its share of religious contentions. Kokopelli like this sort of dance, not that one; or people believe that everybody came from across the sea, carried by Raven, instead of Coyote having made folks from river mud 'cause he was tired of talking to himself. But before the white man came here, these arguments were settled with an insult, or maybe with another story to show that both were wrong.

It ain't that way anymore. Now, if you don't follow Jesus, you ain't right in the head and you're gonna burn in hell. But just as important, if you don't follow Him the right way, you're still in trouble.

There's so many different types of Churches for Jesus and his Father and his Ghost that I can't keep 'em separate. They're all three supposed to be the same God, but some say They're still different, and some say this one's more important than that one, or the other way around. Seems to be important to the Europeans. They'll fight, steal, torture and kill to make sure you worship their god just the right way.



The Mormons

There's a group out here, the Mormons.... They swear Jesus came out here to the Pure Lands and laid out a whole new set of rules for a guy named John Smith to write down. Others don't like those new rules, and they call the Mormons all sorts of names.

'Far as I can tell, the Mormons call themselves the "Chosen Ones" and I bet that set some britches on fire. But more important, they say a man can have more than one wife, and that caused the biggest trouble. By havin' more than one wife, a fellow leaves some of them uglier or poorer men without, and that's sure to cause a fight.

The Mormons got whupped on a whole bunch, but then they got all together and moved out to the Great Salt Lake and built a nice, proper fort. They ain't had any real troubles with the Pure Ones 'cause no one wants the lake, and there's enough of them that they can fend off other settlers with an attitude. Had themselves a right proper fight with the U.S. government at one point, but they finally settled that matter and were allowed to stay near that lake of unpure waters.

One of my friends says the real cause of their persecution comes down to them liking to share everything instead of owning anything. I figure that wouldn't go over well with the cattle barons or the gold miners. My guess is that they refuse to share the wealth. Some people with none ain't happy to see others with too much, especially when the treasure in question is women.

The Jewish Faith

Nearest I can figure it, there's a group of people who believe in the same god as the Christians, but the members don't believe Jesus was the Son of God. That seems to make them victims of all sorts of nonsense. In the East, they're pretty well-established, and while there's a tussle now and then, it doesn't get too ugly. But out here, where folks make up the law as they go, the story's a bit different. Maybe it's something in the air or just the thought that there's nothing else to do on a long summer night, but these folks can't seem to have a minute's peace.

Just as soon as they get noticed, they get trouble. Seems like that's the case with almost anyone who don't fit in around these parts, but I get the feelin' there's a lot of very old grudges that pop up when the Jews are involved. A good half of the people I've spoken to about them all claim the Jews have their money, or stole their money, or loaned them money and want it back. The other half just believe the Jews are wrong about Jesus and need a proper education, even if that means burning down their homes and businesses and temples to make the point.

The ones I've met dressed like all the other Europeans, spoke the same and everything else, but that Jesus fella keeps getting in the way. Me? I reckon we're getting into the same problem as with the Mormons all over again: Them that have money are getting whupped by them that don't have money. Jealousy is an ugly thing, but white men like to feel good about the things they do, especially when they know they're wrong. So they point at a difference of faith and put the blame on the "heathens."

Others

The ex-slaves have a lot of slightly different outlooks on religion. Some of them have become Christians, and others follow different beliefs brought from the land that these people were stolen from. They always have trouble here because of their skin color if for no other reason. It's the same problem as before. They ain't quite the same, so they've got to be educated in the ways of Jesus and God. If they already know about Him, it don't make a difference. There's always another reason to chase after 'em hiding somewhere, or if a reason can't be found, the whites'll make one up.

The same is true of the Chinese. They have their own gods and beliefs, but they're quiet about 'em and seldom make any trouble. They handle problems in their own ways, rather than calling on the law to settle the matters. They stick together and leave everyone else alone. Maybe they've had the right idea all along. If you don't get noticed, there's no excuse to kill you in the name of God.

The Pure Ones are whupped on because we have land that someone else takes a shining to, or because we took a shining to someone else's land, so we were there before the folks who are hankering after it now. We don't much take to the whole idea of just letting people walk all over us, or kill off our food supplies, like they're doing with the buffalo. But as soon as the Europeans hear we don't think their god is so special, they take that as a good enough reason to come teach us the facts of Heaven and Hell.

The Christians are a strange people. They dress in their finest clothes and bow their heads in prayer. They read from their Holy Bible and preach sermons of peace and tolerance. One on one, it seems most Christians follow their beliefs as well as anyone else, but when they come together, united in a cause, the rules of their faith change — in ugly and frightening ways.

I don't reckon religion is a bad thing in and of itself, but some folk sure do their best to make it that way. I've spoken to a few padres about the Ten Commandments, and they seem like a good enough set of rules. Just kind of sad to see how they don't apply when religion gets in the way.



Regions

I used to be disgusted, now I'm just amused

— Button slogan

Everywhere you go in the Land these days, there are settlers or people from other lands who've made themselves comfortable on lands once held by the Pure Ones. That don't bother me so much 'cause there's still lots of places untouched by the interlopers.

I reckon I've crossed this Land about seven or eight times and each time I pass a place, it's different than it was before. More marks of the Europeans and less of the things that made this Land pure left untouched by European hands. More of Europe and lands beyond even that distant place. Less of the soul of the Land left for the children of our children.

Perhaps if I didn't follow Coyote, that would make me bitter. Instead, I am merely curious.

The Northeast

To the north and east, where Wendigo walks and his children were once the masters of the Land, the Europeans have taken almost everything. The MicMac are almost gone, and the Five Nations are weaker than their ancestors could've ever imagined. Where trees once covered everything and the forests hid the secrets of the world, there are places where the ground is covered with houses and buildings and places where great stone pipes spill foulness into the air.

The Europeans have discovered a new master, one they call "Industrialization." It doesn't surprise me that so many of the people there leave for the West when all there is to leave behind is hours in a hot room with hundreds of others, making furniture or fabrics to cover hundreds of people instead of only one. Great ships come from across oceans to Boston and New York, and they always bring more of the Europeans, who hope for better lives than they ever found in their own lands.

The people there are always busy, and they are strange to me. Though they have their own homes and the Land is no more theirs than it is the Pure Ones', they continue to seem sour. Smilin' is almost a crime there, which is a sad thing to see.

Anyplace they don't work in the banks or the warehouses where they buy specialties from other lands, they put their factories. Many of these places work with fabrics and wood to make clothes or tables that would have taken weeks or months to create

before the great machines were built to make the work of hours take just minutes.

Boats go into the waters of the sea and come back with fish enough to feed whole villages every day, except for Sunday, when the fishermen worship their god. Others work to carve the bones from the Land, takin' granite and marble to build more things the Europeans think they need in order to be comfortable.

And farther north, in Maine and Connecticut, the people cut down trees, which become furniture or paper for writing their books and telling their tales. There is no tradition of storytelling among these people. That is sad, I think.

Loggers risk their lives to cut down trees, often enraging the spirits and the Wendigo alike. The great rivers run not with water but with wood. Many of the men who work tearing down the trees run across them on the water and keep them from getting stuck where the rivers fork or where the rocks beneath the water might stop them.

I've worked with these men, trying to understand why they do what they do, and the answer is always the same: money. They work to survive in a world that cuts away the old ways and replaces them with industry.

Most of these people seem unhappy. Many work from the time the sun rises to the time it sets, cutting trees or melting metal and pouring the burning steel into molds for railroad ties, or carving and polishing the marble to place in buildings. They dress themselves in layers of clothing and run from one place to the next. They work in places where their hands and eyes are in danger from their great machines, and if they are injured and can no longer keep up, they are cast aside.

In the streets there are others still, ones who cannot work or choose not to. Some beg from others for a scrap of food. Some sneak after others with a knife or six-gun, and they take what they will. For all their claims of civilization, the Europeans share the same problems found in the wild: The strong survive, and the weak are ignored or killed. The factories belch their filth into the air, and the people in their homes dump trash and excrement into the waters where they bathe and drink.

In many places, the Europeans still work in the older ways of their people. They till the land and reap what they sow and feed themselves on what they can grow with their own hands. They raise cows for milk, and they bake bread made from flour ground from the grains they grow. They live simple lives and seem content.

There are small towns where the people still walk with a spring in their steps, and where they can look their neighbors in the eyes without fear of offending. These towns have people who remember their fathers and honor their mothers. They are content to live with Gaia, though they seldom acknowledge her properly.

Hidden in some of these areas, where the people still love the land, are the coal miners. In Pennsylvania and Ohio, the miners don't search for gold, they search for the black rocks that fuel the machines of the factories and power the engines of the great locomotives.

To see these men workin' so hard to carve the Land apart fills me with fear. Surely these coal pits they dig are the heart of the worst troubles in the Land. The black rocks they bring forth feed the gouts of blackness spilling from the factories. The coal is, I think, the cause of Storm Eater's release. Perhaps the coal feeds him or is a sign of where he was trapped. I do not know, but I know the coal is evil.

But in the cities, where the people are crowded together despite the land resting only a few miles away, they grow bitter and learn to prey on their own kind as if they were natural enemies.


There are places in the north and east where Gaia is forgotten. The Wendigo call these places "scabs," and there is infection within these scabs, infections that fester and spread. Within these cities, the people work and they sleep. They eat and they mate and they grow old and die, sometimes never leaving the cities to see the rest of the Land. Every day, there are ships coming from other lands and people on those ships who come here to stay. The infection grows....

The Southern States

The Europeans are never content. First, they drive the Pure Ones from the land, then they decide the land is too harsh, so they steal people from other lands and make them work on the plantations they've built on the blood of others. I do not like the southern states. They are too hot and too sticky with moisture in the air. Breathing the air there is like breathing the air right before a storm that never comes.

But those states are cleaner than the ones of the north and east. There is less of industry and more of farming. They crush the Land into submission. They cover swamps and make them hold houses built by the poor to shelter the wealthy.





But that ain't really fair. There's some amazing diversity to the whole place. There's rivers clean enough to drink from and fish aplenty to feed on. There's mountains old enough to be half the size they were when Gaia created them, and valleys as deep and secretive as a woman's heart. The bayous are places of special power and home to the Mokolé, as are the swamps in other places. The Land is green and fertile, and not all of the work of the Europeans has come close to crushing the life from Gaia here. There's little of the Europeans' industrialization because the connection to the land is stronger here, despite the plantation owners' presence.

Many have told me that the South is closest to Europe's ideals. There is royalty, though few of its members have titles. A few hold all the land and pay others to raise and cut their crops. I've never been to Europe, but I reckon I'll get there soon enough. Then I can see for myself if what I've heard is true.

The Land is green, but the hearts of men seem somehow darker here. Any place where people must wear chains bears a certain taint, and that's true of the South and the East. I've heard that before the Civil War began there were more slaves than freemen in the South. I don't know if it's true, but that's what I've heard. People were bought, sold and traded the same as horses. I don't understand the need Europeans have to own everything they see, but that need is strong. The Civil War ended slavery, but it hasn't ended the strong feelings against the nonwhites. Every type of person is less if they aren't of European stock. Less still if their blood is mingled.

The plantations still thrive, but now they pay the workers who tend the crops. Mostly they pay them with a roof over their heads and a few meals a day. The laws of the land have changed, but the realities are the same. The very men who worked as slaves now labor as freemen for the right to live where they were once kept, and for the right to eat the food that was once theirs automatically. The biggest difference between then and now that I can see is that those ex-slaves can walk away from their jobs and seek better places if they so desire and if they can avoid being caught by the whites who hold a grudge against them.

There's just as many ports and harbors in the South as in the North, but what gets shipped down there is a bit different. Fabrics and linens come back to the docks, replacing the cotton that was sent away. Livestock comes in and either is sold to a few farmers who try to raise cattle or sheep, or it is slaughtered immediately.

The fruits they grow in the southernmost areas are sweet and filled with juices, but the heat of the summer months is so great that it drains the spirit from the people who farm them.

The anger here is strong, and the sadness is even stronger. People who never thought about life changing on them wallow in their pity or cling to the illusions of their previous life. But all around them, the beauty of the Land and the spirit of the freed men and the wealthy who remain grow to hide that darkness. On the rivers, there are boats carrying the promise of pleasure and the fortunes of card players. Much like the gambling houses of the West, these floating palaces offer the possibility of idle wealth to folks who don't want to work. Cardsharps, hustlers, women and men who can be purchased for a night, a week or a lifetime — they all move about as if in a dream.

In the deepest parts of the swamps and bayous, other people wait and work their own magic, living like parasites, hidden in the places none would think to look. There are pirates there still, waiting to attack the ships from other lands and steal their cargo.

Just like in the West, there are carpenters, blacksmiths and other tradesmen here. There are farmers, and people who deal in pleasure for money. But the society is so different it could well be from another land entirely. The money here is older, more established and harder to come in contact with. There are people who wander the land, prey on the unwary and wait for a chance to take what they cannot earn easily. There are other religions that are not accepted, but they are too feared for any to dare persecuting.

Laws are older and better established than they are in the West and just as surely corrupted by anyone who has the strength or power to do it.

There are distilleries, where the hard liquors are brewed and sold to the rest of the country. Factories here craft guns and bullets in numbers most can't begin to imagine.

The farms are sometimes strange to me. They grow foods on some, but on others they grow cotton or tobacco, and the workers suffer daily from the thorns of the cotton and the poisons of the tobacco soaking into their skin. I'm sort of fond of the denim made from cotton — I have a pair of old Levi Strauss' work pants that I take with me to the colder areas. They may not keep me warm all the time, but they work better than a loincloth against a cold wind. I know tobacco's value very well. Tobacco has been enough to save my hide in a good trade on a few occasions. But I never thought so much land could be taken for growing these two plants.

The Civil War in the South

The states south of the Mason-Dixon Line really do have a very different way of life from what most of the world and the rest of the United States understand. Contrary to history books, the Civil War has less to do with slavery initially. The biggest conflicts have a common source from 1850 through to the end of the war — whether or not the central government of the United States should have power over the individual states and laws created by the smaller governments. Taxation, including strong tariffs that hurt the southern economy and bolster the fledgling northern economy of the “industrialized states,” is far more responsible for the actual war than the issue of slavery.

Slavery, nevertheless, is a major issue. Throughout Europe and most of the “civilized world,” the idea of slavery has become reprehensible. But the fact remains that many southerners feel slavery is justified. They argue that by providing food, shelter and medical care to the enslaved they are protecting a race unprepared for the modern world and in need of education merely to survive. The rarity of such education — rightly thought to encourage runaways — is a point the slave owners carefully avoid addressing. They also argue that the cost of actually paying laborers to work in their fields is too exorbitant and is sure to drive the cost of their goods to uncompetitively high prices. The tariffs the federal government already imposes are handling that matter, though. The costs for moving the cotton and other staples to Europe are already high, especially considering the troubles with piracy. It is not as fashionable as it had been a century before, but piracy still occurs often enough to cause southerners substantial losses of profits.

By citing slavery as a reason for the war, Lincoln successfully stops several other countries in Europe from getting involved. France and England lean heavily toward aiding the southern states before the

Emancipation Proclamation becomes a part of the greater picture. Abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic look to the freeing of the slaves as a positive idea, and both France and England are forced to keep away from the internal conflicts of the U.S., else risk political unrest at home.

The changes in the southern states after the war are profound. A separate form of money printed and used during the war becomes completely worthless by the conflict's end. A Confederate dollar is worth roughly one cent by the end of the war, and people who are wealthy one day are poor the next. The loss of their economic means of survival adds heavily to the burdens suddenly faced by the South, and the enforced freedom of blacks does nothing to ease troubles in the region. Hatred of the northern states and the freed black population leads to more unrest, and in the failed economy of the South, blacks have virtually no opportunities to thrive. Lands awarded to blacks in the war become frequent targets of vandalism. Any attempt at growing crops is an open invitation for trouble, and the violence most often goes far beyond the destruction of farmed lands and into rape, torture and murder. So, it's quite reasonable for many of the freed slaves to move toward the West as a way of escaping the troubles in the southern states.

Despite relocation, blacks face still more hardships. Many of the people who'd fought on both sides of the Civil War move into the territories, bringing their biases and hatreds with them. The one sure place to find Confederate and Union soldiers on the lam is the West. Laws are harder to enforce, and it's easier to lose oneself amid the masses migrating to the region.


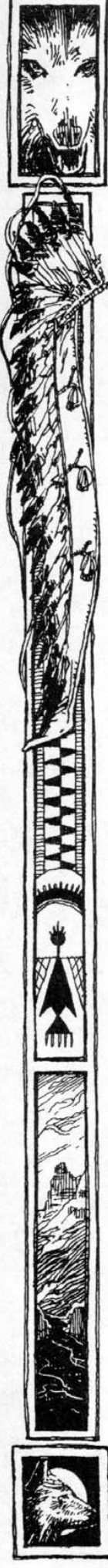
The Civil War changes the ways of the South a great deal, leaving scars that won't fade for generations and, in some cases, remain painful to this day.

The Chickasaw and the Cherokee used to live in these lands, and a few still do, but most of them are gone, pushed to other places. The ones who remain are strong, but they move carefully, for they are so outnumbered. These are the regions once held by the Croatan, and their loss is felt by anyone who knows how to sense the Land.

Maybe this is the place where the quietest of the Wym's servants move. Surely the anger and fear in the

Land is the best soil for the Corrupter's weeds. I do not like the places in the South and East. I don't think they were meant to be what they have become. The people are busy, and the land is bountiful, but there is a deep dark spirit in the ground, and I think it touches everything.

Many of the people leave here and go to the West, seeking peace or a better life. Just as many go west to take what they want, spurred on by the losses they took in the



Civil War and driven by hatreds few outside their homeland could hope to understand.

Even before the Civil War started, there was a lot about the southern states that was going wrong. There were people fussing and fighting about the treatment of slaves, and there was a whole lot of tension about the states and territories to the west, where runaway slaves were given their freedom. There were fights about who would get the cotton grown in the South because the people in the North wanted that cotton for their mills, and so did the people in Europe. But the Europeans were willing to pay more, and the people in the North didn't much like that. I don't reckon the land up there took to growing cotton very well. That seems to be the truest secret of the southern states: Everything has more than one face, and it only shows the face it wants you to see. The people claim they are enlightened and educated, then they cower in the shadows when they hear the voodoo drums in the bayous late at night. They claim they are a part of the United States, but many also swear the war isn't over. They claim that all are equal, but they do not hold to this belief.

The great Mississippi River cuts the southern states, separates them from the areas to the west and connects them to the cities and people of the North. But I think there must be something more than just a river that divides them. I think there is much more. Perhaps in time I will truly understand what secrets the land there holds.

The Corn Belt and the Great Plains

Kansas, Illinois, and a few of them other "states" have got themselves into a fuss over the trains. Some people think they're a mighty fine idea, but others ain't so sure. Take the cowboys, for instance. Most of the folks working as cowpunchers don't much like the idea of the trains coming any further south than Kansas 'cause these fellas might not see much more work if that happens.

Most cowboys work hard when they are working, but I still say if they move the iron horses and their rails through that area, them boys are gonna have to get real jobs. Working with the cattle when it's time to round 'em up ain't a whole lot of fun. You gotta drag 'em from all over the cattle barons' lands and you gotta do the ugly work of branding the young'uns and castrating the older ones. When the time comes for moving 'em out, you really earn your pay. Try moving 3,500 head of beef sometime. They move easy enough, but stopping them

is like trying to stop the clouds overhead. Often as not they try to stampede, and then you've got a situation on your hands.

Then there's all the predators to think about. Talkin' to the cowboys, you'd think the wolves were waiting in a line and takin' numbers for a chance to throw themselves at the herd. I been on a cattle run or two. Can't say as I much liked the work, which is a mite rough and sometimes goes 20 hours a day or so, but I don't recall all that many pumas or coyotes hoistin' rifles to shoot down the cows or steal 'em all away.

What you get by way of predators is normally human and not too bright. Some people see all that beef and figure it's there for the claiming, least until they grow a bloody third eye somewhere on their ugly faces. But both times I went on cattle runs, I hung around long enough to hear a few stories start to grow. Except for the one case I know of when 10 Wendigo came out and made a snack of the cowpunchers, the only big attacks by anything else I've heard about came a few days after everyone was paid and they wanted to talk up how hard their time out in the wilds was.

The Chisolm Trail runs from Texas to Abilene, Kansas, where the train comes along to gather up the cows and take 'em to Chicago for slaughtering. While it ain't exactly the nicest hike around, it ain't nowhere near as bad as them boys wanted everyone to think. Aside from too little sleep and the cook's ability to burn anything, water included, it just wasn't that rough.

Most of what you got going on in the whole area of the Great Plains is nothing but farming. Sometimes I figure the biggest threat in the whole region is boredom. Oh, don't misunderstand me, there's some damn strange stuff going on out there, but it ain't like the whole area's exactly fraught with danger and overflowin' with adventures.

There's the whole bank robber thing, and the train robber thing, too, but most of that just started in the Midwest then moved on to the West like everything else.

How's that? Hell, about half yer bank robber and other criminal types — that's the real ones, not the stories you hear about "rampagin' Injuns" — got their start with the end of the Civil War. When things got too tough for 'em at home, these no-accounts just ran off to other places, robbed a bank or two and scurried on back to the farm to spend what they "earned." Jesse James is doing a fine job of just that even as I speak. Lives back Missouri way as I understand it. Seems he figured since the United States government wants him for working on the side of the Confederacy, he decided he may as well keep on doin' the wrong thing and makin' the best living he can in the worst possible way. I figure the



bounty on his head'll get him shot one of these days, and probably by someone he figures he can trust. I don't care what breed ya are, when there's money involved, it starts makin' people think the wrong way.

Chicago, Illinois

You got some strange people livin' in Chicago. First, they built the whole city on top of a swamp, and then, just so they could show Gaia who's boss, they changed the way the Chicago River flows. It used to move to the east, but that didn't suit their fancy, so they made it move to the west. That's a mighty impressive feat. I suspect the main reason folk up there stay up there is 'cause they're right on Lake Michigan and can move their stuff down the rivers to other parts of the country. That, and there's some mighty fine fishin' in the area. 'Course, the fishin's starting to go bad on account of the pollution from their factories.

They got a lot of factories up there. They got a lot of cattle, too. Just 'cause I wondered what happened to all them cattle, I moseyed on up to the Windy City a while back. They're doin' some strange things up there. They got stockyards full of cows just waiting to be slaughtered and put in cans. Cans of cow and cans of vegetables and cans of fruit. They're crazy for cooking things up and canning them. Seems if they cook food up right and put it in their little tin drums, they can make it last for years. Friend of mine actually bought himself a whole cow leg inside a big ol' pyramid-shaped can. Ate the thing with his whole family. Said it tasted mighty good but a little like the tin it come out of. Me? I'll stick to eatin' what I can catch or pluck from the ground and the trees. I don't reckon all the salt they use on that stuff is good for ya. I get enough salt when I'm desperate enough to eat dried tack.

Chicago's getting fat off the money from canning alone, and they got other industries going just as strong. Matter of fact, they're building a great big place up there, so big that it's already being called a "skyscraper" by the folks living in the area. You can be a mile outside the city and see that thing sticking out of the ground like a mesa. I reckon they figure if the city gets any bigger, it'll take people all day to go from their homes to the factories where they work, so it's better just to make people live and work in places as crowded as a beehive.

Canning and Other Industries

Canning foods is still a fairly new concept in the mid-1800s. During the Civil War, canning, along with munitions manufacturing, become powerful financial levers. Most of the industrialization taking place in the U.S. is in the northern states, and Chicago quickly comes to the forefront. While many of the towns to the northeast are busy with assembly-line production of wagons and munitions, Chicago takes the definitive lead in producing canned goods.

The military likes the idea of feeding its troops safe, nutritious meals in the field, so the trend toward canned goods explodes. Sales to the Union and, to a much lesser extent, the Confederate armies enable the canning industry to become a staple in the U.S. that continues even today.

During the early days of canning, a little more experimentation occurs in the design of these handmade packages and what goes into them. Square cans, pyramid-shaped cans, and even stranger shapes are in abundance. It's even possible to purchase an entire beef roast in a can, though the cost is rather prohibitive and products along this line are normally purchased only for the military. Some of the more common brands found today on supermarket shelves, Borden, Armour, etc., get their start during this era.

Another major industry that burgeons at this time is the manufacturing of covered wagons. Conestoga, by far the leader in the field, starts in Conestoga, Pennsylvania and becomes a financial giant during the Civil War

and the Westward Expansion. Conestoga produces very large wagons, designed for teams of six or more horses. The vehicles are built exceedingly well by the standards of the day. These wagons have floors shaped to avoid slippage of their load, which is a very strong selling point for merchants carrying supplies to the West. With a carrying capability of 6,000 pounds, a broad base and extremely thick wheels, the wagons are ideal for families moving to the western territories. During the time of the California Gold Rush alone, over 12,000 wagons and "prairie schooners" move from east of the Mississippi to the territories. As an example of size, some of the prairie schooners have beds as long as 16 feet, rear wheels up to six feet in diameter and canvases that rise 11 feet or more into the air. Covered wagons are, quite literally, the only sensible way to move products into the frontier territories, at least until the advent of the locomotive.

Studebaker, one of the earliest automobile manufacturers, also has an earlier incarnation as a wagonmaker. The company's sales are not as heavy as Conestoga's because Studebaker's base is in Ohio and not as convenient for many of the families moving to the West.

It's no exaggeration to say that the livelihood of a family moving west depends on the strength and durability of its wagon. Without a reliable means of transport, settlers are left to the elements and bereft of the supplies they need to survive until they can construct a house.



Wagons have to be able to carry food, fresh water, every household treasure, the family and its entire fortune. Wagon trains, large groups of wagons that travel together for protection during the arduous trek to a new home, often suffer not only Indian attacks (though fewer than it is popular to imagine), but also the depredations of highwaymen and cutthroats. Wagon trains mean easy pickings for any group with enough firepower and audacity to attack them. When fully loaded, the wagons certainly work well enough as protection from bullets and arrows, but often at the expense of whatever supplies the passengers might be carrying.

Munitions

Munitions manufacturers such as Winchester, Colt and Browning make their fortunes during the Civil War and in the decades before and after it. With the design of bullets and the manufacture of breech-loading rifles, revolvers and automatic rifles, the firearms companies of the day grow wealthy at an amazing rate.

While a great deal of craftsmanship goes into the final product, the munitions companies are among the first in the U.S. to take real advantage of the assembly line. From the time of the Mexican-American War, and even earlier, the sales and demand for good, reliable firepower start to climb. In war and in peace times, munitions manufacturers fatten on the need for weapons and ammunition.


Railroads

The competition to build the first transcontinental railway system is one of the most serious industries of the era. Simply meeting the demand for supplies required by the railroad companies helps to expand the U.S. timber and steel industries. Increase in the latter, in turn, increases the necessity for the coal-mining industry because steel must be forged. Settlements throughout the U.S. proper and the territories, which would later become states, wage fierce competitions to woo the rail line to their locales. Bribery, blackmail, murder...anything goes in the efforts to win the railroads' affections because train access means the powers-that-be in those towns can grow wealthy selling supplies and can count on their customer base to grow as more people arrive by train. In many cases, railroads are the difference between life and death for the smaller towns.

The sheer manpower needed to build the railroads is immense. In the years between 1840 and 1850 alone, 6,200 miles of rail are laid across the country. In the next decade, 21,000 miles of rail are set down for the locomotives.

During the Civil War, both sides use railroads to move supplies and troops. In fact, the substantial headway of the railroads in the North is very much a deciding





factor in the outcome of the war. Most of the rails switch from north-south and begin running east-west more than a decade before the war takes place. The promise of easy gold in the West, plus the need of the territories to order ready-made supplies from the New England states and New York, make these shifts in the direction of the railroads inevitable.

The South never sees the same need for railroads as the North does, which proves to be a strategic weakness in the Confederacy's supply lines and deployment of troops. Once again, industry rears its ugly head and people who'd stuck to farming as a way of life feel the impact.

Timber Industry

Before the Westward Expansion, Maine has a fairly strong foothold in the timber industry. Once the need to conquer new territories arises, however, the north-western regions of the continent suddenly find themselves poised to make millions in the supply of raw materials to the established mills of New England. The railroads play an important part in moving the logs, as do the Great Lakes. Most of the Northwest is so thick with wood for the taking that few feel there can ever be a need to worry about demand outdistancing supply. Lumberjacks and new textile mills quickly move west in an effort to claim their fortunes in the untouched forests. These people turn acres of woods into mountains of money, but the cost is high in counterattacks by the region's Indian tribes and in assaults by the outraged Wendigo.

The Steel Industry and the Mining Industry

Steel becomes a precious commodity in the wake of growing railroad needs and the demands of weapons manufacturers. Pittsburgh is among the first to take advantage of its natural resources, and by the end of the Civil War, the city is producing over two-thirds of the steel for the entire nation. Almost half of the states in the U.S. are rich in iron ore, and mining for the metal quickly grows to be an industry in which money is easily made. Strip-mining becomes a profitable and effective means of obtaining the iron ore. Equally important for the times is the production of copper, for telegraphs and use in manufacturing ammunition. Copper and iron, while not as precious as gold, are just as profitable.

The industrialization of the U.S. alters the face of the nation in ways few people could ever predict. Sadly, it also gives the Wyrms a powerful foothold in the Pure Lands.





The Great Lakes


The Europeans call them Michigan, Erie, Superior, Huron and Ontario. The Wendigo call them home. The Great Lakes are important to the Wendigo because of tradition and because of the ways these waters shape the lives of the tribes. The Europeans wonder why the Pure Ones are so upset with them, even as they cut down sacred forests and make their way through the Black Hills as if they owned the Land that Gaia gave to all to share.

Is it any wonder the Wendigo are on a killing spree? The white men keep coming into the area, taking what they need, or think they need, and leavin' behind less than even locusts might.

There are many tribes of Pure Ones in the Great Lakes region, but they might not be there for too much longer. The Europeans keep finding more things there that they need, and they like to use their great ships on the waters of the lakes to move what they steal from one part of the Land to another. The tribes have their traditions and they have their weapons. The white men have their guns, and they have their numbers, and most of all, they have their belief that they were destined to take this Land as their own. Even now, the Wendigo spread themselves too thin to stop the white tide from covering the Land. Most of my people have gone to the stars, and even if we were still here, we would not help. The Garou have made their desires known, and we plan to honor their wishes, even if it means they die for their foolishness.

The winters near the Great Lakes are violent and cold. There are times when a person can walk across the surface of Gitchigumi as if it were solid ground. It takes a great deal of cold to halt even a part of so large a lake. At first, the Wendigo thought they could make the Europeans stay away by making the winters too cold for them. All that did was hurt the trees and make the whites kill a few more animals for their pelts. Now the tribe hunts down whites and kills them whenever possible. Many of the other tribes blame Sasquatch for the deaths of the whites, but the Wendigo and me know better.

A few years back, I started rumors of gold up this way. I made sure it was in the months just before winter so that as many fools as could do so managed to work their way up here. A lot of them froze or starved along the way, but none of 'em got rich. I think maybe some of them weren't very well-educated. They missed the mark and got all the way up to Canada. That part I regret.



Now the damn fools are all the way up in the Yukon and raping the Land for the gold up there.

A lot of the settlers make their living with the Great Lakes. They fish for the salmon and trout and use their new canning processes to ship the meat to other places. The Pure Ones here don't much like that, and I can't say that I blame them. If the Europeans were only fishing for the locals, it might not matter, but they are fishing for so many people that the Indians here can't always get enough to feed themselves from lakes that should be plentiful. Also, many of the Europeans haven't learned not to shit where they eat, and their wastes go into the rivers and into the Great Lakes themselves.

There are a lot of trappers up here, white people who set deadly traps to catch what they are too lazy to hunt for. They've probably maimed as many animals as they've killed, and I know the Wendigo are getting tired of it. There's a bunch of the Wendigo who kill trappers on sight, and many more who follow them and let the steel teeth of the trappers' own traps fix the problem once and for all. But no matter how many die, there are others who are willing to take their place. The animals here are more plentiful than in Europe, I suppose, because these trappers and fur traders make a lot of money selling every kind of pelt to their people on the other side of the ocean. Some of them have even taken to mating pairs of the animals so they can raise them in cages and kill them when their furs are soft enough. Most don't even eat the meat.

A few of the Wendigo were thinking of returning the favor, but a Corax I know joined me in convincing them that would be a bad thing to do. I was going to let them do it at first, but he convinced me to explain the unpleasantness that would follow. Skin a few whites and the rest of them kill every red man for a thousand miles to make sure they got the right one. After all, we all look the same to them. The Wendigo finally listened, but only after we gave them a demonstration. I told one tavern of drunken whites that a red man had raped one of their women and they were off like a shot to kill every Indian they could find. All they found was the Wendigo waiting in the woods outside of their town, though. Sometimes the Corax are smarter than us Nuwisha, but not very often.

The Northwest

Brother Raven and his Corax are strong in the Northwest. They watch everything and they sometimes chase away anyone who gets too close to them. They also have seen the whites come to their homes and cut down trees and dig for precious metals in the ground. They too have seen the trains and the loggers, the trappers and the settlers who want to claim the land for their own. Mostly they watch and they squawk and they play tricks when the mood suits them. But just as with the Nuwisha, they do not interfere very often. The Garou have made clear that none of us is welcome to join in their sacred fights. Not all listen as well.

The Corax are smart. They work with the Garou and don't try to stand in their way. That way they can keep their homes and not fear for the safety of their Kinfolk. Still, I know they aren't happy about the logging and the settlers. It makes me wonder just how many people Europe must hold that so many can come here, and still there are many more left behind.

Mostly it's the Red Talons up in the Northwest, but already there are Get of Fenris showing themselves, and the Wendigo are making noises about getting rid of the "Wyrmbingers." They act like the Wyrms was never here before and they forget the battles of the past.

There is gold here, too, but it is harder to reach and many leave after just a few months of tryin' to find the stuff. That suits the Corax just fine because they don't like gold very much. Earth Mother is still angry in this region, and the earthquakes and the rumble of the volcanoes worries some of the Europeans. It should. They don't know just how angry Earth Mother can get when she is offended, and already many are offending her.

The West

California is the place all the whites want to reach, but to get there, they must cross most of the country: Montana, Colorado, the Dakotas, the great desert in what they are already calling Arizona and Nevada, and, of course, Texas.

Have you ever been to Texas? I have. There is a lot of nothing in Texas. A great stretch of land that is too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter, where tornadoes steal the earth and give to the skies. But I think maybe I'm not seeing everything there is to see there, and that I must go back and look again because everyone wants to be there. The Indians had it first, then the Spaniards came and decided it would be nice to have that land, and then the people in Texas decided they didn't want to be part of Spain, or Mexico or anywhere else, and so they fought for their indepen-

Native American Politics

Contrary to the belief that Native Americans are all one big happy family, the history of the tribes in North America is filled with a great deal of violence. The Lakota dislike many of their neighbors and, in return, are often considered barbarians by some because of the tribe's forays into bordering territories. In the U.S. regions alone, there are 500 nations of Native Americans. As seems to be the case with all human interaction, there are disputes, many of which end in bloodshed.

The Iroquois dominate the northeastern fur trade for a very long time, a fact that the Algonquin Indians don't appreciate. For several years, the Algonquin do everything they can to change the tides of fur-trading favor, and they even side with the Canadian French against the Iroquois in numerous fights. The end result? Due to irreconcilable differences and the Iroquois' superior numbers, the Algonquin tribes involved in the conflict have to move to another territory further west, closer to the Great Lakes.

In the Southwest, the Navajo are well-known as raiders who often attack the Pueblo Indians in addition to the Mexican and Spanish settlers. It's not until the late 1860s that the mostly nomadic bands of Navajo are rounded up and penalized for their violence. After four years in prison, the collective Navajo agree to a treaty that leaves them alone on their reservation. Naturally, there are still several skirmishes before anyone settles down in the entire region. Also, disagreements linger between the Navajo and the U.S. government about ambiguities in their treaty.

The Sioux Tribes — the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota being the largest factions — are renowned as warriors, but they also believe that killing an opponent isn't always necessary. In addition to warring among themselves, they also fight with neighboring tribes and with the white interlopers in their area.

The Apache earn respect and fear as warriors, but long before the Westward Expansion, the Apache begin to supplement their farming and hunting with raids on the homes of settlers.

The Comanche are not exactly friendly in their relations with anyone. Excellent horsemen, they hunt buffalo and stage war raids against neighboring tribes. They also practice slavery and are more than happy to make a profit selling captured white settlers to any tribes they aren't warring with at the time.

A thorough overview of relations among Native American tribes is beyond the scope of this book. Just remember that while these peoples certainly suffer cruel mistreatment during this era (and later), they are also capable of such behavior themselves.

dence and they won. Then the United States annexed Texas and the Spanish people got very upset. Mexico and The United States of America had a war and after a lot of stupid deaths, the U.S. won. Just to show who was the biggest fighter, they took California and everything in-between Texas and California away from Mexico at the same time. I don't guess the people living in those areas — European or Native — had any say in the matter.

Now all of these areas are covered with wagon trains and settlers and soldiers who say they have the right to be there and to take what they want. They don't understand that the Apache and the Comanche don't care about Mexico or the United States, their laws or their wars. These nations don't see that the Navajo have been on these lands for longer than either country has existed, and that they intend to stay where they are.

I've heard a few of them talking about "Manifest Destiny." This means their god has decided they can take what they want and kill anyone who gets in their way. So far, it seems their god is right.

The problem is that no one on either side is willing to discuss the matter. It always comes down to "This is our land," and "The hell you say, it's ours." The next thing you know, there's blood flowing and everyone is blaming the other side for being unreasonable. Even when they do sit down to discuss these matters, the differences in beliefs and the bad blood between the two sides slow everything down.

The white men say to the red men, "We need this land for our people who keep coming from across the sea, and we need to dig right over there for gold."

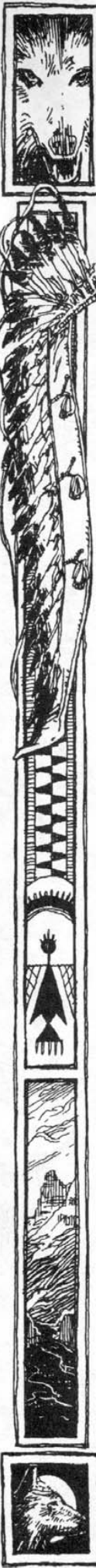
The red men say to the white men in return: "We have been here for a very long time, it's our home and it's all we know. Besides, you can't dig for your gold in that hill because it has a long tradition for our people and is sacred." Both sides make more noises, they hem and they haw, and then they go their separate ways to figure out how best to kill their unreasonable enemies.

Western Towns of Note

There's a few places you can head if you feel like havin' a good time these days. Of course, what you call a good time and what I call a good time might be a little different. I'll tell you about a few of 'em and you can decide for yourself whether or not you want to visit, or just avoid 'em.

Abilene, Texas

You want to meet some real cowboys? The sort that like to smash Injuns in the face and maybe spit on 'em while they're bleeding in the dirt? Then the place for you is Abilene, Texas.



What you have in Abilene is a boomtown without the gold. Place was just a hole in the ground until the railroad came in and figured it was a good spot to rest a while. Now Abilene runs a rail from Texas to Abilene, Kansas. The one in Texas got named for the other one, but most of the people there insist it's the other way around. Most of what goes on in Abilene, Texas involves cattle, booze or women of ill-repute. Everything else involves fightin', shootin' and lynchin' anything that don't belong. There's all sorts of guns-for-hire waiting in that town, and when they get itchy, they like to go piss off the local Indians for fun.

Best of all, there's a lot of cattle barons movin' in on Abilene, makin' fancy new homes for themselves and trying to "civilize" the whole area. It ain't nearly as bad as Mexico, but you can still smell the Wyrn-taint in the air there. Abilene is also one of them places that draws criminals like a bloated corpse draws maggots. Seems there's a lot of unkindly folk in Abilene these days, and most of them are willing to take honest work if it's offered and the price is right.

San Francisco, California

You ever hear of Yerba Buena? Well, maybe you heard of the new name the U.S. gave it when they kicked Mexico out. These days it's called "San Francisco." There used to be a Spanish military outpost there, ever since the times when the U.S. stopped being a British colony and became its own place.

The whole thing sits on a peninsula and a natural harbor that's beautiful, despite the changes everyone's made to it over the years. Wasn't much of a town for the longest time, but when the Gold Rush started, and when the Comstock Silver Lode was found, the whole area grew like a fungus. Now there's a whole bunch of cultures that call San Francisco home. Chinese, Italian, Filipino, Japanese, Mexican and European—they're all there, and most of 'em don't much like each other.

There's a lot of tension in that town, and there's a lot of guns. Stress and pistols don't mix too well, but everyone's still pushin' their way in there, looking for that one sure thing that'll make 'em as rich as they want to be.

There's plenty of lawmen over there, too, but most of 'em can be paid to look the other way if something bad needs to go down. My guess is it's the vampires that keep the place standing. They already got a foothold in San Francisco, and I reckon they ain't gonna just leave.

Place is a little stranger than most because it's so diverse. There's all them cultures living together, and all of 'em seem to've brought along a supernatural or two. I seen things in the shadows of that town that make me want to investigate, and on closer inspection, I've seen a few that make me want to never go back. Of course, I will go back eventually—curiosity is my weakness.

Dodge City, Kansas

Remember what I was tellin' you about Abilene? Well, Dodge City, Kansas makes the whole place seem sweet in comparison. There's more law in Dodge, but it ain't any less corrupt. Anything you might want, you can find there. From the richest treasures to the most desperate people, seems almost everything comes through Dodge sooner or later.

Dodge is a little more tolerant of Indians than Abilene, but only 'cause you ain't as likely to get noticed there as you are elsewhere. Most of the saloons still won't serve anyone who ain't white enough, but they'll make exceptions if there's enough money involved. The Iron Riders already have themselves a stronghold in Dodge. Most of the Leeches stay away 'cause between the Bone Gnawers and the Iron Riders, there ain't too much they can sink their teeth into.

The real problem these days is that the Get of Fenris and the Fianna are doin' their best to move in on Dodge, and they ain't exactly bein' quiet about it. There's already been a few fights, but I suspect it's gonna come to bloodshed pretty soon, and I don't know that I'd like to be around when that happens. On the other hand, bein' around to fan the flames could be interesting.

I hear tell the Uktena are lookin' at the area with a greedy gleam in their eyes, too. Something big is gonna happen in Dodge, and I don't think even the Wyrn has anything to do with this one. Trust me, that's downright rare these days. What gets to me is wondering what's so all-fire important to be drawing everybody to the area. It can't just be the cattle 'cause there ain't any sort of nonsense like that goin' on in Abilene, and they got almost as many head of cattle movin' through there as they do in Dodge.

No. I suspect somebody somewhere knows something about all this, it's just a matter of training 'em to speak to me about it.

Denver, Colorado

You want to talk about a place that just ain't popular with the Garou? Let's talk about Denver, Colorado. The whole thing got built out of two little mining colonies. Silver-mining colonies. These days, it's the capital of the Colorado territories and people are perfectly happy to mine silver like there was no tomorrow. The railroads made it up there to get the silver, and then they kept goin' west. For a place that's in the middle of nowhere, Denver is very popular.

Rumor has it that Denver's under the control of the vampires, who're doin' everything they can to get their hands on the silver in the area and are also makin' sure the Garou know they've been grabbin' up that precious metal.



Winter up that way ain't too pleasant, what with the amount of snow they get, but the vampires don't seem to mind. And if a few miners disappear every time the train gets stuck outside the city, that ain't too surprising, either.

Down Mexico Way

Remember how I said there weren't so many of them Black Spiral Dancers around as there used to be? Well, I can tell you it ain't that the rest of the Garou have the upper hand. Fact of the matter is, I suspect it's the other way around right now. The Black Spiral Dancers fight dirty, even for Garou.

But right now, they seem to have bigger things on their plate than whuppin' their cousins in a fight. Something's goin' on down Mexico way. I don't know just what it is, but the Black Spiral Dancers seem to like that place a lot. I've heard stories of them migratin' there like birds going south for the winter, only they ain't comin' back. 'Least ways not yet.

That's just the beginning, though. The vampires are goin' that way, too. Not all of 'em, just the mean ones. What? Hell yes, there are some nice vampires. At least they can pretend to be nice when they see fit. They like to pretend they're just cursed humans, not really the Wyrmspawn they are. Others, the really mean ones, like to acknowledge that they ain't human, and they celebrate that fact by killing anything that looks at 'em cross-eyed.


The mean ones are moving to Mexico and maybe even places further south. A lot of them come back regularly, take care of some business up this way, and then run back down there.

You ever hear of the Boot Hill Gang? No? Where the hell you been hidin'? Anyway, the Boot Hill Gang is having a good ol' time robbin' banks, locomotives and the occasional military outpost. A lot of what they do in more remote areas looks like nothing more than another Injun attack to the whites, but it's the Boots.

They're vampires from down Mexico way. The leader's name is Joseph Hill, but everyone calls him Boot Hill, like the famous boneyard, 'cause he don't like to leave any witnesses behind. He's a scary bastard, but he does have one good point: He hates Garou. Goes out of his way to kill them, and he even uses silver bullets to do the job.

Had me an uppity group of Fianna come into Abilene not that long ago while I was making myself at





home. They caught one whiff of me and decided I needed a little re-educatin' about who's meaner, Garou or Nuwisha. I let 'em know I thought they were plenty tough, and they decided to prove it to me.

Bein' as there was five of them and only one of me, they felt it would be polite to let me live, so's I could tell all the others how strong and manly they were. 'Bout a week later, the Boot Hill Gang came to town, settled themselves in the saloon and started looking for trouble. I changed my skin so I looked like the alpha from that little Fianna pack, and I pissed on Boot Hill's hat. He was wearin' it at the time, so I can see why he took that a mite personal.

Him and his boys figured to run me straight out of town, probably with a few extra holes in my hide. I made sure they could follow me and ran like the mean ol' Wyrms themselves was chompin' at my heels.

You can imagine the looks on those Fiannas' faces when I ran through their camp. If I'd had one of them camera things, I'd have taken a photo of the alpha's expression for posterity. 'Bout the same time they was preparin' to come after me, Boot Hill and his fellas showed up. You want to see how fast a coyote can climb a tree, you put him in that situation. While I was hikin' myself up the closest tree, the boys from Mexico was collectin' five new furs. Five European Garou dead and three of Boot Hill's boys downed at the same time, and all over a little piss on a leather hat. All my days should be that much fun!

I ain't a mean guy most of the time, but I reckon them Irish mutts had it comin' to 'em, and I was just the fella to make sure they got it. Don't take over my Land and then try to whup on me without a reason. Makes me a bit itchy for revenge, if you see my point.

Anyhow, there's something goin' on in Mexico. I've heard tales for a long time of something truly evil down there, and it looks like maybe whatever it is that's resting down south of here is thinkin' about waking up and having a party or two. If I had to guess, I'd say old Storm Eater is up to something big and is gathering new forces along the way. 'Course, that ain't none of my affair, the Garou made that plenty clear.

Mexico ain't a very happy place these days anyhow. What with losin' Texas and California and everything in-between when they lost that war of theirs with the U.S. If that ain't bad enough, you got a lot of Pumonca and Balam down there, too, and they got their own little War of Rage goin' good and strong. Anything gets too close to their territories, they kill and maybe think about regrettin' what they did later. The Mokolé down there ain't too much better. 'Course, these are Changing Breeds that've had to deal with Europeans a lot longer than some of us. They know what to expect.

Filibusters

The term "filibuster" comes from the Spanish word, *filibustero*, which means freebooter. The term originally refers to the buccaneers and pirates who regularly raid the Spanish colonies in the Americas. Later, it comes to describe a number of people who feel it's time for the U.S. to start making colonies of its own. Filibusters take it on themselves to do exactly that.

Around the middle of the 1800s, several groups of expansion-minded U.S. citizens decide that Mexico and other places south could make fine colonies for their growing nation, and they set out to prove it through conquest and politics.

William Walker is one example of the more martially minded filibusters. In 1853, he establishes a state in Baja, California. After that falls through, he sets himself up as the president of Nicaragua. Unfortunately for him, the people who back his plans financially don't agree with his more radical ideas and he is ousted a year later. He tries his luck again in Honduras in 1863, but he is captured and executed as an enemy of the state a few days later.

Despite Walker's minor successes and large setbacks, there are still plenty of people perfectly willing to try the same tricks. Some set their sights on the lands in South or Central America and some plan to make Jamaica, Haiti and other Caribbean islands part of the U.S. Only the ones who stick to the continental United States have much success, and even then, they normally require assistance from the U.S. military.

And with all them Leeches movin' down their way, you can't really blame 'em for bein' sore.

Mexico already stinks of the Wyrms. That smell is only getting worse, and there ain't likely too much that can be done about it. I know a few Garou who have gone down there and not come back. Maybe they fell or maybe they joined with their enemies. It's hard to say. I'm thinkin' about looking into affairs down there personally, but I don't much know if I feel like puttin' my neck on the line just now. Maybe next year.

If I were you, I'd think real hard before travelin' down that way. I mean, the only thing Mexico has that the U.S. don't have is a nice border that stops the U.S. Marshals from dragging you back for a hanging. That, and maybe an army of Wyrmlings lookin' for a place to call their own before they move back this way and start some serious trouble.

Stuck in the Middle

There's a lot of good people on both sides of this war for the Land, but nobody wants to hear about them. Even now, there are many Mexicans living in Texas. They're sometimes more European in their beliefs, but many have the red man's blood in them as well, and so both sides look down on them as if they are somehow tainted.

There are European settlers who really just want a chance to claim a piece of land and make a living there, those who never seek great fortunes or steal the land from the Pure Ones. Unfortunately, there are the greedy ones who have made a reputation for themselves, and so the simple settlers often suffer retribution for the crimes of their neighbors. There are many Pure Ones who do everything they can to get along with the Europeans, but because a neighboring tribe doesn't like the whites and makes its point with spear, ax and arrow, the same thing happens again. Hatred and misunderstanding mix with the blood already soaked into the soil and bring forth a bitter fruit.

There are many people who fought to see the black man freed from his chains, but they now look on him as an animal because he has chosen to live near them. There are yellow people from across the sea who cannot abide the hatred of the whites and so gather themselves together and stay away from the strange beliefs of their neighbors. In the process, they make themselves seem somehow sinister. There are Spaniards angry with the Europeans, Europeans angry with the Pure Ones, with the black ones, with the yellow ones and with their own. There are black ones angry that they were put in chains and yellow ones who came seekin' fortune and found only hard work and small wages until they walked away from the whites. Everyone is angry, and everyone blames someone else for that anger.

None take the blame for the things they've done wrong, nor do they forgive the others for any wrongs committed. Then you can add in the Pumonca and the Gurahl, the Ananasi and the Ratkin, the Qualmi and the Corax, the Mokolé and, yes, even the Nuwisha. And then, my friend, you can add in the Garou.

There is a war going on to decide the skin color and philosophy that will rule in the Pure Lands. There is another war going on to see which Changing Breeds will be allowed to live here in peace. There are a hundred wars a day in the Land, and no one is even certain which war they are fightin' anymore.

Sometimes the Europeans run to find gold and sometimes they run to hide from their pasts. Sometimes the Pure Ones stand and refuse to move from their Land and sometimes they fight because they have grown tired of moving. Sometimes they fight simply because they are angry and no longer understand the Land as well as they thought they did. Some of the black people move west to find something better than the "freedom" their one-time masters have given them. Some seek fortune and respect. Others run from the memories that would drive them insane if they stayed where they and their families were kept as possessions and treated with less respect than a farmer gives his dog. The yellow men came from other places hopin' to get wealthy on the gold sought by the Europeans. Most have instead found comfort in a place that is far from the political dangers of their homelands.

The Land is vast. The Land has wonders beyond the reckoning of most people and far beyond the beliefs of the rest. But the Land is growing too small, and there is nothing I can do to stop that from happening. I do not know if I should laugh or if I should cry, and for a Nuwisha, that is a bad thing indeed.





Visions of the Land of Storms

As the settlers' drive west begins, dark clouds stretch across the horizon. As the United States Army and the native inhabitants of the land meet in battle, thunder echoes across the landscape. As passersby kill bison from the windows of trains, lightning splinters the darkness. The turbulent upheavals that occur as America struggles to expand and fill the New World cast reflections across the thin veil that separates matter from spirit. In the reflecting pool that is the spirit world, the surface is disturbed, ripples spread, and something hidden deep inside awakens and thrashes to the surface.

The strife and turmoil that exist on the American Frontier create the harsh environment of the Storm Umbra, but in turn the troubles within the spirit world further aggravate the situation in the Physical Realm.

Add the twisted, malevolent force of the Storm Eater, and the grim conditions that face the Garou seem insurmountable.

The Pure Ones' elders agree that in previous times the spirit world was not as volatile as it is now. When traveling the Storm Umbra, many spirits appear apprehensive, for they know that sinister forces prowl the frontier. Gafflings of all types seem to hurry about their duties with urgency, while Jagglings appear even more cryptic and reserved. The older Garou find this change unusual and disconcerting, and they often cite it as a dreadful portent. The Pure Ones say that the number of minor Wyld-spirits encountered while traveling the Middle Lands is noticeably lower, even alarmingly so, whereas the number of larger, more dangerous Wyld-spirits is increasing. In addition, there are reports of spirits, who are obviously terrified, volunteering to be bound into fetishes so they can escape destruction.





Boundaries of the Storm Umbra

It is a fact established by the immigrating European Garou that the Storm Umbra surrounding the West is a harsher and more dangerous environment than elsewhere on Earth. The reason can only be the constant presence of the Storm Eater and its companion Storm-spirits. The question remains, however, of why, with the limitless expanse of the Tellurian before it, does the Storm Eater continue to roam the relatively confined region of the West?

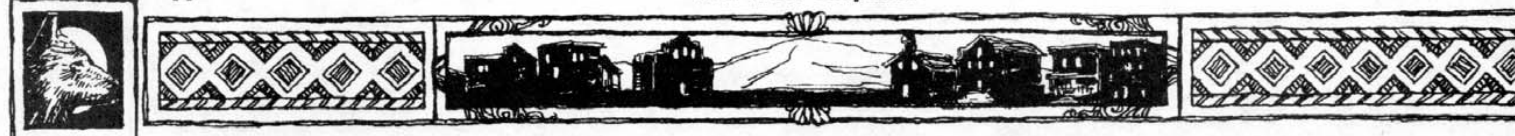
Some Garou believe the Storm Eater has pierced the Membrane at this point and now resides within the Deep Umbra. Others think it has carved a festering, blighted niche for itself high in the Aetherial Realm where it now attempts to breach the Membrane that separates the Middle Lands from the Deep Umbra, so that it can join the Triat in the Heavens. While no one understands the true purposes or motivations of the Storm Eater, the European Garou emigrants favor the latter theory; they feel it offers an explanation of why the tumultuous influence of the Storm Eater is not widely felt beyond the reaches of the Umbra surrounding the frontier. The Wyrncomer Garou believe that while the Storm Eater continues its relentless assault on a single point of the Membrane, its influence seeps down and is felt throughout the Middle Lands and Penumbra of the Savage West. Some Stargazers have attempted to explain that this effect is roughly similar to the circumstances of the sun, which occupies a fixed place an incomprehensible distance away but still manages to affect the Earth with its power. The Pure Ones believe differently. The Wendigo think the Storm Eater haunts the West because this land is where it was defeated and imprisoned for so long, and now that it is free, it wants nothing more than to see the entire continent reduced to a wretched, gangrenous, uninhabitable Blightscape.

Travelers in the Land of Storms

There are many ways to travel from one place to another in the Storm Umbra. Within the Penumbra, where natural laws governing the Earth are reflected in the spirit world, notions of distance are nearly identical to what individuals experience in the Physical Realm, but the parallel does not hold in the Middle Lands. Outside "Earth's shadow," the natural laws break down. Beyond the Realms, the concept of distance becomes relative — an advantage and a disadvantage at once. If an individual knows where she is going, then covering great distances is no problem when the intervening distance is relative. However, if one is not certain of his location or destination, it is very easy to become disoriented and lost in an environment where neither distance nor "landscape" remains constant.



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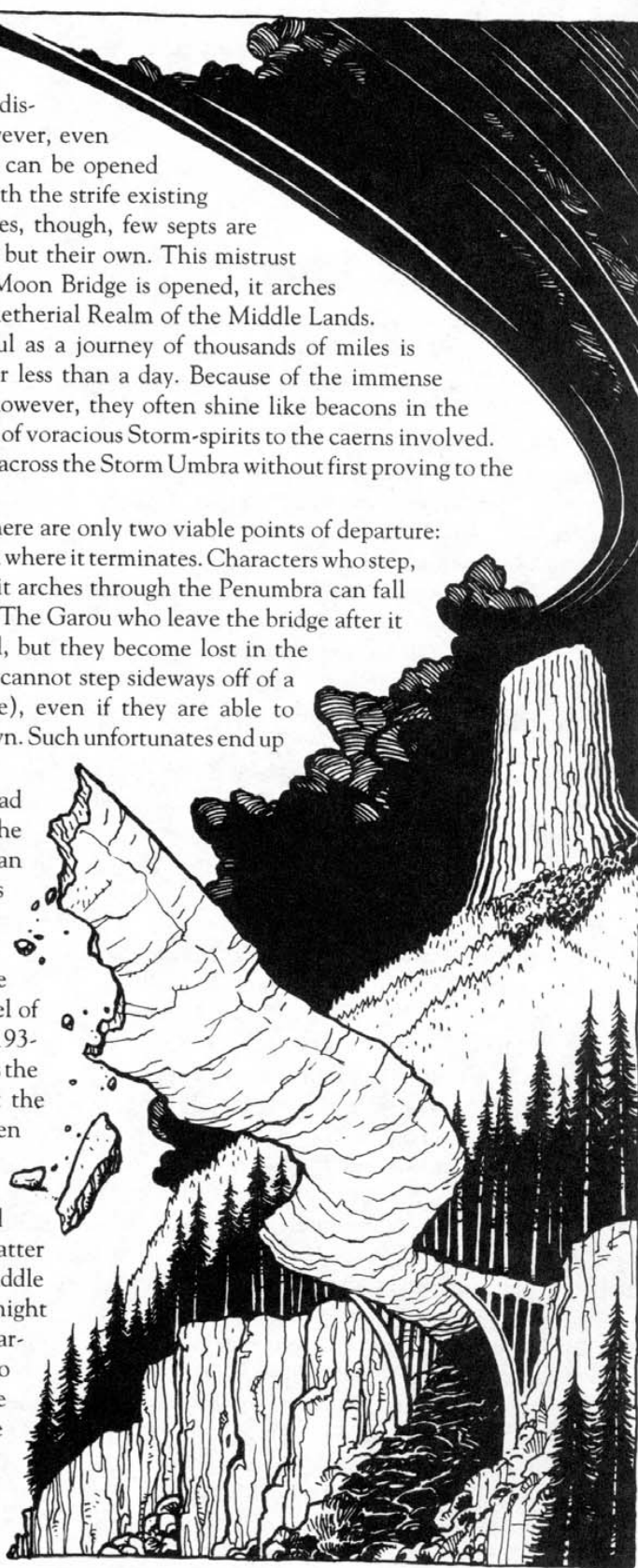


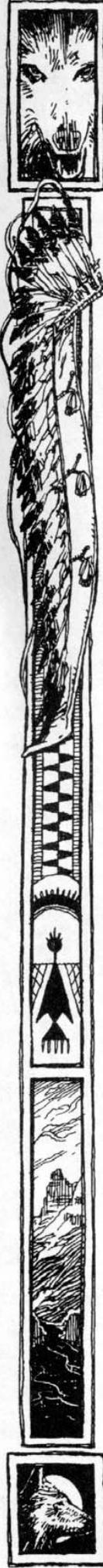
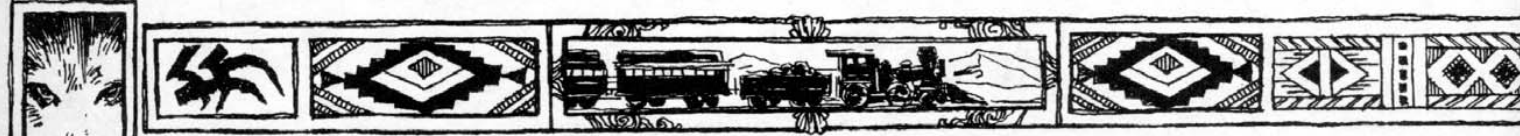
Moon Bridges

Moon Bridges are, without doubt, the most effective and reliable method of traversing great distances across the Savage West and beyond; however, even they have limitations. Normally, Moon Bridges can be opened only between the caerns of two willing septs. With the strife existing between the European Garou and the Pure Ones, though, few septs are willing to receive a Moon Bridge from any tribe but their own. This mistrust makes travel difficult for both groups. When a Moon Bridge is opened, it arches through the Penumbra and actually enters the Aetherial Realm of the Middle Lands. This configuration proves to be extremely useful as a journey of thousands of miles is contracted and can be completed by walking for less than a day. Because of the immense spiritual power tapped to open Moon Bridges, however, they often shine like beacons in the Umbral night, occasionally drawing the attention of voracious Storm-spirits to the caerns involved. For this reason, Garou seldom open Moon Bridges across the Storm Umbra without first proving to the elders a genuine need of the septs involved.

Once a traveler starts across a Moon Bridge, there are only two viable points of departure: the caern where the bridge originates and the caern where it terminates. Characters who step, or who are knocked, from a Moon Bridge where it arches through the Penumbra can fall anywhere in the region (Storyteller's discretion). The Garou who leave the bridge after it has crossed into the Aetherial Realm do not fall, but they become lost in the Middle Lands of the Storm Umbra. Werewolves cannot step sideways off of a Moon Bridge (or after being knocked from one), even if they are able to concentrate while plummeting toward the unknown. Such unfortunates end up wherever Gaia's will carries them.

No wonder, then, that Garou feel such dread toward Umbral storms during this era. Drawn by the intense emanations of Moon Bridges, such spirits can cause awesome damage. To determine if a storm is capable of destroying a Moon Bridge, the Storyteller rolls one die for each 20 points of Power the Storm-spirit currently possesses (difficulty 7). If the number of successes scored is higher than the level of the caern (see **Werewolf: The Wild West**, pp. 193-194) from which it originates, the storm demolishes the Moon Bridge. Failure on this roll indicates that the bridge remains standing, but severe damage often results from near-failures. Storytellers should use an attack on a Moon Bridge to its fullest dramatic potential. Several successes beyond the required number might shatter the bridge like glass and scatter the traveling pack throughout the Penumbra and Middle Lands. One success above the level of the caern might fracture the bridge like an ice floe, thus forcing characters to jump desperately from one unstable piece to another while the bridge continues to disintegrate behind them. A near-failure might also fracture the bridge and threaten total collapse, pushing the pack to decide whether it is willing to risk journeying farther along the unstable expanse. If the





attack roll is botched, the Moon Bridge acts as a conduit by which the associated caerns drain Power from the assaulting Storm-spirit. The Storm-spirit loses 50 points of Power (half goes to each caern) for each additional 1 rolled, beyond those that reduce the attempt to zero successes, on the botched effort to destroy the Moon Bridge. Storm-spirits may make only one attempt to destroy a Moon Bridge. If a Storm-spirit drops to zero Power in a botched attempt to destroy one, it dies. Garou traveling along the bridge or those who are present at the heart of one of the affected caerns when such an event occurs recover Gnosis. Garou may not gain more than their maximum Gnosis, and the total gained by the group may not exceed the Gnosis possessed by the deceased Storm-spirit.

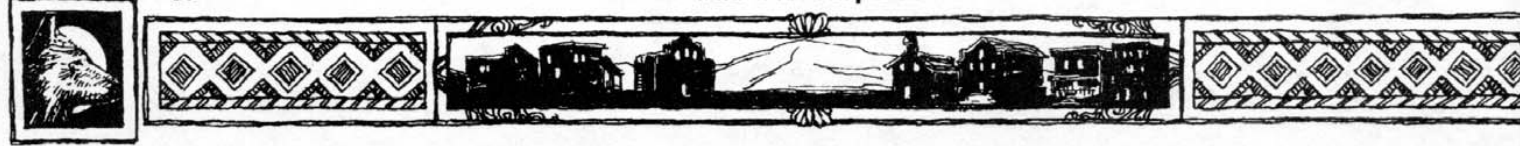
When a Storm-spirit loses Power to a caern during an assault on a Moon Bridge, the spirit attempts to follow the bridge back to the heart of one of the offending caerns. Occasionally, if the storm is large enough and the Power loss particularly traumatic (more than 100 points), the Storm-spirit can split in two. Such a division drives both new Storm-spirits insane, and they enter feeding frenzies. This condition is similar to the frenzy experienced by Garou, except the storm-spirits have no thought but to glut themselves on the Power of the two caerns that forced their creation. If either of these Storm-spirits survives by destroying one of the involved caerns, it subsequently wanders the Aetherial Realm and watches for other Moon Bridges to appear so that it might further sate its hunger on the caerns of the region.


Smaller Storm-spirits (ones with a current Power reserve under 100) attracted to a Moon Bridge frequently attempt to settle onto the bridge and follow it back to one of the caerns. Unless stopped, the malevolent spirit begins to glut itself on the tremendous energies of the caern. With sufficient warning, a sept may protect itself by closing the encroached-upon Moon Bridge, but this action drops everyone and everything still on the bridge into the Storm Umbra. If a Storm-spirit follows a Moon Bridge into the heart of a caern, it can easily begin to drain the Power stored at that site. Caerns have a Power reserve roughly equal to their level multiplied by 100. A Storm-spirit absorbs 10 points of Power each turn in addition to any other actions it wishes to perform. Because the heart of a caern exists both in the Storm Umbra and the Physical Realm simultaneously, any weather phenomena generated by the ravaging Storm-spirit manifest in both regions. Once a Storm-spirit finds such an abundant source of Power, it is unwilling (some would suggest, unable) to leave until all of the energy is consumed; therefore, the spirit must be destroyed. Any caern that loses more than 100 points

of Power to a feeding Storm-spirit drops by one level and is subsequently subject to all of the limitations of this new rating. In addition, a sept cannot tap any of its caern's powers until a Rite of Cleansing has been performed there. A caern that drops to zero Power is destroyed, and the previous heart of the caern becomes a Blight in the Penumbra. These blighted locations are highly sought after by the Savage West's Black Spiral Dancers, who forge such Domains into their own wretched Hives.

Moon-Bridge Assaults

It is possible to force a Moon Bridge to open in a caern that is not prepared for (or even expecting) the portal to appear, though the process is extremely difficult. Almost every tribe considers the unwanted opening of a Moon Bridge to be an act of aggression, even if the act is performed during an emergency. And a sept generally responds in these instances as if it is being invaded. Although the practice is usually thought dishonorable, it is a popular tactic among Garou who wish to launch a surprise attack against a rival sept and thereby skirt established caern defenses and bawn guardians. To force a Moon Bridge to successfully open at the proper location, the heart of the target caern must first be found. Sending someone into that caern to reconnoiter the location is the only way to achieve the accuracy of information required, which is another reason the Pure Ones do not welcome visitors from the Old World tribes into their caerns and vice versa. Once an invading sept obtains specifics about the locale of a target caern's heart, the Gatekeeper (the Garou responsible for opening and monitoring Moon Bridges, and for protecting the sept's Pathstone) of the caern that initiates the Moon Bridge begins the assault. His player rolls Wits + Rituals at a difficulty of 9 minus the level of his caern. This roll is resisted by the Gatekeeper of the defending caern, whose player rolls Wits + Rituals at a difficulty of 7 minus the level of her caern. Each success that the defender scores cancels one success for the attacker. After a turn in which the attacker has more successes than the level of the defending Gatekeeper's caern, the bridge opens and Garou may advance across the Moon Bridge toward the opposing caern. If the Gatekeeper of the defending caern scores more successes than the attacker, she then gains the advantage. If the defending Gatekeeper then accumulates more successes than the level of the attacking caern, the spiritual feedback shatters the attacking Gatekeeper's Pathstone. If a caern loses its Pathstone, the sept must first replace the rare object in order to open Moon Bridges again. Such an undertaking requires a dangerous quest into the Storm Umbra.





The battle to open a Moon Bridge across the Storm Umbra in an unreceptive caern tends to attract the attention of nearby Storm-spirits. If the bridge is successfully completed, the voracious spirit tries to follow it to one of the caerns involved. Any sept that initiates a battle with another caern and arrives in the company of a Storm-spirit (even if it is apparent that they are fleeing from it) is sure to have its reputation permanently and irreparably damaged. The sept is condemned for allying itself with the minions of the Storm Eater, and neighboring septs typically band together in an effort to destroy such an obviously corrupted group.

Moon Paths

Following those natural trails of the Storm Umbra illuminated by Luna's light is the most common means of travel throughout the Middle Lands. However, the presence of powerful Storm-spirits (especially close to the Penumbra) usually darkens the Umbral skies and obscures the moon. With Luna's face hidden, Moon Paths are extremely difficult to distinguish amid the perpetual, swirling mists that envelop the Middle Lands. Also, the unexpected disappearance of the moon often panics the Lunes that guard these trails. Depending on the size and type of storm, the Storyteller may call for a Perception + Enigmas roll (difficulty 6-10, depending on the circumstances) to determine if the characters are able to locate the obscured trail. The largest and most powerful storms entirely eclipse the light of Luna, making the Moon Paths impossible to follow. The Lunes, which usually pose a threat to Umbral travelers only when maddened by the full moon, become agitated without the reassuring light of their patron, Luna. When a storm arises and unexpectedly blocks the light of the moon, panic grips the Lunes. Most flee and attack anything that stands in their path, but some are paralyzed by fear. These pitiable Lunes pose no threat unless travelers somehow bother them, in which case, the spirits attack with crazed intensity.

Werewolves who stray from the Moon Paths quickly become disoriented and lost under the best of circumstances—a process hastened by the presence of a storm. Moon Paths offer no real protection from the effects of Umbral storms, and Garou traveling these trails are left terribly exposed. Tremendous winds can blow travelers off course, or the pack may have to abandon the trail and seek shelter from a Firestorm or Thunderstorm. Blizzards and Fog completely obscure the paths and allow voyagers to wander into parts unknown or force them to waste days traveling in circles.

Spirit Tracks (Airts)



Since the escape of the Storm Eater, following Spirit Tracks (or airts, as they are commonly called by European Garou) has become even more dangerous than in the past. Spirit Tracks are difficult to follow and often vanish right under a traveler's feet. In addition, they are frequently prowled by Storm-spirits of all varieties. Storm-spirits, like natural Weather-spirits, are creatures of habit that follow the same paths across the Storm Umbra until a source of Power catches their attention. When they find something to eat, the twisted Weaver/Wyrm-spirits differ from their natural cousins by leaving their routine pattern to move in and devour a source of spiritual energy. At times, this behavior can produce weather patterns in the Physical Realm that defy reason. For example, a Blizzard might be drawn to a powerful spirit that is slumbering in the Penumbral shadow of Death Valley. When the Storm-spirit moves in to feast on its unwitting victim, the Blizzard coats the area in ice. The manifestation of this encounter on the other side of the Gauntlet is an unnatural cold that moves through Death Valley and brings a few days of snow in July.

Some of the smaller Storm-spirits are known to use heavily trafficked Spirit Tracks as game trails, where they stalk and kill other spirits by feasting on their victims' Power. If characters journey along a Spirit Track for an extended time, or in the company of a large group of spirits, they attract the attention of a small, but hungry, Storm-spirit. Young werewolves eager to prove themselves against the ravages of the Storm Umbra occasionally make an arrangement with a friendly spirit, wherein the Garou wait near an established airt for a Gaffling to attract a Storm-spirit so they can attack it.

Storm Tracks

Similar to Spirit Tracks, Storm Tracks are the paths left in the wake of a Storm-spirit's passing. The difficulty to follow a Storm Track through the Penumbra stems from the type and Power of the Storm-spirit. The greater the destruction caused by a storm, the easier it is to follow. A Wits + Investigation roll (difficulty 4-8, depending on the storm) is required for characters to track any Storm-spirit they cannot see or that has not left an obvious path, such as a Firestorm's or a Tornado's.

Following a Storm Track through the Middle Lands becomes more difficult as the Power of the spirit manifests in a different manner. The concept of weather has very little meaning outside the Penumbra or Realms in the Middle Lands because the traditional laws of nature do



not strictly apply elsewhere in the spirit world. The true forms of the Storm-spirits, twisted amalgams of Weaver and Wyrn, are readily perceived while they roam the Middle Lands. Also, the weather phenomena that commonly accompany Storm-spirits are not constantly active, although the spirits can generate these effects at will. For a character to track a Storm-spirit across the Middle Lands, the player must roll Wits + Enigmas (difficulty 6-9, depending on the circumstances).

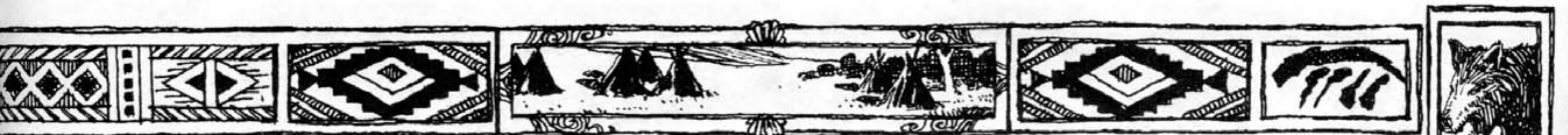
Storm Tracks are dangerous to follow because they invariably have only one destination: the Storm-spirit that created them. Several years after the reappearance of the Storm Eater, it becomes common for packs to undertake quests to hunt and kill specific Storm-spirits. To complete such a quest, a pack must, at some point in its journey, follow the spirit's Storm Track. Also, certain packs report that diligently following a particular spirit's Storm Track reveals something of the creature's preferences and could offer some insight into its future targets.

Storm-spirits are not the only enemies a werewolf is likely to encounter while following a Storm Track through the Penumbra. Banes and other malevolent spirits are attracted to the wreckage caused by the passing of a storm. These foul spirits come to feed on the spirits that were injured during the storm, as well as on the Gafflings that flood the area and attempt to repair the damage to the Umbral landscape.

The Pattern Web

Garou who emigrate from the Old World are aware that it is possible to travel the Umbra along the strands of the great Pattern Web. The practice is, however, severely curtailed throughout the Savage West because of the vast expanse of frontier that, for the time being, remains largely free of the Weaver's influence. As information and resources move along them, the threads of the Pattern Web pulse and writhe with an artificial life of their own. An individual who manages to gain access to the Web may skate along the strands from one location to another. Although this form of transportation is rapid, it is dangerous and extremely limited; the Pattern Web is accessible only at Web Domains—sites of well-established, large-scale industrial development, such as big cities. Characters traveling east of the Mississippi may use the Pattern Web to move along the coast. However, until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1889, the threads are not particularly useful in crossing the continent, and once the line is finished, the creatures of the Weaver commute heavily along the single delicate strand.





Travelers along the Web face several dangers. The most prevalent one is the presence of the Weaver-spirits that construct and maintain the Web. Getting past these creatures and onto one of the strands is no simple feat. Pattern Spiders are not very picky about the raw materials they use to create the Web, and they are more than willing to add a Garou or two into the mix. The number of Weaver-spirits along any section of the Web reflects the amount of construction and industrialization in that region.

Another danger that werewolves face while traveling along the Pattern Web is the possibility of attack by Wyld-spirits. The number of militant Wyldlings and, more frighteningly, Wyldstorms, encountered in the Savage West increases alarmingly after the initial Weaver expansion into the frontier and the return of the Storm Eater to the area. Wyld attacks on Weaver constructs are quite thorough. Any Garou caught on the Web during the battle is presumed hostile.

In addition, for reasons unknown, Storm-spirits linger near Web Domains and areas of fledgling Weaver activity. Some Garou speculate that this attraction stems from some form of dementia in the spirits — an intolerance of any antiseptic creations of the Weaver that lack the defiling presence of the Wyrms. Yet, there is no way to prove this theory. Storm-spirits readily attack Weaver sites, but with as much intent to distort as to destroy. Storm-spirits sever delicate strands of the Pattern Web, or (more often) twist them into foul Blight Webs and mutate the Pattern Spiders and other Weaver-spirits into demented Weaver/Wyrm creatures. Garou caught in a Web Domain during an Umbral storm face the dangers of the Storm-spirit, as well as of the newly twisted Blight Spiders and other denizens.

Blight Webs are frightening Domains of senseless creation and destruction. Tangled structures of gleaming metal and foul decay are left undone. Victims of the Blight Spiders are only partially calcified into the Web, leaving them alive, struggling and unable to free themselves. It is also fair to assume that anything encountered in a Blight Web is likely to be hostile.

Spirit Gates

Spirit Gates are without question the safest and fastest method of traveling from one point to another in the Middle Lands. Garou rarely encounter these mystical portals. Even when one is found, the traveler cannot choose his destination. The operation of a Spirit Gate is unaffected by the presence of an Umbral storm, except in those rare instances of an entire Realm being destroyed, such as an attack by a powerful Wyldstorm or the Storm Eater.


No records exist of anyone ever finding a Spirit Gate within the Penumbra, but it is agreed that some may be there. Theurges believe that if such passages do exist in the Penumbra, they would be found in the heart of potent Domains, and they would lead to corresponding Realms within the Middle Lands.

Riding the Storm

Tales abound of how brave — or foolish — Garou managed to ride the tides of the Storm Umbra like a mustang across the Savage West. As fantastic as these stories may sound, they often prove to be true, if frequently spiced with a liberal dose of exaggeration — particularly by Ragabash narrators. Werewolves are a supernaturally hearty race and, as such, are able to survive otherwise cataclysmic encounters with Storm-spirits. Characters who venture too close to powerful storms may find themselves engulfed by furious winds that can carry them hundreds of miles. (Though survivors invariably prefer the wild mustang simile to the more accurate comparison with a wind-tossed rag-doll when later recounting the experience to their septmates.) Garou suffer damage not only from colliding with debris carried alongside them in the storm, but also from the tremendous fall that usually marks the end of such a wild ride. Some Garou claim to have been flung clear from the Penumbra into the Middle Lands. Despite the tales, this travel method is impossible to control, though the use of certain Gifts can allow the Garou to slightly influence the direction in which the storm hurls them.

Garou who need to travel long distances in a short time and those who are willing to risk complete annihilation can approach the Storm Eater within the Penumbra. As the spirit's power tears apart the Gauntlet and creates Broken Lands, it is also warping the laws of nature. The "landscape" of the Penumbra seems to become knotted and fold over itself where the Storm Eater touches it. Therefore, characters who approach the Storm Eater in the Penumbra and then step sideways into the physical world often pass through one of the Broken Lands and wind up hundreds, even thousands, of miles away from their starting point. This effect occurs only in the Penumbra, where distance still has established meaning. Outside the "Earth's shadow," space and distance become relative concepts. Again, there is no method of controlling distance or even direction when using the power of the Storm Eater to travel the Storm Umbra.

This method of travel is arguably the most dangerous, and it generally occurs accidentally as foolhardy Garou stray too close to the giant Weaver/Wyrm-spirit.



Characters who intentionally attempt this stunt should get the impression as they proceed that they are as likely to be torn limb from limb or blasted out of existence as they are to wind up traveling anywhere. If the character foolishly insists on continuing, it is left up to the Storyteller to determine the outcome.

The American Frontier is a vast expanse that takes several months to traverse on foot, weeks on horseback and days by train — once the railroad is completed, near the end of the century. These two dangerous methods of travel are mentioned largely as devices for a Storyteller who wants characters to be able to cover large distances quickly, or one who wants to send them somewhere players are reluctant to have their characters go. Storytellers should be careful about overusing either of these methods of travel. Umbral storms, and the Storm Eater in particular, should be terrifying phenomena — even for Garou. Having characters walk outside and flag down the nearest tornado to get from point A to point B defeats the entire sense of urgency and building dread that they should feel when entering the Storm Umbra.

Wurm Tunnels

Considered by many Garou to be little more than rumor and speculation, Wurm Tunnels are said to be sub-Umbral warrens that connect a series of Blights. Supposedly, the demented Weaver/Wurm-spirits that inhabit such Domains construct these dismal passages. Wurm Tunnels would undoubtedly be very dangerous for any creature not born to such a place. However, the recent appearance of the enigmatic Storm-Born lends new credence to the frightening prospect of twisted beings burrowing through the underbelly of the Storm Umbra to connect sites of misery and disease with one another.

Storms

At the heart of each Umbral storm lives a spirit, or group of spirits. They generally manifest as weather phenomena, particularly in the Penumbra, where weather has meaning. The Gauntlet prevents all but the most powerful Umbral storms from having any effect on the Realm.

A small faction of Stargazers has allied itself with native Wendigo and Uktena to form a large pack (some say, a small sept) devoted exclusively to the study of Umbral storms. These Storm Watchers are often frustrating and unsettling when encountered because they explain their research with the urgency and distracted enthusiasm of zealots — in terms that they themselves created to interpret their findings. They speak of “the mountains’ gallop,”

“backward burning,” and “the whispered roar.” The Storm Watchers view themselves as a community of scholars and, as such, they try to put aside any tribal differences that might distract them from their work. Most septs do not respect or trust the Storm Watchers because the group is a mixture of foreign and native Garou. Despite this prejudice, the Storm Watchers do all they can to warn another sept if they detect a Storm-spirit advancing on its caern.

Weather-spirits


Weather-spirits are the common, working-class spirits of nature who serve Gaia as the source and reflection of all naturally occurring weather. These spirits are generally Gafflings, or occasionally Jagglings, who appear in as many different forms and levels of Power as there are types and intensities of ordinary storms. Weather-spirits possess a temperament suited to the climate they represent. For example, Snow-spirits are typically solitary, unfriendly and indifferent. Rain-spirits tend to be sullen or moody, while Thunder-spirits are loud and boisterous. These spirits travel the Storm Umbra along Spirit Tracks and reflect the normal weather patterns found in the Physical Realm.

During a naturally occurring storm, characters can step sideways and locate the spirit responsible for the terrestrial weather as it roams the Storm Umbra to do its work.

Wyldstorms

Wyldstorms are immense Wyld-spirits similar to Cy-clones (see *Werewolf: the Wild West*, p. 277) but up to 100 times more powerful. They are always among the rarest and most feared Umbral inhabitants, but within the turmoil of the Storm Umbra, they become distressingly more common. No one is certain why Wyldstorms target specific locations, or why they appear more often throughout the Storm Umbra than in other regions. Some speculate that the Wyld is trying to defend the Savage West from the encroachments of the Weaver, whereas others say the increase in Wyldstorms is a manifestation of Gaia’s attempts to combat the Storm Eater.

Wyldstorms are the purest incarnation of the Wyld that a Garou is likely to encounter with any hope of survival. They are the embodiment of creation and chaotic change. Wyldstorms race through the Storm Umbra, shatter reality and release the stored spirit energy from ephemera (the “spirit matter” that composes the Umbra). They thus create new Wyld-spirits along the way. They destroy the web structures of the Weaver and obliterate any Blights they encounter. Their waves of disruption also shatter Moon Bridges, annihilate weaker Umbral storms, tear apart Domains



and rend small Realms throughout the Middle Lands. If a Wyldstorm manages to linger at a specific location in the Penumbra for a time, it releases a significant portion of its Power to create a Wyldling Domain.

Any Garou caught in a Wyldstorm might vanish forever into the Umbral depths, transform into something else or escape entirely unscathed. Passing through a Wyldstorm can distort a werewolf's sense of space and time. Storms that seem to last only an hour can hold Garou for weeks, months, even years, or they may pass in a matter of seconds. Characters may find themselves hundreds or thousands of miles from their previous location in the Penumbra, or the Wyldstorm may sweep them deep into the Middle Lands. Shapeshifters caught in a Wyldstorm are not able to control their transformations, and they assume a complete or partially new form every few moments. In extreme circumstances, at the discretion of the Storyteller, characters may experience permanent physical or mental changes because of exposure to a Wyldstorm. Individuals who survive a Wyldstorm escape from all forms of external coercive control, including vampiric Blood Bonds or Dominate influence and Bane possession, as well as alcoholism and other forms of addiction. Additionally, all spirits bound into fetishes are released during passage through a Wyldstorm.

No one has ever witnessed a Wyldstorm encountering a comparably powerful Storm-spirit and returned to tell the tale of the resulting battle, but it is apparent from visiting the sites of such clashes that these are awesome events indeed. Everything is changed. Land that was once familiar becomes completely unrecognizable — a tree-fringed lake might become an arid canyon overnight, for example — but these battles do not seem to cause the amount or type of destruction to the Umbral and physical landscape that might be expected. The conflict destroys all Domains. A member of the Storm Watcher pack believes that these rare conflicts restore, in these locations, a minute portion of the Triat back into balance, as it was during the First Times. This notion is not widely accepted, even among the Storm Watchers. The general belief is that conflicts of this immensity can be properly settled only in the farthest reaches of the Deep Umbra, and so the battles are taken there.

As do many powerful Umbral storms that pass through the Penumbra, Wyldstorms have an effect on the corresponding location in the physical world. Wyldstorms, as manifestations of pure chaos, can cause anything, good or bad, to happen when they enter an area. For example, the laws of probability might be affected to allow someone to draw a straight flush three hands in a row — just before other gamblers shoot her for cheating. The difficulty to perform certain actions might be increased or decreased. Crops could spring up overnight. The local landscape may change, or an

honest man could be elected to public office. Storytellers are encouraged to be creative, but they should take great care not to allow game balance to be permanently unsettled.


The Storm Eater

Most Garou believe the Storm Eater to be a twisted amalgam of Wyrms corruption and ordered Weaver structures. Speculation runs rampant that the spirit itself can no longer maintain a stable form. As the two facets of its dual nature constantly battle one another, new limbs, organs and structures are formed, corrupted, calcified and dismantled only to be reformed (in some fashion) once again.

Where its influence is felt in the Middle Lands and Penumbra, the Storm Eater gathers churning, black clouds in the corresponding area of the Realm. The relentless wind and deafening thunder swallow the cries of the storm's victims. At the core of the great Thunderstorm rages a Tornado of immense power and ferocity. Everything for miles is torn free and thrown into the maelstrom to feed the spirit's endless hunger. The storm surrounding the cyclone is equal parts shattered landscape and turbulent atmosphere. Put simply, the Storm Eater brings inescapable destruction. The wise know to flee when it approaches.

The Storm Eater starts out as small and relatively inconspicuous. In ages past, long before the combined effort of the Wendigo, Uktena and Croatan Tribes first imprisoned the spirit, the Storm Eater was a Bane. No one knows what event started the vicious cycle that turned the Bane into the force of nature it is during the early days of the Savage West.

Despite the Storm Eater's centuries-long slumber, after its defeat at the hands of the Pure Ones, the powerful spirit is initially little more than a pale shadow of the creature it becomes. Storytellers who plan to run a chronicle that spans the entire 60-plus years of the American Frontier and the Savage West may consider the pattern that the Storm Eater follows in gaining power. After its escape during the 1830s, it is incredibly strong; Storytellers should remember that it took a unified effort by three tribes to previously defeat it. Each time the characters encounter the Storm Eater over the years, it should be noticeably stronger. Hate, Wyrms-taint, violence, unchecked expansion and the rape of the land all contribute to its growth — but still it would not have reached the magnitude described above. At some point, the Storm Eater encounters and consumes a great Weaver-spirit, adding the Power of its victim to its own. It is at this time that the Storm Eater makes its great leap to the High Umbra and becomes a tremendously devastating force with the ability to shred the Gauntlet and break the



very laws of nature. From this point on, due to the Weaver's influence, the Storm Eater is methodically destructive. It identifies a target, positions itself and commences feeding until all of its victims' energies have been consumed, forming a Blight Domain. Only then does it move on.

The Storm Eater's power to tear the Gauntlet that separates the Physical Realm from the Penumbra is well-documented. Not so widely understood is the fact that for days following the Storm Eater's departure from an area, creatures are able to pass through the torn Gauntlet, before it can mend itself, into a portion of the Tellurian where they don't belong. Spirits from the Storm Umbra, both malevolent and benign, are free to roam the Physical Realm, while people and animals might stumble into the Penumbra. Such displacement gives rise to many legends of monsters wandering the land, as well as to the sudden and mysterious disappearance of entire populations from small frontier communities. For example, the children in a town of Kinfolk might unexpectedly find themselves walking through the Storm Umbra rather than toward home from the schoolhouse.

Another notable effect of the Storm Eater's tearing the Gauntlet is the creation of the Broken Lands. On the fringes of the Storm Eater's reach exist these freakish places where the Gauntlet is torn and the Physical Realm and the Penumbra are brought into horrible, violent union. Packs that make a habit of hunting Storm-spirits are sometimes forced to pass through the disconcerting Broken Lands in pursuit of prey.

The foul and corrupting presence of the Storm Eater is felt in areas of the Penumbra long after it has moved on. The destruction to the Umbral landscape is always severe. What is worse, though, is that the Storm Eater leaves in its wake what one Galliard described as "an oily film of corruption" on the ruins. After the Storm Eater leaves, spirits move into the area. Some of these spirits feed on the wreckage, but most come to repair the Umbral damage. However, due to the power of the Storm Eater and the warping influence of its residue, many of these otherwise peaceful Gafflings become corrupted. Rarely do the Weaver and the Wyrms strike a balance in the minor spirits that fall into the Storm Eater's sway. Some of these spirits become methodically destructive, while others deliberately flaw the repairs they are making to the Umbral landscape. It should be noted that these corrupted Gafflings are not consciously "evil," rather they are mindless automatons performing a single task, or simple set of tasks. Yet, once these spirits are tainted by the Storm Eater, all of their work is flawed. In this way, even after the damage caused by the Storm Eater has been repaired, severe "scar tissue" remains on the surface of the Penumbra. The significance of such "barbed" Umbral structures for Garou is the increased risk of becoming stuck sideways in an

effort to reach the spirit world. In game terms, treat any failed roll to step sideways in such areas as a botch.

Children of the Storm's Fury

Once the Storm Eater settles in an area to begin its gluttony, it begins shattering the boundaries of space and drawing toward itself the ephemera that form the local "landscape" of the Storm Umbra. The Umbral rocks, trees and wind, along with any unfortunate spirits in the area, are torn apart by the tremendous force as they spiral into the heart of the storm. The Storm Eater consumes most of this ephemera and the spiritual energy it stores. Occasionally though, as the vast amounts of ephemera are torn apart, large pieces come into close enough proximity that the spiritual energy coalesces into a new and conscious spirit. Most of the spirits created in this terrible fashion plummet immediately to their doom in the raging storm, having experienced sentience only long enough to miss it when it is torn from them. But some of these newly created spirits are either tossed free of the Storm Eater's grasp as their new spiritual mass changes their trajectory within the vortex, or they coalesce with enough energy to halt their advance into the mouth of the storm. These potent young Storm-spirits, created in the violent fury of the Storm Eater's consuming hunger, are rapidly and easily corrupted to resemble their sire. The Storm Eater travels with a pack of these young Storm-spirits, who cling to their progenitor like remora to a shark and feed on the swirling ephemera and spiritual Power. The ravenous young Storm-spirits often glut themselves on one another, growing in power until they are strong enough to set out on their own, or until they attract the Storm Eater's attention and are consumed by it.

Tornadoes

These Storm-spirits most closely resemble their sire, the Storm Eater. Just as their name implies, these storms manifest in the Penumbra as Tornadoes that vary in size and intensity depending on the Power of the spirit.

Smaller Tornadoes frequently cause unexplained devastation as they destroy the Umbral reflection of objects that exist in the physical world. For example, a Tornado sweeps through a Penumbra forest and uproots its trees. Soon after, the corresponding forest in the Realm dies for no apparent reason. Also, when small Tornadoes strike a populated area, they cause wild mood swings in the inhabitants.

Blizzards

Blizzards, perhaps the most methodical and deliberate of all Storm-spirits, rarely rush into a situation. Blizzards are notoriously slow eaters. They prefer to isolate their prey and feed over time. For example, once they find a source of Power, Blizzards often bury the surrounding area in snow and ice, making it extremely difficult for anything to enter or leave that section of the Penumbra. The Storm-spirit then proceeds to devour all local spiritual energy. Because of the time required by this feeding practice, Blizzards often "hole up" in an area of the Penumbra for months at a time. When Blizzards come across a spirit or other individual they want to consume, they can freeze the victim and consume it at their leisure. Blizzards are known to keep stashes of immobilized victims carefully hidden throughout the Storm Umbra for use as future meals.

When Blizzards enter a region of the Penumbra, they can bring colder temperatures to the corresponding location in the Physical Realm. In populated areas, Blizzards tend to generate feelings of intense paranoia and xenophobia in the inhabitants. They also bring famine with them as they devour the Umbral reflection of some local crops, or their unseasonably cool attendant temperatures interfere with normal crop development.

Firestorms

Firestorms are the most impulsive and mercurial of the major Storm-spirits. They are also among the most blatantly destructive. In the Penumbra, Firestorms appear as anything from a massive wall of flame sweeping across the Umbral plains to a huge, burning vortex. They tend to destroy a location with an inherent source of Power before they have a chance to consume much of it. Therefore, these Storm-spirits gain most of their sustenance by hunting and devouring other spirits, which makes them extremely feared. All damage inflicted by Firestorms is aggravated. Due to their predatory and quixotic nature, Firestorms do not stay in one location for any considerable length of time.

While sweeping through an area, Firestorms can generate intense hostility and anger in the populace of the Physical Realm. Disputes may become violent. The intensity of the emotions and the degree of violence they generate depend on the Power of the Storm-spirit. Smaller spirits generate numerous brawls in an area, while more powerful spirits may incite a massacre among otherwise decent citizens. Firestorms usually stay in a region for only a few hours, or a day at most, so these emotions recede just as quickly as they surface, leaving the population confused and horrified at the things they have done. The Storyteller may call for frequent frenzy or Willpower rolls from players as a Firestorm-spirit affects their characters' reasoning and judgment.

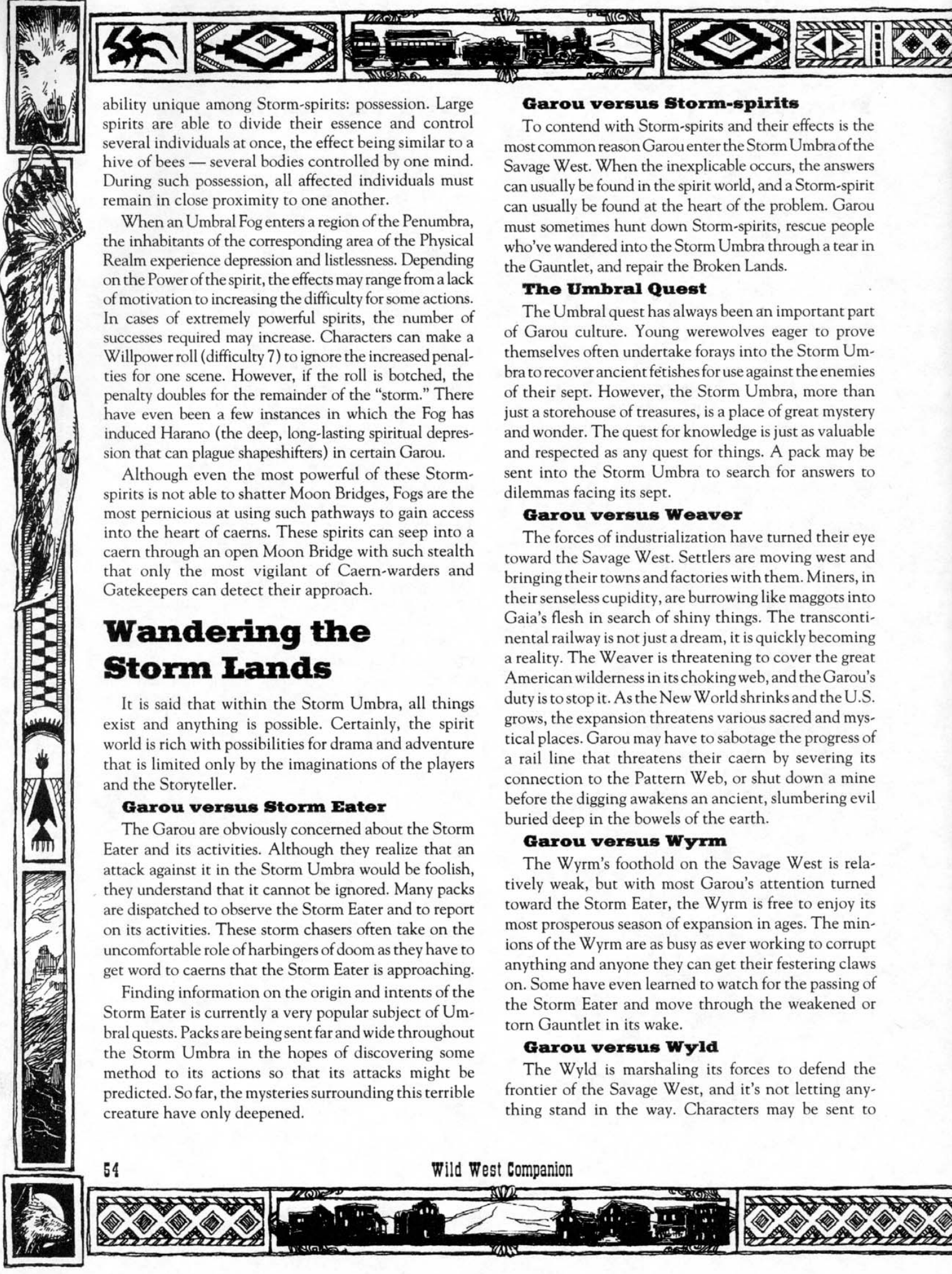
Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are the most common form of Storm-spirit. They appear as large, dark rainclouds accompanied by howling, gale-force winds, stinging rain that can feel like nails piercing flesh, and the tooth-shattering crash of thunder and lightning — always lots of lightning. If the Storm-spirits had a warrior class, Thunderstorms would be it. One Get of Fenris Ragabash christened them the "blitzspritzen," much to his own amusement, until his pack's Philodox pointed out that unfortunately these Storm-spirits were extremely effective at attacking caerns, converting the Penumbra into a wretched Blightscape and slaughtering Wyld-spirits (after which the Ragabash renamed them "filthy, stinking sheep-biters"). Thunderstorms are dedicated and persistent Storm-spirits. Once they identify a target, they spend whatever time is necessary to conquer it. The Wendigo talk of a Wurmcomer pack that caught the attention of a Thunderstorm and was pursued by it for two full moons across much of the frontier territory.

When a Thunderstorm settles into an area of the Penumbra, it has a far different effect on the region just beyond the Gauntlet than other Storm-spirits. The Weaver influence of many of the Storm-spirits is quickly overshadowed by their Wurm components, oftentimes creating in the act of destroying. Not so with Thunderstorms. Because of their obsessive dedication, these Storm-spirits focus heavily on one aspect of their nature at a time. Thunderstorms first nourish a source of Power and encourage it to grow, then they engorge themselves on its spiritual energy, like a hog being overfed before slaughter. This effect manifests in the Physical Realm as periods of tremendous prosperity followed quickly by absolute ruin. For example, local crops might grow to enormous proportions in a matter of weeks, only to rot within days, even hours. Another common example is the discovery of a rich deposit of precious metals that causes the local population to increase drastically in just a few months. Then, the deposit suddenly dries up and the boomtown is abandoned within days. Characters may experience a brief stretch of tremendous good fortune that is inevitably followed by disastrous ruin unless the Thunderstorm responsible can be defeated.

Fog

Umbral Fog is the subtlest — and some say, the most malevolent — of the major Storm-spirits. As the name implies, while in the Penumbra, this Storm-spirit appears as a swirling mass of gray mist, whose density and shade vary from barely visible to physically palpable. Because they are often difficult to perceive, these spirits can usually feed without notice. Umbral Fog has an



ability unique among Storm-spirits: possession. Large spirits are able to divide their essence and control several individuals at once, the effect being similar to a hive of bees — several bodies controlled by one mind. During such possession, all affected individuals must remain in close proximity to one another.

When an Umbral Fog enters a region of the Penumbra, the inhabitants of the corresponding area of the Physical Realm experience depression and listlessness. Depending on the Power of the spirit, the effects may range from a lack of motivation to increasing the difficulty for some actions. In cases of extremely powerful spirits, the number of successes required may increase. Characters can make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) to ignore the increased penalties for one scene. However, if the roll is botched, the penalty doubles for the remainder of the "storm." There have even been a few instances in which the Fog has induced Harano (the deep, long-lasting spiritual depression that can plague shapeshifters) in certain Garou.

Although even the most powerful of these Storm-spirits is not able to shatter Moon Bridges, Fogs are the most pernicious at using such pathways to gain access into the heart of caerns. These spirits can seep into a caern through an open Moon Bridge with such stealth that only the most vigilant of Caern-warders and Gatekeepers can detect their approach.

Wandering the Storm Lands

It is said that within the Storm Umbra, all things exist and anything is possible. Certainly, the spirit world is rich with possibilities for drama and adventure that is limited only by the imaginations of the players and the Storyteller.

Garou versus Storm Eater

The Garou are obviously concerned about the Storm Eater and its activities. Although they realize that an attack against it in the Storm Umbra would be foolish, they understand that it cannot be ignored. Many packs are dispatched to observe the Storm Eater and to report on its activities. These storm chasers often take on the uncomfortable role of harbingers of doom as they have to get word to caerns that the Storm Eater is approaching.

Finding information on the origin and intents of the Storm Eater is currently a very popular subject of Umbral quests. Packs are being sent far and wide throughout the Storm Umbra in the hopes of discovering some method to its actions so that its attacks might be predicted. So far, the mysteries surrounding this terrible creature have only deepened.

Garou versus Storm-spirits

To contend with Storm-spirits and their effects is the most common reason Garou enter the Storm Umbra of the Savage West. When the inexplicable occurs, the answers can usually be found in the spirit world, and a Storm-spirit can usually be found at the heart of the problem. Garou must sometimes hunt down Storm-spirits, rescue people who've wandered into the Storm Umbra through a tear in the Gauntlet, and repair the Broken Lands.

The Umbral Quest

The Umbral quest has always been an important part of Garou culture. Young werewolves eager to prove themselves often undertake forays into the Storm Umbra to recover ancient fetishes for use against the enemies of their sept. However, the Storm Umbra, more than just a storehouse of treasures, is a place of great mystery and wonder. The quest for knowledge is just as valuable and respected as any quest for things. A pack may be sent into the Storm Umbra to search for answers to dilemmas facing its sept.

Garou versus Weaver

The forces of industrialization have turned their eye toward the Savage West. Settlers are moving west and bringing their towns and factories with them. Miners, in their senseless cupidity, are burrowing like maggots into Gaia's flesh in search of shiny things. The transcontinental railway is not just a dream, it is quickly becoming a reality. The Weaver is threatening to cover the great American wilderness in its choking web, and the Garou's duty is to stop it. As the New World shrinks and the U.S. grows, the expansion threatens various sacred and mystical places. Garou may have to sabotage the progress of a rail line that threatens their caern by severing its connection to the Pattern Web, or shut down a mine before the digging awakens an ancient, slumbering evil buried deep in the bowels of the earth.

Garou versus Wyrms

The Wyrms' foothold on the Savage West is relatively weak, but with most Garou's attention turned toward the Storm Eater, the Wyrms are free to enjoy its most prosperous season of expansion in ages. The minions of the Wyrms are as busy as ever working to corrupt anything and anyone they can get their festering claws on. Some have even learned to watch for the passing of the Storm Eater and move through the weakened or torn Gauntlet in its wake.

Garou versus Wyld

The Wyld is marshaling its forces to defend the frontier of the Savage West, and it's not letting anything stand in the way. Characters may be sent to

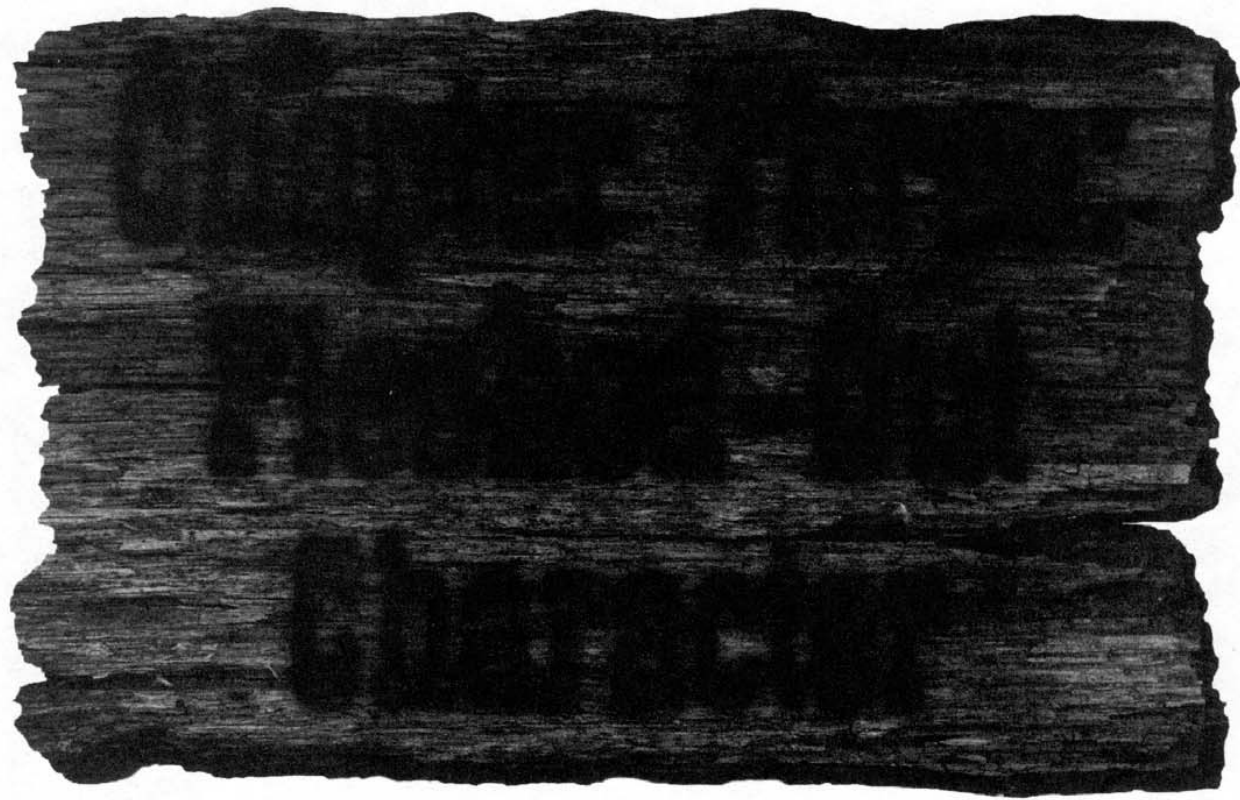
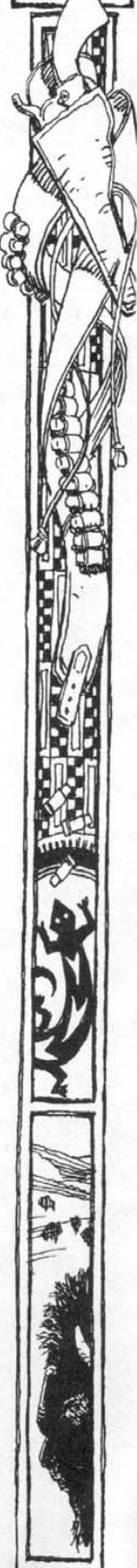
investigate a gathering of Wyld-spirits, or to track the progress of a Wyldstorm as it wends its way across the Savage West. As any Ragabash will tell you, the trouble with pure chaos is that it is so unpredictable.

Garou versus Garou

The spirit world has always been a potent battleground for the Garou, and the Storm Umbra is no exception. The European Garou are always looking to acquire new caerns to strengthen their position in the New World and to facilitate the arrival of their tribemates; whereas, at the same time, the Pure Ones are always looking to recover caerns already taken from them.







Merits and Flaws

Merits and Flaws are character Traits that spice up your **Wild West** chronicle. Merits are assorted boons to a character, whereas Flaws are different drawbacks from which a character might suffer. Some of these Traits do little more in game terms than add a little panache; others can throw a chronicle out of whack altogether or alter its focus utterly. Powerful Merits or Flaws shape a character's destiny and any relationships she has.

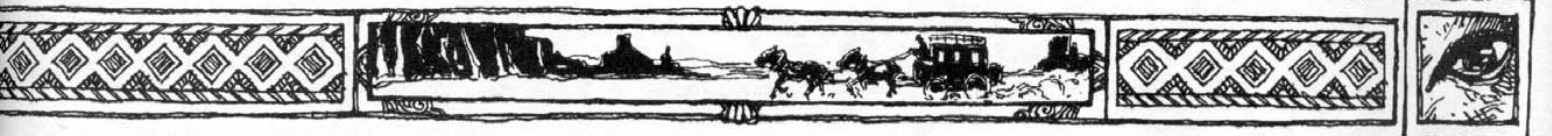
When you create a character in **Werewolf: The Wild West**, you receive 15 "freebie points" to assign to whatever Traits you like as a way of giving your character the finishing touches that make her unique. The optional system of Merits and Flaws expands on this idea and allows you to personalize your character further.

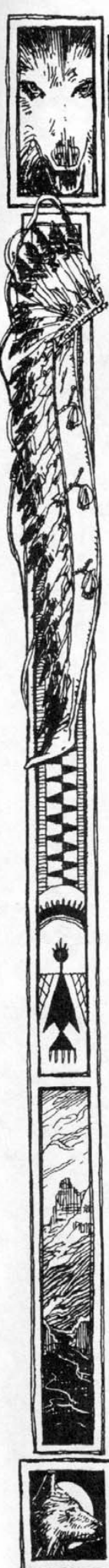
Merits may be purchased only with freebie points and only during character conception. Flaws provide

additional freebies to spend, again, only during initial conception. You may take a maximum of seven points of Flaws, which limits your potential freebie points to a total of 22. Some Merits and Flaws have variable point costs; these Traits offer more leeway in character creation.

Merits and Flaws are provided to flesh-out a character and add new story hooks and details, not to let power-gamers min-max their characters into war machines. Make sure that the Storyteller allows these options in the chronicle before creating characters based on them. Each chronicle is unique, so there's no telling what restrictions or changes the Storyteller may have in mind. There's no right or wrong way, just what works for everyone.

Some Flaws are marked as possible alternate deformities for metis characters (such as Deranged, Blind or Monstrous). Remember that although you can take such a Flaw as your metis disfigurement, in no case do you gain freebie points for that Flaw. Of course, you can





receive freebie points for any additional Flaws you take *beyond* the disfigurement — a truly unlucky metis could be born blind, mad *and* hideous — but at least one deformity must be taken without recompense. Such is the metis curse.

Psychological

These Merits and Flaws deal with the psychological makeup of your character. More than simple personality quirks, they detail overpowering motivations, ideals or pathologies. Some psychological Flaws can be ignored temporarily through the expenditure of a Willpower point, and they are so noted. If you take such a Flaw and don't roleplay it when the Storyteller thinks you should, then he may tell you that you have spent a point of Willpower for the effort. Flaws cannot be easily ignored.

Code of Honor: (1 point Merit)

You have a strict personal code of ethics that you cannot ignore. You can resist with ease most enticements that would bring you in conflict with your code. When battling supernatural persuasion (Mind magick, the vampiric Discipline Dominate, etc.) that would make you violate your code, either you gain three extra dice

to resist or your opponent's difficulties increase by two (Storyteller's choice). You must construct your own personal code, and commitment can vary.

Berserker: (2 point Merit)

You feel the Rage burning inside you, and you know how to direct it toward your enemies. You have the ability to frenzy at will and, thus, you can ignore your wound penalties. However, you must pay the consequences of any actions you commit while in frenzy, just as you would otherwise. Also, you have the same chance of going into frenzy even when you don't wish to do so.


Compulsion: (1 point Flaw)

You have a quirk of some sort, one that can cause you a great number of problems. Your compulsion may be for preening, pilfering or prevaricating, stealing, gambling, gabbing or plain old gluttony. The only way to avoid your compulsion, even for a little while, is to spend a Willpower point (Storyteller's discretion as to how long you resist the urge), but it affects you at all other times.

Dark Secret: (1 point Flaw)

You have some sort of secret that, if uncovered, would be a serious embarrassment to you and would make you a pariah in the Garou community. It can be anything from having murdered an elder to having indulged in an affair with a fellow Garou (*charach* is a fighting word in this era) to having told a group of mockeries a caern's location in exchange for your life. While this secret is on your mind at all times, it comes up in stories only once in a while — but when it does, watch out.





Intolerance: (1 point Flaw)

You have an irrational dislike of a certain thing. It may be a varmint, a people, a situation or just about anything. You have a +2 difficulty on all dice rolls that involve the object of dislike. Note that some dislikes may be too trivial or ridiculous to count; a dislike of deerskin moccasins or of a certain type of cheroot, for instance, has no real dramatic value and shouldn't be allowed. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what you can pick to dislike. Garou cannot take an intolerance of the Wyrms; it's already a common notion and scarcely a Flaw.

Nightmares: (1 point Flaw)

You experience horrendous nightmares every time you sleep, and memories of them haunt you during your waking hours. Sometimes the nightmares are so horrific that they cause you to lose one die on all your actions for the next day (Storyteller's discretion). Some nightmares may be so intense that you mistake them for reality; a crafty Storyteller will be quick to take advantage of this Flaw.

Overconfident: (1 point Flaw)

You are the best, baddest, most ornery hombre there ever was, and you *know* it. You have an exaggerated and unshakable opinion of your own worth and capabilities. You display no hesitation in trusting your abilities, even in situations in which you risk defeat. Yet, because your abilities may not be up to snuff, this Flaw can be very dangerous. When you fail, you're quick to find someone or something other than yourself to blame. If you are convincing enough, you infect others with your overconfidence.

Phobia: (1 or 3 point Flaw)

You have an overpowering fear of something. You instinctively retreat from and avoid the object of your fear. Common objects of phobias include certain beasts or bugs, crowds, open spaces, tight spaces, and heights. If you suffer from a mild phobia (1 point), you must roll Willpower when you encounter the object of your fear. The Storyteller determines the difficulty of this roll; if you get fewer than three successes, you refuse to approach the object or situation in question, and if you fail, you flee. If your phobia is severe (3 points), you must make a frenzy roll not to go into a fox frenzy when faced with the object of your fear. The Storyteller has final say on which phobias are permitted in a chronicle.

Skittish: (1 point Flaw)

You are distinctly ill at ease when dealing with people, and you try to avoid social entanglements whenever possible. All rolls that concern social dealings with other folks are at +1 difficulty, and any roll made while you are the center of attention is at +2 difficulty. Don't expect to make a public speech.

Soft-Hearted: (1 point Flaw)

You cannot abide seeing others suffer; maybe you're a true pillar of compassion, or maybe you're just a cool customer who dislikes intense emotion. If you directly cause someone's suffering while that person is with you, you experience sleepless grief and nausea for days. You avoid situations in which you might have to observe suffering and do anything you can to protect others from it as well. Whenever you must witness it, difficulties on all your rolls increase by two for the next hour.

Speech Impediment: (1 point Flaw)

What comes out of your mouth can stump even the ablest interpreters of frontier gibberish or pidgin English. Your stammer turns a simple "hello" into utter Hell (even in the Garou tongue). Make all relevant rolls at a +2 difficulty. You aren't obliged to roleplay this impediment constantly, but you should attempt to simulate it in times of duress, or when dealing with strangers.

Curiosity: (2 point Flaw)

You're a naturally curious person and find mysteries of any sort irresistible. In most circumstances, you find that your curiosity easily overrides your common sense. To resist the temptation, make a Wits roll. The difficulty is 5 for simple things ("I wonder what's in that shed over yonder"), but it can rise as high as 9 in intense circumstances ("Where'd this Moon Bridge come from? Reckon I'd best go check it out. What could go wrong?").

Low Self-Image: (2 point Flaw)

You just don't believe in yourself. You have two fewer dice in situations in which you don't expect to succeed (at the Storyteller's discretion, though she might limit this penalty to one die if you do the right thing and point out times when this Flaw might affect you). At the Storyteller's option, you may have to make Willpower rolls to do things that require self-confidence, or even to use a Willpower point when others are not obliged to do so.



Pack Mentality: (2 point Flaw)

The pack is your life; without it, you're a nobody. Who you are is so tied to your pack that you always think in terms of "us" rather than "me." When you are with at least one packmate, you receive a -1 on all pack tactics difficulties; when alone, you receive a +1 to all difficulties. You are so dependent on your pack that sometimes you can't make decisions without them — even if you are the alpha. The Storyteller may decide you have to make a Willpower roll or spend a Willpower point to act on your own in a stressful situation.

Short Fuse: (2 point Flaw)

The difficulty of your frenzy rolls is always two less, no matter how you are provoked. The Wyrms touch on you is stronger than normal and you fall more easily into the "thrall of the Wyrms." This Flaw is a dangerous one; don't choose it lightly.

Vengeance: (2 point Flaw)

You are out for revenge — perhaps the caern you belonged to has been destroyed, the Wyrms changed your best friend into a mockery or your kin were brutally murdered. This catalyst may be something from your days before the Change, or from your life as a werewolf. Either way, you are obsessed with wreaking vengeance on an individual (or perhaps an entire group), and you make it your first priority in all situations. The need for vengeance can be overcome only by spending Willpower points, and even then, it subsides just temporarily. You may have your revenge some day, but the Storyteller won't make it easy.

Deranged: (3 point Flaw)

Due to circumstances beyond your control, you are permanently insane. You may have been born with a brain disorder, or you were driven mad by seeing things you weren't meant to see. Choose a Derangement for your character. Although you can temporarily overcome this insanity with Willpower, you can never permanently rid yourself of its grip. Metis can take this Flaw as their deformity.





Driving Goal: (3 point Flaw)

You have a personal goal that prods you in sometimes startling directions. The goal is always limitless in depth and can never be achieved. It could be to stop the constant bickering and warring between the Garou tribes, or to unite the Pure Ones with the immigrant Garou and destroy the Wyrms once and for all. Because you must work toward your goal throughout the chronicle (though you can avoid it for short periods by spending Willpower), it gets you into trouble continually and may jeopardize other goals; other Garou probably won't share your vision, and they may look down on you as being distracted from the true war. Choose your goal carefully, as it directs and focuses everything your character does.

Hatred: (3 point Flaw)

You have an unreasoning and nigh-uncontrollable animosity toward a certain thing. You may hate a particular vicinity, an ethnic group, a situation — almost anything. You must make a frenzy roll whenever you face the object of your hatred. You constantly pursue opportunities to injure, destroy or control your nemesis, so much so that your reasoning is clouded.

Territorial: (3 point Flaw)

You don't like to stray outside your territory, nor do you like to have strangers enter it. In fact, you get so flustered and disoriented while away from your territory that you are at +1 on all difficulties. In addition, you must make a frenzy roll not to attack intruders entering your territory, unless they obtain your permission to pass through. (Some examples of a territory are a town and its surrounding area, a part of a forest or possibly a wagon train and the town it settles. A territory is not, for example, the New Mexico Territory or the Oklahoma Territory.)

Mental

These Merits and Flaws deal with the mind's strengths, weaknesses and special capacities.

Common Sense: (1 point Merit)

You have a passel of practical, everyday wisdom. If you're about to do something counter to common sense, the Storyteller may alert you to what you are trying to do and how it might violate practicality. This Merit is ideal for a novice player, as it allows you to receive advice from the Storyteller on what you can and can't do, and (more importantly) what you should and shouldn't do. This Merit cannot be taken with the Flaw: Tenderfoot.

Concentration: (1 point Merit)

You have learned to focus your mind, to shut out botheration and nuisances. Any negative modifier to a Dice Pool or difficulty that arises from a distraction or other inauspicious circumstance is limited to two. A character with this Merit may not take the Flaw: Absent-Minded.

Perfect Recall: (2 point Merit)

You have a steel-trap memory and recall things seen and heard with perfect detail. By gaining at least one success on an Intelligence + Alertness roll, you remember any sight or sound accurately, even if you heard it or glanced at it only once (although the difficulty of such a feat would be high). Five successes enable you to remember an event perfectly; the Storyteller relates to you exactly what was seen or heard.

Calm Heart: (3 point Merit)

You are naturally tame-tempered and unflappable, and you rarely fly off the handle. Raise the difficulty on all your frenzy rolls by two, no matter how the incident is provoked.

Iron Will: (5 point Merit)

When you are determined and your mind is set on something, nothing diverts you from your goal. You cannot be Dominated by vampires; wraiths or mages using mental attacks against you gain an additional three to their difficulties if you are aware of them and resisting. However, the additional mental defense costs you one Willpower point per turn. Even if you are unaware of an attack, anyone attempting to influence you magically must add one to her difficulty.

Self-Confidence: (5 point Merit)

When you spend a point of Willpower to gain an automatic success, your self-confidence may allow you to gain the benefit of that expenditure without actually losing the Willpower point. When you declare that you are using a point of Willpower for an extra success, you do not lose the point of Willpower unless you fail the roll. As this Merit may be used only when you need confidence in your abilities in order to succeed, it can come into play only when the difficulty of your roll is 6 or higher. You may spend Willpower at other times; however, if the difficulty is 5 or less, this Merit won't help you.



Amnesia: (2 point Flaw)

You are unable to remember your past or anything of yourself or your family. Your life is a blank slate. However, your past may some day come back to haunt you. (You can, if you wish, take up to five points of other Flaws without specifying what they are. The Storyteller can supply the details. Over the course of the chronicle, you and your character slowly discover them.)

Weak-Willed: (2 point Flaw)

You are highly susceptible to Dominate and intimidation; you are, in fact, unable to use your Willpower freely. You can roll or spend Willpower only when survival is at stake, or when it is appropriate to your auspice or Nature.

Absent-Minded: (3 point Flaw)

Your packmates always say that you'd lose your head if it wasn't attached. You've got such a bad memory that you barely remember what you did yesterday, much less, last week. You don't forget Knowledges or Skills, but you do forget names, routes, and when you ate last. In order to remember anything more than your own name and the location of your caern, make a Wits roll or, as a last resort, expend a Willpower point. This Flaw may not be taken with the Merit: Concentration.

Awareness

These Merits and Flaws involve your senses and perception (or lack thereof).

Eagle-Eyed: (1 point Merit)

You have exceptionally sharp eyesight and are almost able to find that needle strategically placed in the haystack just by glancing in the general direction of the pile. The difficulties of all your dice rolls related to sight decrease by two. You may not take the Flaw: Blind if you take this Merit.

Sharp-Eared: (1 point Merit)

Your hearing is incredible. You can hear a pin drop upstairs in the cathouse next to the bar where you're currently engaged in a brawl. The difficulties of all dice rolls related to hearing decrease by two. You may not take the Flaw: Hard of Hearing if you take this Merit.

Color Blind: (1 point Flaw)

You can see only in black and white, no matter what form you take. Color means nothing to you, although you can distinguish gradations in shade, which you perceive as varieties of gray. (Yes, color blindness actually indicates an inability to distinguish between colors, but we fudged a bit for the sake of brevity.) This Flaw is common among lupus.

Hard of Hearing: (1 point Flaw)

Your hearing is defective. Your first clue to a ruckus behind you in the saloon usually has to come from the mirror. Your difficulties for all dice rolls related to hearing are increased by two. You receive the Lupus form Perception bonus only to olfactory checks. You may not take the Merit: Sharp-Eared if you take this Flaw.

One-Eyed: (2 point Flaw)

You can't see out of one eye — because it's not there. You have no peripheral vision on your blind side, and you must roll two fewer dice when a situation involves depth perception (including ranged combat). Metis characters may take this Flaw as their metis disfigurement. Additionally, a metis character who takes this Flaw as her deformity may have a cyclopean appearance, with the one eye centered on her forehead. This can well affect her social life, increasing the difficulties of all Social rolls by two. Such a metis may have no peripheral vision whatsoever.

Deaf: (4 point Flaw)

You're lucky you still have your sight, although you get tired of being spooked when people walk up behind you. You cannot hear sound — you feel the vibrations of very loud noises, nothing more — and automatically fail any rolls that require hearing. Metis characters may take this Flaw as their metis disfigurement.

Blind: (6 point Flaw)

You're completely blind, and you automatically fail all dice rolls involving vision. Metis may take this Flaw as a metis deformity.

Aptitudes

These Merits and Flaws establish special capacities and abilities for your character, or they modify the effects and powers of your character's other abilities.

Animal Magnetism: (1 point Merit)

You are especially comely to others of your breed. You receive a -2 difficulty on seduction or animal attraction rolls (which may inspire some jealousy in others who view you as "competition").

Stunt Rider: (1 point Merit)

You have a natural way with horses and other four-legged modes of transport. The difficulties of all rolls requiring risky or especially difficult riding maneuvers are reduced by two.

Ambidextrous: (2 point Merit)

You have a high degree of off-hand dexterity and can perform tasks with the "wrong" hand at no penalty. The normal penalty for using both hands at once to perform different tasks (such as fighting with a weapon in each hand) is +1 difficulty for the "right" hand and +3 difficulty for the other hand; with this Merit, the penalty falls to +1 for each hand.

Natural Linguist: (2 point Merit)

You have a flair for languages. This Merit does not allow you to learn more languages than are permitted by your Linguistics score, but you may add three dice to any roll involving languages (both written and spoken).

Daredevil: (3 point Merit)

Even angels fear to follow in your tracks. You are good at taking risks and even better at surviving them. All difficulties are at -2 whenever you try something exceptionally dangerous, and you can ignore a single 1 on such rolls (as if you had an extra success).

Perfect Balance: (3 point Merit)

Your sense of balance is acute thanks to constant training or inherited traits. It's very unlikely that you'll ever fall during your life. You may trip, but you always

catch yourself before you fully lose your footing or handhold. Having this Merit aids such actions as tight-rope walking, crossing ice and climbing mountains; all such feats are at -3 difficulty.

Jack-of-All-Trades: (5 point Merit)

You have a large pool of Skills and Knowledges to draw on — obtained through your extensive travels, the jobs you've held, or just all-around know-how. You automatically have one dot in all Skill and Knowledge Dice Pools. This level is illusory and is used only to simulate a wide range of abilities. If you train or spend experience in the Skill or Knowledge, you must pay the point cost for the first level a "second time" before raising the Skill or Knowledge to two dots. Lupus characters cannot take this Merit.

Uneducated: (1 point Flaw)

Life in a small prairie town or in the wild sometimes means that you don't get any schooling. Because you have never attended a day of school in your life or you had to drop out to take up the mantle of the household, you have five points less to spend on your Knowledge Abilities (so the most you could take would be 8, and the least would be zero). Of course, you can still spend freebie points to take Knowledges. However, you cannot have any Knowledge at level 3 or higher at the start of the game. Lupus characters cannot take this Flaw.

Unskilled: (3 point Flaw)

While you might have drifted from job to job, you never trained extensively in any trade or craft and therefore have five points less to spend on your Skills (so the most you could take on your Skills would be 8, and the least would be zero). Of course, you can still spend freebie points to take Skills. However, you cannot have any Skill at level 3 or higher at the start of the game. Lupus may not have this Flaw.

Inept: (5 point Flaw)

You are not attuned to your natural aptitudes, and therefore have five points less to spend on your Talents (so the most you could take on your Talents would be 8, and the least would be zero). Of course, you can still spend freebie points to take Talents. However, you cannot have any Talent at level 3 or higher at the start of the game.



Supernatural

These Merits and Flaws are all some sort of supernatural benefit or detriment. Because of the potential of these particular Traits, the Storyteller might not allow you to choose from this category — ask before you pick any. Furthermore, you should not select such Traits unless they firmly fit your character concept and you can explain why your character possesses them. In general, it is not recommended that anyone have more than one or two supernatural Merits or Flaws — they should be under the Storyteller's strict control.

Ancestor Ally: (1 point Merit)

You are strongly linked to your ancestral heritage. This Merit allows you to unite with one particular Past Life; the difficulty to channel her is two less. Create the ancestor: Give her a name, abilities for which she was best known and how renowned she was among other Garou. You must have the Background: Past Life to purchase this Merit.

Moon-Bound: (2 point Merit)

People call you superstitious, but you feel the power of the moon and the effects it has on you when it waxes and wanes. When your auspice's moon phase is waxing, you receive one extra die to all rolls. However, when your moon phase is waning, you lose one die from all rolls.

Danger Sense: (3 point Merit)

On the trail of those mockeries who destroyed the village, as you walk into the chasm that leads to their hideout, sometimes the only thing that can save you is the prickling of hairs on the back of your neck to let you know somebody's got the drop on you. This sixth sense warns you of danger. When your character is in danger, the Storyteller should make a secret roll against your Perception + Alertness; the difficulty corresponds to the remoteness of the danger. If the roll succeeds, the Storyteller tells you that you have a sense of foreboding. Multiple successes may refine the feeling and give an indication of direction, distance or nature.

Luck: (3 point Merit)

Lucky at cards, but unlucky at love? Not you, you're lucky all around. Maybe you were born lucky; maybe someone's just looking after you. Whatever is the case, you can reroll three failed rolls per story. Only one repeat attempt may be made on any single roll, and the second roll always stands.



Natural Channel: (3 point Merit)

The door to the Umbra has always been easy for you to open. Your difficulty to step sideways is one less, and spirits react favorably to you. Even if you aren't a Theurge, you won't find it difficult to get tutored by the Garou shamans.

Supernatural Companion: (3 point Merit)

You have a friend and ally who happens to be a vampire, mage, wraith, or changeling. Though you may call on her in times of need, she also has the right to call on you (after all, you are friends). However, neither your kind, nor hers, appreciates such a relationship, and you'll both suffer if found out. The Storyteller creates your companion but won't reveal her full powers and potencies to you.

Charmed Existence: (5 point Merit)

Throughout life, you've never really noticed how you've been able to catch yourself before you're about to fall or how you've never really failed at anything. Maybe your life is somehow protected or you're just lucky. Because you do not face the perils that others must, you may ignore a single 1 on every roll you make, as though you had an extra success. This Merit makes it more unlikely that you ever botch, and it grants you more successes than others might obtain.

Guardian Angel: (6 point Merit)

Some supernatural force watches over you, protecting you from harm. You have no idea who or what it is, but you have the idea that someone is there looking out for you. In times of great need, you may be supernaturally protected from harm by peculiar coincidences; however, you can't count on your protector's intervention. The Storyteller must decide why you are being watched over, and by what (not necessarily an angel, despite the name).

Silver Tolerance: (7 point Merit)

You have an immunity to some sorts to silver — the sorts that aren't pointy or knife-edged. You still suffer aggravated damage from silver weapons, but you're able

to soak it. Also, any Gnosis loss from carrying silver items is halved for Garou with this Merit. Instead of losing one Gnosis for every silver item you possess, you lose one Gnosis for every two silver items you carry (always round up).

True Faith: (7 point Merit)

You have a deep-seated faith in and love for Gaia, God, or whatever it is you consider the Almighty. You begin the game with one point of Faith (a Trait that ranges from 1 to 10). This Faith provides you with an inner strength and comfort that continues to support you when all else fails.

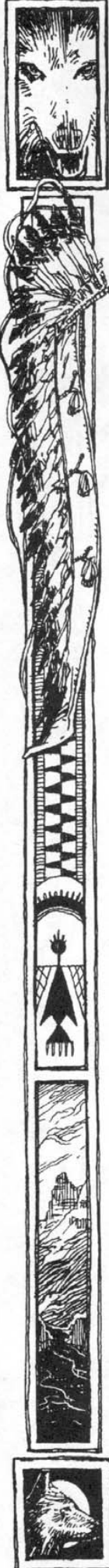
Your Faith adds to Willpower rolls by providing an extra die to that Dice Pool for each point in Faith. The exact supernatural effects of Faith, if any, are left up to the Storyteller, although it does typically repel vampires. (The Garou's player must make a Faith roll against a difficulty of the vampire's Willpower to repel him. For more rules, see *Vampire Players Guide*, p. 30, or *The Hunters Hunted*, pp. 64-66.) The effects of Faith certainly vary from Garou to Garou and are almost never obvious; some of the most saintly people have never performed miracles greater than managing to ease an injured soul's suffering. The nature of any miracles you may do is usually tied to your own auspice, and you might never realize that you have been aided by a force beyond yourself.

No one may start the game with more than 3 points of Faith. Additional points are awarded only at the Storyteller's discretion, based on appropriate behavior and deeds.

Banned Transformation: (1-6 point Flaw)

Some event prevents you from changing, except back to your breed form. Choose one from below or create your own. You must spend a Willpower point and make a Willpower roll to successfully change forms when the forbidding condition occurs.

- Within earshot of soothing music (1 point)
- When wolfsbane is near (2 points)
- Without spending a Rage point (3 points)
- When silver is near (4 points)
- During the day (5 points)
- Cannot see the moon (6 points)



Cursed: (1-5 point Flaw)

You have been cursed by someone or something with supernatural or magical powers. This curse is specific and detailed; it cannot be dispelled without extreme effort and can be life-threatening. Choose one from below or create your own.

- You occasionally get a nasty case of mange, causing your fur to fall out in clumps and lowering your Appearance to 1 for days at a time (1 point)
- You always wind up losing something very important to you — your horse, your money purse, your favorite bottle of nerve tonic, or a minor fetish (2 points)
- Guns misfire or backfire when you attempt to use them (3 points)
- You are more likely to be dumped out into the Near Umbra rather than the Penumbra when stepping sideways (4 points)
- Any fetishes you use have a fifty-fifty chance of not working, even if you manage to activate them successfully (5 points)

Foe from the Past: (1-3 point Flaw)

An enemy of one of your ancestors still seeks revenge — through you. If the enemy is supernatural, such as a vampire, mage, wraith, changeling or spirit, this Flaw is worth three points; if you are being hunted by a fanatical werewolf-hunter or other nonsupernatural human, it is worth one or two points, depending on how powerful your foe is. (A mortal probably isn't the same person that pursued your ancestor, rather she is a descendant or heir of one of your ancestor's enemies.) She doesn't necessarily pursue you all the time; she is out for revenge against your ancestor, and you are simply the best path to that vengeance. You must have the Background: Past Life to purchase this Merit.

Forced Transformation: (1-4 point Flaw)

Some event or condition forces you to shapeshift uncontrollably. You must spend a Willpower point each turn to resist the change. Once changed, you cannot shift back until the condition forcing the change has passed. Choose one event from below or create your own.

- Every full moon you must assume Crinos form (2 points)

- You change under the influence of alcohol: to Glabro (1 point), to Crinos (2 points)

- When you are sexually aroused: to Glabro (1 point), to Crinos (2 points); if you are a homid: to Lupus (3 points)

- When you frenzy, you take a form other than Crinos: to Glabro or Hispo (2 points), to Lupus (3 points), to Homid (4 points)

- At the sight of wolfsbane: to Homid (1 point), to Lupus (2 points)

- At the sight of a vampire: to Crinos (1 point), to Homid (3 points)

Insane Past Life: (1 point Flaw)


One of your ancestors was loco. This Past Life takes over during certain situations and is quite a hindrance. Choose the situation: It can be anything from "when-ever mockeries appear" to "whenever you see an elder at a moot." Create the ancestor: Give him a name and some abilities and define the nature of his madness. Play this out to the hilt. If the Storyteller deems you aren't playing it well, she can declare that you've spent a Willpower point to suppress your deranged ancestor. You must have the Background: Past Life to purchase this Merit.

Slip Sideways: (1 point Flaw)

You step sideways into the Umbra quite easily. In fact, you sometimes seem to *fall* into the Umbra without even meaning to. When confronted with a mirror in a stressful situation, roll Wits + Occult (difficulty 7) to resist shifting over. You must still make a Gnosis roll to pass the Gauntlet, but your difficulty is 1 less — but *only* when accidentally stepping sideways. If you *want* to go through, you're at normal difficulty.

Sign of the Wolf: (2 point Flaw)

You have a wicked time trying to hide your werewolf heritage. In fact, your Homid form has all the folkloric signs of werewolves. Your eyebrows have grown together, there is hair on your palms, your second and third digits are the same length...all manner of embarrassing conditions. In extreme cases, a pentagram may appear on your palm right before and during your auspice phase of the moon. Obviously, it's difficult for you to hide from werewolf-hunters.



Pierced Veil: (3 point Flaw)

Your Crinos form doesn't trigger the Delirium in mortals. This Flaw can be dangerous, as werewolf-hunters find it easier to trace you and perhaps find your caern.

Dark Fate: (5 point Flaw)

You are doomed to experience a most horrible demise or, worse, suffer eternal agony. In the end, all of your efforts, your struggles and your dreams may come to naught. Even more ghastly, you have partial knowledge of this end, for you occasionally have visions of it — and they are most disturbing. The malaise these visions put you in can be overcome only through the use of Willpower, and it returns after each vision. In terms of the story, some day you will indeed face your fate, but when and how is completely up to the Storyteller. Although you can't do anything about your fate, you can still attempt to reach some goal before it occurs, or at least try to make sure that your friends aren't dragged down with you.

Garou Ties

These Merits and Flaws deal with a character's place, position and status within Garou society.

Favor: (1-3 point Merit)

You have managed to earn an elder's favor, through something either you or your pack once did for her. The extent of the favor depends on this Merit's value: 1 point indicates a relatively minor favor, while 3 points indicates the elder owes you her life. This favor can be asked only once.

Reputation: (2 point Merit)

You have a good reputation among the Garou of your sept and among townspeople in general. The reputation may be your own (for being well-known for helping out strangers, for being the fastest gunslinger, or for being the best gambler), or it may derive from your pack (such as rounding up those horse thieves or running that group of troublemakers out of town). This reputation may spread from town to town through gossip or through penny novels written about you or you and your pack. Add three to all Dice Pools for social dealings with your sept's Garou and for those with townspeople who have heard of you. This is not the same thing as Renown; a Garou can have little Renown, yet be well-known and liked. A character with this Merit may not take the Flaw: Notoriety.

Enemy: (1-5 point Flaw)

You have an enemy, or a group of enemies, who seek to do you harm. The value of the Flaw determines how powerful these enemies are. The most powerful enemies (Methuselah vampires or archmages) are 5 points, while someone near to your own power is only 1 point. You must decide who your enemy is, and how you became enemies in the first place. (Note: A fun way to do this is if you're known for being a fast gunslinger and people want to be known as the person who beat you — a classic western way to have enemies without them really being your enemy.)

Twisted Upbringing: (1 point Flaw)

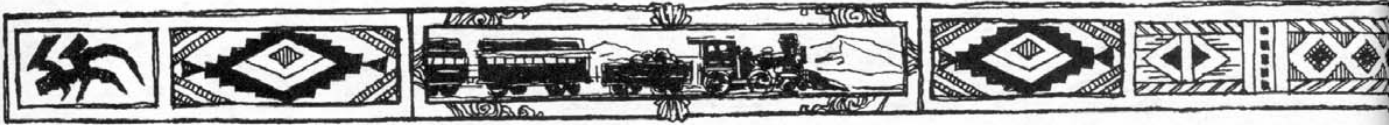
The pack that nabbed you and took you away for your Rite of Passage taught you a bunch of balderdash about Garou society. Everything you believe about how Garou interact is wrong, and your beliefs are likely to get you into a great deal of trouble. Over time, after many hard lessons, you can overcome this bad start (the Storyteller tells you when). But until then, you continue to believe what you were first told, no matter how others try to trick you into thinking otherwise.

Notoriety: (3 point Flaw)

You have a bad reputation among the Garou of your sept and people in general. The reputation may be your own (such as gunning down innocents, robbing banks or selling firewater to other Indians), or it may derive from your pack (such as robbing trains, running people out of town or taking over a town). This reputation may spread from town to town or tribe to tribe by gossip or penny novels written about you or you and your pack. There is a two-die penalty to all dice rolls for social dealings with your sept's Garou or with any people who have heard of you. Characters with this Flaw may not take the Merit: Reputation.

Human Society

These Merits and Flaws deal with the influence, power and status of a character within human society. Some of them correspond very closely to certain Background Traits (such as Resources, Contacts, and Influence), whereas others simply elaborate and expand on them. The Backgrounds give you more creative freedom, while the Merits and Flaws provide you with exact details of what you lack or possess.



Local Ties: (1-3 point Merit)

You have influence over and contacts in a local circle of some sort, be it a government system or a loose collection of "businesses" (saloons, doctors' offices, general stores, etc.). Your influence is far from total and may be threatened by changes in personnel or regulations. The more you use your ties, the weaker they grow unless you do something to fortify them.

- Judicial (2 points): You know most of the local judges and can affect the progress of cases and trials with limited difficulty. Though it is arduous to intervene in a case, you can influence it in one direction or another.

- Press (2 points): You can suppress or create news stories (though not always with 100 percent efficiency; scribes are an unruly bunch and prone to gossip). You have access to news and gossip from telegraph stations, the Pony Express and newspaper staffs.

- Business (3 points): You understand the dynamics of money in the city or town and have links with all the major players. In times of need, you can cause all sorts of financial mayhem and can raise considerable amounts of money (in the form of loans) in a very short period of time.

- Authorities (3 points): You know local sheriffs and some members of the U.S. Marshals and the Pinkerton Detective Agency. Through these contacts, you can easily have people arrested. The more often you use your ties with any of these agencies or sheriff offices, the weaker they become, and the more attention you attract toward yourself. Your influence is not solid (that can be achieved only through gameplay) and can let you down at times.

Tenderfoot: (1 point Flaw)

You just stepped off the train from the city and found yourself in a whole new world. Or maybe you're an Indian raised among whites (or vice versa), and now you're on your own in frontier America. In any case, you're a fish out of water; you don't know a Cherokee from a Chinese, and you get into all sorts of trouble just through sheer ignorance. This Flaw is intended for homid characters but can be adapted for lupus or metis ones. Characters with this Flaw cannot take the Merit: Common Sense.

Hunted: (3 point Flaw)

A fanatical werewolf-hunter pursues you and believes you to be a dangerous, slaving beast inimical to humanity (whether you are or not). This hunter could

be a pastor who saw you change and he figures you're some kind of Hell-spawned tool of Satan, or a sheriff who saw you kill three innocent men while you were in a frenzy and therefore vowed to destroy you. The same individual may hunt all your companions as well. Although this hunter seeks the destruction of all Garou, there is something about you that impassions this killer. The hunter is, for some reason, immune to the Delirium. How does it feel to be the hunted, not the hunter?

Ward: (3 point Flaw)

You are devoted to the protection of a human. You may describe your ward, though the Storyteller will actually create him. This character may be a friend or relative from your pre-Change days, or just a child that you swore to protect after his parents were brutally murdered. Wards have a talent for getting caught up in the action of stories, and they're frequent targets of characters' enemies. If the ward is Kinfolk, then he must be one the character is especially close to (lover, childhood friend, etc.).

Physical

These Merits and Flaws deal with your health and physique.

Double-Jointed: (1 point Merit)


You are unusually limber. With this Merit, you stand a good chance of squeezing through your jail-cell door or working ropes or manacles off your arms. The difficulty of any Dexterity roll involving body flexibility drops by two. Characters with this Merit may not take the Flaw: Lamé.

Partial Shift: (1 point Merit)

This whole shapeshifting deal is pretty easy for you. You're so good at it, you can transform certain body parts, such as a hand to a claw, while still in Homid form. Your difficulty for such changes is 6.

Bad Taste: (2 point Merit)

There's nothing like relaxing and washing off all the grime after a hard day of work on the trail. Too bad you're still all slimy and nasty afterward. Your flesh exudes oils that taste so bad that anyone whose mouth makes contact with your skin gets nauseated. This unfortunate must make a successful Willpower roll each



turn for the remainder of the scene, or be unable to act while he is retching. Lupus, wolves and dogs react poorly to you and obviously won't lick you. These oils aren't odorous in any way, but you must constantly wipe the oily sweat from yourself.

Fair Glabro: (2 point Merit)

Your ma just calls you big-boned, when you're actually in Glabro form. With this Merit, you can pass for a large, bulky Homid in this form. You lose no Social Attributes when in Glabro.

Lack of Scent: (2 point Merit)

You produce no scent, or if you do, your scent is extremely faint. Garou or other hunters who use and rely on scent have a devil of a time picking up your trail. Any attempts to track you are at +2 difficulty.

Longevity: (2 point Merit)

Gaia and good, clean living (and maybe, just maybe, a fast gun) have blessed you with long life. You do not suffer aging effects until you are 90-plus years old (rather than 65-plus). You can expect to live 120 to 130 years, barring death in combat.

Huge Size: (4 point Merit)

You are a giant, possibly over seven feet tall and weigh 400 pounds in Homid form. You therefore have one additional Health Level and can suffer more harm before you are incapacitated. Treat this as an extra Bruised Health Level, with no penalties to rolls.

Effortless Shift: (6 point Merit)

If only bronco busting was this simple.... You find it extremely easy to change forms, and you sometimes do it in your sleep. You do not need to roll to shift forms (you are considered to have an automatic five successes); nor do you need to spend a Rage point to instantly assume a desired form. In addition, if you are ever knocked unconscious (due to wounds, etc.), you can make a roll of Wits + Primal Urge (difficulty 8) to assume whatever form you wish, instead of reverting to your breed form.

No Partial Transformation: (1 point Flaw)

You cannot take any mixed forms at all (such as a Hispo with Crinos claws) — only the full forms.

Short: (1 point Flaw)

If you didn't have a full beard or look as old and ornery as you do, people would mistake you for a kid. You are well below average height and have trouble seeing over high objects and moving quickly. You don't get as bulky as most do in Crinos form and you get to be the height of an average Joe in this form. You suffer a two-die penalty to all pursuit rolls, and you and the Storyteller should make sure your height is taken into account in all situations. In some circumstances, this Flaw can give you a concealment bonus.

Strict Carnivore: (1 point Flaw)

There's nothing like a fresh cow for dinner when you're traveling the range. When you eat, you gain no nourishment from vegetables and must rely solely on meat — preferably raw.

Disfigurement: (2 point Flaw)

You're uglier than sin, which makes you easy to notice — and impossible to forget. Because of your hideous disfigurement, you have a zero Appearance. The disfigurement is either a deformity from birth or a massive Battle Scar that has ruined your face. Metis characters may take this Flaw as their metis disfigurement.

Deformity: (3 point Flaw)

You have some kind of bodily affliction that really stands out — a misshapen limb, no limb, a hunchback or whatever — and affects your interaction with others. It may also hamper you physically. Your difficulty is at +2 for all dice rolls related to Appearance. This Flaw also raises the difficulty of some Dexterity rolls by two, depending on the type of deformity you possess. Metis characters may take this Flaw as their metis disfigurement.

Lame: (3 point Flaw)

Lucky you're not a horse...otherwise you'd have been shot by now. Your legs are injured or otherwise prevented from working effectively. You suffer a two-die penalty to all dice rolls related to movement, no matter your form. Your lameness may result from a birth defect, pre-Change injury or Battle Scar. A character may not take this Flaw along with the Merit: Double-Jointed. Metis characters may take this Flaw as their deformity.



Monstrous: (3 point Flaw)

No one is quite sure what Gaia was up to when she made you. Maybe she was hitting the old rotgut a bit hard that morning because there is something wholly monstrous about you. Your Homid form scarcely looks human, and your Crinos and Lupus forms look horrendous; in what manner you differ from the norm is up to you. Perhaps you have taken on the features of a reptilian beast and look like a creature of the Wyrms to certain literal-minded Garou. Your Appearance is zero. Metis characters may take this Flaw as their metis disfigurement.

One-Armed: (3 point Flaw)

Whether from a birth defect, pre-Change injury or Battle Scar, you have only one arm. It's assumed that you are accustomed to using your remaining hand, so you suffer no off-hand penalty. However, you do suffer a two-die penalty to any Dice Pool in which two hands would normally be needed to perform a task. Metis characters may take this Flaw as their metis deformity.

Mute: (4 point Flaw)

Your voice box does not function, and you cannot speak at all. You can communicate only through other means — typically, writing or gestures. Metis characters may take this Flaw as their metis deformity.

Wolf Years: (5 point Flaw)

Your life span is that of a wolf, rather than that of a normal Garou. In other words, you've got 12 to 20 years, tops. You begin to show aging at eight years if you are lupus, or within five years of the Change for a homid character. Naturally, homids with this Flaw begin aging rapidly only after the Change.

Gifts

Breed Gifts


Homid

- **Dead-Eye (Level One)** — Survival in the Savage West may depend on a single lucky bullet. With this Gift, a Garou makes her own luck. Even the most difficult shots can be accomplished with the assistance of this power. A Ravenspirit teaches this Gift.

System: By spending one Willpower, the player can reroll any one Firearms, Archery or other missile weapon roll.

- **Gaia's Embrace (Level Four)** — Known only to the Pure Ones, this Gift allows the Garou to become one with the land. If





seriously wounded, the Garou may "crawl into" the earth to seek Gaia's aid. Once protected within Her womb, the wounded child is mended by the power of the Goddess. An Earth-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: After suffering aggravated wounds, the Garou must be buried alive or dig his own way under the soil. This Gift sustains an interred Garou and heals his aggravated wounds at a rate of one per hour, instead of one per day.

Metis

• **Haunting Stare (Level Two)** — The Garou summons her hereditary instability and focuses it into her stare. Gazing into the eyes of the metis leaves the victim choking with horror. An Ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The user must spend a turn in concentration to focus her will, but the Gift takes effect immediately. Upon making eye contact, the victim must successfully roll her Willpower (difficulty 8) or be unable to act during her next turn. The difficulty to use Haunting Stare increases by one against Garou who are insane (including Silver Fangs).

• **Chameleon (Level Three)** — Like the Gift's reptilian namesake, the Garou can blend with her natural surroundings. Unlike the lizard, however, the Gift user shifts fluidly with changing backgrounds, thus allowing the Garou to move about and even attack. A Chameleon-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point to activate the Gift. Anyone trying to see the Garou, even in open ground, must make Perception rolls (difficulty equals the Garou's Wits + Stealth). Failure indicates that the Garou remains undetected. Once the Garou attacks, the difficulty drops by three. Note that the Gift affects only visual senses, and it provides no camouflage for sound or scent.

Lupus

• **Wyld Ferocity (Level Two)** — The harsh, untamed wilderness frequently brings death to humans who venture into it unprepared. With this Gift, the Garou can heighten the fear humans have of the wild. A panic-stricken human may be unable to act or have to flee the area. An Ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The Garou must spend one Rage point to activate the Gift and must growl (even in human form) for the effect to work. All normal humans lose one die from their Dice Pools within 20 feet of the Garou. Those humans not used to dealing with wild animals must make a Willpower roll (difficulty equals the Garou's Rage) or flee the area.

• **Strength of Gaia (Level Three)** — The Goddess blesses her child with enhanced strength to defeat her enemies. The Garou must maintain her Lupus form, but she retains the might of the Crinos.

System: The player must spend one Rage point to activate the Gift. Her base strength increases by four, rather than the normal one, in her Lupus form. The Gift works only in Lupus form and its effects cease if she shapeshifts. In any case, the Gift's effects last one scene.

Auspice Gifts

Ragabash

• **Trailblazer (Level One)** — With this Gift, the Garou can wend his way through thick underbrush as if walking on the open plains. The Ragabash also finds the fastest trails and shortest routes from one location to another. When used in a town or city, the Garou can still find the shortcuts through alleys and dart through crowded streets with ease. A Crow-spirit teaches this Gift.

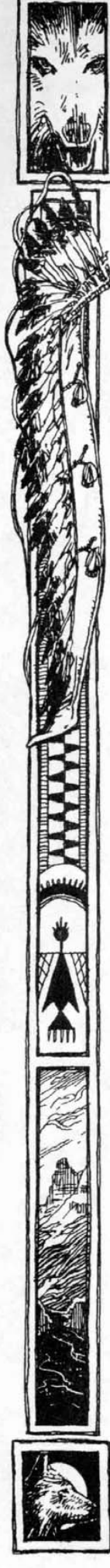
System: The player must roll her Perception + Survival, or Larceny in cities (difficulty 7). The number of successes equals the quality of the new route and decreases travel time. Every success reduces travel time approximately 10 percent, up to a maximum of half the original travel time. The difficulty of any rolls to track the user increase by two when this Gift is active.

• **Empty Hand (Level Three)** — The Garou's hand may seem to grasp the air, while in reality it may hold a pistol or even a stick of dynamite. This Gift obscures one possession for the Garou, making it completely undetectable to others. A Raccoon-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player grasps the item and spends one Willpower point to make the object undetectable. The object must be hand-held and should not be larger than the Garou's arm. For one scene, the item remains undetectable to all senses (including peeking from the Umbra) except touch, even if the Garou drops it. Unfortunately, even the Gift user can't see the item, so dropping it is bad.

• **Steal Spirit (Level Five)** — The Ragabash can steal an opponent's strength of spirit or her Rage. With her ill-gotten gains, she can pummel her drained opponent.

System: The player rolls her Wits + Larceny (difficulty equals the targets Willpower). The number of successes indicates the number of temporary Rage or Willpower points (not both) that the victim loses. The



player receives that number of points to the appropriate statistic up to her permanent maximum. If she receives Rage in excess of her permanent rating, she must make an immediate frenzy roll.

Theurge

• **Tinker's Touch (Level Two)** — The Theurge can mend a broken object with a touch, as long as the item contains metal. This Gift is especially useful for emergency wagon repairs or for fixing guns during a siege.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point to activate the Gift. She must place together and continuously touch any separated portions of the item to be mended for one turn. During which time, slipped nails slither solidly back into place, bent rifle barrels straighten, shattered blades re-form, and so forth. Items blasted to bits (such as an exploded artillery shell) are beyond the scope of Tinker's Touch. A Metal-spirit teaches this Gift.

• **Umbral Camouflage (Level Three)** — Although perfectly visible in the physical world, this Gift renders the Garou undetectable by spirits. In conjunction with other Gifts, Umbral Camouflage can make the user vanish from all perception. Garou who use this Gift in the Umbra might as well be someplace else entirely. A Wind-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point, and for the remainder of the scene, she is completely invisible to spiritual senses. She may move about as normal but cannot make any attack actions without disrupting the Gift. In the Umbra, the Garou becomes completely undetectable.

• **Obscure the Spirit World (Level Four)** — This Gift allows the elder to confuse the minds of young Garou, making it impossible for them to step sideways. The victims of this Gift are blind to the spirit world and all of its denizens. Quite often used as a punishment, the Gift has obvious tactical advantages when fighting other Garou. A Coyote-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point for every Garou she wishes to affect. The Gauntlet increases by five for those targets. The effect lasts for one story. The Gift can affect up to five Garou at any one time.

Philodox

• **Aura of the Just (Level One)** — When the Gift user commits a just act, everyone around him knows it merely by gazing at him. The Aura of the Just proclaims to one and all that this Garou is in the right. Where

circumstances or perceptions might cloud the judgment of witnesses, the Gift clears all doubts. Alternatively, those who know the Philodox can see his guilt when the Gift does not activate. A Falcon-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The user spends one Willpower point to activate this Gift. When the Garou commits a just and fair act, all who witness it know intuitively that it is so. While this Gift does not guarantee respect, anyone who sees the aura cannot doubt the Philodox's merit.

• **Curse the Betrayer (Level Three)** — Anyone who cheats the Philodox pays for his dishonesty. After entering a pact with the Garou, bad luck follows anyone who violates the agreement (including the user).

System: The Garou must enter a pact with someone. To seal the bargain and make the Gift active, the participants must shake hands, share a smoke or make a toast to seal the arrangement. Should either individual break the bargain, double every 1 he rolls for the rest of the story when calculating botches. An Honor-spirit teaches this Gift.

Galliard

• **Dreamchaser (Level One)** — The Galliard can tap into the unconscious of a sleeping person and follow the course of his dreams. Although she cannot participate, she recalls all of the dream and can view it objectively. A Dream-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and must remain within "arm's reach" of the target (i.e., walls, partitions, furniture or other physical obstacles may come between user and target, but no more distance than the length of the user's arm) for one night's sleep. If the sleeper dreams, the Garou can experience the chaotic events as they unfold. What information she gleans from the vision is up to the Storyteller.

• **Primal Song (Level One)** — The Galliard ingratiates himself with strangers by seeming to know all of their songs and dances. Having heard only a few hummed bars or having glimpsed at just a movement or two, the Garou can sing along or lead the dance. Skilled musicians can create new songs appropriate to the style of the culture in question. A Songbird-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: After learning this Gift, it starts automatically whenever the Galliard hears a song or sees a dance. He will know every word, note or step as if he'd created the piece himself. Whether or not he can entertain people still depends on the regular rules for Performance.

• **Coyote Howl (Level Two)** — Throughout the long, lonely night, the Galliard howls without rest. This

Gift alters the sound of her howl to resemble that of a coyote. The Coyote Howl disturbs the sleep of all those who hear it, making them edgy the next day. A Coyote-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: No roll is required, but the Galliard must stay awake all night howling. All who hear the howl lose one die from all Mental rolls for the entire next day. The Gift refreshes the Galliard in the morning but does nothing for her packmates.

Ahroun

• **Steadfast (Level One)** — No matter the task, the Ahroun does not tire. This Gift allows the Garou to work, run, or fight far beyond her normal limits. A Horse-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Rage point. For the remainder of the scene, her Stamina doubles any time she has to roll it. This Gift does not affect soak rolls.

• **Strength of the Pack (Level Two)** — The Ahroun, the heart of the pack's strength, can share any or all of her physical might with her pack members. Just as if she handed her packmate a loaded gun, the Ahroun grants her more power to do the work of the pack. A Bear-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Rage point to make the Gift active. She may then temporarily reduce her strength by any amount, to a minimum of 1, and lend that strength to her packmates with just a touch. The Garou decides how much strength goes to each pack member chosen. The effects last for one scene.

• **Shake the Earth (Level Three)** — The force of the Ahroun's Rage splits the ground before him and knocks his foes off their feet. Even a minor tremor can cause great damage to houses, mineshafts and people. An Earth elemental teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Rage point to cause a three-foot-wide stretch of ground, extending 10 feet in front of the user, to split into a chasm that is 10 feet deep. Anyone over that spot must make a Dexterity roll (difficulty 7) or fall into the hole. For every Rage point beyond the first, the Garou can make similar holes or deepen the first one.

Tribe Gifts

Black Furies

• **Whore's Vengeance (Level Two)** — This Gift affects the most sensitive areas of the human or animal anatomy. By causing either minor irritation or wracking

pain, Whore's Vengeance can distract or even incapacitate a victim. The target of this Gift need never have visited a house of ill-repute, nor does the Gift user need to practice the profession. A spirit of Lust teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls her Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty equals the target's Willpower). If the roll succeeds, the target breaks out in a painful rash in his or her sensitive region. Each success subtracts one die from the target's Dice Pool for the remainder of the scene. This Gift affects only living animals (including humans) and has no effect on spirits or the undead.

• **Anger of the Goddess (Level Five)** — With the force of Gaia Herself, the Black Fury elder strikes down even the most powerful enemies. Few can withstand the righteous anger of Gaia unleashed. The power can take many forms: a lightning bolt from the heavens, an avalanche, or even a tornado. The wrath of the Goddess blindly ravages the innocent and guilty alike. An avatar of Gaia Herself is the only spirit that teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends three Rage points to summon Gaia's wrath. The Storyteller determines what freak natural events follow, but the full force of the Goddess strikes the target (multiple lightning bolts, a tornado touching down at his feet, etc.). Unfortunately, the Gift affects everyone around the target as well, as the power of nature is indifferent to innocence.

Bone Gnawers

• **Play Possum (Level One)** — With animal cunning, the Gnawer can force her body into a state near death. Far from a serene, peaceful trance wherein the Garou imitates death, the Gift creates a facade closer to a drowned, bloated rat. The Garou's body stinks of rot, maggots crawl on her and flies gather as if to feast. Only a scrupulous investigation reveals the truth — but most folks won't want to get that close. Most Silver Fangs argue to ban this Gift at moots and social gatherings. A Decay-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player must spend a Gnosis point and remain perfectly still to activate the Gift. On activation, the Garou resembles a rotting corpse to all senses. When the Gift activates, anyone attempting to detect life in the Garou must roll Perception + Medicine (difficulty equals the user's Manipulation + Subterfuge) and physically examine the "carcass."

• **Beneath Notice (Level Two)** — While others seek fame, the Bone Gnawers' best bet is anonymity. This Gift allows the Gnawer to blend in with the features of a town or village by becoming too familiar to be noticed. Although no physical change takes



place, normal people cannot remember details concerning the Garou. The Gift works in either Homid or Lupus form and causes people who encounter the user to remember a nondescript drifter or a mangy dog. A Dog-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point to remain "anonymous" for the rest of the scene. No one who sees the Gnawer during that time can remember details concerning his appearance.

• **Drunkard's Luck (Level Two)** — In a drunken stupor, the Gnawer walks away from fatal accidents and hazardous situations with the assistance of this Gift. Where a sober Garou would hesitate and take a mortal wound, the Gnawer stumbles into the clear despite impaired reflexes. A Spirits-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The Gift activates automatically when the Bone Gnawer consumes enough alcohol to render him drunk. In this state, he loses three dice to all of his actions (more if he continues drinking), but he benefits from an amazing lucky streak. The player can reroll any failed rolls involving defensive actions, including Dodge and Stamina soak rolls. The Storyteller may also allow the character to avoid hazards that he could not normally detect, such as falling debris or surprise attacks. When the effects of the alcohol wear off, the Gift deactivates. The Gift does nothing for hangovers.

Children of Gaia

• **Voice of Reason (Level Two)** — All too often, emotions obscure rational thought and turn normal people, both human and Garou, into a bloodthirsty mob. The Children of Gaia use this Gift to break through the emotional cloud and bring reason back to such a crowd. Once her words reach her listeners' ears, the Gift forces them to pay attention. It quells emotional distractions and imparts a moment of clarity on the audience. While the Gift does not disperse the members of a mob, it does give them a chance to rethink their actions. A Reason-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The audience must hear the Child of Gaia for this Gift to work. If she is unable to speak, or cannot be heard over the roar of the crowd, the Gift has no effect. The player must also spend one Willpower point. For every success on a Charisma + Empathy roll, two people come to their senses and shake off the mob mentality. If the Gift can affect the majority of the group, the mob disperses.

• **Fool's Medicine (Level Five)** — Bigotry may be commonplace in the West, but that doesn't mean Gaia's Children have to like it. Tribe members use this Gift to teach a harsh lesson to people blinded by hatred. It lets the user make general alterations to a person's skin tone and facial features. The person remains recognizable in many respects but suddenly has a cocoa complexion, say, instead of a ruddy one, or "Oriental eyes" instead of "round eyes." Loved ones can usually discern the target's identity, however, which is an aspect of the Gift that troubles many bigots more than the alteration itself. Basically, the target changes to resemble a member of the ethnic group he despises most.

System: The user spends a Gnosis point to activate the Gift and rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty 7). The number of successes equals the duration, in days, of the Gift. The user must touch the target for Fool's Medicine to take effect, which it does the next time the target sleeps.

Fianna

• **Sense Fae (Level One)** — As the Fianna have acclimated themselves to their new surroundings, they have also created relations with the fae of the New World. This Gift allows the Fianna to detect fae beings. A Dream-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: No roll is required, but the Fianna must concentrate for one round, during which he may take no other action. The player must roll Perception + Enigmas (difficulty 7). The Garou can detect fae nature at a distance of five meters per success. This Gift does not guarantee a friendly reaction from any fae creatures that it reveals.

• **Primal Song (Level One)** — As the Galliard Gift.

• **Drunkard's Luck (Level Two)** — As the Bone Gnawer Gift.

• **Sense Secrets (Level Two)** — Centuries of association with the fae people have taught the Fianna the nature of secrets. Things deliberately hidden, whether obscured by brush or dropped down a mineshaft, make their presence known to the Fianna. The Gift gives no indication as to the nature of a secret, only to its existence. A Squirrel-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Perception + Enigmas (difficulty 8). Every success improves the Fianna's sensitivity. One success detects cursory or slipshod concealment, such as tumbleweeds pulled across a cave's mouth; five successes detect the presence of the most painstaking obscurement, including hidden passageways and the like.



Get of Fenris

• Curse of the Berserker (Level Four) —

Although the tribe is known for its ferocity, this Gift allows a Get to throw off her frenzy and retain control. This Gift comes with a price, however, as the Garou must choose another to suffer. That victim then endures the Get's frenzy instead. A Wolverine-spirit or an Ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls her Willpower in a resisted action versus her target's Willpower when a frenzy is imminent (difficulty for each equals the opponent's Willpower). The loser of the resisted action enters a frenzy and the victor remains in control of his wits.

• Heimdall's Blade (Level Three)

— This Gift turns ordinary items into spiritual manifestations of the Garou's Rage. With this Gift, even a barstool becomes a deadly weapon. An Ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Rage point and grasps her improvised weapon. Until the scene ends or until the Get drops it, the item has the same statistics as a cavalry saber (difficulty 6, damage Strength +4).

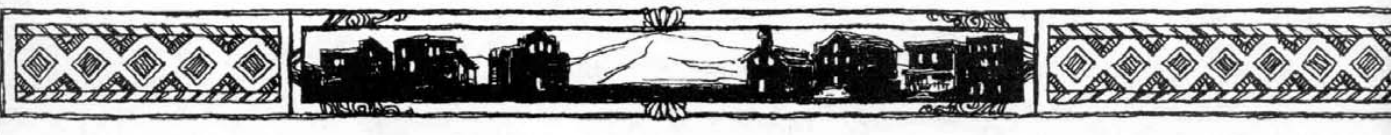
• **Journey Home (Level Four)** — No matter what the distance or what the circumstances, the Get can travel home as easily as he can reach into the Umbra.


System: The player spends all of his Gnosis (minimum of three points) and steps into the Umbra. When he steps out of the Umbra, he emerges at the place he considers home.

Iron Riders

• **Rope Tricks (Level One)** — The Garou can perform simple tricks with any length of rope she is touching. From a simple







• **Gibberish (Level Three)** — This Gift destroys the ability to communicate. The Silent Strider causes one target to lose her knowledge of speech, writing and any other form of communication. Should the victim try to speak, no one can understand her. Should she try to read a telegram, the message appears to be garbled nonsense.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Enigmas (difficulty equals the target's Willpower). Each success removes the victim's ability to communicate for five minutes. The victim can resist with Willpower, but each point allows her to read or speak only one sentence.

Silver Fangs

• **Fool's Silver (Level Two)** — The Silver Fang can trick a victim into thinking an ordinary item is made of silver. Whereas greedy humans flock to the illusion, Garou are usually wary and back away from it. A Lune teaches this Gift.

System: The Silver Fang concentrates for one turn to make the Gift active. The selected item gleams with a silvery sheen. Garou who hold the item feel the sting of normal silver for about 10 seconds, after which the illusory "pain" vanishes.

• **Silver Bullets (Level Three)** — The Gift allows the Silver Fang to change the composition of his ammo. As he fires each shot, the bullet changes to deadly silver. Lunes and Ancestor-spirits teach this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point as he fires his gun. The bullet changes to silver and causes regular damage to normals, but it inflicts terrifying wounds on Garou. The bullet remains silver after it strikes (whether what it hits is its target or not). The altered bullets do not reduce the Silver Fang's Gnosis unless he recovers them.

• **Command the Heart of Rage (Level Four)** — The Silver Fang can reach into the heart of another Garou and stifle her opponent's Rage. Even a frenzied Garou must obey the Fang's command. An avatar of Falcon teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and selects a target. The Fang and the victim make resisted Willpower rolls. If the Silver Fang wins, she can dictate when and how much Rage the victim spends. This Gift works on frenzied Garou as well.

Stargazers

• **Dreamchaser (Level One)** — As the Galliard Gift.

• **Fearless (Level One)** — Whatever odds she may face, the Stargazer maintains an aura of complete serenity. Whether hanging from a rock face 300 feet in the air or staring into the very maw of the Abyss, the Garou with this Gift knows no fear. A spirit of Fear teaches this Gift.

System: By spending a Willpower point, the player automatically passes any fear-related tests for the entire scene. This Gift also negates the power of other Gifts that cause fear, such as Cry of the Killer, or Howl of the Banshee.

• **Disguise the True Form (Level Two)** — The Stargazer can avoid revealing her true nature to other Gift users or supernaturals. Even in Crinos form, the Garou registers as a normal human. An avatar of the Chimera teaches this Gift.

System: Any powers used to detect the Stargazer's true nature fail. The Stargazer appears to be a perfectly normal human, despite her current form.

Uktena

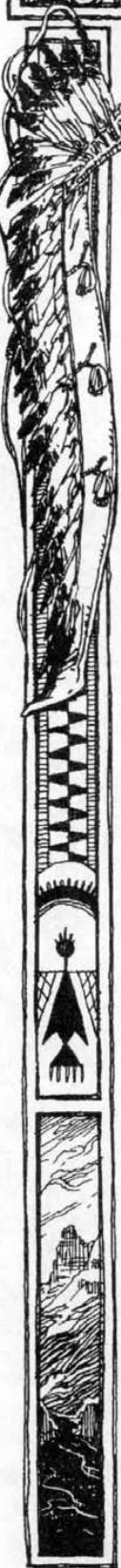
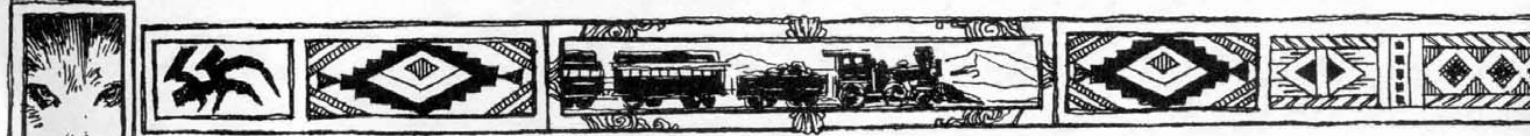
• **Sense Secrets (Level One)** — As the Level Two Fianna Gift, but easier for this secret-obsessed tribe.

• **Fetish Fetch (Level Two)** — The Uktena need not carry her fetishes with her at all. She may draw them from a hidden cache whenever she needs them, no matter the distance. A Packrat-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The first part of the Gift involves creating the secret hiding spot for the fetishes. The player spends one Gnosis and buries or covers her items. Once this ritual is complete, she needs to spend a Gnosis point to summon any or all of her fetishes. The fetish appears in her hand as if from thin air. Just one hiding spot can exist at any one time, but the Uktena can create a new spot at any time.

• **Wurm Whispers (Level Three)** — Considered too dangerous by the other tribes, this Gift gives the Uktena insight into the thoughts of Wurm creatures. The Uktena can read even the most vile thoughts of Banes, if the Garou can hold her stomach. A Dream-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls her Perception + Enigmas (difficulty 8). With one success, she can detect nearby sentient Wurm creatures. For every additional success, she telepathically reads one complete thought from the creature's mind. If she receives five or more successes, she must make a frenzy roll. Regular use of this Gift can cause Derangements or even Wurm-taint.



Wendigo

• **Truth of the Hunted (Level One)** — This Gift enables the Wendigo to follow his prey's passage regardless of the user's tracking skills. The Gift reveals course, speed, size and even the health of the target. All of the clues an accomplished tracker notices become blatantly obvious to the user of this Gift, which is taught by a Wolf-spirit.

System: The player rolls Perception + Survival (difficulty 7). He needs only one success to follow the target precisely. Multiple successes eliminate false trails and provide more detail — height, weight, state of mind (panicked, calm, etc.), general health (healthy, tired, wounded), etc.

• **Ghost Dance (Level Two)** — Preying on the fears of the European settlers, the Wendigo use this Gift to seed doubt and guilt amongst the invaders. A vision of the walking dead clouds the judgment of the targets, causing them to panic and flee. An Ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point to make the Gift active. He rolls Wits + Occult (difficulty 7). The number of successes indicates the number of people affected. People caught in the Gift's spell see "spirits of the dead" rise from their graves and advance. Most humans flee from the illusion. Garou and other supernaturals may try to interact with or even fight the visions.

• **Haunting Stare (Level Three)** — Like the Level Two Metis Gift, but the emotional impact is more guilt than horror.

• **Great Bison (Level Four)** — For centuries, the bison provided the Pure Ones and their Kinfolk with all they needed. With the incursion of the Europeans, both Garou and human, the bison population dwindles and the open plains vanish. With this Gift, the Wendigo summons a ghostly stampede of spirit bison to trample his enemies. A Bison-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower, one Gnosis and one Rage point to summon the stampede. The stampede, 50 yards wide and 100 yards long, tramples everything in its path and causes 10 dice of damage. The bison are spirits and pass through man-made obstacles, such as buildings, to crush anyone inside. The targets can find safety out of the bison's path, to either side of the stampede, or by climbing trees and the like.

Black Spiral Dancer Gifts

• **Haunting Stare (Level One)** — As the Level Two Metis Gift but easier for the Wurm-ridden.

• **Gold Fever (Level Two)** — The lure of easy money draws many settlers to the Savage West. This Gift lets the user tap into these feelings of avarice and bring them to the surface. Even those humans with generous natures find themselves slaving for a taste of wealth and the easy life. A Greed-spirit teaches this Gift.

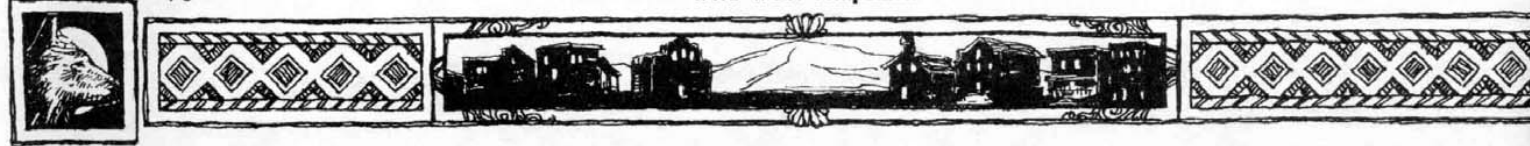
System: The Storyteller spends one Willpower point and rolls her Manipulation + Larceny (difficulty 7). The number of successes indicates the number of people affected. Victims of the Gift lose any semblance of propriety and enter a near-frenzied state of greed. Garou are unaffected and the target can resist by spending Willpower.

• **Coal Breath (Level Three)** — Living in tunnels beneath the earth exposes the Black Spirals to many natural hazards. Rather than succumbing to these deadly toxins, the Dancers learn to use their environment. With this Gift, the user exhales the deadly gasses she inhaled in the tunnels below. This poisonous cloud envelops the Dancer's enemies and chokes them to death. A Coal-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The Storyteller spends one Gnosis point and rolls the character's Stamina + Survival (difficulty 6). Each success creates one five-cubic-foot cloud of billowing poisonous gas. Anyone caught in the cloud must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 7) or fall unconscious. Characters cannot protect themselves from these effects by holding their breath. Remaining within the cloud eventually proves to be fatal as every additional round of exposure causes one aggravated wound. The Gift user is immune to the cloud.

Tribal Weaknesses

The wisdom of Gaia is such that each of Her children has unique strengths and weaknesses. In order to encourage the Garou to band together in packs, Gaia included flaws in their creation so that they would need to depend on one another. All Garou together succeed whereas one will fail — that is the lesson of the tribes.



Optional Rule

The tribal weaknesses presented here are optional rules for **Werewolf: The Wild West**. Because they complicate characters and tend to skew a chronicle into a fantastic, high-magic direction, they are not recommended for every game. In general, players should modify their characters' behaviors to fit their tribes' weaknesses. If they need reminding, the Storyteller should require them to act according to their weakness in situations that would ordinarily bring out the weakness.

Black Furies

Anger: -1 difficulty for frenzies when men, "male thinking" or patriarchal injustices are involved

The Black Furies rage eternally against the nonsensical savagery of the masculine gender. Women have been forced to bear the blame for a host of evils — remember Pandora? Eve? — but the Furies know that at the bottom of the world, if Gaia is a woman, then the Wyrms that defiles Her is a man.

Bone Gnawers

Pariahs: +1 difficulty on all Social rolls involving members of other tribes

The Bone Gnawers are the low wolves on the totem pole of Garou society — the dogs to be kicked when higher-ranking tribes are frustrated by the coming Apocalypse (or simply in a bad mood). Objects of mockery and ridicule, scorn and abuse, the Gnawers make a career and sometimes a sacred calling of being Gaia's Sacrificial Wolves.

Children of Gaia

Conciliatory: Must accept pleas for mercy or offers to surrender, even if blatantly insincere

The will to forgive that dwells in the heart of every one of Gaia's Children is among the Garou's greatest gifts, but it is a bittersweet burden to carry in a darkening, increasingly violent world. If any creature, no matter how vile or Wyrms-ridden, makes a show of repentance and asks the Garou to spare it, any Child of Gaia present must make a Willpower roll or be compelled to do everything in her power to grant that request, even if it means fighting her fellow werewolves. This weakness is the chief reason for the derision heaped

on the Children by more "sensible," warlike tribes, such as the Red Talons or the Silver Fangs, who view such displays of "soft-heartedness" as stupid at best, racially suicidal at worst.

Fianna

Half-Cocked: +1 difficulty for Willpower rolls

The Fianna are the friskiest of all the tribes — rather than view their fiercely emotional natures as potential weaknesses in battle, the Fianna revel in their passions. Unfortunately, members of the tribe are often led by their emotional responses to do stupid and irrational things. Many packs have been forced to put down their own Fianna packmates when the Fianna "went berserk" over an imagined insult or challenge and attacked the alpha without benefit of proof or protocol. Other Fianna have been lured by their passions into traps laid by the Wyrms, realizing too late that it is better to pause and plan than to go running off at the first available opportunity.

Get of Fenris

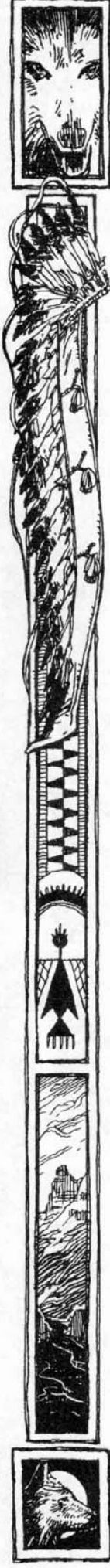
Contempt: Each Get of Fenris is even more a creature of Rage than other Garou, but not even the fiercest Get can hate everything all the time. Rather, Rage crystallizes in each member of the Get as a particular irrational hatred for some class of people or situation that she considers "lower" than herself and unworthy of even the humblest existence on Gaia's green Earth.

Even the mere reminder of the object of contempt is enough to make a Get edgy, which adds one point to her Rage and necessitates a frenzy check. This point of Rage can be burned off through mocking the object of contempt, kicking it, telling insulting jokes, or proving one's own natural superiority to it.

However, when this task is impossible or when the object of contempt remains in close proximity to a Get for an extended period (a scene or so), the Get is driven into near-frenzy and will do everything in her power to punish the nuisance for existing.

This situation is especially true when the object of intolerance is another Garou, as the combination of offending behavior and "pure" Garou blood drives the Get into a paroxysm of complete and dangerous fury.

The player of a Get of Fenris character must define a specific Contempt for her character, using the following list for inspiration. All Contempts must be approved by the Storyteller and must represent an irrational hatred over and above those expected of all upstanding Garou (so, for example, one cannot be Contemptuous of "Wyrms Creatures," "Bone Gnawers" or "Iron Riders").



Cowardice — You hate the display of fear in all its forms, whether it is cowardice on the battlefield or fear of standing up to pack leadership. Shyness, caution and even the urge for self-preservation are personality flaws in your world — crutches for the cowards to justify their own lack of willpower.

You especially disdain anyone who goes into a fox frenzy — whether it happens in your presence or if you hear of the shame through the rumor mill. A fox-frenzier has dishonored herself and the entire Garou race. Her existence is a stain on the pride of the whole species, and you must make your displeasure known. Of course, if you are the one to run with the fox, you have some self-loathing to work through....

Compromise — You hate compromise, seeing it as a clever monkey tactic for those too weak to get their own way in any purely Garou manner — tooth and claw. You agree with the Red Talons that diplomacy is a weak sister to violence, especially seeing as how most of the “diplomatic solutions” that the Garou are pursuing seem to be nonaggression pacts with vampires and worse. Vampires are creatures of the Wyrms, and a shorter name for “compromise with the Wyrms” is death!

You especially hate the Children of Gaia and their dangerous need to allow evil to prosper in the world as long as it whimpers a bit. The only time you compromise with an enemy of the Garou Nation is if a war leader or elder whose leadership you accept forces you to do so, which often means beating you in an open fight. Even then, you begin to harbor doubts about such a “leader’s” fitness to give orders — why else would she have begun to rely on compromise and other crutches, unless she had grown weak and, hence, unfit to rule?

Uppity Livestock — Garou are alone at the top of the food chain, the only pure race. All other creatures, including humans, the Bête, and even wolves, are at best pallid imitations of the perfect Garou form, made all the more disgusting by their skill at copying Garou virtues.

Gaia meant for the Garou to be lords of the world, to exploit all lesser creatures. While you might choose to protect given humans, wolves or other livestock, it is only because you are a prudent master, not because of any inherent commandment on Gaia’s part to do so. However, if the livestock talk back to you, they must be taught their place. Any amount of “insubordination” — or any behavior less than worshipful — from a human, Kinfolk or other creature can drive you toward frenzy.

Milquetoasts — You despise the Philodoxes and anyone who seeks to tame the Wyrms with a law book at his side instead of a klaive in his hand. The world is war, and the time for peace is over. Anything less than swift

and immediate response to provocation is for fools, not the Get of Fenris. When attacked, you must never back down or even take much time to gauge a situation — such fretting is for Galliards and idiots.

Frailty — You hate any reminder of the reality of failure, whether in yourself or in others. Weakness — whether physical, moral or in the will — is Gaia’s warning to the strong that She is preparing to cull the pack, and you are more than willing to help in Her cosmic duties. The Wyrms is weakness.

Scorn anyone you consider weak in some way and constantly remind him of his imperfections in order to help him toward correction of these flaws. Punish failure decisively and promptly, preferably in a public forum to set an example.

If others are unlucky enough ever to mention one of your failures or frailties, you fly into a homicidal rage. Some Get, confronted with indelible proof of their failures, kill themselves rather than live with the shame.

Weaver Works — You hate all things of the Weaver, from Gatling guns to barbed wire. You despise any means of conveyance that lacks legs (to the irritation of your packmates) and may even consider klaives antithetical — there are times when only claws and fangs are pure enough. You especially loathe the Iron Riders and all other monkey-loving degenerates who’ve grown too fat and reliant on the Weaver’s deceitful toys. You must never willingly use technology, even if there is no other way to achieve your goals.

Iron Riders

Weaver Affinity: Cannot regain Gnosis on natural ground

The iron riders are tied closely to the woven world of cities and roads, and especially to the great ritual work of the iron rails running endlessly across the untamed vastness of the continent. By paving the earth with iron, the Riders hope to translate the land’s natural energies into a form they can use and understand. In the meantime, however, Iron Riders cannot regain Gnosis points on bare soil — they must be resting on a railroad tie, on a finished floor, or with some other layer of Weaver work between themselves and the earth.

This weakness is the mark of the Riders’ sin against the Wyld, and watchful Garou who know the signs will treat members of the tribe accordingly. It is not for nothing that the Iron Riders are already set apart from the Garou Nation, for they are shunned as ones who have lost touch with their true natures.

Regardless, if an Iron Rider is allowed into a natural caern, he may regain Gnosis as normal, even if it is the purest and Wyldest spot on Earth.

Red Talons

Born Wyld: Inability to understand human ways

The Red Talons have cut themselves off from their homid sides, preferring instead to rely exclusively on their lupus heritage. This focus gives Griffin's Children an enviable connection with the primordial Wyld, but it nearly prevents them from understanding the growing powers of the Weaver. While Talons can still gain Gnosis in cities and towns (so far, anyway), they find themselves increasingly bewildered by the nature of the spirits and physical objects within these "scabs."

A Red Talon player must pay double experience point cost for learning or improving any Ability that is taught exclusively by humans. For example, Science, as the game defines it, has no equivalent in lupus culture and Talons, therefore, must struggle harder to understand the basic concepts involved. Yet, wolves need no additional training to learn how to Dodge attacks or use Stealth to sneak up on prey.

Suggested restrictions on Abilities are: Crafts, Culture, Etiquette (human contexts only), Firearms, Law, Linguistics (human languages), Medicine, Melee, Ride, Subterfuge (the Wyrms teach lies) and Science. Depending on your Storyteller's interpretation of lupus culture, this list might include other Abilities as well.

Shadow Lords

Failure's Dagger: -1 Renown for failure

Shadow Lords prize winning above all else and hate losers with an intensity that would make the Get of Fenris proud. If ever a Shadow Lord fails to carry out a task assigned to her by the tribe, she loses a point of temporary Renown. This Renown comes from whichever category that success in the assigned task might have gained her—Glory, Honor or Wisdom. A bungled task subtracts from the category that would have gained the most Renown for success.

In addition, the disgraced Shadow Lord earns a full measure of scorn and derision from the rest of the tribe.

At the Storyteller's option, other Shadow Lords might be less willing to assist the character again until she somehow redeems herself. Redemption might be impossible for some characters, and many Shadow Lords have become virtual Ronin — outcasts from their people, as punishment for a bungled assignment.

This weakness does not affect the normal Renown process in any other way. Shadow Lords only gain the normal amount of Renown from successful actions.





Silent Striders

Haunted

Of all the tribes, the Silent Striders labor most heavily under the mixed blessing and curse of having a connection to the spirit world. This burden was first laid on the Striders in their homeland of Egypt, in the ancient days of the world, and as a result, they must eternally wander the world or become trapped in an increasing gloom of dead souls and pursuing shadows.

Whenever a Silent Strider enters or leaves the Umbra, a botched roll indicates not only that she is caught between the worlds, but that she also draws the attention of a wraith. As the Strider struggles to escape being stuck sideways, the wraith attaches itself to her and follows the Garou back to the world of the living.

The wraith is visible just to the now-haunted Silent Strider who led it back to the bright world. Even other Silent Striders cannot see the "passenger," although the tribe has ways to identify such phantoms.

In general, the wraith behaves in neither a good nor evil way toward its "vehicle." Instead, the creature seeks to exploit its relationship with the Strider by nagging her to perform services, whether from altruism ("Revenge my family"), remorse ("You murdered me! Honor my memory or I'll haunt you forever!"), or some other motivation. Often, the wraith is just lonely and annoys its host by distracting her with constant fuss and chatter.

The only way a Strider can get rid of a ghost is to fulfill its requests, exorcise it, or leave its vicinity. Most wraiths are bound to a particular region and cannot follow a Strider beyond a certain range (generally, no farther than a town's edge or a county's limits).

Statistics for ghosts can be found in **Wraith: The Oblivion**, with specific modifications and rules for running wraiths in the Savage West in **Ghost Towns**. Storytellers without those books (or individuals who prefer not to use them) can treat the typical haunting wraith as having the following statistics:

Willpower 5, Rage 4, Gnosis 3, Power 15

Charms: Airt Sense, Sap Will, Suggestion

An enterprising Silent Strider sometimes deliberately seeks contact with these ghosts, purposely "snagging" herself on the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead. The secrets of the dead form a major component of the Striders' reserves of hidden information, and it is partly for this reason that the tribe does not speak of its curse in the presence of outsiders. Not only are the Striders ashamed of having to wander from town to town to evade ghostly attentions, but it is often useful to keep quiet about their relationship with these restless souls. The elders of other tribes would look askance at the Striders' kinship with such tainted spirits, and besides, the dead themselves have ears.

Silver Fangs

Derangement

The blood of the Silver Fangs is not as strong as it used to be, which is largely due to years of inbreeding with limited flocks of Kinfolk, and the situation is growing increasingly dire as the Fangs spread across the West. Each Silver Fang has a Derangement, regardless of the degree of Pure Breed she possesses. It may be chosen by the player (with the Storyteller's approval); a list of sample Derangements follows.

Obliviousness — In dire circumstances, you enter a fugue state and lose your own identity.

Ratiocination — You compulsively try to apply logic to every situation and you repress emotion as much as possible. However, when reason collapses beneath the weight of the unexplainable, you collapse, too.

Volatility — Your mood vacillates from utter bliss to implacable despair. You begin each story at one extreme or the other and can switch back and forth any number of times.

Self-Aggrandizement — You seek mastery over your fellow Garou — and everybody else, for that matter.

Mania — You focus on one person or one thing, to the exclusion of all else in your life. This object of your obsession can change or intensify into violence.

Paranoia — You can see the all-pervasiveness of the Wyrms. Why can't the others see it, too? Perhaps they've been tainted along with everyone else. While you are arguably right in assuming that the world is growing increasingly corrupt, your constant finger-pointing and accusations of "collaboration with the Wyrms" don't help anything. In fact, they cause more trouble than they solve.

Perfectionism — You work hard to keep every aspect of your life perfect at all times. You use all of your energy to preserve order, and you sometimes frenzy when things don't go in your favor.

Infantilism — You revert to childlike behavior during extremely stressful episodes.

Vindictive — When you have been wronged, you *must* avenge yourself, no matter what the cost might be to yourself or to the Garou Nation.

Stargazers

Staring into the Mirror

Other tribes often accuse the Stargazers of being too wrapped up with personal philosophical questions to be much good to others. Certainly, the propensity of these mystics to become irrationally obsessed with riddles supports such arguments.

Whenever a Stargazer confronts a puzzle that she cannot solve (in other words, whenever the character fails an Enigmas roll), she becomes obsessed with the question and is unable to concentrate on anything else until she solves it. During this time, the Storyteller may inflict any of a variety of minor effects or "distractions" on the character to represent the growing power of this intellectual obsession — perhaps the character's reaction time might lag behind events as her mind is occupied with weightier matters (losing successes on Initiative rolls), or perhaps she begins to dully react to the world around her (gaining a +1 difficulty on all Perception rolls).

While these effects of Staring into the Mirror can and should change over the course of the Stargazer's affliction — growing more severe as time goes by without a riddle being solved — each character should generally suffer only one effect at a time. Of course, there is nothing in the Stargazer tribal character to prevent a character from becoming obsessed with multiple riddles (and suffering multiple distractions) simultaneously.


Such difficulties naturally disappear once the Stargazer can solve the original riddle to her own satisfaction.

Uktena

Intense Curiosity

The Uktena are devoted to the understanding of secrets, and they love all secrets except for ones that withstand the tribe's efforts. Whenever an Uktena learns that someone knows something she doesn't, she must try to obtain that





information for herself, even if it means using extreme cunning or force to draw the secret from its keeper. Until then, all other plans and agendas the Uktena might have once followed rapidly become secondary to the secret. Sooner or later, the Garou loses interest in pursuing any goal apart from this elusive knowledge.

Several Uktena septs have been lost through careful manipulation of this weakness by the Wyrms and its creatures.

Wendigo

Wheel of the Seasons

The Wendigo are the Garou who best remember the ancient relationship between the individual and the Earth, with its cycle of ever-changing seasons. It is a correspondence they preserve within themselves.

As special children of Winter, they grow in might during that cold season, but they pay for this power by suffering seasonal weaknesses during the three gentler quarters of the year. Seasons, in this case, refer to the natural seasons and not to the Weaver's tame equivalents or "months"; thus, the powers of the Wendigo ebb and flow from year to year and from region to region depending on the intensity of the weather. This correspondence helps to explain the tribe's affinity for northerly protectorates, where winters are long and intense, and its retreat from more southerly climes following the arrival of the Wyrmscomers.

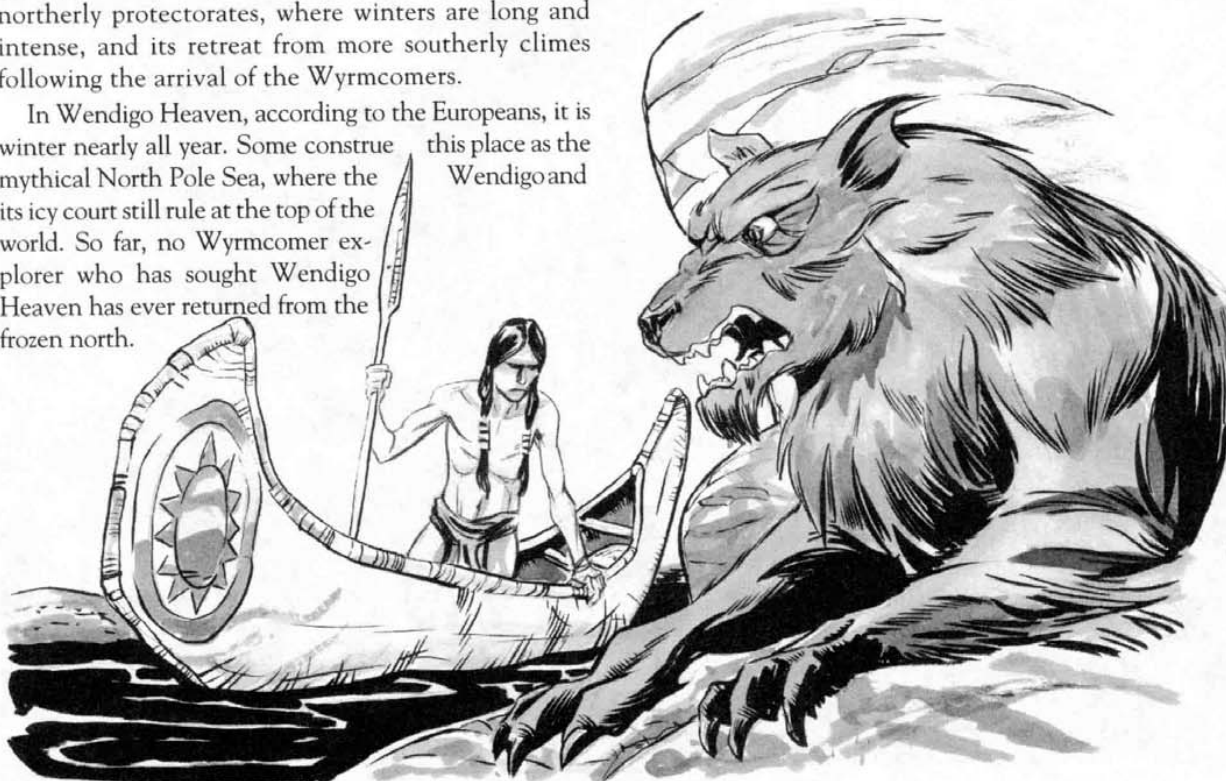
In Wendigo Heaven, according to the Europeans, it is winter nearly all year. Some construe this place as the mythical North Pole Sea, where the its icy court still rule at the top of the world. So far, no Wyrmscomer explorer who has sought Wendigo Heaven has ever returned from the frozen north.

Spring: Between the blooming of the year's first green leaves and the summer solstice, all Wendigo struggle under a +1 difficulty to their Willpower rolls. This penalty represents the increasing trouble they have concentrating as the world becomes less serious for a while, with life quickening and blossoms gathering all around their shaggy ears.

Summer: Between the summer solstice and the first fall of the leaves in autumn, the blood of the Wendigo quickens, forcing them to take a -1 difficulty on all frenzy rolls. For this reason, summer is the season of war among the Pure Ones, and the habit is hard to break now that the Weaver has bound the year tight in her web of calendars.

Autumn: Between the first leaves to fall and the first snowstorm, the world begins to die around the Wendigo, forcing a time of inertia and increasing restriction on the tribe. Wendigo find it difficult to change forms in autumn, with +1 difficulty applying to all rolls to do so.

Winter: Between the snow and the green leaves, the Wendigo are strong, implacable and deadly. Winter favors the children sired on her by the Wendigo and grants members of the tribe -1 difficulty on all soak rolls.



Personality Archetypes

When we watch Westerns or take in other dramatic interpretations of the era, we constantly encounter iconic (and often larger-than-life) figures who seem right at home in that period. Such characters fill a panoply of roles that describe life on a frontier, if not necessarily *the* frontier. Although such archetypes overtly simplify the variety of human personalities, these classic figures help us to imagine the people of that day and age through what they did and why.

In game terms, personality Archetypes define a character's drive and her disposition. Here, every character possesses two personality Archetypes, her Nature and her Demeanor. Nature describes a character's true self: her core personality. Demeanor describes her outward personality: how she appears and presents herself to others. While a character's Nature suggests action, Demeanor channels that action into behavior.

During character creation, the player may select one Archetype for her character's Nature and another for Demeanor. Most Natures and Demeanors are similar in their ends, with Demeanor often being a hazy reflection of a character's Nature. Unbalanced characters have wildly contrasting Natures and Demeanors. A forthright character might possess the same Archetype for both Nature and Demeanor. Nature usually remains constant throughout a character's existence; only life-altering experiences can change one's inner self. Conversely, Demeanor changes fairly easily, even on a day-to-day basis.

Personality Archetypes are completely optional when playing **Werewolf: The Wild West**. In many ways, auspice determines the personality of a Garou. Nature and Demeanor can sharpen the details of that personality during gameplay. Both the player and the Storyteller can better understand the character with the assistance of Archetypes. **The Werewolf Players Guide Second Edition** and **Vampire: The Masquerade Second Edition** both give more information regarding Nature and Demeanor, as well as additional Archetypes that may be appropriate.

Nature and Demeanor provide simple guidelines for roleplaying. Nature should not limit a character's actions or a player's initiative, but it should offer a

basis for actions and decisions. Demeanor does not have to rule a character's personality, as it can change from day to day, or from minute to minute. Unstable personalities might have a half-dozen different Demeanors.

As an additional optional rule, the Storyteller can give Willpower rewards for exceptional roleplaying within the parameters of the character's Nature. The Archetypes below include an example of how a player can be rewarded in each case for "playing to type."

• Arbitrator

The world is harsh enough, and too many people are looking to make it worse. You try to go that extra mile and work out others' grievances before folks come to blows. You can't please all the people all the time, but you do your best to find the most equitable solution to any conflict. You believe that bargaining and compromise can solve any problem. Even when your advice isn't solicited, you actively attempt to smooth over people's differences with advice and negotiation. Many Philodox adopt this Archetype.

— Regain Willpower when you guide others through a dispute and forestall a confrontation.

• Deputy

You may not have all of the responsibility, and you may not get all of the fame, but you do most of the work. You're always there to back your comrades, yet you rarely take any of the credit. If there's a dirty job, you usually sign up second. You wait for another to lead the way, but after that, you jump right on board. You're good at taking orders and following them to the letter, but you can also take charge — if that's part of the job.

— Regain Willpower whenever you complete a difficult task and someone else takes the credit.

• Elitist

No matter what your character's tribe, breed, auspice, race, religion or gender, one of these aspects always makes you better than everyone else. No matter how well others prove themselves, they're always inferior simply because they are different from you. Your elitism may rest on any of these characteristics, or it could cross all categories, which makes it all the more difficult for others to measure up to your standards.

Elitists can be from any walk of life or any tribe. Even Bone Gnawers can look down at the "cultured" tribes and scoff at their wasted efforts toward civility. Elitism is not limited to a certain group. It can flow from any individual.

— Regain Willpower when anyone not of your particular persuasion fails miserably.



• Enigma

What you do isn't half as important to you as remaining a mystery to everyone around you. Your motives, your goals and even your name remain shrouded by meandering ramble or dead silence. Anonymity and mystery allow you to support whatever cause suits your fancy, and they keep your enemies guessing. Adopting fake personalities or encouraging overestimation of your abilities creates confusion that gives you freedom and power. Although it may prevent people from getting close to you, your secrecy keeps you from getting hurt.

— Regain Willpower when you accomplish a task without revealing your intentions beforehand.

• Entrepreneur

You understand that one day they'll run out of frontier, and you're going to be the one to profit from your foresight. You may be a land-friendly developer, an inventor or just a lowly tinhorn, but you know your fortune awaits. For every person who sets foot in the West, there's one new idea; you'll take the best ideas and turn them into cash. This Archetype is common among Iron Riders.

— Regain Willpower whenever one of your far-sighted ventures succeeds.

• Explorer

You have an inquisitive mind that causes you to unveil the secrets of the world around you. Whether you're searching through uncharted wilderness or exploring the inner workings of a new social circle, it is the thrill of discovery that fuels your ambition. The frontier provides a never-ending supply of new experiences, as well as a constant influx of fresh personalities.

— Regain Willpower whenever you successfully discover something truly unique or you uncover some hidden truth.

• Gambler

Everything is a game to you, and you always have to win. You take chances with your life, your friends' lives and the lives of innocents. Anything that is worth having is worth risking — as long as there's a payoff in the end. Whether you play for money or for higher stakes, you always take the risk and never look back. To do otherwise would be to admit defeat, and you'd rather die.

— Regain Willpower whenever you risk something of great value and come away victorious.

• Idealist

The vastness of the West is an anvil on which peace among disparate peoples can be forged. With so much space, why can't everyone be happy? You aren't *quite* as naive as that sounds, but you feel that things could be better. You tend to see the best in people before you recognize the worst. Even though you understand that evil people exist, you can't

help thinking that there must be some good in them. Bringing to the forefront the best attributes in the most heinous of criminals is your overwhelming goal.

— Regain Willpower whenever someone measures up to your lofty estimation of people's inherent goodness.

• Leech

The world owes you a living and you're going to take it. You might sit back and wait for handouts from the rest of the world. On the other hand, you might just take what you want from everybody around you. Either way, you have no compunctions about living off of others to maintain yourself. Packmates, strangers, friends or enemies — they're all the same to you, as long as you get what you want.

— Regain Willpower whenever others give of themselves to you and you give nothing in return.

• Loyalist

You stick to your guns no matter how dangerous or unpopular your cause. You are stubborn to a fault and do not allow your loyalty to be bought, shaken or ignored. You expect a lot from others because of your own high standards. You might not have many friends, but the ones you do make are friends to the bitter end. You tend to make enemies of people who oppose your causes, but all the worse for them. You never give up.

— Regain Willpower whenever you successfully maintain loyalty in the face of adversity and at great personal cost to yourself.

• Omega

Some say that you are affected by the New Moon, regardless of your auspice. While this may or may not be true, you always seek to question the authority of the pack leader, or any authority for that matter. Maybe it's because you are last in station in the pack; maybe it's because you want to be in charge. Whatever the reason, people around you expect you to disagree with them on almost every occasion.

— Regain Willpower whenever the pack listens to your suggestion over the advice of others and things work out for the best.

• Packmate

You are one part of a larger organism. The pack is your body, the alpha is your eyes and Gaia is your soul. You have little identity outside the pack. You look to the others, especially the leader, for initiative and direction. You represent ultimate loyalty, as every member of the pack can depend on you at all times. You could no sooner betray your pack than you could chew off your own leg.

— Regain Willpower whenever the pack survives a dangerous situation because of your actions.

• Patron

You never act out of self-interest; you act only in the best interests of people around you. Whether they're starving artists bringing culture to the frontier or settlers trying to beat back the wilderness, you support the underdog. You enjoy being sought out for your help, and you relish giving advice to anyone in need. You live for the attention such benevolence brings you. You are, however, jealous of your wards and guard them from the influence of others.

— Regain Willpower when something you've nurtured becomes successful in the eyes of others.

• Scoundrel

You have no time for moral codes or "The Law of the West." You have no scruples against shooting someone in the back or stealing from women and children. To allow some ridiculous ethical code to determine your actions is anathema to you. Beyond that, it could get you killed or sent to prison. You take advantage of every situation, no matter how low or reprehensible. It's not that you don't have honor, it's just that you have more sense than everyone else.

— Regain Willpower whenever you gain the upper hand by doing "the wrong thing."

• Swindler

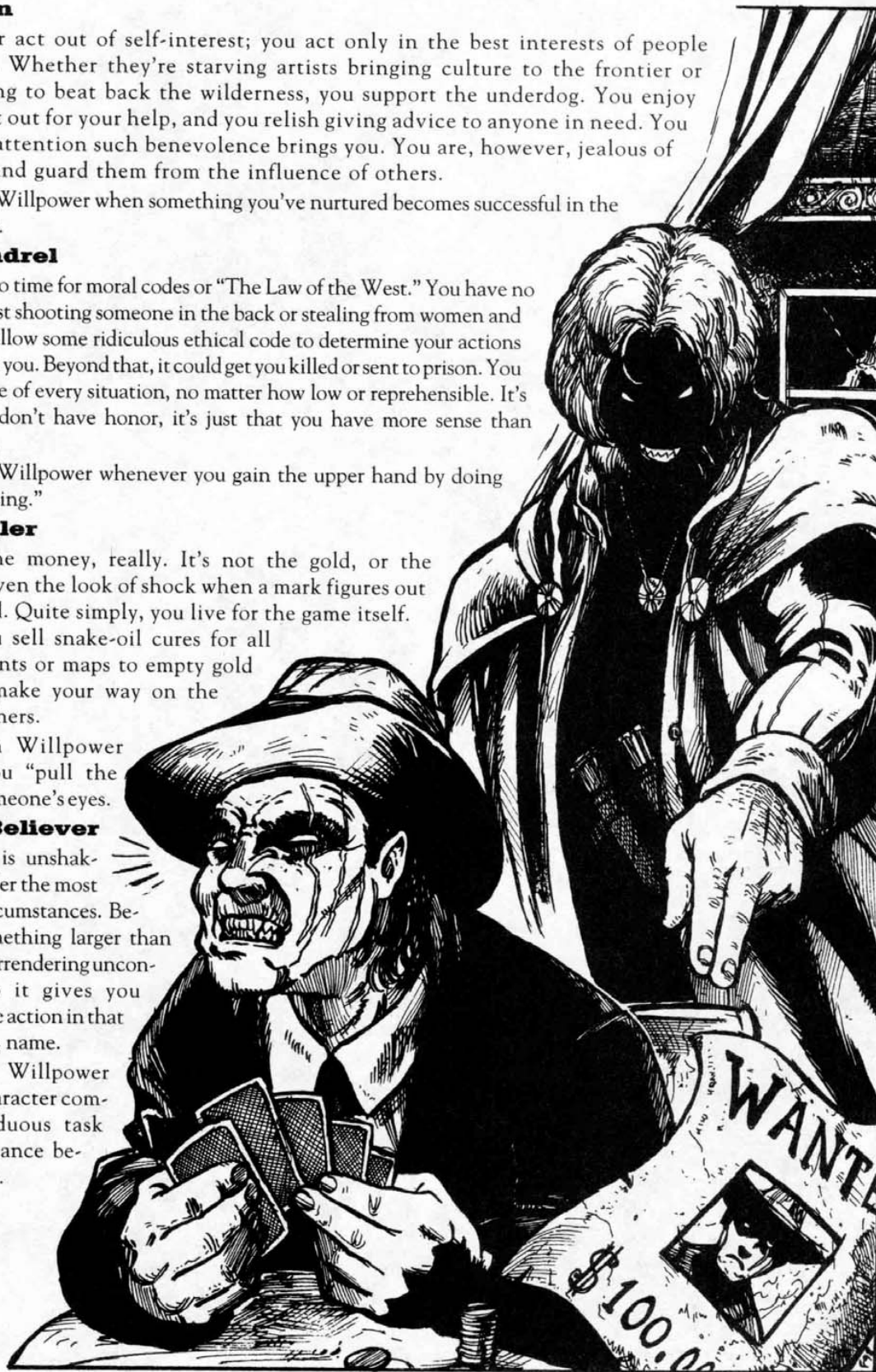
It's not the money, really. It's not the gold, or the property or even the look of shock when a mark figures out he's been had. Quite simply, you live for the game itself. Whether you sell snake-oil cures for all known ailments or maps to empty gold mines, you make your way on the naiveté of others.

— Regain Willpower whenever you "pull the wool over" someone's eyes.

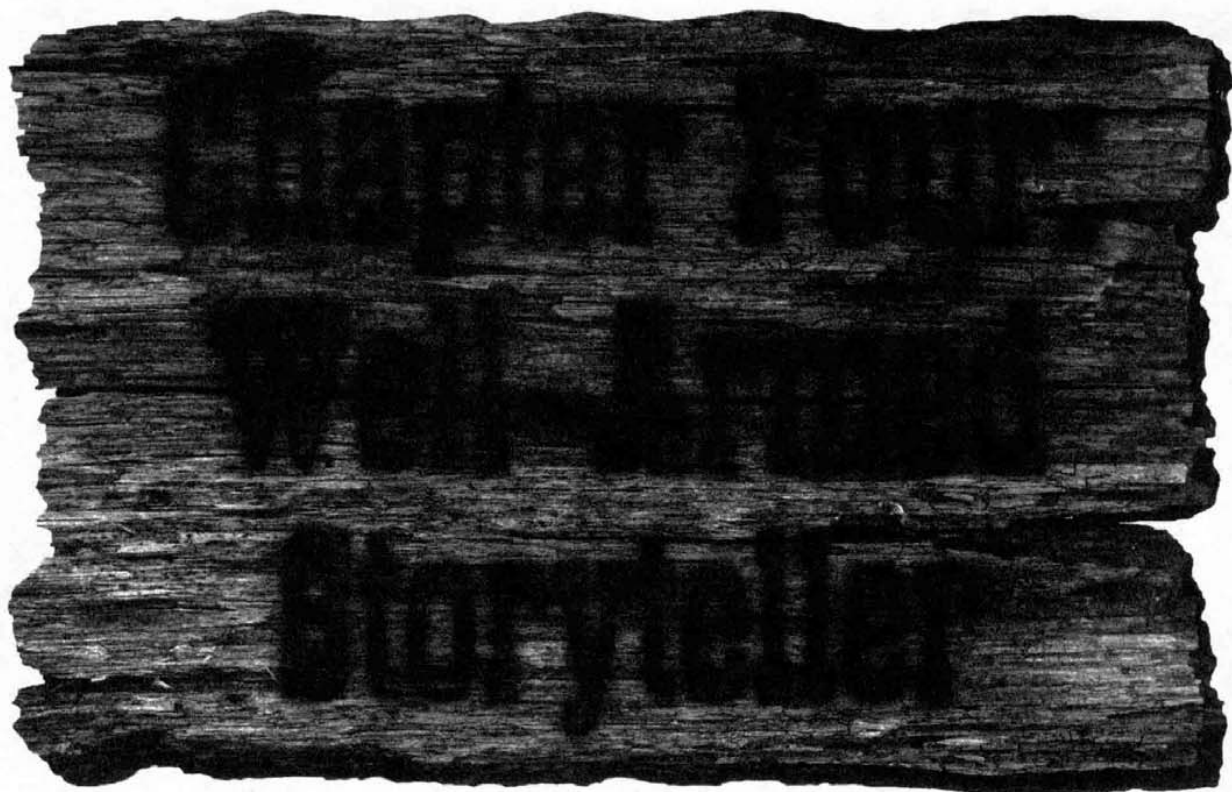
• True Believer

Your faith is unshakable, even under the most stressful of circumstances. Believing in something larger than yourself and surrendering unconditionally to it gives you freedom to take action in that higher power's name.

— Regain Willpower when your character completes an arduous task with no assistance beyond his faith.







The Storm-Born

It sounded like a woman's shriek, a tearing, painful note that made Emma jump and sent the plates she'd held clattering to the cabin's dirt floor. The screech pierced the air again, louder than any human throat could, then another joined it, and another, and she suddenly realized it was the horses screaming in their corral.

The cabin door opened with a bang to admit a blast of hot wind. Jacob was in the doorway, barely holding himself there with his thin arms. "A storm, mama!" he cried shrilly. "A storm!"

That was when it went dark, the slim bars of daylight vanishing from the slitted shutters and the oil-fed flames from the lanterns suddenly stretching tall and thin, as though squeezed by invisible hands. Emma raised a callused hand to her throat and rushed to the boy, stifling a cry of her own.

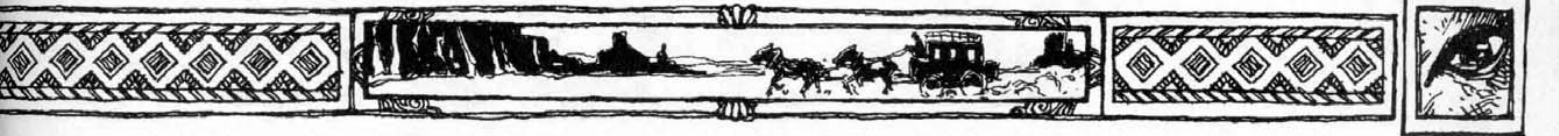
It looked like the end of the world. Clouds, black and thick and roiling, filled the midwestern sky from horizon to

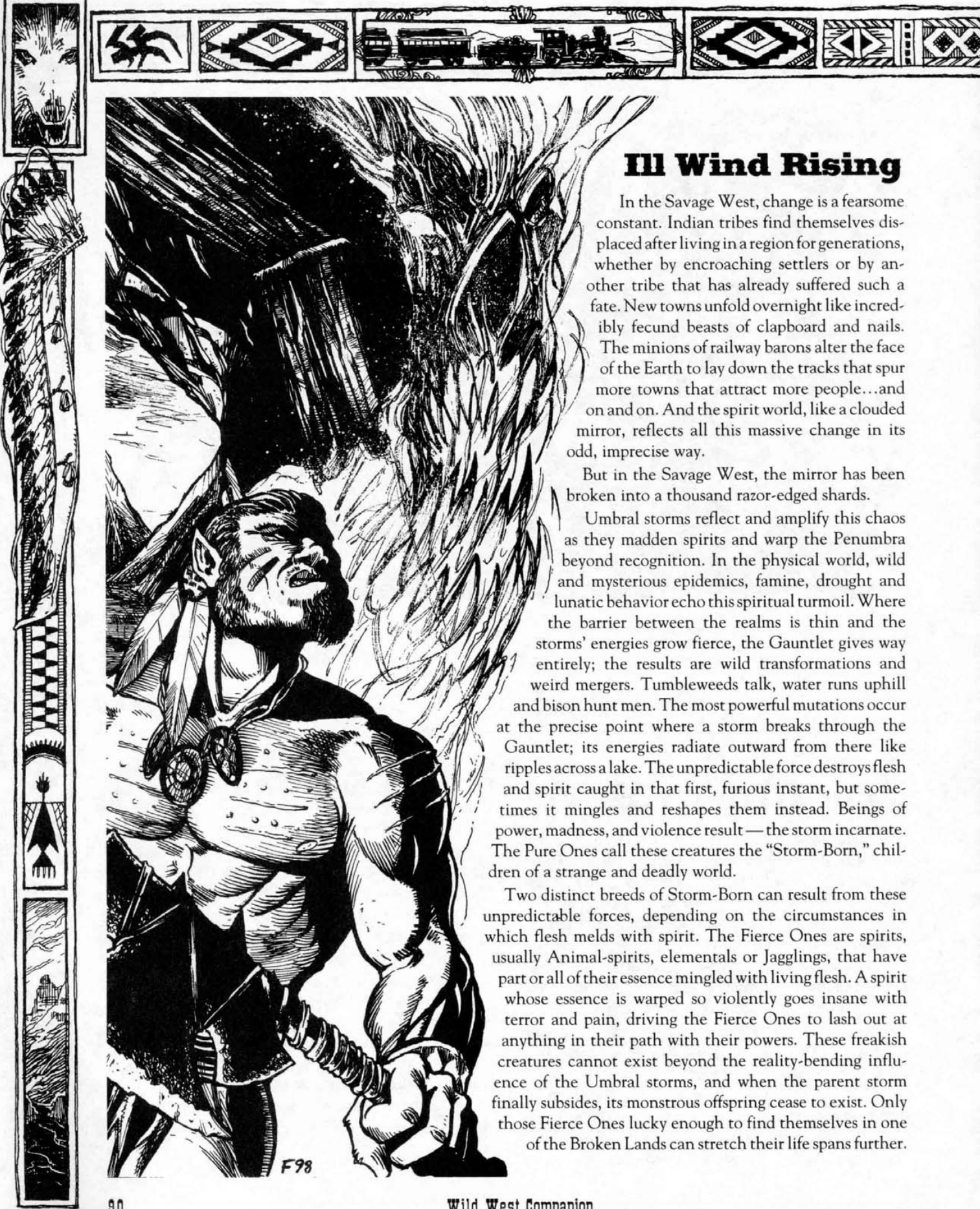
horizon. Lightning spat and danced among the whorls and eddies, but there was no thunder, no sound at all but the shrieks of the terrified horses.

Emma hugged Jacob against her belly and the whole world seemed to explode. The storm leaped at the earth like a rabid dog. Dirt and wood erupted into the air. The cabin flew apart around them in silent fury; Emma could feel the storm around her, through her, bursting her veins, melting her flesh — and Jacob's, too. She screamed, but no sound came from her throat.

The storm held them for an eternity, and it was over in an instant. Its fury swept back up into the sky like a receding wave — except for the lightning still inside her. The wind and the fury twisted her insides with pain and filled her guts to bursting. Emma watched the storm dwindle to a speck and felt like a child watching her parents disappear into the distance.

The new mouth in her belly was the first to scream, as the scrawny arms extending from her waist reached forlornly to the sky.





Ill Wind Rising

In the Savage West, change is a fearsome constant. Indian tribes find themselves displaced after living in a region for generations, whether by encroaching settlers or by another tribe that has already suffered such a fate. New towns unfold overnight like incredibly fecund beasts of clapboard and nails. The minions of railway barons alter the face of the Earth to lay down the tracks that spur more towns that attract more people...and on and on. And the spirit world, like a clouded mirror, reflects all this massive change in its odd, imprecise way.

But in the Savage West, the mirror has been broken into a thousand razor-edged shards.

Umbral storms reflect and amplify this chaos as they madden spirits and warp the Penumbra beyond recognition. In the physical world, wild and mysterious epidemics, famine, drought and lunatic behavior echo this spiritual turmoil. Where the barrier between the realms is thin and the storms' energies grow fierce, the Gauntlet gives way entirely; the results are wild transformations and weird mergers. Tumbleweeds talk, water runs uphill and bison hunt men. The most powerful mutations occur at the precise point where a storm breaks through the Gauntlet; its energies radiate outward from there like ripples across a lake. The unpredictable force destroys flesh and spirit caught in that first, furious instant, but sometimes it mingles and reshapes them instead. Beings of power, madness, and violence result — the storm incarnate. The Pure Ones call these creatures the "Storm-Born," children of a strange and deadly world.

Two distinct breeds of Storm-Born can result from these unpredictable forces, depending on the circumstances in which flesh melds with spirit. The Fierce Ones are spirits, usually Animal-spirits, elementals or Jagglings, that have part or all of their essence mingled with living flesh. A spirit whose essence is warped so violently goes insane with terror and pain, driving the Fierce Ones to lash out at anything in their path with their powers. These freakish creatures cannot exist beyond the reality-bending influence of the Umbral storms, and when the parent storm finally subsides, its monstrous offspring cease to exist. Only those Fierce Ones lucky enough to find themselves in one of the Broken Lands can stretch their life spans further.



When an Umbral storm alters the consciousness of a living thing to make the creature aware simultaneously of both the physical and spiritual realms, the result is a Clever One. Such creatures are rare, constituting perhaps one-tenth of all the Umbral storms' spawn. Typically, these Storm-Born are subtler and last longer than their cousins, the Fierce Ones. Clever Ones often undergo no change in appearance, but the shock of transformation always does permanent harm to mundane minds. As time passes, Clever Ones' behavior and actions become increasingly alien. Many of these Storm-Born are subject to bans or weaknesses similar to ones that afflict pure spirits, though restrictions that the Clever Ones suffer tend to echo the personal habits or taboos that the creature held during its mundane existence. A Storm-Born who, in mortal life, was a drunkard might still be drawn to liquor; a creature who was once a gambler might be unable to resist betting a traveler's life in a game of

cards. Although their powers and physiques are less dramatic than the Fierce Ones', the Clever Ones are much more physically grounded and can exist outside the Broken Lands. These Storm-Born haunt the Savage West, leaving pain and ruin in their wake. Despite their scarcity, these beings — and their powers — have become the stuff of campfire legend.

All Storm-Born exist simultaneously in the physical world and the Penumbra, and their perceptions extend into both realms (which is a fact side-stepping Garou had best remember). They possess both Gnosis and Power, in the manner of pure spirits. Because of their corporeality, however, Storm-Born need not Slumber once they consume all of their Power, but they do become unable to perform any activity that requires it. Storm-Born recover Power from the Umbra at the rate of one point per hour of rest (they suffer no penalty for dissipating all of their Power).



Chapter Four: The Well-Armed Storyteller

The Fierce Ones

The Fierce Ones, also called "Los Fieros" in some parts of the Southwest, have powers similar in scope to elementals'. Their physical forms combine their dual essences and defy the laws of reality. They have little better than a frenzied intelligence, similar to that of rabid animals, and they attack any living thing that they encounter. Although very powerful, the Fierce Ones must often endure bans or weaknesses that are relative to each creature's origins. However, whatever the restriction that these Storm-Born suffer, all of their kind are limited to an existence within the bounds of an Umbral storm or the Broken Lands.

Skinners

The Skinners are buffalo hunters caught skinning the carcasses of their recent kills when a storm breaks over them. The Umbral energies fuse their bodies with the agonized spirits of the buffalo that they've just slain, giving them tremendous strength, stamina — and a burning, self-destructive rage. All sanity flees as the Skinners turn their knives on themselves to remove their own hides. Thereafter, they wander the West with their parent storm and seek the skins of others.



Skinners are huge caricatures of men: very broad shoulders and thick limbs swollen with the strength of the buffalo. Their bodies are raw and skinless, and they fill the air with anguished howls of pain and misery as they move. They must take the hide from any living thing they catch to wear as their own. Stolen skin, whether human or animal, adheres to their forms for a short while, giving them an even more hideous patchwork appearance but also taking away their pain. The skin rots away within hours, however, and the Skinner must hunt again. Skinners travel in bands of five to eight and are tireless when pursuing their prey. A Skinner's teeth and hands are capable of causing aggravated damage.

Physical: Strength 8, Dexterity 4, Stamina 8

Social: None

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 1, Brawl 3

Willpower 7, **Rage** 8, **Gnosis** 4, **Power** 30

Powers: Resist Pain (Power cost: 10; as the Get of Fenris Gift), Sense Living Flesh (Power cost: 5; the Skinner can sense suitable prey at a distance of one mile per success on a Gnosis roll), Howl of the Hunter (Power cost: 5; anyone capable of hearing the Skinner's howl must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) or be physically paralyzed for the rest of the turn)

Ban: Skinners are unable to resist the lure of salt. If a large quantity of salt is present (one pound or more per Skinner), the Storm-Born must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 9). If the Skinner fails the roll, it must stop and consume the salt before continuing after its prey.

Cyclone Hawk

This maddened creature is the embodiment of an Earth elemental in the flesh of a large raptor. Conflicting urges to fly and burrow deep into the earth drive the Cyclone Hawk into a frenzy, with its rage creating terrible dust storms and sudden earthquakes.

The Cyclone Hawk appears to be a large red-tailed hawk; its feathers are mottled with metallic colors that are, in fact, metal deposits fused with the bird's body. This Storm-Born's eyes glow with a red heat, and its cry is deep and rumbling. The Cyclone Hawk is able to fly for short distances by fighting the urge to dive back down into the earth. When it does fall, it strikes the ground like a thunderbolt. The creature is a virtual cyclone of destruction, wreaking havoc on anything in its path.

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: None

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Talents: None

Willpower 4, **Rage** 8, **Gnosis** 5, **Power** 50

Powers: Quicksilver Talons (Power Cost: 10; damage Strength +2, and affects Garou like silver), Earthquake (Power Cost: 20; by flying up and plunging into the ground, the Cyclone Hawk can cause fierce localized earthquakes; anyone in the earthquake's radius must make a Dexterity roll (difficulty 8) to remain standing, and buildings in the area collapse if the Cyclone Hawk makes a successful Rage roll), Dust Storm (Power Cost: 15; the Storm-Born can cause a blinding dust storm whose radius is one mile; all within the cloud subtract four from their Perception. The Cyclone Hawk is unaffected by such storms)

Weakness: The Cyclone Hawk takes double damage from iron.

Daughter Night

Folks who know the stories about Daughter Night now think twice about heading to the rescue when they hear a girl screaming in the dark for her parents. This terrible creature is the result of a love Epiphling merged with the body of a young girl. The psychic echoes of the girl's fate (she died of terrible wounds after the Cheyenne massacred her family) torture the Epiphling and drive it to seek out love and comfort from everyone it encounters. The result is a storm of jealousy, rage, paranoia, and obsession that tears families, friends, and packs apart.

Daughter Night appears to be a girl of 12 with large blue eyes and terrible wounds in her shoulder and chest. She speaks in a vulnerable, trembling voice, and her touch fills the hardest heart with feelings of compassion and protectiveness.

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Expression 4

Willpower 7, **Rage** 1, **Gnosis** 6, **Power** 40

Powers: Obsession (Power Cost 10; the target must make a Willpower roll, with the difficulty equal to the Storm-Born's Willpower (7); Garou can substitute Rage for Willpower if it is higher. All who fail the roll become obsessed with caring for the creature, trying to tend to its wounds and protect it from anything deemed a threat —

that is, any other living thing. The Storm-Born can use this power on a dozen people at once — anyone within 100 feet is affected — invariably bringing them into conflict with one another), Self-sacrifice (Power Cost 20; the Storm-Born utters a scream that can force others to do anything to protect her. Anyone capable of hearing the cry must make a Willpower roll, with a difficulty equal to the Storm-Born's Willpower. All who fail the roll must rush to her defense, even to the extent of placing themselves in the way of any harm that might befall her.

The Clever Ones

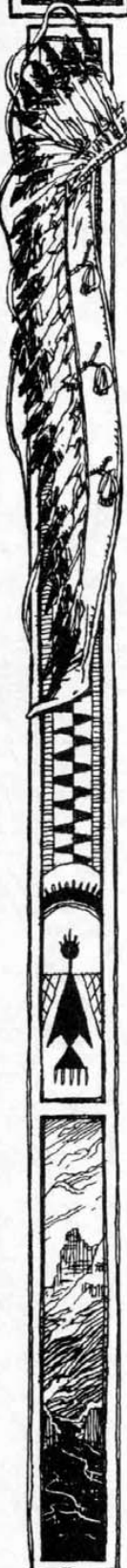
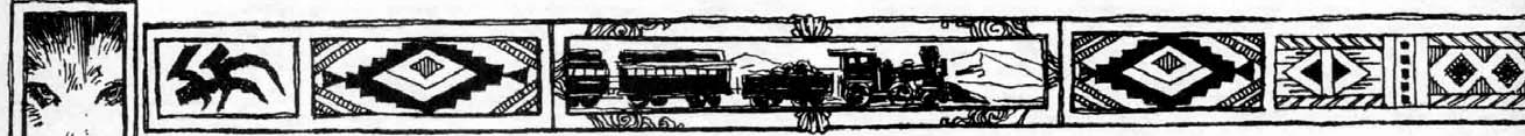
The Clever Ones — some call them “Los Diestros” — are former humans reshaped by exposure to the raw energies of the Umbra. Now they wander the land to spread mayhem with their newfound abilities. In general, the Clever Ones' powers are subtle, if potent, but their bodies sometimes bear marks or signs that hint at these creatures' true natures. Like the Fierce Ones, the Clever Ones are subject to bans, but the restrictions on a given individual are more rooted in a Storm-Born's psychology than in any elemental law.

John Drowner

In the remotest outposts of the Savage West, settlers whisper tales of John Drowner. Once an itinerant Baptist preacher, this Storm-Born still travels from town to town as he preaches his hellfire-and-brimstone sermons and rouses frontier folks to drive Satan from their midst. His powerful oratory and healing hands drive the faithful to seek out any trace of sin in their communities, be it real or imagined, and to destroy it utterly. After all, as the Good Book says, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.”

Towns found wanting in Drowner's eyes have become the stuff of legend. All but one of the residents of Promontory, Kansas, for example, turned up drowned in their homes — in the midst of a drought and uphill from the lake that served as the town's water supply! The lone survivor swore that, late one night, every vessel of liquid he could see in Promontory, from horse trough to bucket, began gushing with water. As he was washed downhill, the story goes, he saw John Drowner riding into the distance.

John Drowner is a tall, gaunt figure with a powerful, stern presence and a voice like rolling thunder. People bold enough to match his gaze claim to have seen the deep blue of his eyes roil like storm-tossed waters.



Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 3
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 6
Talents: Dodge 3, Expression 4, Intimidation 4
Willpower 9, Rage 8, Gnosis 4, Power 75
Powers: Awe (Power Cost: 5; as the Silver Fang Gift), Staredown (Power Cost: 5; as the Shadow Lord Gift), Icy Chill of Despair (Power Cost: 10; as the Shadow Lord Gift), Mother's Touch (Power Cost: 15; as the Children of Gaia Gift), Reveal Sin (Power Cost: 15; the target must make a Willpower roll [difficulty 9] or begin displaying the darker aspects of her personality), Incite Mob (Power Cost: variable; Drowner may raise a mob by spending one point of power per individual within range of his voice, and by making a Manipulation + Expression roll [difficulty 8]. If successful, any affected individual must make a Willpower roll with a difficulty equal to Drowner's Willpower. Anyone who fails his roll surrenders his will to the mob), Part the Veil (Power Cost: 15; as the Lupus Gift)

Ban: Fire. Drowner is terrified of flame. The Storm-Born must make a Willpower roll whenever he is near an open fire. The difficulty of the roll is dependent on the level of the fire: 3 for something similar to a candle, 8 for a torch waved in his face, or 9 for a roaring bonfire.

The Storm Walkers

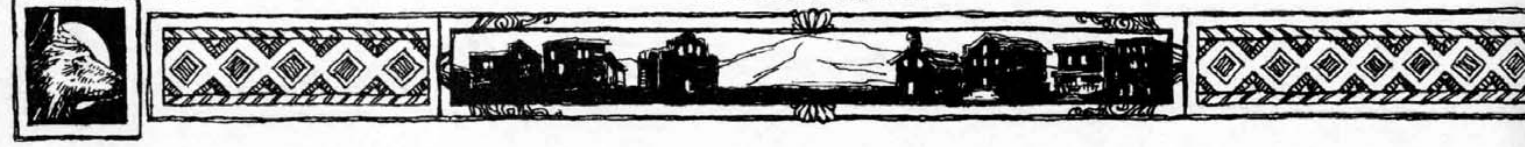
Years ago, when the first Umbral storms appeared in the Savage West, a council of Sioux wise men came together to discuss what could be done to solve the problem. The solution they reached was to use their knowledge to seek out the storms and attempt to bring their energies back into balance. Eight of these shamans, the greatest of the council, set off in separate directions to find and calm the storms.

None of the shamans was seen again until a year later, when they returned to their various tribes and spoke of a great vision they had been given. The storms, they said, had risen to help the Pure Ones fight off the Wyrmscomers and restore the Land. The spirits of the storms promised power and knowledge for Sioux who chose to follow their path. The shamans promised it was the beginning of a new age of glory for the Pure Ones and the Sioux Nation. The tribes followed the shamans in pursuit of the storms and were never heard from again.

Since then, the Storm Walkers, as the shamans call themselves, have appeared all over the Savage West as they try to persuade Indian Nations to follow the spirits of the storm and rise against the Wyrmscomers. Rumors amongst the Pure Ones tell of entire tribes that have turned from the old ways and that offer their children to the raging storms in the belief that the storm spirits will drive the white men from the plains. Those European Garou who believe in the Storm Walkers at all think the shamans to be possessed by powerful Banes that feed on the despair of the tribes and that fuel the hatred of their victims against settlers and railroad workers. The Uktena, however, fear that there are far-worse forces at work; they believe the Storm Walkers are the Storm Eater's servants, whom it sent into the physical world to prepare for its coming. The only thing certain about these enigmatic creatures is that wherever they go, hatred and madness follow.

The Storm Walkers appear to be vibrant, white-haired wise men, but their skin is as cold as ice, and they never touch any food or drink.

Physical: Strength 3+, Dexterity 3+, Stamina 3+
Social: Charisma 4+, Manipulation 4+, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 4+, Intelligence 4+, Wits 5+
Talents: Alertness 3, Empathy 4, Expression 5
Willpower 8, Rage 2, Gnosis 8, Power 75
Powers: Persuasion (Power Cost: 10; as the Homid Gift), Counting Coup (Power Cost: 15; as the Stargazer Gift), Mold Spirit (Power Cost: 25; as the Theurge Gift. The Storm Walker imparts the energies of the Storm Umbra into a spirit's form. If there is some form of living flesh nearby, the Storm Walker can use this power to create a Fierce One, which exists until such time as it has expended all of its available power), Call the Storm (Power Cost: 30; if the Storm Walker can make a successful Gnosis roll — difficulty equal to the local Gauntlet rating — he can summon an Umbral storm into the physical realm, thus creating a Broken Land around him for as many turns as he is able to make a successful Willpower roll [difficulty 8]. Anyone immediately around the Storm Walker risks being affected by the reality-bending effects of the storm.)



Familiar Fauna of the Savage West

Most normal animals encountered in the Savage West are not openly aggressive unless provoked. However, animals are just as susceptible as humans to the influence Umbral storms wield across the Gauntlet. In addition, Banes and other spirits possess animals, just as they do people (few things are as truly frightening — even to a Garou — as a Bane-possessed grizzly bear). This fate frequently greets animals wandering in the Broken Lands.

Normal animals are best described with only Physical Traits. Few have an Intelligence score higher than 2 or a Perception lower than 3 (domesticated animals have a Perception score of 2). Determining Social Traits possessed by individual animals is up to the Storyteller.

Bats, Cats, Rats and Other Varmints

Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -4, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for one die. Group attacks do three dice per turn and always have three (and only three) successes for their initiative.

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Stealth 3, Larceny 1

Notes: A varmint is any small, furry beast you run across that can prove to be a nuisance. By themselves,

they aren't much of a problem; they're hardly worth wasting a bullet on. However, some run in bunches (namely rats and bats), which gets a bit annoying. Varmints live everywhere: cities, plains, mountains. Even in the desert, six days from nowhere, you can find some rodent taking shade under a cactus. Cooked varmints taste like chicken; raw ones taste like squirrel.

Bear: Black/Brown/Grizzly

Strength 4/5/6, Dexterity 3/2/2, Stamina 4/5/6

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Claw for Strength +2 dice; bite for Strength

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Stealth 1

Notes: Bears are reclusive creatures and can be placid, but they have short tempers and get pretty ornery if they feel their territory is threatened. Bears aren't afraid of people and occasionally wander into camps at night to forage. Much revered by Native Americans for their strength, enraged grizzlies can give even Crinos-form Garou a good fight. Several kinds of bears dwell in the Savage West. Black bears are the smallest (about five feet long) and grizzlies are the largest (eight or nine feet long), with brown bears in-between the two. Bears live in most North American forests, but grizzlies stick to the West. Polar bears (same statistics as grizzlies) stick to the far north, naturally. Some human denizens of the Savage West consider bears good eating.

Stampede

Any large group of herd animals can stampede when frightened. The Storyteller can treat a stampeding herd as a single unit rather than as individual animals. Note, however, that killing or incapacitating one or more members of the herd does nothing to halt a stampede. A werewolf's options are to step sideways (if possible), ascend or descend out of the path of destruction, find sturdy shelter or take her lumps. A herd, during each turn that it stampedes, has an initiative score of three successes. No roll is necessary to determine if the herd hits any opponent during a stampede. Anyone in the herd's path is struck, gored, kicked and trampled by several animals running in close proximity. A stampeding herd inflicts 15 dice of damage every turn to each character caught in the animals' path. Characters

may soak this damage normally; characters may attempt to Dodge (difficulty 7) during a stampede. Each success scored on the Dodge roll removes one die (before damage is rolled) from the Dice Pool used to determine the damage inflicted on that character by the stampeding herd. Characters caught in a stampede take damage for a number of turns equal to the total number of animals in the herd divided by 10, after which time the herd passes. For example, if the Wind River Kid finds himself amid a stampeding herd of 30 cattle, he takes damage for three turns before the stampede leaves him in its wake. Stampeding herds steer clear of large trees, boulders and sturdy buildings, but any crops, fences and small structures (such as sheds and outhouses) in their path are completely destroyed.



Bison

Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Gore for five dice; stampede for 15 dice each turn

Abilities: Alertness 1, Brawl 1, Dodge 1

Notes: Huge herds of bison—commonly called buffalo—roam the Great Plains of the Savage West. The native inhabitants revere these creatures as one of the staples of life and use their carcasses for everything from food and clothing to building and handicrafts materials. These herds once stretched as far as the eye could see, numbering in the thousands and covering hundreds of acres. Settlers see bison as just large vermin because of the animals' great numbers. Buffalo hunters travel the prairies, gun down hundreds, skin them and leave them to rot. The horrible stench of so many decaying corpses lingers for months and travels miles downwind.

Cow/Bull

Strength 3/5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3/5

Willpower: 2, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -3, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for three dice/gore for six; stampede for 15 dice each turn

Abilities: Alertness 1

Notes: These animals are found anywhere that there are settlers and range from the family's milk cow to vast ranching herds. Most cows are dumber than sod and no longer have the instincts needed to survive in the wild.

Coyote

Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for three dice

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 2

Notes: These nocturnal cousins of wolves show up mostly in the Southwest. Settlers, particularly ranchers, see them as little more than loathsome varmints that poach livestock. Coyotes are smaller than wolves and rarely attack prey larger than sheep or goats.

Crow/Raven/Vulture

Strength 1/1/2, Dexterity 3/3/2, Stamina 2/2/3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -5

Attack: Claw for one/one/two dice; bite for one (desperation)

Abilities: Alertness 3, Dodge 2

Notes: These three birds are all scavengers and, as such, they hang around corpses (or folks soon to be corpses) and carcasses, which gives them a pretty bad reputation. There are lots of stories told about these birds having mystical powers and being messengers for the dead, but one thing is for sure: Watching a big black bird pick at someone's remains is mighty unsettling.

Deer/Stag

Strength 1/3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2/3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: None/gore for five dice

Abilities: Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Stealth 2

Notes: Deer are the prime game animal in the Savage West. Two-legged and four-legged predators pursue them eagerly, and deer lead such hunters on an arduous chase. Some Garou and Indian tribes, having learned firsthand how dangerous these male animals' many-pointed antlers can be, also harvest stag antlers. Deer live in the high grasslands and forests.

Dog

Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -3, -5

Attack: Bite for four; claw for two

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 1

Notes: Dogs are a cowpoke's best friends in part because they help keep varmints away—even human ones. Most dogs in the Savage West are working pets and are found only near settlements.



Chupacabra (nonflying/flying)

Strength 2/3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2/3

Willpower: X, Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for three/four dice; claw for two/three

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Stealth 3

Notes: These rare creatures, also known as "goat-suckers," inhabit the Southwest. Chupacabra feed off settlers' livestock, primarily by sucking the blood of their prey, although they occasionally eat certain organs (most notably the eyes, tongue and liver) of an animal. Mass feedings by these secretive creatures can result in mystifying sprees of animal mutilation. chupacabra walk upright and stand nearly waist-high to a human. The creature has a large, egg-shaped head and huge eyes that allow it to hunt well at night. Of the two types of chupacabra, flying ones are slightly larger than the others and they possess patagia (flaps of skin that stretch between limbs and allow limited flight). These creatures nest in small family units and hunt at night in groups of two or three. They frighten easily and disappear into the darkness as soon as they are startled, which makes sightings by humans rare.

Hawks/Owls/Eagles

Strength 1/1/2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Willpower: 3, Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -5

Attack: Claw for three/two/three dice; bite for four/three/four

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2

Notes: Many breeds of hawks and owls live throughout North America, but the Golden Eagle and the Bald Eagle inhabit the West only. Settlers and Indians admire these majestic birds of prey.

Horse/Mustang

Strength 4/5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3/4

Willpower: 2/3, Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for three dice; trample or kick for five/six; stampede for 15 per turn

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 1/2, Dodge 1/2

Notes: A horse is more than just transportation or a dependable "farmhoof"; a horse is his owner's best friend in the world. They say you can tell a lot about a person by the way he treats his horse — and they're right. Anyone not tied to one place depends on his horse for survival. Horse thievery is a hanging offense in most parts of the Savage West. Mustangs are wild horses that inhabit the southwestern plains.

Jackalope

Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Willpower: 2, Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -3, -4

Attack: Bite for three dice; gore for four; kick for one (desperation)

Abilities: Alertness 1, Brawl 1, Dodge 1

Notes: Settlers often scoff at the tales of the dreaded "Piranha of the Prairies," but when the shrieking begins in the dead of night, the scoffing ends. At first glance, a jackalope looks like a big rabbit with antlers (it's obvious why the settlers scoffed). Jackalopes stand about knee-high to anyone who's not completely bowlegged. Horns sprout from atop their heads, between the large ears. Female jackalopes have two horns that curve back like the ones on an antelope, and males grow full racks similar to a stag's. Their teeth are wide and flat in front, but they have large canines. When a jackalope family passes through an area, it eats *everything*, from grass, to grain, to livestock. It is not uncommon for several jackalopes to bring down a sheep, though they rarely attack bigger animals unless their family is unusually large or they happen upon a sick or wounded animal. Jackalopes shriek when they hunt, making a sound like a woman screaming. The creatures travel in families of 15 to 20, but groups of 50 to 100 have been seen on the Great Plains. Jackalope meat tastes similar to rabbit, but with a musky flavor reminiscent of larger game animals.



Moose

Strength 5, Dexterity 1, Stamina 4

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -4, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Gore for six dice

Abilities: Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Intimidation 1

Notes: These large animals favor the cooler reaches of the Northwest. They gather in small herds and seldom appear alone. Moose generally stick to wetlands and other lowland areas.

Mountain Lion

Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Claw for three dice; bite for four

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Stealth 3

Notes: Mountain lions are the biggest cats native to North America. These solitary predators live among the cliffs in the high altitudes of the Rocky Mountains. Hunting deer and mountain goats, these predators carve out their own territory amid roaming packs of gray and timber wolves.

Mountain Goat

Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -3, Incapacitated

Attack: Gore for four dice

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 4, Brawl 1, Dodge 2

Notes: Sure-footed mountain goats live on the craggy terrain of the Rocky Mountains that other animals avoid. Amid rock and sparse vegetation, they rely on dexterity and knowledge of their home turf to protect themselves. Mountain goats are herd animals, but due to the area they inhabit, they tend to cluster, with the entire herd covering a truly expansive range. Mountain goats communicate with a bleating that signals the approach of a predator.

Mule

Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Willpower: 6, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -2, -4, Incapacitated

Attack: Kick for five dice, bite for four

Abilities: Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2

Notes: This pack animal is a favorite among trappers, prospectors and others who need to transport huge loads. It is able to carry more than its body weight for long periods. Mules are not terribly intelligent animals and lack many instincts required to survive in the wild. Mules' stubbornness and surly dispositions are legendary.

Rattlesnake

Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -3, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for two dice; poison three dice per turn

Abilities: Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2

Notes: Only one thing is worse than finding a diamond-back rattler in your sleeping bag and that's having the rattler find *you*. Few animals have earned as frightening a reputation as the rattlesnake. These creatures are actually quite reclusive and prefer to avoid a fight, but if backed into a corner, they strike. Once a rattlesnake bites a character, the poison causes three dice of damage per turn during combat for each bite inflicted, or three dice every 15 minutes for the next six hours if the character is not in combat. Damage caused by the venom may be soaked and regenerated normally. In addition, if a werewolf doesn't receive any damage from poison during a turn, she may regenerate the poison instead of a wound. Rattlesnakes dwell in the deserts of the Southwest.



Scorpion/Tarantula

Strength 0, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Willpower: 1, **Health Levels:** OK, Incapacitated

Attack: Sting/bite for zero dice; poison one die per turn (see Rattlesnake listing)

Abilities: Alertness 1, Brawl 1, Stealth 4

Notes: Scorpions and tarantulas have fearsome reputations, much like the rattlesnake's. The bite of a tarantula and the sting of a scorpion are both venomous but generally not lethal to adults. Their poison is potent enough to make a person seriously ill, however. See the rattlesnake listing for details on damage and regeneration of poisons. Desert travelers sometimes learn the hard way that a scorpion or tarantula has taken up residence inside a boot or some garment. A popular pastime in many small desert towns is to catch a scorpion and a tarantula, toss them both in a box and bet on the fight's outcome.

Sheep/Pig/Goat

Strength 1/2/2, Dexterity 2/1/2, Stamina 2/3/3

Willpower: 2, Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -3, Incapacitated

Attack: None/none/bite for three; gore for four

Abilities: Alertness 2

Notes: These animals are only one step up from varmints; they do make good eating, though. Most of these animals can be domesticated, which means they lack sense enough to survive on their own. It also means someone is likely to get upset if such animals go missing.

Texas Pterodactyl

Strength 5, Dexterity 1, Stamina 2

Willpower: 4, Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -3, -4, -5, -6, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for five; grapple

Abilities: Alertness 2

Notes: These extremely rare behemoths of the air are throwbacks in the Savage West. They live amid the harsh desert mesas of Texas and New Mexico, where they feed on bison and cattle. Soaring high in the sky, they swoop down to snatch up their prey without warning. As they are rarely sighted by humans, few people believe Texas pterodactyls exist. Seeing a compadre snatched up and carried away does a lot to convince skeptics.



Wolves: Red/White/Gray/Timber

Strength 2/3/3/4, Dexterity 3/3/2/2, Stamina 3/4/3/4

Willpower: 3, Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for three/four/four/five dice; claw for three/four/four/five

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Stealth 2

Notes: Wolves are perhaps the most hated and feared animals inhabiting the Savage West. Furriers hunt them for their valuable pelts. Trappers hunt them because wolves are competitors for game. Ranchers hunt them because they fear losing livestock to wolves. Settlers hunt wolves in an effort to make the land safe for children. Ranchers and even entire towns place considerable bounties on especially daring or elusive wolves. Red wolves are the smallest, rarest breed and exist in the southern states only. White wolves inhabit the cold tundra of extreme northern latitudes. Gray and timber wolves are the breeds most commonly encountered, as they inhabit the woodlands of the northern and western territories.

Wolverine/Badger/Skunk

Strength 3/2/1, Dexterity 2/3/3, Stamina 4/3/2

Willpower: 4, Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -3, Incapacitated

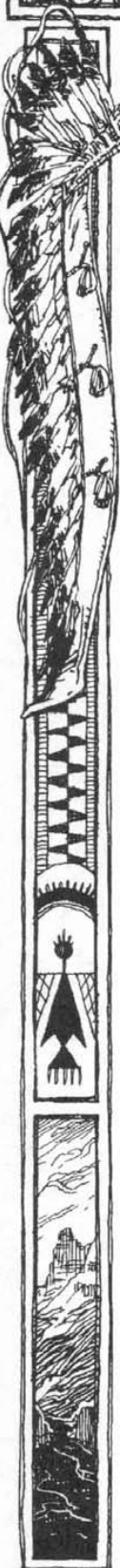
Attack: Claw for three/two/one dice; bite for five/four/three; spray (skunks only)

Abilities: Alertness 1, Brawl 2

Notes: These are some of the orneriest creatures living in the Savage West. Wolverines are the size of a small dog, and badgers are usually smaller. Both animals have a mix of brown and black fur. Skunks are the size of a cat, with black fur and one or two telltale white stripes running down the spine. Skunks aren't nearly as ferocious as their cousins, but they do pack a mean weapon. They squirt a cloud of oily musk that coats everything for 10 to 20 feet in a straight line from their tail-end. This musk has one of the foulest odors found in nature and is extremely difficult to wash off. Any character sprayed by a skunk loses five dice from her pool when performing any Social roll. In addition, her presence is immediately detectable, within 10 yards, by anything with a nose.



Open Warfare in the Savage West



Our perception of the Old West is littered with cliché images. Hostile Indians ambush a company of United States cavalry, which holds out in a dusty ravine awaiting rescue. A gang of murderous cut-throats and thieves falls upon a helpless town, with only a few souls brave (or stupid) enough to fight back. Fighting breaks down into a giant shoot 'em up free-for-all, in which you rarely see anyone but the person you're aiming at, and death can come from a shot fired hundreds of yards away. But if some of those "hostile" Indians are Garou protecting their caern, and one of those "few brave souls" can become an eight-foot-tall killing machine that can rend a horse in two, suddenly things aren't cliché anymore.

This section helps you direct large-scale battles during a session of **Werewolf: The Wild West**; not your typical shoot-out in the local saloon in which you have time to draw a bead on your opponent, dodge out of harm's way and think about what you are doing. It's the wild, chaotic, violent and incredibly bloody experience of open warfare: episodes such as the 1866 Fetterman Massacre, wherein fewer than 100 U.S. soldiers found themselves stopping volleys of arrows from 2,000 Indian warriors (the infantrymen managed to last 40 minutes). The following simplified Storyteller system avoids a shot-by-shot sequence of events and simulates the fast-paced confusion of mass combat.

Battles may be the stories of armies, but **Werewolf: The Wild West** battles are stories about individual werewolves and packs. Perhaps the characters are trying to help keep their kin alive on either side (or even in the middle of) the Plains Indian Wars, or maybe they stumble into a skirmish in the Mexican War. By whatever means they become involved in an honest-to-goodness battle, they can't concern themselves with what's happening on the other side of the field, or with whom may be lurking in an alley along the street. The foes immediately around them command their attention, and these rules reflect this "fog of war."

Imagine that you're enjoying a game of poker with your buddies in the local saloon when dozens of desperadoes ride into town. You burst out the front door

and lead starts flying. A runaway horse almost tramples you. A near-miss ricochets off the stucco wall and sends shards of dust and sand into your eyes. Across the plaza, a bandit levels his rifle at you. Your best friend, shot through the chest, falls to the ground next to you and gasps for breath. You shoot so fast that your pistol grows hot to the touch.

How do you know when you're in the middle of a battle rather than a simple shoot-out? If the battle involves more combatants than can be seen at first glance, use these mass-combat rules. For barroom brawls, use the normal Storyteller rules. While there are many other threats to Gaia besides humanity, the forces of the Wyrms rarely (thankfully) gather together in an army-sized force. However, if your Garou find the mockery who happens to be leading the opposition during the course of the battle, then by all means, resume use of the normal Storyteller rules for the duration of that combat.

Although participating in the Battle of Little Big Horn may be an excellent addition to your chronicle, it should not take five sessions to tell the story. The feel of a battle is what you want to achieve, not a bullet-by-bullet description. Do the characters rush in to stop an army massacre at an Indian village? What happens when reinforcements arrive? Does a Crinos Garou need to take cover if a whole skirmish line opens fire in her direction? (Hell yes!) Can she? (Not really.) These rules allow that battle feel with a minimum of dice rolls, while letting the characters remain the stars of the show.

Once the characters become part of the battle, don't let up. The key to mood is to maintain a fast pace. Try not to let the players have time to think; there should be a threat at every turn. A Garou can face many obstacles in the midst of a battle, including:

- Random bullets in motion and artillery shells exploding; lead practically fills the air
- Multiple opponents
- Anything that clouds the vision; many 19th-century firearms can generate a lot of smoke
- Falling bodies; when your buddy next to you gets shot, he has to drop somewhere
- Difficult terrain and obstacles, which can include nearby cliffs, bodies of water (rivers, swamps), buildings or friendly troops in the way
- Charging enemy troops; the world looks a lot different on the wrong side of a bayonet or hatchet

Getting Ready

Battles, even small skirmishes, do not simply happen of their own accord. Before one side can ambush the other, scouts must head out, reconnoiter, return and report. A band of outlaws strong enough to endanger an entire town takes time to assemble and usually needs an even stronger leader to keep it together. It's hard to do that in total secrecy. The local cavalry garrison doesn't simply decide to roam the prairies randomly; it receives its orders, gathers supplies and has a mission. Then again, maybe the characters in your chronicle are the ones getting ambushed. Even so, every battle has a reason, even if it is a Bane-possessed cavalry commander with a bad attitude and an itchy trigger finger. A battle is the result of a series of events, some of which are unknown to the characters at the time, but all of which ultimately affect the characters in fundamental ways.

Avoid the temptation to insert a battle into the story simply to increase the fighting. Unless your Garou have a vested interest in fighting the Civil War from start to finish, which is unlikely, numerous battles can become tedious very quickly. A good rule of thumb is to have one battle per chronicle. Protecting an Uktena caern from assault by a local tribe under the influence of encroaching Shadow Lords, with the inevitable battle as the climax, makes for an enthralling story.

The Backdrop

There's nothing worse than a story that goes nowhere fast. Okay, your werewolves have successfully defended the tribe's village from an assault, so what happens next? The Storyteller should know. To move the narrative along briskly, the Storyteller needs to know the events leading up to and occurring after the battle. The story flows smoothly that way. It means knowing the outcome of the battle in advance.

Unfortunately, players have a nasty habit of foiling the best-laid plans. They come up with ideas and actions that the Storyteller could not possibly have thought of beforehand. Perhaps they sidestep into the Umbra, find the enemy leader and take him out. Then again, they could have a fetish the Storyteller has forgotten and use it to rout a good portion of the enemy. For this reason, the Storyteller needs to be able to maintain a reasonable amount of flexibility, which means having a contingency plan in case the battle reaches an entirely unplanned outcome.





The Fog of War

You don't have time to think in the middle of a battle. You react. Death is as close as the bullets whizzing past your ear. War is one threat after another, and characters should not have time to decide what comes next. The mass-combat system allows the Storyteller to present the chaos of warfare to the players without confusing the hell out of them.

Warfare, in the time of the West, falls into two categories: battles and skirmishes. The subjective difference between the two is the size of the forces involved. The *important* difference between them is the type of tactics used. Full-scale battles, such as the ones for Texan independence, or during the Civil War and Plains Indian Wars (at least where the U.S. Cavalry is concerned) involve lines of battle where soldiers stand shoulder to shoulder and shoot at each other until one side gives way. Brigades and regiments move around the battlefield without regard to terrain and cover.

Skirmishes, due to their smaller size and the need for greater flexibility, typically require combatants to use looser formations and organizations. The combatants make use of whatever cover is available at the time and have greater maneuverability. Skirmishes include anything from a raid on a town or village to a street fight with hundreds of bandits.

By the 19th century, the longest large battles can last for several days. Skirmishes typically last for hours. Even so, the individual combatants usually become involved in the fighting only for short periods of time. After all, other units are fighting, too. In the interest of a smooth narrative, the Storyteller needs to focus on the *actions* of the characters. Everything else is just the backdrop of the story.

The characters' participation in an ongoing battle should not take more than 8 to 10 turns. If the Storyteller wants to represent a longer battle, she should break it up into multiple segments with the interim moments described/roleplayed as a temporary withdrawal, a reorganization of forces or a movement to some different portion of the battlefield. Remember, the players may find a way, during those breaks, to influence the outcome of the battle as a whole, rather than remain pawns in the larger battle.

The Rules

The Storyteller combat system can be modified into a few representative rolls to simulate mass combat. This alteration is solely at the discretion of the Storyteller, and the emphasis on the story should not be overshadowed.



Initiative

A character's Dexterity determines the initiative. Characters with high Dexterity go first, followed by ones with lower Dexterity. Players who wish to spend Rage points to gain extra actions must do so at this time.

Actions

The number of Dexterity dots a Garou has determines the number of actions he may take during a turn. Each dot represents a single action, whether it is shooting, running or engaging in combat. A character may attempt to perform multiple actions with each dot, but in that case, the Dice Pool is split between actions.

Using Gifts takes time because a character has to concentrate on what he is doing. Concentration can be hard when it seems everyone on the planet is shooting at you. To use a Gift requires a full turn, regardless of how many dots of Dexterity the Garou has. Some Gifts are instantaneous and expend only one dot (which, remember, equals one action). The Storyteller has the final say on which Gifts may be used in this manner.

Other actions, such as attuning oneself to a fetish, may also require a full turn.

Stepping Sideways

Travelling into the spirit world during a large battle may sound appealing, but it is often more trouble than it's worth. First, you must again concentrate. "Reaching" likewise requires a full turn and, as always, a mirror or similar surface. The less-than-shiny barrel of your rifle does not cast much of a reflection, you notice. And assuming you can step sideways, where do you go? You can step back into the physical world and take out the enemy leader, but many of his fellows are then likely to aim their weapons at you. Also, don't forget that some of the movers and shakers on the other side may be supernatural creatures themselves; they may even have spirits guarding them in the Umbra and be waiting for such an attack.

There are other disadvantages as well. Most soldiers frown on their comrades disappearing in the middle of a fight. If the characters have to answer to some human authority afterward (a military officer, perhaps), they may have some explaining to do. Their comrades may even label them as cowards. At worst, their "skedaddling" could cause others to run for the hills, too, especially if the Garou in question is also *leading* the attack. The Storyteller has the final say on any effects "reaching" has on the battlefield.

Stepping sideways requires a full turn regardless of how many dots of Dexterity a werewolf has. The player must still make a Gnosis roll versus the Gauntlet.





Sequence of Events

A lot happens on the battlefield, most of which the characters cannot control. Artillery shells explode overhead, repeated hits topple small trees, people are milling about, and all this time you're trying to kill the enemy. The mass-combat system takes all of this hurly-burly into account with a few simple rolls per turn.

It's best if the Storyteller tailors the turn sequence to the players. If an indecisive player has a character with high Dexterity, his turn could potentially bog down play and make a battle scene resemble a televised chess match, with the lower Dexterity characters' players as the viewers. Storytellers shouldn't hesitate to throw curves in such situations (it's combat, after all) and penalize dawdlers, which is another way of saying: "He who hesitates loses actions." Just have a runaway artillery wagon collide with the character and move to the next player! Alternately, of course, given a table ringed with lively and attentive roleplayers (you know — hams), the Storyteller might decide to have players carry out their actions singly in succession. The drawback here is that such play penalizes the high-Dexterity characters, who end up with multiple actions to carry out *after* everyone else's. Again, the Storyteller knows the players best and can structure play to achieve the best storytelling.

The Unknown

The player should make a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 6) at the beginning of each turn to account for the random actions of the battlefield. If the roll succeeds, the character keeps a sharp eye out for the ever-present dangers combat has to offer, and she avoids them. If the roll fails, the character loses one of her Dexterity dots for the turn. In story terms, she loses that action as she steps out of the way of a falling comrade, dives to avoid an exploding artillery shell or otherwise keeps out of harm's way. If the Dexterity roll





botches, then the character loses all actions for the duration of the turn while trying to stay alive. The exact circumstances are up to the Storyteller.

Remember, the Dexterity + Athletics roll is not an action in itself. It does not require the expenditure of a dot. The roll represents events that are random and beyond the control of the character.

Attacking

Combat occurs in broad strokes. The type of attack has no bearing on the rules used. The same rules apply whether the character is shooting at distant enemies or using claws alone to tear through an opposing battle line.

The player rolls for his actions normally and at a difficulty of 6. Each success incapacitates one opponent. Health Levels are not an issue for enemies in the midst of battle. The exact nature of the wounding or death is relevant to the overall mood of combat, so any description should rely heavily on the color red. For example, Rob's character, Trager, uses one of his four dots of Dexterity to slash at three enemy soldiers with his klaive. Rob gets four successes on his Dexterity + Melee roll (difficulty 6). "Trager's swipe guts the two men nearest him," the Storyteller says, "but misses the third. However, gore traveling in an arc off Trager's blade spatters against the third man's face and blinds him." In other words, the enemy, by whatever means, simply ceases to be a threat. Splitting Dice Pools between dots obviously lowers the number of potential successes.

A Gift that takes a full turn to use requires a concentration roll to be successful (Wits against a difficulty of 6). If the concentration roll fails, the distraction foils the use of the Gift. If the roll botches, something nasty happens to the character.

Gifts that act on multiple targets produce casualties equal to twice the rating of the power. For example, using Gaia's Vengeance (a Level Five Gift) eliminates 10 of the enemy. With Gifts, the effect is often more important than the number of dead bodies it causes.

Gifts

Players can and will think of unique ways to use Gifts during battle. The Storyteller should be receptive to such creative applications. The most important question to ask in this situation is, *does the use enhance the story?* If the answer is yes, then allow the character to perform the action, even if you have to bend the

rules somewhat. For example, Cynthia wants her Rank Four character, Annie-Runs-the-Rails, to use the Level Five Gift: Wall of Granite in combat. She confers with the Storyteller before play begins and hints that she has a "spectacular" use in mind, so he approves. During the battle, she successfully invokes the Gift and races across her enemies' line of fire at point-blank range, the mystic barrier between her and the shooters. The mobile earthen wall protects her and kills 10 opponents with ricochets and backfires. As always, the Storyteller has final say on what is acceptable. Of course, Annie's explanation to her packmates of how she learned such a powerful Gift is, literally, another story....

Fighting Back

The characters are not the only ones doing the shooting. The people on the other side want to kill you and live as much as you want to kill them and live. The fact that the characters are werewolves merely makes them tougher to kill. The Storyteller makes a single roll to represent the enemy trying to get a piece of the character. He rolls five dice (difficulty 6) against each Garou, each turn. The role encompasses all attacks against that werewolf made for that turn. Double the number of successes and use the total as a damage Dice Pool. The Garou can then soak the damages normally. Attacks cannot be dodged; there are too many dangers on the battlefield to take all of them into account.

Fortunately for werewolves, silver bullets are not standard issue in the arsenals of the U.S. Army or most outlaws. Yet, that does not mean the battlefield is a safe place. If the werewolf becomes Critically Wounded, she cannot regenerate at the usual one Health Level per turn. That might leave her immobile and prey to enemies on the battlefield or, worse, a grass fire caused by black-powder weapons might cause her aggravated damage.

The Storyteller may make every second or third turn cause aggravated damage. The story should dictate the frequency. For example, a town being looted by a mix of human and mockery bandits certainly justifies this rule (the mockeries probably have some silver bullets and aren't affected by the Veil). Also, Garou fight amongst themselves often, and a few silver arrowheads may be among the stone ones flying through the air.





Morale

Every participant in a battle has his reasons for being there, even if those reasons boil down to not having deserted in time to miss the latest outing. Such motivations typically revolve around self-preservation — though some warriors do cease to care once the fervor of battle embraces them. Mostly, though, soldiers who empty their six-shooters into a person only to have him leap back to his feet and keep coming (i.e., soldiers who confront Certain Death) tend to question their purpose on a battlefield. Unusual occurrences here may affect more than those people directly exposed to these events. The exact reason and extent of a panic, if any, are the sole decisions of the Storyteller. Remember, panic is contagious. It's much easier to stay and fight when everyone else is doing the same. If everyone else runs, maybe you *should* follow.

Panic goes both ways. If a werewolf frenzies, he may very well attack the individuals near him, and they will probably be his friends. Mortals may have the Delirium to protect their sanity, but seeing a comrade shoot or disembowel members of his own army can knock the fight out of a person.

Example of Play

In this section, we examine two turns of mass combat. Most battles should last longer, but two turns worth should give a feel for the rules.

Fisher-of-Skies knew that reaching Kansas was the key, for once there, the pro-Union Creek Indians could enjoy a measure of safety from the Confederate Army and its Cherokee allies. The Red Talon had sworn he'd see his Creek allies to safety, but the Confederates were right behind them the whole way, despite everything the old Ahroun did to slow them. Fianna who were affiliated with the Cherokee — thanks to that half-Scot Kinfolk, John Ross — were probably helping drive the Creeks from the Indian Territory. Fisher-of-Skies feared they'd lost more than the race for Kansas when the Cherokee caught them at Round Mountain.

The Storyteller has established that Fisher-of-Skies is attempting to help the Creek Indians reach Kansas, where they can be relatively safe. However, Garou infighting hampers their flight. At Round Mountain, the tribe's luck runs out as Confederate

soldiers and their Indian allies surround the tribe. The Storyteller has already made the decision that the Creeks lose based on his reading a history of the actual struggles.

The first step is to determine initiative. Because Fisher-of-Skies is alone (there are no other players), he goes first. He has a Dexterity of 3, so he may take an action for each Dexterity dot. Gifts or other complicated actions could expend all the dots in one action.

Brad first rolls Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 6) to determine whether Fisher-of-Skies can avoid the mishaps that occur during the battle. The roll succeeds, so Fisher-of-Skies has three actions to perform during the turn.


Hoping to spread fear quickly among the enemy, Fisher-of-Skies uses all three actions to invoke the Gift: Flame of the Sun Dance. Brad spends a Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 8). He rolls one success, but that's enough; it's a Level Three Gift, and it blasts six of the attackers. Consequently, the Storyteller indicates that the Confederates believe the Creeks somehow have artillery, and two more attackers run away.

With Fisher-of-Skies' actions completed, the Storyteller rolls five dice (difficulty 6) for the attacks against him. The Cherokee are lucky and get three successes. Fisher-of-Skies is able to soak two. Luckily, the attack does not cause aggravated damage. At this point, the first turn ends.

At the beginning of the second turn, Brad decides to spend a Rage point to give Fisher-of-Skies an extra action. He then rolls to see whether his character avoids any mishaps on the battlefield. This time, Brad fails. The Storyteller describes a charge by several Cherokee on horseback, barreling straight toward Fisher-of-Skies, who must leap out of the way. This incident leaves him with three actions.

Fisher-of-Skies grabs a gun from a fallen soldier to shoot the Cherokee who almost crushed him. He raises the pistol (a first for him, he's a Red Talon) and Brad rolls Dexterity + Firearms (for him, Dexterity) with a difficulty of 7. He gets one success, and a lone Cherokee tumbles from his horse.

For his next action, Brad has Fisher-of-Skies spend another Rage point to switch to Crinos form automatically. It's time to get mean. The Storyteller



decides that the transformation spooks some nearby Confederates, who do not react well to seeing a nine-foot-tall werewolf appear in the midst of the charge. The Storyteller rolls a die and decides that two of them turn tail and vamoose.

For his last action, Fisher-of-Skies lashes out at a group of nearby Rebels attacking several Creeks. His Dexterity + Melee pool is eight, his roll is at difficulty 6. Brad rolls and gets four successes. Fisher-of-Skies tears four nearby soldiers to pieces.


The Storyteller decides to use aggravated damage for the enemy counterattack. The Fianna have equipped some of the Cherokee with silver-tipped arrows. This time, they score two successes, and Fisher-of-Skies soaks only one. The Storyteller indicates that Fisher-of-Skies' player must make a Rage roll for taking damage from silver. It's a half-moon, and Fisher-of-Skies is in Crinos form, which reduces the difficulty by one. Still, Brad rolls five successes. Frenzy! Brad must now decide whether to attack or flee. Seeing his best efforts failing him and the Creeks nearly beaten, Fisher-of-Skies decides to fox frenzy, and he races from the battlefield. The second turn is now over.

Fisher-of-Skies and the Creeks flee for their lives. He may seek revenge on the Fianna, if he can find them, or see to the remainder of the Creeks. Brad decides he will spend the next few days shadowing the Cherokee and picking them off one by one. The Storyteller must then arrange the story to accommodate Brad's decisions.

Conclusion

The key to storytelling combat is to keep the action nonstop. Never let the players or their characters pause to assess the situation. The characters should not be aware of what is happening in the grand scheme of things; instead, they should worry about surviving. Death should be present at every step.

Summary of Combat Rules

- The battle should last only 6 to 10 turns.
 - Expend Rage points to gain extra dots, which translate to actions on a one-to-one basis.
 - Dexterity determines the initiative. The character with the highest Dexterity acts first.
 - Each character checks Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 6) to avoid random dangers on the battlefield.
 - A werewolf gets as many actions as he has Dexterity dots. Split a single dot into Dice Pools to simulate multiple actions.
 - Roll for attacks normally. Each success eliminates one enemy.
 - Gifts and complicated actions (determined by the Storyteller) may require a full turn to use. The number of targets affected is equal to twice the power rating (i.e., level) of the Gift.
 - Each Garou suffers one counterattack per turn from the enemy, which has a Dice Pool of five (difficulty 6). Double the number of successes to determine the number of dice rolled in the damage pool. Soak damage normally. Attacks cannot be dodged.
 - Assume that aggravated damage occurs every second or third turn.
- 





If werewolves were the only supernaturals making the Savage West savage, it'd be a far less colorful time and place — arguably safer, but possessing a narrower range of grays and lacking in some of the more intense blacks. As it is, variety rules on this stormy frontier. Not only are the Garou far from North America's only shapeshifters, but they weren't its first ones, either. Naturally, there are differences of opinion about who it was Gaia first put to work guarding the Pure Lands, but those arguments are as old as shapeshifters

themselves. In the Savage West, it's an argument that gets settled (or started up properly) with flying lead as often as it does with fang and claw. And then there are the ones even shapeshifters don't believe in, or don't want to believe in: the forgotten, the monstrous, the betwixt and between.

They may be hard to find, but in some cases that's a good thing. Don't believe anyone, man or wolf-man, who tells you there are no wanderers of other trails.

Bunyip

Legendry: Why Bunyip Hop

In the Dreamtime long ago, all the animals slept inside the Earth like stones. In fact, they were stones, but one day they woke up and came out to walk the Earth as animals. One of these animals was Toad. Some say the Earth once slept inside Toad. If you ask Toad, even today, he will tell you that was the truth of things. Toad will also tell you that everything I am about to tell you is true, just backward.

In those days, Toad was always hungry or angry. When he wasn't hungry, he was angry because things were blocking his path as he hopped from place to place. These things Toad ate. All other things in Toad's way got eaten because he was hungry.

Toad ate Grub and he ate Spider. Toad ate Fish and he ate Lizard. Toad came to the gum tree, which blocked his way, so he ate the tree and everything in it. As he ate, he grew, so that when he came to the stream where Bunyip — who we call Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun — dwelled, Toad was like a mountain that moved, for he had eaten mountains, too.

Toad's thirst was great, and he drank all the water in Bunyip's stream. Bunyip was left in the mud of the riverbed. He looked at Toad and said, "You drank my home."


Toad replied, "You are in my way, so I must eat you." And he made a huge leap, and he landed where Bunyip had just been. Toad swallowed only mud, though, for Bunyip was quick and had already moved away on his flippers. Mud was not to Toad's liking, especially after he'd been expecting Bunyip, so now he was hungry and angry as well.

"Be still, so that I may eat you," Toad said to Bunyip and then leaped again, but once more Bunyip was gone. This time Bunyip was able to race only half as far away, though. He knew that it was just a matter of time until Toad caught him.

On went the chase as Toad came half again as close to Bunyip with each jump. Bunyip was tired and Toad was falling toward him when the river dweller got caught on a spur of rock. In desperation, Bunyip leaped just as Toad did.

Just in time, he got
away as Toad
landed





on the sharp stone. He hit it so hard that he burst, and all that was in Toad's belly was scattered far and wide.

Bunyip was pleased that he'd gotten away, and he always remembered the secret of leaping. And from Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun all of the Bunyip tribe learned to hop.

Description

Even as early as the time of the Western Frontier in the United States, the Bunyip are a tribe on the wane. Confronted by genocidal aggression from outsiders, these Australian Garou retreat to their most secret refuges and remotest caerns. The tribe is losing its battle for survival, not only of its culture, but of its species. The Bunyip Kinfolk, two- and four-legged ones alike, are being systematically hunted down and killed. Their habitat is being destroyed. The Tasmanian tiger, or thylacine, the tribe's four-legged kin, is never very numerous; predation against it leads the creature into a steady and irreversible decline that results in complete extinction by the 1930s. The Australian aboriginal people, among whom are the Bunyip's two-legged kin, are fighting a conflict that will not be remembered as a war in the histories of the European invaders who win it. Nevertheless, it is a war in all respects.

The Bunyip themselves are not warlike creatures, having remained aloof even from the internecine conflicts of their human Kinfolk. Now they must fight a war that they did not begin and that they can't win. They fight with the ferocity of a creature at bay and, peaceful as they are, they are shapeshifters and overflow with Rage and destructive potential. The war in Australia, which eventually is remembered as the War of Shame by those Garou who are sensitive to such considerations, is in its final act by the late 19th century, the era of the Savage West.

Homid Bunyip come from Australian aboriginal stock. They have dark skin and dark hair, and many have sinewy, athletic bodies. Otherwise, there are considerable variances in physical features among Aborigines from different parts of the continent. The other breed of Bunyip has as its breeding stock the thylacine, which superficially resembles a wolf but is not one. It is, in fact, not even a member of the canid family and is instead a marsupial, more closely related to the kangaroo than to the wolf. The animal is called a tiger because of a series of dark-brown stripes that cross its back, with up to 20 or so markings on the largest individuals. The rest of the animal's coat is a sandy-brown color, light enough to make the stripes quite pronounced. Thylacines move with a shuffling gait and are also capable of short bursts

of bipedal hopping. They do not run well or fast, and they hunt by stealth rather than by speed. The Tasmanian tigers are not pack animals and live alone or in pairs. The mother carries her young in a backward-facing pouch and suckles them on milk. Litters are small, consisting of up to four. Additionally, thylacines are the victims of intense hunting by the European population in the far south of Australia.

Organization


The Bunyip are wanderers by nature, which makes it difficult for the tribe to maintain settlements or other meeting places. The Bunyip do have such places but not as many, or to the same scale, as other Garou do. Also, Bunyip do not have the pack instinct of the wolf-descended Garou; instead, they are solitary creatures who associate in twos or threes, if they associate at all. Any organization that the Bunyip tribe does possess comes through the tribal structure of the human Kinfolk whom they protect.

The Bunyip typically live among their aboriginal kin and spend more time with these Kinfolk than they do with each other. Some reasons that the war begins so well for the invaders are the scant cohesiveness of the Bunyip and the limited communication among its members. However, the war has the salutary (if futile) effect of teaching the tribe the value of communication and cooperation. The Bunyip tribe at the end of the 19th century bears little resemblance to its earlier, more natural incarnation. Now, the tribe comprises only fierce, scattered bands whose only reality is fighting a losing battle against the European interlopers. The Bunyip use their native knowledge of the Australian countryside and their superior ability to travel into and out of the Umbra to wage a guerrilla war against the invaders and their Kinfolk. Even now, however, there is little coordination between the bands of Bunyip, and each fights as a separate entity, achieving less perhaps than they all might as a cohesive force.

Traits

Totem

The tribal totem of the Bunyip is also its namesake. Also called Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun, the Bunyip watches over the whole tribe that bears his name. The Bunyip, a Totem of Respect, is a frightening beast whose actual physical appearance is not easy to determine. Inhabiting the Dreamtime Umbra of the Australian continent,



Bunyip is at once furred, flippered, scaled and finned. Bunyip is a water spirit and inhabits rivers and billabongs (small lakes made by the isolation of a former river bend). He takes on characteristics appropriate to the river life of the region where he is currently dwelling. Although he is a Totem of Respect, the Bunyip must increasingly serve as a Totem of War, a craft that he is learning. His aspect is changing, becoming more fearsome and less mysterious.

There is a growing notion among the Bunyip that this bellicose spirit is a new totem altogether and should be worshipped separately. Neither totem is friendly with other Garou or any of their totems as the War of Shame spills over into the spirit world and causes ripples of disharmony through the Penumbra and beyond.

Society

Although they are primarily solitary, the Bunyip do congregate and interact in a formal and ritualized way. These gatherings almost always involve Kinfolk, both human and thylacine, and take place in the open air. The gatherings, called corroborees, are made all the more important by their rarity. A corroboree comprises many things — dancing, singing, initiation ceremonies, funerals, storytelling, debate and, lately, councils of war. All kinds of social functions are crammed into one frenetic night. Although they are joyous occasions, they should not be confused with festivals or feasts. The human Kinfolk sometimes hold a feast the next day, but by that time, the Bunyip have slipped away into the wilderness.

Sacred Places

The Bunyip maintain caerns but not in the sense that the Garou understand such places. A Bunyip caern is often merely a locale that is central to some Bunyip tale or legend: a rock formation, grove of trees, water hole or whatever evokes a particular story of the Bunyip from that part of Australia. Other Garou who come to the continent find themselves unable to open these caerns with their rites. Indeed, it takes them decades to perfect this process. Even then, only a small fraction of the Bunyip caerns, generally the larger ones, ever reveal their secrets to the remaining Garou. The Bunyip do open their caerns, yet not with any rite. In fact, caerns appear to be permanently open to any Bunyip who visits them for spiritual refreshment, cleansing or just isolation.

Attributes and Abilities

One of the most distinctive Abilities of the Bunyip is their affinity with the Umbra. Many are able to step sideways without the need for any kind of focusing device, such as a mirror or other reflective surface. The Bunyip are perhaps more spiritual than other Garou, as Rage does not dominate even the fiercest of the tribe's Ahrouns. A Bunyip's Willpower is seldom lower than her Rage, and Bunyip frenzy infrequently. Their Rage is hardly ever higher than the minimum required for their auspice. All Bunyip have a high starting Gnosis, and unlike other homid Garou, homid Bunyip typically have Gnosis equivalent to members of their tribe born with four legs.

Bunyip tend to have high physical Attributes, which are benefits of their constant exposure to all of Gaia's moods. They have well-developed Talents and certain Skills and Knowledges, but they are not generally well-acquainted with European technology or modes of thought. The few Bunyip who can be found in the Savage West might be exceptions to this rule, which is a factor determined by how much time they have spent in this alien environment.

Backgrounds

Bunyip can begin with Allies, Contacts, Mentor, or Rites. They do not often possess the Background: Resources, although ones found in the Savage West are exceptional in many ways. They do not possess Pure Breed as other Garou understand it, descending as they do from marsupial stock. A Bunyip can buy this Background, yet it affects only other Bunyip and Bunyip Kinfolk.

Initial Willpower: 3, although it is uncommon to encounter a Bunyip with a Willpower lower than her Rage.

Beginning Gifts: Leap of the Kangaroo, Dreamwalk

Breeds

Bunyip of homid breed, without exception, resemble Australian aboriginals. The aboriginal people have dark-brown complexions, dark eyes and hair, though in old age their hair turns gray or sometimes white. The equivalent to the lupus breed is the thylacinus breed. Metis are unheard of, but other Garou tribes are unsure whether the forbidden breed cannot exist among Bunyip or merely does not exist.

Forms

The Thylacinus form is highly agile but not particularly fast or well-adapted to running. Bunyip are ablest to run long distances in Homid form. The battle-form is similar to the Crinos form of other Garou but a little less bipedal in aspect. The intermediate forms have been observed, yet they are not commonly adopted by the Bunyip, who prefer the purity of the extremes.

Form Statistics

Glabro	Crinos	Hispo	Thylacinus
Str: +1	Str: +3	Str: +2	Str: +1
Sta: +1	Sta: +3	Sta: +2	Sta: +3
Dex: -1	Dex: -1	Dex: +1	Dex: +3
Man: -1	Man: -4	Man: -4	Man: -4
App: -1	App: 0		
Diff: 7	Diff: 6	Diff: 7	Diff: 6

Territory

The Bunyip assert that the entire continent of Australia is their territory, and lately they have had to assert this with fang and claw. The European Garou make condescending offers to "allow" the Bunyip to retain certain desert areas and other interior regions of the continent if the natives permit European Kinfolk to colonize Australia's fertile coastline. Needless to say, the Bunyip see these offers for what they are, and the conflict continues. There is, therefore, no area that can be construed as undisputed Bunyip territory any longer.

Protectorate

The thylacine constitute the core of the tribe's responsibilities to Gaia. Its human kin, in turn, pursue a philosophy of protecting the natural resources that sustain them. This system, which works more or less undisturbed for more than 50,000 years, is shattered by the European invasion. The aboriginal people, including the Bunyip Kinfolk, are systematically dispossessed and slaughtered, a process that ultimately cuts them off from the land, which is a part of their soul. Perhaps it is the ease and uncaring with which the invaders destroy the tribe's links to the physical world that ultimately causes the Bunyip to give up the fight and lose the war.

Bunyip in the Savage West

What needs to be stressed is that there are almost no Bunyip in the Savage West. The very few who go there go because of freak accidents or unusual circumstances. The number of Bunyip in the Savage West can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Australian aboriginals had no reason and no means to travel to America and there were never more than one or two thylacines in American zoos. The Bunyip might travel there via Moon Bridge, but none of their Kinfolk is there and the West is a region dominated by hostile Garou, so Australian shapechangers almost never "go west." Thus the first and hardest task in designing a Bunyip character is to justify her presence in the Savage West. Bunyip are rare and should remain so, especially if their rarity is to have any impact. Remember, the tribe embodies the most tragic elements of shapeshifter existence.

With a solid enough back story, a Bunyip could be a good choice for a Savage West character. What follows are two examples of Bunyip who travel to the West. Perhaps they are the only two.

Jirra

Jirra went to America as a young girl. She traveled there in the entourage of a wealthy Englishman who, having spent his money to no avail in Australia, decided to try his luck on the American Frontier. Jirra's mother was a possession to Heathcote, the Englishman, or so he treated her. He took her and her six-year-old daughter with him on a ship across the Pacific, but Jirra's mother didn't survive the journey. Perhaps she was unable to be separated from the land that so deeply suffused her blood. Whatever the reason, Heathcote was left with the inconvenience of an unwanted aboriginal child. At the time, Jirra spoke not a word of English, and she was terribly frightened. Heathcote sold her to the ship's captain for one pound and forgot her — until the night, years later, when she tore open his throat.

The ship's captain contacted an acquaintance in the slave trade and convinced him to try to sell Jirra. No money changed hands, but the slaver canceled a long-standing debt that the captain owed him, and both were quite happy with the deal. The captain thought no more of Jirra, and he likewise didn't recognize her the evening that she swam to his ship and broke both of his arms before throwing him overboard. As he sank, she watched with sad, moon-silvered eyes.



The slaver had a difficult time getting money for Jirra. Her not-quite-African appearance made potential buyers wary — many suspected the child to be “soft in the head.” Finally, he consulted a friend who claimed to have extensive experience with primitive peoples around the world. The “expert” concluded that young Jirra was of a rare cannibal tribe and might have value as a curiosity. This layman’s anthropologist put the girl out of his mind until she arrived one midnight at his Arkansas ranch to feed him his own guts.

The slaver sold Jirra to a traveling freak show. Six wagons dragged this pitiful assortment all over the frontier to disgust and titillate audiences in theaters and at open-air shows. Jirra was the “Cannibal Girl from Deepest Darkest Africa.” The proprietor filed down her teeth, and in her act, she squatted in a cage (it lacked room for her to stand up) and ate pieces of raw pork cut to resemble human body parts. The freak-show proprietor was surprised to find that she took to eating raw meat as if it were natural for her. He assumed, wrongly, that it must have been a cultural practice for her after all.

Jirra stayed in the freak show from the time she was eight until she turned 12. She made friends with the bearded lady and the dwarf and was treated better by these people than she had ever been before. When the

Change came on her, she spared them, freed them even (although both ended up back in other shows of a similar nature). Jirra methodically tracked her oppressors and killed every one of them and a few of their associates, too. She moved south, freeing slaves and other prisoners. Jirra didn’t seem to care or understand a great deal of her ancestry, but she had some instinctive sense that her home was to the south. Her efforts to free slaves, though forceful and bloody, had little long-term success and these unfortunates were often as frightened of Jirra as they were of captivity.

Jirra continues to make her way toward Mexico and points south. In her wake, she leaves legends of a “fearsome striped carcajou” and, among slaves, tales about “Jeer the Chainbreaker.”

Jimmy Dingo

Jimmy’s pejorative name came from the Europeans who knew him. The colonists who mixed with aboriginals typically gave a native an English first name (so they didn’t have to learn an aboriginal name) and a surname that seemed to suit the native and degrade him at the same time. There was something animalistic about Jimmy, canine even, and so they called him Dingo. They were not far from wrong.

Jimmy was a Bunyip who went through his First Change just as the first hostilities of the War of Shame were occurring. He never knew the long peace that was the habit of generations before him, which should have been his birthright. He grew up among Bunyip who talked nostalgically about those times as they continued to lose the war they fought, and Jimmy got angrier and angrier. He saw his people being destroyed by the invaders and their doing little about it because they did not understand the seriousness of the threat, or the real nature of the enemy. Jimmy vowed to change things. He mastered his Rage and mingled among the whites, posing as a “Black Tracker” — a title the Europeans gave to aboriginals they employed. Black Trackers traced criminals mostly, but they also got work finding rogue animals that were killing stock. They knew never to track Bunyip.

Jimmy Dingo was a very good tracker, but he sometimes led his charges into the middle of a desert, where they depended on him for food and water. There, he’d teach them some manners. Many humans, and even a few Garou, died learning Jimmy’s harsh lessons. He could have gone on this way until he was discovered and killed by the European Garou — except that he met Tam. Tam was Wendigo Kinfolk and a displaced American Indian traveling with an American schoolteacher.

Tam befriended Jimmy and told him of her people in the West who were fighting a war that was not unlike his own. Jimmy, inspired by the idea of recruiting allies, decided to travel to America.

Jimmy traveled by merchant ship to San Francisco and he had his eyes opened to the enormity of the world. At that time, many Moon Bridges had been captured by the Garou. The werewolves, however, couldn't utilize the Bunyip caerns effectively and so the Moon Paths lay empty. Jimmy encountered Africans, West Indians and other peoples who had fallen victim to European colonization, and he realized that the problem was much larger than he imagined.

A year after he left Australia, Jimmy arrived on the frontier a much-changed individual, but his central purpose remained firm. He sought out the Wendigo to enlist their help. The first of the Pure Ones Jimmy encountered were, in fact, Uktena, who maintained a strong interest in the Australian aboriginal people after that first meeting. They received Jimmy with sympathy but offered no armies of Garou warriors to liberate Australia.

Jimmy continues to travel the West somewhat lost. He occasionally involves himself in local matters, but he sadly observes the destruction of yet another native culture.



Gifts

- **Leap of the Kangaroo (Level One)** — Similar to the Lupus Gift: Jackrabbit Jump, this Gift bestows supernatural leaping ability and takes its name from the familiar marsupials that inhabit the Bunyip's homeland. The Bunyip coils to spring and stretches in a leap that can cover huge distances from a standing start. It should be noted that Garou later adopt the Bunyip name for the Gift, perhaps in the tribe's memory. Naturally, a Kangaroo-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Strength + Athletics (difficulty 7). If successful, she may double her normal jumping distance as per the Jumping Chart in *Werewolf: The Wild West*, p. 49.

- **Dreamwalk (Level One)** — This Gift signals the Bunyip's great affinity with the spirit world. Although Uktena and some other Garou deny such a relationship, there is no doubt that the Bunyip treat the Umbra as their home. In fact, some Bunyip express surprise about the existence of a Gauntlet at all. Any Dreamtime-spirit can teach this Gift.

System: Whenever the moon is visible in the night sky, the Bunyip can reduce the Gauntlet in her immediate area (a radius of no more than six feet) by two. This reduction applies to the user only. Any Bunyip with this Gift never has any need for a reflective surface to enable her to step sideways.

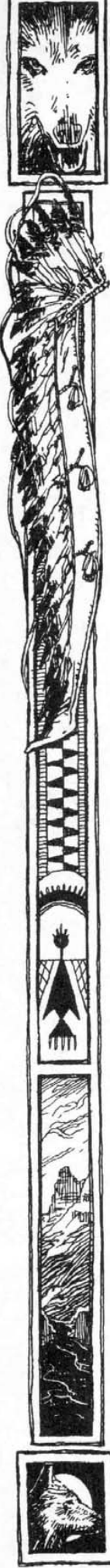
- **Possum's Feet (Level Two)** — Moodai the Possum teaches this Gift, which is called "Catfeet" in the North. It is in all ways similar to the Lupus Gift of that name.

- **Measured Step (Level Two)** — The thylacine is an able hunter and tracker. This Gift operates as the Stargazer Gift.

- **Lonesome Voice of the Bunyip (Level Three)** — This Gift, developed since the War of Shame began in earnest, comes from the closeness of the Bunyip with his tribe. The Bunyip realizes that his children are his last hope and that they are losing the fight. He emits a booming cry that combines fear and loneliness and is intimidating and saddening to all who hear it. An Ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Performance (difficulty 7). The Gift affects all non-Bunyip (although even the tribe's members are saddened by it) who hear the cry, which causes all targets within 500 feet to lose Willpower equal to the Bunyip's number of successes until the interlopers depart the area and leave the Bunyip alone.

- **Landspeak (Level Three)** — The Bunyip have such an affinity with their homelands that they comprehend



it as a song. Landspeak represents this connection and affinity. It should be noted that the Gift is intended to be used only in the Bunyip's homeland, and in normal circumstances, it would be ineffective in a foreign place — the Savage West, for example. An avatar of Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun teaches this Gift.

System: The Bunyip must listen to the ground by placing his ear against a tree or rock, or directly on the earth. The player makes a Gnosis roll (difficulty 6). The number of successes indicates the relative distance within which the user can gather information. One success might indicate a mile or so, whereas five successes would be more than 100 miles. The Bunyip can learn the number and type of creatures that tread on the Earth or such things as the distance of an approaching storm.

- **Vice-Jaw (Level Four)** — Thylacines are known for their ability to open their mouths extremely wide and to exert powerful pressure on anything unlucky enough to be between their jaws. This Gift is identical to the Lupus Gift: Gnaw.

- **Guardian of the Dreamtime (Level Four)** — A Bunyip who learns this Gift no longer has any restriction on her ability to step sideways. The Bunyip can ride the Gauntlet between the two worlds with ease, phasing in and out of the spirit world effortlessly and keeping tabs on both environments seemingly at once. An avatar of Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun teaches this Gift.

System: Day or night, reflective surface or not, the Gauntlet is always treated as two less for a Bunyip using this Gift. Also, the Bunyip can reduce for other Garou the Gauntlet in her immediate area (a radius of 10 feet). She makes an Intelligence + Primal Urge roll (difficulty 7), with each success indicating either a reduction of one for the Gauntlet or a duration of an hour for that reduction (e.g., three successes lower the Gauntlet by one for two hours or by two for one hour) at the player's option.

- **Bloody-Mindedness (Level Five)** — "Bloody-mindedness" is an Australian expression that denotes an unshakable commitment to a certain idea or goal. The Bunyip with this ability can dedicate himself to a particular endeavor and remain undistracted by almost anything. An avatar of Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends two Willpower points and decides the nature of the task that is to be the focus of the Gift. The Bunyip then has no need to eat or sleep until the task is performed. All difficulties directly associated with the task drop by one. Any supernatural attempts to prevent the Bunyip from completing the chosen task fail automatically. If the Gift is used in

combat, the Bunyip becomes unable to avoid any attacks other than those of the targeted combatant. Her soak Dice Pool versus these other attacks is doubled, however. The Bunyip gains one extra attack per round versus the chosen opponent.

- **Billabong Bridge (Level Five)** — It was through the use of this Gift that the Bunyip efficiently traveled the vast distances of the Australian continent. A Bunyip can enter one body of fresh water and emerge from another such body any distance away. The journey cannot involve salt water, however. Both bodies of water must be well-known to the Bunyip using the Gift. An avatar of Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends two Gnosis points and envisions his destination. Only the Gift user can travel this way.

Rites

Because of the minuscule presence of Bunyip in the Savage West, the tribe's rites never occur there. (For more information on the Bunyip, see **Rage Across the World Volume 2**.)

Quote

Come to my lands, have you? Do you seek to take them from me like others have? Will your blood join theirs on the sand or are you the one who'll finally overcome me? For surely my spirit will soon fail.

Stereotypes

- **Silver Fangs:** They are the embodiment of all that is evil — creatures who claim a spiritual existence but instead are murdering thugs. They have no respect for us, nor understanding.

- **Other European Garou:** A mixed bunch — they mostly do as their leaders do and this is bad. We have had some sympathy but little help.

- **The Pure Ones:** Proud and not unlike ourselves. They cannot or will not help us, but at least they do not involve themselves in our persecution. In better times, we might have taught each other much.

- **Rokea:** We have never had cause to challenge their domain. They are strange to us, but we are not enemies. Perhaps the invaders might learn from this relationship.

Ananasi

Legendry: The Pride of the Patient Ones

I give you thanks, my brothers and sisters, for sharing your meat and the warmth of your fire with an old man. I will give something back to you now, out of respect and to honor the Great Spirits who brought us together in this sacred place. This is an old story told by my people, and I pray its lesson gives you wisdom. This is the Spider's Tale.

Once, many seasons past, the world was in harmony. The offspring of Gaia nurtured and protected the land, all according to their gifts. The first of these Changing Breeds was called "the Weaving Folk," or sometimes "the Patient Ones." They were the werespiders, diligent children of the Weaver, and in the Dawn Times, they spun out the foundations of earth and sky. Their limbs were swift and sure for the spinning of

the finest threads, and their bodies glowed in jewel-like hues. They knew all the secret places of the Earth and the hidden ways of the spirit realms. And they were proud, as eldest children often are, without respect or humility for Gaia's younger Children.

Sad for me to say, the world's harmony was short-lived. The Weaver fell ill and became mad. In his delirium, he forced his children to build and build, without reason or purpose, upsetting the balance and suffocating the land. The Weaving Folk went to their beloved Queen Ananasa, the Weaver's consort, and pleaded with her to intercede on their behalf. But the Weaver turned on her, and they fought. The Weaver could not destroy Ananasa, so instead he wove around her a black opal, trapping her inside for all time, and cast it down into the dark places of the Earth. There it fell into the clutches of the Wyrms.

The Patient Ones wept when they heard of Ananasa's fate, and so great was their horror that they gave up their labors and went down into the darkness to beg the Wyrms for her release. In those days, the Wyld was mighty, and if they had only asked, all the other shapeshifters would have rushed to help.





But the Weaving Folk were too proud to share their troubles with mere babes, and so they went to the Corrupter alone. Now, the Wyrms had long coveted the arts of building and shaping, which were beyond its powers, so it demanded a ransom from the werespiders. If they would serve the Wyrms for 1,000 years, their queen would go free. Without hesitation, they agreed.

So began a time of nightmares, as the Weaving Folk turned their skills to the making of snares and traps for the children of the Earth. The werespiders gave no thought to the terror they spread, but the more they did the Corrupter's work, the more tainted their souls became. One after another, the weavers succumbed to madness or despair or, worst of all, they grew to love the misery they caused. Finally, when all was nearly lost, those Patient Ones who still remembered their love for Ananasa understood the Wyrms' plan. There would be no freedom for their queen, only deed after unspeakable deed until the werespiders lost their souls and surrendered themselves to corruption. If the Weaving Folk were to survive, they would have to find where Ananasa was hidden, rescue her and escape. But the deed was beyond the greatest of the werespiders. It would take the sharp eyes of the Corax, the cleverness of the Nuwisha and the valor of the Garou. But such was the werespiders' pride that never once did they consider going to their brothers and sisters with a humble spirit and begging for help and forgiveness. Instead, they came together and made a plan to trick the other shapeshifters into giving them what was needed.

First, the Weaving Folk turned their snares upon the Pumonca, for it was well-known that the werecougars had little love for the Corax and their secrets. Many Pumonca were taken or slain, and then when the weavers went to the Corax, the wereravens welcomed them out of gratitude. During one of these visits, the werespiders told the Corax of a great opal that was treasured by the Wyrms and hidden so deep in its lair that none of Gaia's Children could ever find it. Of course, the Corax could not resist such a challenge, so they took to wing and did not rest until they had searched all the Wyrms' secret places. The danger was great, and many swift Corax were slain, but at last they found the opal in the deepest holes of the earth. To their dismay, the wereravens saw that the opal was a dull, black thing, not the glittering treasure they had been led to believe, and it was too large for even the greatest among them to carry. Bitter and dismayed, the Corax told the Weaving Folk what they had found, but after that, the wereravens had no more to do with them.

Once they knew where the opal was hidden, the Patient Ones went to the Nuwisha and told the werecoyotes that they discovered where the Wyrms kept its heart; it was a dark opal deep in the earth, and the Garou should be ashamed for not having learned of it themselves. The Nuwisha took this information with glee and used it to shame the Garou, who rose up in their rage and vowed to dig out the Wyrms' heart and crush it between their teeth.

The werewolves threw their might against the Wyrms, and the Earth trembled and bled. The Garou were bold and fierce, but their enemies were numberless. While the battle raged and heroes gave their lives for Gaia, the werespiders slipped into the Wyrms' deep vaults and stole away the great opal. When the Garou finally fought their way to where the opal had been hidden, they saw at last how they had been tricked and vowed a bitter vengeance on the ones who had deceived them.

And so the Weaving Folk fled into the darkness with their queen, drinking in the night air and staring up at the stars as one would stare into the eyes of an old friend. But then they heard the bitter howls of the wolves and felt the coldness of the winter season, and they realized, too late, where their pride had brought them. Every hand was raised against them, and there was nowhere in the wide world that offered them comfort or shelter. Where once the folk hung the stars in a silken web and ordered the movements of the heavens, they were now outcasts, unable to show their true faces without being hunted and killed.

This, then, is the Spider's Tale. Remember it well when you believe yourself to be older and wiser than your tribemates and Kin. You are not setting yourselves above them; you are setting yourself apart, a path that leads only to loneliness and despair.

Description

The Savage West's Ananasi are exiles in a world they helped create. Where once they were the great builders, the shapers of earth and sky, now their name is synonymous with nightmares and deceit. No human can look upon their massive spidery forms without madness or fear, and many of the Changing Breeds remember with fury how they were once manipulated by the Weaving Folk's schemes. Ever surrounded by enemies, the Ananasi live silent, stealthy lives, whether in lawless frontier boomtowns or in the high, wild places of the Savage West. Their only remaining link to the meaning of their existence, the great Queen Ananasa, remains



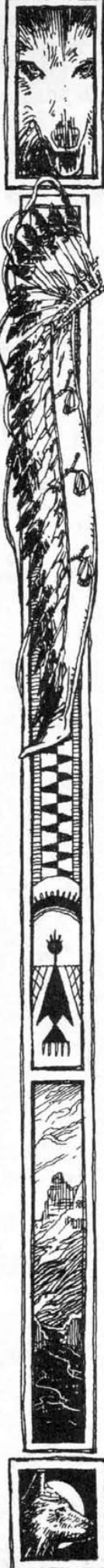
imprisoned, as her dark opal chamber is secreted away somewhere in the Umbra until such time as she may be freed. Until then, the werespiders are a people adrift, relying on no one but themselves to shape their destinies. As a result, the Weaving Folk are the only race of shapeshifters who serve all three aspects of the Triat.

Ananasi who choose to serve the Weaver are not committed to propagating the reckless expansion of cities and telegraph lines across the land, but they seek to stem the relentless tide of human expansion, redirecting it through political manipulation and intrigue. Often, their manipulations in the cities along America's eastern seaboard bring them into conflict with the growing population of immigrant vampires, which leads to elaborate contests of guile and subtlety as the two sides steer the unknowing human population to serve their aims.

Some werespiders are unable or unwilling to return to the ways of the past, perhaps having resigned themselves to the fact that the Weaver can never regain its rightness, nor the sense of balance it once had. These Ananasi swear themselves to the defense of the embattled Wyld, and they take a more active role in rooting out minions of the Wyrms and protecting the sacred places of Gaia. Many times, these Wyld werespiders settle in abandoned caerns to preserve the power of these sacred sites; some legends suggest that the Uktena consulted with the eldest of these werespiders before the Pure Ones managed to build the great web of caerns that imprisoned the Storm Eater so many centuries ago.

Both Weaver and Wyld Ananasi share a tendency for subtlety and manipulation, achieving their aims through the use of allies or unwitting pawns. Where the Garou have Rage, the werespiders have limitless patience and look toward the long-term in any situation. For the Patient Ones, the end always justifies the means, which is a view that accounts for the werespiders' reputation of being cold-hearted, ruthless and deceitful. An Ananasi does not ask for trust, nor does he offer it. The only real loyalty that the werespiders can claim is to their lost queen, who holds a mythic significance for them that cuts across philosophical lines.

Unfortunately, not all of the Ananasi were able to win their freedom ages ago. There are still werespiders who willingly serve the Wyrms. These corrupted ones act as the Wyrms' prize hunters, cunning assassins and agents provocateurs. Where normal Ananasi are reclusive, these creatures hunt in packs of four to eight, doing the work of their master and, above all, hunting for free



Ananasi to drag back into the depths. The savagery of these creatures and their sudden, bloodthirsty raids led European Garou and their Kinfolk to refer to these servants of the Wyrms as "Comanche Spiders."

Organization

Most Ananasi are solitary, territorial creatures, and the divergent philosophies of the Patient Ones make their attempts at central organization difficult. Over the centuries, attempts to organize the Ananasi into a unified entity for the purpose of self-protection have failed. The werespiders' independent nature make it difficult for them to set aside personal agendas for the purpose of a common goal, no matter how important. Apart from rare family efforts and the aforementioned Wyrms servitors, Ananasi usually link only with like-minded werespiders by means of the Rite of the Spirit Web. Through such connections between lairs, they share news and spread warnings of threatening activity, but these networks rarely extend beyond a regional area. The major exceptions in the Savage West are chains of Spirit Webs that parallel the railway lines. Centuries of persecution by humans, Pumonca, and Garou have given the Ananasi levels of distrust and paranoia equal to any vampire's. The fewer who know about a werespider's existence, the better.

Conversely, the Comanche Spiders are unified to the point of having no real individual will. It is the Voice of the Wyrms that drives them day and night. From their first moments deep in the pits of the Earth, their minds are linked irreversibly to the Corrupter so that no werespider who enters its grasp can ever escape. It is the overriding will of the Wyrms that drives the Comanche Spiders to assemble in packs. Their members sometimes tear at one another in mad ferocity and frustration, even as they spread their terror across the Savage West.

Traits

Long ago, after the Weaving Folk found the opal that imprisoned their queen, the greatest of their elders hid the enormous orb in the remotest part of the Umbra. To this day, it remains there, watched over by the eldest weavers from each generation and a horde of vigilant spirits, until such time as Ananasa can be freed. From this place, she shares what wisdom and power she can with her children. Every werespider born enters into her care without question; as a result, Ananasi need not purchase a

Totems Background to receive the Gifts of the queen. Ananasa grants all of her children Enigmas +3 and Occult +2.

All werespiders begin with Willpower 7 and Gnosis 3. Ananasi are creatures of order, reason and manipulation, and they do not possess Rage.

Werespiders have Renown similar to Garou, but each member of the Triad favors them differently. Weaver Ananasi value Wisdom above all, while Wyld werespiders pursue Glory and, to a lesser extent, Honor. Ananasi ranks are generally not recognized outside their faction.

Breeds

Ananasi produce two breeds of offspring: homid and the much rarer arachnid breed. Like werewolves, 1 in 10 matings with a human produces a homid Ananasi, who is kidnapped when the first signs of the change manifest.

When in their Crawlerling form, Ananasi are capable of mating with regular spiders, with 1 in 100 matings producing an arachnid. Initially, these werespiders are the same size as their normal kin, and they must grow by consuming the flesh of their siblings and other spiders. It can take as long as two or three months for an arachnid Ananasi to gain enough mass to take on a size equivalent to the Pithus form, which is an everyday shape in this period — and accounts for some of the darker campfire tales of the era. Until that time, the growing werespider is vulnerable to the same threats as a normal spider, and many perish before reaching a viable size. Ones who do survive are taken in by their Ananasi parent and taught the ways of their people.

Young arachnid Ananasi remain close to their parent (and to their nutritious siblings) until adulthood, at which time, the surviving werespiders go into the world to find their own lairs. The bond between parent and child is the tightest connection that the Ananasi share; occasionally a mother keeps her daughters together to protect a vital caern or to complete some large, lengthy undertaking (sometimes literally — a few Ananasi clans in the Savage West run funeral parlors to help conceal their subterranean activities). These groups of werespiders are called "shuttles," and they organize themselves with a rigid hierarchy that defines each individual's responsibilities to the group.

There are no known instances of Ananasi metis. Werespiders who speak on the subject claim that the offspring of two werespiders is never born alive, but the Weaving Folk refuse to discuss such matters with outsiders.

Forms

A werespider's internal physiology is similar to an arachnid's, such that they cannot digest solid foods in any form apart from Homid. The Weaving Folk require blood to survive, making them akin to living vampires. Originally, the weavers were able to subsist on the blood of animals, but during their service to the Wyrms, they were nurtured exclusively on the blood of humans, and now nothing else nourishes them as well. As a result, werespiders have a Blood Pool similar to that of vampires and can hold a maximum of 10 Blood Points. One Blood Point is consumed per day, regardless of a werespider's activity. Like vampires, the Ananasi feed by piercing the flesh of their victims with fangs. Enzymes in the werespiders' saliva seal the wounds afterwards.

As the werespiders are creatures of the Weaver and bear no allegiance to Luna, the Ananasi do not take aggravated damage from silver. Only fire and the usual weapons of Changing Breeds or other supernaturals (claws, teeth, etc.) can do them lasting harm. Comanche Spiders, with the Voice of the Wyrms shouting in their minds, are immune to fear-based attacks (e.g., Icy Chill of Despair, Staredown).

Ananasi can assume four distinct forms: Homid, Lilian, Pithus and Crawlerling. Although the Comanche Spiders take on these same forms, forced breeding and the energies of the Wyrms make their statistics more physically robust.

Homid: An Ananasi's human form is generally tall and slim, adorned with long hair and dusky features. Facial features are angular, delicate and exotically attractive. Comanche Spiders in Homid form tend to be hirsute, with bristly-brown or black hair and intense, unblinking eyes.

Lilian: In this form, the werespider grows to almost seven feet in height, and her body becomes covered in fine, black hairs, like velvet. Common features include a broad face, and large oval eyes. Among Comanche Spiders, two extra pairs of arms extend from the torso just above the waist, giving the Ananasi a spider's eight limbs. Fingers end in curved claws, which can cause aggravated damage (Strength +1), and the werespider can make six such attacks per turn.

Pithus: Also referred to as the Pit Spider, this is the nightmarish form that still evokes atavistic terror in the minds of humankind. Like the Garou's Crinos form, Ananasi in Pithus form engender the Delirium in humans who see them. The Pithus form is a great spider whose body is five feet in length and resembles a black widow in shape. The spider's mandibles are

huge, powerful and capable of causing terrible wounds (Strength +2). For some Ananasi, the Pithus form is strangely beautiful, adorned in complex designs of jewel-like colors, but many werespiders in the service of the Wyrms are unmarked and as black as night. Comanche Spiders in this form resemble huge tarantulas or wolf-spiders in shades of red and brown, which provide camouflage against the surrounding terrain (opponents' Perception rolls are at +2 difficulty).

Crawlerling: In this bizarre form, the werespider's body breaks apart into hundreds of smaller spiders, which can act in concert with a sort of collective consciousness. The Ananasi takes in all the information perceived by its myriad of eyes and can move with great stealth and speed. The form grants an additional 20 Health Levels to the werespider, but the drawback is that the individual small spiders of the Crawlerling form are as vulnerable as normal spiders. If an Ananasi loses more than 30 percent of its Crawlerlings, it is unable to assume any other shape until it has caught and consumed the flesh of an equal number of spiders. In the Southwest, the spider population is so sparse that werespiders are reluctant to risk this form.

Form Statistics

(numbers in parentheses are for Comanche Spiders)

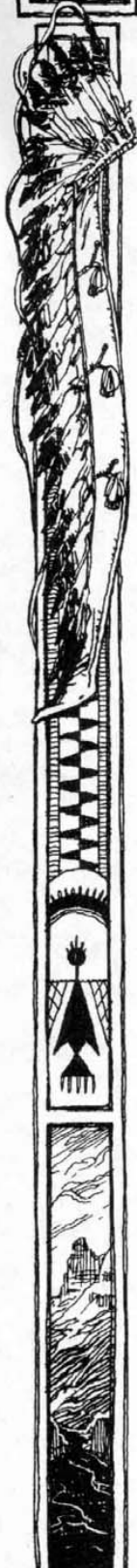

Lilian Pithus Crawlerling

Str: +3 (+4)	Str: +4 (+5)	All physical and social stats become 0
Sta: +2 (+3)	Sta: +3 (+5)	
Dex: +3 (+3)	Dex: +2 (+3)	
App: -1 (-2)	App: -2 (-2)	
Man: 0 (0)	Man: 0 (0)	
Diff: 6	Diff: 7	Diff: 8

Gifts

Ananasi are capable of learning Gifts from any spirits allied to the aspect of the Triat that they serve, but additionally there are certain Gifts unique to the werespiders that are passed along from parent to child down through the ages. Each Ananasi begins with three Gifts.

- Leap of the Hunter (Level One) — As the Lupus Gift: Jackrabbit Jump.
- Eyes of the Umbra (Level One) — With this Gift,



a werespiders may concentrate and peer into the spirit world at will.

System: The player must make a successful Gnosis roll against the local Gauntlet rating.

- Sense Wyrms (Level One) — As the Metis Gift.
- Venom (Level Two) — This Gift allows the werespiders's saliva to contain a powerful toxin, which they can inflict with a bite — or a kiss.

System: The Ananasi spends a Blood Point to activate this Gift. The player must either make a successful bite attack on the target, keeping track of the number of successes that were rolled to hit, or roleplay kissing the target. If the target suffers even one point of damage, she must then make a Stamina roll (difficulty 7). If the target gets a number of successes equal to or greater than the werespiders's successes, then she resists the poison. If not, the poison takes effect and lasts for the duration of the scene. The venom of the Ananasi is a powerful paralytic poison that lowers the target's Dexterity by one for every unresisted success the spider rolled to hit. The venom of the Comanche Spiders, on the other hand, is a virulent necrotic poison that inflicts one level of aggravated damage per unresisted success and doubles the target's wound modifiers.

- Spinnerets (Level Two) — The Ananasi is able to spin webs from glands hidden in her hands and feet when in Homid form. In all other forms, the spinnerets are on the werespiders's abdomen.

System: It costs one Blood Point to activate this Gift, and the player must make a Dexterity roll to weave the desired web successfully. It requires a Strength of 6 and three successes to break a strand of this webbing.

- Still as Stone (Level Three) — With this Gift, the Ananasi can remain virtually undetectable, so long as she remains absolutely still.

System: The player must spend a Blood Point and remain motionless. If someone attempts to detect the Ananasi, he must make a roll of Perception + Alertness (difficulty 8) versus the werespiders's Willpower (difficulty 6). If the werespiders wins the contest, she goes undetected.

- Reshape Object (Level Three) — As the Homid Gift.
- Assimilation (Level Four) — As the Homid Gift.
- Gaia's Hidden Ways (Level Four) — With their innate knowledge of the foundations of earth and sky,

the Ananasi may find safe pathways through hazardous or otherwise impassable terrain.

System: The player spends three Gnosis and rolls Perception + Alertness, difficulty equal to the area's Gauntlet rating. If successful, the werespiders somehow finds a path through the area; such a route can be a cleft in a rock wall out of a canyon, a cunningly hidden tunnel that leads underneath a raging river, etc.

- Mold the Spirit (Level Five) — As the Theurge Gift.

Rites

While an Ananasi is free to employ rites suited to whatever aspect of the Triat she chooses to serve, there are numerous rituals that the Breed passes down from parent to child in sacred trust, to be kept as heirlooms of the werespiders' time as the Weaver's chosen servants. These rites concern the weaving and shaping of the energies that bind the physical and spiritual realms together.

Rite of the Spirit Web

Level One

With this rite, the Ananasi can stretch an Umbral strand of energy from one location to another and communicate through it instantaneously over vast distances. Rite of the Spirit Web allows the reclusive werespiders to remain in contact with one another as well as to spread warnings or other vital information. To create a strand, the player spends one permanent Gnosis point and makes an Intelligence + Enigmas roll; the difficulty is the higher of the two anchor points' Gauntlet ratings. Once established, the tendril is permanent but is vulnerable to Umbral storms or to disruption by an Umbral traveler who detects it (Perception + Enigmas [difficulty 9]). Once the strand is established, the Ananasi can communicate verbal messages (sent and received as vibrations along the strand) at will between the two points.

Rite of the Gossamer Door

Level Three

This rite, a further sophistication of the Spirit Web, is one in which the werespiders builds an Umbral tunnel of sorts that connects two locales and permits instantaneous travel between them. This rite takes three days to complete, and the weaver must have detailed, first-hand knowledge

of the two anchor points. To create the tunnel requires four Gnosis points and an Intelligence + Enigmas roll, difficulty equal to the higher of the two points' Gauntlet ratings. The number of successes determines the size of the openings at either end, beginning at one square meter and expanding by another for every success. Once the tunnel is built, it may be used at any time thereafter with the expenditure of a Willpower point and a successful Gnosis roll (difficulty 7). At the time the tunnel is opened, everything within the opening is instantaneously transported, then the tunnel collapses and a new one must be built. Many Ananasi maintain these doors in their lairs as bolt-holes for dire emergencies, whereas the Comanche Spiders have perfected their use as a tool for ambushes and kidnappings.

Rite of the Umbral Loom

Level Five

With this rite, the Ananasi may use their ancient skills to work the fabric of the Gauntlet. A werespider may raise or lower the Gauntlet rating of an area by spending permanent Gnosis points, on a one-to-one basis. This effect is permanent unless acted on by outside forces (e.g., building a town on the site, extending a railroad line through the area).

Quote

Come on in boys! Welcome to Miss Jane's. Leave those pistols with Mr. Montague there and head on into the parlor. This here's a respectable establishment, and we've got some rules. I don't allow no fightin', no cussin' and no spittin' on the floor. We've got poker tables, good whiskey, and the finest-lookin' ladies this side of the Mississippi. So settle down and relax, and I'll set you up with some drinks. We can talk about payment later.

Stereotypes

- **European Garou:** They are like children, reckless with their passions and careless with the treasures Gaia has given them. They war with their brethren over the sacred sites, sometimes wrecking them in the process, and then they claim to be the protectors of the land! Beware of these trespassers, for they are the true storm that is ravaging the West, and they will kill you and take what you possess, as they have done to so many others.

- **Uktena:** For all that they fear us, they still respect our place among Gaia's Children, and they have kept the Pure Lands in harmony for millennia. Their love for the land and the desperation of their plight gives us a chance to redress old wrongs. We should aid them whenever possible, so long as it does not put us at undue risk.

- **Corax:** Avoid them if you can. Information is the coin they deal in, and they share your secrets just as swiftly as they give you someone else's. More than one Ananasi has fallen prey to Garou or worse after dealing with a Corax.

- **Pumonca:** The werecats have never forgiven us for the way we persecuted them in ancient times. Now they seek out our lairs and slay us out of hand. If there is a way to make peace with them, we must find it.

- **Vampires:** Never forget that they are the spawn of the Wyrms, but remember too that the young ones can be useful tools. They spin such simple webs. If one is careful, one can turn their strands to one's purposes and let them assume all the risks.

Gurahl

Legendry: The Way of the Bear

Most of the Changing Breeds agree that the Gurahl rank as the first and oldest of all the shapechangers, but I heard a different story from my grandmother about how the bear folk came into being. It goes something like this:

At one time there were no bears — only humans and a few herd animals and small critters. The humans traveled from place to place, following the herds and never staying long in one spot, until they got tired of traveling and decided to settle down and grow food. They became farmers and worked hard — too hard, one clan thought.

At first, one or two members of this clan, the Aní-Tsâ'gûhi, left the settlements of their people and went to live in the mountains, where they imitated the ways of the animals they saw. After a while, they noticed that

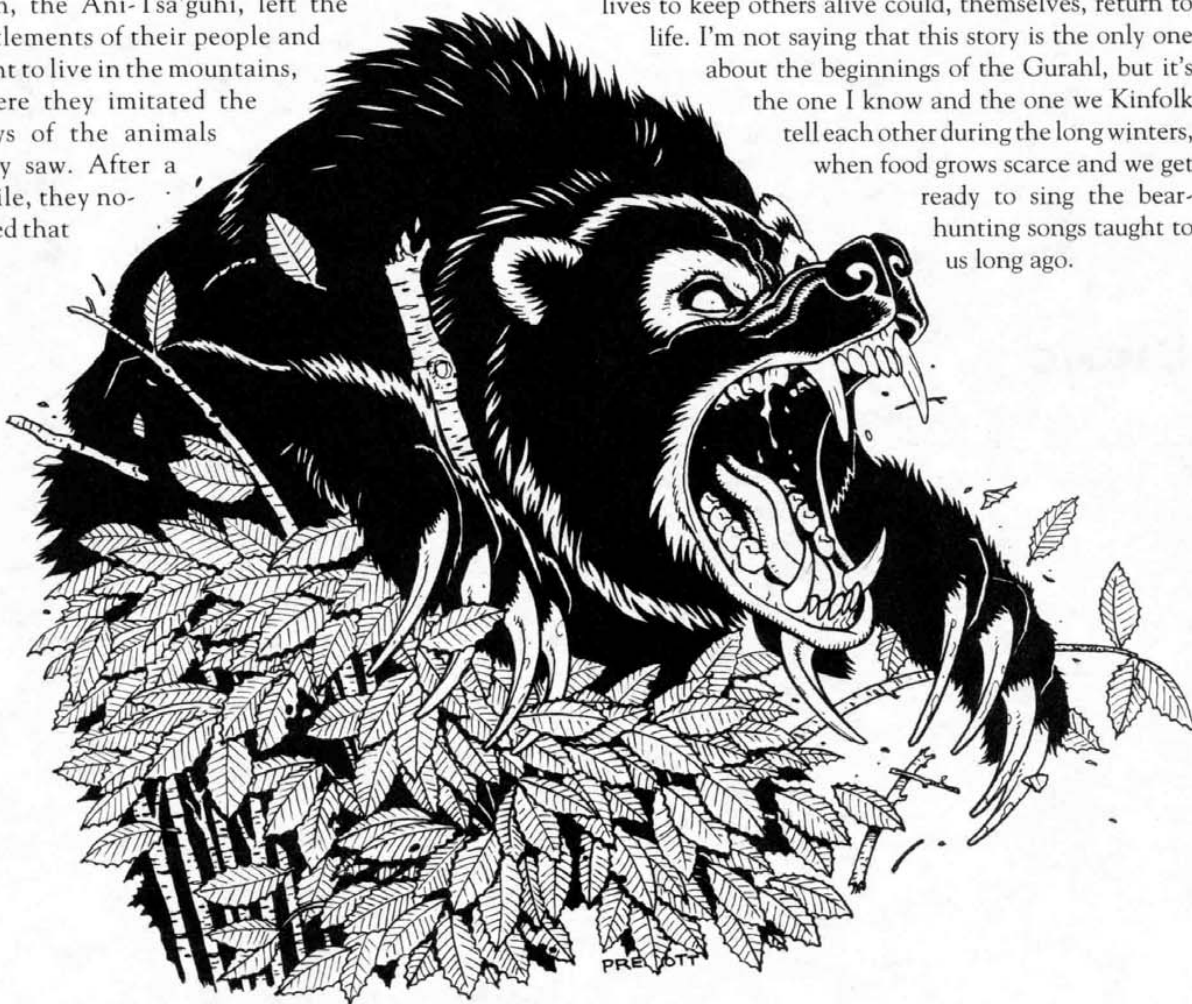
long brown hair began to cover their bodies and they started to grow larger and to think differently than their human kin.

When they returned from the mountains and told the other members of the Aní-Tsâ'gûhi how they had learned to live a simpler life, without the trials and worries of planting and harvesting, the whole clan decided that they too wished to learn this new way of living.

Following the directions of their changed kin, the Aní-Tsâ'gûhi fasted for seven days and purged their bodies of human food. Then they traveled to the mountains. In time, some became the first Gurahl, while others changed completely into bears.

They never forgot their human origins, however, and when times were hard and the crops failed, a few of them returned to the settled places to give their lives to feed the ones they left behind. The bear-people taught the humans songs to sing in time of need.

Gaia saw this happening and rewarded the Gurahl with the secret of rebirth, so that those who gave their lives to keep others alive could, themselves, return to life. I'm not saying that this story is the only one about the beginnings of the Gurahl, but it's the one I know and the one we Kinfolk tell each other during the long winters, when food grows scarce and we get ready to sing the bear-hunting songs taught to us long ago.





Description

Like the Uktena, Wendigo and Croatan tribes, some Gurahl come to the New World with the Pure Ones by crossing the land bridge alongside their Kinfolk. The werebears spread out, along with the human tribes, to all parts of the Pure Lands, from the Arctic regions to the southeastern woodlands and everywhere in-between. Hardy and adaptable to mountains and forests, the Gurahl make their homes in sacred Dens, away from most humans but near enough to keep an eye on their Kinfolk. European Gurahl arrive with the immigrant populations that come from Scandinavia and Russia, as well as from Western Europe. These werebears chafe in the cities of the East and are among the first to join the westward push in search of the wild places of the American Frontier.

Gurahl typically serve as Gaia's caretakers and nurturers. From the earliest times, they act as healers and providers, purifiers of the land and teachers of the other Changing Breeds. The Wars of Rage affect them deeply, however, by driving many werebears into hibernation and away from the society of other shapechangers for centuries. Thus, numerous Gurahl who walk the Pure Lands get their first disorienting glimpse of human progress during the time of the Savage West. Emerging from their long sleep is, for many members of this usually even-tempered Changing Breed, a rude awakening indeed. The Gurahl wander unawares into some of the most violent and widespread destruction of the Wyld that is ever seen. Some werebears react during this period by doubling their efforts as custodians of the wilderness, but others direct their energies at humanity, the root of that monster weed that is progress.

The reverence the Breed feels for the seasons and their slow, steady change makes the rapid and tremendous alterations of the western landscape all the more painful for Gurahl. Werebears who are not in hibernation at the start of the 19th century have an easier time adjusting to the era's massive shifts, but their fellows suffer shock, confusion and gloom. Some slip back into Harano, the shapeshifters' depression they'd entered slumber to escape. Individuals who are already awake when the Storm Eater escapes are quickly aware of *something* being amiss, but there are as many approaches to fixing that something as there are werebears during this period. Some of them embark on Umbral forays to apprehend the spiritual causes of the Storm Umbra, whereas others try to shield their Kinfolk (both humans and bears) from its chaotic effects.

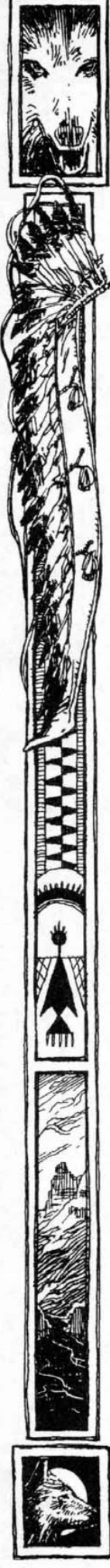
In the Savage West, many newly arrived Gurahl act as guides for wagon trains, as traveling doctors, as teachers and as sheriffs. Just as many established ones live by themselves (or with their families) in the least inhabited regions. Differences often erupt between werebears helping pioneer settlements and those seeking to curtail what they see as encroachment. Such disputes escalate into violence only in the rarest instances, which is a testament to the Breed's extraordinary patience. However, encounters between native Gurahl and other shapeshifters (especially European Garou) are far less predictable. Wariness is the rule of the day for anyone in the Savage West who knows she's meeting a werebear. A knowledgeable wanderer of the frontier understands that her reward might be a new Gift, but it might be a new scar, too — if her luck's not *really* bad. Otherwise, she might wind up decorating the underside of some boulder.

Organization

Gurahl prefer to dwell alone or with their families, at least until their children (or cubs) grow old enough to fend for themselves. Each Gurahl establishes her own protectorate, usually a territory large enough to supply her with sufficient food and breathing space. Gurahl consider themselves responsible for the well-being of the creatures dwelling within their protectorate. Again, in the Savage West, whether that protection extends to specific humans depends on the individual werebear. When boomtowns, railroad stops and trading posts clutter the landscape and threaten to upset the balance of life in a Gurahl's territory for example, even the most benevolent of these shapeshifters can turn a tad mean. The coming of locomotives and the proliferation of gold-mining towns earn the wrath of many a Gurahl for the claim-jumping human varmints who infest the West.

Because they are solitary creatures, the Gurahl do not adhere to a complex social hierarchy. For the most part, each Gurahl makes his own decisions and keeps his own counsel. Communication among the Gurahl comes about through regular council meetings similar to Garou moots. The most important gathering, the Great Council, occurs during the autumnal equinox. Here, Gurahl elders assess the doings of the past year, welcome new cubs into their ranks and acknowledge the deeds of worthy members with increases in rank and Renown.





Although werebears do not maintain the sort of caerns the Garou do, they consider their Dens to be sacred places. Gurahl retire to these secluded, Gnosis-rich havens each winter to spend that season in slumber and meditation.

Gurahl communicate with one another through a system of claw marks made on trees or scratched across the surface of boulders. They speak the Gurahl tongue as well as the language of bears.

Traits

Gurahl adopt some aspect of Bear as their totem. Many dedicate themselves to the Incarna itself, while others feel closer to the Great She-Bear (Ursa Major) or the inquisitive First Cub (Ursa Minor). Bear asks only that Gaia's firstborn remember his sacred guardianship of the land and its creatures.

Gurahl assign three kinds of Renown: Honor, Succor and Wisdom. Honor comes from responsible actions and nobility of heart. Succor measures the desire to protect and nurture. Wisdom reflects the Gurahl's growth in understanding her place in the world and her closeness to Gaia.

Gurahl characters start with 6 Willpower, to reflect their innate reluctance to change their minds or to succumb to persuasion. Homid Gurahl begin with 3 Rage and 4 Gnosis, while ursine Gurahl begin with 4 Rage and 5 Gnosis.

Instead of spending Rage for extra actions, the slow-moving Gurahl use Rage to increase their Strength or Stamina (on a one-to-one basis). They may gain as many additional points in Strength as they have in Homid form or they may double their Stamina to twice that of their current form. So long as they abide by these limitations, Gurahl may increase both Strength and Stamina in any combination.

Each Gurahl begins as a Ragabash, then she progresses through stages that correspond to the Ahroun, Galliard, Theurge and Philodox Auspices as she ages. Most elder Gurahl are, therefore, Philodoxes, although once a Gurahl has experienced an auspice, she may revert to it at any time in her life if it seems appropriate. Thus, some ancient Gurahl prefer to return to the playfulness they knew as cubs, becoming wizened trickster bears who teach through games and riddles.

Breeds

In the Savage West, ursine Gurahl still exist in numbers equal to their homid relatives, which is another reason that the Breed is more dangerously unpredictable than it is only a century later. Most homid Gurahl come from the Native American tribes and occasionally serve as shamans or wisdom keepers for their human relations. Homid Gurahl of European stock tend to come from lands where bear cults once existed. European Gurahl usually claim a protectorate in the high wilderness, thus sparking many legends of gruff mountain men and women who live off the land and visit civilization only on rare occasions. Ursine Gurahl proliferate in the highlands and forests of the Savage West, at least before trappers and hunters whittle away at their Kinfolk and diminish their breeding stock. Gurahl choose their mates carefully by using a simple but effective rite to select suitable Kinfolk with which to breed. Therefore, metis Gurahl do not exist.

Forms

Like the Garou, Gurahl have five forms. Although most werebears prefer to remain in their birth form, they readily assume any of the various forms as necessary.

- **Homid:** In human form, Gurahl exhibit a wide variety of physiotypes, though they tend to be taller and more muscular than average. Hair, skin and eye colors range from dark (for ones of Native American stock) to fair or ruddy (for Norse or others of European heritage). A few Gurahl have begun to breed with the small but significant African population of the Savage West, as they seek to strengthen their bloodlines and incorporate the wisdom of other lands, but such occurrences are still rare.

- **Arthren (Glabro):** In this form, Gurahl resemble the stereotypical "hairy mountaineer" most often linked to them in legend. Their naturally rich voices grow deeper and sound more threatening. They easily attain or exceed human maximums in Physical Attributes.

- **Crinos:** The werebear battle-form towers 10 to 12 feet in height on average, though some individuals reach a height of 16 feet. Their overall size increases, bringing their weight up to nearly a ton. The face becomes bearlike, while nonretractable claws extend from fore and hind paws. A dense, wiry coat of hair covers the entire body, affording additional protection against damage. Speech is restricted to guttural monosyllables.

• **Bjornen (Hispo):** The near-bear form of the Gurahl mimics that of the prehistoric cave bears — gigantic creatures with oversized fangs and claws. The Gurahl's thought processes undergo a change in this form, becoming more instinctive and less cerebral. Human speech is impossible, though they can still communicate in a simplified form of the Gurahl tongue.

• **Ursus (Bear):** Ursine Gurahl look like normal bears in every way. Black, brown, and grizzly bears predominate in the Savage West.

Form Statistics

Arthren Crinos Bjornen Ursine

Str: +3	Str: +5	Str: +4	Str: +3
Dex: +0	Dex: -1	Dex: -2	Dex: +0
Sta: +3	Sta: +5	Sta: +4	Sta: +3
Man: -2	Man: -3	Man: -3	Man: -3
App: -2	App: 0	App: +0	App: +0
Per: +1	Per: -1	Per: +2	Per: +2
Diff: 6	Diff: 7	Diff: 7	Diff: 6

Gifts

As Gaia's firstborn, the Gurahl received an abundance of Gifts from the Great Mother. These blessings, taught by Gaia herself, involve healing, purification and mysticism. Long before the Wars of Rage, Bear's children taught the Garou Gifts such as Mother's Touch, Sense Wurm, and Scent of the True Form, all of which are therefore appropriate for werebears. All Gurahl begin with a Breed Gift (ursine Gurahl may choose either Lupus or Metis Gifts), an Auspice Gift (see **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**) and a Gurahl Gift.

• **Fiddlefish (Level One)** — The Gurahl scoops her hand (or paw) through any stream, lake or sea to catch a hefty, healthy fish. Using this Gift in the same place too often results in failure, due to Gaia's anger at the Gurahl's gluttony.

System: The player does not need to make a roll, nor does he need to spend Gnosis so long as he wants only one fish per day. Repeated use of the Gift requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll; success gains the Gurahl one additional fish. Failure results in no fish,

while a botch signifies Gaia's annoyance with the Gurahl (who must atone for his greediness before again using this Gift).

• **Sentinel's Warning (Level One)** — The Gurahl becomes aware of any hostile presence in his protectorate. The sense of intrusion causes him to feel uneasy and on-edge. This Gift does not allow the Gurahl to determine the precise cause of the threat and it functions only when activated, unlike the Danger Sense Merit, which requires no activation.

System: The player rolls Perception + Alertness and spends a point of Gnosis. Each success maintains the Gift for one scene.

• **Nature's Plenty (Level One)** — This Gift enables a Gurahl to find enough food, healing herbs or other needed plants to feed or heal an individual creature she's caring for.

System: The player rolls Perception + Primal Urge (difficulty 7). Each success allows the Gurahl to find food or one type of healing herb.

• **Grisly Aspect (Level Two)** — Gurahl use this Gift to appear even more formidable than usual, making themselves seem taller, broader and more ferocious. The Gurahl also gives off a subtle scent that engenders panic or dread in most creatures, even predators.


System: The player rolls Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty equals the target's Willpower). A single success causes the victim to hesitate; three or more successes force the target to flee.

• **Ride the Storm (Level Two)** — By using this Gift, a Gurahl may travel through even the most tempestuous part of the Storm Umbra without harm.

System: The player rolls Strength + Enigmas (difficulty 8) and spends a point of Gnosis. A single success allows the character to travel safely through Umbral storms and upheavals; additional successes let the Gurahl bring additional persons with her on a one-to-one basis.

• **Anchor the Umbral Den (Level Three)** — This Gift enables the Gurahl to reduce the chaotic fluctuations and other effects of the Storm Eater in the immediate vicinity of his Den's Umbral portion. This ability makes it possible for Gurahl who choose to pass the winter in hibernation within the Umbra to do so without fear of catastrophic disturbances.

System: The player rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 7) and spends two points of Gnosis. Only a single success is necessary to calm the Umbra in the region around his Den. The effect lasts until the Gurahl



leaves the Umbra for any reason. Thus, a single use of the Gift can last for an entire season of sleep and meditation, provided that the Gurahl remains within the protected spot.

- **Ease the Fevered Mind (Level Three)** — This Gift allows the Gurahl to soothe raw emotions, smooth over terrifying memories and calm the fears of others.

System: The player rolls Perception + Medicine (difficulty 7). Each success allows her to suppress another's madness or Derangement for one scene. A Gurahl cannot use this Gift on herself.

- **Masking the Hunted (Level Four)** — This Gift allows the Gurahl to call upon the local terrain to provide a safe hiding place for someone being hunted.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Stealth and spends a point of Gnosis. Difficulty is equal to the Perception + Alertness of the hunter. One success provides a false trail; additional successes add to the effectiveness of the hiding place itself.

- **Gaia's Breath (Level Five)** — Taught only to the wisest of the Gurahl, this Gift brings a dead werecreature back to life. The Gurahl reserve this Gift for werebears who sacrifice themselves for others. No Gurahl has been known to use this Gift on non-Gurahl, nor to attempt it on anyone dead for more than a few hours. The Gurahl do not teach this Gift to the other Changing Breeds.

System: The player spends a point each of permanent Gnosis and Willpower and rolls Charisma + Occult (difficulty of 6 plus the number of hours elapsed since death, not to exceed a total of 10) to entice the spirit back into a recently slain body. Only one success is required to call back the spirit and revive the creature to the status of Incapacitated. Extra successes may restore missing Health Levels. Only one attempt may be made on a single being. Ever.

Rites

Gurahl love ritual and they have devised many rites for everything from greeting the sun and moon to purifying the land, healing themselves and others and celebrating the major passages of life from birth to death. Many Garou rites have their origins in the rituals of the Gurahl. In addition to the following examples, Storytellers may use any Garou rite (with appropriate modifications) for Gurahl characters.

Rite of True Mating

Level Two

Gurahl do not mate until they attain adulthood and learn to perform this rite, which locates one or more Kinfolk suitable for breeding. The Gurahl places a cutting of her hair along with a drop of her blood in a small bag, which she then hangs around her neck. For three consecutive nights, the Gurahl wears the bag while she sleeps. On the morning after the third night, the player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Empathy (difficulty 7). The bag exerts a pull on the Gurahl's mind and leads her to the location of a suitable mate (either human or bear).

Rite of the Dead Woods

Level Three

Gurahl use this rite to discourage settlement in an area. By urinating on a tree, he renders it worthless as lumber. Small branches broken off an affected tree may be used, but felling one completely leads to unnaturally quick deterioration of the wood (it crumbles to pulp within hours). Only Gurahl whose protectorates are overrun by especially stubborn humans invoke this rite. To do so requires the expenditure of a Gnosis point during the marking of a tree. Rather than attempting to mark all trees in their territories, Gurahl usually target the oldest and most substantial trees in hopes of convincing interlopers to spare such spirit-filled titans. The single-minded rapacity of the timber industry ultimately leads to this rite's disuse.

Quote

Yes, I know that you must move through the pass quickly, and that you need my help to do so. I will show you a safe route through the mountains if you are patient and wait until I finish greeting the Great She-Bear and First Cub as they rise in the heavens. Of course, if you cannot wait, you may try to find the way without me. I will come later and try to pick up the pieces.

Stereotypes

- **European Garou:** They have no respect for the territorial rights of those who have lived here long before they were whelped. Their unthinking arrogance has led to great disruptions in the Umbra as well as to the suffering of the land and its native people. Still, if they learn to demonstrate respect for the Great Mother and her creation, we may reach an accord with them in time. Until then, we watch and wait and withhold our trust.

- **Uktena:** These Garou understand and appreciate knowledge as much as we do, if not more. They seek to uncover secrets that might cause them great harm and lead to disaster. Memories of the Wars of Rage prevent us from sharing our own lore with them as fully as we would like.

- **Wendigo:** They have not stopped fighting the Wars of Rage in some respects. If they could see beyond their own noses and acknowledge that all the

Changing Breeds have a common enemy, they would make excellent — if sometimes intemperate — defenders of Gaia. As it is, they are too rash and angry to think clearly.

- **Pumonca and Qualmi:** These creatures are far too curious for their — and our — own good. In addition to that, their predatory natures overcome their good sense. We treat them cautiously and intimidate them when necessary.

- **Corax:** If they weren't so useful as messengers and information gatherers, we would stay as far away from them as possible at all times. Not only are they greedy and acquisitive, they also talk too much.

- **Nuwisha:** The ravens should learn from these natural tricksters on how to revere Gaia through humor. Although we are often the victims of their pranks, we try to bear them in good grace, knowing that they too serve the Great Mother. Still, we try to direct them to other targets when we can.



Qualmi

Legendry: Why Qualmi Speak in Riddles

Back in the days before even the first wasichu came to our shores, our cat cousins were not as enigmatic as they are today. It was Lynx's own curiosity that got him into such a state.

In those days, Hare was a talkative fellow. He would blather on all day about anything, and all of the other animals thought he was dim-witted and full of himself. Well, he was pretty dim-witted, but eventually he

caught on that no one was listening. So he went to Bear because Bear was very wise, and Hare hoped that Bear could make him wise as well.

Bear said, "I cannot make you wise. Wisdom can only be learned with experience."

"But no one listens to me," Hare whined.

"Well, that I can fix. Carry this stone with you and you will always appear to be wiser than you are."

So Hare took the stone and returned home. From then on, all animals listened when Hare spoke, for what he said sounded very wise (most of the time they just couldn't understand him).

Now about this time, Lynx came sniffing around, trying to learn the secrets of all the other animals. He was pretty successful until he got around to Hare. Try as he might, he couldn't decipher Hare's secrets, for they were cleverly hidden by his sagacious-sounding words.

All of this thinking and puzzling was making Lynx hungry, so he pounced on poor unsuspecting Mouse.

"Please, don't eat me!" Mouse squeaked.

"Why should I not?" Lynx asked. "I am hungry, and you are just big enough to keep my stomach quiet so I can think."

"I know you are trying to discover Hare's secrets. If you spare me, I will tell you what I know."


"Very well, tell me what makes Hare so clever that I cannot learn his secrets."

"Hare was not always so clever," Mouse said. "He used to blather on all day long and no one would listen to his foolish talk until he went to see Bear and returned carrying that small stone which he always has with him. Perhaps his secrets are in the stone."

Lynx was astonished that he hadn't thought of that himself, and he immediately forgot about Mouse, who had slipped quietly away. Lynx thought that it ought to be easy enough to get that stone away from Hare and learn his secrets.

So he waited in ambush for Hare, and when Hare happened by, Lynx sprang up snarling and hissing and





looking very hungry (for he had let his intended meal go free). This so terrified Hare that he shrieked and bounded away as fast as he could, unwittingly dropping his magic stone, which rolled to Lynx's feet. Lynx quickly snapped up the stone and swallowed it, so no one would know he had taken it and so Hare would believe he had lost it in his wild flight. At least, that's what Lynx hoped.

After Hare recovered from his fright, it soon became apparent to everyone that he no longer seemed as wise and clever as before. Hare was so embarrassed that he never spoke another word.

Lynx had quite a different problem.

He returned to his people to report his success. But though he sounded very wise, they found his new manner of speech difficult to follow.

Lynx realized what the problem was and tried to cough up the stone, but it was too heavy and remained stuck in his gullet. He sought the help of Bear, who had given Hare the stone in the first place. But Bear would not help Lynx, saying only, "The gluttonous creature chokes on his own vice," and chuckling. Humbled, he was forced to ask Hare for help. Word of Lynx's troubles had spread far and fast thanks to Raven, but Hare had shamefully hidden away and not heard the news. When he caught sight of Lynx, Hare remembered his earlier terror (it helped that Lynx, having had no food yet, looked still hungrier), and he fled. Lynx gave chase and eventually got Hare in his claws, but when Lynx demanded to know how to make the stone's magic stop, all Hare did was shriek in terror. Lynx was so angry (and so hungry) that he gobbled Hare up.

To this day, the children of Lynx will always chase the children of Hare, even when there is easier prey to be had.

Description

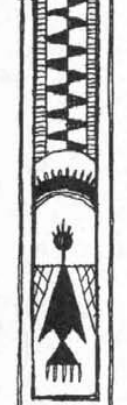
The Bastet like to think of themselves as the Eyes of Gaia; for no tribe is that name truer than for the far-seeing Qualmi. The Riddle Dancing werelynxes keep much wisdom and hide many secrets in their *tahla*, passing it on only to anyone clever enough to decipher this riddlesome speech. Most werecats speak in *tahla* only when trading secrets or when they want to be cryptic. Qualmi speak in *tahla* all the time! This practice makes things interesting and frustrating for their allies. Storytellers and players may choose to roleplay a Qualmi's riddles, or they may use the Gamecraft rules found in *Werewolf: The Wild West*.

It is nearly impossible, even for the Qualmi themselves, to make any sense of the history of this tribe. It is told differently by each Riddle Dancer and filled with enigmatic parables of their ancestors that have no sense of continuity, such as "How Lynx-boy Stole Wendigo's Sight," "How Weeping Skunk Fooled Coyote" or "What Glowing-Bundle-Leap Found at the Bottom of the Ocean."

The Qualmi, like their cat kin, are found mainly in Canada and the northernmost reaches of the United States. These hardy and adaptable folk prefer to keep to their own forest territory rather than wander the breadth of the land as Pumonca (werecougars) do. Qualmi spend much of their time in their Feline form or in the shapes of other animals. In cat form, they have small, thickset bodies with long hind legs, short tails, large fur-covered paws and distinctively tufted ears. Their heavy coats range from reddish to grayish brown, feature indistinct spotting and fade to white underneath. In winter, their coat lengthens and takes on a frosted appearance, and the fur ruff at their jawline becomes even thicker. When they do assume homid form, they tend to be small and wiry, dark-skinned and dark-eyed. They dress in the rugged clothing of their homid kin among the Cree, Ojibwa, Inuit, Salish and Mohawk (to name a few). Even the youngest Qualmi can have gray or graying hair, and the Riddle Dancers have a certain ageless quality that makes it difficult to distinguish between a youngster of 20 winters and an elder of 60.

Isolationists by nature, Qualmi prefer the company of animals to that of people. With magic that allows them to assume any animal shape, the Qualmi find it easy to make friends and allies. Although they seek solitude, they are never inhospitable to people they do meet, and they are generous to people or animals in need. If a Riddle Dancer likes you, she'll take you home, feed you and give you gifts as long as you're clever enough to keep her interested. The catch is that you have to put up with both her seemingly infinite stream of nonsensical questions and her long silences. It's rare that a Qualmi tires of her guests before their patience reaches its limit.

The Wendigo don't hold the decidedly unwarlike lynxes in very high regard, but the Qualmi are on friendly terms with the Uktena and occasionally visit the tribe's northernmost caerns to trade riddles with the Theurges and Philodox of these most enigmatic Garou. Before the advent of the Wyrmscomers and the Storm Eater, which jarred the tribe back to concerns in the real world, the Riddle Dancers often



indulged in more esoteric pursuits and sought obscure knowledge in the wildest, most isolated reaches of the physical world and the Deep Umbra.

Less affected by the second War of Rage than any of their cousins, the Riddle Dancers don't hold a grudge against the European Garou so long as the invaders keep out of Qualmi territories. Although, when the Wyrmscomers and their kin start sniffing around Qualmi and Qualmi-kin lands looking for gold, watch out! These unassuming cats are masters of tricks and traps, and they use their animal allies and powerful elemental Gifts to drive away interlopers; plus, it never hurts to have the Wendigo as your neighbors in times like these. A few Qualmi, seeing the threat the Wyrmscomers pose to the Pure Lands as a whole, go beyond simple defense of their territory. One Riddle Dancer in particular, Strange Owl Woman, seeks to discourage miners and railway builders from their westward expansion. She undertakes a fantastic quest through the Storm Umbra to learn potent spirit magics from that mistress of riddles — Sphinx. With these new Gifts and her own cleverness, she perpetrates acts of sabotage and uses guerrilla warfare tactics to drive miners and railroad workers away from Qualmi lands.

Organization

Unlike their Garou cousins, Qualmi have no formal organization and only rarely participate in the *taghairms* (moots) of other Bastet. Even their infrequent appearances at these gatherings stem more from an interest in exchanging secrets than from any need to socialize. Qualmi meet only when an elder takes in a cub for fostering. In most Bastet tribes, this tutelage lasts for a year after the First Change, but the Riddle Dancers' strange and solitary ways usually send a youngster to seek his own way after the first six months.

Although Qualmi keep no caerns of their own, once they reach a respectable age, they often attune themselves to their territory and set up a Den Realm there (see the **Bastet** sourcebook, pp. 83-84 for more information on this Background).

Traits

Unless they are pressed to the limit, the werelynxes are much more relaxed than werewolves and are quite self-possessed (starting Rage 2; starting Willpower 5). They also suffer Luna's displeasure so that silver affects Qualmi the same as it does Garou. The keen senses of their feline heritage extend to all

forms but their Homid one (lower difficulty for Perception rolls by two), thus enabling them to see easily except in complete darkness. Werecats have a certain talent for spirit magics as well (starting Gnosis is one higher than for Garou of the same breed). In spite of this seeming affinity with the spirit world, werecats do not find it easy to cross the Gauntlet into the Storm Umbra. In fact, they must first learn the Level Four Gift: Walking Between the Worlds to do so.

The Riddle Dancers revere Luna (Qualmi always bear some symbol of the moon on their persons), though they lack the close bond that the Garou share with her and so have no auspices. Similarly, being the self-reliant creatures that they are, they neither form packs, nor can they forge a relationship with any totem or Ancestor-spirit (Bastet may not take the Pack Totem or Past Life Backgrounds).

Qualmi advance in rank much as Garou do, though they value the traits of Cunning and Ferocity more than they do Wisdom or Glory. The Riddle Dancers have their own sense of Honor. Their solitary existence forces the werelynxes (like most other Bastet) to rely on spirits to carry the tales of their Renown to their brothers. (See the **Bastet** sourcebook for further details on status, Traits and Gifts.)

Breeds

Qualmi choose mates about equally between their human and feline Kin. The qualities they look for most in their mates are cleverness, patience, perceptiveness, independence and a generous spirit. Homid Qualmi are generally born to Native American tribes such as the Inuit, Ojibwa, Cree, Mohawk, Algonquin, Nez Perce, Salish and Tlingit. Werelynxes of European descent are unknown in the Savage West due in part to the isolation of the tribe's dwelling places, but also because the Qualmi are so protective of their lands. Homid Bastet start with Gnosis 2.

Although it is possible that some metis Qualmi exist in the Savage West, it is unlikely. Female werelynxes come into season only once per year, and they spend most of their lives isolated from others of their kind. Riddle Dancers become edgy and irritable in each other's company. The quizzical, enigmatic face they show to others quickly becomes tiresome when they are on the receiving end. If there were any metis, their starting Gnosis would be 4.



Despite the hunting of the werelynxes' feline kin for fur or for sport, these hardy and adaptable wildcats never come near extinction as do the feral kin of the Garou and the Pumonca. Lynxes thrive where their favored prey, the snowshoe hare, is abundant, so the Qualmi always have a plentiful selection of mates. Feline Riddle Dancers begin with Gnosis 6.

Forms

Bastet have five forms that differ slightly from the ones of their Garou counterparts.

- **Homid:** Qualmi in homid form tend to be slightly smaller than the average human, but they're always rugged and athletic. Their eyes reflect light just as cats' eyes do in darkness.

- **Sokto (Near-Man):** In Sokto form, the Qualmi's features take on a decidedly feline cast, ears become pointed and eyes become like a lynx's. The werelynx gains retractable claws, vestigial whiskers and increased muscle mass.

- **Crinos (Half-Cat):** Crinos-form Qualmi are neither as large nor as threatening as Garou in Crinos form (they cause Delirium at one level lower than usual on the Delirium Chart). Like a werewolf, Qualmi in this form can use weapons, wear dedicated clothing and even manage mangled human speech. Although they lack the raw power possessed by their Garou cousins in this form, Qualmi are agile enough in Crinos to dance circles around most opponents.

- **Chatro (War-Cat):** For a truly challenging fight, Qualmi assume a form resembling their long-extinct, saber-toothed cousins. Chatro form calls up a primal fear in humans that harks back to a time when they fought such beasts in order to survive (Chatro form causes the full effects of the Delirium). With massive shoulders, sloping hindquarters and enormously long stabbing teeth extending below his jaw (causing an extra die of bite damage in this form), the Qualmi reaches the size of a mountain cat in Chatro.

- **Feline:** Qualmi shrink down to assume the form of their cat kin, but they remain larger than average for their breed — around four feet long with a small head, short tail, and hind legs that are distinctly longer than the front pair.

Form Statistics

Sokto	Crinos	Chatro	Feline
Str: +0	Str: +1	Str: +1	Str: +0
Dex: +2	Dex: +3	Dex: +4	Dex: +4
Sta: +0	Sta: +1	Sta: +1	Sta: +0
Man: +0	Man: -2	Man: -2	Man: -2
App: +1	App: 0	App: 0	
Diff: 7	Diff: 6	Diff: 7	Diff: 6

Gifts

Bastet characters begin with three Gifts as do Garou, but instead of an Auspice Gift, they must choose among common Bastet Gifts because they receive no special blessing from Luna. It is a common practice for a Bastet to "steal" Gifts from other shapeshifters by spying on them until he learns the new trick. Qualmi exceed most werecats at such chicanery, as the tribe's members are masters of disguise and spycraft, and they have Gifts of their own to aid them in these endeavors. Thus, it's hardly surprising that Qualmi Gifts often resemble or copy the Gifts of their Wendigo neighbors. Qualmi prefer to learn Gifts relating to sight, the elements, shapeshifting or spying. (The serious Bastet player may want to consult Chapter Four of the **Bastet** sourcebook, which has dozens of Gifts in addition to the ones presented here. Otherwise, additional Qualmi Gifts can be simulated with **Lupus** and **Theurge** Gifts, plus the less combat-oriented **Wendigo** ones.)

- **Catfeet (Level One)** — As the Level Three **Lupus** Gift, but easier for a Bastet, of course.

- **Turned Fur (Level One)** — In her native wilderness, a Qualmi can become nearly invisible by blending into her surroundings. This Gift is taught by a Deer-spirit.

System: For this Gift to work, the Qualmi must first remove all of his clothing. Turned Fur works only in the wilderness and increases the difficulties of all rolls to spot the Riddle Dancer by three. This Gift lasts for one scene.

- **Call Spirits (Level Two)** — Using a language from the days when matter and spirit were one, a werecat's words can penetrate the Gauntlet and



allow the user to communicate with any nearby spirits. This Gift can be taught by any spirit.

System: The player rolls Gnosis against the local Gauntlet. If the werecat is already in the Storm Umbra, no roll is required. Once the user learns this Gift, he can understand spirit-speech for the rest of his life, though spirits spawned by the Storm Umbra are probably incomprehensible even to individuals who possess this Gift.

• Drop of the Sea (Level Three) — The Qualmi are masters of disguise and subterfuge, and this clever trick is one of their best weapons of obfuscation. Weeping Skunk was the first to learn this Gift; Riddle Dancers learn it from an avatar of one of the great tricksters, such as Raven or Coyote.

System: With the expenditure of a Gnosis point and a Manipulation + Subterfuge roll (difficulty 7), this Gift allows a Qualmi to assume any human or animal shape, from hare-sized to bear-sized. If she takes an animal form, the animal's innate abilities (flight, speed, etc.) come with the form. If she assumes a human guise, the player may add one dot to the Qualmi's Physical or Social Traits per success on the roll for the duration of the Gift. Really extreme changes, such as changing from Strange Owl Woman into Abe Lincoln or John Henry, raise the difficulty by one. Any observer may see the Riddle Dancer for what she really is on a Perception + Enigmas roll (difficulty 9). To undo the Qualmi's disguise, he may ask her a riddle (see *Gamecraft*, *Werewolf: The Wild West*, p. 257). If she cannot answer it, she immediately reverts to her true form; otherwise, this Gift lasts for one scene.

• Farsight (Level Three) — With the help of a reflective surface or a summoned spirit, the Bastet can scry distant places. It's easier if it's a place he's seen before, but not required. This Gift is taught by an Owl-spirit.

System: For a werecat to call upon this Gift, the player must spend a Gnosis point and have time to concentrate. The player then makes a Perception + Occult roll (difficulty varies, see below). If successful, the werecat gets a bird's-eye view of the place in question — high enough to get a good view of the surroundings, but close enough to see what's going on. Farsight cannot be used to follow people, only to

view distant places, though anyone at a described location can be spied on as the cat wishes. The Bastet can focus on particular things with a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 6). Farsight lasts for one turn per success and can be used to view any place within 30 miles of the Bastet.

Location

Difficulty

Intimately familiar (home territory, a mate's lodge)	6
Somewhat familiar (a friend's village)	7
Visited occasionally (the nearest Uktena caern)	8
Been there once (the nearest Wendigo caern)	9
Heard it described or saw it in a picture (nearest white-man's town)	10

• Walking Between the Worlds (Level Four) — This Gift allows a Bastet to enter the perilous Storm Umbra. This trick was most likely stolen from the Garou.

System: See *Werewolf: The Wild West* pp. 192, 198-199. Once learned, this Talent becomes natural for the Bastet.

• Still Breeze Blowing (Level Four) — As the Level Five Lupus Gift: Elemental Gift. Qualmi favor air or ice elementals over any others when calling upon this Gift, which is taught by an elemental.

• Call Down the Stars (Level Five) — Strange Owl Woman undertook a perilous Umbral quest and defeated Sphinx in a battle of wits so she could win this Gift to fight the Wyrmscomers. By confusing the spirits inside fires with an utterly baffling riddle, the lynx can cause explosions and mayhem. This Gift is taught by Sphinx herself.

System: With a successful Manipulation + Enigmas roll (difficulty 7) and the expenditure of a Willpower point to focus the spirit's attention on the riddle, the combustible source — gas, coal, wood, kerosene, whatever — explodes. The exact effects are up to the Storyteller. A fire might flare up and cause one or two Health Levels of damage per success, whereas a steam-engine furnace might cause up to four Health Levels of damage per success (and possibly derail the train it powered). Some combustion must already be involved. For example, the lynx can't make a case of dynamite blow up on its own.

Rites

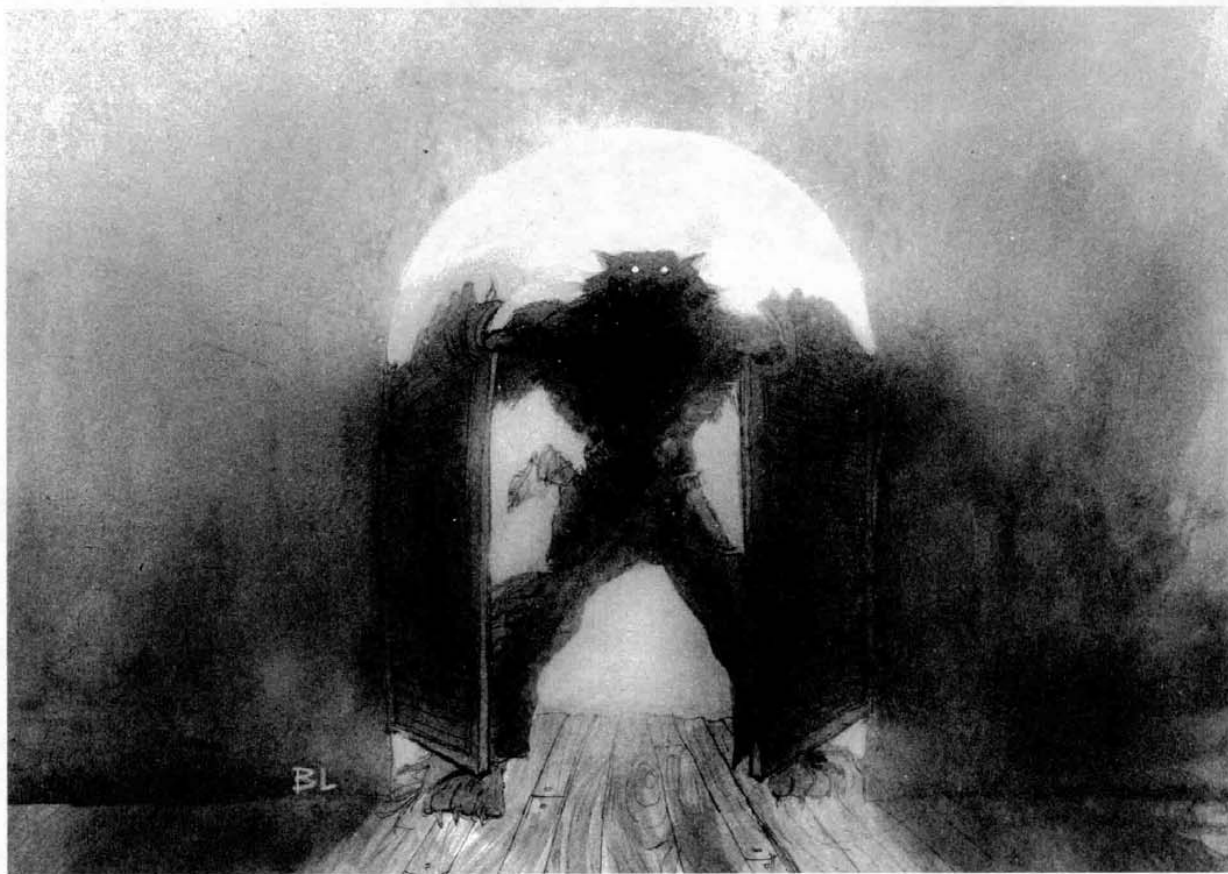
Like all shapeshifters, the Qualmi often make use of rites. In fact, they use many rites remarkably similar to ones of the Garou, except Riddle-Dancer rites are designed to be performed by a lone werecat. Some rites found in the *Werewolf: The Wild West* main rulebook simply don't apply to the werelynxes for one reason or another. Ones they tend to use the most are: Rite of Cleansing, Rite of Binding, Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of Summoning, Rite of the Fetish, Facing the Final Journey, Rite of Accomplishment and various minor rites.

Quote

The blind man who tries to catch a shadow in the snow will end up cold and wet.

Stereotypes

- European Garou: He treads too loudly, who wakens the serpent. His own noise deafens him to the warning rattle. The serpent is deadly, no matter how gentle his bite.
- Uktena: Eldest Brother may uncover the secret of fire, but more likely, he will only burn his paws.
- Wendigo: Rivers of blood will not wash away the stain spreading across the land, nor will dams of bodies keep back the iron tide.
- Pumonca: Frost-faced Cousin will find it difficult to save the home he has not built from the fires to come.
- Nuwisha: Even the Laughing Moon does not find the Skunk's tricks amusing.
- Gurahl: The sound sleeper may awake too late.



Cáscara

They walk among the Garou, yet only by night. They know the weaknesses of the tribes and the secret defenses of Gaia, the passwords and protections that allow them entrance to the most sacred caerns.

They are the unholy monsters of the Wyrms — they are former Garou themselves. They were once warriors of Gaia, loyal to tribe and pack and family, but the Wyrms now owns their hearts and long ago destroyed their souls. They are the Cáscara.

A Cáscara, or Abomination, is a walking contagion, a plague car-

rier of both the spirit and the flesh that brings perversion and blasphemy to everything in its path. Some elders believe that Cáscara are the ultimate expression of evil, and perhaps they are right. Abominations wander across the Savage West like stormclouds. What they can easily destroy, they destroy. What they cannot easily destroy, they poison to ruin others' lives.

Cáscara are Garou who exist at the lowest depths of corruption. Their souls have been polluted beyond cleansing, thus removing them from the wheel of rebirth. Denied the blessings of Gaia, Cáscara must prey directly on any vitality around them, drinking blood and devouring life.

They are the ultimate outcasts from the Mother's grace. Some call them "werewolf vampires," but that understates the issue and understatements are always dangerous when the Wyrms are concerned. Compared to the Cáscara, vampires are creatures to be pitied. Abominations are to be feared and fought.



From "Cáscara and the Seven Pups of Auntie Grissom"

(as told by Ears-Twitching-at-Sundown)

...and then, when the creature had lured the children to the schoolhouse one by one, dressed as it was in the skin of Miss McNeely with her lace collar still on it, it butchered them all under cover of darkness. That night, the entire town was as quiet as death because the ones who had children knew that Bobby and Sue and all the rest were never coming back. And the ones who didn't have children didn't want to get involved. People latched their shutters and the frontier seeped back into the dusty midnight streets like it had never left in the first place.

Cáscara was not the smartest of the Wyrms' bastard children because its own hunger and evil worked against it and drove it crazy. It realized, too late, that it had butchered all the boys and girls before getting full use of them in its plans — it harbored a lot of plans that it never got to finish, and that just made it crazier. And all the meat was getting cold.

So Cáscara decided to have itself a puppet show and pretend the kids were still warm and full of screams. That was when the Seven Pups arrived....

Tales Around the Campfire

Cáscara are so rare that most Garou do not believe in them. Their rarity is a mercy for every living thing, but the fact that elders lean a bit too heavily on the Abominations as bogeymen when they tell cautionary tales to cubs is sometimes a hindrance — for many young Ahroun and Philodox scoff at the idea of "werewolf





Other young Garou make a far more grievous mistake; they convince themselves that Abominations are somehow "tragic figures," and they fixate on the elders' constant recitals of the unbearable pain and madness that fill every moment of a Cáscara's existence. "No creature is entirely beyond redemption," they think to themselves, "and what a good thing it would be to reclaim one of these abandoned souls for Gaia."

On the surface, it seems like a cool idea to make your primary player character a Cáscara. They get vampire powers and a lot of the werewolf powers. They are rare, so your character is always special and unusual. They are intensely lonely and usually in a lot of pain, so you will have many chances to make tragic speeches and feel sorry for yourself.

If you want to go ahead and play an Abomination, nobody's stopping you. However, think about what you're doing. You're playing a real monster, a creature who is truly and irrevocably cursed never to be happy. The Banes and other vindictive spirits that follow every Abomination aren't your friends; in fact, they go out of their way to make sure that nothing you attempt can ever bring you any satisfaction. They hate you, and they amuse themselves by making you suffer.

Since all Cáscara are doomed to self-destruct over time rather than get more powerful with experience, you should remember that your cool character won't be around very long. The thrills (such as they are) are short-term, and then your character is dead.

After the Hell on Earth of being an Abomination, it'll probably be a relief.

Most of these pups grow out of this delusion. Of the few who do not, an unlucky minority end up meeting an Abomination face to face. The unluckiest of all must go on living after the creature pares off their faces to keep in a bag around its neck.

The Making of an Abomination

The Garou call the C  scara by any number of euphemisms to avoid speaking their actual name aloud and, hence, attracting their attention. Thus, songs are filled with references to "the Undying Children of Gaia," the "Damned Urrah," the "Pale Ronin," and "Luna's Demon Children."

Cáscara are indeed "werewolf vampires" — the corrupt remains of a Garou that has undergone the Embrace. Yet, Abominations do not find new families among the Children of Caine either, for vampires fear and loathe them as thoroughly as the Garou do. Like all leeches, however, Cáscara are animated corpses that hunger unbearably after more blood.

Fortunately, Gaia's protection of Her chosen warriors is strong, and very few Garou ever become Cáscara, even if they are unlucky enough to suffer a vampire's Embrace. A few werewolves exposed to the corruptive, Wyrn-tainted blood die instantly, for Gaia takes them rather than allow Her Children to endure such misery. Even when She cannot directly intercede in a Garou's behalf, the strength She bestows to Her Children helps them resist the Wyrn, and they fight the curse with their lives. These poor Garou die slowly, lingering for hours in dreadful agony as they regenerate and futilely attempt to expel the contagion.

Only the most misguided or corrupt of werewolves are estranged so deeply from Gaia's grace that the curse can take root in their souls and turn them into Cáscara. The fact that there are so few Abominations is a testament to the purity of the Garou — throughout the Savage West, there are perhaps a handful of these creatures, most of whom are drawn from elsewhere to participate in the horrors being wrought by the Storm Eater.

A few infamous figures in Garou mythology — Eyes-of-Ice, Tia-Razor-Teats and the shadowy figure known only as “Frying Wolf” — seek out vampires to offer them undying service in exchange for eternal unlife. Such a pact, however, is so extreme a betrayal of the Garou Ways that not even



Black Spiral Dancers ever entertain such legends seriously. Instead, nearly all known Abominations are the result of Garou being taken prisoner by the pale ones and forced to endure the painful and degrading translation into undeath. Even still, most die without being transformed. The road of the Cáscara is a dark one, leading to stunted places and wasted lives.

System: A Garou who undergoes the vampiric Embrace is likely to die. Seldom is this death an easy one; the victim usually writhes in agony for hours on end before finally earning release from her body. Occasionally, Gaia takes mercy on a Garou who is exceptionally pure of heart and allows her to die quickly and without agony.

When a vampire Embraces a Garou, the player must make a Gnosis roll (difficulty 9). If the roll succeeds, the Garou dies a fast and painless death. If it fails, the character suffers a slow and torturous death. The Garou feels her limbs consumed by internal fires as the curse courses through her paralyzed body to combat her own Gaia-granted regenerative powers. Her heart pounds with increasing fury before it, at last, explodes.


Only a Garou who is especially accursed by Gaia and actually botches her Gnosis roll becomes an Abomination.

Gazing at Monsters

An Abomination is the loneliest creature ever to walk the Earth. It remains trapped in an unyielding state of deepest Harano. A Cáscara is both mocked and feared by its new-found fellows, the creatures of the Wyrms, who recognize the marks of the Garou on its spirit. However, Garou who understand the true nature of an Abomination can only despise such a fallen comrade, as such an unfortunate must have been impure at heart to undergo this transformation. Thus, Cáscara dwell apart from everyone.

Most of these creatures end their own unives as soon as they find an opportunity, preferring the last, killing kiss of Helios to eternity as a semblance of a living thing. Others linger on for years or even decades, but they eventually kill themselves out of loneliness or insanity.

Once a Garou dies and becomes an Abomination, she loses forever her familiar kinship with the spirit world that all true werewolves take for granted. She can now access the otherworld only through dreams and the dark rites of the Wyrms. As long as she has



Gnosis, she can still step sideways, but that precious spiritual reservoir diminishes irretrievably as the Abomination descends into Wyrmtaint. Of course, she can rely on vampiric Blood Points, but they can never be used in the same turn as Gnosis and usually power Disciplines that speed the onset of Wyrmtaint. Innocent spirits flee the presence of a Cáscara and do everything in their power to avoid communication with the monster. The effect is devastating — it is as if the speaking world in which everything is alive suddenly goes silent. Even the former Garou's fetishes and dedicated items divorce themselves from her and free their motivating spirits at the time of the Embrace. Her klaive, for example, becomes simply an unresponsive length of silver in her hands.

Only Banes enter into commerce with the Cáscara, and then only for their own twisted reasons. Many Banes find enormous amusement in masquerading as uncorrupted "Gaian" spirits for the "benefit" of lonely Cáscara, but all the Gifts they teach are ultimately intended to cause destruction and misery.

Powerful and Terrible

Abominations are very powerful. They gain access to the dark abilities possessed by vampires — Disciplines — yet retain all knowledge of whatever Garou Gifts they knew in life.

Abominations gain three dots in the Discipline of their sire's clan, just as any vampire neonate does after the Embrace. They may subsequently learn new Disciplines through practice, training or experimentation. However, most Cáscara manage to kill their vampiric sires soon after the Embrace and become vampiric outcasts, or Caitiff. As a Caitiff, an Abomination nearly always finds it difficult to progress quickly in the use of Disciplines because few, if any, vampires are willing to teach her.

While Cáscara retain their Garou lore of spirit Gifts, they can learn a new Gift only from a spirit willing to teach them — a difficult task. Most spirits hate and fear the Cáscara and do everything in their power to avoid contact with Abominations.

Like other vampires, Cáscara drink blood and draw mystical sustenance from it. Each Abomination has a Blood Pool that can be used to increase their physical attributes, heal wounds or power

vampiric Disciplines. Animal blood rarely satisfies a Cáscara for long, and most eventually give in to their dark thirst and seek out the blood of humans, wolves or even Garou.

Cáscara keep their Rage, although this is a mixed blessing. They still frenzy as they did when they were Garou, but their difficulty to enter frenzy is two less, and all frenzies are berserk. Worse, their innate fury festers into an even more terrible version of the vampiric "Beast" as well. Every time an Abomination commits an atrocity against Gaia's Litany during such a frenzy, make a Gnosis roll at difficulty 7; failure indicates that the character has lost a point of Gnosis.

Doom

Cáscara are subject to all the natural threats faced by more common vampires, including sunlight, fire and the mercy of Gaia in the form of Garou hunting parties. Ever the capricious spirit, Luna refuses to withdraw her influence from an Abomination, and so the Cáscara remain vulnerable to the touch of silver also.

Like vampires, Abominations must drink blood to survive and going too long without blood will cause an Abomination to frenzy as her thirst drives her deeper into madness.

As noted, most Abominations exist amid a miasma of parasitic malign spirits. These entities, drawn to the Abomination's own misery and the misery it causes others, delight in "assisting" the Cáscara in destroying everything around them. It is not without basis that the songs tell of the way the Undying Ones bring doom and despair to everything they touch — their Bane companions see to that.

Although there are rumors of blasphemous "Paths" by which an Abomination might sustain her sanity and will to live, there is no solid proof of their existence in the Savage West. Particularly vile Cáscara claim to follow the "Path of Ego," but it is clearly nothing other than a disguised Litany of the Wyrmtaint that grants Gnosis in the manner of the Black Spiral Dancers.

A few Garou seers have heard the "Path of the Storm Eater" whispered in the dark places of the world, but nothing more is known at this time.

Los Infelizos

(The Wretched Ones, also called "Los Penitentes" and "The Bastards")

In a forgotten corner of the Savage West, the land is too poor to interest the Wyrncomers. The soil here is cracked and the arroyos, more often than not, run dry. Here, the vast inhospitality of the cliffs and canyons keeps the invading wagon trains at bay and makes a squalid but relatively safe haven for the unwanted, the weak and the deformed.

These are the badlands, the protectorate of the Infeliz, a wretched "tribe" of outcasts. No true tribe claims them, and the hand of every decent-thinking Garou who rides with a straight back is raised against them. Even the Bone Gnawers can despise them, and so the Infeliz must endure banishment from the green bosom of Gaia.




The Secret History of Wretchedness

The Infeliz owe not only their personal origins to inbreeding, but their tribal ancestry as well. When proud Shadow Lord conquistadors first rode up the river valleys from Mexico, they left their chosen breeding stock safe in the cities. Yet, the Indian women in one of the villages where the invaders "diverted themselves" were close Kinfolk of the Uktena, but the Wyrncomer riders did not even recognize their own cousins until it was too late.

Some of these unions of conquest produced offspring. The Shadow Lords were free to destroy the resultant Kin — as is their ancient custom — but they were reluctant to murder the full Garou pups who were born. Still, some of the conquistadors were so shamed by having bred with "savages" that they smothered their own children.

The priests of thunder raised the half-breeds and taught them the Law of the Mother, but always with an eye toward reminding the bastards of their misbegotten nature. As they grew, the so-called "Infelizos" surprised and alarmed the priests with their aptitude for uncovering secrets and carrying on other dark conversations with the spirit world. Such was the inheritance their Uktena mothers and wet nurses fed into the cubs' mouths with their first milk.



After the revolt of Texas and the collapse of the Spanish Empire north of the Rio Grande, the Shadow Lord landowners slowly retreated to their cities and left the ranchos and all of their serfs behind. Of course, they could not bring the Infelizos with them, and so they abandoned the half-breeds in the arid country, where the rivers were drying up. They did leave their offspring with something, though: Before their departure, the priests managed to impress upon the bastard children the wickedness of bastardy. Left without spiritual guidance apart from one another, the children did their best to repent.

Blasphemous Ceremony of the Infeelies (1881)

— From the Journals of Paul “Skunk” Settles

It was the Jenrettes, a Kin family that grows beans outside Taos, who told me where the Infeelies held their church services. It would have been easy enough to find them — just follow your nose to the place that stinks worse than I do — but I felt I owed old Jenrette and his people a visit. They don't get much fresh air down there.

So I waited in the badlands until it got good and dark and they came out with their candles and incense. After you've been in the desert for a while, you get to where you've heard a lot of stories about the Infeelies, but I'd never seen one before then. Kind of hope I never do again.

[...]

It looked about like any other rite until they got out the nails. The cub put them in his mouth and danced around, sniffing at all the guys. He found one — a scrawny character — and they said something I couldn't hear. The scrawny guy was crying and screaming about something.

The fat Crinos grabbed the scrawny guy and dragged him up to the wrecked kiva I'd scouted before. The others were busy screaming and singing and crossing themselves.

They laid the scrawny guy down and the cub pounded the nails. When they lifted up the cross, he was bleeding from the hands and from his nether region.

That's how the Infeelies celebrated Easter. Gaia have mercy on us all.

I took out my silver bullets and I shot them all until they died.

Children of the Unclean Dust

Shunned as impure by both the remaining Shadow Lord Kin and the retreating Uktena, the Infelizos now keep one another's company only. They were constantly neglected and otherwise mistreated by their fathers, who made no effort to hide the shame and loathing these half-breed children engendered. Left to their own devices, it's only natural that the children might turn to a baroquely mystical world of visions and divine, apocalyptic punishments. Their ritual calendar grows into a frenzied fusion of Iberian Catholic dogma and the Garou Litany, in which the Wyrms is God and Gaia is His Virgin Mother and unwilling, incestuous Bride.

In the minds of the Infelizos, the Wyrms is the cruel Creator of the world, the All-Father of wretchedness who deliberately filled the world with suffering in order to teach His children how to obey and how to repent. The Wyrmscomer Tribes are the favored of the Father, as their ongoing punishment of the “Pure Lands” demonstrates.

Within a generation, the Bastard Garou and Kin are breeding indiscriminately with homids, lupus, renegade Kinfolk and one another. They manage to produce a strain of metis that the Wretched Ones greet with great weeping and dark satisfaction, for they see in the deformed pups further proof of their own damnation. However, a majority of Infelizos choose to abstain from the pleasures of the flesh, as they believe that it is better for Garou cubs never to be born at all than to invite them to share in a world of tears. Ones who lack the will to abstain from mating often have themselves sterilized by other members of the community — an event that spurs great ecstatic fervor and dark rituals among the Infelizos and that gathers “family” from miles around.

It is particularly honorable for Infeliz males to castrate themselves, for in this way, they proclaim their allegiance to the Raped Virgin Gaia and cast aside the legacy of the Father.

Character

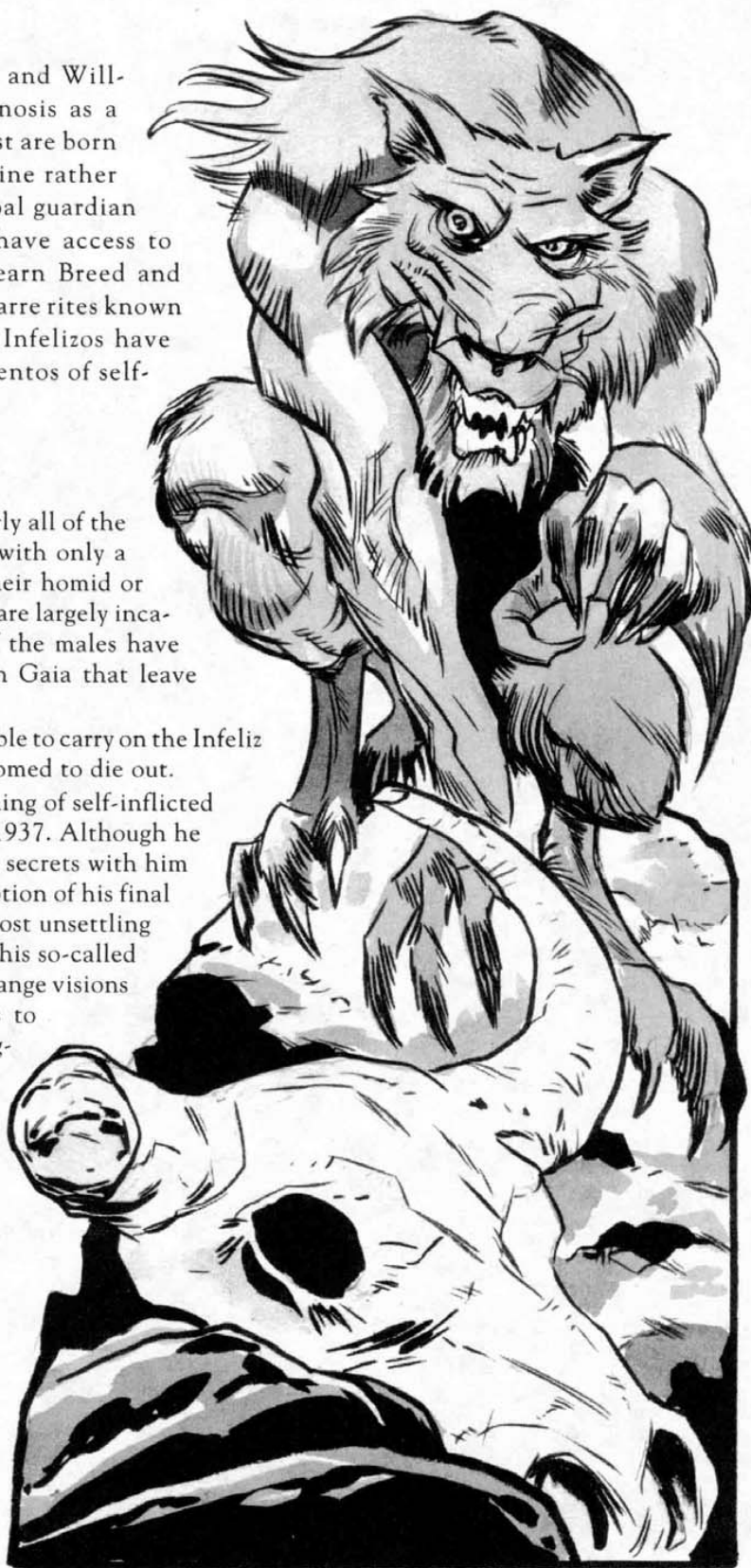
Infelizos tend to have low Rage and Willpower but extraordinarily high Gnosis as a result of their abject existence. Most are born either metis or homid. As a bloodline rather than a true tribe, they have no tribal guardian of their own and, hence, do not have access to tribal Gifts, but they can freely learn Breed and Auspice Gifts along with certain bizarre rites known only to themselves. A majority of Infelizos have one or more Battle Scars, the mementos of self-inflicted punishments.

Destiny

By the time the frontier closes, nearly all of the Infelizos are deformed, sterile metis, with only a handful of the old and sick among their homid or lupus population. Even the non-metis are largely incapable of reproducing, as nearly all of the males have made ecstatic sacrifices to the Virgin Gaia that leave them incapable of sexual intercourse.

Because they render themselves unable to carry on the Infeliz bloodline, the Wretched Ones are doomed to die out.

The last of the Infelizos dies screaming of self-inflicted wounds in a New Mexico hospital in 1937. Although he takes the majority of his people's dark secrets with him to the grave, the fragmentary transcription of his final sickbed ravings becomes one of the most unsettling of the mystical texts of the Uktena. This so-called Litany of the Penitentes, filled with strange visions and horrifying prophecies, continues to guide Theurges and other Garou struggling to come to grips with the approaching Apocalypse.



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