

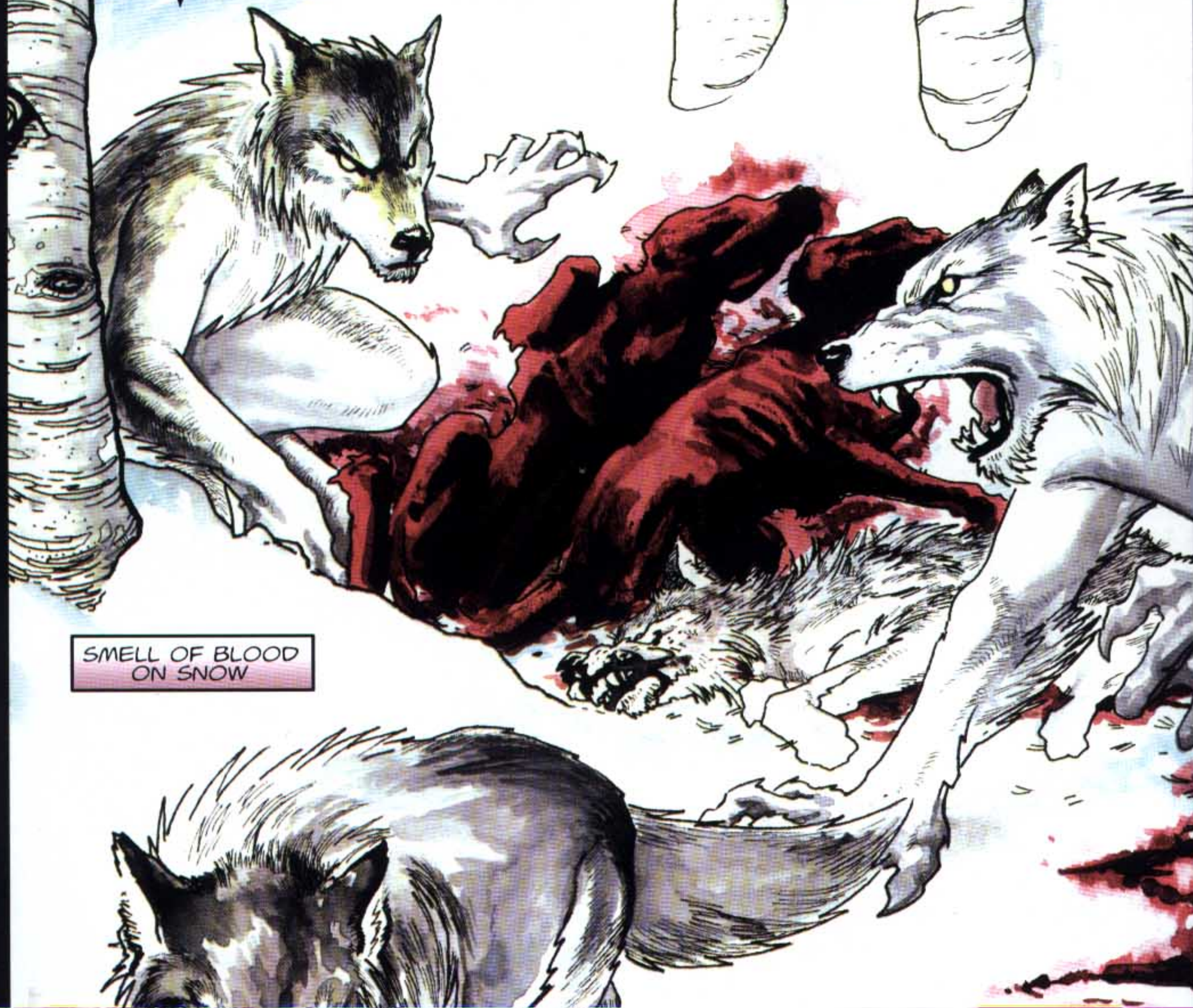
RED TALONS

TRIBEBOOK



A Sourcebook for Werewolf: The Apocalypse[™]
Tribebook 7

A Wolf in the Blood



SMELL OF BLOOD
ON SNOW



SMELL OF FEAR



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SMELL OF DEATH

SOUND OF BLOOD
ON SNOW



SMELL OF COMING BLOOD

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS
OF WYRM MACHINES



SMELL OF POLLUTION...



DESECRATION

SMELL CHOKING FUMES

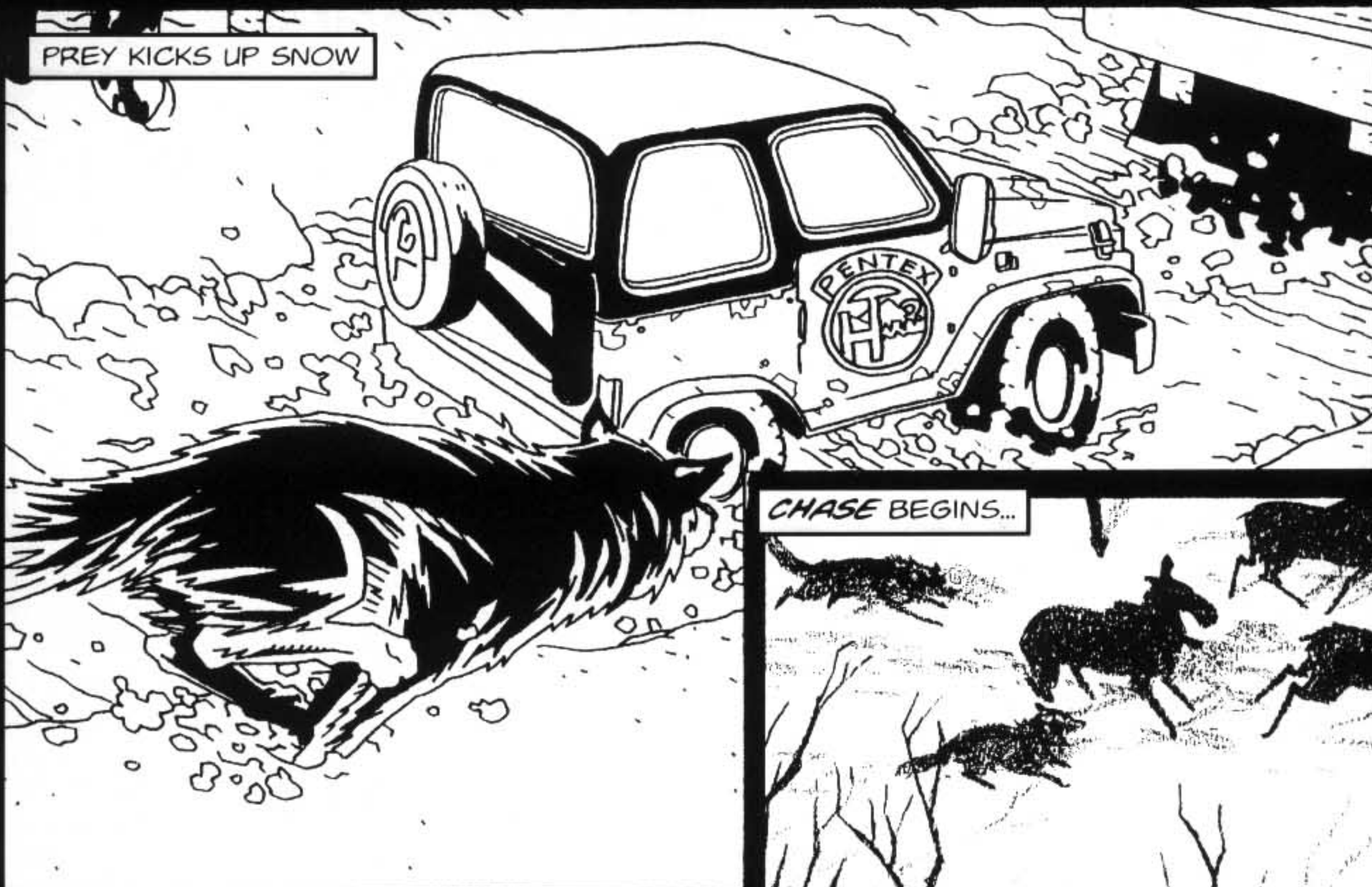


MUDDY SNOW ON PAWS

SMELL HUMAN-FEAR



PREY KICKS UP SNOW



CHASE BEGINS...



SOUNDS OF ICICLES FALLING



SMELL OF FEAR



WIND RUSHING OVER FUR



SOUND OF METAL THUNDER









SCREAMS OF DYING PREY



SMELL OF OIL AND FILTH ON FUR...

FAMILY



SMELL OF PURE SNOW OVER FALLEN



SOUNDS OF
TRIUMPH



RED TALONSTM

C R I B E B O O K



No Compromise

By Ben Chessell

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One last time for my pals in Editing & Development...

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Phil "Nature Boy" **Brucato** for communing with the wild when (almost) everybody else was playing Family Feud.

Ethan "On the road" **Skemp** for being a Sam & Max fan.

Cynthia "Bug bait" **Summers** for learning that mosquitos are not the biggest bugs at NERO.

Profuse apologies to Larry Friedman for leaving his name out of the art credits for *Rage Across Appalachia*.

Author's Note

For wolves

*Not the book, for which you would have little use,
but the effort at understanding.*

I enjoyed your company.

— Barry Lopez, dedication for *Of Wolves and Men*

The Red Talons represent the "other." They are everything we don't understand — the wolf, the predator, the wilderness, the dying creature. I wrote this book with a great love for and fascination with wolves. When I began, I thought I knew a great deal about the animals. After more research, I found I was wrong. What most biologists and naturalists know about the wolf is inconclusive, based on little empirical research. Indeed, the research that has been done has served only to reinforce the elusive and enigmatic nature of the wolf, difficult to explain using strictly biological principles. All that can confidently be said is that we need to know more.

Despite this lack of information, the wolf is an icon for many conservation and environmental efforts. It is a great comfort, in a world of destruction and desecration, that people feel the need to conserve something that they do not understand, simply for its own sake.



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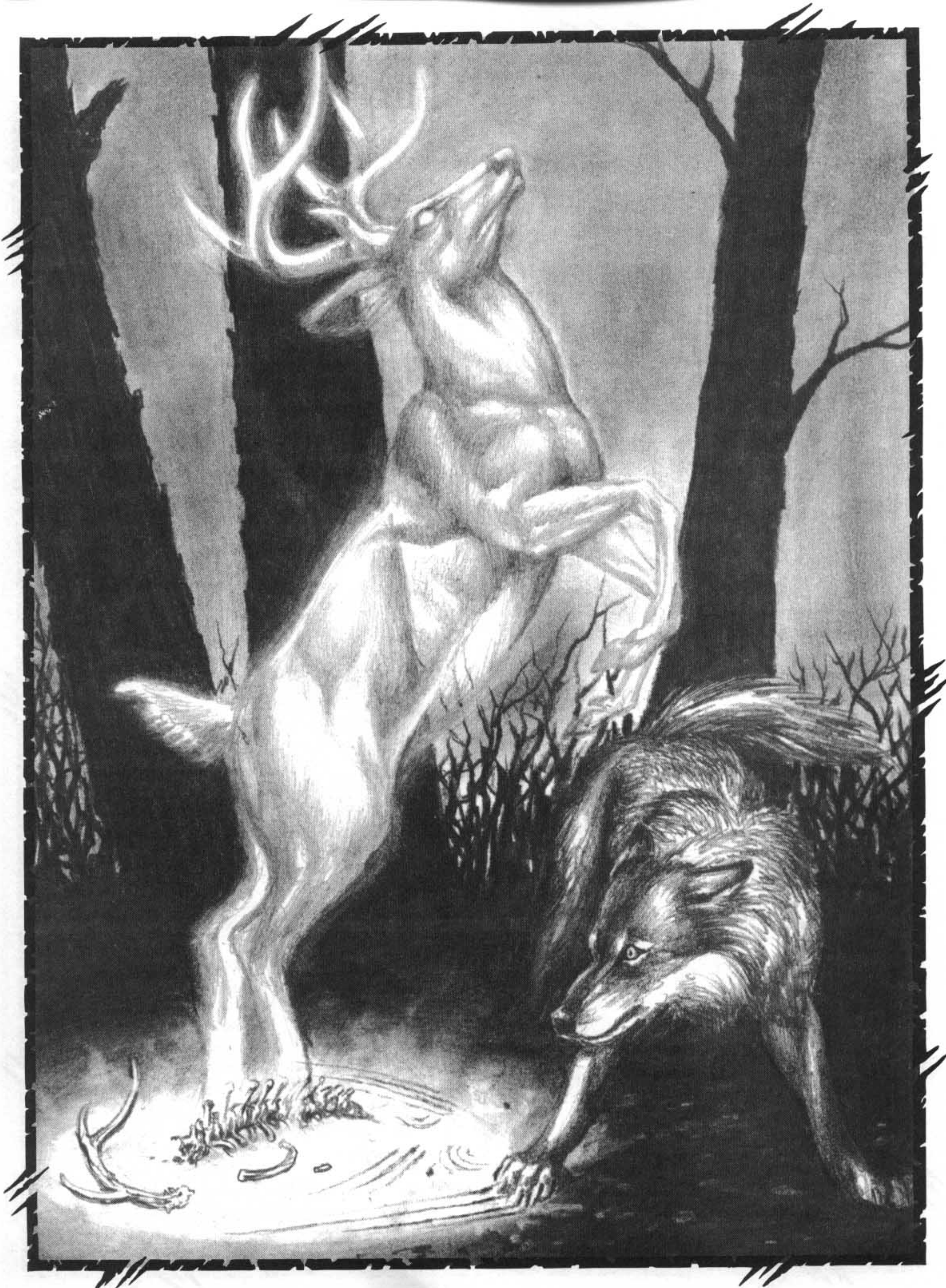
Because of the mature themes involved, reader discretion is advised. Printed in Canada.

RED TALONSTM

C R I B E B O O K

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Introduction: Always

*Our blood is the blood of Gaia,
A wounded blood.
We know Her pain. We are the Red Talons.
None can quench our anger.
You dare ask "When will we Rage?"
We have never ceased. We are the Red Talons.
Since the days of the Impergium,
Until the last hours of the Apocalypse,
We are always. We are the Red Talons.
— Scent-of-Red-Snow*

We are wild — unquenchably wild. Red Talons are different than all the Garou. We are not a balance between wolf and human. We are creatures — beasts — hunters who are capable of taking the form of another, lesser beast for a time. Even in that form we understand that we are still creatures. We are unafraid to be animals. We are unafraid, as many are, of the will of Gaia, the will of the earth. If we look after Her, then She will provide for us. If we fail in this, She will provide for none.

The Red Talons are dying. We are now so few that our wisdom is almost lost to you, but still you do not understand. You embrace the ways of the Defiler and then turn to us when all is lost — we cannot help you. We can hardly help ourselves. The very laws of Gaia will be our eventual undoing. Yet we fight on. We are the Red Talons.

— Crookpaw



Chapter One: The Long Defeat

*So, so you think you can tell Heaven from Hell, blue skies from pain.
Can you tell a green field from a cold steel rail? A smile from a veil?
Do you think you can tell?
And did they get you to change your heroes for ghosts? Hot ashes for trees?
Hot air for a cool breeze? Cold comfort for change?
And did you exchange a walk on part in the war for a lead role in a cage?
— Pink Floyd, "Wish You Were Here"*

It falls to me to talk of history. The Red Talons, my tribe, are not concerned with the past, except to acknowledge the sadness and tragedy that has been wrought there.

You think us creatures of anger, and that we are. But our Rage is different from yours. We are not the carriers of Wyrms-tainted fury; ours is the understanding that we are the hunters of Gaia. Our anger is the response of those who have seen their world torn down.

But more often we feel sadness. Again, unlike you, this is no Wyrms-spawned Harano that saps our strength. It is an understanding of how things are and how they should be... how they might have been. Maybe it is the understanding, never spoken, that the Red Talons are dying, that our time

is past. We have no place in your Weaver-ruled world, where the Wyld is wrapped in plastic and every meal bears the tang of the Wyrms. We will not have this world, and it will not have us.

We place little stock in the great deeds and tales of the lore-wise tribes, and even less importance in the lists and dates of human scholarship. It takes a Red Talon who is exceptional, different... metis... to talk of our history at all.

Red Talons live their history through moots where tales are told in howls by long-dead ancestors who enter into the living to give guidance. Those great Talons of old who have had the misfortune to share my metis body with me have taught me much of their earlier times.



I am named Crookpaw and nothing else. A description of infirmity is all that is my name. I have earned no other title of worthiness. Having been denied the experiences that my full-blood lupus brothers and sisters enjoy, I have acquired a fair grasp of human speech, and can thus tell the legacy of my tribe. For though my tribe will not have me, I will have none but the Red Talons.

The History of the Red Talons

*If we seek solace in the prisons of the distant past
Security in human systems we're told will always last
Emotions are the sail and blind faith is the mask
Without the breath of real freedom we're getting nowhere fast...
History will teach us nothing*

— Sting, "History Will Teach Us Nothing"

We Red Talons remember everything, and we remember nothing. We are concerned with the patterns of Gaia, not dates or the counting of years. We remember only those things that made us what we are. We do not write our history down, but remember it in tales and songs, acknowledging the long line of wolves that pad silently before us. These tales would slowly die if locked in the cage of written words. Deeds that are sung can live forever.

Preserve the paw that makes the mark, so that it might make its mark on others. Weep not that the mark has been washed away by the rain.

The First Story

*I'm the red wolf, says the dark
old father.*

All right, the red-dawn-wolf am I.

— D.H. Lawrence, "The Red Wolf"

It has elsewhere been told that the Red Talons sprung from the very womb of Gaia Herself. What tribe would not claim this lineage? The Red Talons, however, are truly born of wolf, as are no other. Wolf was the favored animal of Gaia, ruling over Her paradise and ensuring that Her balance was maintained. There are many versions of this story.

Some say it was the Wurm who broke this paradise. In his jealousy, he slithered in and corrupted the youngest humans. But this stinks of the humans' own story too much for me.

Some say it was the Weaver who, in her desire to create, stole away some of the creatures of the Wyld. The Weaver secreted them in a cave and showed them her lore of tools, changing forever their relationship to the world. When Wolf, sent by Gaia, came to find them, they were frightened and stung him with their spears and sticks. His death was the first great tragedy, but his rebirth by Gaia was a greater tragedy still, for he was charged with thereafter warding humans.

But I favor a different telling, and for this (and my metis scars) I am seldom asked to address a moot or to instruct the pups. I think that it was Gaia Herself who made the humans, just as She made us. Or rather, the humans, made by Gaia, grew unaided into what they are now.

Once they were monkeys, eating leaves in the trees and fearing the ground lest the wolf might eat them. After coming out of the trees they made tools and weapons, fire and dwellings, protecting their young as we protect our young. The forces of Gaia shaped them, just as they began to shape Gaia. The humans are a creature different from us. Never satisfied with what they have, they always desire better... and more. They have vanity and greed. Whether this stain of the Wyrms was in their hearts from the very beginning, or whether they were tricked or corrupted into the having of it, we will never know and do not care.

While we ruled over the wilderness, they began to carve out a space for themselves. They were clever and skillful; it cannot be denied. Without their tools and walls, however, they are defenseless. They have come to rely on their creations to compensate for their furllessness.

When humans and wolves first walked the earth together, in the same age, there were born Garou. The seeds of the first Garou were sown by Gaia in the bloodlines of humans and wolves so that Her two favored children might cooperate and unite into one creature that could defend Her. It was a tragedy that Gaia chose humans to be part of Her defense when they were instead to become Her greatest enemy. Homid Garou do not understand this tragedy.

The first Garou born was a wolf. Who can say whether he was a Red Talon? In such times "tribe" had no meaning. Tracks-in-Fresh-Snow he called himself, and for a short time he was lord of all of Gaia's creatures. He delighted in his wolf and human forms, and moved among both races. He mated with a human woman, and she gave birth to the first homid. The Red Talons are descended from Tracks-in-Fresh-Snow; he is our father as Gaia is our mother. Many of the other tribes advance a complicated argument, claiming that his homid daughter was the first true Garou, as Tracks-in-Fresh-Snow had no Garou parent. Or they deny his existence.

This denial is meant to take honor from the Red Talons. We bear this affront as we bear all offenses: with defiance and contempt. But our Rage smoulders.

The First Metis

A great deal can be learned about the Red Talons from the story of the first Red Talon metis. Maybe the story is true... maybe it is myth, but I have made it my story — committed it to memory — and I tell it often.

Red Talons had witnessed the whelping of metis in other tribes, and found them to be anathema, abominations. The great lupus found an explanation easy to come by, however. The other tribes were tainted by their homid stock, and

homid breeding was a strange process. Why then should not the breeding of the homid tribes be equally strange (and equally tainted)? No metis were birthed in Red Talon packs, whose members mated with wolves and kept their line strong in both the Garou and their Kinfolk.

But the Red Talons were young then. Human ideas like love and sex for pleasure were alien to them. These emotions rose up through their hated homid side, but remained ignored and dormant. The early Talons, like those of the modern world, seldom adopted Homid form, thought or speech. Although this was in times before the creation of the Litany, for which we care little (having our own code), mating between Garou was strictly forbidden. Red Talons considered themselves to be in no danger from this affliction, seeing no use in the creation of sterile progeny. But, as has happened so many times to my tribe and to all Garou, this confidence and pride was to precede a fall from grace.

How typically tragic that it was the advent of human love which caused this fall of the Red Talons. Although wolves feel affection for their mates and packmates, it is not the same as the troubled, overcomplicated passions that wrack humans and homids. The love of wolves is a simple love, born of the need for mutual survival and cooperation. The love of humans is a confusing, troubled thing.

In the late spring, when each Red Talon pack was to break up for a time, its members going their separate ways, two young lupus decided to visit a human settlement together. This was in the time before the Impergium, and though Red Talons had always regarded the humans with suspicion, good relations existed between humans and Garou. The human settlements were not too large, and they understood their place in Gaia's delicate balance. Most Red Talons paid humans no heed, thinking them lesser creatures and unworthy of the attention of great Garou. But these two young Talons, Leaps-the-Creek and Tail-Like-a-Branch, were curious about humans, and had determined to learn something of them.

Leaps-the-Creek was a young male of six summers; Tail-Like-a-Branch, a female of similar age. As with most lupus, their First Change occurred for them within two to three summers. The two had been companions for the last few years, for they came from the same wolf pack. (In those early days, Gaia sometimes blessed the Garou with multiple Garou births to a single litter.) The two Garou planned to spend all summer at the human settlement.

There was a man in the settlement called Tarn. Tarn was the grandson of one of the wise men and had not yet found himself a lifemate, much to his family's shame. As he saw the arrival of the two Talons... as he watched them take the Homid form out of politeness to their hosts, and as he saw Tail-Like-a-Branch's nakedness before it was covered by a human blanket, he determined that he would take her as his lifemate and be the father of Garou. This would alleviate the shame he felt. Tarn was not a beautiful man but he was crafty and a fine warrior. He bided his time.

During that summer, the two Garou lived among the humans in the village, eating, hunting and playing with them all the time in their Homid forms, as they had intended. The two stayed close together, as foreigners will among strangers, but slowly the humans came to accept them and value their great skill as hunters and foragers. The humans observed the Garou closely, and learned much from them concerning Gaia and Her laws. The young Garou watched the humans just as closely, and came to understand a great deal of their laws and customs.

It is said that the Garou are gifted to understand humans and beasts, but I say there is nothing in this to marvel at. Humans themselves are also beasts.

Leaps-the-Creek and Tail-Like-a-Branch made many friends and companions in their time among the humans. Leaps-the-Creek watched as his packmate befriended Tarn. Tarn flattered Tail-Like-a-Branch, and brought her many gifts. The humans understood what was happening, but the young Garou could not. Leaps-the-Creek continued to smile at the sight of his lifelong friend's happiness. The two Garou were sad to leave when the snows returned and the appointed time had come.

As the Garou bid their farewells, Tarn approached the two and asked Tail-Like-a-Branch, in the way of his people, if she would be his lifemate. Then, the Garou understood, as they stood upon the cold tundra, anxious to take their Lupus forms after a year of playing Homid. A gust of cold wind cut through their inadequate, unfurred skins. Tail-

Like-a-Branch paused for a moment in contemplation. She was ready to mate, and this man seemed as good as any. Tarn produced a spear, and said that he was willing to fight Leaps-the-Creek for the right he requested.

The people stood silent. The Garou had yet to speak. Slowly, as if he did not understand his own words, Leaps-the-Creek said, "Tail-Like-a-Branch is my lifemate." Tail-Like-a-Branch was silent. The silence deepened as the people nodded their heads and turned to leave. Tarn, however, was not so easily defeated.

He ran at Leaps-the-Creek with his spear raised. Leaps-the-Creek was both stunned by his own words and the realization that was coming over him; surprised by the sudden attack, he failed to dodge, and the first spear thrust pierced his side. But Garou are not slain by such wounds; he leapt up from the bloody snow in Crinos form. Tarn fought bravely, but the battle was short and victory assured. The two lupus fled into the snow, leaving the people who had been their friends weeping.

That night, in a hollow lined with pine needles, Tail-Like-a-Branch licked the wounds of her packmate, and the two nuzzled together against the cold. They mated there, for many reasons, and perhaps not the same for each of them. But they mated there and parted company until the pack would rejoin.

Leaps-the-Creek never returned to the pack. He was never seen again by any Garou, and maybe he was the first victim of Harano. But this is a story about another tragic first.



Tail-Like-a-Branch returned to the pack with a swollen belly, and none thought it strange, as it was natural for Garou to mate in the summer when off on their own. The elders mourned the loss of Leaps-the-Creek, but even they did not wonder about the pup growing inside Tail-Like-a-Branch. Finally, the pup was born and a hideous, small, Crinos creature it was — as I have heard it said all metis are.

All pups are born blind and hairless, but this pup (named Sadness by his mother) had no fur to shield him from the snows, and only one of his eyes ever opened. The elders conferred over what should be done about the metis cub, and reached a decision that maintained the pride of the Red Talons above all else. Tail-Like-a-Branch fought to defend her offspring, and was slain in front of all the pack by the oldest of the Ahrouns, Black-Paw. Black-Paw then took the little metis in her mouth and crushed the life out of it with her jaws, not eating it for fear of contamination.

That is the end of the story, except to say that the pack broke apart after that, having witnessed that cruel act, and ran together no more. In killing Sadness, Black-Paw had given birth to grief and doubt. Since that time, many other metis have been treated like Sadness, but other packs have learned from that story, and more care is taken to prevent the creation of metis than is invested in their destruction.

This disgrace I bear myself: with heavy shoulders and my nose set into the wind. But my Rage stirs.

When finally all Red Talons have gone from Gaia it will not be as the Croatan were lost, slain in battle with the Wyrms. Red Talons are too strong to fall in battle; we shall fall because the world moves beyond us. We are not great changers, we Red Talons, though we can change our forms. Even as we cling to our wolf side, we cling to a Gaia that will soon disappear. Our close ties to Gaia make us subject, as are all of Her wild children, to the forces of extinction, against which we Rage. We are constant and unflinching, unwilling to adapt to new ideas or situations; it is not our way. Such was the impact of homid emotions on the Red Talons.

A Great Offense

One of the saddest defeats of the Red Talons — one which helped build the Rage of the Impergium — was when some of our wolf brothers and sisters became the helpmates and playthings of the humans. The settlements of humans had already begun to expand, and although they still feared the wilderness, their hunting expeditions became more sophisticated. Having seen the efficiency and skill of the wolf packs and the Garou, the humans, who are nothing if not adaptive, began to recruit hounds to help them in their hunting. At first, these hounds were treated as partners in the endeavor, and had no further part in human life. Soon, however, the hounds became dogs (later to become lap dogs) and lost their dignity and freedom. The Wyld went out of them, and the Weaver entered in. The Red Talons watched this process with disgust and Rage.

Not yet ready to intervene and kill the humans involved, those who seethed at the ignobility of the new status of the dog turned their anger upon the dogs themselves. The way in which the humans used these animals — made them work, hunt and labor for human gain — enraged my ancestors and drove them to ever more violent acts. There had been resistance and anger at the harnessing of oxen and other hoofed creatures for human bidding, but these animals were our prey, and, although proud in their own way, did not inflame the fires of our Rage. To enslave our brethren, though, separated from us by only a few mothers and pups, was too great a crime to be borne in silence.

So when dogs — so-called wolf-hounds and others — were made to be a human tool, Red Talon patience and restraint were broken. One-Ear-Black, a mighty Galliard, led a wild run into human settlements. Her intention was to free the hounds, to release them from their servitude. Never did she believe that the dogs would resist, or that they would greet the Talons with snarls and bared teeth. One-Ear-Black was crushed when she realized that dogs had become companions of humans, and that they were more frightened of the Garou than of the Wyrms. Indeed, they could no longer smell the Wyrms in their own kennels.

Howling piteously, she set upon the penned hounds that she had intended to free, beginning an enmity between wolves and dogs that exists to this day. Humans gift their dogs with chains and spikes to keep them safe from us. It is not enough. Dogs no longer know Gaia, and it is another thorn in the paw of the Red Talons. When the Impergium finally came, the dogs stood beside their human masters and suffered with them beneath our fangs.

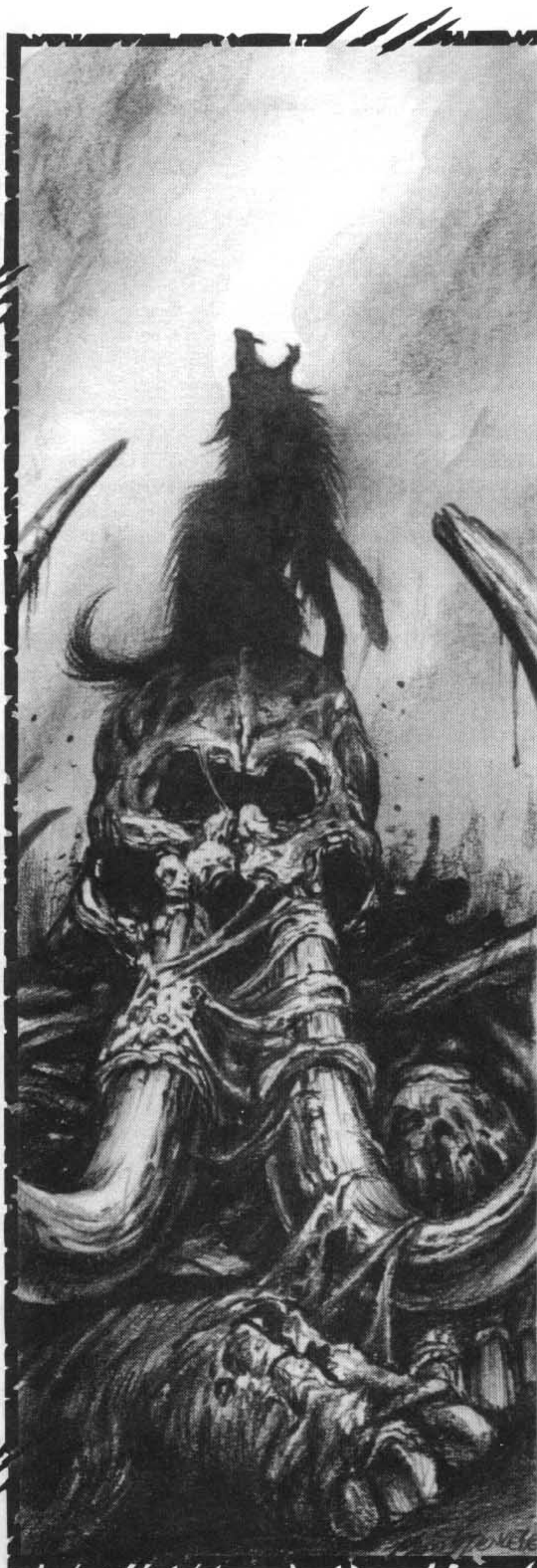
We reserve special hate for those creatures that are hybrid; some dog and some wolf are in them — an insult. Humans keep them as prisoners, and hope to capture some of the nobility of the wolf for their entertainment. This is anathema to us.

We bear this insult as we bear any other: with Rage and sadness. But our Rage begins to grow.

The First Extinction

There was a time when we did not notice the humans. Maybe the Theurges were uneasy at the new habits of the creatures, their groupings and buildings, but Garou had foreseen nothing of the permanency they would achieve. Wolves had no such structures, and Garou had no need for them, so we watched with curiosity as humans grew and ploughed and hunted.

When Red Talons hunt, there is consideration made for the hunted and for the hunted of next season. What I mean is, Red Talons do not prey on a herd that is near to collapse. Garou do not kill all the young of any creature, knowing that to do so is foolish, preventing that food from being available the next year. The humans did not understand this, and we did not know that they did not understand until it was too late.



Animals had been lost before. In the earliest years, in Garou infancy, many creatures walked the earth that are now gone, and we hunted them then. But we did not drive them unto death. It was by Gaia's will that they left, a will that we understand well (only too well, for we may soon ourselves be its victims). These creatures are gone because Gaia had changed, and the world for which they were made was now gone. What the humans did was something different, a wound that festers in our conscience to this day.

The humans had come to lose their fur over time and had become pink and vulnerable. There was a great need among them for the hides of other creatures to keep them warm (truly they are paradoxical creatures — strength garbed in weakness). In packs, the humans hunted the beasts with thick hides. We soon taught them not to hunt wolves, though sadly, this is a lesson they have since forgotten. They turned their attentions to larger animals, many times stronger and more dangerous than they. Some hunted bison; others, deer. One group were called the mammoth people, and their lives revolved around the hunting of the great furred mammoths.

In much the same way as wolves might, many humans would cooperate; using clever strategy and their human tools, they would tire and then kill the great mammoths.

At first, we felt that this was good. One mammoth beast would keep many humans warm and fed. Although the humans did not treat their prey with the respect that a hunter should, they did little harm. They used all parts of the fallen prey to make their clothes, weapons and dens, and this was good. We never thought that the humans would be so foolish as to hunt too many beasts.

It was long before we realized the effects of our lack of vigilance. When next Garou traveled the runs of the mammoth, they found few left, and those few were mostly old or sick. There were no calves. Stunned, the Red Talon Philodox, Runs-Wisely, tried to save what few mammoths had survived and to prepare them for the coming spring hunts of the human tribes. Next, Runs-Wisely traveled to the humans to tell them that they must not hunt. Again, the Red Talons were shocked — not by how few humans there were, but by how many. The tundra was dotted with settlements like a diseased skin.

Undaunted, the Red Talons approached the human leaders, and told them they must not hunt mammoth this season. The human gestured to show the Red Talons how many of her people were cold: "This year we have even more people who need to be warm."

Runs-Wisely was a gentle creature; he left to ponder the human's words. He was a clever Garou, but he was unable to solve the puzzle, unable to imagine how far the humans would go in their selfishness and short-sightedness. And so it was that, in the next hunting season, no one was there to defend the last of the mammoths as the humans hunted them down with ambushes and spears.

When Runs-Wisely returned to see how the mammoths had recovered, he found one old, bald, bull mammoth left. All the others were dead. He spoke with the old bull, who told him of the coming of the humans, year after year, and the slaughter of his family. Still, Runs-Wisely could not understand the human behavior.

Together, the Garou and the mammoth traveled to the human settlement to talk again with the leader there. When Runs-Wisely asked the leader what had happened, the leader told him of the great winter cold, and how the people had needed all the furred-skins to survive. Runs-Wisely felt a black anger rise in his stomach as he asked, "But how will you survive the next winter when all the mammoths are dead?"

"We will hunt another beast," the woman replied.

Only then did Runs-Wisely understand.

As the humans speared the last, old, bald bull mammoth, Runs-Wisely forgot wisdom, and slew humans on all sides with teeth and claws and pure anger. Runs-Wisely was slain eventually by many human weapons. Many spears and axes pierced his flanks as the humans harried, tired and ran him down until he could fight no more.

This was the first time that humans had killed a Garou, and was to be the event that ignited the Impergium... which had been a long time coming. Finally, the homid Garou were presented with an undeniable example of human power and depravity. A Garou was dead, and an animal kin extinguished because of human need. The Silver Fangs could no longer ignore our pleas for direct control of the humans. A grand moot was held, and the Impergium was ordered.

Humans have driven many more beasts to their extinction since the Impergium. Our "enlightened" homid cousins see this but do not act. We bear this foolishness as we tolerate all the excesses of the homids: with little regard and lonely action. But our Rage grows.

The Impergium

They mostly come at night... mostly.

— Newt, *Aliens*

Our glory is past. The Impergium is over. We were there, the wolf in every fold, the hunter and the shepherd. We were the lords of the earth. Now, we die, and Gaia groans under the weight of swollen flocks. The Impergium was a time of greatness, a time when the hateful humans understood their place — or rather, we understood it and made them see our understanding. In that time, wolves were proud, and humans were fearful. We even respected them as the hunting wolf respects the moose (though these humans have no hooves and horns of their own — these they build from rocks and trees). We would look them in the eye, those who were to die, and tell them, as wolves tell their prey, that they must die, and that their death was for

the good of Gaia. That is how it should be. But I would never give a human such a boon today.

Imagine the scene: A small human herd with its constructions of ice, wood and stone. Around a fire they sit and stand as the ancient night closes in. They look at the moon, fearful to find that it is full. Quickly they count their numbers, accounting for all their pack.

The warriors shake their heads, knowing that it was a bountiful spring, and that many human pups play around the fire, tied by thongs of hide to a post in the middle of the village; too many. These infants are sent inside, to wait together in the hall. If the wolves are to come, it will be tonight.

The warriors sharpen their spears or repair axes, as they sit around the built-up fire. The mothers of the children join them. All know that resistance is futile; the wolf-men (as they knew us then) are too strong and too fast. They hope that the hunters hunt elsewhere this night, at another settlement.

As the night wears on, they fall asleep, one by one, illuminated by the glowing embers, each one believing that they have kept watch long enough, that they are safe tonight. Two men remain awake, staring at each other in the firelight. They are both old men, and they know. The wolves will come. A child will die tonight.

Never, in all our years as their shepherds, did we treat theirs as now they treat ours. In those times, we were more numerous than we are now, and they were less. Red Talons roamed the ancient tundra, carrying out Gaia's will, preventing the clever humans from becoming too many. We thought then that the humans understood; it was the way, the balance that must be kept. But they, the humans, were of the Wyrms from the very beginning. Some Red Talons knew that then; all know it now. Yet still we killed only some, maintaining their numbers as we would any other beast under our care.

Many counseled for utter eradication of the humans from Gaia. Despite what many have said since, this was never the desire of the Red Talons. I know what my ancient brothers and sisters felt about the humans: they were herd animals and a special problem. Herd animals should not be driven to extinction, even these humans who had done such things to Gaia that might never be repaired.

I grin with pain at the thought of the smallness of the crimes that angered those early Garou, compared to the abominations that we now see, horrors that would cause the old Talons to slay humans in their tracks. But the Talons then felt that the destruction of every human was against Gaia's law, as had been the humans' destruction of the mammoths.

Now, we feel differently about humans. They have waived their right to the protection of Gaia and become a disease. No longer can we pick the diseased creatures from their herd — all the herd is diseased. We leave them quietly



to die, and yet they do not. It is not the Red Talons who have failed; it is all Garou.

Yet we bear this burden as we bear the others: with silence and strength. But our Rage grows.

Betrayal and the End of the Impergium

It is easy to see why the Red Talons believe that compromise is betrayal. The first betrayal was the first compromise, and so it has been since. It is said, by Children of Gaia and others, that the Impergium was our great mistake (they, of course, deny personal blame). If such is the case, then we Talons welcome the accusations. We would begin anew today had we the numbers. I say, however, that the great mistake was ending the Impergium. Had it been maintained, then to this day Gaia would remain pure, and the humans would be no more or less a part of the balance and pattern of all life.

Why should the humans have no predator, yet breed out of all proportion? Yet the hunt was ended. The tribes were tricked and influenced by the homid Children of Gaia, Stargazers and others — all born of human. By the time the Red Talons were recalled from their tireless duty as shepherds for the human flocks, the decision was made. The Red Talons arrived at a great moot to find homids congratulating each other on the success of their “peace.”

These homids had mistaken inaction for peace, as always they do. Peace is not to be found in stillness. It is a noble thing to seek peace, that is sure, but it is found in the eyes of the dying moose that is your meal, or in the silence of a forest glen, or in the myriad smells of snow with the return of winter. The homids knew nothing of peace — they had betrayed all Garou and Gaia.

We bear this insult as we bear any other: with bitterness and regret. But our Rage grows.

The Culling Continues

We did not fight then; there were too many Garou who opposed us, although many of us wanted to fight. We withdrew and held a moot of our own. Other lupus were present, but the numbers were ours. There we made a decision. Most of the Red Talons refused to accept the Children of Gaia's initiatives, and continued to cull the human flocks. Alone or in small packs, they visited the settlements that other Garou had already visited spreading their message of peace. The Red Talons waited quietly for the other Garou to leave, hiding in the forest. None can find a Red Talon in the wilderness when she does not want to be found. After the homids left, my ancestors descended on the humans, picking young and old, sick and injured as their targets. Those final days of the Impergium were bloody indeed, and many more humans were taken than was needed to cull their flocks.

Much meat was buried beneath the snow, for in those times, human meat was still sweet, free from toxins and Wyrmspittle. I think that the Talons who killed in those final days of the Impergium knew, somewhere deep inside, that this was a last and futile chance to stave off the human assault on Gaia. And they tried... with fang, heart and blood.

What those Garou who clamored for the ending of the Impergium did not understand is that they are responsible for the weakening of the human animal. Humans multiply, and many become fat and lazy, sick and weak. When we were their masters, we killed such infirm among them, as we might kill sick caribou or buffalo, and kept their living numbers strong. Sometimes we would take healthy men or women when the mood took us, but culling usually kept the humans not only manageable but healthy and resilient. These days, one small sickness could wipe them out.

After the Impergium had ended, the humans grew more and more to rely on their tools and constructions to protect them from and reshape the world. Even things in which we find joy — rain, snow, wind — the humans shut out and brush away.

The humans are a herd, like any other. They are a herd that has grown beyond imagining, beyond terror. They have grown this way because we have not been allowed, by our less wise and short-sighted cousins, to prey upon them. It is not that their flesh is special — I have tasted it, and it carries little nourishment. It is better, true, after having

been buried for several days in the black earth; the fat comes away from the meat more easily. But human flesh is full of tastes and smells that make most of us sick.

But the herd is no longer culled, and the hunters are held back from their task by short-sighted homids. We bear this hurt as we bear any other: with anger and mourning. But our Rage grows.

The War of Rage

*Perhaps this final act was meant
To clinch a lifetime's argument
That nothing comes from violence
And nothing ever could*
— Sting, "Fragile"

There has always been some enmity between wolves and bears, between Garou and Gurahl. We never saw eye to eye. The great war between the Garou and the other changers was a sad time. The Silver Fangs were responsible for the war, but even then, we doubted their voice. We were never convinced by the voice of any homid, be he Silver Fang or Glass Walker. We had to protect our caerns.

The war was bloody, and the Gurahl and others struck back at more than just the Silver Fangs. Our Kinfolk were attacked in retaliation for the war, easy victims for the Gurahl and their allies. This we could not tolerate, and sadly, we joined the conflict in defense of wolves under our protection.



Though the Garou claim victory in the war, the Red Talons are not proud of our part in it. We gained much territory and many caerns that had once belonged to the Gurahl, but were not glad. Had the other changers fought only the Silver Fangs, then perhaps we would not have been part of the fight. But they were led by vengeful homids (as the Garou are now). If, perhaps, those born of wolf and those born of bear had been allowed to reach some agreement, then the war might have been short... if at all.

But the war was long. Each side believed it defended its territories. Kinfolk and hunting grounds. Territories had previously overlapped, and new boundaries were drawn in blood. But Red Talons never fought with the Corax, the wereravens. Ravens are our friends, and many of us follow the Raven. He teaches our pups to play, and we allow him to pick the bones of our kills. Red Talons hid many Corax at the time of the war, in secret caerns and other wild places. Some Corax counseled that we join with them and the Gurahl to resist the Silver Fangs. But we could not do this, and the Red Talons sadly drove the Corax from hiding, turning their backs on the slaughter.

Many modern Garou blame the Red Talons and believe that, because we advocated the Impergium and because might is our way, we had a great part in the war. They are wrong, but their ignorance does not surprise us. We hold the Gurahl caerns, safe from homid corruption, pretending they are our own, in case the Gurahl one day return to claim them.

We bear this prejudice as we bear other insults: with silence and hatred. But our Rage grows.

The Rise of the Weaver

*I know, that the sunset empire shudders and shakes
I know, there's a floodgate and a raging river
I say, see the silence of the ribbons of iron and steel
I say, hear the punch drunk huddle drive hammer and wheel
sometimes you're beaten to the call
sometimes you're taken to the wall
but you don't give in*

— Midnight Oil, "Sometimes"

We have seen Gaia die around us in ways that my ancestors never dreamed. When, for a time, the dead look out through my eyes and see the world as it is now, I feel their anguish course through my crippled body.

After the Impergium and War of Rage, the Red Talons retreated to the wildest parts of the world. We had spilt enough blood and could do no more, since our efforts against the humans were halted.

We then recognized our privileged duty as the protectors of the secret and sacred places still left. We sought to defend the wilderness, not to attack the problem. We understand

our mistake now. We should have tried harder to warn the homids, but they would not have listened to us. They kept their own counsel, and we kept ours.

When again Red Talons emerged to see what it was the humans were doing, they were confronted with the first gusts of the great tornado of destruction that was to come. Cities were springing up. Everywhere the ground and the forests were plundered for the materials to build human homes. The first time we entered such places, we were stung by the absence of Gaia. She has fled these palaces of the Weaver and Wyrms, and will not return.

Now these offenses are everywhere. Every day, forests die and the concrete scab swells. The earth's skin grows hard, and the creatures flee, leaving only the accursed humans and their Weaver master. It is said that the Wyrms went mad. Maybe. But the Weaver has become insane also, and is greedy. Only the Wyld remembers anything about the balance, and one cannot maintain the balance when two have forgotten. The homids say the Weaver is misguided, that it is the slave of the Wyrms. I say that homids are misguided, that many of them are slave to the Weaver. There is no excuse that either the Weaver or the homids offer that can satisfy the Red Talons.

We bear this hypocrisy as we bear all hurts: with insight and purity. But our Rage grows.

A New Wilderness

It is said among Red Talons that there will be new blood, but there will never be new land. It is said, therefore, that to spill blood to save land is a bargain well struck.

Once, there was a new land.

It is well known that the first Garou in the new wilderness were the three tribes who call themselves the Pure Ones: the Wendigo, the Uktena and the Croatan. It is a terrible misfortune that the Red Talons arrived in the new wilderness at the same time the homid Garou and their filthy Kinfolk did. A Galliard, Sky-Runner, was the first to set paw upon the shores of the new wilderness, and was amazed by what she found there. Huge areas of the land were unspoiled, not like the forests for which she had fought in her old home.

At first, there was cooperation between Sky-Runner and the Garou she met in this Gaian paradise. With the help of a Croatan Theurge, she opened a Moon Bridge and brought several packs of Red Talons to the new land. Sky-Runner and the first Red Talons to come founded many caerns that are still kept sacred today. These few packs walked the length of the new land, marveling at the beauty that Gaia had wrought here and kept secret from them for so long. There was envy in some, that the Pure Ones lived in this special land where no Red Talons had yet walked, but mostly it was wonder that filled their hearts.

Meanwhile, the European Garou and their Kinfolk were establishing settlements of their own. Land was claimed by humans, and there was violence between them and the native peoples. Red Talons paid this little heed, as violence between humans has never been our concern. The Pure Ones felt a need to protect their Kinfolk, as did the European Garou. Humans were responsible for the war, though the Garou involved showed no great reluctance to fight. Also, the lupus of this new land were unready for the anger of the Red Talons. They did not understand our commitment, our smoldering Rage. We had been at war for as long as they had been at peace. This divide persists, even to this day, and separates us from those who might otherwise be our greatest allies.

So it was that war broke out between the Pure Ones and the Garou from Europe. Many believe that the Red Talons fought with the invading Garou on their side. The truth is less simple. Some Red Talons fought with the invaders, while a few fought with the Pure Ones, expressing pent-up Rage against their European cousins. Most of the Red Talons declined to enter the war, dismissing it as homid politics. However, the Red Talons feel little of the remorse that is now felt over that conflict. To us, it was homid slaying homid in pride. The blood that soaked the earth made rich the grasses.

The defense of the new wilderness was a different matter. There were mighty realms of the wild to be found in this new place. Although human Kinfolk of the Pure Ones had lived here for many centuries, they had not had changed the earth as had the humans who lived in our old home.

And there were wolves. Wolves who at first were blind to our kinship with them. Soon, however, the Red Talons established packs and territories and began to make their gentle but firm mark on the new wilderness.

Although the Wyld was strong in this place when first we arrived, the Weaver quickly took hold, and the humans from Europe demonstrated they had learned nothing from their meeting with new peoples. It was the sheer speed and ferocity with which the wilderness was destroyed that forced the Red Talons to abandon the policy of defense and protection that had existed since the end of the Impergium, and to go back to an earlier and purer idea.

The humans had to be stopped or completely wiped out. In this notion, we had some support from the Wendigo, who are perhaps closest to us in the way they think, but the Europeans opposed us again. There was some conflict at the time, but the European Garou had far greater numbers, and we were again rendered impotent. We have always been too few, but few can accomplish much. Especially if those few are Red Talons and their Rage is true.



Diminishment, Slaughter and Gaia's Laws

The rest of our history, that of recent times, has been sad and punctuated by loss. We remain angry, but our anger is cooled by constant tears. Well named is this history: "The Long Defeat." All around us we see the proof of our inadequacy, evidence of the defeat of the Garou. Humans prosper under the tender care of the Wym. Wolves diminish and are slaughtered.

Always we have followed Gaia's laws. Why is it that we are punished for our loyalty and the humans are rewarded for their ignorance and greed? The humans have breached Gaia's laws, causing the extinction of beasts by misguided hunting and mindless massacre. There is a law under Gaia, a law that changes beasts as the years pass, a law by which all creatures change with the changing world. The humans try to understand this law, calling it "natural selection" and "evolution." Such words mean nothing to us. The Glass Walkers claim to understand the law, saying that they prosper because they follow this law. But humanity is the force that changes them.

The Red Talons understand this law, this pressure for change in a changing world. The Red Talons defend this law, allowing creatures to live under Gaia. But we do not change. We are the Red Talons. It is the one law of Gaia we do not obey. And we will suffer for it... one way or another.

A New Impergium

Do you not see the bitter irony of the day? The Impergium has returned, but it is the humans who practice it upon us. What are our numbers now? The Garou are too few. The Red Talons are even fewer. Daily our homes are burned and our Kinfolk slaughtered. This is the Impergium in truth. We run to the national parks. What is this but cowardice? What is this but captivity?

There is only one way. We must turn this around, tear down the cages and bite the masters. We must admit the horror of our situation and use what strength we have to tear out their throats. We are still strong. No human could stand against us. Even the Red Talons alone could still do what must be done, if it were not for you other Garou standing in our way saying, "Hold, there is another way."

There is no other way.

We must cut out the infection from Gaia, and that infection is humanity. They are uncontrolled and uncontrollable. The only answer is to kill every last human, to make toothless the Wym. Then we can heal Gaia. Don't talk to me of peace, don't talk to me of reconciliation, don't talk to me of healing. The Red Talons understand these words. We understand them better than any.

Before we have peace, before we have healing, we must kill. It does no good to seal the poison into the wound; first you must clean the wound. It is no good to believe humans will change. They will not. They have had the freedom to change, and they become more arrogant, more evil every new day. The Impergium must return. Are we to be predators or prey?

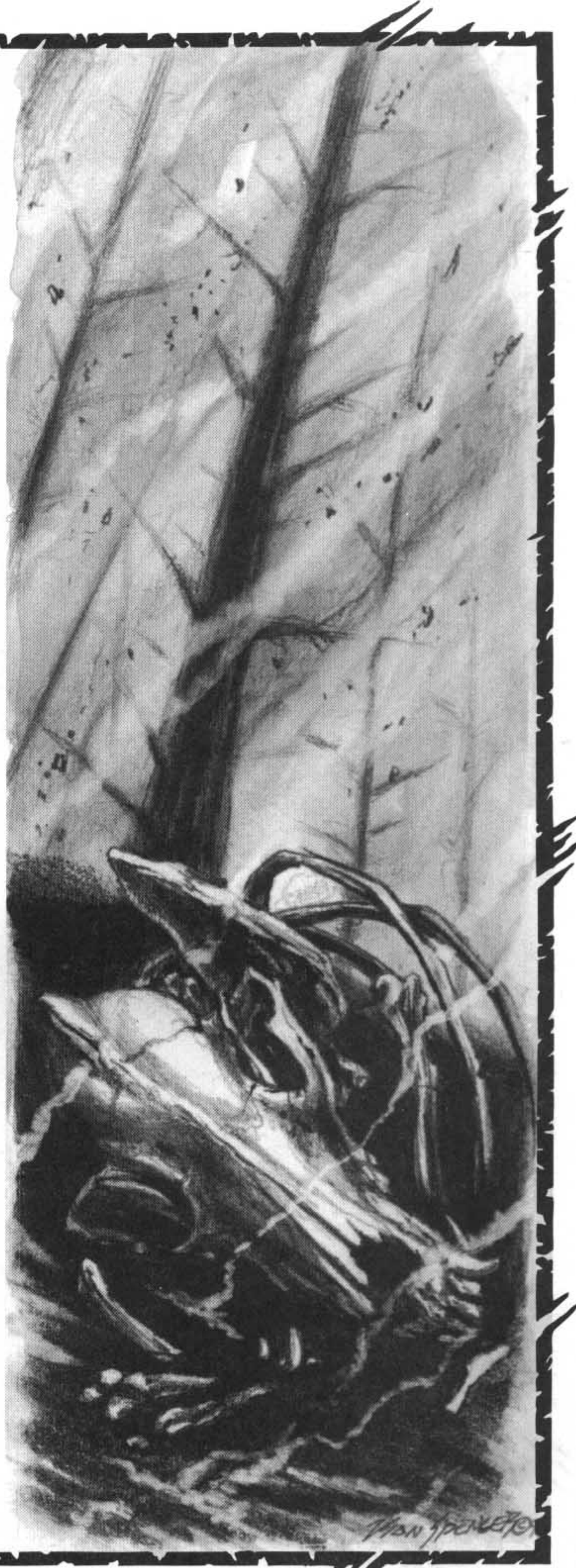
The Red Talons and the Apocalypse

He told of death as a bone white haze,
Taking the lost and the unloved babe
Late too late all the wretches run
These kings of beasts now counting their days.
From mother's love is the son estranged
Married his own, his precious gain
The earth will shake in two will break
And death all around will be our dow'ry
— Queen, "The Prophet's Song"

The Apocalypse. Spoken of by the great lorespeakers of all the tribes. A time when the earth will boil and the trees will be laced with fire. Waiting for the signs of the Phoenix? I tell you it is happening now. This is the Apocalypse, and we are losing. The Red Talons, the Garou, we are all dying. There will be no great final battle but this. That is not the way of Gaia. The Garou — unless some great effort can be mustered, unless some great realization can overcome them — will simply and slowly disappear. There will be none to witness the end. That is the way of such things.

The tragedy of the Red Talons is that we are being defeated. We are losing the battle to an enemy beneath contempt. The soft, pink, defenseless humans have proven themselves more than a match for red fangs and quick claws. While the humans breed and overrun the earth, we Red Talons die out. It is as though Gaia has forgotten us. It is as though we have no place in her plan. Refusing change, we must cease to be.

But the plan has gone awry, and we have not forgotten Her. Even though the Theurges see our end, the Red Talons will keep fighting. Our Rage is endless. Our Rage sees no reason. Our Rage knows no restraint. Wait not for a sign. The time to Rage is now.





Chapter Two: Paths in the Snow

*A few still hunt way out beyond philosophy
where nothing is sacred till it is your flesh
— Les Murray, "The Conquest"*

I have spoken with many different Garou. The stories that are not mine have been well remembered by me, but are the words of others. I know less of such matters than I would like, but the Red Talon blood in my veins lends me enough insight to present the wisdom of my elders so that you homids might understand. Where I can, I will tell you which great lupus it was that told me the thing that now I tell you.

The Terror of Two Legs

The Theurge, Stands-Against-the-Stream, a mighty and revered Red Talon, told me the following thing. This is her wisdom and not mine:

"Much is said by homid Garou about the terror of the Change. They whine like pups, and talk of the fear they had

when they found they were of wolf. I laugh at them. There is no fear in finding that you have a grace, balance and speed that you never had before. It is the lupus who knows real terror of the Change — I have not been so scared since then. Not of any Wyrn creature or human cruelty. When I found I was of human, I felt terror and shame.

"Humans had killed my wolf mother, and I thought, 'How can I be one?' After the Change came on me and I had killed the hunters in my first Rage, I came back to myself. I lay naked in the snow in my two-legs form for the first time, muscles screaming, covered in blood that coated my skin as if it were fur. The wind cut me like daggers, and the snow burned me with its cold. I tried to stand but could only fall, slip and roll. I could smell nothing and hear only the wind. I wanted to die.



"But no true wolf wants to die. That is the way of the humans; we abhor such weakness. I crawled on my human limbs to a fir branch in the snow and pulled it over me to keep the wind away. So I used my first hated tool, and came to understand the humans better. I lay there, unable to change, not knowing what creature I was, woman or wolf, until my father came and found me. That was true terror. But there was to be more.

"When I first had changed, I had still thought as a wolf. Later, I realized that I must think like an ape. I cannot take my wolf mind into my ape body. Humans have devious and clever minds. I want none of this. When I am on two legs, my mind is more like a human woman than the alpha wolf I am. This is more frightening than you can understand."

Here she backed away, hackles raised and lips drawn back to reveal fangs, frightened by her own words. She would say no more for several hours.

Dominance and Hierarchy

Red Talons, like our wolf brethren, have strong laws — a strict system of leadership and hierarchy. Although it is always clear to each member of a pack what his or her particular rank is, the alpha does not always determine what the pack will do. An older Talon who, though past her

prime, has knowledge of the territory in which the pack is about to travel, may lead the pack for a time. Deference to the alpha is demonstrated by the way a Talon holds her body.

When approaching the alpha, a young Red Talon must stay low, in head, body and tail. The pup might nuzzle the alpha or rest his head on the alpha's back. If the pup is feeling the need for particular submission, he might take the alpha's muzzle in his mouth and gently squeeze it. In turn the alpha will stand higher than the pup and tolerate his affections. It is never necessary for a Red Talon to use clumsy, inexact human speech to communicate such relations. We learn these things as pups and never forget them. There is more in the glance of an alpha, in the way he holds his tail, than can ever be said in human talk.

Among the Red Talons, it is a matter of great import that a leader emerge for each pack. That Garou will be the strongest and wisest Talon, the best able to lead the pack successfully against the Wyrms. Red Talons who mingle in packs made from the members of other tribes must content themselves with the games and laws of other Garou. But when the Red Talons are alone, they have no use for Gamecraft or other such folly.

It is clear most of the time who is best suited to lead the pack. Those with the healthiest coat, the fullest stride, the whitest teeth and the brightest eyes will be alpha. Other

Garou can see these things, these marks of strength and health. These signals cannot lie. Gaia does not lie. When it is clear who is to be alpha there is no fighting. Red Talons are not so foolish as to risk precious Garou blood fighting against an outcome that is preordained.

Sometimes, however, it is not so clear. There might be two or more Garou, each of whom has a healthy coat and sharp fangs, and each of whom would be alpha. Still the Talons do not fight each other, for though we can often be found fighting homids to make them see their ignorance, we do not willingly fight each other. When conflict must occur over who is to be alpha, the two Talons involved assess each other's ability in ways that do not usually kill or injure either Garou. No Red Talon has been known to engage in a klaive duel, at least not with another Red Talon.

Red Talon facedowns consist of a series of rituals that are designed to test the two Garou who are vying for the position of alpha. First they might walk up and down together, watching each other for signs of weakness. This is as far as many contests go. If neither backs down, they might next stand eye to eye or nose to tail, reading each other's scent and face. Only if many such rituals are passed and each Garou still judges himself to be the equal of the other does a fight begin. There is no duplicity in these contests. No Garou can hide his true condition from the practiced eye of a Red Talon alpha and a pack of would-be followers.

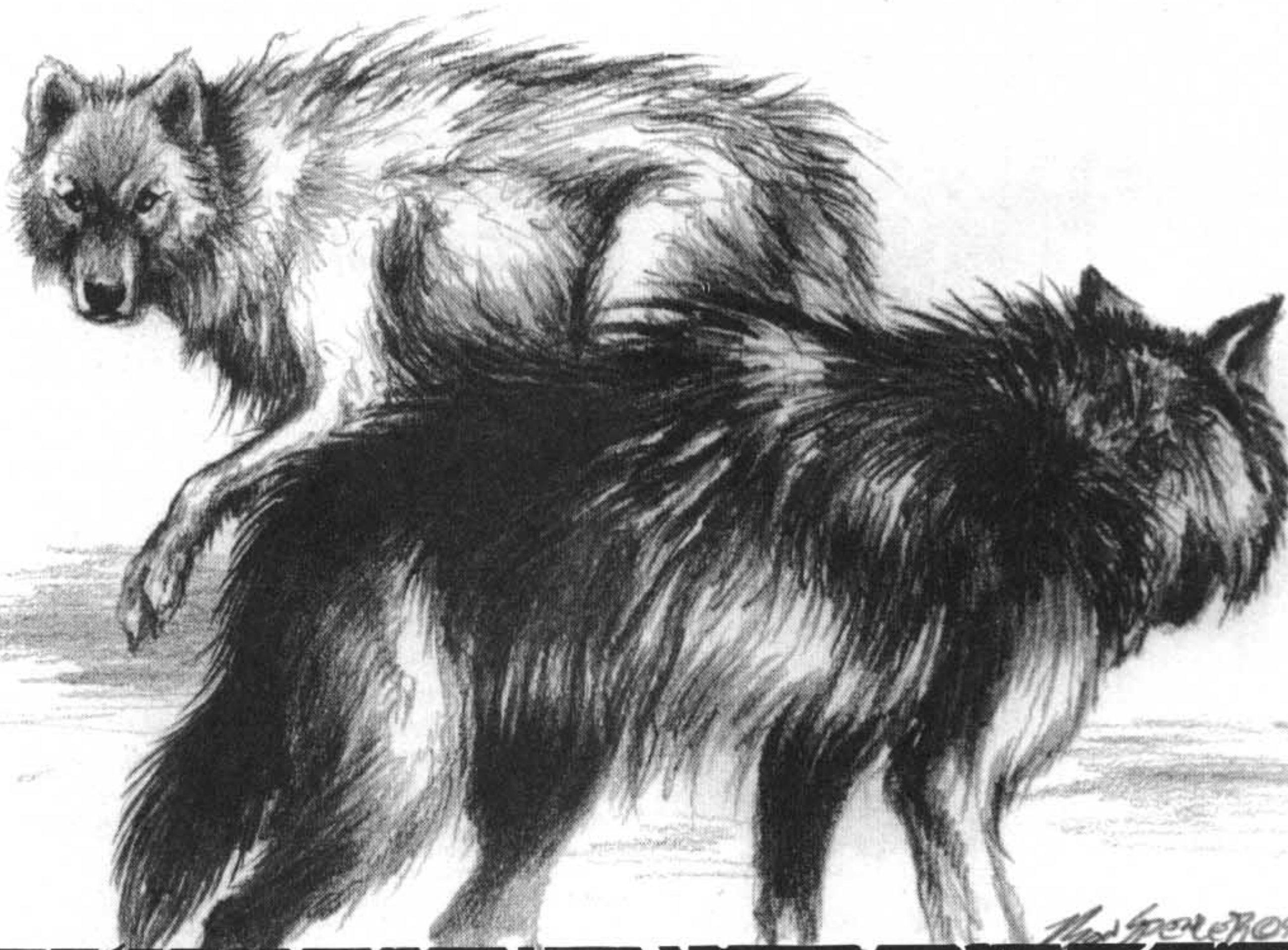
The Pack

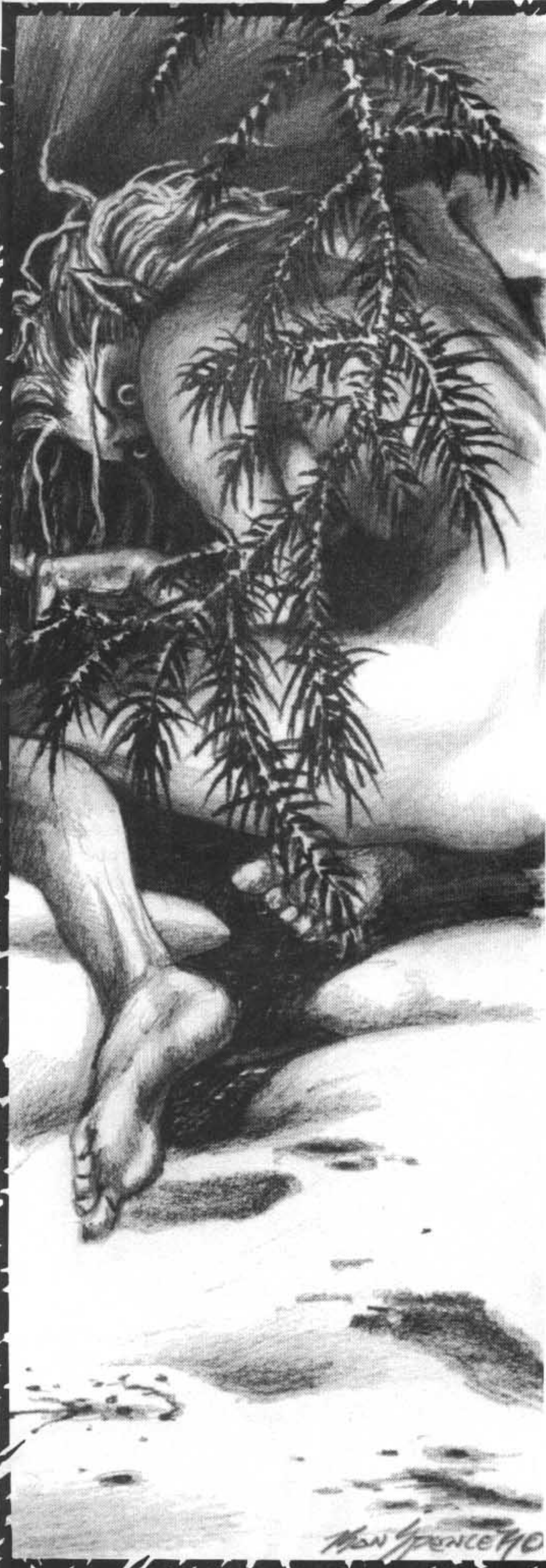
*So, in this moon, we climb the hills
lift our eyes toward the Wolf Trail
and remember that our lives
and songs are stronger
when we are together.*

— Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London, "Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back"

I have heard that humans compare the associations that they make with each other to the packs that wolves create. In this, as in all other things, they are wrong. Wolf packs and the packs of the Red Talons are sacred groups. Together we are more than what we would be were we alone. The pack is strong. When a single pack is made entirely from Red Talons there are connections that no homid could understand. Every inch of my body speaks to those packmates that know me. My scent tells them whether I am happy or afraid, my eyes speak to their eyes. When we howl together, the sound is the anguish of Gaia Herself.

We lie together on warm rocks as the sun sets, and each Garou knows his or her place. This knowledge gives strength and security. The special wisdom of each Talon is useful to the pack; we are not so proud that we cannot learn from one another. The young learn from the old; this is natural, and even the humans have learned this trick. But in the pack it





is different. The knowledge that passes is absolute, not changed or governed by jealousy and prejudice. There are no lies in the pack. If there is disagreement, then the two Garou involved settle their differences, usually without bloodshed.

The pack is dangerous — dangerous to others, dangerous to its prey. The humans have forgotten just how dangerous we are.

We metis are often refused the security of the pack. I feel the absence of such succor too greatly to doubt its importance.

Camps

If the answer isn't violence

Then neither is your silence

— Pop Will Eat Itself, "Ich Bin Ein Auslander"

Factions such as camps are human ideas, homid perversions. Wolves are not creatures of politics, and neither are the Red Talons. Nevertheless, these ideas have infiltrated our tribe, and thus we have camps.

Most of us do not admit that these camps exist, saying that their names come from the lies of the homid tribes trying to understand us. Among the Red Talons, the boundaries among the camps are difficult to distinguish, and what one Red Talon believes may actually fall under the auspices of several of the camps. Camp members may not identify themselves as such or even admit that camps exist, but we are an angry group and, inevitably, factions develop. Sometimes these factions are shortlasting, and disappear before they can be truly recognized. It is thus hard to accurately describe the beliefs of a particular group. Those that can be named are the longest enduring of the Red Talon groups, with many members at any one time. The camps are not as important or as organized as they appear to be in the other tribes — but they *do* exist. We hide them for shame, not because we do not know of them.

The Lodge of the Predator Kings

The Red Talons who are most adamant about the absolute and utter destruction of humans and their society are generally thought to be members of the Lodge of the Predator Kings. They claim to remember an older time when the apes knew their place — in the trees — and wolves roamed supreme over Gaia's mantle, with only other mighty predators to fear and respect. They believe that an alliance with the other animal breed changers — other predators — is the only way to halt the ascendance of the homid Garou and their Kinfolk.

The Lodge members prefer to run as Hispo, claiming that this is the true form of all Red Talons of old. In this way they demonstrate their shame of the wolf of today. Gaia took the dire wolf from her mantle; now, only the Garou walk in its tracks. But it is gone. The wolf remains. This we must remember.

Torn Ear Speaks:

Gaia needs us, now more than ever before. Animals are strong — stronger than they know — but they must be led. They require fighters to lead them in battle against their tormentors, captors and enemies. We are those leaders. Gaia has untapped armies, waiting for the leadership of lupus, feline and ursine. We are the ancient sentinels, the forgotten generals.

The way to victory is through the mustering of the forces of Gaia Herself and the minions of the Wyld. The humans hand-feed the Wurm, and still the Garou do not act. It is useless to protect what wilderness is left because humans will not stop. There is no choice left. No room for choice. There is no compromise.

The Warders of the Land

The Red Talons who are called Warders of the Land make up the bulk of my small tribe. This is the most tenuous and least obvious of the groups because it consists of all those Red Talons who are not obviously members of the Lodge of the Predator Kings or of the Whelp's Compromise.

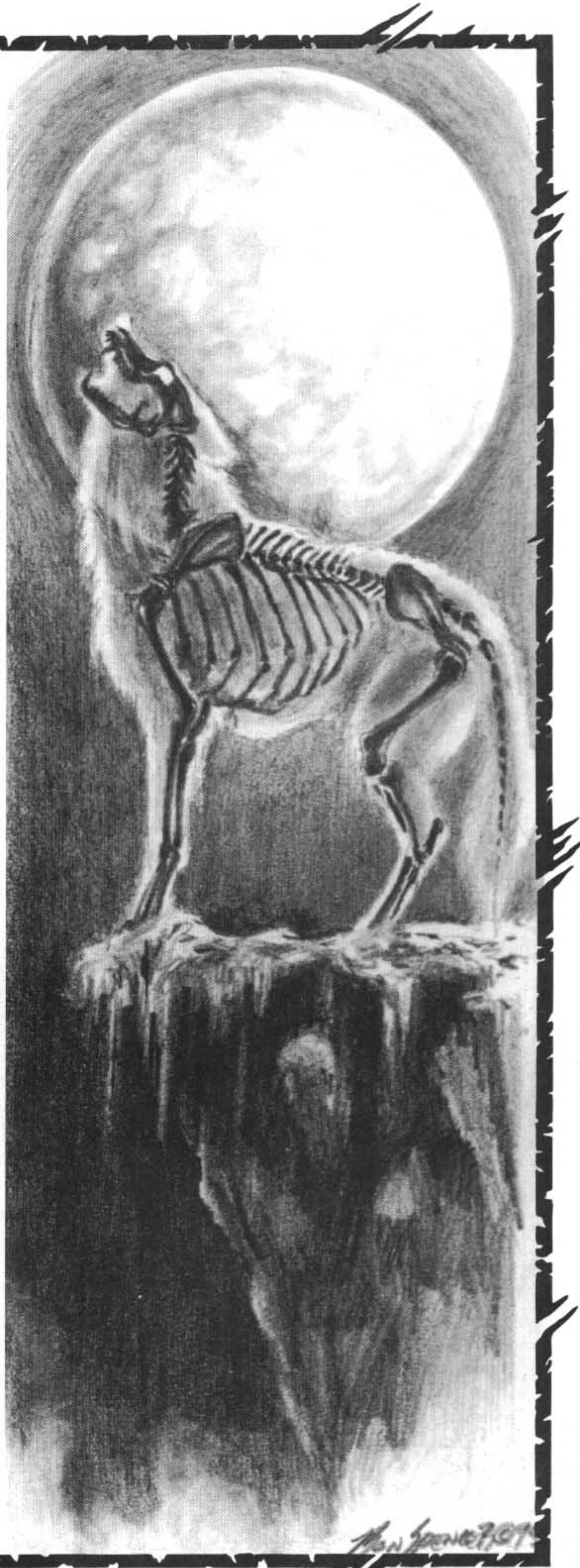
Some Warders of the Land argue that what wilderness remains is best protected through defense; others argue that the only way to protect the Wyld is to attack the humans outright. The Warders are aware of the balance of Gaia and the natural laws. They try to see things in this light, make decisions and take actions that consider this balance.

Bloodmoon's Creed:

I have only one answer to the question that all Garou must face: We must kill. Humans are not special; they are not important. They are beasts that have grown too great. They have come too close to the sacred places; they do not see that all wilderness is sacred to us. We are the Warders. We must guard what remains. We are the hunters. We must cull the herd. We must kill.

Whelp's Compromise

The only group in the tribe that could truly be called a camp is the Whelp's Compromise. Called by the homids the "anti-extinction faction," they are a group of young Talons who have taken on many homid ideas and behaviors. They argue like homids, and do not show respect for their elders. They have no pride, and, when challenged by an alpha or other elder, immediately roll and show their throats. In this way they ensure that they are not hurt by the elders, who cannot betray this most sacred of behaviors. And so they practice their profanity freely. We are unable to silence these few, feeling it is better to keep them within tribal packs rather than to allow them to move among the other Garou, threatening the name and honor of the Red Talons.



One-Leaf-Ear is Heard:

To be a small wolf amongst such great ones is ever daunting. We have found a way to make ourselves heard, however. We have stopped fighting our elders, giving in to them while they are present and changing our voices as soon as they leave. We are accused of every evil: that we are like homids, like humans or even agents of the Wyrms. We are not traitors. We believe in the Red Talons, but we would not see ourselves waste our energies in one useless attack against the unassailable might of humanity. Surely such an effort would result in the end of the Red Talons and not the end of the human disease. Furthermore, we would not have the Red Talons reduced to humanity's level. Humans are the only creature that forces its might onto other creatures so insanely, driving them to extinction. We would not do this to them. I would not have my tribe do such things. Then truly the Wyrms would laugh at us.

Totems

Griffin

You call him Griffin, and maybe he once was. To you, he is a beast of legend, from the myths of human heroes. To us, he is everything that is noble in the animal, in the hunter. He is the talons and the fangs, the muscle and sinew — those things with which the beast makes his life. Griffin is a hunter and a warrior. We are hunters and warriors. When the humans paint Griffin, they draw a fearsome beast. That he is, and so are we. They would do well to fear us.

We remember Griffin in our moots and when we make our kills. We invoke his name in a sacred howl before we begin a hunt or an act of war, for his spirit guides us best in these activities. Sometimes a Red Talon becomes so infused with the spirit of Griffin that we perform a sacred rite, dedicating him to do the work of the tribe. The Talon then runs alone and slays all creatures of the Wyrms he can find. Eventually he dies. Griffin understands this.

Old Wolf of the Woods

The story of Old Wolf of the Woods is known well to the Red Talons. One of our greatest totem spirits, this ancient hunter stalks the woods of the Umbra and enacts the sacred lifepath of the wolf. He is the guardian of our spirit, and understands the cycles and rhythms of Gaia like no other. We remember him as the shadow wolf, the ever-wolf, and he is in all of us as he is in our wolf brethren. When the time of the Apocalypse is upon us, Old Wolf of the Woods will come back to Gaia and fight for his children.

Old Wolf of the Woods is a strange spirit. He is both totem and ancestor, creature and spirit. He makes his home in the deepest Umbral forests that is all woods. Born from the womb of Gaia, he has taken on the forms of many Garou in his long life. When he is old and no longer hale enough to take part in the hunts of his realm, he chooses a Red Talon to lay him to rest and assume his mantle. So the cycle goes.



Breeds

Wolves may be unique in having markedly different human personalities. In human terms, some are more aggressive or shyer or moodier, and pack society allows these individual temperaments to mature.

— Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*

Almost all of the Red Talons are lupus. There have never been any Red Talon homids, nor do the Red Talons have any human Kinfolk. Very rarely are Red Talon metis born, and even more rarely are they allowed to survive. Even in these desperate times, among a tribe that understands its scarcity only too well, the arrival of a metis cub is met with anger and violence.

Lupus

Stands-Against-the-Stream has spoken of being lupus:

"We are born of wolf, and we die of wolf. When we sleep, it is as wolf. We can take the two-legs form, with no fur, no balance, no smells, but we do not like to. We are fastest, strongest and safest with four paws planted strongly on the snow. As lupus, we run with our brethren. As lupus, we mate with them, and stave off the day when our line will fail. There are not many of us; there are not many wolves. It has been said that we should mate with human packs and make homids — this would not work, and we would not do it. Better to die lupus than be born homid.

"Lupus is a mighty creature, and gentle too. In us is a balance that comes from our understanding of the earth. We run low to the ground; we are never far from it. We can sense things we cannot describe to you — not smells or sounds, but senses that go beyond the humans', beyond the homids'. We know where our prey will be before it is there. How do we know this? you ask. You can never know with your rational, calculating human brain. We are lupus; we do not think of it. We know."

Metis

It is not without bitterness that I speak of the treatment of metis by my tribe. Rarely are such creatures as I born, but much rarer is our survival. Most packs would slay metis instantly, eating the dead cub to return the tortured flesh to Gaia and so as to not waste a meal. I ask you, how can one whose parents both are lupus not be lupus? I am no hybrid, no monster of homid and lupus, not even a mule who was made by different tribes, yet I am metis. I am scorned. It is their own shame that makes them drive me away. I was not even allowed the position of the scapegoat, to follow the pack at a distance, to pick the bones of its kills, sharing them with ravens. I will never have a mate, never cubs.

Sometimes I hate my packmates for this, yet their blood is in me and I understand.

The Auspices

All that is now

All that is gone

All that's to come

and everything under the sun is in tune

but the sun is eclipsed by the moon.

— Pink Floyd, "Eclipse"

The shapes of the moon that govern our whelping are those that make our place in the pack. All packs need all moons; packs that lack a moon are weaker than those that are whole.

Each Garou has a role to play, bestowed by Luna when she blesses him with the mark of the Garou. It is foolish to think that Ragabash is like Ahroun or that Theurge is like Philodox.

Ragabash (The Invisible Moon)

The New Moon is my auspice. It is the Invisible Moon, for on such nights it is very dark, and we hunt by scent alone. Our prey cannot see us in the dark, and when we move into the wind it cannot smell us. We are invisible.

We Ragabash have a special place among our packs and tribe. The Red Talons, more than any other tribe of Garou, have a strict hierarchy. The alpha is ruler, and is seldom, if ever, a Ragabash. Our role is to be the only Garou allowed to question the alpha. We may ridicule, embarrass and joke about the alpha. When she responds with a challenge, we, never hoping to be alpha ourselves, respond submissively, acknowledging her dominance. In this way we can criticize the leadership of the alpha without threatening her position. This role is vital to the survival of the pack. If there were none to question the alpha, a bad leader could lead the pack to disaster just because he was the strongest.

Theurge (The Listening Moon)

This is the Listening Moon. It is still too dark for sure sight in the hunt, but we can hear our prey. It is also during this moon that the spirits whisper into the world; if we are quiet and still, we can hear them. Those born on these nights can understand them.

Stands-against-the-Stream is a Crescent Moon:

"The way of the Theurge is the way of Gaia. We bear a great burden. Knowledge is ours, and secrets that can be heard by no other Garou, not even those of our own packs. This is hard. Sometimes we know the future, but we can say nothing of it. The Theurge guards her pack while they are in the Umbra, and at all times from the spying and stalking of baleful spirits. The Theurge tells Gaia what the pack is doing and who they are, that She might be merciful and give the pack good fortune. We are the heart of the Red Talons, the heart of the Garou and the heart of Gaia Herself."



Philodox (The Traveling Moon)

This is the night of half-light. It is light enough for our prey to see us, but not as well as on other nights to come. It is time to move across the land; the hills and trees are seen in their beauty. Packmates are seen nearby; their eyes meet. It is a time for family.

Torn Ear is a Half Moon:

"You may think that I will talk of balance. The balance of the half moon, the balance of human and wolf? All Red Talons understand balance, the balance of Gaia. I am more wolf than human, and no creature walks the middle line exactly. What is Philodox that no other Talon is? Philodox is tolerance. Not always, but when needed. Philodox can listen to any point of view and make judgments based on what he hears. When I strike, it is after I have considered the matter before me. When my pack strikes, it is after it has listened to my ruling. Philodox is sometimes alpha, sometimes not. When Philodox talks to the pack, all listen. If this is balance, then Philodox is balance."

Galliard (The Howling Moon)

The light is growing. All can be seen but the shadows. What prey do the shadows hide? It is time to howl, to summon the pack and to scare the prey from hiding. Gaia's beauty makes us cry. It is time to howl.

Scent-of-Red-Snow is a Gibbous Moon:

"The keeper of the howl is a sacred duty. A Galliard must do this so that the howl never ceases. When I do not give voice, the howl resounds inside my belly, growing in strength so that when I open my jaws, the howl bursts forth and all that hear comprehend my Rage and love. The Galliard must know much. It falls to me to teach the pups and to chronicle the deeds of the pack, lest we should fall. We use no writing, for such kills a tale. The only living tale is that told from wolf to wolf. I was born under the dying of the gibbous, and my songs are dire. I sing mainly of death, but such songs need not be so baleful. The death of a prey is a sacred thing, and I must sing of the chase and of the bravery of the stag. All such things are my duty."

Ahroun (The Seeing Moon)

The light is everywhere. There is no hiding. A time for boldness. The prey can meet our gaze; the hunt is honorable. All see our glory as we hunt; we see ourselves as we hunt. A time of renown. A time for all to see.

Bloodmoon is a Full Moon:

"To be a Red Talon Ahroun is to be the teeth and sinew of the earth. It is to know the taste of blood and the press of battle. It is to be everything or nothing. The strongest Ahroun will be alpha, leading a pack of strong Red Talons against humans, against the Wym. The weaker ones will be scapegoat, unable to lead their own packs, picking at the scraps left by their more generous packmates. Or they will be lone wolves, condemned to travel on their own and do what they may for Gaia. The strongest, though, will lead.

"This is a terrible responsibility. Think carefully before you lead Garou or wolves into battle. If they are slain, then you are responsible. Then you will be the lone wolf. The Ahroun of the Red Talons is the strongest warrior on the face of Gaia. We need no klaives; we need no guns. The weapons that Gaia gives us are superior to these. With claw and fang we make the humans remember us, and tell the Wyrms things it cannot forget."

Spirituality

*Sister moon will you be my guide
In your blue blue shadows I would hide
All good people asleep tonight
I'm all by myself in your silver light...
To howl at the moon the whole night through
And they really don't care if I do
I'd go out of my mind, but for you
— Sting, "Sister Moon"*

Ours is an animal spirit. When we howl together at Luna's brightness, all creatures flee the sound. It is the eerie sound of those whose duty it is to kill giving thanks, giving thanks to their Mother, to their pack and to the earth.

Ours is an unrestrained spirit. No chains bind us, no fence can stay us. We are those who tread the crest of the hunt. We are brothers and sisters together. The smell of my packmate's fur is the smell of safety. We are free.

Ours is a killer's spirit. We are bound to our prey in a sacred bond. Luna smiles upon us as we sleep, nose to tail in the snow. We hunt together, and we are one beast.

Red Talon packs hold moots frequently. In the season in which the pack runs together, there may be a moot every night. No fires are ever kindled, no special place is needed. One Red Talon will be ritemaster, and the others lie on the stone or in the snow as she prepares her rite. We circle her, as hunters might a prey; beginning far away, but getting closer, ever closer. As we come closer, an ever decreasing circle of pacing wolves (for we are ever in Lupus form), the ritemaster begins the rite. Red Talons rites always end in a howl — a long mournful howl to bind the pack together, to tell others of our territory, to sing our anguish to Gaia.

The Wyrms

What to say of the Wyrms? The Wyrms are all evil but all evil is not the Wyrms. The Wyrms kill us, kill ours and kill Gaia. We fight as we can. We will not win, for the Wyrms defeat us. We will not win unless the humans are driven from Gaia, unless their cities are again sown with plants and overrun by wild beasts. The Wyrms are in all humans. Without humans the Wyrms could have no form. Humans are the Wyrms.

The Weaver

You might find a Red Talon who will accept that there is a place for the Weaver, but you would need to look hard and long. The Weaver has gone far beyond any such place. We do not believe in a world without pattern — nature is full of patterns — but the Weaver's patterns choke and stifle. The Weaver's webs are the scaffold on which the Wyrms hang the humans and provides the framework of their machine. Without the support of the Weaver, the Wyrms could never have been so victorious. Therefore, the Weaver is our enemy.

The Wyld

The Wyld is often misunderstood. Wilderness is not the same as chaos. The Wyld is a force of life, of creation. The Wyld obeys rules that the others of the Triad have forgotten.

Without the Wyld, the Weaver would have no material with which to build, the Wyrms no force to warp. The Wyld is thus stronger than the other forces. The force of the Wyld is undirected, and can be channeled, through the laws of Gaia or by the others of the Triad. Everything that the Wyld creates begins as good and true, but can quickly be corrupted or stolen.

The Litany

There are Red Talons who do not even know of the Litany. It is only those Red Talons who interact with other Garou, perhaps in multitribal septs, that have need for the ancient rules. Many of the Red Talon's own instinctive principles are similar to those of the Litany, but others are different.

Torn-Ear has mixed with other tribes, and holds strong opinions about the Litany and its meaning for Red Talons:

Garou Shall Not Mate with Garou

Metis are abomination. We have no need of them. Garou should mate only with wolves, whom they protect.

Combat the Wyrms Wherever It Dwells, Wherever It Breeds

The Garou at the moot intone this creed and then do nothing. I say that if you would combat the Wyrms wherever it dwells, wherever it breeds, then come with me to its den, to the city, and kill humans. But they do not come. We are the only tribe that respects this law.

Respect the Territory of Another

This is the way of wolves. It is the same as to tell a wolf to sleep with his nose out of the wind. We respect it, but we need not be told. Our noses tell us where we should and should not go. Others wander more often into our territory than we into theirs.



Accept an Honorable Surrender

Any that roll on their backs and show their throats should be spared. It is enough to show true submission to one's elders. If the crime against the dominant Garou is so great, cast out the offender. If the offender does not surrender, kill him. If the offender is human, give him no time to surrender.

Submit to Those of Higher Station

Garou must have leaders. Those leaders are the healthy Garou and the strong, those that know how to hunt and those that know how to fight. Other Garou should realize this and submit themselves to just leadership.

They are tainted, we are pure. The Silver Fangs still rule, and we follow them, though sometimes their course seems mad. They are pure of blood yet weak of mind. We do not understand this. Is it a Wyrn trick? For now, their lupus still embody the law of the wolf. Their homid are like any other homid, and we do not follow homids.

The First Share of the Kill for the Greatest in Station

The kill is a sacred thing, to be shared by all who make up the pack. There is a proper way to eat a kill that goes beyond the first share. Cubs must be fed, and elders. The greatest should eat first, but all should soon partake, and all should regurgitate for pups. Greed is the province of the homids, and we have none of it.

Ye Shall Not Eat the Flesh of Humans

Humans are a herd like any other but their meat is forbidden. There are more of them, it is true. This is more, not less, reason to hunt them down. Hunt them, but do not eat them. Once their meat was good, but no longer.

Respect All Those Beneath Ye - All Are of Gaia

This is a pointless law. Those who are of Gaia are of Gaia, and any Red Talon can recognize them. Others, beneath or above, should be killed. What is respect if it comes only one way? Respect the quarry you hunt, if it is of Gaia. Forget the humans you slay, even as their blood dries on your muzzle.

The Veil Shall Not Be Lifted

The Veil does not protect Gaia. The Veil does not protect the Red Talons. Our Kinfolk are slaughtered and our homes destroyed. Kill the humans however you can. Yet fleeing and screaming humans sicken me. They are not good hunting. The Veil is protected by the other Garou, by the Silver Fangs who rule us yet. They must not be allowed to know that we break this law. They wrap themselves in the Veil and ease their own pain, their own guilt.

Do Not Suffer Thy People to Tend Thy Sickness

Other Garou are ignorant. Old Red Talons are kept in good health by their packmates. They have wisdom we need. We are young. We are strong. But they are old, and they are wise. No Red Talon lives a life of solitude; all are warriors. Any that are old have survived many dangers.

The Leader May Be Challenged at Any Time during Peace

Among the Red Talons, the leader is the strongest. If another is stronger, then she will be leader. This is the way of the Red Talons. We need no challenges; we need no games. If a Talon does not show the leader the respect he should, then the leader will deal with him. If the leader cannot, then another shall lead.

The Leader May Not Be Challenged during Wartime

All times are wartime. Gaia is dying, and the humans have overrun the earth. There will be no more peace. The strongest will lead.

Ye Shall Take No Action That Causes a Caern to Be Violated

The caern belongs to the pack. The pack belongs to Gaia. The caern belongs to Gaia. We suffer no others to come to our caerns. No humans, no homids, no other creatures can find the caerns of the Red Talons. There, as in no other place, is Gaia untainted. In this sacred duty we will not fail, unless every last Red Talon be dead.



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Chapter Three: Other Territories

*There must be one place left in the world
Where the mountains meet the sea
There must be one place left in the world
Where the water's real and clean...
There must be one place left in this world
Where we can be
— Midnight Oil, "Antarctica"*

Just as wolves avoid contact with human societies, the Red Talons tribe is an insular group. We do not mix with other Garou often or willingly, though some Red Talons do seek to have an influence in wider Garou politics. Nevertheless, Red Talons do come into contact with many of the inhabitants of the world and interact with them.

Red Talons and The World

*I wish I was a nomad, an Indian or Saint,
The edge of death would disappear leaving nothing left to taint
— The Indigo Girls, "World Falls"*

I know what I give below because others have told me. One such is Scent-of-Red-Snow, a great Galliard and traveler. She said this to a human Kinfolk:

"I have seen your human world, and I know you do not understand. Whether you are truly of the Wyrn or not means nothing to me. You humans think you are the most important beast on the face of Gaia. You believe you can destroy the homes of other creatures to make more homes for yourselves. You believe yourselves to be so important?

"We have no such delusions. Humans are not important. Red Talons are not important. Garou are not important. Only Gaia is important, and all things on Her are important only to grace Her. No human can understand the silent spirit of the forests. No human can understand the heaving pain of the oceans. No human can understand.

"There is nowhere for us to go. We have no sacred places that are undefiled by the closeness of filth. Our Kinfolk and the other beasts are forced to flee to the high mountains before those too fall to evil. We flee with them when we would rather fight. We are so few, and our pups are fewer.

"Gaia dies a little every day. Some forest, some wetland, some grassland falls to the human's axe and their encroaching concrete deserts every day. How long until the homids can see? How long will the other Garou keep us from human throats? We want to kill. We see no other outlet for the indignance, the Rage that builds inside us, which turns to bitter gall every time we hear the death scream of a tree and we are powerless to help. We hate the humans and hate the homids who keep us from their necks. We hate the Wyrn of sickness, and we hate the Weaver of chains. Homids and even humans of the future will look back and see that we are right. It will be so clear then. But there will be no future. Therefore, we are the Red Talons, and we hate."

Red Talon Kinfolk: The World of Wolves

The brains of a wolf do decrease and increase with the moon. The neck of a wolf is short which argueth a treacherous nature. He is exceedingly strong, especially being able to bite asunder not only stones, but Brasse and Iron.

— Edward Topsell, *A Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes*

Humans do not understand wolves, and this is why they treat them as they do. Should we be surprised that humans do not understand the majestic coursing of the wolf in flight? Should we be surprised that they fear the wolf? I think that the Impergium-old image of the Garou engraved in their race memory has had a bad effect on the wolf. The wolf, however, is not without its defenders.

It is truly the good fortune of the Garou or the good planning of Gaia that we are descended from the wolf. The weaknesses that arise from our human forms are easily compensated for by the strengths of the wolf. The wolf is a truly amazing creature. Even I, who am more than half wolf and who has come to understand some of the deepest mysteries of Gaia, am always learning new things about the wolf.

Once the wolf roamed all the forests of our half of the world. Herds of all beasts were the wolf's to tend, and he prospered. The wolf was the most populous predator of its kind on the face of Gaia.

No longer.

Now the wolf lives only in the forests of Northern America and Canada and in a few other places in Europe and Asia. This loss has not occurred naturally, for the wolf has no natural predator — except, perhaps, during puppyhood. This terrible diminishment of the home of the wolf has been caused by the actions of humans, who cut and burn the forests in which the wolves live and who kill our Kinfolk with traps and guns and poisons.

Hunting

A wolf is kept fed by its feet.

— Russian Proverb

Many animals live alone. They hunt alone and only come together to mate. Wolves are different. Wolves live in packs. A pack has many advantages. Although not every animal in the pack will be able to mate in his or her lifetime, all will help to raise their sister's or father's pups. In this way, Kinfolk pass their blood down through many cubs.

A pack of animals can hunt much larger prey. A lone wolf might be able to kill a moose, but will surely suffer broken ribs or a crushed skull for his efforts. Solitary wolves are more likely to eat rabbits, mice and other small creatures. A pack, however, can succeed well in hunting moose or caribou.


Wolves are clever creatures, and this is obvious when they hunt. First, they approach the herd of prey, singling out the creature that they will eat. Sometimes this is as far as it goes, when the wolves determine that no creature is suitable at that moment. Next, they will meet the gaze of their chosen prey. Once the prey recognizes that he has been chosen, he will run. The wolves follow.

We Red Talons hunt like the wolves. Gaia forgive you if you are our chosen prey. We will chase you, no matter if you have vehicles to escape us. We are tireless. We will chase you, wear you down, cut you with our teeth until you fall, exhausted and alone. Your packmates have long abandoned you. We will look into your eyes, and you will understand — only then — who you are and who we are. We are the Red Talons.

Red Talons among Kinfolk

We move among our Kinfolk often. It falls to us to maintain their numbers and their strength. Also, if there were no more wolves, there would be no more Red Talons. This is a selfish reason to protect wolves, but we also protect them for themselves. The world would be less without them, less even than it would be without the Red Talons.

When we travel among our Kin to find a strong mate and to sow our seed that more Garou might be born, we live among the packs. If a Red Talon male wishes to mate with a wolf, he must become part of that pack, hunting and running with them, showing that his limbs are strong and his coat glossy. He must show the wolf that he is a good mate, a good sire for her pups. Also, he must best the alpha male for the right to choose his mate (who is often the alpha female). In these contests, no use of Gifts or other Garou abilities is allowed. The contests must be a fair match, wolf against wolf. If the Garou is defeated, as happens more often than you might think, he must leave and search for another mate.



If a Red Talon female seeks to mate with a wolf, then she too must live as a member of the pack for a time. Her mate, who is often the alpha male, must be won over by her and must be convinced that she is a better breeding prospect than the alpha female or any of the other females in his pack. This often results in conflict, which must be resolved as fairly as the male contest.

The Other Garou

Garou are the chosen of Gaia. Red Talons are those who remain true to Her. The other Garou have lost their way. They are still strong and greater in number than we, but they do not hear the pulse of the seasons, the rhythms of Gaia, as we do. They have become as the humans, separated from that which gives them life.

There are some among their ranks who begin to understand. Some Black Furies, some Wendigo, and all lupus have listened when Red Talons have spoken, and they found that they knew little of Gaia. Most of the others, the great bulk of the homids, are good for little but to protect caerns and fight each other for dominance. What good is a Garou who has forgotten how to hunt? What good is a Garou who cannot sleep on the snow for fear of a chilling death?

The Glass Walkers, in their arrogance, claim that they are advanced. They claim that they have adapted, and will live on after other tribes have died. Let them live on — their world will be one devoid of beauty and truth. Let them negotiate what terms they can with the Wyrms; let them acknowledge their new master. We have no need to adapt. Red Talons are the predators at the top. We are the hunters of Gaia; we are unchanging and eternal. We will die before we change and compromise like the Glass Walkers.

We have no structure for politics as do many other tribes. No Red Talon is answerable to any but the alpha of her pack. No alpha is answerable to any Garou. The Children of Gaia believe this makes us weak. On the contrary, our strength stems from the importance and influence of each individual Red Talon to the fate of the tribe.

The Other Shapechangers

Just as every creature has its place, every one of the changing creatures has a place on the earth. We regret the War of Rage, and as has been recounted, we did not begin the conflict.

Some of the other changers, Bastet and Gurahl in particular, hide in the wilderness in places where the Red Talons see them. We run far and are elusive. We do not tell of the retreats of these creatures. Garou more foolish and ignorant than we might seek a renewal of ancient hostilities. We are prepared to let them be, and should the Gurahl come to reclaim their former caerns, we will give them up.

The Wretched of the Wyrms

What to say of the corrupted brood of the great Defiler? They are filth. Worse than the humans, though often part of them, such creatures are nothing to us. Everything they touch is blighted until their bodies are torn apart and their stuff given back to Gaia. Their corpses should not be buried in clean ground. Dig in the concrete and asphalt of the outermost limits of the scabs and bury their foulness there. Gaia and time will reclaim the befouled matter.

Vampires

We have little business with Leeches. None are our friends. We do not go to the cities where they dwell. I am told that they prey on the humans, who are to them little more than cattle. If they understood the sacred nature of the hunt, the ties that bind the prey to the hunter, then maybe they would be closer to Gaia. But we have little more regard for them than we would for a parasite, a creature with no purpose and no place in the natural order. When all humans are slain, then the Leeches will disappear.

Mages

It is difficult to tell a mage from a normal human, so we know not how many of these we kill. We are unafraid of their magics. Such tricks can have no effect on the chosen of Gaia. Some Garou have friends among the mages. Not us; we court the alliance of no human. Mages suffer from human greed.

Wraiths

What do we know of these? What should we care if it is true that a few human souls cling pathetically to life after it has been taken from them? We will create more ghosts as the years pass, sending human spirits to their wretched afterlife with our claws and fangs. Perhaps those that die of fright on seeing a Red Talon's anger become especially pathetic ghosts. A human killed by a Red Talon is gone forever.

Changelings

These enigmatic creatures are frivolous and pointless. Some do understand the value of the wilderness and seek to protect it. Too often, however, they are tainted, as homids are, by their human blood. They are too much of the Wyld that they forget their duty to Gaia. They might have been friends of Gaia long ago, but now they are cowards. Once, one promised us aid in hunting a Wyrms thing in the scabs, but two moons later he had forgotten his promise and even pretended to know us not. Fool.

The Deep Wilderness

*I'll be the first to praise the sun,
The first to praise the moon,
The first to hold the lone coyote,
The last to set it free.*

— The Indigo Girls, "Welcome Me"

The wilderness, while dark and strange even to some Garou, is and has always been the home of the Red Talons. It is our bed, our larder and our shrine. Its secrets are in our minds and hearts. We know places where the laws of the Weaver and the pollutions of the Wyrms have not yet reached in any way. Places where the Gauntlet is a small ledge over which we can skip freely, places where the world has been the same since before the humans built their nightmare palaces, places where Gaia Herself would be proud to walk. These are our dwellings. Such places have power and magic. Not the crude magic of the mages, or even the noble magic gifted to us by spirits that we have pleased, but a deep, primal magic, a rhythm of birth and death that pervades all of Gaia, though in the cities it is strangled, choked. Though we cannot hide in these secret glens, their presence gives us hope and fuels our anger. Should ever they fall, then even the Red Talons' courage might fail.

The Human World

*The paw-print of a two year old Alaskan timber wolf,
canis lupus pambasilieus
is the same size as the face
Of a three month old human child.*

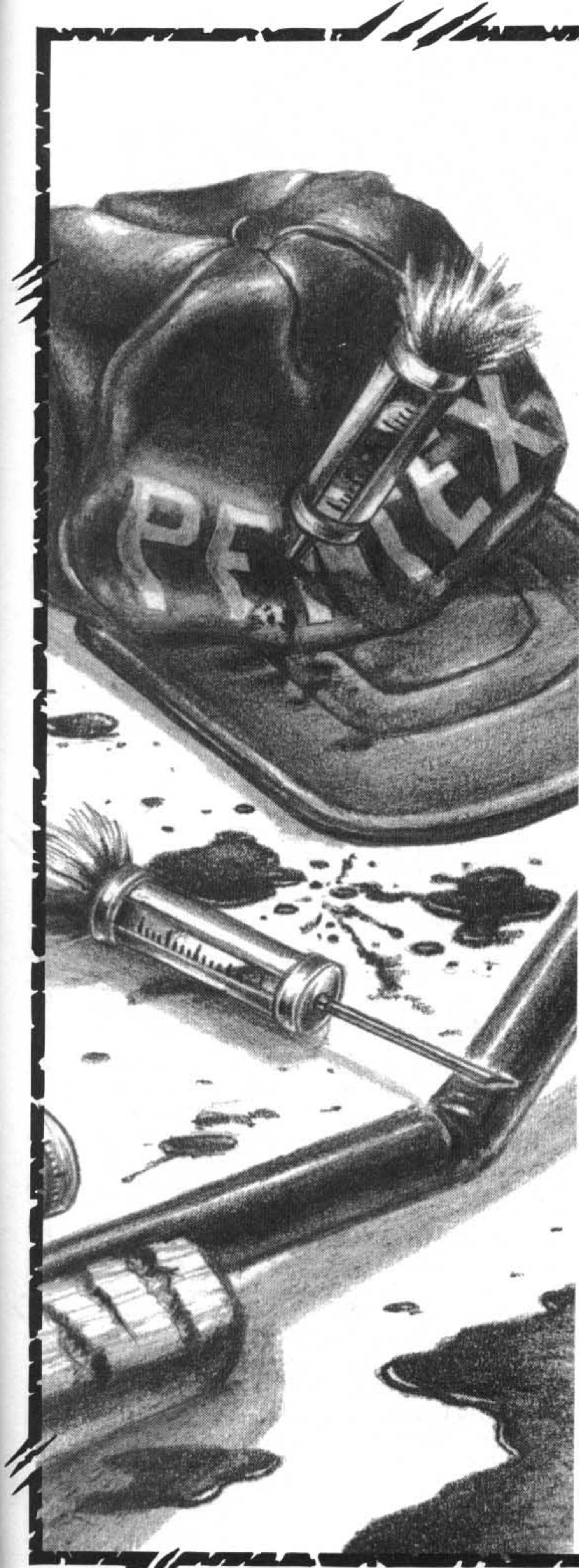
*We humans fear the beast within the wolf because
We do not understand the beast within ourselves.*

— Gerald Hausman, *Turtle Island Alphabet*

Humans believe that they are different from other animals. Humans think that only they have culture, and that this sets them apart. What is this culture that they have? Culture comes from Gaia as does every other aspect of their lives. This culture that they claim sets them apart is just their world playing tricks with them. We have such culture; wolves have such culture. What is culture but talk between humans that keeps them from the natural world of which they are deeply afraid?

Once they were apes; once they were furred. They climbed in the trees and ate the leaves. What is so different now, save that they have forgotten? What is so different now, save that their food is not so wholesome? What is different is the Wyrms.

Once they were beasts as any other. They were the children of the Wyld as we are, as wolves are. But they grew tall and spurned the Wyld. They forgot the Wyld as they lost their fur. They came to love the Weaver and its webs and snares. They opened their hearts to the Weaver, and the Wyrms slithered in.



Some humans take their pleasure from extinguishing life with their weapons. One might think that we as wolves could understand the instinct of a hunter. We are not hunters like them. We have nothing but death reserved for these humans. Many wolves will see no other humans in their short lives — should you wonder that we Red Talons rage against such destruction? The smartest and most fortunate among our wolf children mark traps and baits with the smell of their urine, warning other animals and packs of the danger. This we do also, but we have certain strengths missing from even the sturdiest wolf.

There is great pleasure to be gained in making the hunter the hunted. For example, we lie on the snow together. The hunters approach, always downwind, thinking we don't see them. They aim and fire their cowardly weapons from what they think is far away. (It is not as far as a howl travels.) As soon as they have made their shots, we run and are upon them. We run them down and exhaust them, as we might caribou and as they do wolves in their polluting vehicles. We run them down, chasing them until their hearts burst or they beg for mercy. We have none to give.

Some come in the air; they are more difficult to destroy. I once saw a wily Ragabash defend a pack. When the human fired at him he stood, took Homid form before their eyes and fired back with a rusty rifle he had taken from another of their kind. The flying humans crashed in the snow and burned, spewing filthy smoke into the clear air. The wolves of his pack buried the human meat in the snow, leaving its scent so a fox would find it. The meat was not good for wolves to eat.

We are the Red Talons, and we exact revenge.

The Red Talon Creed

In this time of the ending of days, the Red Talons have established a creed. It comes from the accumulated wisdom of the many Red Talons that have served Gaia truly over our long and sad history. It comes from the conclusions we are forced to draw when we look around us at the world in which we, the last Red Talons, exist.

No creature is so important that it should overshadow all others. The humans must be shown the truth of this.

We are dying, and we must realize the truth of this. We must not Rage against the injustice of this ending but do what we may with our last days.

These are the last days of Gaia. These are the last days of the Red Talons. These must be the last days of the humans.

Do not ask us when we will Rage. Ask instead what good will remain when we have gone and our Rage is but a memory.

Appendix One: The Powers of the Wolf

Tribal Weaknesses (Optional)

An optional rule was introduced in the first of the *Werewolf Tribebooks*: tribal weaknesses. These are quirks each member of a particular tribe possesses, usually due to the social or even genetic nature of a tribe. Weaknesses should not always be enforced. There are some situations where a Bone Gnawer may not suffer a higher difficulty on Social rolls. These situations may be rare, but they can occur. For instance, Black Furies suffer from an inborn anger against men, but a Black Fury may not feel anger toward a man with whom she has a trusting relationship.

It is up to the Storyteller to enforce these rules when an appropriate situation occurs in the game. A player may be unwilling to remind a Storyteller that her Uktena's curiosity will get her into trouble.

Red Talon Weakness

Wyld Affinity: Cannot regain Gnosis in cities

The Red Talons are tied closely to the wilderness, drawing on the ebb and flow of its natural, spiritual life. Because of this, they lack an inherent connection with the

Weaver, and may not regain Gnosis within a city. The exception to this is when they are at a caern; they may regain Gnosis as they normally do at these sacred sites. The Storyteller may allow them to regain a few points in the suburbs, if he deems that the 'burbs are rural enough.

Homid Appearance

Many Garou tribes choose their Kinfolk from a particular broad cultural group or race (e.g., the Shadow Lords with Eastern Europeans, the Wendigo with Native Americans). The Red Talons, being all lupus, obviously do not have such human connections. The only time that any human blood was introduced into the Red Talon line was long, long ago. The Red Talons state that no human was ever part of their breeding, but this seems unlikely.

A Red Talon's Homid form is generally quite primitive-looking. Depending on their Appearance rating, they may look similar to other Garou's Glabro forms. Many have pronounced brows and thick bones. Their skin can be any color, generally determined by the climate in which they grew up as wolves. Those with a high Appearance may have rugged, athletic looks that somehow don't seem ugly, while those with low Appearance may seem neanderthalish.



Age

Garou most often experience their First Change when they hit puberty. For a homid, that's usually between 12 and 15 years of age. For a lupus, however, it's within two to four years after birth. A wolf matures more quickly than a human, since its life expectancy is maybe 10 years at best. So, lupus enter the world of the Garou with only two to four summers of life experience. This tends to make them more naive than homids, but they still have closer ties to their instincts, and this tends to make up the difference.

After the First Change, all Garou age like humans. This is a tragedy for lupus, as they see many Kinfolk wolf pack generations die natural deaths within this extended lifetime. Sometimes, a Red Talon of only 30 human years (three times the normal wolf life expectancy) may choose the Rite of the Griffin as ritual suicide, unable to live through the pain any longer.

Gifts

- **Eye of the Hunter (Level One)** — Just as wolves are able to assess a herd of prey animals, this Gift enables a Garou to correctly determine the weakest and strongest member of any group she can see. This Gift is taught by a wolf spirit.

System: The Garou rolls Perception + Primal-Urge (difficulty 7). If successful, then the Garou learns which members of a chosen group within sight are the strongest or

weakest and which is the leader. If the Garou attacks the group after employing this Gift, she gains one extra attack die against the weakest individual only.

- **Primal Howl (Level Two)** — Wolf howls are frightening to their prey, and an unconscious fear of them still resides within the human psyche, thanks to the Impergium. Although any Garou can howl, a Garou with this Gift can tap into and evoke this deep-rooted fear. In addition, the Garou can make a howl that sounds like it comes from several wolves (or Garou), giving even Wyrn creatures reason to pause. This Gift is taught by an ancestor spirit or a wind spirit.

System: The Garou rolls Stamina + Expression (difficulty 7). If successful, anyone (except other Garou or wolves) who wishes to approach the Garou must first make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) to overcome his instinctive fear. If the Garou approaches him, he must make the roll to stand his ground.

In addition, each additional success after the first makes the howl sound as if it came from one additional Garou (or wolf): A two-success howl sounds as if it came from two wolves or Garou; three successes sounds as if there are three wolves, etc. Each additional "wolf" adds one to the target's Willpower roll difficulty (maximum 10). If the target of the Gift can see the Garou during the howl, it will be clear to him that there is only one Garou, and the difficulty penalty will not apply.

• **Gaze of the Hunter (Level Three)** — The Garou stares into the eyes of an intended victim, and communicates to them the ancient bond between predator and prey — beginning the sacred hunt. This Gift is taught by the spirit of any predatory mammal — wolf, mountain lion, bear, etc.

System: The Garou spends one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty 6 for animals or the human [or other sentient] target's Willpower — whichever is higher). If the Gaze is successful, the target (human or animal) understands the link and will act accordingly: Wild animals will run into the open, allowing the hunter to eventually catch and kill them. Humans and domesticated animals — for whom this is a terrifying experience — may run or cower, terrified. No victim will begin a fight, although if the Red Talon pursues and catches the prey, a battle might result. The Gift does not work on other Garou, but will be effective against most creatures the Garou sets out to hunt.

• **Shield of Gaia (Level Six)** — The Garou can become so attuned to the laws and rhythms of Gaia that the Weaver's laws cease to have any affect on her. This Gift can only be used once by any Garou who learns it; its effects are permanent. The Garou becomes immune to the effects of one form of technology, such as bullets, photography (i.e., cannot be photographed), electricity, chemical toxins, etc. This Gift is taught by an avatar of Griffin.

System: The Garou spends a permanent point of Gnosis and chooses the one form of technology to which she will

be immune. It is up to the Storyteller to determine exactly what is and is not included in the protection afforded by this Gift. For example, Garou who chooses immunity to flame-throwers would not be burned by them, but other flames will act normally upon her.

This Gift does apply against Wurm-tainted technology, although not Wurm substances. For instance, a Garou who is immune to chemical toxins may not be harmed by the Pentex acid, but the Bane in the acid can still try to possess her.

This Gift is open to a lot of abuse, but the player and the Storyteller should recognize the spirit of the Gift: it is Gaia's protection to Her children from the ravages of the Weaver and the modern world. Just how this is interpreted and how much is permitted depends on the mood and atmosphere of a game. However, no player should be allowed to claim immunity to nuclear weapons.

Rites

The Red Talons guard secret knowledge about the wilderness and its creatures long forgotten by the other tribes. Much of this knowledge is kept in the form of rites, far too numerous to list here. Each pack knows several rites, generally connected to the natural rhythms and patterns of the area in which they live. They dance the rhythms of the beasts, both extant and extinct, and the changes of the



seasons, lest their ceasing cause the world to change accordingly. Red Talons carry knowledge of these rites with them into multitribal packs, but often perform the rites alone, only including their multitribal brethren if they are convinced of the other Garou's integrity and purity. The rites described below represent some of the more mainstream rites of the Red Talons.

Rite of Defiance (Caern)

Level Two

This rite is performed regularly by the Red Talons, and is usually performed at the heart of a caern. It symbolizes the deep connection between the Red Talons and the wilderness they protect and their determination to keep the tide of humanity and the Wyrms from profaning their secret place. The rite is performed every time the Red Talons suffer a setback in this mission. It gives them renewed hope that their task is worthwhile, critical and achievable.

The Garou gather quietly in the caern, spirits low because of their recent defeat. No ritemaster is chosen for the rite; rather, whichever Garou has the most hope in her heart stands and begins slowly and softly to howl. As other Garou find strength in their packmate's bravery they stand and join the howl. Eventually all the Red Talons howl together, the polyphonic sound carrying their defiance all the way to the boundaries of their territory and beyond.

System: The self-appointed ritemaster rolls Charisma + Rituals (difficulty 7). If successful, every participant replenishes one point of temporary Willpower. It is possible for a group of particularly downtrodden Talons to lie for days at the caern until one is sure enough to begin this rite.

Rite of the Griffin (Mystic)

Level Four

This ceremony is seldom performed by the Red Talons, as it inevitably results in the death of one of their valued members. Sometimes a Talon reaches a point where she cannot tolerate what she sees as the compromise of the Red Talons, and certain death is no longer enough to prevent her from trying to wipe out the humans. The alpha of her pack calls a Rite of the Griffin in which the entire pack participates.

The Garou for whom the rite is being performed stands in a ring formed by her pack members as the ritemaster recounts her greatest deeds and invokes the spirit of the Griffin to inspire the Garou. If the ritemaster is successful, Griffin gives the Red Talon who is to die a final boon. Her Rage and Gnosis are refreshed to their maximum level, and she enters a final and pure frenzy. While in this frenzy, she is immune to any supernatural powers that would force her to diverge from her purpose. She will not leave the frenzy until she dies. The rite ends when the enraged Talon runs off toward her goal and the pack howls a mournful howl after her. The pack then wait for a time and begin the Gathering for the Departed.

System: The ritemaster rolls Charisma + Rituals (difficulty 8) to petition Griffin for aid to the despairing packmate. Even if this roll is not successful, the supplicant often travels to a scab and dies in a futile attempt to destroy the heart of the Wyrms.

Rite of Passage (Renown)

Level Two

The Red Talon Rite of Passage is conducted in the deepest wilderness. The pup or pups who are to undergo the rite are prepared by a night-long vigil in the heart of a caern. At first light, the young Garou are released, to run swiftly in the bright dawn of Gaia. The pups run until they come to the edge of a human settlement — this is often a long run, as Red Talon caerns are as far away as possible from the filth of humanity. The young Talons must then enter the outskirts and hunt a human. Their prey must be someone who is actively involved in the human's destruction of the wilderness. (Many Red Talons believe that every human fits this description.) They must hunt their chosen prey, often a Pentex employee or the like, and herd him, alive, from the city. The human must be chased or dragged back to the caern without dying, where he will form the end of the pups' Rite of Passage. The Red Talons then slay the human in front of their new pack and present the corpse to the alpha for acceptance. It is expected that the victim chosen will be (at least initially) able to defend himself against the cubs (though not many humans can defend themselves effectively from Garou), and before they are accepted into the pack, the pups are always examined for the scars that demonstrate their initial fight to capture the human.

Rite of Wilderness Reclaimed (Mystic)

Level Three

This rite is performed by the Red Talon pack as a whole, and has no ritemaster as such. It is performed in an area that has been defiled by the Wyrms or the Weaver, and is a way for the Red Talons to lessen the blow. Those who are to participate in the rite stand in a circle with their noses touching. They concentrate, and each pack member slowly, over a matter of minutes, slips into a trance state. They then can see the blighted area as it once was, when it was dominated by the natural forces of Gaia. The Garou look at this scene of beauty and rightness for as long as they need, then one by one they break contact, and the vision fades. The Red Talons involved then usually dedicate themselves to returning the area to its natural state. Indeed, in the weeks and months after the performance of this rite, some manifestations of Gaia do begin to return, even if it is just weeds in an abandoned city block or a flower in an open-cut mine.

System: All Garou involved in the rite must roll Wits + Occult against a difficulty of the area's Gauntlet. If successful, they gain the vision described above, and the Gauntlet in the area is reduced by one until the next human being (or other nonnatural animal) travels through the area.



Totems

Totem of Respect

Old Wolf of the Woods

Background Cost: 6

Old Wolf of the Woods is the heart of the Red Talons. While Griffin is the totem of the Talons' anger, Old Wolf is the guardian of their spirituality. It is said among the Talons that Old Wolf of the Woods is actually not one spirit but a succession of Garou who have each ascended to the sacred duty when their predecessor's health finally fails. Old Wolf of the Woods is a symbol of eternity and wilderness, symbolizing the sacred duty of the Red Talons and their unique strength. Old Wolf of the Woods is not infinite in his strength, however, and when the last wolf vanishes from the face of Gaia, so too will Old Wolf of the Woods.

Traits: Packs who follow Old Wolf of the Woods are greatly respected by the Red Talons; each member gains three points of Honor. Also, his Children can share up to five points of Past Life per story. All Gauntlet difficulties are treated as one less for the Children of Old Wolf of the Woods, as his home is the Umbra.

Ban: Only lupus may follow Old Wolf of the Woods.

Totem of Wisdom

Raven

Background Cost: 7

Raven is a gamester and an opportunist. Raven makes no kills himself but is always where death is. Raven plays with wolves, jumping out of the range of their teeth and claws. Through such games, Raven can teach the Garou about the dangers of frenzy, because if one frenzies in an attempt to catch Raven, one is nothing but a fool. Raven is an ancient companion of Wolf and accompanies him on his hunts, hoping to pick the bones of his kills. Raven is a wise spirit, skilled in seeking and finding, not in war. Raven's Children are characterized by their sharp wits and keen eyes.

Traits: Raven is nimble and clever. Raven's Children add two dots to their Dodge Ability. He is a wise bird as well as a playful one; his Children each gain one point to their Wits Attributes. All of his Children gain one point of Wisdom.

Ban: Raven asks that the Garou who follow him leave the carcasses of their prey for his fellows to eat.

Fetishes

Red Talons are not great fetish users, preferring to rely on their natural skills and physical abilities to succeed. There are, however, a few items that have been made and used by various Talons.

Hunter's Bone

Level 5, Gnosis 7

This fetish is the carcass of a small prey animal, killed by the fetish maker in a single bite. The carcass is then prepared by being dragged around the boundary of a desired territory and buried close to the center. Any Garou who knows the location of the buried fetish can go to that place and attempt to make use of its powers (by activating the fetish). If the Garou is successful, she knows everything that transpires within the bounds of the territory as long as she concentrates (or the scene ends, whichever comes first).

To create a Hunter's Bone, the Garou must engage in a ritual hunt to find the animal and then bind the animal's spirit permanently into its corpse. If a Hunter's Bone is exhumed, it immediately ceases to function and the spirit goes free.

Pine Cone

Level 4, Gnosis 6

When the pine cone fetish is held between the jaws of the Garou (difficult in Homid form) she makes no tracks and leaves no scent markings for any pursuers to detect. It is impossible to track the user of a pine cone fetish, even with Gifts that normally aid tracking. If the pine cone is crushed between the jaws, destroying the fetish and releasing the spirit, the Garou becomes invisible to sight and scent for the remainder of the current scene.

To create a pine cone fetish, the Garou must bind a trickster spirit of some kind into a freshly fallen pine cone.

Talen

Raven Feather

Level 1, Gnosis 5

A single raven feather, which must come from a living bird, is braided into the Garou's fur just around the mane. After activating the feather, the Garou gains an unerring sense of the where the closest healthy source of food is, be it game or buried meat. The Garou can use the feather to hunt or to scavenge with equal success. The Garou knows the direction of and the rough distance to the food, but not its nature. Thus, a Red Talon using this fetish to seek game may be disappointed with a carcass buried by a packmate many days ago.

To create a Raven Feather, the Garou must find the feather and bind a spirit associated with hunting into it. This talen can be used multiple times, but when the bird from which the feather came dies, the talen ceases to work.

Merits and Flaws

Natural Weapons (3 pt Physical Merit)

Garou with this Merit are greatly in tune with their wolf physique. Their balance and physical acuity in Lupus form is greater than those in Homid form. The Garou can

subtract one from the difficulty of any attack roll with a natural weapon (e.g., claw, fangs, punch, kick, grapple) when in Lupus form. However, he adds one to the difficulties of any such attack rolls made while in Homid form.

This Merit costs four points for homid characters.

Territory (2 pt Background Merit)

The Garou has established a territory for himself (or possibly in conjunction with other Talons or wolves). The territory is defined by scent marks recognized by other creatures (though not humans). The character knows the area intimately and can tell, upon traveling there, whether any others have crossed the boundaries. Inside the territory the Garou can hunt more easily and has an intimate knowledge of all the prey there. Other Garou will not willingly enter the Garou's territory unless they seek to provoke him.

Breeding Pack (2 pt Background Merit)

The Garou is in control of a breeding pack of wolves. She visits this pack as often as she desires, and mates with whichever of the wolves there she chooses. This pack will rear any pups that spring from these unions, and the parent can return to collect them at the time of the Change (if they happen to be Garou). The breeding pack is not necessarily safe, and the Garou may be called away to defend it at any time. This Merit grants one free point in the Kinfolk Background.

Ward Pack (4 pt Background Flaw)

This flaw is similar to the Flaw Ward (3 pts), but refers to an entire wolf pack. The Garou is responsible for the wolf pack's safety and good health. The pack is often in need of defense and care, and may have suffered the loss of many members before the Garou was entrusted with its care. Perhaps it is a captive pack or in an area of active wolf hunting.

Roleplaying a Red Talon

In most roleplaying games the characters we play are in some way extensions of ourselves. We often exaggerate one aspect of our personality or some emotion or desire, but essentially all characters are rooted in us, the players. Even in such games as *Vampire: The Masquerade* and *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* in which the characters aren't actually human, they remain an extension of ourselves. The Kindred and Garou that we portray carry aspects of ourselves as people inside their supernatural skeletons. When the character you play is a lupus Garou, this principle is both broken and doubly true.

A Red Talon lupus has never been a human. This may seem an obvious thing to state, but if you consider the implications of the statement, you can see that it seems inappropriate to invest any human ideas and emotions in a character that has never had such feelings. It would be wrong to look at a lupus as merely a homid with more Gnosis, for example. In the same way a homid Garou identifies with a human who has become a Garou and who views the world

from an "enlightened" human perspective, the lupus character has the perspective of an enlightened wolf. A Red Talon lupus expects that his behavior, and the behavior of those around him will be according to the rules that he has learned in his early years. This does not merely equate to an inability to understand mobile phones and read maps. It has much greater implications for communication and cooperation.

Obviously, wolves don't speak, but lupus Garou can and do. A lupus, however, gets more information about a speaker from and gives more to a listener through body language — the way the speaker holds his body, the sweep of his neck and whether his teeth are showing — than he does from the words that are spoken. When portraying a lupus, it's not necessary to crawl on all fours or to make a detailed study of canid social behavior (although there is nothing to prevent you), but you should keep this kind of physical communication in mind. These kinds of cues are present in our own behavior and communication, but a lupus is much more sensitive to them than is a human or homid. It is possible to communicate a lot in the confines of a table and chair. Simple messages can be sent and received by leaning forward and back, angling your head, drawing back your lips in a snarl and so on.

One of the largest and most difficult mental hurdles to overcome in understanding the perspective of the Red Talon lupus is that humans are not important. Our view of the world, however environmentally enlightened we might be, places humans firmly at the top. We cannot help but be anthropocentric. The Red Talons don't recognize this

importance, and would gladly kill us all. Taking the animals' point of view, as exemplified by the Red Talons, can be quite liberating. If you try to adopt the viewpoint that would be shared by lupus Garou, you can begin to see what damage we have done to them and their world, and it becomes very easy to understand why the Red Talons want to kill us. Even if you don't intend to play a Red Talon or you play one who advocates total extermination of humans, it is worth having a look from their point of view.

The World of the Lupus

Another thing that is fundamentally different about the lupus mindset stems from the different way in which she perceives the world. The lupus, in her wolf years, has grown up low to the ground. Her vision is therefore adjusted to see the ground and a close horizon well. Her sense of smell is acute, and she relies upon it most of all her senses for information. A dog can detect the scent of a human fingerprint six weeks after it was laid! This amazing sense of smell has an impact not only on the way a lupus "sees" the world but on the way she interacts with others. With her olfactory senses, she can perceive the past, knowing who has been to a particular place, how long ago and in what state they were when they left. Her hearing is also better than a human's, and she is constantly listening. She is aware of the natural rhythms and currents, and is careful not to be caught upwind of a threat or her prey. These subtle rules that are natural to wild hunters and Red Talons must be painstakingly learned by homid Garou.



Appendix Two: Cubs

*We carry deer-fawns in our mouths
We carry deer-fawns in our mouths
We have our faces blackened
— Wolf-song
— Gary Snyder, "Hunting"*

Red Talons, like wolves, vary in personality and temperament. Just because humans cannot recognize the variety of wolf behaviors does not mean variety is not there. Red Talons are traditionally considered by most Garou to be mean, vengeful, human-hating werewolves, at home in the wilderness rather than the city. This image is true, as far as the Red Talons have behaved when in the presence of the other tribes. But when in

the deep wild, when away from Garou politics, they show a different face — their true face: that of highly spiritual beings who know and respect their place in nature and Gaia's ways.

True, they will continue to hunt humans with a Rage almost terrifying to other Garou unused to such raw honesty. But they will also keep the Ways, perform the forgotten rites and defend the wilds from all who would harm it.

Rascal Wolf

Quote: *If I do not speak the truth, then why do all the others laugh behind your back?*

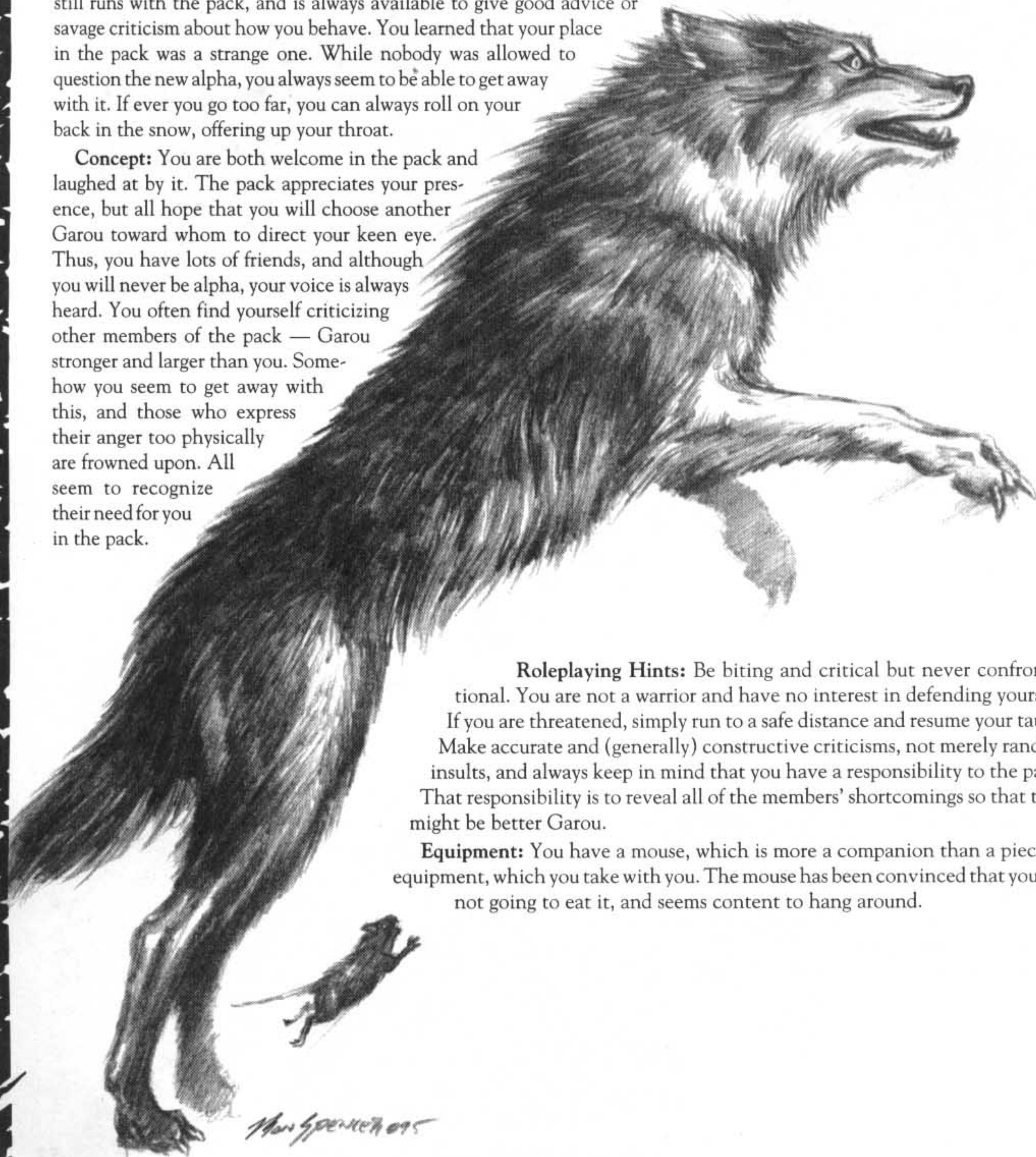
Prelude: You were never the strongest. Even when you became a Garou, the strongest wolves of your pack could easily drive you away. When you were a young wolf pup, you were the bottom of the heap. You got used to it. You were last to be fed and last to get a bone to bury. During your puppyhood, you learned to be fast and nimble, avoiding even play-fights with your packmates, who were engaged in the serious business of learning to fight and hunt. You were always more interested in something else, although you played with the ravens often. When the old Garou came to claim you, your pack didn't put up much resistance, and you don't miss them much either.

The old Garou was a Ragabash and alpha female of her pack. She taught you the ways of your auspice and protected you from the stronger Red Talons until you learned to fend for yourself. She is too old to be alpha now but still runs with the pack, and is always available to give good advice or savage criticism about how you behave. You learned that your place in the pack was a strange one. While nobody was allowed to question the new alpha, you always seem to be able to get away with it. If ever you go too far, you can always roll on your back in the snow, offering up your throat.

Concept: You are both welcome in the pack and laughed at by it. The pack appreciates your presence, but all hope that you will choose another Garou toward whom to direct your keen eye. Thus, you have lots of friends, and although you will never be alpha, your voice is always heard. You often find yourself criticizing other members of the pack — Garou stronger and larger than you. Somehow you seem to get away with this, and those who express their anger too physically are frowned upon. All seem to recognize their need for you in the pack.

Roleplaying Hints: Be biting and critical but never confrontational. You are not a warrior and have no interest in defending yourself. If you are threatened, simply run to a safe distance and resume your taunt. Make accurate and (generally) constructive criticisms, not merely random insults, and always keep in mind that you have a responsibility to the pack. That responsibility is to reveal all of the members' shortcomings so that they might be better Garou.

Equipment: You have a mouse, which is more a companion than a piece of equipment, which you take with you. The mouse has been convinced that you are not going to eat it, and seems content to hang around.



Red Talons

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Breed: *Lupus*

Auspice: *Ragabash*

Camp: *Warders of the land*

Pack Name:

Pack Totem:

Concept: *Rascal wolf*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ☐☐☐☐☐

Dexterity ☐☐☐☐☐

Stamina ☐☐☐☐☐

Social

Charisma ☐☐☐☐☐

Manipulation ☐☐☐☐☐

Appearance ☐☐☐☐☐

Mental

Perception ☐☐☐☐☐

Intelligence ☐☐☐☐☐

Wits ☐☐☐☐☐

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ☐☐☐☐☐

Athletics ☐☐☐☐☐

Brawl ☐☐☐☐☐

Dodge ☐☐☐☐☐

Empathy ☐☐☐☐☐

Expression ☐☐☐☐☐

Intimidation ☐☐☐☐☐

Primal-Urge ☐☐☐☐☐

Streetwise ☐☐☐☐☐

Subterfuge ☐☐☐☐☐

Skills

Animal Ken ☐☐☐☐☐

Drive ☐☐☐☐☐

Etiquette ☐☐☐☐☐

Firearms ☐☐☐☐☐

Melee ☐☐☐☐☐

Leadership ☐☐☐☐☐

Performance ☐☐☐☐☐

Repair ☐☐☐☐☐

Stealth ☐☐☐☐☐

Survival ☐☐☐☐☐

Knowledge

Computer ☐☐☐☐☐

Enigmas ☐☐☐☐☐

Investigation ☐☐☐☐☐

Law ☐☐☐☐☐

Linguistics ☐☐☐☐☐

Medicine ☐☐☐☐☐

Occult ☐☐☐☐☐

Politics ☐☐☐☐☐

Rituals ☐☐☐☐☐

Science ☐☐☐☐☐

Advantages

Backgrounds

Allies ☐☐☐☐☐

Mentor ☐☐☐☐☐

☐☐☐☐☐

☐☐☐☐☐

☐☐☐☐☐

Gifts

Blur of the Milky Eye

Leap of the Kangaroo

Scent of Running Water

Gifts

Renown

Glory

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Honor

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Wisdom

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Rank

Rage

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Gnosis

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Willpower

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

Bruised ☐

Hurt -1 ☐

Injured -1 ☐

Wounded -2 ☐

Mauled -2 ☐

Crippled -5 ☐

Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

WYLD AFFINITY:
CANNOT REGAIN
GNOSIS IN CITIES

Mystic Predator

Quote: *You think we are the same but you could not be more wrong. I am nothing you can understand and everything you are afraid of.*

Prelude: One of a litter of six pups in an Alaskan pack, you were the only one to reach maturity. Born black with a streak of grey, you were well taken care of by your natal pack, though the years were not good ones for them. You were always the outsider, even then. The black wolf among white, the wolf with an unfathomable eye. When the Garou came, you were not surprised. You knew your father was not the alpha of the pack, and the noble grey wolf who arrived to collect you made everything fit into place. Your great connection to Gaia gives you a unique sense of such relationships and natural patterns, and this innate ability enabled you to complete your Rite of Passage with no great difficulty. You traveled with the great Theurge for some time, and he is still a source of guidance for you in time of need. You do not see this as weakness, but keep your elder secret from other Garou to preserve the sanctity of the bond.

Concept: You are the "other" — the Theurge, the black, the lupus, the Red Talon — all of these mark you as an outsider, and you are all of them. You embody the reasons why humans can't understand wolves and homids can't understand lupus. You are utterly wild, and no human will ever fathom your mystical depths or resolve the dark questions you pose. The Umbra is open to you, as are the secrets of the natural world. A warrior of a kind, you have appointed yourself guardian of the sacred spirituality of your race, your tribe and Gaia itself. It is your responsibility to handle any violation of that spirit — and there are innumerable breaches. Also, you are the spiritual life of the pack who revere and respect you. You are their sacred link to Gaia, and you lead them in rites and covenants that embody this connection. Finally, you are the predator. You hunt and kill for your own food, understanding like no other the holy link between predator and prey.

Roleplaying

Hints: You are inscrutable. The observations made by you might be so obscure as to mean nothing to any but yourself. You often stare deeply into other creatures' eyes, trying to discern their inner being and making them uneasy. You speak little, and are not easily swayed to anger. When angry, however, your response is swift and violent.

Equipment: You carry little. You know the location of several caches of food in the area but travel without burden.



RED TALONS

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Breed: *Lupus*

Auspice: *Therurge*

Camp: *Wardens of the land*

Pack Name:

Pack Totem:

Concept: *Mystic Predator*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Dexterity ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Stamina ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Social

Charisma ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Manipulation ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Appearance ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Mental

Perception ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Intelligence ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wits ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Athletics ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Brawl ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Dodge ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Empathy ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Expression ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Intimidation ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Primal-Urge ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Streetwise ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Subterfuge ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Skills

Animal Ken ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Drive ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Etiquette ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Firearms ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Melee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Leadership ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Performance ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Repair ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Stealth ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Survival ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Knowledge

Computer ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Enigmas ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Investigation ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Law ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Linguistics ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Medicine ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Occult ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Politics ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Rituals ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Science ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Advantages

Backgrounds

Kinfolk ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Mentor ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Past Life ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Gifts

Beast Speech

Heightened Senses

Spirit Speech

Gifts

Renown

Glory

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Honor

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wisdom

☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Rank

Rage

☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Gnosis

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Willpower

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Health

Bruised ☐

Hurt -1 ☐

Injured -1 ☐

Wounded -2 ☐

Mauled -2 ☐

Crippled -5 ☐

Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

WYLD AFFINITY:
CANNOT REGAIN
GNOSIS IN CITIES

Zoo-Born Arbitrator

Quote: *You say I know nothing of humans. I have observed them every day of my life, as they believed they observed me, and I know more of them than they ever learned of me.*

Prelude: Whelped in an enclosure, you grew up as part of a captive wolf pack. Your home was not as small as a cage, but you never learned to run as other pups did. Your pack was unhappy and uneasy, fed dead meat every day and stared at by humans from behind metal fences. There was no real alpha in the pack, and you did not learn about the social life of wolf packs. You did, however, learn more about humans than most Red Talons. Every day you saw them as they watched you, fed you and wrote on their pages. As you grew you became more and more frustrated with your existence. Some of the

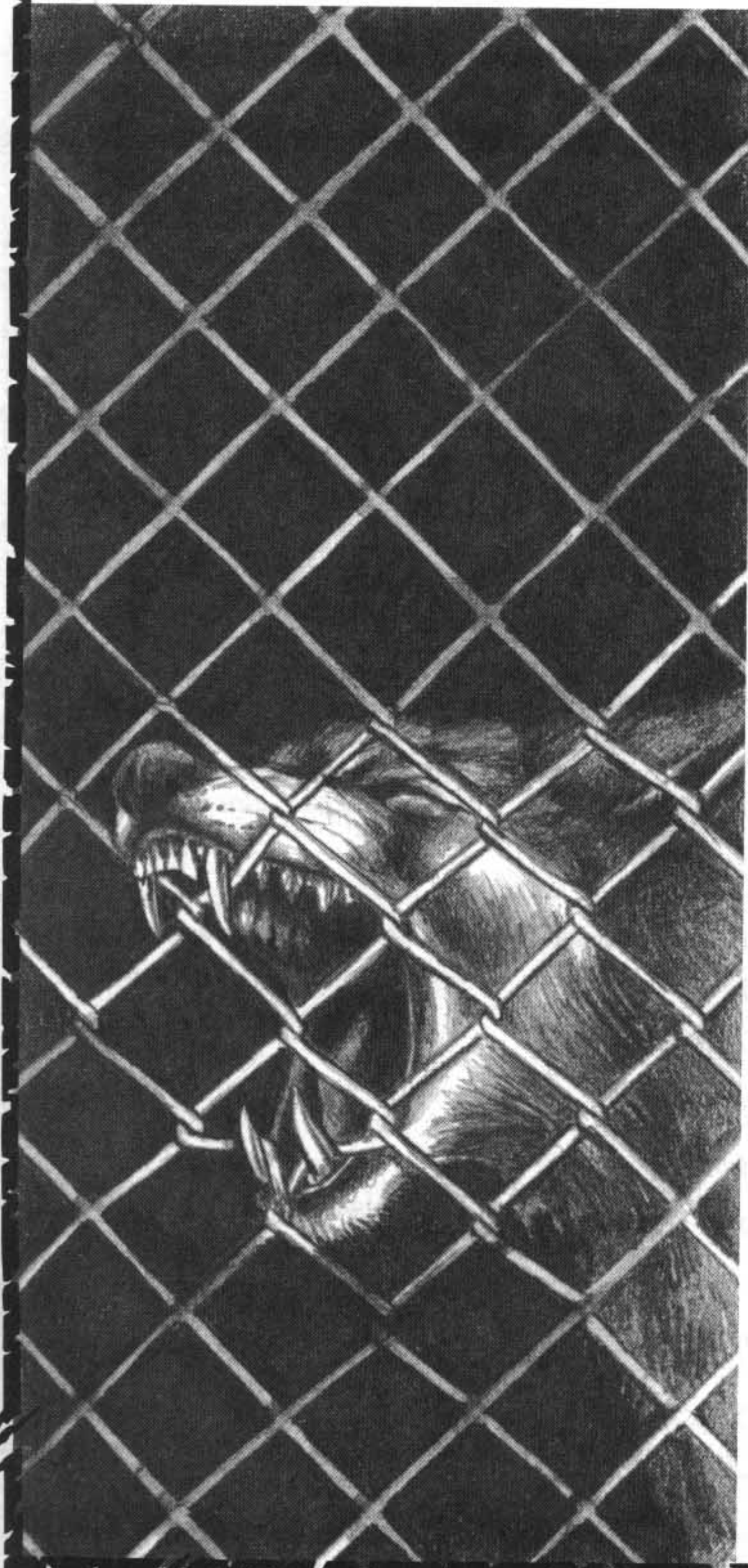
wolves befriended your captors and associated with them. Others did nothing but lie in the shade all day, remembering freedom. You first knew you were different when one day you bit a finger from the hand of a young boy who offered you mushy human food, cold and stinging like snow, through the fence. The keepers were very angry with you and locked you up on your own.

That night, you were angry as you saw the half moon shining in the sky. You tore down the fence keeping you from your pack. Then you pulled down all the fences and led your pack off into the night. As you crossed a human track covered with machines, your mother was killed by a metal monster. Sadly, you led the pack off into the mountains. You had little success. Many of the wolves did not know how to hunt or to survive in the much colder mountains. Heartbroken, you led those that could make the journey back to the enclosure. After that, you wandered far on your own, in the wilds and the outskirts of the human cities, until the Red Talons found you.

Concept: Born in captivity, you have seen much of the human world and the world of wolves. Although you are new to many of the most basic ideas about wolves, the Red Talons need your valuable knowledge about humans. You are making something of a name for yourself as an arbitrator, negotiating with other tribes who you find it easy to communicate with. The Red Talons are your tribe, and it is superior to all the others. Only Talons could understand the sadness in your heart when you led your packmates back to captivity. You hate captivity more than anything.

Roleplaying Hints: Stand still and listen when others talk. You understand the power of listening. When you reply make your words count, and say things only once. If others do not know how to listen, then it is their bad fortune. Always try to find a new point of view. You have seen and felt many things that other Garou never have. Make sure they know this.

Equipment: None.



RED TALONS

Name:

Breed: *Lupus*

Pack Name:

Player:

Auspice: *Philodox*

Pack Totem:

Chronicle:

Camp: *Whelp's compromise* Concept: *Zoo-born arbitrator*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ☐☐☐☐☐
Dexterity ☐☐☐☐☐
Stamina ☐☐☐☐☐

Social

Charisma ☐☐☐☐☐
Manipulation ☐☐☐☐☐
Appearance ☐☐☐☐☐

Mental

Perception ☐☐☐☐☐
Intelligence ☐☐☐☐☐
Wits ☐☐☐☐☐

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ☐☐☐☐☐
Athletics ☐☐☐☐☐
Brawl ☐☐☐☐☐
Dodge ☐☐☐☐☐
Empathy ☐☐☐☐☐
Expression ☐☐☐☐☐
Intimidation ☐☐☐☐☐
Primal-Urge ☐☐☐☐☐
Streetwise ☐☐☐☐☐
Subterfuge ☐☐☐☐☐

Skills

Animal Ken ☐☐☐☐☐
Drive ☐☐☐☐☐
Etiquette ☐☐☐☐☐
Firearms ☐☐☐☐☐
Melee ☐☐☐☐☐
Leadership ☐☐☐☐☐
Performance ☐☐☐☐☐
Repair ☐☐☐☐☐
Stealth ☐☐☐☐☐
Survival ☐☐☐☐☐

Knowledge

Computer ☐☐☐☐☐
Enigmas ☐☐☐☐☐
Investigation ☐☐☐☐☐
Law ☐☐☐☐☐
Linguistics ☐☐☐☐☐
Medicine ☐☐☐☐☐
Occult ☐☐☐☐☐
Politics ☐☐☐☐☐
Rituals ☐☐☐☐☐
Science ☐☐☐☐☐

Advantages

Backgrounds

Allies ☐☐☐☐☐
Contacts ☐☐☐☐☐
Kinfolk ☐☐☐☐☐
Mentor ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Gifts

Beast Speech ☐☐☐☐☐
Leap of the Kangaroo ☐☐☐☐☐
Truth of Gaia ☐☐☐☐☐
Resist Pain ☐☐☐☐☐

Gifts

Renown

Glory

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Honor

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Wisdom

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Rank

Rage

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Gnosis

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Willpower

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

WYLD AFFINITY:
CANNOT REGAIN
GNOSIS IN CITIES

Metis Scapegoat

Quote: Stare if you must at the hairless wolf. Disgusting am I? My claws cut clean, and my fangs bite deep. I have found strength in bitterness you could never know.

Prelude: Born the offspring of a Red Talon female, you never knew who your father was. Why the pack let you live, you still do not understand. You were never one of them — never even allowed to be. They threw you scraps from their kills when it was clear that you would starve otherwise, but that was the only kindness they gave you. Even your mother was distant, raising you until you were old enough to be chased away, alone. You wandered and managed to hunt on your own for a time. You wandered north and found other Garou, Children of Gaia, Bone Gnawers and others. Many offered to take you in, claiming that they felt no aversion to metis. You were sorely tempted by their kindness but couldn't accept it. The hatred and shame that your Red Talon pack had instilled in you was too great to allow you to accept. Besides, you have a strange kind of pride and believe yourself, despite your hairless body, to be superior to these mongrel tribes.

Concept: You are a bitter loner, forming only transitory associations with other Garou. You are full of hate for the Wurm, the Red Talons, all other Garou and even yourself. Your performances as Galliard are strange. Most often you sing for yourself, for audiences find your songs disturbing. It has been said that you have great insight, but you don't care for such accolades. You have no fur, as Gaia has no forests; you are an omen of things to come, and your songs speak of the Apocalypse. You accept your position as scapegoat in other packs, and don't care any longer what others think of you. If you must nip at the scraps of a kill, then so be it. With your greater understanding (but no greater sympathy) of humans, you are invaluable to a pack of lupus and have served as guide in the past.

Roleplaying Hints: You are surly and biting. You can be funny, but your humor is always black. Snarl a great deal, and deliver withering looks to any other characters who make bad jokes. The only folly you tolerate is your own. You are very sensitive to comments about your metis nature, and can be quickly driven to Rage at those who make them.

Metis Deformity: Hairless.

Equipment: A bag full of various clothes and basic human gear. A book of beautiful, glossy wolf photographs.



RED TALONS

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: *Lupus*
Auspice: *Galliard*
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: *Metis Scapegoat*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
Dexterity ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐
Stamina ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

Social

Charisma ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Manipulation ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐
Appearance ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Mental

Perception ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐
Intelligence ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐
Wits ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐
Athletics ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐
Brawl ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐
Dodge ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Empathy ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Expression ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐
Intimidation ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐
Primal-Urge ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐
Streetwise ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Subterfuge ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Skills

Animal Ken ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Drive ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Etiquette ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Firearms ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Melee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Leadership ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Performance ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐
Repair ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Stealth ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Survival ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Knowledge

Computer ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Enigmas ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐
Investigation ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Law ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Linguistics ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Medicine ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐
Occult ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐
Politics ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Rituals ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐
Science ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Advantages

Backgrounds

Past Lives ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐
Pure Breed ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐
Resources ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Gifts

Beast Speech ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Scent of Running Water ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Sense Wyrms ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Disfigurement

Hairless ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Renown

Glory
☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Honor

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wisdom

☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Rank

Rage

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Gnosis

☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Willpower

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

WYLD AFFINITY:
CANNOT REGAIN
GNOSIS IN CITIES

Lone Wolf

Quote: You see I have no pack. I need none. Do you wish to test my strength against yours? I have learned hard lessons and would be glad to teach them to you.

Prelude: Born in a litter of pups sired by the alpha male of your pack, you would have been destined for glory but for your size. You were a good deal smaller than your littermates, and although you fought bravely with them, you were condemned to the bottom of the pecking order. As you grew you developed surprising strength for your size, but it appeared as if you would never be alpha. Both your brothers vied for the position when your father died. When the Change came upon you, your brothers refused to accept your dominance. In an act which will haunt you for the rest of your days, you killed them both and took over the pack. When the Red Talons came to take you away, you left a devastated pack in the hands of your young mother.

Your brief time at the top ended and you again found yourself at the bottom of the heap. A small Ahroun, you had no choice but to follow the alpha and your elders and do what you could to aid them in their struggle. This subordinate status became too much, and you challenged the alpha for the right to lead the pack. Soundly defeated, you were expelled from the pack. You tolerated the position of scapegoat for a short time but quickly left the pack altogether. Now you roam the wild alone, making humans and Garou fear your territory. You have returned to your natal wolf pack occasionally, and mated with a new dominant female. There will be pups in the spring.

Concept: A strong loner type, you take grief from no one. Quick to anger and quick to judge others, you nonetheless understand what it is to be alienated and rejected. Somewhere inside you there is tolerance and kindness, but you never let it surface. You live the life of a wolf without a pack.

Roleplaying Hints: You are utterly sure of yourself, despite past defeats. You quickly size up those you meet, dominating them if you judge them weaker, avoiding them if they are stronger. Be forceful and open in your dealings with others; there is no place for subtlety or subterfuge in your vocabulary.

Equipment: Other than the scars of your many fights, you carry nothing but your fur.



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RED TALONS

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: *Lupus*
Auspice: *Ahroun*
Camp: *Lodge of the Predator Kings*

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: *Lone wolf*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ☒☒☒☒☐
Dexterity ☒☒☒☒☐
Stamina ☒☒☒☒☐

Social

Charisma ☐☐☐☐☐
Manipulation ☒☒☒☒☐
Appearance ☒☒☒☒☐

Mental

Perception ☒☒☒☒☐
Intelligence ☒☒☒☒☐
Wits ☒☒☒☒☐

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ☒☒☒☒☐
Athletics ☒☒☒☒☐
Brawl ☒☒☒☒☐
Dodge ☒☐☐☐☐
Empathy ☐☐☐☐☐
Expression ☐☐☐☐☐
Intimidation ☒☒☒☒☐
Primal-Urge ☒☒☒☒☐
Streetwise ☐☐☐☐☐
Subterfuge ☐☐☐☐☐

Skills

Animal Ken ☒☒☒☒☐
Drive ☐☐☐☐☐
Etiquette ☐☐☐☐☐
Firearms ☐☐☐☐☐
Melee ☐☐☐☐☐
Leadership ☐☐☐☐☐
Performance ☐☐☐☐☐
Repair ☐☐☐☐☐
Stealth ☒☒☒☒☐
Survival ☒☒☒☒☐

Knowledge

Computer ☐☐☐☐☐
Enigmas ☒☐☐☐☐
Investigation ☐☐☐☐☐
Law ☐☐☐☐☐
Linguistics ☐☐☐☐☐
Medicine ☒☒☒☒☐
Occult ☐☐☐☐☐
Politics ☐☐☐☐☐
Rituals ☒☒☒☒☐
Science ☐☐☐☐☐

Advantages

Backgrounds

Kinfolk ☒☒☒☒☐
Past Lives ☒☒☒☒☐
Pure Breed ☒☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Gifts

Beast Speech
Heightened Senses
The Falling Touch
Razor Claws

Gifts

Renown

Glory

☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Honor

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Wisdom

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Rank

Rage

☒☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Gnosis

☒☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Willpower

☒☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐
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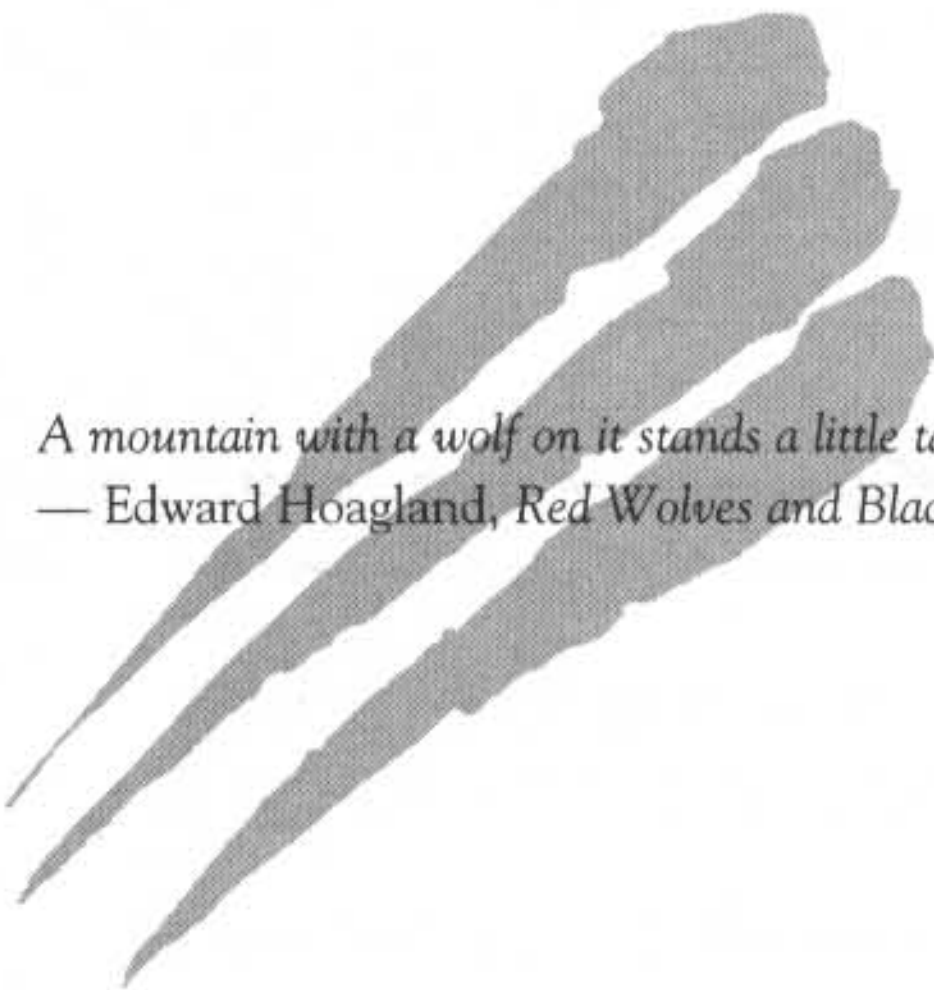
Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

WYLD AFFINITY:
CANNOT REGAIN
GNOSIS IN CITIES

Appendix Three: Hunters of Different Prey



*A mountain with a wolf on it stands a little taller.
— Edward Hoagland, Red Wolves and Black Bears*

Bloodmoon

Bloodmoon is a hater. He hates humans, especially those who were responsible for slaughtering his natal pack just after he had left them to learn the ways of the Red Talons. He hates Garou, who he sees as compromising, weak, foolish creatures who are unprepared to act when action is required. In a twisted way he also hates wolves for the weakness they show in falling before the humans' guns and their inability to prove the superiority he knows they have. Most of all he hates himself for his failure to save his wolf mother and her pack. Bloodmoon failed his Rite of Passage, which involved the protection of his wolf pack, and he has not undergone another. Rather than run with other Red Talons, Bloodmoon surrounds himself with other outcasts — homid, metis or lupus — he doesn't care. He will take any lonely Garou of any breed or auspice, though he prefers Ahrouns like himself.

Bloodmoon leads attacks against human settlements with these ragged packs and with any who will follow him. He strikes indiscriminately, sometimes hitting the heart of the operations of the Wyrms, sometimes in a relatively unimportant area. He is beyond caring.

Bloodmoon has a strange trait. When he assumes Homid form, which is rarely and generally for the short period of time he requires to infiltrate a human area, he appears different from his last Homid form. Sometimes he is black, sometimes caucasian. Another form he assumes resembles a

Native American. No one knows whether he has a series of forms through which he cycles, or whether his Homid form is different every time he changes. Bloodmoon has no answer to the mystery. For him, it has always been so, and is merely one more strangeness he incurred at the time of the Change. Some of the Theurges have taken it to be an omen of some kind, but are not specific as to what it might prophesy.

So far, Bloodmoon's ravages have gone unchallenged. This strange trait of his may breed reluctance in those who might otherwise have tried to curb his excesses.

Scent-of-Red-Snow

A Galliard born under the waning Gibbous moon, Scent-of-Red-Snow has always been a wanderer. Seized at a young age with a lust for journey and discovery, Scent-of-Red-Snow has made her paw prints in many parts of America and beyond. Originally from northern Montana, she appears as a huge, shaggy timber wolf, with a gray-stained muzzle and bright eyes. Scent-of-Red-Snow is a member of no particular camp, and is careful to avoid conflicts between them. She has been known to disarm such conflicts by breaking into an aching, mournful howl that others cannot help but join. One of her great missions is to end factional conflict among the Red Talons, believing that it is a characteristic of humans groups that has tainted her tribe and that it can only weaken Talons against humans and against the Wyrms.



Scent-of-Red-Snow is a doomsayer. Her songs are invariably dark and infused with visions of the Apocalypse and the final death of the Red Talons. She preaches to Red Talons in great moots, begging them to end the madness of Red Talon fighting Red Talon and giving them glimpses of her dark vision. She is a great performer, and her audience is always swayed by her pleas, though this may fade after they have left the moot.

Scent-of-Red-Snow is always prepared to support her claims with action. She has frequently insulted some strong Ahroun only to have him challenge her in front of the moot. She never backs away from such challenges, but the Ahrouns usually do. Hardly ever having to rely on her considerable fighting talents, Scent-of-Red-Snow is well preserved by her reputation and by the fact that deep down all the Red Talons feel her criticisms and know that she is right.

One-Leaf-Ear

One-Leaf-Ear is the member of the Whelp's Compromise who has obtained the highest profile outside the Red Talon tribe. A small, bristled Ahroun, she has made it her mission to travel among the other tribes and spread the message of Red Talon tolerance. She often asks the protection of the groups in which she is staying when the Red Talons come to fetch her.

One-Leaf-Ear loves the Red Talons, though many of her elders wouldn't believe this. She loves her tribe so greatly

that her concern for its future has outweighed her hatred of the humans. She believes that the humans can be controlled and changed, so that wolves and Red Talons might survive. She claims, perhaps correctly, that if the few Red Talons who remain were to attack humanity outright, the backlash from human society would quickly destroy the few populations of wolves that remain in the wild. Even in the unlikely event of Red Talon success, she argues, there would be no wolves remaining to create new Talons, and the tribe that she so loves would disappear forever.

A bright-eyed individual, One-Leaf-Ear is highly charismatic and has swayed several young Red Talons to her cause. She leads such groups in a manner that would horrify the older Talons. There is no alpha in the pack, and decisions are made on a distinctly homid basis. One-Leaf-Ear has been called "monkey lover" and many other names besides, but is undeterred from her mission to change the minds of the Red Talons for their own good and for that of Gaia.

Crookpaw

Crookpaw is often called more lupus than lupus. Born the offspring of two Red Talons, he has striven all his life to throw off the shackles of his metis heritage. He is a strident hater of humans and advocates their complete extermination. He spends most of his time in his Lupus form, loping ungracefully on his three good legs, his left front paw dangling uselessly. He is a bitter Garou, who has dedicated





his life to learning all there is to learn of the Red Talons and to giving them the voice they refuse to give themselves. Although he is a fierce human hater and homid doubter, he travels among homid-dominated septs, talking of the Red Talons and trying to quell opposition against them.

He has traveled extensively, collecting the lore of the Red Talons, a mission that he performs for none but himself. What he intends to do with the lore he has collated, if anything, remains a mystery. He strives to be the equal of his lupus tribemates, often exceeding them. He lives like a wolf, hunting deer and moose and sleeping on the snow.

There is a strange air about him. Because he is crippled, he will never be the physical equal of any healthy lupus, but wherever he travels, his bitterness, his perseverance and his determination give the Red Talons reason to think. Often a pack is stronger in an indefinable way after a visit from Crookpaw. Maybe he is merely fulfilling the role of the Ragabash, questioning the alphas, reevaluating the laws. Maybe his rare metis blood has found in him some special purpose that will become clear as the Apocalypse approaches.



Farewell

Wow, has it really been only three years? Werewolf has been around that long, and I've been with it ever since the first edition rulebook was released. But by the time you read this, I will have moved on. I'll be a partner at HDI, a hot new computer gaming company, along with fellow White Wolf alumni Andrew Greenberg, former *Vampire: the Masquerade* developer.

I'm going to miss working with the Geron everyday, but I still plan to help them stave off the Apocalypse by writing future books. I actually look forward to writing about the Geron rather than helping others write about them. That's going to be Ethan Skemp's problem now. Heh, heh. Poor Ethan will have to put up with the shenanigans of our crazy authors all by himself. The Wyrms work in many ways, Ethan. Beware.

Of course, Gaia works in many ways also, and I'd like to thank all the authors who helped tell the stories of the Geron. You know who they are; just pick up any of the books and read the credits.

May Gaia look over you and the Wyrms tremble at your passing.

— Bill Bridges

P.S. Keep your eyes peeled for *Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth* in April '96. It's a forbidden book of Wyrms lore, so don't let any Geron catch you looking at it.

RED TALONS

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed:
Auspice:
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept:

Attributes

Physical

Strength _____ ●○○○○
Dexterity _____ ●○○○○
Stamina _____ ●○○○○

Social

Charisma _____ ●○○○○
Manipulation _____ ●○○○○
Appearance _____ ●○○○○

Mental

Perception _____ ●○○○○
Intelligence _____ ●○○○○
Wits _____ ●○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness _____ ○○○○○
Athletics _____ ○○○○○
Brawl _____ ○○○○○
Dodge _____ ○○○○○
Empathy _____ ○○○○○
Expression _____ ○○○○○
Intimidation _____ ○○○○○
Primal-Urge _____ ○○○○○
Streetwise _____ ○○○○○
Subterfuge _____ ○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken _____ ○○○○○
Drive _____ ○○○○○
Etiquette _____ ○○○○○
Firearms _____ ○○○○○
Melee _____ ○○○○○
Leadership _____ ○○○○○
Performance _____ ○○○○○
Repair _____ ○○○○○
Stealth _____ ○○○○○
Survival _____ ○○○○○

Knowledge

Computer _____ ○○○○○
Enigmas _____ ○○○○○
Investigation _____ ○○○○○
Law _____ ○○○○○
Linguistics _____ ○○○○○
Medicine _____ ○○○○○
Occult _____ ○○○○○
Politics _____ ○○○○○
Rituals _____ ○○○○○
Science _____ ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

_____ ○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○

Gifts

Gifts

Renown

Glory

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Honor

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Wisdom

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Rank

Rage

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Gnosis

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Weakness

WYLD AFFINITY:
CANNOT REGAIN
GNOSIS IN CITIES

RED TALONS

Homid

Glabro

Crinos

Hispo

Lupus

No
Change

Difficulty: 6

Strength (+2) _____

Stamina (+2) _____

Appearance (-1) _____

Manipulation (-1) _____

Difficulty: 7

Strength (+4) _____

Dexterity (+1) _____

Stamina (+3) _____

Appearance 0

Manipulation (-3) _____

Difficulty: 6

Strength (+3) _____

Dexterity (+2) _____

Stamina (+3) _____

Manipulation (-3) _____

Difficulty: 7

Strength (+1) _____

Dexterity (+2) _____

Stamina (+2) _____

Manipulation (-3) _____

Difficulty: 6

INCITE DELIRIUM
IN HUMANS

Other Traits

_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO
_____	OOOOOO

Fetishes

Item: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated	Level _____	Gnosis _____
Power _____			
Item: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated	Level _____	Gnosis _____
Power _____			
Item: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated	Level _____	Gnosis _____
Power _____			
Item: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated	Level _____	Gnosis _____
Power _____			

Rites

Combat

Maneuver/Weapon	Roll	Difficulty	Damage	Range	Rate	Clip

Brawling Chart

Maneuver	Roll	Diff	Damage
Bite	Dex + Brawl	5	Strength + 1†
Body Slam	Dex + Brawl	7	Special
Claw	Dex + Brawl	6	Strength + 2†
Grapple	Dex + Brawl	6	Strength
Kick	Dex + Brawl	7	Strength + 1
Punch	Dex + Brawl	6	Strength

† These maneuvers do aggravated damage.

Armor: _____

RED TALONS

Nature:

Demeanor:

Merits & Flaws

Merit	Type	Cost	Flaw	Type	Bonus

Expanded Background

Mentor

Pure Breed

Kinfolk

Past Life

Pack Totem

Possessions

Gear (Carried) _____

Equipment (Owned) _____

Sept

Name _____

Caern Location _____

Level _____ Type _____

Totem _____

Leader _____

Experience

TOTAL:

Gained From: _____

TOTAL SPENT: _____

Spent On: _____

RED TALONS

History

Prelude

Description

Age _____
Hair _____
Eyes _____
Wolf Breed _____
Human Race _____
Sex _____

	Height	Weight
Homid		
Glabro		
Crinos		
Hispo		
Lupus		

Battle Scars _____

Metis Deformity _____

Visuals

Pack Chart

Character Sketch

RED TALONS

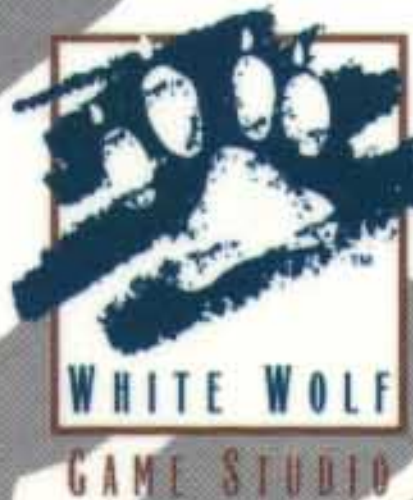
TRIBE BOOK

You think you know us, but you do not.
You think you are like we are, but you are not.
We are like no other. We are the Red Talons.

You try to behave like we do, but you cannot.
You try to keep pace with us, but you fall behind.
We run the long run. We are the Red Talons.

You try to match our purity, but you are tainted.
You try to catch our eye, but our eye is fixed on our prey.
We are relentless. We are the Red Talons.

You plan and scheme, change and grow.
You fight together and speak like humans.
You multiply and are many.
We are stone, we stay the same.
We speak seldom and make no promises, save one.
We are few. We are the Red Talons.
— Scent-of-Red-Snow



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