

# UMBRA

## THE VELVET SHADOW



*The Spirit World Sourcebook  
for Werewolf: The Apocalypse™*



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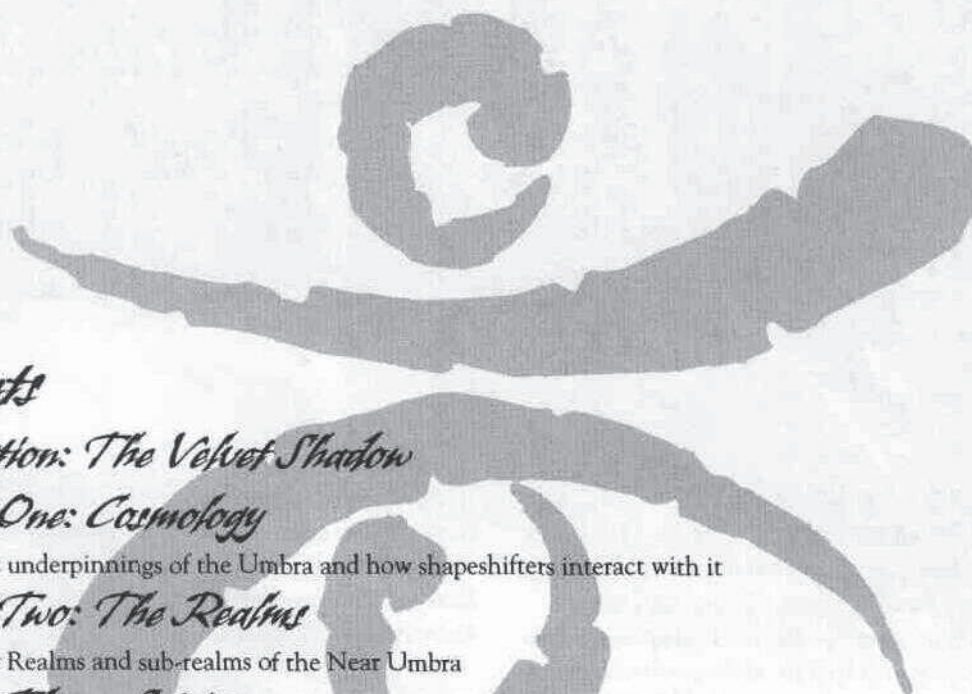
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# Introduction: The Velvet Shadow

Callie Heart-Like-a-Fist had hated the smell of the clinic from the moment she'd walked in the door. The lights were too artificial, the angles too sharp, the surfaces too smooth — but worst of all was the smell, an antiseptic stink like ammonia gone sour. As a place of healing, it left much to be desired.

Now she stood on the clinic's roof under a half moon, staring down through the spotlight into the main lobby. Even outside, it smelled wrong to her. God, she thought, no wonder teenage girls are afraid to come here. How the hell are they supposed to think the people here care about them as human beings when the place doesn't look like humans are allowed inside? She shook her head. Well, Anya may be reaching the staff one step at a time, but she doesn't have that kind of time. She needs help.

Callie took a deep breath, then shoved herself sideways, into the Gauntlet. It was like pulling herself through half-frozen water — it dragged at her, pressing down on her from all sides — but the sensation didn't last long, and then she was through.

The half moon overhead seemed a bit dimmer; the haze of the night sky was all the more telling. A tiny speck of red caught at the corner of her eye, but she forced herself not to

look at it. Instead, she stared down at the layers of webbing under her feet, webs like gleaming cables, each one laid in perfect symmetry to the rest.

Like I figured, she thought, watching an errant glass-and-metal spider scurry along the webs. Anya's not going to get anything done at this rate — the webs are too thick here. It'd take a crowbar to force any life, any new ideas into the people living here.

She drew in a breath, feeling the breath coalesce into bone and muscle, her clothes tightening, her already over-long arms lengthening further. I start pulling those webs apart, she grumbled to herself, and there's no telling what happens. Maybe I make the place unstable. Maybe the walls come crashing down. She cracked her knuckles. But it's not like I have time to try anything else.

She reached out, plucked one of the smaller spider-spirits from the web, and crushed it in her oversized fist. It was dissolving into a pixel-like mist even as she began opening her fingers again. With a sigh, she knelt down and took a long, strong cable-strand in either hand, bracing herself against the webbing rooftop.

As above — so below.

She pulled.



## *The Spirit World*

Virtually every culture has its stories of journeys into the spirit world, of figures that dare to walk beyond the world as we know it. From the stories of people descending into the underworld to retrieve dead lovers to the tales of heroes who travel into the heavens to steal fire for their people, these legends are part of the human yearning for something more.

In the World of Darkness, the human connection with that "something more" has been lost. It's a rare person who's able to sense that there is something beyond the world of flesh and soil. Many humans — possibly most — don't have much faith at all in a greater realm of existence, and live their lives accordingly. But the werewolves know.

In some old legends, wolves were described as "messengers from the spirit world." That much is true. Just as the old European legends of wolves that thirst for the blood of humans have their basis in gruesome fact, the tales of animals that walk between this world and the next also have some root in truth. This ability is a great privilege for the Garou and more than that — it's an awesome responsibility. A werewolf must keep the health of both spirit and physical worlds in mind, because what ails one ails the other. And as the world spirals toward the final days of the Apocalypse, the spirit world has continued to worsen.

This is the plight of the Umbra.

## *Warriors of Both Worlds*

The Umbra should be at the heart of every Werewolf chronicle. Yes, the Garou are the warriors of Gaia, and conflict (usually bloody) is what drives a game of savage horror — but the Umbra epitomizes *why* the Garou fight, and how they learn to be better warriors. Not every session should involve a spirit quest, and not every plotline should revolve around a threat from the Umbra — but in the World of Darkness, werewolves are one of the few creatures who still perceive the spirit world. Nobody else is as intimately tied to the Umbra; nobody else knows better the vital blessings — or obscene horrors — that can pour from the other side of the Gauntlet if they're summoned properly.

The spirit world adds an entire layer of possibilities to the Werewolf universe — and to your game. The brutal conflict key to the savage horror genre and the webs of politicking that come with any game focused on social interaction and society are certainly enough material to fuel sessions. But the Umbra adds something more — in fact, it holds so many more possibilities, it's hard to define as a single layer at all. The Umbra is a source of more foes, true — foes that can be fought tooth and nail, or that have to be fought by trying to win the hearts of humanity. It's also a change of backdrop for a story, or a source for more

personalities to interact socially and politically with the characters. It holds the objects of many quests, and the tools for deeply introspective, character-based stories. The Umbra can be anything — *anything* — for your chronicle. It just depends on what you want to get out of it.

And it's not even as if the Umbra's added story elements replace the physical concerns of the Garou — far from it. No story should be "either-or," either Umbral or not. If the pack goes off on a quest into the Umbra, leaving their loved ones behind, they may encounter realms or challenges along the way that mirror their earthly desires (or threaten their mortal relatives). If a pack is fighting a decidedly earthly foe, they'll probably rely on their spirit allies or Umbral travel abilities at some point along their hunt. Werewolves are creatures of both worlds — the one's just as vital as the other. The physical world you already know about; it's a darker version of the one outside your window. The spirit world — well, that's bigger. A little extra guidance is always helpful, right?

Hence, this book.

## *How to Use This Book*

Umbra isn't a book of adventures, nor is it the definitive guide to every portion of the spirit landscape. Instead, this book is a resource dedicated to helping the Storyteller adjudicate the obstacles and rewards of quests into the spirit world. Inside are all the building blocks necessary to start running packs through the Gauntlet and into the greater portion of reality.

If you're a new Storyteller who's looking for some advice on handling stories that deal with the spirit world, congratulations and welcome aboard; it's our hope that you'll find plenty here to inspire your stories for years to come. If you're a long-time Storyteller who already owns a copy of *Umbra: The Velvet Shadow*, hopefully you'll find some things worthwhile in this volume, too; things have changed in the spirit world, and not always for the better.

- **Chapter One: Cosmology** covers the general setup of the Umbra, from the relations and connections between the Near, Dark and Deep Umbrae to the logistics of maneuvering throughout the Penumbra.

- **Chapter Two: The Realms** details the fourteen most prominent Near Realms, their laws and layout, as well as touching on some of the more frequented Zones and sub-realms. Each Near Realm is described in terms of geography and "laws of the realm," although these shouldn't be seen as absolutes; the Umbra isn't a static place (no thanks to the Weaver's efforts), and any amount of customization is not only possible, but encouraged.

- **Chapter Three: Spirits** expands on the spirit material presented in the main rulebook, from relations with the spirit world to a number of new spirits to act as





allies and enemies. In particular, a spirit from each of the tribal totems' broods is offered, so that the Storyteller can offer spirit allies for characters of any tribe.

- **Chapter Four: Storytelling in the Umbra** contains advice for the Storyteller on running Umbral stories, particularly when it comes to presenting the Umbra as something special.

- Finally, the **Appendix** collects virtually all the hard-and-fast rules bits from throughout the book, from new *Gifts* and *fetishes* designed for making Umbral travel easier to notable personages that packs might encounter while walking in the spirit world.

As vast as the Umbra is, it's probably no surprise that there are several supplements available that go further than the scope of this book. ***Rage Across the Heavens*** details the Aetherial Realm with great fervor; with tons of story seeds and information on each of the Planetary Incarnae, it's well worth a look. ***Book of the Weaver*** is particularly useful when dealing with the Weaver's webs; ***Book of the Wyrms*** contains numerous Bane threats and a more detailed description of Malfeas. The out-of-print (but still handy) ***Werewolf: The Wild West*** supplement ***Ghost Towns*** is a good source of information on the Dark Umbra, particularly in crossing over ***Werewolf*** materials with ***Wraith: The Oblivion*** materials. (Speaking of which, ***Wraith*** is of course the ultimate source of ideas for

the Dark Umbra; the recent fall of the Stygian Empire is detailed in ***Ends of Empire***, for those interested.) ***Axis Mundi: The Book of Spirits*** is likewise out of print, but full of interesting spirits that require only a little tinkering to fit into Revised rules. ***Book of Worlds***, while heavily rooted in ***Mage*** cosmology (expect contradictions with the way things work in ***Werewolf***), may provide some ideas for stories that range significantly farther afield.

Of course, everything we provide is rooted in another source as well — human myth. Browsing through the mythology section of your bookstore or library should give you ideas aplenty for journeys into the Underworld or spirit realm, from anthologies of Native American myths to Joseph Campbell's works on the Hero's Journey. Even works of fiction like Dante's *Inferno* are applicable — the *Inferno* isn't just about a descent into hell, it's a satire on the Italian society of the time. Such escapades in symbolism are hard to beat.

Is this a lot of material to digest? It sure is. But we're talking about the Umbra here. You could gather your group to play every week for years and still only scratch the surface of everything the spirit world has to offer. If you're interested in doing other reading, it's probably worth your while; if not, the Umbra's certainly big and wild enough that you can devise whatever you like off the top of your head. The sky isn't even the limit any more.



# Chapter One: Cosmology

## *The Velvet Shadow*

The spirit world, the ephemeral realm, the "shadow" of creation — no matter what name it is known by, the Umbra is a realm beyond the world we know. The realm of flesh is made of hard, physical matter and substance, obeying the laws of science and nature. Yet mystics and visionaries alike perceive another dimension beyond this harsh and static realm: a world of dreams and spirit, mysticism and magic.

Garou mystics attest that everything in the world we know has a spiritual reflection in the Umbra. Once, long ago, the many worlds were one. The powers of mysticism and magic were evident everywhere. Then the fabric of the world was torn asunder, separating spirit and matter. From one world, two were born: the Earth and the Umbra. Since then, the two worlds have slowly drifted farther apart. Strange new realms have multiplied, reflecting the ideals of the Garou and the dreams of mankind — as well as their nightmares. In the depths of the Umbra, Garou find the world as it once was, as it really is, as it might be, and as it never was.

The spirit world is a dimension as limitless as imagination. Although the Weaver and Wyrms continue to spread their influence throughout the Umbra as well, the Garou continue questing to its very limits. From the cub stepping sideways into the Penumbra for the very first time to packs of elders seeking the distant shadows of other planets, the Umbra is a place for Garou to pursue great and epic quests. Along the way, heroes face the greatest horrors the mind can conceive.

## *The Structure of Creation*

Within Garou lore, all of creation is collectively known as the Tellurian. From the werewolves' point of view, one realm lies at the heart of it, existing in the very center. It is the physical world, the realm of flesh, the so-called "real world." The human race knows it as Earth. There is, perhaps, no better name for it.

Earth has its own set of absolute laws. Glass Walkers find them fascinating, as nearly all of them are based on humanity's precepts of the universe. On Earth, gravity always pulls objects towards the center



of the planet at 32 feet per second per second, and two plus two is always four. If any of these laws are violated, it happens because of the action of hidden things, like traditions of magic, the charms and powers of spirits, or the supernatural strengths of creatures like the Garou.

The spirit world has its own unearthly laws, and they are by no means always absolute. The farther one travels from Earth, at the heart of the Tellurian, the less earthly reality applies. Contradictions begin to manifest, much to the delight of Stargazers. Magic manifests in mysterious ways, as Uktena readily attest. And slowly, as a Shadow Lord might remind us, the Wyrms gradually spreads its tendrils of corruption throughout the many planes and realities of the spirit world. Both dimensions have become polluted. In some domains, such as Earth itself, the Wyrms' power is overwhelming. Other realms are untouched and inviolate, sacred destinations for questing Garou.

## *The Penumbra*

The closest realm of the spirit world is merely a reflection of the physical world. Everything on Earth has a spiritual reflection in the Penumbra, the "shadow" of the Earth. When cubs tell stories of the Umbra, this is usually the realm they're talking about. It's the easiest one to understand. For werewolves who aren't particularly spiritually inclined, it's all they really need to know.

The Penumbra looks just like our world, but from another point of view: that of the Garou. Mankind defines what happens on Earth, but in the Penumbra, Gaia's presence is more keenly felt. Wherever Gaia is healthy, the realm is filled with life and living things. A public park might look seedy and overgrown in our world, but in the Umbra, the trees and plants are vibrant with energy. The smell of auto exhaust fades, replaced by fresh breezes — smog gives way to fresh air. The scents and sensations that are deadened in the city come alive again. The moon is always clearly visible. By day, the sky is usually brilliantly blue in a way that only small children can understand; there is almost never a visible sun, but ambient sunlight permeates the Penumbra. (A vampire somehow brought into the Penumbra is in trouble during the day, as the sunlight is never direct but practically omnipresent.) By night, all of the stars are visible despite Luna's glow, as well as some men never see. The force of the Wyld is obvious everywhere.

Unfortunately, so are the forces of the Wyrms and the Weaver. It's the rare city that still casts a healthy reflection in the Penumbra. As the spiritual health of an area wanes, so too does that of its Penumbral counterpart. In the physical world, the Wyrms' influ-

## *Should I Pack a Lunch?*

Visitors to the Umbra don't always burn calories at the same rate as they would on Earth. This is particularly true of shapeshifters, whose spirit energy sustains them to a degree. Just as spirits don't really need to eat as such, a werewolf (or other shapeshifter) can get by on much less food by burning Gnosis to survive. Depending on how much exercise he indulges in, a werewolf needs to spend anywhere from a Gnosis point per week (for casual, unhurried travel) to a Gnosis point per day (for frequent exertion such as combat) to sustain himself. This Gnosis requirement can be staved off by eating food, but most Garou prefer to hunt Englings or the spirits of prey animals for Gnosis, as that proves more efficient.

Creatures without Gnosis, however, have a rougher time of it. They still must eat to fuel their now-spirit bodies. Food found in the Umbra can be nourishing, but it's not always so; fruits picked from Glens or the "flesh" of an animal spirit that gives its form up willingly seem to be the most palatable and filling. The undead are in particular trouble; lacking the vital spark that ensures compatibility with the Umbra, they find spirit food (or blood) impossible to ingest. Unless she's brought a few mortals to snack on, or the Storyteller decrees that a particular source of "blood" is close enough to glean some nourishment (unlikely unless dealing with a spirit of blood itself), a vampire is likely not long for the waking world. (Not to mention the ambient sunlight that's a problem during the Penumbral day...)

If a person "starves to death" in the Umbra, he doesn't die — exactly. Rather, he undergoes disconnection, his body becoming pure spirit. (This also happens to anyone, shapeshifter or no, who spends too long — a few years seems to be the going theory — without returning to the physical world.) When this happens to a shapeshifter, he tends to transform into an ancestor-spirit; humans often become ephemera, pale shadows of their former selves. Animals, of course, become animal spirits of the appropriate type. It's not certain what would happen to the undead, who are so incompatible here. One theory has it that a vampire that disconnects becomes a Bane of hunger and rage, but nobody's ever known an vampire to survive that long in the Near Umbra, where so few of their powers work and they can't handle the local food. At any rate, once the transformation is complete, the reliance on food is gone, and the new spirit relies on Rage, Gnosis, Willpower and Essence in the usual fashion.



ence might be all but invisible, but its tendrils are often more overt in the Umbra. Suppose a chemical plant is manufacturing Wyrml-filth to spread throughout a city. The machinery responsible might appear gleaming and well maintained, but in the Umbra, its corruptive resonance is all too apparent. Its pipes may be encrusted with unrecognizable excrescence; the lights that flash along its control panels may wink like predatory eyes. A vat of Wyrml-tainted chemicals might glow with an unearthly color one cannot later name. The cranes that load them onto trucks may cast shadows of long and sinuous tentacles.

There are many such blighted areas in the world where the Wyrml or Weaver has thoroughly infested creation. In the physical world, the telltale signs of such corruption are harder to discern, yet they are no less present. Pollution, human misery, exploitation and suffering are all signs of Wyrmlish taint, all problems that cast a spiritual pall. Conformity, stultifying oppression, and technology beyond all restraint are prevailing indicators of the Weaver's influence. Werewolves can fight these adversaries by facing such problems in the human world. Because of their *obligation to humanity*, most Garou feel they must do no less. A concerted cleanup campaign in the physical world may treat the symptoms of spiritual corruption, but it doesn't always cure the disease. Sometimes a pack must journey into the spirit world to face such horrors directly.

Humans are distracted or deceived in the physical world, but Garou in the Umbra can see the forces of the Triat at work. A cub that steps sidewise in a city for the first time sees the Weaver everywhere. The headlights of passing traffic may blur into long glowing strands of spider silk. Nestled in a "Don't Walk" sign, a little Weaver-spirit may chant his pedestrian mantra to passers-by over and over. Most humans don't even appear at all, with the more "enlightened" or "important" — those who have a more profound effect on many people around them, such as dedicated teachers — appearing as faintly luminescent, barely visible outlines. Shapeshifters, whose spirit form is part of their flesh, cast similarly vague and indeterminate shadows in the Penumbra. Around them, the form and structure of buildings, sidewalks, and crowded streets may appear as tight-knit walls of spidery webbing...or, if stranger forces are at work, other, less explainable things.

Although shapeshifters might be able to discern the spiritual context of a place by examining its Penumbra counterpart, it's not so easy where living things are concerned. Most animals, including humans, simply don't live long enough to cast individual shadows

in the Penumbra — thus, the spirit reflection of a city can appear eerily deserted by compare, with only the occasional human-shaped spirit. The cat-spirit living in a Penumbra alley is not the reflection of any particular cat — it's merely an embodiment of the spirit concept of "cat" that happens to find that alley an appropriate territory. The most common exception is the reflection of a tree; with their long lifespans and general importance to their surroundings, trees are often able to achieve sufficient spiritual "significance" to cast a Penumbra shadow.

It's distinctly rare for a human to cast a reflection in the Penumbra. Those who do are either persons of *great spiritual enlightenment* or those who have been powerfully touched by the spirit world. A potent spiritual leader who truly believes in the cause he champions might appear in the Penumbra; so might a child with a gift for seeing spirits for what they are. Mages in particular are noted for casting reflections of themselves into the Penumbra, thanks to their notable willpower, *spiritual awareness* and general sense of self-importance. In all cases, a human's reflection is somewhat influenced by his self-image and somewhat by the nature of his spiritual ties; a wholly corrupt mage who sees himself as pure and holy might cast a reflection that shines with a faint aura, but that seems oddly, even malevolently blurred around the edges.

As mentioned before, shapeshifters cast only partial reflections and ones that give little hint as to their true nature — the Penumbra doesn't serve very well as a poor man's "Scent of the True Form." Vampires and other undead also cast no real reflections in the Penumbra; their ties are to the Dark Umbra. There are apparently a few exceptions when dealing with undead of phenomenal personality who have a severe impact on their surroundings: A demented mass-murdering vampire might show up as a cold, dark patch that attracts small Bane Gafflings, just as a mortal sociopath might. Similarly, an undead creature on the verge of transcending its morbid state and moving on to a more transcendent plane might glow coldly but brightly in the Penumbra. But for the most part, the undead have lost their vital spark entirely, and have little effect on the Penumbra.

### *Parallels and Analogies*

Time and space pass in the Penumbra as they do in the physical world. If you spent one hour watching traffic near Central Park's Penumbra before stepping back into the physical world, exactly one hour would have passed. If you "step sideways" at Bethesda Fountain and walk through the Umbra to the Strawberry Field garden three miles away, you'll step back into the physical world at the Strawberry Field garden three





miles away. Farther from the Penumbra, such laws may not apply. But this close to Earth, in the shadow that the planet casts, distances are fairly constant.

Idealistic Garou believe the Penumbra shows the world as it appears in Gaia's vision, the world as it is meant to be. It's certainly true that the appearance of the physical world can mislead one as to something's spiritual significance. In the Penumbra, things appear according to their "importance," rather than their form. This aspect of the Penumbra is also made visible in the spirit forms of shapeshifters.

The body of a true shapeshifter is equal parts flesh and spirit; when a werewolf enters the physical world, his spirit aspect shifts to mostly flesh, and when he enters the Umbra the reverse is true. The spirit form of a werewolf is, truth be told, his body — simply made of different stuff. However, a few cosmetic alterations sometimes materialize. For instance, a Silver Fang who is beautiful in both body and soul may shine with an almost luminescent radiance, her nobility even more apparent. A Red Talon's coat may shimmer like fire, his eyes almost literally ablaze with his passion. A Fianna Galliard would wear the same clothes she brought with her, but her sacred tattoos may be sharper and more vivid, and her posture might recall the warriors of legend rather than a modern 21st-century kid. A Silent Strider who mourns the loss of his love might seem darker and colder, as if a shadow had fallen over him. These variations are always minor; as mentioned before, a werewolf's spirit body is the same as his physical body, not an idealized form. But as creatures of spirit, shapeshifters resonate more clearly when in the spirit world — they are, in a manner of speaking, home.



The same principles of "spiritual image" apply to the physical landscape. A venerable church that's been frequented by the faithful for two hundred years is a spiritual bastion. A sacred oak where sorcerers have conducted ceremonies for decades is obviously mighty. The hot dog stand that's been parked nearby every day for a week doesn't even leave a scent on the Penumbral air. Through the same analogy, once a major corporation pours millions of dollars into a downtown office building and moves in hundreds of employees, you'll likely know it. The geometric shapes of the building may have outlines of Platonic perfection, while Weaver-spirits cotuscating along phone lines, whizzing in computer cables, and trapped in fluorescent lights buzz, hum and whisper cryptic incunabula to the world surrounding them.

The reflections of physical things in the Penumbra are made of spirit-stuff; some refer to it as ephemera. Buildings that don't have much spiritual significance may not have solid reflections made out of ephemera, but that doesn't mean a werewolf can go strolling through walls at leisure. To pass through a wall that's only partly solid (say, that of a building with some, but not much, significance), the Storyteller may call for a Gnosis roll for the werewolf to pass through safely. Also, areas of high technological concentration tend to attract Weaver-spirits — many office buildings are present in the Penumbra as huge layers of webbing with no real structure beneath. However, you can bash, smash and crash your way through ephemera just as you would in the physical world. In the realm of spirit, all things are possible; some just take more time and effort than others.

Environmental hazards are also variable. For instance, a werewolf who steps sideways while aboard an airplane may well be in trouble if the plane has no ephemeral counterpart. (Werewolves expecting to travel by air are well-advised to perform the Rite of Spirit Awakening on the airplane beforehand, if they can do so covertly.) It's possible for a person to drown in Penumbral waters or suffocate in the Penumbra of outer space — however, shapeshifters and spirits are allowed to make Gnosis rolls, difficulty 6, to successfully adapt to such situations for a scene's duration. Ephemeral fires still cause damage, but the Penumbra of a blazing desert is survivable. The Storyteller is generally the final word on which hazards are "adaptable" and which are dangerous, no matter what.

Over time, actions taken against things in the physical world affect their reflection in the spirit world, and vice versa. If a venerable church is knocked down to make way for a parking garage, you may still sense its remains in the Penumbra, at least until the Weaver moves in to complete the new building. If a

pack blows its way through the same door in the Umbra over and over, the physical door will slowly begin to degrade. The Umbral pack might shred webs, smash the little Weaver-spirit in the lock, or just twist ephemera around with the Open Seal Gift. In the physical world, the hinges on the door might begin to squeak, or might not close properly, or the mechanism on the lock might not work exactly right.

A little selective destruction applied to blighted areas in the Umbra may help their corresponding locations in the physical world heal. Squish a few hundred blackened, toxic spirit worms inside the spiritual reflection of a fast food restaurant like O'Tolleys, and the Wurm-taint in the greasy fries may fade. Then again, such actions are unpredictable. The depressed stooge who watches the fry vat might quit that day, or the food might just taste a little more palatable on the next. Certainly leveling all the trees in a tainted spirit forest won't promote a healthy woodland by any means. Garou may see Umbral objects the same way, but their actions may invoke different results. Destroying evil in the Umbra is not enough; Garou live in both worlds, and must fight in both worlds to stop it.

### *Eternal Mystery*

When Garou see spiritual reflections, they interpret what they find there in terms they understand. If these parallels were always expressed in the exact same way, the Umbra would be easier to understand. Unfortunately, they're not. Any cub knows that spider-form spirits serve the Weaver, for instance, but these spirits may not always appear as the same species of spiders. Strange insectoid caterpillars may spin strands of sticky filth. Vibrating tentacled blobs may hover over shimmering matrices of energy. The imagery of the Umbra can change; in areas where the Wyld is strong, it may change very quickly.

Using the same analogy, the first time Garou visit a realm controlled by the Weaver, gigantic spiders may scurry toward them, attempting to calcify them in webs. The next time they delve into a Weaver-controlled region, humanoids in riot gear may surround them, trying to subdue them with clouds of chemical gas. The third time, faceless men in shirts and ties may attempt to wrap them in red tape. In each case, the same type of Weaver-spirits are attacking (with the same game mechanics), but their form is different. Even in realms dominated by stasis, things may change from region. In short, Garou should be aware (and Storytellers should take note): The Umbra is never predictable.



The reflections of animals, humans and other self-aware or sentient creatures can't be destroyed in this way. If a werewolf claws at a person's Penumbral shadow, that person feels a chill, the proverbial sensation of someone walking on his grave — but no ill effects will come of it. A person's spirit reflection is not his soul.

Are these principles absolute? Of course not. The Penumbra is not an exact reflection of Earth. Like anything else involving spirit and magic, it is sometimes capricious and unpredictable. Some Theurges explain that every physical object has a spiritual force behind it. If spirits are the slightest bit aware, they'll be unpredictable, with a limited will of their own. This frustrates homids to no end, but it also makes great tales for Galliards (and Storytellers). Again, the farther one travels from Earth, the less earthly laws apply.

### *Awakening*

Theurges believe that every object in the physical world has an element of spirit within it; after all, they see evidence of this first-hand every time they step into the Umbra. It's a simple outgrowth of the animistic principles they hold dear. Some objects are more spiritually "dead" than others. A transitory object of little consequence or significance has a very faint reflection in the Umbra, or may not exist at all.

Some mystics are capable of awakening a spirit that lives inside a physical object, particularly with a well-chosen rite. No one may particularly care about a neglected 386 desktop computer stashed in the back of a warehouse, but a Glass Walker Theurge who performs the Rite of Spirit Awakening can rouse the spirit within it. In its spiritual reflection, a nest of sluggish Spider-spirits begin stirring, gathering up stray fragments of code and sifting through data files. A playground may have been abandoned years ago, but if a Bone Gnawer Theurge performs the same rite, he may find it easier to clear the blight around it, possibly making it a vital part of the neighborhood again.

Humans can do this to a much more limited extent every day, even if they're not aware of it. When a person labors care and attention over a physical object, the spirit within it stirs. Over time, the object gains significance, and its reflection in the Umbra is strengthened. A ten-year old car rusting in an empty lot may be spiritually dead, or may even start to fester with Wyrmspirits. If a mechanic rescues it and painstakingly tries to restore it as a vintage automobile, the spirit within it awakens. It may eventually appear in the Umbra as it did ten years ago. A nursery filled with stuffed toys is suffused with a glow in the Umbra; a stereo system that's kept maintained pulses with bright Weaver energy.

Wherever light fades, darkness spreads. Neglected or polluted sites take on their own "dark reflection." There are places in the physical world where horrible crimes have been committed, where innocents have been abused and victimized. The spirit world reflects these actions too. A slaughterhouse may be stained red, echoing the bleating cries of the animals that were slain there. If the people in a neighborhood mutter prayers as they pass by the abandoned "murder house," they give strength to the spiritual taint that infests it. A simple rite may not be enough to erase such atrocity; far greater effort is required.

Spirits of the Wyrms are drawn to places where sin and vice are strong. Such blights are often tinged in the Umbra by darkness and shadow. Humans may try to hide some of these places in the physical world, but they're still clearly visible in the Umbra. The faint outline of a human may take on veins of black corruption if he's fertile ground for the Wyrms' taint. Spirits haunt such people, whispering and hovering until the time for possession is just right.

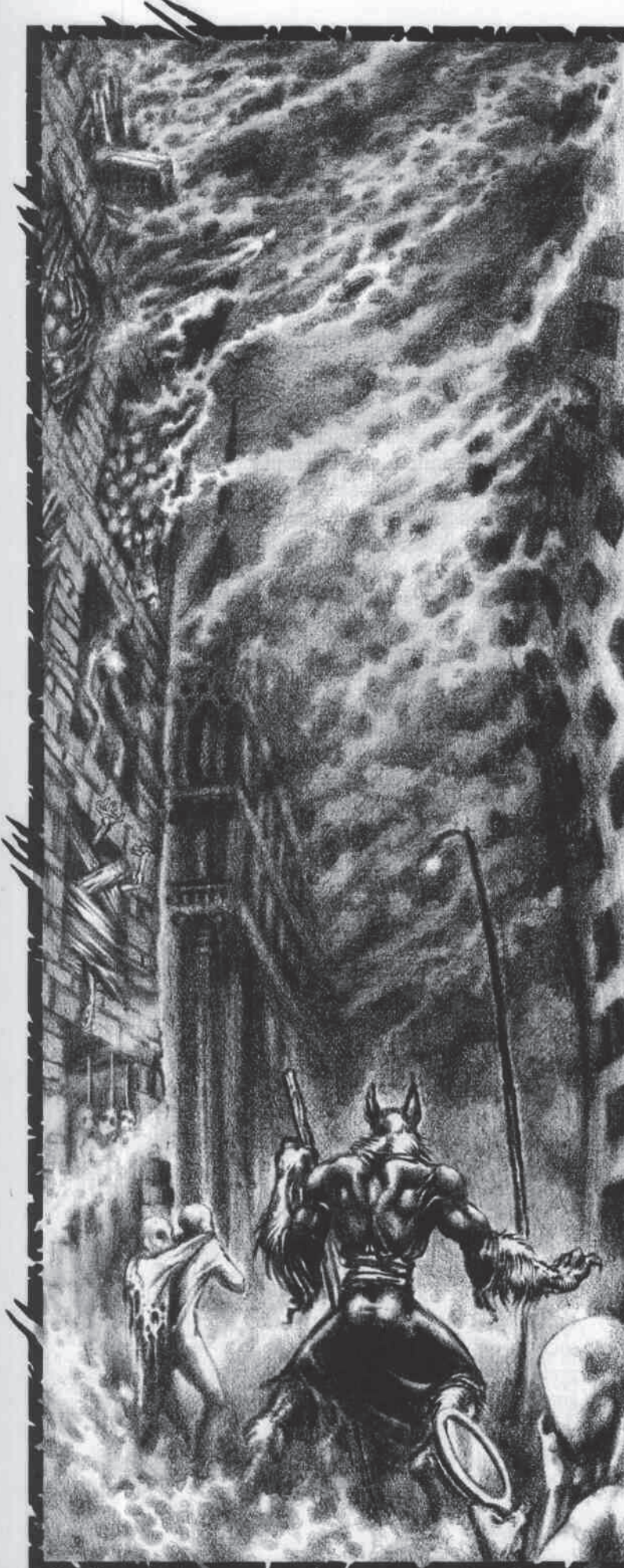
It should be noted that just as there is light and darkness, there are always shades of gray. In the modern world, vast stretches of urban landscape are colored by moral ambiguity.

### *Spiritual Perception*

Just as Garou can pass between the two worlds (by stepping sideways), some spirits can pass from the Penumbra to the Earthly realm and back again. By using up their energy, they can materialize in the physical world. They can roughly guess where things are in the physical realm by watching their spiritual reflections. Wyld-spirits are drawn to light; Wyrmspirits to darkness. Some spirits actually attempt to possess beings they watch in the physical world. These ephemera are hidden in the physical world, but often clearly visible in the spirit world. A madman may secretly have a Wyld spirit clawing at his back and whispering insanity; only in the Umbra is this hidden truth revealed.

Without the use of particular Gifts, fetishes or blessings, Garou cannot peer directly from the physical world into the Umbra. Even when they are capable of entering such a mystic trance, their visions of the spirit world are very limited. Werewolves find it much easier to "peek" from the Penumbra back to the physical world; spirits can do much the same (which is how many Banes find victims). Attempting such a feat requires attunement and spiritual strength, since it involves recognizing what spiritual reflections actually represent. (As part of this, if a character is peeking, the number of dice in his Perception dice pool can't exceed his Gnosis.)





After peeking into the earthly realm across the Gauntlet, actually influencing the physical world requires the Garou to step sideways again. Playing with the Gauntlet over and over again tempts the Weaver to take notice. (In game terms, if players keep passing through the Gauntlet in the same area repeatedly, the difficulty for stepping sideways should increase by 1 every time after the first attempt.)

### *Other Penumbrae*

Garou of all tribes step sideways into the Penumbra regularly, but the Galliards and Theurges of a few tribes tell stories about other Penumbrae. Those who feel a need to be precise when trying to categorize all of creation sometimes refer to the Penumbra described above as the "Near Penumbra." There are, however, others.

These other Penumbrae are rarely experienced, and far removed from a werewolf's casual reach. The reason is that they aren't tied to the Near Umbra — the source of a shapeshifter's spirit power — at all. The physical world is said to cast a shadow into both the Deep Umbra and the Dark Umbra — and the strange Penumbrae that are the result are largely things of legend to Garou. Silent Striders hint at a "land of the dead," a shadowy realm that can be accessed only by ritual, haunted by ghosts rather than spirits; Stargazers postulate the existence of an "astral Penumbra," and call it cousin to the Periphery. Even the Glass Walkers wonder at the possibility of a Penumbra tied into virtual reality and the network of cyberspace, although it's hard to imagine such a thing existing before the 20th century in any form. Fortunately for the average cub, these theories aren't common; for most, the Near Penumbra is *the* Penumbra, the only one they need know.

The other "true" Penumbrae are far from common experience — the Penumbrae of the moon and the other planets of the solar system. It's theoretically possible, at least according to some Theurges, for a werewolf to find his way through the spirit world to the Penumbra of Mars or Venus — or farther. The journey needn't be lethal, though it would surely be difficult. However, without life to enrich the other planets and their spiritual shadows, the spirits there would surely make poor allies. How would it be possible to convince a spirit of the virtue of preserving the world's forests and oceans if the spirit has never seen so much as a weed or puddle? Even the void of outer space is reflected with a Penumbra, although the Gauntlet is terribly low out between the planets and stars. A few Ragabash share jokes of human mystics who



believe that there is no physical "outer space," that spaceships and man-made satellites are somehow magical devices that journey into the spirit world. ("And they call us primitives...")

Even so, mystics and occultists are acquainted with the meanings associated with such celestial bodies. Crude definitions can never fully define their deep and spiritual meanings. A Theurge may say that Mars is a "planet of war," but in truth, Mars is governed by its own Planetary Incarna — and perhaps even a Celestine above that Incarna. A mystic may say that Mars has an influence on events on Earth, but the planet's spirit may very well have its own ideas. When one stands on the shores of the Aetherial Realm, meditating upon the heavens at an Anchorhead, the vibrations from these worlds are dimly perceptible, chiming as the enigmatic "music of the spheres." Stargazers may spend a lifetime studying this strange and illuminating music.

Some Garou heroes dare to travel through the ether to these other realms. Each Incarna has its own wisdom to bestow, as well as its own Gifts and blessings. Just as Garou can form a pack based around a Gaian totem, the greatest Garou heroes can form a pack with a Planetary Incarna as their totem. Of course, this requires them to visionquest through the Umbra to find their totem spirit. In recent years, entire packs of elders (the highest-ranking Garou) have taken up these, the greatest quests, to find new hope for their dying world.

### *The Gauntlet*

There is a barrier between Earth and the Penumbra, a construct said to be erected by the Weaver to keep order in the physical world. Garou must pass through the Gauntlet to step sideways from the physical world to the spirit world. Visionaries describe the act of passing through the Gauntlet as a silky caress, like brushing aside a heavy (sometimes impossibly heavy) curtain of soft velvet — thus, many poetic Galliards refer to the Umbra as the *Velvet Shadow*. Others describe the sensation of reaching through spider webs, parting black lace to reveal a brilliant candle, or feeling the breath from the faintest whisper.

The Gauntlet is a creation of the Weaver, and as such, the barrier is thickest wherever order is strongest. Deep in the heart of the largest cities, or hidden in the high-security areas of high-tech laboratories, Garou find it extremely difficult to escape into the Penumbra. There, man's laws reign supreme. In the same spirit, places where nature is strongest, usually deep in the heart of the wilderness, the Gauntlet is weaker. Meditating deep in the forest, it's easier to imagine the world as it must have been long before human history began.

There are a few sacred places where ritual and magic used repeatedly have kept the Gauntlet especially weak. Caerns are places of power for the Garou, where the strength of the spirit world can be called upon and focused, and thus, they are the place of preference for cubs, cliath or other inexperienced Umbral travelers to step sideways. The Gauntlet is accordingly lower in a caern, and the risk is reduced. (The fact that elder Garou are typically waiting nearby to rescue young packs when they fail is an added advantage.) Other supernatural sites frequented by different occult creatures — for example, the stone circle of a band of modern-day druids or the hilltop where the fae are said to come to earth — present similar opportunities. But such places are almost always guarded in some fashion; as far as cubs are concerned, such places invite greater peril than more mundane areas with a higher Gauntlet.

Just as there are other Penumbrae, there are other Gauntlets as well, but many Garou do not concern themselves with them. The realm of the dead and other such places cannot be accessed without the use of rare and secret rites, so most werewolves have never so much as brushed up against these "alternate" Gauntlets. Most of the time, when werewolves refer to passing through the Gauntlet to the Umbra, they speak of the Gauntlet between Earth and the Middle Penumbra.

### *Stepping Sideways and Getting Caught*

The journey to the spirit world is not one to be taken lightly. Cubs are foolish to attempt such a feat before their Rite of Passage. Many homids are too spiritually weak to attempt it without great risk. Some even think they know "shortcuts" to the spirit world, believing they've witnessed it before in poetic reveries, after the ingestion of drugs, or during massive intoxication. (There are reasons for these delusions, as we'll soon see.) Garou cubs learn simpler methods. Meditating upon a reflective surface is the most direct.

Fianna Theurges point out that because the spirit world is a "reflection" of the physical world, a mirror or crystal clear lake is the perfect affinity or focus for such magic. Bone Gnawers share this belief, but often meditate on very different sorts of puddles. A reflective surface is actually a crutch of sorts. Mirrors are a commonly used focus, but by no means the only one. Enlightened or mystical Garou find it easy to reach such states by other means. Children of Gaia may prefer the altered states mentioned previously. A Stargazer may rake the stones of a Zen garden or breathe deeply during a tai chi kata. Less attuned sorts find meditation difficult; the traditional name for stepping sideways, "reaching," sums up that extra effort.



Many werewolves carry their own personal talismans to help them "reach" across the Gauntlet, relying on different sorts of reflective objects. An Uktena may gaze at a shiny piece of jewelry given to her by a tribal shaman. A Bone Gnawer might tote a highly polished hip flask. A Glass Walker might just beam with joy over the greenish luminescent display of his cell phone. Just as there are few absolutes about the spirit world, no two Garou need relate to it in exactly the same way. (In game terms, one of these items offers a -1 difficulty to the roll to step sideways, just as a mirror would. At the Storyteller's option, more unusual meditative techniques such as a Stargazer's Zen garden or a Child of Gaia's altered state of consciousness might serve a similar purpose, although only for the Garou who is used to meditating in such a way.)

Of course, it's possible to botch an attempt to step sideways. Typically, if a mirror is used as a focus, the stress shatters it. When less traditional methods are used, stranger things can happen. Pity the poor Bone Gnawer who gazes into a pond in a city park. He might find the soda cans in the water distracting; if he does, he may wind up with tinny soda pop jingles racing through his skull for hours and hours. Sometimes little "pocket realms" of the Weaver's creation get caught in the Gauntlet — a werewolf might find himself in the middle of the same commercial or hit song over and over again until he can figure a way out.

When strange foci are used, bizarre (yet illuminating) events can occur. A cell phone may receive calls from a dead person, who haunts the unfortunate Glass Walker who relied on his tech instead of his insight. A wall-length mirror may twist into a funhouse, reflecting a vain Silver Fang's moral flaws. The hip flask may produce debilitating intoxication that Gifts cannot disperse. Don't ever count on the Umbra to do exactly what you want. Each one of these pocket realms allegedly has a solution for getting out of it. The vain Silver Fang might divest herself of her make-up and expensive clothes, while the Bone Gnawer may recycle the cans in the lake.

A Garou doesn't *have* to use a reflective surface when stepping sideways — it's just safer. Without one, the most common danger of passing through the Gauntlet is actually getting caught in the Weaver's webs. In these cases, another pack member may attempt to pass through the exact same spot and rescue the poor fool. (Read: Attempt a Gnosis roll at a higher difficulty.) Complications might arise: Weaver-spirits might attack, or a treasured possession might get lost forever. It's never quite the same experience twice. After all, if actions always carried the exact same consequence, the pack might as well remain on Earth. Once one

## Disconnection

Shapeshifters are meant to live between the Umbra and the physical world; they are creatures of both worlds, and don't do well without maintaining a balance between the two. For every year a werewolf goes without stepping sideways (either to or from the Umbra), add one to the effective difficulty number to step sideways when he tries it next. (This countdown begins from the werewolf's First Change, not from the day of his birth.) This adjustment can take the difficulty over 10; if a werewolf spends ten years in the Umbra, he can obviously never return. At this point, he has become a being of spirit in full.

Storytellers may allow characters to undergo quests to reduce this disconnection (as long as the characters don't wait until it's too late.) For those shapeshifters who have a more difficult time stepping sideways (such as Bastet, although entering or leaving a den-realm counts as stepping sideways), the Storyteller might also be a little more generous with the time limit. Remember, though, this rule is intended to simulate a shapeshifter's need to acknowledge both his physical and spirit natures — allowing a shapeshifter to neglect either side with no penalty might convey the wrong message about the mood of Werewolf.

faces the perils of an Umbral journey, mankind's reality is left behind.

## Gnosticism

"Why does the Umbra work this way?" cubs ask. "Why do some Garou find stepping sideways easier than others? Why is reaching the Umbra so difficult?"

Garou have a wealth of explanations, and many of them are correct. Many of them also contradict each other, and are also correct. Some werewolves just don't care, as long as they make it through the Gauntlet safely. Wise cubs avoid contemplating such matters entirely, and skip ahead to the next subject.

One mystical explanation is common: Man's world, the physical world, has become completely and utterly corrupt. As the End Times approach, the world is utterly infested by the Wyrms, the Great Serpent that suborns and destroys all it touches, unraveling all of creation. Yet mystics and spiritualists can sense something more transcendent in the world around them, something magical that defies the limits of the material world. Some call it spirit. Garou call it Gnosis.

Gnosis is attained through wisdom and contemplation, intellect and wonder. It transcends the reality



of the physical world. On Earth, the Wyrms reign supreme, but in the spirit world, the Wyld endures. If one can ignore the temptations of the physical world, one can attain Gnosis. The Wyrms tempt with vice and sin. The Weaver offers material comforts and distractions. Most modern humans define the world in a way that denies mysticism and magic. Gnosis transcends such temptations.

Werewolves follow far older ways than most of the human race. Rituals preserve an understanding of Gnosis that predates all of man's history, but some Garou stumble upon the knowledge by more exotic means. Because they defy many of mankind's conventions, whether that's by a Stargazer's asceticism or a Bone Gnawer sniffing at puddles of urine, they step outside the world mankind has created, and remember the world as it once was. Through wisdom and meditation, the Garou escape the clutches of the Weaver and the Wyrms to find Gaia in her purest form.

### *The Periphery*

Humans sometimes experience the wonder and inspiration of the Umbra, but in limited ways. You may think of the Periphery as a place between Earth the Penumbra; some call it the *Soft Umbra*. Mystics on visionquests may catch a brief glimpse of the Periphery in the midst of starvation and aesthetic deprivation. Strong-willed humans in altered chemical states may witness it through a fog of intoxication and madness, although they may be unable to distinguish it from hallucinations. Poets in the midst of reverie, when their creative powers are at their height, may capture some small fragment of its reality. They have a very limited understanding of spirit, yet one that is greater than that of the average person.

Galliards often see the Periphery as a sign of Gaia's love, that something so rich and real can come to the right people. They sometimes attribute the Periphery's granted sensations to Awen, their creative muse. In fact, some Garou artists and visionaries attempt to attain the Periphery in search of Awen by following these very human activities. Others seek her in the depths of the Umbra, or insist that she has no one spiritual form to find. Regardless, long ago when the two worlds were one, the Periphery was closer to human consciousness as well. Now it is masked by the distractions of man's modern world, baffled and muffled by the Weaver's ceaseless activity and the Wyrms' tyrannical and draconian schemes.

The Periphery isn't precisely a place; it's more of a state of mind, a heightening of spiritual awareness that comes on its own. Its spirit denizens are few and far between, and are generally abstract spirits such as Chimerlings and Epiphlings that have found their way

from other, stranger vistas. No werewolf has discovered a reliable way to step sideways and stand in the Periphery; it would be easier to stand on a cloud. That said, there are rumors that Umbral travelers who have become exceptionally lost have accidentally found their way into the Periphery, shoulder to shoulder with the dreams and visions that inspire poets and madmen alike.

### *Last Innocence*

Once a hero returns from the Umbra, he's keenly aware of how much the physical world is lacking. He may remember the stories his elders told him, of "long ago when the two worlds were as one." As one renowned Galliard has said, "They were not cut from the same fabric; they were the whole cloth. They were not two sides of the same coin; they were the indivisible face of reality." Until, that is, something separated them forever. After returning from the other side of the looking glass, the wandering hero may ask: *Why?*

Many Garou believe this separation was the result of some war in the Tellurian, no doubt the result of a division in the Triad, the forces of the Weaver, Wyld and Wyrms. Some blame the Weaver: In a world of limitless imagination, the Weaver went mad trying to classify, categorize, and separate everything (rather like some homids do). To pare away what it did not understand, its spiritual servitors erected a barrier between the worlds. Some blame the Wyrms: When it became corrupt (it is said), the separation of the two worlds was the first step in its campaign to unravel all creation. Others simply state that there was no longer a place in the world for pure Wyld energy. After the creation of everything, the excess force of the Wyld had to go somewhere; thus, the Umbra.

Storytellers and loremasters attest that at the dawn of history, men and women were aware of the close proximity of the spirit world. As the two worlds slipped apart, mankind drifted away from a world of magic and limitless possibility, trapped in a realm of cold, hard facts and quantifiable reality. Life became devoid of its inherent meaning.

In the modern world, humans can't explain this feeling of loss at the core of their being. Some try to fill the void with anything that can approximate the transcendent feelings of the spirit world. They seek out pale approximations of it whenever they can — through drugs, alcohol, television, meaningless sex, gluttony, intellectualization — but nothing fills the emptiness. The spirits of the Wyrms and Weaver know how to exploit this hunger, preying on human weakness. Mankind staggers about in a cold and uncaring world in search of something it can never again attain. Even a few Changing Breeds have lost much of their talent for walking the Umbra, no longer able to rely on its proximity.



But the Garou have not forgotten. Werewolves remember, even as their memories fill them with anger. In a way, the Umbra reflects the hopes, ideals and dreams of the Garou. They renew the fight against corruption in the real world by facing it over and over again in the spirit world. As the world dies, hopelessness and despair have crept further into the Umbra, but by defeating evil in the distant realms of the Umbra, werewolves find the courage and strength to face similar evils in the real world.

## *The Near Umbra*

It's easy for cubs to be fascinated by their quick jaunts into the Umbra; the Penumbra certainly holds enough wonders and threats to keep a pack interested (and occupied). However, there's more to the Umbra than that, and many higher-ranking werewolves seek more rarefied knowledge, things that cannot be found in Earth's Shadow.

To most shapeshifters, the Near Umbra is the Umbra. Yes, they know that there's more to the spirit world than the Near Umbra and all it contains — but the Deep and Dark Umbrae simply aren't where the war for Gaia is being fought. Even the most ambitious Ahroun knows that hurling oneself into the Deep Umbra in hopes of "slaying the Wyrms in its den" is not only suicidal, but virtually impossible. Similarly, the Dark Umbra is the place of the dead, and human dead at that — when a shapeshifter dies, his spirit is freed to return to the Near Umbra, there to serve future generations, or perhaps even to be born again.

No, the Near Umbra is what matters most to the Garou and the other Fera. A battle won here can have great repercussions throughout the worlds. All the pain of the world can be found here somewhere, whether in the Near Realms or simply drifting in clumps of manifest concepts in the place between.

Most of the Near Umbra is relatively formless overall; it resembles the primeval void or chaos that, according to many myths, gave birth to the Earth. The raw spiritstuff of the Umbra changes and shifts to match whatever Realms or Zones are nearby; chunks of rusted metal drift aimlessly near Scar, while the spirit world near one of Helios' abodes is filled with blazing sunlight. There's no fixed "up" or "down," although werewolves on a path or scaling the Pattern Web can perceive those concepts in a relative sense. For example, everyone knows that you have to go "up" to reach the Aetherial Realm, whereas as one nears the Abyss, one can feel the gravity of the place pulling things "down" toward itself. It's no surprise that the Near Realms are the best landmarks one could ask for in the shifting texture of the spirit world.

You may, if you choose, picture the Near Realms like a strand of spheres strung around the Earth, like a shimmering pearl necklace. It's an inaccurate analogy, but the analogy works well enough to not drive human minds insane. Each of these realms has its own set of laws and rules, though each also has its own degree of unpredictability. The laws that color human perceptions of reality don't necessarily apply in the Near Realms — instead, the Near Realms are governed by the instinctual, the subconscious. Things make a different sort of sense in Near Realms, where "that's just the way things are" is nearly a physical law to itself.

For instance, the Near Realm Battleground is a place of constant war, never interrupted by an outbreak of peace. Certainly, humans and shapeshifters don't pursue bloodshed and vengeance every minute of their lives — but the Battleground is different. The greatest battles of human — and shapeshifter — history are constantly replayed in Battleground, always blazing with the fresh vigor of a newborn battle cry. As long as someone, human or spirit, remembers a battle — the Battleground will fight that battle over and over again. It doesn't make sense to some, but that's the way of the Umbra — as long as the potential for war and bloodshed exists in mortal hearts, the emanations of the Battleground can never set down their weapons.

The events in a Near Realm make sense, but only in a mythic or dramatic way. Once a pack strays off the path in Battleground to pursue a great battle, they find it very hard to return the way they came. They must fight on until the grisly conclusion. After the skirmish commences, the only way to escape is to survive until the very end. If a hero dies before then, he merely regains consciousness somewhere between the Near Realms and the Penumbra. Strangely, it is far easier to regenerate in Battleground than any other realm — strangely, that is, to those who don't think in terms of *why* the Battleground is. Werewolves heal quickly in the Battleground because the battles *must* go on. And werewolves seek out the Battleground to understand their own ideals of heroic battle; to some, a bloody quest of this nature reveals far more than simple introspection would.

While this may not seem like a very "realistic" sequence of events, it is the "reality" of Battleground. Countless heroes have followed the spirit quest to this Near Realm, reinforcing its same set of "rules." It is possible that a visionary pack may encounter it in an entirely new way, forever altering the way it is perceived, but until then, the saga is told the same way over and over. Stranger things have happened, and often do.



## *Tainted and Forgotten Realms*

The Wyrms and Weaver have already started to claim some of the Near Realms as their own. Scar is a very different sort of realm. Both the Wyrms and Weaver are strong there, and hopelessness prevails. An endless cityscape of squalor and urban devastation, it traps the spirits who live there in mindless routines of slavery and servitude. They trudge through the same commutes to factories, corporate offices, and retail hells over and over again. Many have forgotten they are spirits at all, and they are slowly sapped of their energy.

Garou raiding Scar must follow these same "laws," often succumbing to them against their will. They may forget the object of their quest along the way. A patrol of Bane-spiders may capture them, force them into slavery, and sap them of their Gnosis like the spirits they hunt. They may forget their ideals, finding them replaced by material (and very transitory) wealth. There are ways to awaken the spirits who are also trapped, but these laws are unique to Scar. By understanding Scar, one may come understand why lupus werewolves fear cities, or at least train to fight the Weaver and Wyrms in the physical world as homids do.

In recent years, it has become harder to find some of the older, lesser-known realms. As an example, Fianna have started to notice that fewer packs return from their quests to find the fabled Arcadia Gateway. Once faerie trods allowed heroes to attempt the long and perilous journey to the distant shores of Arcadia, but many of these paths have been broken or destroyed. The tales of returning packs become more disparate, and cynics insist that as the End Times approach, all of the Near Realms may disappear. But other werewolves refuse to be so fatalistic. Time alone cannot destroy the Near Realms, they claim — only failure to win the war.

## *The Major Near Realms*

Garou epics mention the Near Realms more than any other destinations beyond the Penumbra. Perhaps telling tales of such places over and over keeps them hale and healthy. Although they've been mentioned in the main rulebook, here again is a quick summation of the Near Realms most familiar to the Garou:

- **Abyss:** A tear in the fabric of creation, the Abyss is a yawning chasm that consumes everything that is forgotten or abandoned. In its depths are things long gone and things best forgotten. As the Apocalypse approaches, it steadily grows larger.

- **Aetherial Realm:** Stretching across the Umbral heavens, portions of the Aetherial Realm wend

their way across the barrier between Earth and the Deep Umbra. Powerful Garou tend to Anchorheads, places where travelers may pass through Earth's Gauntlet to other worlds; many of these distant realms are staunchly defended by the Stargazer tribe. Aetherial totems have a strong influence on this realm — the "planetary Incarnae" of Luna and Helios are among the most powerful.

- **Arcadia Gateway:** Here one may find a dying relic of a bygone age, and perhaps portents of the future. This realm is the manifestation of the fae in the Near Umbra, a place where emanations imbued with faerie energy act out the classic roles of fae myth. However, the ailing plight of the fae has affected this realm; an Endless Winter slowly advances across the landscape, destroying the old ways. If Garou seek truths about the Fair Folk's past, they had best quest here soon.

- **Atrocity Realm:** Millennia of suffering from all the world's victims have created the Atrocity Realm, a place where the worst cruelties and tortures have been immortalized. No Garou seeks this place for glory — those that come here do so to learn, no matter how painful the lesson.

- **Battleground:** A realm dedicated to war and conflict in all their forms, the Battleground will burn strong as long as people make war on one another. Spiritual echoes of the great battles of history live on: tribal conflicts during the Impergium, Roman invasions, Shadow Lord raids on vampire fiefdoms, the two World Wars, and so on. Spirits, shades, and werewolf camps have also begun gathering around an empty field called Vigard Plain, where they believe the battle of the Apocalypse will begin.

- **CyberRealm:** The war against the Weaver has come to the glass and steel skyscrapers of the CyberRealm. In the urban squalor of the streets below, anarchists and idealists gather their forces. High overhead, the Weaver dominates a high-tech realm. "Corporate ladders" of webs stretch across many vertical miles. Computer terminals scattered throughout the upper levels grant access to a sub-realm known as the Computer Web.

- **Erebus:** Gaia's wrath manifests in caverns below the Umbrascape, where failed Garou atone for their greatest sins. Sinister broods of black or silver Crinos brutes exact punishment against werewolves. Their charges writhe in a river of molten silver. Visitors may pass through and learn from the errors of others...or may challenge the broods for knowledge and power. Charyss rules here, watching from the parapets of a castle in the center of a silver lake.



• **Flux:** Anything is possible in this highly transitory realm. When the Wyld faded from Gaia, it's said, he left his heart in deep in the Umbra. Now the Weaver has encased it and trapped it in the Flux Near Realm. Pure madness and energy surge here.

• **Legendary Realm:** The legends of the Garou live on. Packs in the Legendary Realm can experience the lives of their ancestors here. Incorporating the legends of all the tribes, it has created a mythic fantasy realm, a place that never was, but will exist until the end of time. Galliards give this realm strength by reciting tales from the old days.

• **Malfeas:** Just as the CyberRealm pulses with the growing power of the Weaver, Malfeas bears witness to the diseased might of the Wyrms. Though the Wyrms itself may make its home in the Deep Umbra, the most corrupt and demented of its servitors have flocked here, to the realm born of its most hideous dreams.

• **Pangaea:** A world before civilization. A world before the Impergium. Pangaea is a spiritual memory of primal Earth, as it was and as it should have been. Dinosaur kings and bronze-skinned human tribes live on as Pangaeans spirits. Packs have been known to degenerate here over time, resembling their ancient ancestors more with each passing day.

• **Scar:** Created during the Industrial Revolution, this realm once reflected the idealistic efficiency of mechanical perfection. The Wyrms and Weaver have since claimed the realm as their own, sacrificing captured spirits to create Wyrms-tainted fetishes. Every employee's nightmares come to life here. The soul-deadening horrors of the workplace thrive in Scar.

• **Summer Country:** This is another realm that is steadily fading away, becoming lost in the depths of the Umbra. It is a world of Gaia's pure, uncorrupted love, where she offers her bounty to all who would receive it. Some Garou debate whether it exists at all anymore.

• **Wolfhome:** Upon reaching Wolfhome, all werewolves immediately shift to Lupus form... and cannot change back. To survive, one must master the ways of the wolf. Here one finds vast stretches of untouched wilderness, the answers to primal mysteries the world has forgotten, and even urban labyrinths where animals are hunted and feared. Homids are sometimes sent to quest in Wolfhome when lupus elders are angered.

### *Aislings and Spirit Quests*

Actually finding your way to one the Near Realms, or any other destination, is an achievement in itself. Galliards and other storytellers often say that if you're looking for something in the Umbra, and you're destined to find it, you'll get there eventually. Quests in

the Umbra are dramatic, but also downright strange. Garou tell wondrous (and sometimes epic) tales of heroes who left the world behind to go questing the Umbra. The hero leaves the world he knows to face the unknown. Such journeys are called *aislings*, or "spirit quests." Visionaries find a way to travel beyond the Penumbra to other realms, sometimes guided only by a vague knowledge of what they seek.

One of the most common quests attempted in the Umbra is the one to find a pack's totem. Garou refer to this journey as a type of visionquest (although the Wendigo have a very distinctive Vision Quest of their own). The heroes first ceremonially purify themselves, then smear a concoction of mud and mugwort over their eyes. Ritually, they step sideways. Once they open their eyes, they can see evidence that their totem spirit is nearby.

Each tribe may encounter its own distinctive set of tracks, clues or spoor leading to the spirit, whether those are actually pawprints, slaughtered victims, a phone number on an ephemeral matchbook, or whatever. If the pack can resolve the enigmas they find, or at least destroy the malefic spirits that bar their way, they can eventually catch up to their totem spirit and ritually bind it to them. The visionquest is completed once the pack performs the Rite of the Totem, declaring their alliance to it and its ideals.

Many spirit quests follow this same sequence of events. The hero leaves the laws and reality of his world behind, attains insight by studying a strange, new realm, and then safely returns to bring such wisdom with him into the "real world." More renowned packs pursue more epic quests. There are few shortcuts to a Near Realm, for instance. A pack seeking one journey in the Penumbra until they find something that will lead them to this other dimension.

Sometimes, the path is straightforward. Spirits who have made this journey over and over sometimes leave paths behind for Garou to follow. These paths and "signposts" are called *airts*, and they take many forms. They may be shimmering trails, cryptic hoofprints, unusual scents, fragments of forgotten memories, or just plain weird shit. A Bone Gnawer may read the labels of milk cartons discarded by a thirsty rat-spirit on its way to Scar, while Wendigo may read the entrails of beasts a wolverine-spirit has slain. Spirits, as one would expect, are unusually adept at reading such signs, often by using the Charm: Airt Sense.

Many lesser realms lie between the Penumbra and the Near Realms, usually containing a little bit of both places. A Glass Walker might lead his pack to Scar by following the sidewalks of the city, rushing along them at high speed. A Bone Gnawer could burrow under a



gigantic trash-spirit until he finds a tunnel. Before long, the Glass Walker may see an endlessly repeating series of identical streets and buildings where cockroach-spirits reveal directions in code. The Bone Gnawer, on the other hand, could uncover a marvelous sewer where legions of rat-spirits are amassing another raid on Scar. The journey is as important as the destination, and no two alphas will lead their pack to a Near Realm in quite the same way. The journey is never exactly the same twice.

### *Spirit Paths*

Umbral navigation doesn't always rely on following totem spirits (or your destiny). A wise Theurge may be able to bargain with a spirit to lead him to a realm it knows, but some ephemera are canny enough to mislead or misdirect the unwise traveler. Packs have totem spirits to aid them, but sometimes a true hero ventures in the spirit world alone on a personal visionquest. Garou may get separated from the rest of their pack, or travel with other shapechangers who betray them. When all seems lost, there are ways to find your way back. Umbral geography and fixed ephemera that direct travelers are collectively known as spirit paths.

Moon bridges are perhaps the best known form of spirit path. Garou open them to travel between caerns during their ceremonies. Keeping both ends of a moon bridge viable requires a Pathstone at each end, as well as regular diplomacy between septs. The apex of a moon bridge passes through fringes of the Aetherial Realm (mentioned above), and is kept sacred and safe by Luna herself. No one in recorded Garou history has ever tried to sever the walls of a moon bridge along his way; if anyone succeeded, Luna's vengeance against him was no doubt sufficient to remove him from recorded history.

Moon paths are pathways of moonlight that connect the Umbra at night. A Garou who follows Luna with great devotion may be rewarded with a vision of one. Taking up the journey is not without risk. A moon path's perils often correspond to the current phase of the moon.

— During a full moon, hostile spirits may be drawn to the path, waiting to ambush foolish or unwary travelers.

— During a gibbous moon, spirits may block a path demanding chiminage of songs and stories (even if the pack has to go out of its way to uncover one).

— The half-moon path is contested by the Wyrms, Wyld, and Weaver, or even courts of spirits. The pack may need to negotiate it by shifting alliances or brokering deals.

### *Scent in the Umbra*

The most common method of tracking spirits is by scent. Animals (including wolves) often use smells on the physical plane to interpret the world in ways that humans cannot. This tendency is stronger in the spirit world, since many inconsequential physical distractions are gone.

Garou can use Perception + Primal-Urge to track places, spirits, or even concepts in the Umbra (the difficulty depends on how esoteric or "distant" the quarry is). Not surprisingly, the smells involved don't have to correlate to any scent on Earth; synesthetic effects are entirely possible. ("What's it smell like?" "It's blue!") At the Storyteller's option, events in the recent past can be scented as well, although describing events by smell can be as challenging as stepping sideways. The Storyteller also has the prerogative of limiting this ability as needed, since nothing in the spirit world need be absolute. As another optional rule, a Garou cannot use more dice of Primal-Urge than he has in Enigmas.

— While the crescent moon is barely visible, guardian spirits and cunning adversaries demand the resolution of enigmas. Puzzles predominate.

— At no moon, the path is obviously broken, or may only barely be visible at all, demanding the travelers use introspection to find their way.

By compare, spirits who have traveled along the same airts over and over leave spirit tracks, trails that can be physically followed. Wyld spirits may leave a trail of renewed vigor and energy in their wake, while Wyrmspirits may pollute and despoil their spirit paths, imbuing them with despair and misery. As noted in the main rules, the difficulty with spirit tracks is their impermanence; a strong Umbral wind can easily destroy one.

Spirit gates are treasured discoveries, as they lead instantly from one area to the other. Unfortunately, many of them do not last for long. The longest lived one, the gateway between the Umbra and mythical Arcadia, lasted for centuries of Earth's history, and now may be lost forever.

Aside from these four well-known methods, there are other more unusual paths. Bone Gnawers speak with reverence of the Subway, a mysterious cross-Umbral train used by their tribe. Some can only find it after epic bouts of intoxication, earning it the nickname "Night Train." Silent Striders know there is another conveyance that passes through the lands of the dead, a "Midnight Express" that frequents all the



haunts of the dead, while Nuwisha werecoyotes tell implausible and misleading stories about their own spectral *Ghost Train*.

Umbral geography doesn't have to follow earthly laws, of course. The spirit world isn't limited to vast plains and natural landscapes. Packs following spirit paths may find themselves on the back of a slumbering giant, spinning through tubes of viscous fluids, wafting on currents of cold air, or flushed down a downward spiral. Tesseract folds like flowers and musicians climb staffs of musical notes. Plasticine porters with looking glass ties keep on trucking through hippie clichés. The sky is no longer the limit.

### *Weaver-Spirits and the Pattern Web*

The Pattern Web is another type of spirit path, one that is primarily used by the Weaver's minions—but sometimes also by those who oppose them. Since the Mad Weaver erected many of the Gauntlets between realms, domains and even Penumbrae, her spiritual servitors can scurry almost anywhere along the Web.

The pattern is so complex that it's almost impossible to read without the Glass Walker (and Theurge) Gift: Web Walker (see Appendix). Summoning or commanding Weaver-spirits may also work. Remembering where a path leads may require an Intelligence

+ Enigmas roll (difficulty 7). Such shortcuts are not without risk; the following are just a few hazards appropriate to traveling the Web. (Note: These hazards may also be found anywhere the Weaver is strong, such as the barriers around different realms, domains, sub-realms and dimensions.)

- A large and powerful Weaver Incarna looms into view in all its insectile, multifaceted glory. Laying low may be the best option, although a very clever negotiator might be able to trick the thing with contrived logic into revealing information or doing a favor for the pack.

- Wyldlings attack the pack, mistaking them for servants of the Mad Weaver. Their hostility and alien nature is such that negotiation has almost no chance of dissuading them. This is a fine way of stressing that no member of the Triat, not even the Wyld, is "friendly" toward the Garou.

- Several pattern webs coalesce into a web connection, creating a Weaver-dominated domain. There may be a terminal there leading to the Computer Web of the CyberRealm.

- Some sections of the Web are blighted by Wyrmtaint. The Wyrms sometimes corrupts Weaver-spiders into Blight-spiders, resulting in expanses of acidic webs, clouds of toxic gas, and worse hazards. Wyrms





corrupted Weaver-spirits are under no compulsion to leave werewolves using the Web Walker Gift alone.

- Calcified objects may be found within the webs: dying spirits, fetishes of diminishing power, shapeshifters in suspended animation, putrefying corpses, and so on. A valiant Garou might have to overcome ambushers, sticky patches of webs or even possessed victims in order to set the ephemera free. Blight-spiders lay traps around such objects, and heroes may not notice hazards until it is too late.

- Informational Geomids are nodes of information surrounded by Attack Geomids. Many are ephemera of platonic or polyhedral perfection, dealing with intruders with ruthless efficiency. A savvy traveler may be able to barter for information, or an isolated

geomid may just demand information ("...information, information...") from any who pass by.

- Structural Geomids erect and devise new areas of the Web, sometimes with little logical purpose behind them. Pattern Spiders attend them as servitors. Packs of Garou make good, strong building material.

### *Long, Strange Trips*

The Umbra is as limitless as imagination. Even the Near Umbra is far too large to chart. Countless Galliards and Umbral questers have tried to define its furthest reaches, inventing new vocabularies to define the impossible. Some terms predominate, but because the Umbra continually spawns new short-lived realms, new descriptions and ideas arise all the time.

### *Domains*

Domains are places in the Umbra sustained by outside spiritual energy, often that of supernatural creatures. The tribal homelands are the best example. The spiritual strength of each tribe and its tribal totem creates a realm where they can interact with the reflections of great Garou heroes. Each one is a dream of a tribe's greatest ideals. The dreams and strength of the various tribes "will" them into being. (Or maybe the Legendary Realm lends dreams and strength to the Garou. Who knows?)

For explorers who need to define and classify, chimares, den-realms, lunae, and all the other realms described in this section are also domains. Domains that are maintained by the Wyrms, Weaver or Wyld are called Triat domains. (Theurges who constantly need to use such precise vocabularies are called pretentious know-it-alls.) For visionaries who believe the Umbra is transcendent, it's better to just experience these places first-hand, and worry about finer distinctions later.

### *Triat Domains*

Blights are realms reflecting either the most perverse and desecrated ideals of the Wyrms or the static and dehumanizing agenda of the Weaver. Some form in the Penumbra, shifting reality to favor the desires of the spirits that control them. Others are clustered around Hellholes or Webs (as described below). Werewolves can destroy a Blight by healing a specific environment on Earth, destroying a specific building in Scar, or killing enough spirits in the blight to sap and rechannel its energy. With powerful Blights, all three tasks are commonly necessary, making the cleansing of a Blight an ideal quest for a pack of young Garou. Each Blight reclaimed is a victory against the Wyrms or the Mad Weaver.

### *Myths and Legends*

Heroism plays a big role in the spirit world. While cubs have traveled to the Penumbra for countless generations, many of the Umbral realms beyond are undefined and unknown. When a hero travels to a realm for the first time or attempts a task that would be impossible in the "real world," he's taking a big chance. That's part of what makes him a hero. He's a trailblazer; if he succeeds, others will follow him.

Werewolves acknowledge heroism by awarding renown; as part of this, Galliards retell tales of renown over and over. Legendary Garou thus inspire cliath and cubs to follow in their pawprints, taking the same journeys to prove their heroism as well. Theoretically, this reinforces the structure of the Umbra, making the impossible more and more possible. If enough werewolves visit the same realm over and over, they give it spiritual strength, making it significant. If enough Galliards retell tales of the realm again and again, this further reinforces the realms they describe, solidifying their "reality".

In this way, the spirit world reflects the ideals and aspirations of the Garou. Battleground has been shaped by the heroes who have recreated great acts of historic courage, just as Scar and the Atrocity Realm are expanded each day by human horror. But when a hero attempts a great feat for the first time — whether that's Joins-the-Mile-High stepping sideways out of an airplane or Klaital Stargazer descending into the Abyss — anything can happen. Heroes, myths and legends help shape the Umbra. Their acts resonate until the end of time.



Glens are domains where the Wyld is supreme. Their earthly reflections are places of great beauty, while their Penumbra shadows are ideal for meditation. Moon paths extending from Glens are usually safe against the Wyrms' depredations. Many provide gates and airts leading to natural realms like Pangaea and Wolfhome.

Hellholes are domains in thrall to the Wyrms, desolate areas thoroughly corrupted by pollutants. Some spew balefire into the Penumbra, or glow with sickly radioactivity or disease. Their very presence may limit a Garou's use of Gnosis or Gifts, but they also bestow Rage (generally 1-3 points) upon any werewolf who sees them for the first time. Their very presence is an insult, a blasphemy against the Earth Mother, for they are pits that draw energy from the depths of the Malfean realms. Banes rejoice and breed there. Even the very act of entering one can grievously wound a Garou; in game terms, hazards such as radiation and balefire are often present in spirit form. Many Hellholes lead to Malfeas.

Webs are calcified in stasis by the Weaver, kept as representations of cities or urban realms, showing what they will look like once the Weaver's webs have thoroughly suborned them. Many are Weaver "Blights": They are found in the Penumbra and are shadows corresponding to physical places on Earth. Webs are sustained by oppression and conformity in their physical counterparts. The force of the Wyld is weakened there. (In game terms, the difficulties for shifting forms or Gifts dependent on the Wyld increase by 2.) It is often possible to travel along the Pattern Web (described above) from one of these locations, but then again, such spirit paths are often used by the Weaver's minions as well. Many Webs lead to the Near Realms of Scar and the CyberRealm.

Just as Glens are found in the Penumbra, Wyldings are found in both the Near and Deep Umbra. Wyld-spirits and ephemera gather there as swirls, whirls, clouds and other, more disturbing forms. The laws and structures of such places may change on a whim. Some Wyldings in the Near Umbra contain Anchorheads leading to the Deep Umbra, yet may also leak raw chaos and madness into their domain. Garou have gone mad from entering them (slowly losing their Willpower, Gnosis, and sanity). Some believe Wyldings draw their strength from a Near Realm called the Flux Realm. Many Wyldings have gates to Flux, but then again, Flux leads to a lot of odd places.

### *Other Domains*

Chimares are individual dream domains. Some Theurges believe that every sleeping person has a private domain where his dreams take place. If this is

true, then werewolves and Wyrms-spirits alike can enter and affect these dreams, twisting them in subtle ways. On the rare occasions when Chimares are encountered, mists surround the shadowy Penumbra outline of the sleeping person. Such domains have their own hazards, including spirits called Phragments and Dream Banes. Some mages and vampires of legend are said to have had extremely potent Chimares. No matter who the creator is, when the dreamer awakens, all inside the domain are cast into the Dream Zone or some sub-realm outside the Penumbra. All Chimares connect to the Dream Zone (detailed below).

Den-realms are domains in the Penumbra created by the Bastet, the shapeshifting werewolves. By stalking through a den-realm, the cat prevents Webs and Blights from forming in that area of the Penumbra. Even other Fera (that is, other shapechangers) have trouble entering such realms, although it's said that Ratkin may be able to create boltholes into them (a matter of much debate). Bastet may challenge any Garou who stalks through the physical territory surrounding a den-realm. Other Fera are rumored to be able to build their own versions of den-realms, notably the Ananasi.

Lunae form where moon paths cross, or gather near a spot where moon bridges pass regularly. The Celestine Luna bestows her spiritual imminence upon the area. Her spiritual servitors, the Lunes, congregate there. A fortunate pack that finds one may rest and meditate there in relative safety in the midst of a hazardous journey. Packs who dedicate themselves to the Incarna Phoebe, adopting her as their pack totem, may gain Gifts that may be used there. One of Phoebe's rituals allows packs of her children to travel from a lunae to the moon itself.

### *Epiphs*

Epiphs are realms of pure thought, often devoted to a single idea. Those who have never experienced them cannot fully understand them. An Epiph may be dedicated to as simple a concept as the color blue, the smell of ozone, or the number 4. More elaborate ones posit alternative histories, celebrations of alternate identities, or schemes and dilemmas worthy of the Twilight Zone. Prolonged exposure breeds insanity. An unwary traveler in the Deep Umbra can find entering an Epiph all too easy. Leaving is far more difficult.

### *Mini-Realms*

Mini-realms are more extensive than domains. No one knows where the spiritual power used to sustain a mini-realm originates. Some are found by botched attempts with moon bridges, or by ambitious spirits



who wish to trap Garou and feast off their Gnosis. Packs sometimes categorize realms and domains they don't understand as mini-realms.

As an example, one of the most infamous mini-realms is "the Beast," a vast expanse that resembles the back of a gigantic furred mammal. Before the Beast, werewolves are little more than fleas. Gigantic tufts of fur rise hundreds of miles into the air. All attempts to see the beast in its entirety fail. Banes in strange and terrible insectile forms feast off the Beast, sucking blood and Gnosis from its hulk. They attack Garou with renewed vigor, unless their quarry can burrow into the skin and live like vermin. Sometimes the Beast shifts form, catapulting passengers off its back into the Umbra. Afterwards, Bone Gnawers in particular either show a much greater respect for their own skin parasites or a renewed interest in hygiene.

### *Sub-Realms*

Sub-realms are reflections of Near Realms or Zones. Some exist between the Penumbra and Near Realms, becoming stable enough to be visited repeatedly. They have enough spiritual energy to maintain themselves, at least until they are eventually destroyed by the encroaching power of the Wyrms, Weaver, or Wyld. A few are caught and redefined in that very transition. Several "exist" between two Near Realms, perhaps caught in a space where they "overlap." A sub-realm usually obeys at least some of the same laws as its parent realm.

As an example, there is a realm found between Pangaea and the Penumbra known as the Land of the Dinosaurs. Mokolé lizard kings stalk the Earth in their Crinos forms, reveling in a freedom they can never find in the physical world. Exotic creatures from the dawn of time thrive there, including some that have long been extinct. Garou Ahroun, particularly Fenrir, Red Talons and Uktena, hunt there to show their prowess. In this land, as in Pangaea, werewolves regenerate faster, regain Gnosis faster, and shift forms easier. On the other hand, while the spirits of Pangaea are governed solely by the phases of the moon, the Lizard Kings rule this realm. All pay them tribute, include small tribes of humans who have established primitive religions to venerate their dinosaur gods.

Bone Gnawers and Ratkin make pilgrimages to the Television Realm, a sub-realm of the CyberRealm. Some say it is adjacent to an Epiph as well. Here, the spirits of all of mankind's television shows are kept alive by nostalgia and memory. An Umbral traveler can easily find himself in one of his favorite TV shows. Many of the laws of the CyberRealm apply, but so does the "logic" of television. There is always a chance to escape at the end of each program, unless

the hapless victim meets with the words "To Be Continued." Most werewolves find the existence of this sub-realm a sick joke, proof that humanity has indeed fallen far from grace if these are the finest concepts they can find to venerate.

### *Zones*

Zones are an inherent part of the Umbra, but they have aspects that cannot be neatly defined. They have strong connections with the rest of the Tellurian. Damaging one causes major repercussions throughout the Tellurian, and may even attract the attention of Celestines. Most are believed to be part of the Deep

### *Near Realms and the Horizon*

A few traditional mages and sorcerers describe the Membrane as the Horizon, the very limits of human possibility; Glass Walkers often use the same term. According to the lore of the Uktena, sorcerers and witches afraid to confront the problems of the physical world had a habit of nesting in tiny little pocket realms that they called "Horizon Realms." Very few shapeshifters ever saw the inside of these sub-realms, as their inhabitants tended to guard them jealously. Many a Horizon Realm was crafted to be nothing more than an elaborate hiding place, a custom-made territory where the mages could do whatever they liked to whomever they brought with them without having to deal with the various shadow wars raging across the World of Darkness.

Unfortunately, in the World of Darkness, nobody can hide forever.

The dawning of Anthelios has had many effects on the Umbra, and the Horizon Realms are no exception. Many have become so disparate from reality that the paths to them have closed. Others have fallen more violently. Recent rumors (among those shapeshifters who care about such things, such as the occasional curious Corax or Nuwisha) paint numerous tales of Horizon Realms falling to internecine wars, invasions of hostile spirits or beasts, or even the direct intercession of Incarnae. One particularly vivid tale claims that Rorg, the Planetary Incarna of the asteroid belt, decided to use one of these realms as "target practice" for some strike yet to come, and hurled a vast clawful of Umbral asteroids through the would-be Eden. The story seems exaggerated, even implausible — but those who've met the Many-Taloned Hunter himself find it a little harder to doubt.



Umbra, yet some Garou have encountered them without passing through Anchorheads. Zones are described more thoroughly in Chapter Two.

Four Zones recur in Garou epics. The Mirror Zone contains other reflections of Earth, sometimes trapping Garou returning through the Gauntlet. A pack may spend weeks in a Mirror Zone before they notice the subtle differences that demonstrate they never actually returned home at all.

The Null Zone is like a second Gauntlet, a "backdrop" to reality, the space behind the Umbra. It acts much like the area backstage to a play. Time doesn't pass there unless a Garou is witnessing its events. Space has no meaning in Null-Z; it is a shortcut to everywhere, but also leads nowhere. Its walls are bare and blank, waiting to steal meaning from those who view them.

The Dream Zone is composed of the dreams of humans and Garou alike. In theory, Chimares are outgrowths of the Dream Zone itself.

### *Temporal Zones*

There are also tales describing *Temporal Zones* as well, but all such stories end in tragedy. Some speak of Garou, and other supernatural creatures, attempting to travel back in time, yet none speak of pleasant results. As an example, Shadow Lords tell the tale of a sect of vampires that developed a method of traveling back in time through limited access to Temporal Zones — until one tried to travel back and time and usurp

### *Werewolf: The Wyld West*

Another popular example of a Temporal Sub-Realm is the Wild Wyld West, a thorough and authentic replica of the American West. Visitors may enter with the intent of playing "Cowboys and Injuns," but often unearth old rivalries between tribes within the pack within a matter of hours. Fianna proud of their ancestry may balk at their ancestors' savage attacks on the Pure Ones; Wendigo might find evidence of so-called "Wymcomers" who acted with surprising compassion and open-mindedness. Glass Walkers may have a chance to ride the rails with Iron Riders, Uktena may experience the Ghost Dance firsthand, and Garou of all coats and claws may fight shadowy echoes of the Storm Eater, a fierce Umbral maelstrom of unsurpassed fury. Garou may not want to live in the Old West, but it makes for a hell of an Umbral journey.

(In other words, if you bought the damn book, you might as well use it again, right?)

power from their bloodline's founder. They are all gone now, and are remembered only hazily.

The only stable Temporal Zones are reflections of places that once were. It is believed that such places cannot actually change the past, but they can give insights into things as they were. There is, for instance, a strong temporal zone reflecting the American West of the late 19th century. The realm is powerful enough that some have actually confused traveling to this zone with traveling in time. A few are welcomed back into Mirror Zones that convince them that they've actually changed history. As if they've been hit with a "temporal paradox," they steadfastly deny that they've failed in their attempt to change the past. Some are never seen again.

### *Vistas*

Vistas are realms that travelers cannot physically enter, but may still witness. These images and ideas have been cast adrift in the Umbral flow. Encountering one is usually hazardous, and can alter a person's — or shapeshifter's — perception of reality forever. Vistas unfold before Umbral travelers, trapping them until they complete their image. Some explain them as free-floating pieces of dreams, ideas sprung from Gaia, or reflections of past events trapped in the Deep Umbra. A Garou might see the origin of the Umbra, a vision of the world calcified in the Weaver's stasis, or even a foreshadowing of his own death.

### *Hazards of Umbral Travel*

Even the most secure spirit tracks cannot guarantee that a journey to the depths of the Umbra will be free of peril. Anyone who makes a quest into the spirit world should be prepared for the worst, or at least for some of the common problems. Of course, since the spirit realm is capricious and vicious, the following hazards are merely a representative sample — any Storyteller worth her salt will surely alter, elaborate upon or expand this list as the mood takes her.

• **Umbral Winds:** At times, Garou in the Umbra feel as though they are breathing pure energy, fresh air or even luminiferous ether. No matter what the medium, the force of the Wyld can stir it into a maelstrom, or simply buoy the pack through the air to an unexpected destination. Garou can be blown off a trail, carried on thermal currents to other areas of the spirit world, or simply terrified by the fury of a storm. The wind may do no real damage (even as the Storyteller calls for soak rolls), seriously fatigue them, or actually injure them. Imagine a scene in which the pack must regenerate wounds from an umbral wind... right as it drops them into a middle of a fight with hostile spirits.



### *Myth and Destiny*

The Umbra is. The Umbra was. The Umbra will be. The spirit world does more than reflect the past; it also helps shape the future. Because the forces of myth and legend help shape the structure of spirit realms, destiny can play a major role in an Umbral journey. Galliards attest that if a hero wanders into the Umbra to seek something, he'll eventually find it. Any quest can be fulfilled, or at least simulated and recreated. If a hero can attain an impossible goal in the spirit world, he gains a clearer revelation of how to recreate such tasks in the "real world."

Bone Gnawers, for instance, have charged into Scar over and over again to learn how to "monkeywrench" the Weaver's schemes — in recent times, they've been joined by representatives of all other tribes, even the Glass Walkers. They wouldn't do this if they didn't believe their actions might actually tip the balance in wars against the Weaver's minions if they succeed. The outcome may very well affect their own destinies. If the pack really believes this, their chances for success improve.

In the same spirit, true heroes often witness prophecies and revelations in the spirit world, whether through vistas, evolving Near Realms, or imaginary realms like the Mirror Zone. If a hero goes looking for his fate, he'll find it. If he witnesses a tragic fate, he'll have time to prepare to face it. Not surprisingly, an increasing number of Umbral questers claim to have seen visions of the Apocalypse in their aislings. If enough Garou come to believe one of these prophecies, the events are destined to come true.

- **Lunaes and Lunes:** Imagine the moon path a pack is following intersects with another. Lunar spirits drift in the air as luminescent balls of pure moonlight, barring their way. How they behave may very well relate to the current phase of the moon. They might punish the pack for not acceding to Luna's whims, spirit away "insulting" fetishes or silver until the pack offers them chiminage (payment or a favor of some kind), or simply lead the pack astray with cryptic and alien activity. For all her patronage, Luna is still a spirit of mysteries, and her creations are no different.

- **Weaver-spirits:** Pattern webs may lead to almost anywhere; thus, Weaver-spirits can intercede wherever they are needed. A Glass Walker who relies a little too much on high tech might attract their interest, or a Black Fury or Red Talon alive with Wyld

energy might irritate them. If the pack has stolen a valuable fetish from a realm, Weaver minions may scurry out to retrieve it before it gets used, bollixing up a perfectly good bit of order.

- **Vistas:** A scene unfolds before the pack as they travel along a spirit path (see the "Vista" description above). It could foreshadow a future event in the chronicle, offer them a (real or false) temptation to lead them astray from their quest, or even reveal secrets of an enemy of the Garou. A hero may face a reminder from his past or a key to his destiny in the spirit world.

- **Allies or Rivals:** The pack encounters Lunes, a totem spirit attended by Jagglings, other species of shapeshifters, or even another pack of Garou. The newcomers may be initially friendly or neutral, but they may soon reveal they're trying to trick the pack out of something they need. Such an encounter may test the werewolves' dedication, motivation or even morality. Some shapechangers have fled to the Umbra permanently, unable to return to the realm of flesh. Such creatures could very well be hostile, suborned, or just insane.

- **Banes:** Wyrmspirits have tainted a domain the pack thought was still safe. Beauty and splendor have been perverted and corrupted. Banes now breed there, and attack. Perhaps one of the allies or rivals from the previous example has become host to a Bane. Far from the physical realm, overpowering scents (or stench) may make the use of the Sense Wyrms Gift impractical.

- **Moon Shadows:** A spirit path might end for no discernible reason. A particular ability (Enigmas, Occult, Lore, or Cosmology, for instance) may be needed to sense where it resumes, or how to repair it. A valiant lupus may be tempted to jump across a rift or chasm. Failure could spiral the pack down towards the Abyss.

- **Temporal Victims:** Travelers from a bygone age appear on the spirit path. They may be shadows of a previous age, refugees from the Mirror Zone, delusional spirits in disguise — or the genuine article.

- **Wyldings:** Chaos is unleashed! Weapons could melt, or fetishes might get frozen, while psychedelic spirits release intoxication, dementia, delusion or hallucination. Reality shifts beyond the norm even for the spirit world.

### *Limits of the Near Umbra*

Some Umbral explorers speculate that there are barriers between the three Penumbrae. They return with tales of passing through it on their way to the Digital Web, the astral plane, the Shadowlands, or other rarefied destinations. Of course, there are no signposts to such places. Theurges repeat that a hero in





the spirit world meets his destiny; thus, there is no guarantee that a Garou on an aising will follow the same path. Such journeys have happened enough times, however, that such a theory seems to hold some credibility.

### *Malfean Realms*

The descent to the infernal realms is a long and torturous one. The White Howlers found a quick-and-dirty path into its depths, but sacrificed the destiny of their entire tribe in the process. At the nadir lies Malfeas, the realm of the Wyrms. Surrounding it are other demonic, infernal and Malfean realms. Bold heroes charge into these depths with dreams of utterly annihilating the Wyrms' minions. They return with nightmares, or not at all.

Silent Strider lore speculates that it is possible to descend into the Shadowlands, the Low Umbral Penumbra, by journeying through Malfeas. It is unlikely that even the most puissant hero could kick enough ass to pass by waves and waves of Wyrms' spirits on his way down there, unless the poor unfortunate was tricked into wandering down too far. Some Garou on the path towards corruption, or perhaps destined to walk the Labyrinth of the Black Spiral, may be welcomed. Even so, if the lost soul can't find a way into the Shadowlands (possibly because none exists), he may need to make Faustian deals to find his way back again.

Just as it is easier to "reach" the Middle Umbra in the midst of a powerful caern, there are profane sites that lead straight into Malfeas. Garou occultists often refer to them as *Hellholes* (as we have already seen). Black Spirals have claimed many of the most powerful, yet it is rumored that some wraiths and ghosts have established *haunts* of their own around some of these entropic areas.

### *The Pattern Web*

Another enigma concerns the phenomenon called the Pattern Web. This spirit path can lead to anywhere the Weaver is powerful. Some Glass Walkers have described "climbing it" to reach such disparate places as the Computer Web, cyberspace, astral space, or even remote realms that mages can attain through quiet meditation. More commonly, it is used to travel to the CyberRealm. Glass Walker Theurges sometimes refer to it as a sort of "spiritual superhighway" for Weaver spirits. As such, it is also posited as a "barrier" or Gauntlet separating these realms, possibly even acting as the boundary between the Near Umbra and the Deep Umbra. Climbing the Pattern Web requires the Web Walker Gift.

### *Sacred Sites and Profane Blights*

Just as werewolves use caerns to draw energy from the Near Umbra, other supernatural creatures have



### *Storytelling Technique: Flying without a Net*

Storytellers take note: The Umbra is definitely a realm where mood dominates over mechanics. Each Near Realm may have its own laws and rules, but the spirit world should be vast and complex, not limited by charts and tables. Strictly defining everything can kill the spirit of the Umbra. To keep that spirit alive, we recommend that you refer to your imagination instead of the rules as often as you like. The realms beyond should be places for wild imagination, so don't limit yourself to dice, rules and mechanics. The solution to a problem may come from a song, a story, wild invention, emotional outbursts, or (gods forbid) sheer roleplaying.

Once you've got a feeling for the mood of the Umbra, you may very well surprise yourself. If any of the rules of a realm get in the way, ignore them or scrap them altogether. Make shit up. Improvise. Run in circles. Howl. A firefight with Tec-9's in an urban alleyway may have a lot of number crunching and dice chucking, but the wild and tempestuous spirit world should not. If these experiments work, then great; if they don't, don't sweat it — creativity always involves risk. Besides, next week, the characters may very well be back in the real world anyway. Just remember: When you set aside the rules, the players are investing you with a great deal of trust. That also means they believe in you: Jump off and fly.

similar sacred (or profane) sites. The Gauntlet may be lower around these areas, but consequences and competition may be severe. Expressly at the Storytellers option, a botched attempt to step sideways in one of these areas may temporarily strand the pack in another Penumbra.

Faeries use freeholds to gather the power of the Wyld. It is rumored that a changeling will never age in a freehold, but if he never leaves, he'll eventually go insane. Some Fianna claim to have seen this happen first-hand. Furthermore, it is said that the fae can access realms beyond the Near Umbra through freeholds, traveling into their own variety of Penumbra. A few Fianna have set out on quests for this "homeland" from which all fae allegedly hail, well suspecting that the Arcadia Gateway is something else entirely. Not surprisingly, the few who make it return with many fantastic and contradictory stories.

Some Silent Striders have attempted to reach the Shadowlands in a similar fashion at wraith haunts. Stepping sideways in an area that's frequented by ghosts has its own perils. Striders already run the risk of attracting the attention of the Restless Dead when they fail to pass through the Gauntlet successfully. The danger is even greater in a haunt.

Once it was believed that mages could attain their own "Horizon Realms" with greater ease at their sacred sites. There's enough bad blood between Garou and mages to imperil any such investigation. For one thing, mages often seek out Gnosis, and sites where the Gauntlet is low seem to be particularly prized. Powerful mages have learned to drain it from werewolf caerns, vitiating them of their strength. If werewolves are seen sniffing around a mage's pet fount of spirit energy, the warlock may anticipate Garou retribution and respond accordingly.

### *The Deep Umbra*

Beyond the Near Umbra, the Deep Umbra contains realms of wild impossibility. The physical world has no parallels to such fantastic places; thus, the depths of space are little more than an empty void in the material world. In the world of spirit, the Deep Umbra is like a roiling ocean, a turbulent medium of less accessible spirit matter. Floating within its depths are fantasies and nightmares the Earth simply cannot accommodate. What is true today may not be true tomorrow.

Venturing into the Deep Umbra entails the greatest risks of all. Before a pack can attain it, they must travel to the very limits of the Penumbra, which correspond to the edges of Earth's atmosphere. Some say it is the end of the realm of Gaia's influence. There is another spiritual Gauntlet surrounding the Earth, one far stronger than the ones separating the physical world and the Penumbrae. This barrier is known as the Membrane. Care to check it out? Fasten your seat belts, and please extinguish all smoking passengers.

To attain the outer limits of the Penumbra, one usually travels through the air. Lupus Garou sometimes try to leap for the clouds, while Uktena see how far they can push the Spirit of the Bird Gift. Bone Gnawers and Ragabash do the same things in the Umbra with fireworks, leaping off buildings, or just flapping their arms. Servants of Falcon, Stormcrows and other avian spirits may summon one of the Incarnae. Attended by hundreds and hundreds of lesser Gafflings and Jagglings, the great avian totem lifts the pack into the air. A clever Garou may just pull himself up by his bootstraps. In other words, to attain the impossible, the weird turn pro. Dull or derivative attempts always fail.



Some Garou have found it possible to reach this destination by running along the clouds. Uktena Skywalkers have mastered this art, but other tribes and camps have not been as lucky. There is a tale told of a Glass Walker Ragabash named Joins-the-Mile-High. The poor fool offered to lead his pack out the emergency exit of an airplane at 20,000 feet. Unsurprisingly, no one took him up on his offer. The valiant homid stepped sideways just as he approached a mirror duct taped to the door. Immediately surfing the clouds at 700 miles per hour, he launched himself at the heavens, hit a cloudbank just right, and soared into the Deep Umbra. There is also a tale of an Uktena who attempted the same feat while using the Spirit of the Bird Gift. He was never seen again. The further a visionary strays from the path, it would seem, the greater the chances of being lost forever. The Umbra carries few absolutes, and no guarantees. Great heroes face great risks.

The Garou have established a few sacred sites in the Aetherial Realm where one can pass into the Deep Umbra; these are called Anchorheads. Elder Stargazers maintain many, but as their tribe has withdrawn from the Garou Nation, they have become less willing to allow heroes through them. Only Garou of great renown have a chance of eliciting their aid. Anchorheads appear in many forms, but most are vast aerial domains.

A hero may need the Survivor Gift just to endure such extreme conditions. Currents carry packs along ephemeral corridors. Visionaries deduce enigmas to enter great castles in the air. Hypergeometric figures rotate to the music of the spheres. Or sometimes, a less mundane event occurs. Regardless of how the Anchorhead is attained, the pack then performs the Rite of Becoming and soars into the Deep Umbra, becoming one with the universe.

## *The Dark Umbra*

Werewolves are creatures of spirit — but more spirits of the Near Umbra, even more of the Deep Umbra than of the Dark Umbra. The Dark Umbra's ties with the "living" Umbrae are far more tenuous; this is the realm of mortality.

When a werewolf uses a rite to step into the Dark Umbra, he arrives in the Underworld's version of the Penumbra — called by some the Shadowlands. From there, a traveler can walk from place to place, just as in the Penumbra, or voyage deeper into the Dark Umbra proper. At least, that's how it used to be....

## *The Sea of Shadows*

Most of the Dark Umbra is comparable to a vast, dark sea, upon which float various islands that host

kingdoms of the ghosts of various cultures. Once a traveler leaves the Shadowlands, he must have some way of navigating this sea if he's to reach Stygia, the Duat, Swar, the Dark Kingdom of Jade or any of a hundred different ghost kingdoms. As inhospitable as the sea is, this is no easy feat; malevolent ghosts are prone to attack werewolves, particularly since the spirit energies of the "living" Near Umbra tend to stand out in the grim Underworld. A werewolf's overabundance of life energy is like a beacon in the Dark Umbra, a beacon that draws hungry ghosts.

As problematic as this situation may be, the current problems facing Dark Umbral travelers are even worse. Since 1999, the Dark Umbra has proven even more inhospitable to werewolves. A mighty storm, so huge it rages across the entire realm, has battered the Dark Umbra with no signs of relenting. Powerful winds, spectral hail and ghostly lightning lash any unprotected travelers almost to ribbons. Although the storm winds seem to be most devastating to the ghosts of the Dark Umbra, beings of the Near Umbra such as shapeshifters still take five to ten dice of lethal damage per turn of exposure to the worst of the storm. Sometimes a calm patch passes over the area, and a gap in the swirling clouds reveals the dull red glow of Anthelios — then the storm resumes.

Most Theurges lay this storm at the feet of the Red Star, claiming that Anthelios' presence is what set this maelstrom in motion. One theory runs that as the Eye of the Wyrms began to open, its gaze fell on the Dark Umbra first, stirring up these incredible storms. If so, some wonder, what happens when Anthelios' gaze falls on the Near Umbra?

## *The Shadowlands*

Earth casts a shadow into the Dark Umbra just as it does into the Near Umbra — but the Dark Penumbra, as some shapeshifters call it, is a much more sinister place. The spirits of Gaia and the Triat don't come here — this is the exclusive domain of the ghosts of the dead.

Before the great maelstrom, the Shadowlands were an eerily still place. Here things appeared much as they did in the physical world; buildings cast reflections regardless of age, as did some trees. A slight sense of death fell over the whole landscape, though; sidewalks appeared more cracked than usual, vegetation seemed withered, and so on. The landscape was monochromatic, ranging from pale grays to deep, rich blacks. The only speck of color has arrived recently: a small red star — Anthelios — burning sullenly in the sky.

However, like the rest of the Dark Umbra, the Shadowlands have been wracked with great tempests



since 1999. A werewolf who enters the Dark Umbra may well be torn from her feet or savagely wounded before she has much of a chance to get her bearings. Some places, fortified by wraiths, hold fast against the raging maelstrom — but these tend to be the Shadowlands reflections of cities, where there are sufficient materials to form barricades and hands to do so. Entering the Dark Umbra in the wilderness is a dangerous business; some places, like the eyes of hurricanes, remain calm, but far too many more are swept by the furious storm winds.

These days, only a few werewolves dare to travel into the Dark Umbra, and most of those swear off the attempts if they survive their first jaunt. The werewolves most interested in the human dead — notably the Striders and the Ivory Priesthood — have other things to worry about, at any rate. Since the beginning of the great maelstrom, many ghosts have found their way across the barrier between the physical world and the Dark Umbra, settling into their former bodies. Putting these “walking dead” to rest is a difficult task, but one that the Striders and Ivory Priests would be hard pressed to ignore.

### *Auspices in the Umbra*

How werewolves should conduct their crusades into the spirit world is a matter of much debate. If a Garou wants to find out more about the Umbra, the elders of his sept, camp and tribe are all willing to instruct him. Each auspice also sees the spirit world differently, each seeking its own truth. Perhaps they should tell you more themselves....

### *Ragabash in the Umbra*

Fridge Magnet, Glass Walker “Umbral Tourist,” advises:

“Damn, there’s some powerful shit out there! You’re the one who’s got to figure out how to outwit it, or at least help everyone outrun it. The spirit world is a Ragabash’s dream come true, because it offers you the chance to defy reality, break every convention, and escape the laws that bind us in the realm of flesh. Some of those distant spirit places are pretty damn bleak, so it’s also your duty to keep everyone’s spirits up.

“Steal the secrets the Umbra keeps hidden, show your bravery through your sense of humor, and make yourself useful. The muscle-bound Ahroun may dominate the world of flesh, but there’s more stuff on the other side of the Gauntlet than they can fight. When they get stuck, they’ll need you. Lateral thinking’s the key to success out there, and that’s what us New Moons were built for. When the Theurge can’t figure out the angle on the latest weird situation, it’s up to you to find the proper approach. Don’t

let any barrier — whether it’s a thought, emotion, or Weaver’s web — keep you away from the object of your quest. And bring me back a souvenir, will ya?”

### *Theurge in the Umbra*

Sense-the-Unseen, Uktena Theurge, confides:

“It is sadly inevitable — no matter what your purpose in the Umbra, because it is the realm of spirit, your pack will often look to you for leadership. Because you study the ways of spirits, they will expect you to understand everything, even the unknown. Do not dissuade them of this illusion, for more than anything else, they need your courage and faith. To survive, they will require your trust in Gaia. To endure, you must have trust in yourself.

“If your elder has deemed you worthy, you will be taught how to speak with the spirits as well. If Gaia gifts you with this knowledge, it is your responsibility to interpret and analyze the motives of these ephemera. Always look for spirits who can aid you, but bargain well. Remember before you bargain rashly that your totem-spirit is also there to guide and advise you, for he is a powerful ally. When the journey is over, your last responsibility is to see that your pack remembers the lessons it has learned.”

### *Philodox in the Umbra*

Mam’selle Guillotine, Shadow Lord historian, pontificates:

“The spirit world is a realm of mystery and enigmas, existing outside the laws of the real world. It is our duty to remember to respect laws, at least when they are correct and just. The spirit world has as many codes of laws as it does realms, and it is our duty to learn, observe and use them all. We must apply our own interpretations of what behavior is right or wrong as well as our knowledge of the spirit world’s rules, regardless of the realms we visit. Preserve the Litany in even the most extreme or bizarre circumstances.

“Remember above all else that your actions in the spirit world have consequences in the real world. Too many packs have abandoned themselves to reckless enthusiasm, believing they have left the responsibilities of the real world behind. Just because you are in a re-creation of the past, for instance, doesn’t mean you can’t affect the future. Your pack may also face its greatest challenges in this realm.

“There are occasions when you must bargain and negotiate with the spirits you meet. As any Theurge will attest and advise, their motives can be strange, but you must keep your pack from making a deal they cannot honor. And no matter what deals you make, you are the one who must keep them all together as a pack, for every one of you will be needed to survive and return. Along the way, do not forget that you yourself must learn from what you see.”



### *Galliards in the Umbra*

Echoes-of-the-Past, Silent Strider Galliard, enlightens:

"You have but one duty, my child, above all others: remember. The ancient ways and ancient truths are in the Umbra. Legend and myth live on. Heroism and destiny are revealed in their true forms. All we have lost may be found there; all we might become may be revealed there. Your pack will no doubt prove themselves worthy of renown and glory, so it is you who must return this knowledge to the world. By telling the tales of the spirit world, we keep it alive, shape it and give it strength. All this depends on your sacred duty, your obligation to remember the tale and survive to tell it."

### *Ahroun in the Umbra*

Zero Tolerance, Get of Fenris Modi, sternly cautions:

"Ahroun are spirit warriors in the Umbra, just as they are in the physical realm. Just as you must use the gifts of

the spirit world to fight your mortal foes, you must use your body's might to its full when walking the Umbra. An Ahroun is not complete unless both halves strive as one. We are Gaia's teeth and claws, her force of vengeance. The most dangerous foes you will ever face, the greatest challenges you will ever endure wait beyond the Gauntlet. Joy, terror or a sense of wonder may overwhelm your pack, but it is your responsibility to see that they survive it. You must protect them, even when they are gawking about like fools.

"You must show your strength so that none will challenge you. This does not mean that you must kill everything you confront, for the spirit world contains forces far beyond our strength, and allies that masquerade as foes. Rather, you must know when to fight as well as how to fight. Bear your decisions with courage, but temper them with wisdom. All quests carry one undeniable imperative: Someone must return to tell the tale. Along the way, you will have your opportunity to prove yourself a true hero. Wait for it."





# Chapter Two: The Realms

*Before heaven and earth had taken form all was vague and amorphous. Therefore it was called the Great Beginning. The Great Beginning produced emptiness and emptiness produced the universe.*

— Huai-nan Tzu

The Near Umbra is more than the sum of its parts. Taken in turn, each of the various realms and sub-realms within the Near Umbra might seem to reflect only a part of the overall experiences of shapeshifters, humanity and the spirit world. And that's true; each realm is only a fragment of existence, blown up and elaborated upon in such a manner that it is steeped in symbolism. The Battleground Realm is more than just "fighting in the Umbra" — it's a realm that visitors can go to in order to learn more about war, about why people fight or how best to overcome an opponent.

But at the same time, the Umbra is a place of near-limitless possibility, and none of its realms are the "last

word" on what they represent. Spirits go to war in realms other than the Battleground. Oblivion creeps into the cracks in places other than the Abyss. Although the following Near Realms, subrealms and Zones are the most familiar to the Garou, remember that they aren't necessarily the only realms in the Near Umbra. Storytellers should feel entitled to create new subrealms, Near Realms or whatever they like in the interests of expanding the Umbra. This book can only outline the basics of what a pack might find — the Umbra itself would fill a continent piled with libraries. It's a big, big place, after all.



# The Abyss

The Umbra contains many realms of nightmare. Within its borders are places of endless battle and carnage, nests of monstrous Banes, and realms devoted to the twisted perversions of the Maeljin Incarna. Yet, for all these places' horror, few are held in as much dread as the silence and emptiness of the Abyss.

The Abyss, simply, is a great pit in the fabric of the Umbra. This pit is so deep and wide as to be seemingly bottomless and without end. Objects and creatures that fall or are hurled into the Abyss simply disappear, presumably to fall forever. Certainly, nothing that has fallen into the Abyss has ever come out.

Countless paths lead to the Abyss. Indeed, some werewolf tribes claim that any mundane crack in the ground will, if followed far enough, lead unwary travelers to the Abyss. The realm itself consists of the great chasm, surrounded by a bleak, stark landscape of mud and rock and shrouded in layer upon layer of mist. Innumerable tributaries from the main canyon lead off into all directions of the Tellurian. These appear as ever-widening cracks in the Umbral soil.

According to the Garou, the Abyss is the ultimate destination of all lost things: lost persons, cultures, totems, even Incarnae. Supposedly, forgotten spirits from dead tribes come here to wither and fade. If travelers leave the moon paths of the Umbra, they might well end up by the side of the Abyss.

As one scales the sides of the Abyss in an attempt to descend, the traveler encounters row after row of frightful visages and totems seemingly carved from the cliff face itself. Garou legend states that these images depict great heroes and spirits of elder days who fell (or were hurled) into the Abyss and are now lost forever. Some Garou believe these images are actually frightful monsters waiting to be unleashed during the Apocalypse. In truth, no one knows precisely what these carvings are intended to represent.

Werewolves harbor countless legends concerning the Abyss. For example, the Bone Gnawers whisper that the Abyss harbors the eldest vampires, who will rise from its depths to drink the world dry on the night of Apocalypse. The Get of Fenris have a similar legend, but they believe that hordes of loathsome Wyrmspawn will rise from this "Maw of Jormungandr." The Stargazers see the Abyss as the greatest of paradoxes, an embodied spiritual koan. Only Klaital, greatest of the tribe, was able to descend fully into the

Abyss and return from within. The Silent Striders whisper that, should the greatest of Garou heroes sacrifice himself by voluntarily hurling himself into the Abyss, the entire realm will close in on itself, sealing itself shut for all time. Of course, the Striders sardonically add that, despite several heroes' attempts, the Abyss remains intact and gaping.

Nor are the Garou the only shapeshifters to know of the Abyss. According to the Bastet, the Abyss marks the area where the first den-realm came into being. This realm has since been overtaken by the Wurm and desecrated into its current form. The Mokolé see the Abyss as the anathema of Mnesis, the embodiment of all that has been forever lost from even their prodigious memories. Needless to say, they fear it greatly. The Ananasi tell tales of a bloated Goblin Spider who spins ceaselessly in the depths of the Abyss, seeking to bridge it; when she succeeds, say the spider-folk, the Apocalypse will be upon the world. The Nagah refer to the Abyss as the Shadow Fang, and they say it marks the spot where the Wurm struck the spirit world and injected it with poison. The sun-loving Corax simply do not speak of the Abyss, nor do they journey there.

Perhaps the Abyss is best understood as the manifestation of the Unknown. Travelers to the Abyss must confront their fear of the unknown, as well as the emptiness and frustration within their own souls. Werewolves, who are less prone to existential brooding than humans, are perhaps particularly vulnerable to the silent, deadly influence of this realm.

## Geography

Essentially, the Abyss is a great rift in the Umbra. Its sides are as scalable as any other Umbral rock; doing so, however, is a perilous endeavor. Powerful gusts of wind whip through the Abyss, and travelers seeking to scale the cliffs must make frequent Dexterity rolls or lose their grip and plummet into the depths, lost forever.

The Abyss devours light, sound, even scent. Ultimately, if one travels far enough into the Abyss, one experiences complete sensory deprivation. At this point, one eventually becomes lost forever.

Three paths lead down into the Abyss, and ultimately to the deep caves where nearly anything and everything lost can be found. Each is lined with a particular type of mineral, for which the path is named.



### *The Golden Path*

The Golden Path is so named because it is lined with nodes of purest gold. Travelers can indeed remove some of this gold from the path, though so doing invokes a potent curse (see *Laws of the Realm*, hereafter). Riches lie scattered heedlessly along this path. Unfortunately, so do the remains of prior travelers; the Golden Path is exceedingly precarious (difficulty rolls to traverse obstacles are made at +2). The path is fraught with fissures, sheer drops, and similar obstacles. Of all the Abyssal paths, the Golden Path is the deadliest.

### *The Iron Path*

The Iron Path is lined with striated bands of iron ore. The path seems to be favored by lost cubs that accidentally enter the Abyss. The path runs by countless caverns; most of these caves are inhabited solely by bones and desiccated remains, but a few contain living creatures or stranded spirits. Such creatures are inevitably mad, and many are quite dangerous — although rescuing a shapeshifter who has been driven mad by the Abyss from the terror of the Iron Path is a deed worthy of great renown. The path itself, though, is relatively easily traversed.

### *The Silver Path*

Most enigmatic of the three paths, the Silver Path is considered the most enlightening. Stargazer Garou claim that the great hero Klaital took the Silver Path through and out of the Abyss. Most of the great totemic carvings lie along the Silver Path. Silver taken from the path is said to be particularly useful when forging klaives. The Silver Path is surely more difficult and treacherous than the Golden and Iron Paths, in its own way — otherwise more would be known of it. However, no two Theurges agree on the precise nature of the Silver Path's challenges.

### *Into the Void*

Some shapeshifters, particularly Corax, have been known to fly directly into the Abyss. Beings who do so ultimately suffer the effects of sensory deprivation (see "*Laws of the Realm*" for specifics). As travelers descend farther and farther into the lightless, silent void, they must make Willpower rolls (difficulty of 10 minus their own Rage) to avoid maddening terror. If a shapeshifter succumbs, she begins to hallucinate, filling her brain with imaginary sights, scents and sounds in place of the absolute nothingness of the realm. At this point, the character is considered hopelessly lost, another victim of the Abyss.

### *Abyssal Dwellers*

Few permanent dwellers reside in this lonely land. Spirits seeking to come here must materialize to enter the realm, falling out of touch with the rest of the Umbra as they do so. Significantly, neither the Weaver nor the Wyld is strong here; the signature charms of Break and Solidify Reality do not function in the realm, and thus most spirits of Weaver and Wyld assiduously avoid the Abyss whenever possible.

Ironically, though, the Abyss acts as a sort of spiritual "magnet" or beacon. Most spirits, fearing this power, give the place a wide berth, but beings of power who attempt to summon or cajole spirits while in the Abyss find their task notably easy.

Shapeshifters believe that the Abyss is the ultimate destination of all lost things. Lost cubs, stranded Umbral travelers, and forgotten spirits can occasionally be found wandering this gloomy realm. Such beings are often mad and will sometimes attempt to coerce travelers into helping them escape the realm.

Other creatures visit the Abyss from time to time. Incarnae, even Celestines, occasionally hold moots of their own near the Abyss; they believe that the proximity of the Abyss prevents most other spirits from interfering with them. Very occasionally, one or more monstrous Wyrms slither up from the void to haunt the nearby moon paths.

### *Nightmaster*

The most infamous and terrifying inhabitant of the Abyss is undoubtedly the great Shadow Lord Nightmaster. Formerly a Garou hero and member of the Society of Nidhogg, Nightmaster traveled into the Abyss long ago with his pack, seeking to learn the secret by which he could devour the sun itself. As the pack journeyed into the Abyss, though, they went mad one by one. Nightmaster was forced to put them down in order to continue on. Finally, the legends state, Nightmaster stood alone in the lightless void.

As the stories go, Nightmaster made a pact with the Abyss itself, becoming its slave, or perhaps its master. In so doing, he sacrificed his soul to the dark, allowing it to destroy everything of his being that was once weak or natural. Thereupon, Nightmaster strode with impunity through the Abyss, freeing such creatures as suited his whim and pressing them into service. Now he reigns supreme in the Abyss, a fitting ruler for this gloomy realm.

Now that Anthelios has made its presence felt in the Umbral sky, a few desperate werewolves have sought out Nightmaster. In the rogue Shadow Lord,





these Garou seek to find an ally willing to do battle with the demon sun — perhaps to swallow it from existence entirely. No pack that has sought Nightmaster in this manner has returned.

### *The Hive of the Jagged Maw*

The Hive of the Jagged Maw is a group of Black Spiral Dancers that has chosen to dwell permanently in the Abyss. This hive is devoted to worship of Eater-of-Souls, one of the Wyrms' incarnations. The hive, led by its priestess Grythyg, believes that the Abyss is itself the mouth of Eater-of-Souls. Its members remain by the great pit, even enacting horrific rites in preparation for the Apocalypse, when they believe the Wurm-monster will rise from the ground to devour the world.

The Hive of the Jagged Maw frenziedly seeks to keep the Abyss "pure." Above all, this means keeping shapeshifters devoted to Gaia from sullyng the region. The hive can be cunning, pretending to be a pack of lost Gaian werewolves and then ambushing Garou who attempt to help them.

They relish capturing werewolves or other hapless shapeshifters, torturing them nigh to death, and then hurling them alive into the Abyss.

The hive hates Nightmaster with great passion, but as the Shadow Lord's forces are far mightier than the hive, Grythyg does little about it for now. Indeed, hive members occasionally aid in Nightmaster's lesser schemes at the request of the monster, ever probing for a weakness in Nightmaster's guard. To date, they have found none.



## *The Last Legion*

Recently, a few reports from Umbral travelers have made mention of strange phantasmal figures seen near the Abyss. These figures bear the chill of the Low Umbra, and they appear to be spirits of the human dead. They come in many shapes, but all bear weapons, cuirasses and hauberks of black iron. They move in precise military formation and are soldierly in bearing; certainly, they seem to handle their swords, pikes, guns and other accouterments with an ease born of familiarity.

This forbidding squadron is the Lost Legion, soldiers formerly in service to the Lords of the Dead. During a great spirit-storm that swept over the Death-Realms, these hapless ghosts were blasted far from their posts and ultimately ended up in the Abyss. Try as they might, they were unable to find a way back to their normal haunts, so the rag-tag remnants of the various legions of the Dead consolidated into one hodge-podge military unit. They have erected an encampment along the Iron Path, and they patrol it as their *de facto* home. As yet, the Legion is uncertain what to make of their new surroundings, but tend to be suspicious of travelers. The Legion knows of Nightmaster, but is uncertain of his exact nature or powers.

## *Entry and Exit*

Entering the realm itself is not overly difficult. As mentioned previously, many paths lead to the realm, though travelers commonly do not know they are entering the Abyss until they actually arrive at the realm. Furthermore, a Garou who gets lost in the Umbra (perhaps blown off a moon path by a Maelstrom or other freak incident) might well wander into the realm through sheer happenstance.

Exiting the realm is more difficult. A creature seeking to walk out of the realm must walk alongside one of the Abyss's tributary cracks for several days, then must make either a Rage or Willpower roll (difficulty 8). However, to attempt this roll, the creature must be in a sane frame of mind, suffering from neither derangement nor Harano; creatures in either of those conditions may not leave the realm until they are cured.

## *Story Possibilities*

- Garou may enter the Abyss as part of a quest to retrieve something that has been lost: a cub, a fetish, even a spirit or totem. The more important the lost article, the more likely it is to be deep in the heart of the caves; the pack will have to venture down one of the Paths into the dangerous section of the realm.

- A werewolf or pack may seek to hurl a blasphemous fetish, enemy or Bane into the maw of the Abyss, hopefully to be lost forever. Transporting the hostile object or captive is sure to become more difficult as the

werewolves draw nearer to the Abyss proper and must overcome the laws of the realm.

- Now that Anthelios has appeared in the Umbral sky, a few desperate Garou have considered contacting Nightmaster, in an attempt to persuade the monstrous Shadow Lord to devour the Demon Sun itself. No Garou who has gone to entreat Nightmaster has thus far returned. The pack might attempt their predecessors' quest, or might simply be content to attempt the rescue of those who went before.

## *Laws of the Realm*

- Anything without the ability to fly that falls into the Abyss is forever lost.

- The Abyss acts as a natural magnet for spirits, thus amplifying the power of summonings performed in the realm. Any Garou performing a Rite of Summoning in the realm has her dice pool doubled.

- A Garou staring into the Abyss must make a Willpower roll (difficulty of 12 minus the character's Gnosis) to tear her gaze away. If she fails, she must make a frenzy check. If she scores three or more successes on the frenzy roll, she enters a fox frenzy and flees the area at top speed. If she has lost all of her Willpower, she tries to leap into the Abyss.

- The Abyss can cause Harano. Upon entering the realm for the first time, a Garou must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) or enter Harano.

- Exploration of the Abyss can be enlightening and revelatory. The Storyteller might gift explorers with extra experience points that can be used only to purchase the Enigmas Knowledge, appropriate Gifts, or Gnosis. However, the Abyss is treacherous; scaling the walls requires a series of extended Strength + Athletics climbing rolls (difficulty variable depending on the precise terrain).

- No actions involving the expenditure of Gnosis points work in the Abyss.

- Anything lost in the Umbra (and not found by another creature) eventually arrives in the Abyss, through some inexplicable phenomenon. Garou who are aware of this may search the Abyss in an attempt to find a particular lost item. The difficulty is determined by the Storyteller, depending on the size and concealability of the item. The number of successes needed depends on the location searched, as follows:

| Location    | Successes Needed |
|-------------|------------------|
| Surface     | 6                |
| Golden Path | 5                |
| Silver Path | 4                |
| Iron Path   | 3                |
| Deep Caves  | 2                |



- Difficulties of all Perception rolls increase by one for every 300 feet down into the Abyss a character travels.

- All sight Perception rolls made in the Abyss use the following chart:

| Moon Phase            | Difficulty |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Daylight/New/Crescent | 10         |
| Half                  | 8          |
| Gibbous               | 6          |
| Full                  | 4          |

When difficulties for sight Perception rolls increase over 10, the character enters the Abyss's sensory deprivation zones. Once this occurs, the character rolls Perception + Primal-Urge (difficulty 8). Failure has no effect, while success induces hallucinations. The more successes the character scores, the greater the hallucinations' intensity. If the successes rolled exceed the Garou's Willpower, she fully succumbs to the hallucinations, believing them real. The Heightened Senses Gift reduces the difficulty of the Perception + Primal-Urge roll, making it easier for such Garou to hallucinate. Hallucinations typically, though not always, involve

persons, places and events from the Garou's past; some hallucinations, though, are inexplicable.

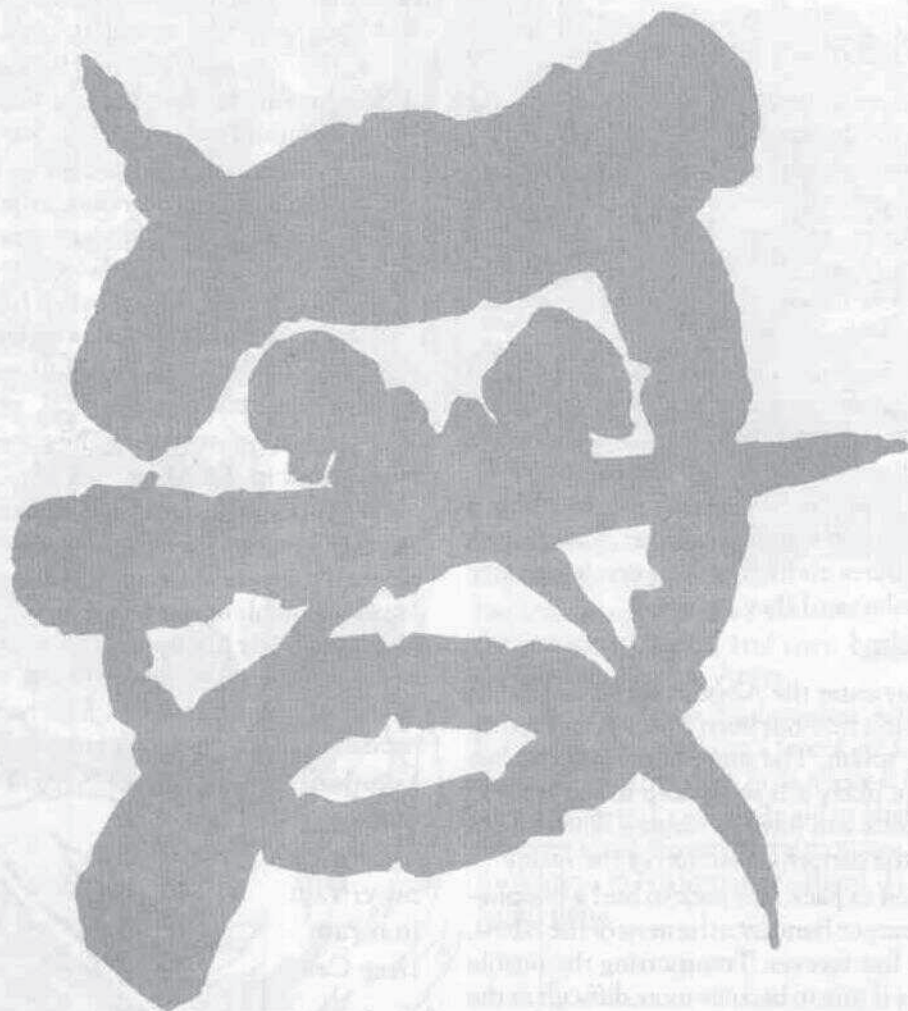
- All Intimidation rolls, as well as Gifts using Intimidation (such as True Fear), gain two automatic successes when used in the Abyss.

- No moon bridges may penetrate the Abyss Realm. This includes bridges created by the Bridge Walker Gift.

- A character that collects gems and gold from the Golden Path may collect sufficient amounts to bestow upon herself Resources 5. However, thereafter she will be dogged by the Curse of the Abyss. Forever after, she will have a propensity to mysteriously lose things, particularly things of importance to her. These losses can even include such things as love, control, or sanity. Additionally, the character's difficulty to regain Gnosis forever becomes 10, regardless of circumstances.

- The Sense Wyrms Gift will detect the entire Abyss as being "of the Wyrms."

- Some of the gems along the Abyss's walls are fetishes called Hearts of Midnight (see the Appendix). They must be attuned to the user to remove them from the Umbra.





# Aetherial Realm

Every shapeshifter looks to the skies. The werewolves follow their great patroness Luna, just as many other shapeshifters do; some werebeasts raise their eyes to the sky to venerate Helios instead. Even the werecreatures who care nothing for sun or moon glance nervously upward in the Umbra, noting the dull glow of the ominous Red Star. Wise seers know that there's magic in the heavens — and this magic becomes manifest in the Aetherial Realm.

The Aetherial Realm is, for want of a better term, the Umbral sky. It is a place where Luna and Helios spin around one another, where the spirit representatives of the various planets move in a slow, stately dance, where the constellations pulse with the power of legendary heroes. Umbral travelers come here to learn from the wisdom of the heavens — or to try to find a way to learn the true nature of Anthelios and counteract its effects.

## *Geography*

The Aetherial Realm is laid out much like the vault of the sky; the lowest point still considered part of the realm is a layer of shifting clouds, solid on top and easily navigable. These clouds shift and billow in immense mountains and wide plains, a "landscape" all their own. The spirits of birds and other flying beasts soar above the clouds and claim aeries in some of the mountains. Any type of aerial spirit, be they elementals, weather-spirits or the spirits of flying mythical beasts, can be found somewhere within the realm. The occasional tower or other structure dots the cloud layer as well, testament to those who have come before.

Above the clouds, the Aetherial sky shines in all its glory. The sky is a deep blue, just a shade or two away from the black of midnight. In one direction, Luna hangs in the sky, much larger than she appears in the physical world. Helios resides in the opposite half of the sky, somewhat fainter and farther removed, as if viewed from a more distant planet such as Mars. Each of the planets is brighter and more visible, and the stars are clear and crisp.

## *The Moon*

Traveling toward one of the celestial objects in the Aetherial sky takes time; days, even weeks. Even so, many Garou dare to make the journey to the moon, hoping to gain the favor of Sokhta/Phoebe. Of course, they don't make the journey unchallenged; Lunes

guard the path to the Aetherial moon, ensuring that their patroness isn't disturbed lightly. If the travelers ignore the Lunes' demands to turn back, the Lunes try to divert the shapeshifters onto moon bridges that lead elsewhere. To resist the Lunes' manipulations, pilgrims must attain seven successes on an extended Intelligence + Enigmas roll, difficulty 10; the visitors must do so in three rolls or less.

Once past the Lunes, visitors arrive at the realm of the lunar Incarna. The realm usually appears as a vast garden, the soil brightly shining moonsilver and the vegetation soft and luminous. The Incarna's throne lies in the center of the garden, where she grants audience to those wise and perseverant enough to reach her. Many Garou undertake this journey to request Pathstones (in order to link their caern with another via moon bridge), or even to ask for moonsilver.

## *The Sun*

Although the Aetherial sky is generally dark, that changes as one grows nearer to the Umbral sun. The closer one comes to Helios, the brighter and hotter the air gets. Fire elementals dance around the Aetherial Sun, providing a deadly gauntlet for visitors to run. Everyone who tries to press past the gauntlet must endure five separate "attacks," each inflicting three health levels of aggravated damage at difficulty 9 to soak (unsoakable for those who can't soak fire damage, of course). Some Gifts, such as Luna's Armor and Master of Fire, may aid in passing the gauntlet at the Storyteller's choice; only the Gift: Kiss of Helios automatically negates all damage.

Beyond the gauntlet lies the domain of the sun's Planetary Incarna; it may appear as a blazing citadel if the Incarna manifests in his Hyperion guise, or as a brilliant tipi if the Incarna appears as Katanka-Sonnak. The sun's Incarna has many forms, but his nature remains roughly the same; he prizes valor and despises deceit. He may prove to be a vital ally for those who seek his blessing, although he is an exacting spirit to please.

## *The Reaches*

The portions of the realm's sky beyond sun and moon are called the Aetherial Reaches. It's here that the planets have their own domains, and even farther still that the Triat's power begins to bleed into the realm. At the very height of the Aetherial sky lies the



Membrane, the border to the Deep Umbra. The essence of the Triat has leaked through the Membrane into the realm, and each Triatic entity has claimed a portion of the Reaches for its own.

The **Weaver Reaches** are covered in a gridlike spider web, not unlike an astronomer's computerized map. The life that pulsates in the stars elsewhere in the realm is not in evidence here; the stars and world of the Weaver Reaches hang still and cold in the web, arranged in an unnatural symmetry. The only spirits found here are Weaver-spirits; geomids and huge "star spiders" patrol the web, making certain that everything is in its proper place. There are no Anchorheads here; travel across the Membrane is hard-fought in the Weaver's domain. Legend holds that many lost fetishes and powerful spirits have been embedded in the Weaver Reaches, and that they wait for someone to free them so that they can fight for Gaia once more.

The **Wyld Reaches**, by compare, are a constantly swirling area of unusual sounds and peculiar lights. Odd planetoids and strange comets dance here in apparently no patterns whatsoever, although it seems they always narrowly avoid any potential collisions. A traveler can find Anchorheads in abundance here; the Wyld Reaches are probably the safest and easiest path through the Membrane to the Deep Umbra (not that that's saying much). Indeed, enigmatic paths and gates to all portions of the Umbra seem to come into existence here, although there's no real way of telling whether a spirit gate will take one to a tribal homeland or to the bottom of Malfeas. Many Garou come here in search of Wyldstones, loose stones drifting among the planetoids that are so imbued with Wyld energy that they make natural fetishes.

The **Wyrms Reaches**, on the other hand, are dark and forbidding. The Anchorheads here lead largely to Malfeas, or worse, to the region of the Deep Umbra where the Wyrms itself is tangled. (The latter possibility is only a theory; obviously, nobody has survived a trip to meet the Destroyer face to face.) The star and planetary spirits here are warped and ominous, spelling out dire omens as they cycle around one another, even devouring one another. Balefire elementals dance on the asteroids, and the constellations have a dire aspect. When the nebula of pure pollution isn't obscuring the stars of this portion of the heavens, it's said that one can read the future motions of the Wyrms in the sky.

### *The Planetary Incarnae*

Although travel through the Aetherial Realm doesn't guarantee direct access to Luna, Helios or other Celestines, Garou can contact the Incarnae that represent the planets themselves. A trip to the moon





in the Aetherial Realm would be a good way to contact Phoebe (or Sokhta, as she's also called), the Planetary Incarna of the moon that acts as one of Luna's faces. Similarly, a pack could journey to visit Hyperion (or Katanka-Sonnak), the Planetary Incarna of the sun. Visiting a Planetary Incarna isn't easy; it requires a long trip to the Aetherial analogue of the celestial body in question, and usually passing a number of tests to prove one's bravery, insight or whatever other qualities the Incarna in question values.

Even the planet Earth boasts a Planetary Incarna — Eshtarra, the Songteller, an Incarna that in many ways reflects Gaia (albeit in a much smaller fashion). The other Incarnae of the familiar bodies of the solar system are:

- Mitanu, the Rogue, the trickster Incarna of Mercury;
- Tambiyah, the Veiled Mother, the fecund Incarna of Venus;
- Nerigal, the Ice Warrior, patron of battle and Incarna of Mars;
- Rorg, the Many-Taloned Hunter, the apocalyptic and feral Incarna of the asteroid belt;
- Zarok, the Crowned One, the kingly Incarna of Jupiter;
- Lu-Bat, the Peaceful Counselor, the sagacious Incarna of Saturn;
- Ruatma, the Shadowed One, the enigmatic Incarna of Uranus;
- Shantar, the Loom Maker, the inventive and pragmatic Incarna of Neptune;
- Meros, the Wanderer, the restless Incarna of Pluto.

Each of these Incarnae rules a realm that partly reflects the physical nature of their planet, partly symbolizes the associations humans have long made with their planet's aspects, and is partly shaped to the Incarna's liking. For instance, pilgrims to Nerigal's domain can expect a cold, red desert guarded by martial spirits in the form of bloody legions. If the pack wins their way to Nerigal's court, he may well listen to them — if he believes them brave souls. Such a pilgrimage is truly a hero's journey.

### *The Sept of the Stars*

Atop one of the stable cloud mountains lies the home of a particularly unusual sept — a group of mostly Stargazers that has forsaken the physical world to fully explore the mysteries of the Aetherial Realm. These werewolves have gradually disconnected from the physical world; they are now creatures of spirit, although they still act as if they possessed all their mortal

Traits (i.e., they use Gifts rather than Charms, and so on). Their most powerful member is Altair, a mighty spirit warrior who still remembers how to use his Kailindo to utmost effect.

The sept resides in a huge spirit-orrery, a nearly impossible building filled with clockwork and ephemeral representations of the planets and stars, always turning in relation to one another. Many of the more significant celestial bodies are represented not by globes, but by actual rooms; to study the movements of Mars, a character may have to stand within a red-hued room with translucent walls and compare his position to the rest of the heavens. The orrery is confusing and difficult to navigate, but the sept members are more than happy to guide seekers along the right path.

The recent developments of Anthelios' arrival and the Stargazers' secession from the Garou Nation have added an extra element of tension to the sept. The Red Star and the attendant birth of the "perfect metis" have stirred them to even greater activity, driving them to search for prophecies that might lead the Garou to success in the final battle. Although the sept doesn't entirely agree with the Stargazer elders' decision to leave the Garou Nation, they nonetheless honor the wishes of their tribemates, and have offered their services to the occasional hengeyokai sentai ("pack") that has come in search of counsel.

### *Entry and Exit*

Finding the Aetherial Realm is easy enough — all one has to do is find a way up. The realm stretches above the clouds of the Penumbra, and is relatively easy to find from the Near Umbra as well. Since all moon bridges pass through the Aetherial Realm at their highest point, werewolves can simply leave a moon bridge and find themselves there.

Leaving is, if anything, even easier. All a traveler need do is jump through one of the breaks in the clouds and begin falling down towards the rest of the Near Umbra. When he finally lands, he lands safely — that is, the impact is as gentle as if he'd merely jumped a few feet. There's no guarantee that his surroundings will be safe; by falling from the Aetherial Realm, a character can wind up anywhere in the Near Umbra, with the exceptions of Erebus and Flux.

For those interested in a more predictable destination, moon bridges and moon paths function well enough as a means of exit, particularly if called up from Sokhta's realm. The Wyld, Weaver and Wyrms Reaches all possess gateways to appropriate Near Realms — the Flux Realm is reachable from the Wyld Reaches, for instance, while the Wyrms Reaches hold several tunnels to Malfeas.



## Story Possibilities

- A powerful cult of Black Spiral Dancers who see Anthelios as their dark messiah has moved into the Wyrms Reaches, where they plan to enact great rituals to contact the Red Star and seek its patronage. The Dancers greatly outnumber the pack, who must stymie or dissuade them in some other way than a direct assault.

- A far-off caern has agreed to a pact of allegiance with the characters' own. After much negotiation, the elders of both caerns decree that, as a sign of allegiance, packs chosen by both caerns shall journey to Sokhta's realm to attain pathstones. The characters, the chosen representatives of their caern, find themselves in a friendly race to see who brings back a pathstone first; the winners of the race are likely to receive just a touch more Renown, as well as bringing extra honor to their caern.

- A group of mages powerful enough to force their way into the Umbra has made their way into the Aetherial Realm. According to their books, many of the buildings on the cloud layer, including the spirit orrery of the Sept of Stars, were built by mages of their order long ago — and are their rightful property. Their attack comes, coincidentally enough, at the time of the pack's more peaceful visit to the sept. The pack must figure out just how to defuse the fanatical mages' crusade before the warlocks' magic attracts the attention of spirits from the Weaver Reaches.

## Laws of the Realm

Due to the proximity of the Umbral moon, all Garou (or other shapeshifters with Rage) regain a Rage point upon entering the realm.

- The "outer space" of the Aetherial Realm is still breathable and temperate to shapeshifter visitors (although visitors that aren't part spirit, such as mortals, may be in trouble). The only hazard a shapeshifter need overcome in the depths of the realm's "space" is weightlessness.

- Falling does no physical damage in the realm, no matter the distance. A werewolf could fall from the height of the Reaches, plummet past the cloud layer entirely, and land on the ground by the Abyss

far below without being injured (although his mental state isn't guaranteed).

- All visitors, spirit, shapeshifter or otherwise, can walk on the surface of the cloud layer as if it were solid ground.

- It's notably easier to summon Lunes, star-spirits, fire elementals and other spirits of celestial origin in the realm. The difficulty for any such summoning is reduced by 2.

- All moon bridges travel through the Aetherial Realm. While in the realm, any rolls involving moon bridges are reduced by 2. Any astrology-related Ability or Gift involving celestial objects or astrological phenomena also receives this reduction in difficulty.

- The clouds in the Wyrms Reaches increase the difficulty of all Perception rolls by 1.

## Optional Laws

- The Aetherial Realm simply is the Penumbra reflection of outer space; anyone stepping sideways in the realm emerges in an appropriate point in the physical world (probably to decompress and die).

- All shapeshifters can fly while within the realm. This is *not* automatic knowledge, however, and the more experienced visitors and residents give it out only to those they deem most trustworthy. By rolling Perception + Enigmas, difficulty 6, a shapeshifter may move 10 feet times their Gnosis per success; Gifts that increase movement also increase this distance. (For example, Mephi, a clever Silent Strider with a Gnosis of 7, rolls five successes. He could normally travel 350 feet this turn, but he's activated Speed of Thought, so can travel for 700 feet.)

- The Silver Fang Gift: Lament Flame does not cost a Willpower point in the realm, and the shining aura leaves a trail like a comet as the Fang crosses the skies.

- Any shapeshifter in Luna or Helios' favor gains an extra success when using Gifts related to the relevant Celestine, such as Luna's Armor or Halo of the Sun.

[Note: Although space is limited here, the Aetherial Realm and the Planetary Incarnae are covered in much more detail in *Rage Across the Heavens*.]



# Arcadia Gateway

While many have dreamed of Arcadia, few have actually experienced it. Seeking this mythical faerie kingdom remains one of the most ambitious quests one can hope to achieve. Storytellers have told countless tales of heroes who have sought this fabled realm, but if any have attained it, they have yet to return to explain the end of their journey. Every story, every myth, every dream of Arcadia has been brought to life in a realm of the Umbra that reflects these faint aspirations: the Arcadia Gateway.

As the old stories claim, once there was a time when many paths led to the true Arcadian Kingdoms. The trods of Earth were like tributaries leading to mighty rivers, and all flowed into one great ocean. Throughout the Tellurian, the fae explored creation, bringing chaos and magic wherever they went. In Earthly legends, the fae were known by many names: the Fair Folk, the Good People, changelings, nunnehi, and the various kith and kin of legend. For these bold wayfarers, the trods all showed the way back home. Humans who met these wanderers often found their lives taking on the semblance of dreams (or as often as not, nightmares); nobody came away from an encounter with a faerie unchanged.

The fae were never really creatures of the Near Umbra; wherever they came from, it wasn't a Near Realm. But their ability to touch and terrify so many, whether human or shapeshifter, resounded in the spirit world. The result was the Arcadia Gateway. To this day, Fianna historians can't agree whether the Gateway was born of human dreams (much as the Atrocity Realm was born of human pain), shaped by powerful fae who became lost in the Near Umbra and tried to create a semblance of home, or if it just simply came to be. Although popular legend holds that the realm is an actual gateway to the fae homeland, a close examination reveals that it is no such thing. The "fae" who populate this realm are emanations like any other. Perhaps some of them were truly fae once who gradually "disconnected" from the material world and their home realm, but the end result is the same.

Yet one by one, as magic faded from the world, so did the trods to the true Arcadia. It is said that as the forces of the Wyld retreated into the Umbra, many Seelie and Unseelie followed them, forsaking the staid conformity of the earthly realm. On Earth, Arcadia became little more than a legend. The ancient trods

meandered throughout creation, wending their way through strange and fantastic places. But as the Weaver erected Gauntlets to separate the distant reaches of creation, fewer trods led to their original destination.

As the legend goes, many fae never found their way back to their true home, instead finding the Arcadia Gateway. Just as the Fair Folk were known by many names throughout the world, heroes who actually found their way to this mythical land knew their ultimate destination by many names as well — Avalon, Hy-Brasil, Tir na-N'ogh, and so on. With each tale, the Gateway grew to accommodate their dreams. Yet because many of those dreams were fantastic or impossible, the realm drifted further away from mundane reality. Truths about the Fair Folk in the "real world" were relegated to myths, legends and dreams.

Now the world has grown cold and uncaring, plagued by darkness, consumed by rage, and bereft of all but the strongest magic. Arcadia lives on in dreams, but even those dreams are dying. Limitless possibility has been replaced with the cynicism and cold reason of the modern age. The Fair Folk may soon fade away as so many other magical creatures have before them — and as they fade, their Near Umbral creation, the Arcadia Gateway, fades with them.

## *The Coming Winter*

As legends tell, long ago, the fae fled from the madness of the earthly world. A few remained on Earth, evolving into "changelings," faeries who learned to hide their true forms from the harsh world around them. Others retreated into forgotten realms, and still others sought the spirit world. Some sought to guard the trods to Arcadia, protecting it from mankind's madness and the ravages of age. Others hoped to lead unwise and villainous rivals astray, even if it required the betrayal of their own followers. Fae legend holds that Lord Lysander, a valiant Seelie sidhe, was the one who found and protected the true "gateway to Arcadia." If Lysander were once a true fae but is now an emanation, there's no proof of it — he has since disappeared from sight and almost from memory.

For centuries, the realm of the Arcadia Gateway remained isolated from the real world. In accordance with the old traditions — or what the Wyld-imbued fae thought they remembered as the old ways — the land was divided evenly between the Seelie and



Unseelie Courts. The perceived "gateway to Arcadia," the portal out of the realm, was protected by the Seelie Court, safeguarded deep beneath the well-defended walls of Lord Lysander's castle. The gate has since fallen, and the Lord himself has vanished, perhaps faded away.

With the demise of the Seelie lord, Unseelie rushed in to claim lands their rivals could not protect. Shadows slowly encroached across the land. Centuries before the death of Lord Lysander, the western lands lay in perpetual midsummer, preserved by the Seelie. The eastern lands were frozen in midwinter, cloaking the treachery of the Unseelie. Now the balance has been upset, perhaps forever. Winter spreads across the domain like a cloak of cold and darkness. Only a few scant leagues in the west still enjoy the warmth of the sun and the protection of the Seelie Court.

An Endless Winter is passing across the land, eradicating the antiquated relics of the realm to make way for a new eternal age. Friends of the Seelie Court have one last chance to preserve the past; if they fail, then this last remnant of Arcadia will descend into eternal night.

The true paths to the realm all lead to the same destination: a shimmering moon path. At the end of it, a circlet of coruscating light reveals a glimpse of a forest covered in snow. Standing at the threshold, a knight in black armor waits as he has for countless centuries. The knight demands that none pass without defeating him in combat. Unfortunately, age has already defeated him. He is feeble and old. His armor is hollow, easily scattered by a resounding blow. He may be tricked or deceived. Yet oddly, no matter how thoroughly he is victimized, the armor always stands there again the next time a traveler passes. Since few pass by anymore, he has ample time to recover.

### *Geography*

Beyond the black knight that guards the realm, a worn, decaying road stretches to the horizon. Thick woods surround it on either side, covering the ground as no forest on Earth has for centuries. At times, the one road twists and turns into the depths of the wilderness, hidden from view. The end of the path is visible, however, leading to a dark and sunless sea. Once this winding path was straight as an arrow, serving as the barrier between the lands of the Seelie and Unseelie. Now it has been twisted, and the border between Seelie and Unseelie is ill defined. It isn't even a very good trail. Throughout most of the realm, winter has cloaked the forest in snow, and dense copses of trees have become little more than thick tangles of branches.

To the east, a swollen harvest moon rises behind a grim and terrible fortress. Cold winds arise from the east, for it is the dark heart of the Unseelie domain. To the west, a dull sun sets behind the ruins of a crumbling castle. If a hero listens intently, however, and he retains some measure of hope, he can hear distant sound of music and laughter beneath the setting sun. A perceptive and idealistic traveler may see the glow of distant campfires through the trees. In a handful of leagues to the west, the last remnants of the realm's Seelie Court prepare for the onslaught of winter.

### *Trails and Leagues*

The broken trail winds onward, leading from the circle of light to the woods. It has become so twisted over time that it is hard to see further than the next hill or valley. Lesser trails offer alternatives, tempting with shortcuts and scenic routes. These lesser trails seem to subtly shift and twist from day to day, adjusting to the mutable geography. If Garou choose to follow any one of them, they may use their woodland lore, survival skills, or primal senses to orient themselves again, but such tasks are exceedingly difficult. Magic misleads and misdirects them. Leaving the path has even more drastic results.

A steadfast pack may follow what roads they can find, but fae will attempt to lead them astray. Will *o' wisps glow in the bleak forest*. A lone cabin may be visible in the distance, offering hot food and a warm hearth. Nymphs and satyrs dance amidst the trees, inviting travelers to join them. No matter what their motives, a Garou who wanders out of sight of the path will not find his way back unless he is led there by one of the Fair Folk. Magical trickery confounds Garou Gifts as well: a Hare's Leap may result in a lupus catapulting through the trees, a Lament Flame may be mirrored by a dozen ephemeral balls of light, and so on.

Travelers who try to take shortcuts through the woods encounter hunters and monsters, stalking things worthy of the oldest and grimmest fairy tales. Beasties and boggles lurk and shuffle. Redcaps chase anything that moves (and some things that don't) before swallowing them whole. In the "real world," a Garou could easily defeat some of these creatures, but the bitter and Unseelie nature of this realm has made them stronger, in some cases, enough so to give a pack a run for its money... or its life. The spirit world has gifted them with hideous strength.

Relics of other faerie tales live in the Unseelie lands, but they have all been tainted by the jaded sensibilities of the modern age. Some are even fouler: They mirror the original tales. A gingerbread house may smell delicious, but inside, bad little children roast





in the oven. The Big Bad Wolf hunts a girl in a red cloak, hungering for more than just her cookies. Garou may rage and rush off to punish these atrocious creatures. If they do, they have strayed from the path.

If travelers somehow survive or ignore these perils and distractions as they continue south, they eventually approach an old Roman style road leading from west to east. This is the easiest way to reach the Seelie Court in the west. The Unseelie are winning their war against the Seelie Court, and so all the other roads eventually lead to the east. Only the Roman Road is true. Various cobblestones have been stolen from the Seelie path; they might be returned when low faeries chuck them at a Garou's head. The remaining stones are set at the distance of a chariot's wheels. In fact, at least once a day, a steam-driven metal conveyance of some kind barrels down the road, smashing into anything that bars its way. Other stretches of road are maintained by ogre and troll construction crews. Whether they actually repair the road or just bury lesser creatures beneath is open to conjecture.

If the pack travels to the very end of the southern road, it leads out of the forests to an immense ocean. A few of the eldest fae have set sail across these waters, never to be seen again. Even the wisest Garou do not

know if there is a distant shore on the other side of the cold ocean. The fae do not speak of what lies beyond (or beneath) the waters.

### *Castle Ruins and Faint Hope*

Hopelessness makes the journey more perilous. Hope, however, can clear the way, especially if the pack is strong-willed, can see the faint fires of the Seelie lands, and heads straight for them. If the pack travels west, towards the setting sun and a rose-colored sunset, they eventually reach a clearing after many leagues. In the center, a castle rests in ruins like a shattered dream. The rubble surrounding it is lit from within by a massive bonfire. Yet a refrain of music drifts from the faeries gathered there. The beleaguered defenders refuse to abandon their lands, despite any adversity. This motley clique is the last remnant of the Seelie Court in the realm.

In the Seelie domain, fae who can fight are prepared for war, ready to defend their dreams. Despite overwhelming odds, they refuse to give up, or even recognize that they are losing. Any Fianna or Galliard schooled in fae lore may know of how the courts were once organized: When the world was young, the Seelie and Unseelie Courts shared the burden of rule. The Seelie ruled from Beltaine to



Samhain; the Unseelie reigned from Samhain to Beltaine. Now, as on Earth, only the strongest can rule, whether through valor or treachery.

Though Endless Winter stretches across the land, the leagues surrounding the castle remain untouched, at least for several days' journey. Here it is fall, and the ground is carpeted by a multicolored array of fallen leaves. Areas of lovely, tranquil beauty endure. Quiet glades and trickling brooks nurture the land, reflecting the calm perseverance of the Seelie. Gossamer waterfalls shimmer, and autumn leaves blaze like fire.

For several leagues around the distant ruins, the power of the Seelie Court holds sway. Their spirit is imbued into the very earth. In fact, the natural spirits of the land oppose all intruders who are not Seelie, regardless of their intent. In Seelie fashion, the defenses are whimsical, ridiculous and fiercely imaginative. A puddle may quickly expand to the size of a lake, washing over intruders with waves of crystal water and bubbling demands for them to swim away. In a grove covered with grain, mice may grow on trees, dropping from branches to scurry up legs and scamper off with what they can carry. Thickheaded lizard-folk emerge from under rocks, denying passage to anyone who cannot best them in an argument. Natural spirits waylay invaders with proficient and prolific inventiveness.

### *Seemings*

If the pack doesn't know the old legends, or if they want to help, they'll have to ask the local fae. The first Seelie the pack encounters here may very well depend on whom they choose as their alpha. If a Ragabash or Theurge is alpha, they will probably meet a childling, one of the youngest of the fae. Childlings play and cavort as though oblivious to the encroaching winter. The games children have played for centuries are preserved in their song and verse. Ragabash can elicit trust through jokes and puns; Theurges may take interest in the way that children's games have been adapted into faerie magic. Openness and trust are met with laughter and play. Cruelty and hostility are met with clever japes. In a wink, a childling might take a hop, skip and a jump back to alert his elders.

If a Philodox or Galliard is alpha, wildlings approach. These passionate fae are sustained in perpetual adolescence, consumed by romance, rebellion, and a taste for adventure. They perceive the "War for the Gateway" in harsh black-and-white terms, demanding to know whether the pack is with them or against them. Words mean little; they then want proof. Philodox are met with arguments and accusations; Galliards confront displays of furious invective, passionate outbursts, or sly flirtation and seduction. Ob-

sequious submission invites disdain; intense confrontation gains admiration.

If an Ahroun leads the pack, or the pack advances with martial intent, a *greybeard* takes notice. These are the "elders" of fae society. Some of the most esteemed are valiant knights, protectors of the oldest traditions. They have a bearing worthy of any Garou elder, and demand the same respect. If a warrior offends a greybeard's sensibilities, the elder issues a challenge. A few patrol the wasteland surrounding the Seelie domain, attended by entourages of hotheaded wildlings.

Subterfuge is a dangerous tactic to employ against a greybeard, for they are patient and subtle. A few nobles and high faeries remain in the Seelie realm. All (save for the Unseelie Queen) are greybeards. They are princes and princesses, barons, dukes and duchesses. They have also been worn down by age, leaving them shadows of their former selves.

Occasionally, the high faeries and nobility try to stir the passions of the wildlings under one banner, but the wildlings are too contentious and hot-blooded to all ally under any one ruler. Many attest that Lord Lysander will return in the moment he is needed most, as any true hero would. A few scoff that he sailed out over the Southern Sea, and it's time for the rest of the greybeards to step down. Fewer still hold the faint hope that if the Unseelie conquer the entire Arcadia Gateway, a new Seelie realm will arise (much like Gaia's fabled Summer Country). To help win these arguments, the fae sometimes ask visitors for stories of how the battle rages in *their* world. Many find it better not to tell them.

### *The Grim Fortress*

Shadows and fear have conquered the rest of the realm. The forest darkens where the Unseelie reign. Gnarled, dying trees loom overhead. Mud-filled creeks sluggishly ooze past stagnant pools. Spider webs shiver in the cold, while dead leaves and brambles fester into mulch. Occasionally, one might hear mocking laughter. As one approaches the Grim Fortress of Queen Marianna, one sees the results of her handiwork.

Rumor has it that the grim sorceress secretly loved Lord Lysander before he "passed away." Now that he is gone, her dark and terrible beauty has spread across the land without restraint. In one field, rotting skeletons stand at attention in the whistling wind, waiting to assault any that approach. Another stretch of the road is interrupted by an elaborate hedge maze, one that cheats by shifting its corridors to trap intruders. Ponds lie frozen, trapping wide-eyed beautiful fish suspended beneath the surface. Brilliant moonlight illuminates



the landscape, eliciting howls from wolves in the woods. The yellow harvest moon is always full.

At the eastern end of the Roman road (and all of the tributaries save a few), bitter cold condenses in the air, forming a light frost on every surface. The very walls of the Grim Fortress are reinforced with ice. The dark and terrible queen of the castle rarely leaves it, but from a distance, she may be seen pacing along the parapets like a caged animal, particularly when her despair is overwhelming or the Seelie have caused her grief.

Black knights have set a bivouac outside the castle. The clash of their weapons can be heard for miles. In the forests around the fortress, the commoners and low faeries feed raging bonfires. They scream and leap, chanting and laughing with maniacal glee. Visitors offer further amusement. Some intruders (or emissaries) are humiliated (or sacrificed) in honor of the dark queen. In one particular clearing, there is a marble altar where the Unseelie worship her.

### *The Dark Queen*

As is the way of Umbral nobles, the vast expanse of these lands reflects the temperament of its ruler. Queen Marianna strides through the hallways of her castle in flowing black diaphanous gowns. Eyes rimmed in kohl peer from a china white face. Long jet-black hair billows down her back. Before the commoners, she is the very model of a Victorian faerie, tightly controlled in her etiquette and restraint. In private, she disrobes to display lustrous pale skin, exposing beauty so rare it briefly stops the hearts of those who view her. It is a cruel beauty, one that can kill by overexposure.

Few dare recount the legend of her exile from Arcadia, or her failed schemes to use powerful sorcery against those in power. Now she reigns supreme in her own domain, as beautiful as she is terrible. When she has the chance to talk to visitors (or captives), she plays the role of a victim of circumstance, a poor defenseless maiden exploited by forces beyond her control. This facade is used to justify her vengeance against the land, the perpetual act of exacting her anger on all who invite her displeasure. When speaking to those who do not fully know her, she pleads for their help in her return to Arcadia. Sometimes she claims she cannot leave until the realm has been destroyed. No one can tell whether she is lying. Ever. Within the confines of her half of the realm, she is as much an Incarna as any other resident of the Gateway.

Queen Marianna also desperately hungers for news of the modern world, one of the few commodities for which she's willing to barter. She attempts to enchant

those who can provide her with such news. If a hero piques her interest, she offers protection in the form of her black knights, masking her taking of hostages as hospitality. She is served by skulking minions and creates monsters to stalk the woods. In her most elaborate ceremonies, hideous, slinking creatures come out of the forest to worship her. When matters must be handled quickly, she sends her most powerful servants — they are anything but fools.

One day, she dreams, she will find the path back to the real world. She believes that returning to the real world, and abandoning the nightmare of her existence, is the only way she will finally forget Lysander. Unfortunately, she's wrong; she cannot leave, at least not without dire consequences. If Marianna ever forgets the Gateway, the realm will lose much power, perhaps even vanishing like a dream. And her reward for doing so? Although she has no idea that she is an emanation and not a true faerie, the truth of her nature won't be denied. She can never set foot on Earth, spirit being that she is. So Marianna pines for something she can never safely have — and each year of her despair eats at the Gateway like venom. This faerie tale seems destined not to have a happy ending.

### *Entry and Exit*

Travelers may quest for the ancient spirit paths to the realm, but those who do are waylaid by faeries that were left behind. The Wyld has warped and twisted them, filling their souls with rage and madness. Whether these "Umbral fae" lost their way, were betrayed by nobles, were exiled from Arcadia or were never even fae to begin with, all of them have lived in the spirit world for so long that they have become pure ephemera. The Wyld has also warped many of their memories into delusions. Umbral faeries resemble many mythical forms: earthly changelings, figures of folklore, fictional heroes, lost Kithain, shunned Thallain, refugees from the Dreaming, or none of the above. Dreams of the Fair Folk on Earth have reshaped them to reflect the madness of the modern age.

The emanations of low faeries and commoners lurk along the old trods. Unseelie fae don't want outsiders upsetting their victories in the Arcadian realm. Seelie test those they encounter, certain that if there is one last chance to save the Arcadia Gateway, they must make sure that the hero who attempts it is true. Commoners of both courts require sacrifices, tasks, boons or payment before they allow passage. Chiminage may take the form of gold, riddles, or blood. A Seelie fae may demand a song and dance from a brooding Ahroun, laughing and taunting the poor werewolf until he's fit to rage. Unseelie fae often



demand painful memories, forcing their victims to retell and relive past horrors. If their moods are particularly foul, they'll demand the sacrifice of innocence instead, tormenting those who confront them with new thresholds of pleasure and pain. Sadly, most Umbral trods lead nowhere (or at least to places other than Arcadia). Many of the old stories hold little meaning in the modern world anymore, so the trods that reflect them drift off to forgotten conclusions.

Leaving the Arcadia Gateway isn't overwhelmingly difficult. If a traveler passes beyond the ruins of the Seelie castle and on into the west, or beyond the Unseelie castle into the east, the road he follows will take him into the Dream Zone. The most famous way out, the actual gateway that lends its name to the realm, however, has been shattered for many years — although the fae do not know this, nor would they believe it. As far as they're concerned, the gateway exists somewhere, it can be found, it *does* lead to Arcadia — otherwise, what would be the point?

### *Story Possibilities*

- A strange, fae weapon has wounded an elder in the real world. The pack must quest for the Arcadia Gateway to find a cure. Once there, the pack must petition a highborn noble for help, and possibly perform a favor in return. This does not have to be a military mission; a Seelie childling may need to be taught a valuable lesson, a greybeard may want to witness the mysteries of another realm, or a wildling may ask for help in tracking a mythical Arcadian relic. When the task is complete, the cure is granted.

- Queen Marianna sometimes dreams of spreading her influence outside the realm. She may capture an exotic spirit from another realm, some variety of shapeshifter, or even a questing Garou cub to gather information. Perhaps she even has some foul experiment to test her theories of other worlds. The quest is simple: Seek the castle and rescue the captive before he is tainted forever.

- Even the Arcadia Gateway is not free from the Wyrms' influence. The fae are strong enough to fight off such invasions (sometimes even allying both courts to do so!), but the Garou have a greater reputation for valor against the Wyrms. Packs of Banes or Black Spiral Dancers can also invade in the realm. The hunt is complicated by the capricious or cruel hazards of the landscape that waylay friends and foes alike, and the fact that the locals, Seelie or Unseelie, might be all too willing to accept "outside help" for their struggle, no matter the source.

## *Laws of the Realm*

- Distance in Arcadia is measured in "leagues." An *Arcadian league* is about the distance a traveler can walk in a day. Oddly enough, in the ways of legend, if a hero is faster or slower, he will still seem to travel about one league in one day. Garou in Lupus form can cover about two leagues in a day (if they use the rules for "Long Running").

- Seelie does not mean "good," and Unseelie does not mean "evil." The fae of both courts demonstrate many of the classic foibles, be they codes of honor or malevolent streaks, attributed to the fair folk.

- Faeries feel a strong kinship with Fianna and packs following Stag. Any character belonging to one of these groups finds it easier to deal with the faeries of this realm: When rolling a dice pool based on a Social attribute, the character in question gets a -2 difficulty. (Optionally, a Silver Fang might get a -1 difficulty when dealing with Seelie; a Shadow Lord might get a -1 difficulty when dealing with Unseelie.)

- The very idea of a werewolf getting lost in the woods is exceedingly frustrating. Each day spent lost in the woods reduces the difficulty of all frenzy rolls by 1, at least until the pack finds its way again.

- For the sake of the game, many of the abilities possessed by faeries are described by the same statistics used for spirits. The average Umbral faerie has Rage, Gnosis, Willpower, and Essence. However, in this realm, the emanations of fae are not treated as spirits. Gifts that specifically affect spirits do not affect faeries and their kin.

- What silver is to Garou, cold iron is to the fae. The only way a fae can be permanently killed in the Arcadia Gateway is with this substance. A faerie that takes his last aggravated wound from this substance disappears from the realm forever. (Whether Queen Marianna possesses this vulnerability or not is entirely up to the Storyteller.)

- In the Arcadia Gateway, a faerie who suffers her final wound (if she has spirit stats) or her Incapacitated health level (if you're using the optional method listed below) from an attack that doesn't involve cold iron goes into "slumber," much as a spirit would. The length of slumber depends on the mythical story she is involved in. If it is a battle, she slumbers in a patch of wood far from the fray. If it is a tale of treachery, she will eventually appear as a captive in the enemy camp. If it is a tale of romance, she will slumber until her suitor rescues her. (In the modern reflection of Arcadia, this happens to men as often as it does to women.)



- In this realm, time passes randomly in relation to Earth. One day in the Gateway may pass in hour of game time, or it may take a year. This is entirely at the discretion of the Storyteller. If a visitor partakes of any food or drink while in the Gateway, at least a year will have passed on Earth by the time he returns (if he returns at all).

- Faeries understand the shapeshifters in all their forms, and can communicate freely with them. Monstrous creatures may not want to do anything more than growl menacingly.

- A shapeshifter can travel one Arcadian league in one day, but the terrain of the realm may change from week to week. In the Unseelie domain, this may occur depending on the mood and disposition of its ruler, Queen Marianna. In the Seelie domain, there is no one ruler. The lands reflect the Seelie fae who is currently held in the highest regard. The most renowned Seelie changes every few weeks, so the geography slowly shifts to accommodate his temperament as well.

- Distance seems to be influenced by drama. No one has measured the actual size of the realm; all such attempts are frustrated by random magic. When Galliards compare their adventures in the realm, the distance between various landmarks also seems to change from "story to story" as dramatically appropriate.

- Travelers are advised not to stray from the path. Attempts to regain the path always fail until a fae brings the poor wanderer back. Incidentally, using the Rite of Questing Stone in this realm results in a frost-covered stone spinning around and around. At par-

ticularly bad moments, it leads straight to Queen Marianna, regardless of the ritualist's intent.

- Sense Wyrms does not detect the presence of Unseelie.

- Queen Marianna is now the Lady of the Realm. She's about as close to an Incarna as a faerie is ever going to get. She has magic, but only the kind that furthers the plot. She cannot grow old, and she cannot die, at least as long as she stays here. She will not leave until the realm is conquered by the Unseelie.

### *Optional Laws*

- If a Storyteller owns a copy of **Changeling: The Dreaming**, it's possible to adapt changeling Traits to this realm. Only European fae manifest here; yet another sign that this realm is flawed.

- Some faerie abilities can be reproduced by the same mechanics as Garou Gifts. For instance, many possess arts equivalent to Blissful Ignorance, Scent of the True Form, or Doppelganger (although using this last Gift doesn't require Gnosis).

- Names have power in the old stories. If a shapeshifter can learn the true name of a faerie in this realm, she can control him. (Such fae never introduce themselves with their true names.) A faerie under this ensorcellment must perform any task asked of him. However, he will make every attempt to escape.

- Bargains are binding in the Arcadia Gateway. If a Garou and a faerie make a deal, the fae must carry out her side of the deal. Should a Garou betray such a promise, the entire court will find a way to punish him.



# Atrocity Realm

This realm reflects the taint of the Wyrms as few others do. The Atrocity Realm is thought to be the embodiment of the psychic residue created by countless acts of brutality, torture and degradation in the material world. Quite simply, the place is nightmare given form. Within the Atrocity Realm, spirit emanations re-create phantom tapestries reflecting acts of horror in the material world. The deeds of child abusers, serial killers, dictators and "ordinary" mortals pushed over the edge of sanity all provide fodder for the realm. One horrific scene after another presents itself to the traveler's eyes.

This realm is particularly loathsome to shapeshifters because, as beings of half spirit, their deeds stain the Umbral realms more than do those of humans. Thus, atrocities perpetrated by shapeshifters show up particularly vividly in this realm. Some Garou claim that most of the deeds of the Impergium can still be found reenacted by phantasmal simulacra somewhere in the center of the Atrocity Realm.

The terrain of the Realm itself is hideous. The realm is a feculent wasteland of browns and slimy grays, mud pits, piles of rotting skin and cairns of skulls and bones. Putrid or mummified carcasses of mutilated victims project halfway out of the ooze, their forms locked in rictuses of torture. Mass graves, dug by unknown hands, serve as repositories for countless corpses. Black, ash-laden smoke fills the gray sky, and the stench (a combination of rot, burning flesh, sulfur and feces) is nigh unbearable. Moans, shrieks and screams fill the air, coming from all directions. With each step, crunching or squishy sounds can be heard. As travelers pass, their footprints leave oily puddles that quickly fill with wriggling worms and maggots. Swarms of biting flies hum through the realm, adding to travelers' misery.

Unfortunately for travelers, the realm's geography is the least of the horrors awaiting them. The realm's mudslides, flesh-hills, ravines and other features effectively divide the realm into an endless maze, and at each turn and opening in the maze, shocking scenes await visitors. In some senses, traveling through the realm is like walking through a haunted house, except the scenes here are far more vivid (and, worse, are reflections of actual occurrences from the past and present). Around one bend, travelers might be treated to a phantasmal reenactment of tortures from Caligula's

court. In a dirty pit, travelers might be forced to witness the depredations of Jeffrey Dahmer, or the medical experiments of Auschwitz, or a US cavalry massacre of an Apache village, or a Serbian rape camp, or simply a forgotten child being brutalized by its outwardly upstanding family behind the walls of an ubiquitous suburban house.

In some ways, the Atrocity Realm resembles the Battleground. However, this is a place of victimization, not struggle. The spirit-victims are invariably helpless, the victimizers sadistic and merciless. Greedy Bane larvae hover near the scenes of torment, fattening on the psychic energy emitted thereby.

Shapeshifters who seek to end the carnage and horror find out quickly that they can't. The Bane larvae can be killed or driven off, and most of these weak creatures will flee a concerted attack. However, the emanations of the victims and victimizers are simply images, not truly real. Shapeshifters can interfere in the scenes and even "destroy" a tableau momentarily. However, as soon as this is done, it will simply re-form, replaying the atrocity again and again despite all efforts to end it. It is said that the only way to exorcise an atrocity permanently is to avenge or rectify the victims' suffering in the material world. If someone is able to bring the serial killer to justice, try the dictator for war crimes and administer reparations to the victims or simply confront the abusive parent and make her acknowledge her guilt, then perhaps the world can heal just a little bit more.

The ephemera of the realm are not "real," even in a spiritual sense. If slain, they re-form; if items are taken from them, these items vanish. Nonetheless, the hideous tableaux of the realm can impart useful information (just what happened during the Impergium?) or grant a shapeshifter a modicum of self-awareness.

Sometimes the self-awareness granted by the Atrocity Realm is too great — for the greatest danger of the Atrocity Realm lies in the possibility of encountering one's own atrocities. If a shapeshifter ever hurt or killed an innocent creature in a fit of frenzy (or, worse, deliberately), there's a good chance she'll encounter a "replay" of her crime somewhere in the realm. Some Garou deliberately send criminal members of their sects to the Atrocity Realm, seeing the place as a form of "confrontation therapy." These Garou argue that the Atrocity Realm serves a valuable function. By



forcing a shapeshifter to purify herself through empathy with her victims, followed by a cleansing journey to Erebus, the shapeshifter in question can reenter the material world purged of sin. However, such forcible presentation of one's darkest deeds can — and has — driven many a shapeshifter mad with guilt. Such beings roam the Atrocity Realm forever, seeking to cleanse themselves through shocking acts of self-torture or throwing themselves outright into a Bane breeding pit. A few of these deranged shapeshifters turn to the Wurm, lost forever.

### *The Modern Age*

The Atrocity Realm has always, unfortunately, been a powerful place. In recent years, however, the realm's evil seems to have increased, and the presence and strength of the realm's Banes has grown. Perhaps this is due to the sheer number and scale of atrocities committed in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries; perhaps it's because of the waxing of Anthelios. In any event, the Banes, formerly more of a nuisance, now constitute a decided danger. Indeed, a Maeljin Incarna has recently taken up residence in the realm, building a "fortress" of violated corpses amid the widest of the pits. From this ghastly citadel, the Incarna organizes the Banes into crude mobs and orchestrates the harvesting of negative energy from the realm.

### *The Wall and the Wire*

In one area of the realm rises a wall. This wall is made of simple black rock, rather like the Vietnam War memorial in Washington D.C. The realm's ubiquitous Banes generally stay well away from this Wall. Along the Wall, in characters ranging from Egyptian hieroglyphics to modern typeface, reads a list of names. Theurges speculate that these names represent the names of all that have been victimized or abused in the course of human history. Because the realm's Banes tend to avoid the place, the Wall has often provided a sort of safe zone for shapeshifters trapped in the realm. However, that has recently changed.

Recently, the Wall has been overrun with tendrils of barbed wire, growing over the structure like choking vines. This wire is actually an ectoplasmic projection delineating the boundaries of the Dark Kingdom of Wire, a "nation" of ghosts formed entirely of victims of the Nazi Holocaust. Blasted out of the Underworld like other wraiths during the Fifth Maelstrom, various survivors among the ghosts found their way to the similar psychic emanations of the Atrocity Realm. Now they cautiously explore and fervently fortify their new home, all the while seeking out any fellow survivors among the realm's emanations (which remind them of the *musselman* drone ghosts that used to haunt

their kingdom). The ghosts of the Kingdom of Wire have found ephemeral reflections of the death camps where they died but, little understanding the difference between ectoplasm and ephemera, do not fully comprehend why their interactions with the realm's denizens have thus far been unsuccessful.

The sober ghosts of the Wire Realm have little understanding of, or interest in, something as frivolous as werecreatures. To them, characters will likely seem little different from the weird Banes that have been molesting them since they arrived in the Atrocity Realm. Characters must tread carefully around the ghosts or suffer their wrath; unlike the other creatures of the Atrocity Realm, the ghosts can destroy a character permanently. (For more information on the Dark Kingdom of Wire, see the *Wraith* supplement *Charnel Houses of Europe*.)

### *Breeding Pits*

The Atrocity Realm is perhaps the foremost breeding ground for Banes. Countless pits, filled with writhing bodies and gobbets of flesh, serve as spawning grounds for Bane larvae. These loathsome larvae can take many forms, but often appear as mobile fetuses or maggots with human faces. Scraggs and other Banes guard these pits, protecting the larvae until the strongest are mature enough to cannibalize their weaker siblings and crawl out of the pits. Once free of the pits, the Banes find a scene of victimization and hover nearby, psychically feeding on the negative energies.

Unlike the emanations found in the rest of the Realm, these Banes are quite real. Shapeshifters may freely attack them, though the sheer number of Banes present makes this course of action questionable. Garou who die at the hands of Atrocity Banes are mystically reborn in a Bane pit, there to be tortured at the hands of various Banes until such time as they free themselves, are freed, or (most likely) go eternally mad.

### *Entry and Exit*

Entry into the Atrocity Realm is typically instinctive and unwitting. The spiritual resonance of the realm calls to emotions befitting its intrinsic nature. Thus, shapeshifters who find themselves dwelling on thoughts of rage, violence or death might find themselves unwittingly entering the realm, perhaps taking the wrong branch of a moon path or rounding the wrong bend while traversing a particularly forbidding section of the Middle Umbra. (In game terms, this means that the Storyteller has *carte blanche* to send a character or pack to the Atrocity Realm if she thinks the character or pack in question meets the criteria.)

Exiting the realm, however, proves more difficult. Quite simply, there is no conventional means of es-



cape from this most nightmarish of spirit-realms. Neither moon bridges nor Gifts allow travelers to leave. To exit the realm, a character must take the role of a victim and be "slain" by one of the realm's emanations. The character must suffer everything that the victim in question suffered, not lifting a paw to prevent the horror. Upon "death," the character is mystically transported to another realm: perhaps the material world, perhaps another Near Realm such as Pangaea or the Summer Country. Ultimately, this decision is in the hands of the Storyteller.

### *Story Possibilities*

- A shapeshifter or entire pack is haunted by a past deed. Due to frenzy, mistaken identity or sheer malice, they brutally slaughtered an innocent mortal, who returned to the Umbra as a Bane and now makes the character(s) suffer. To exorcise this Bane, the character(s) must travel to the Atrocity Realm to confront their past action in phantasmal form — all the while stalked by the very real Bane and its allies in the realm.

- The characters must escort a rogue Garou into the realm to confront his crimes. However, the characters are equally vulnerable to any threats that lie in wait — such as the Bane-spirits that have been awaiting their chance to possess the rogue Garou. Furthermore, a spirit victim of the werewolf has been biding its time, seeking to avenge itself on the Garou when it enters the realm. Can the characters appease the spirit by allowing it to administer the rogue's punishment? Or will the spirit league itself with the realm's Banes to overwhelm the characters?

- A tyrant of some sort — a rogue werewolf, vampire prince, even mortal dictator or crimelord — is out of control, brutalizing everyone and everything in his sphere of influence. This tyrant is too powerful or well protected to confront physically; however, the characters are given a fetish horn and told that they can rouse the emanations of the tyrant's victims by playing this horn. If roused, the emanations will destroy the tyrant spiritually, dragging him into the Atrocity Realm to be punished. However, the charac-

ters must first enter the Atrocity Realm, find the appropriate emanations, and sound the horn.

### *Laws of the Realm*

- The emanations of the realm are ephemeral spirits and may not inflict or receive true physical harm. If "killed" by an emanation, a Garou is ejected from the realm. Garou may harm (and be harmed by) other material visitors, Banes, or similar creatures.

- After each atrocity witnessed, all shapeshifters lose a point of temporary Gnosis. After all Gnosis is gone, shapeshifters lose one point of temporary Rage per atrocity witnessed. After all Rage and Gnosis are gone, shapeshifters begin losing temporary Willpower in similar fashion. When all temporary Trait points are gone, the shapeshifter is automatically and summarily "slain" and ejected by the emanations of the realm.

- Shapeshifters encounter scenes relevant to their own sins. A Garou who frenzied and killed innocent victims would surely see this scene, along with similar scenes relating to the darker aspects of her past.

- If a shapeshifter consciously wishes to find a particular scene, he may roll Charisma + Enigmas (difficulty 6).

- The only way to leave the Atrocity Realm is to "die." Moon bridges, fetishes and Gifts are ineffectual means of escape.

- Difficulties of all Perception rolls in the Atrocity Realm are increased by two.

- Garou may use the Sense Wurm Gift to locate particular types of Banes in the Atrocity Realm. This requires a Perception + Occult roll (difficulty 8).

### *Optional Law*

- If a shapeshifter confronts a scene in which she is committing atrocities, she may spend a Willpower point and roll Charisma + Empathy (difficulty of her permanent Rage +4, maximum of 10). If she succeeds, she makes peace with the emanations and the scene vanishes; this tactic may be tried only once. The Rite of Contrition likewise allows offenders to atone to their victims.



# Battleground

From the beginning of time has there been war, and so from the beginning of time has existed the Battleground. This realm has figured prominently in the mythology of every tribe, and it is here, so say the lorekeepers, that the Final Battle against the Wyrms will be fought.

The Battleground is the embodiment of war, struggle, and conflict. Philodox claim that every battle throughout history and prehistory, from savage Neolithic struggles against the cave bear through 21<sup>st</sup> Century "ethnic cleansing" and gang wars, is reflected here in spirit. Within the Battleground, ephemeral spirits continually engage in battles that spiritually reflect past conflicts in the material world.

The place itself is a military historian's dream and a sane being's nightmare. The entire realm is a vast war, or wars, or series of battles representing every period known to man or shapeshifter. In one part of the realm, a legion of Romans might be "unleashing hell" on Teutonic barbarians; in another area, spirit reflections of Washington and Cornwallis might maneuver their troops, or the skies might shake as the Luftwaffe rains destruction on a spiritual counterpart of London.

Then, too, the countless struggles meld together in one vast cauldron of strife. It is entirely possible to find Ottoman janissaries, Greek hoplites, Napoleonic dragoons, and Viet Cong guerrillas battling with each other, or against each other, or both. The realm's various conflicts can mirror famous battles involving tens of thousands of troops, or an inner-city gang scuffle over a couple of blocks. If it involved violence, struggle, and especially death, it's probably reflected somewhere in the realm.

The realm is chaos personified, as faux-Gettysburgs flow into faux-Austerlitzes and Tet Offensives; but one feature of the place remains constant: the Signpost. Visitors arriving in the Battleground always manifest at the Signpost, a marker at the intersection of two roads leading deep into the realm. Different visitors see the Signpost differently: It might appear as anything from an Egyptian obelisk to the archetypal weathered post adorned with wooden arrows to a touch-activated computer terminal. In any event, the Signpost always contains a list of various historical (and forgotten, and minor) conflicts. The specific conflicts change depending on the time of entry. For example, a shapeshifter might enter one time and find "directions" to Water-

loo, Thermopylae, and the fall of Saigon; the next time, the directions might point to entirely different battles. Characters with high Rage who enter this realm might find that past battles in which they personally participated are listed on the Signpost.

The realm itself represents every terrain and climatic type, for nearly every place in the world has known strife. The ground is littered with structures and debris representing every period in the history of strife. Wreckage of Sherman tanks and APCs shares the plain with medieval castles and Roman-era fortifications. Trenches, rows of barbed wire, and prison camps litter the realm; clouds of smoke and acrid gas slowly drift along the landscape, limiting vision to about 50 yards under most conditions.

As long as travelers stay on one of the two tracks, however, they will not be directly molested or harmed — except perhaps by the legions of the Wyld, Weaver and Wyrms (see below).

## *The Tracks*

Characters remaining on the tracks will eventually reach the battles listed on the Signpost. From this vantagepoint, they can witness the battles playing out before them. So long as they stay on the tracks, they cannot be harmed, though bullets and exploding shrapnel might whiz all around them. The tracks themselves change in accordance with the specific battle; for example, a Vietnam battle might be viewed from a dusty trail through a sweltering bamboo jungle, while a Roman battle might be viewed from a Roman road. For naval battles, the "track" changes appropriately to a dinghy, motorboat or the like.

Once characters step off the track, it disappears, and characters may freely (or be forced to) participate in whatever conflict is at hand. The track will not return until the conflict ends. Characters remaining on the track may drag their compatriots back to safety, so long as they do not themselves step off of it.

## *Retreat or Evacuation*

Characters may continue along a track, ignoring the events at hand. Should they do so, they will eventually discover another Signpost, this one listing "Retreat or Evacuation" as a choice. Characters who head to this site discover ephemeral soldiers from all times and places throwing down their weapons and fleeing into a semisolid wall of opaque mist. Characters



who leave the track and flee into this mist exit the realm, reappearing in the Near Umbra. As with Signposts, Retreat sites may take many forms: a flare-lit clearing, a helicopter pad, even a buoy during a naval battle.

### *Battles*

Characters who head off the tracks are "free" to participate in the battles. Some werewolves, particularly the hotheads among the Get of Fenris, love to expend their Rage on these battles. Other Garou consider participation in these battles to be good practice and/or exercises in military strategy. Most shapeshifters consider the realm to be a good learning and testing ground for their young. The world's greatest warriors and generals can be found here, and characters can watch — or participate in — their successes and failures. Many Garou consider the place to be a training ground for the Apocalypse; a few Theurges observe the fields after the various battles take place, seeking to divine what will become of the world following the great struggle.

Characters walking off the tracks encounter wounded and dying soldiers and refugees, as well as all too healthy squadrons of pugilistic combatants. Characters may freely participate in any struggle they like, and characters' actions have occasionally changed the (otherwise inevitable) outcome of a famous historical battle — at least until the next time that battle is fought. Still, giving one's all to avert a famous massacre even once can result in beneficial karma for the Garou involved. (Of course, some totems may demand that their children join in on the winning side — woe to the Wendigo pack that sides with Custer at Little Big Horn!)

### *The Plain of the Apocalypse*

No matter where they travel or whom they meet, Garou eventually come to a vast, broken plain of alkali flats and sparse patches of grass. This place, the Theurges say, is the Plain of the Apocalypse. On its expanse, the final battle for survival will be fought. The Get of Fenris have their own name for this place — they call it Vigard Plain, a name humans borrowed for their own tales of the final battle where gods and giants clashed.

In contrast to the rest of the Battleground, the Plain of the Apocalypse is eerily quiet. No shrieks or explosions disturb its stark silence. Rumors speak of an Army of the Apocalypse — an encampment of shapeshifters and spirits who wait in eternal vigi-





lance for the Last Battle — but no recent traveler has seen or spoken with any member of this Army.

On the borders of this plain, three mighty forces duel for supremacy.

### *The Warring Hordes*

Recently, the Battleground has been invaded by a new conflict, one that dwarfs even the largest military actions of yore. This battle is waged by spirits and seems to represent the primal struggle between the Weaver, Wyld, and Wyrn. This monstrous conflict centers on a field adjoining the Plain of the Apocalypse, but it also spills across the other battles, engulfing them, passing through them, and moving on. The battle even spills onto the tracks; characters on the tracks may be affected by these combatants whether they choose to participate or not.

Appropriately, there are three armies in this vast struggle. The first horde, a seething mass of drones and spidery spirits, clearly represents the Weaver. These arachnoid soldiers build bases and bunkers as they go, spinning roads, fortifications, and encampments out of metallic silk. The Weaver's forces act with precision and discipline; indeed, they are models of military tactics, flanking and dividing their forces whenever possible.

The second force, representing the Wyld, is an unruly mob of amorphous, chimerical spirits. This force randomly attacks and retreats, sometimes even turning on itself. Branches of the main body randomly overrun the realm, like the pseudopodia of a vast amoeba. The one constant of these spirits is that they seem to relish the struggle as much as any of the realm's other emanations. This is the smallest army, however, and it must often withdraw a space to lick its wounds while the other two are still entangled in combat.

The third force, a great army of Banes, is the Wyrn's legion in the fight. Scrags and other Bane-spirits form the nucleus of this army, which is directed by reflections of the Maeljin Incarna themselves. The Wyrn-legions attack Weaver, Wyld, and ephemeral forces without favor, and they'll not hesitate to engage exposed characters should that be possible amidst the fray.

Some of the Battleground's ephemera have joined one or another of the three forces, fighting alongside the spirit-creatures. A few shapeshifters have joined the Wyld's army, evidently thinking that so doing might aid the struggle of Gaia's children on Earth. By such proximity to the Wyld, however, they have gone quite mad.

### *Entry and Exit*

Garou can arrive in the Battleground by the conventional means of a moon bridge. In this sense, they are as likely to arrive in the Battleground as in any other Near Realm. Garou who are full of Rage, though, seem to enter the Battleground more readily.

No moon bridges lead from the realm, although the Galliard Gift: Bridge Walker allows a Garou to create an exit route. There are, however, three primary ways to leave the realm.

The first way is to enter a battle and survive the entire fight. After a battle, the site sometimes fades from the Battleground entirely. All surviving shapeshifters in the area are expelled into the Near Umbra. This effect does not always happen — sometimes, the field of carnage remains in the realm, and travelers might thus endure several battles before they're able to exit. That's all right, though; one way or another, there's always eventually a way out of the Battleground.

The second means of exit, ironically, is to die during a battle. As with the Atrocity Realm, the inhabitants of the Battleground are primarily ephemera and cannot truly slay a character. A "slain" Garou reappears somewhere in the Near Umbra, someplace safe if she is lucky.

The last way to escape the Battleground is to find the Retreat or Evacuation site. This site functions as a moon bridge, allowing retreat into the Umbra.

### *Story Possibilities*

- Shapeshifters may use the Battleground as an opportunity to practice their combat skills, or perhaps to fight the spirit-emanation of a mighty foe that they cannot yet defeat in the material world.
- The characters might be forced to flee a powerful Umbral enemy and thus end up in the Battleground. If they stay on the tracks, they're easily found; if they leave the tracks, they could end up in any one of the countless battles. Can the characters avoid their foe in the midst of the mother of all wars? And will such "cowardly" behavior earn the ire of the eternally struggling spirits therein?
- A character is accused of cowardice or treason during a battle important to the sept. To prove his innocence, the character must journey to the Battleground, find the spiritual reflection of the battle, and demonstrate to his accusers that he behaved honorably.
- One of a character's ancestor-spirits is plagued by a past failure in battle and his pain adversely affects



the character's ability to channel him. If the character journeys to the Battleground and helps the emanation of his ancestor win the day, the ancestor-spirit's pain is eased, making him easier to channel. Similarly, questing to aid the emanations of one's ancestors might prove a valid excuse to raise one's Ancestors Background.

### *Laws of the Realm*

- The Battleground represents War incarnate; thus, the difficulties for all frenzy rolls are reduced by two.

- Shapeshifters who participate in the realm's battles automatically gain one point of Rage per turn for the duration of the combat.

- The battles a Garou faces in the realm often reflect, in spirit, the shapeshifter's battles in the material world.

- Spirit arms and armor may be collected from the various battlefields. However, these are made of ephemera and may be used only in the Umbra. They may be used in other Near Realms or parts of the Umbra, but

once a shapeshifter crosses into the material world once more, the artifacts disappear.

- A shapeshifter who enters the Battleground in search of a particular battle or enemy must make a Gnosis roll (difficulty 8; consult the "Battleground Witness Chart").

- Conflicts in the Umbra, even among spirits, are reflected in the Battleground.

- Changes in the outcome of a conflict in the Battleground might change the memories of people who participated in that battle in the material world. However, the result of the battle remains as it "really" was.

- If a shapeshifter participated in a material conflict that is reflected in the Umbra, that conflict does not begin until the shapeshifter arrives on the scene.

- As with the Atrocity Realm, characters in the Battleground cannot be truly slain. If they are "killed," they are transported into the Near Umbra, but lose two temporary Gnosis points. In fact, nothing may truly kill a Garou in the Battleground.

### *Battleground Witness Chart*

| Successes | Result                                                                                       |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Botch     | Garou loses a Willpower point and cannot find any relevant battles.                          |
| Failure   | The shapeshifter loses a Willpower point and might or might not find something of relevance. |
| 1         | The shapeshifter may witness a battle in which she personally participated.                  |
| 2         | The shapeshifter may witness a battle or enemy with which she is familiar.                   |
| 3         | The shapeshifter may witness a battle that she's only vaguely heard of.                      |
| 4         | The Garou may uncover a battle of which she knows nothing.                                   |
| 5         | The shapeshifter may uncover a potential enemy or future conflict.                           |





# CyberRealm

This realm represents perhaps the pinnacle of the Weaver's influence in the Umbra. It is young, as Near Realms go, having first arisen when humans began using technology in their day-to-day lives. The Realm swelled greatly, however, after 1800, as the devices of the Industrial Revolution cast spiritual shadows in the Umbra. Now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this realm is a vast and powerful reflection of the Information Age. In the CyberRealm, the constructs of the Weaver have run amok, weaving a forbidding realm of steel, wire, and advanced technology.

The CyberRealm is divided into three distinct areas. The first, Spider City, reflects the future shock and inexorable pace of the postmodern cityscape. The second area, the Pit, is a bizarre underworld of discarded dreams. The third area, the Computer Web, is a place where raw data is embodied in spirit form.

The CyberRealm is run from the Uptown area of Spider City. The spirits that live here, powerful Weaver-spirits, are opposed to the Wyld in all its forms. As such, they vehemently seek to foil the doings of shapeshifters, who strenuously fight for the Wyld's survival. Increasingly, the CyberRealm and its inhabitants are becoming a serious threat to the goals of the Fera.

## *Juice and the CyberEconomy*

Few things reflect the Weaver more than commerce, and so the spirits of this realm have instituted a complex economic system. The currency of the system is "juice": liquefied Gnosis that can be used to power Weaver machines or simply ingested.

Juice is the lifeblood of the Realm. It is power and currency all in one. The lords of Uptown are the lords because they have the most juice. Lesser beings ceaselessly barter and haggle, beg and steal and even kill for juice. When running stories set in the CyberRealm, keep in mind that nearly every being the characters meet has an angle to get some juice — one way or another.

## *Spider City*

This city represents everything abhorrent to most Garou. It is a titanic glass-and-steel-and-neon construct embodying Urban Life in the postindustrial world. The city is a seemingly endless maze of concrete and chrome, plastic and glass. Its web-shrouded towers stretch up and up, seemingly for miles; the higher in Spider City you live, the higher your status in the hierarchy of the Weaver.

The city itself is laid out in a vast web pattern, stretching far into a sky that's eternally the color of a

television monitor tuned to a dead channel. Its upper levels blaze with a rainbow spectrum of neon, while its lower levels are shrouded in darkness. Weaver-spirits of all sorts scuttle like ants through the city's towers, alleys, hallways and corridors, scurrying hither and yon on mysterious errands.

In Spider City, technology reigns supreme. This realm houses technology inaccessible outside the realms of certain technologically adept sorcerers. Hovercars glide along elevated roads, and maglev trains cruise into gleaming stations. Robots powered by liquescent spirit-data, or "juice," prowl the hallways and corridors. In hidden alcoves, secret labs pump out all manner of bizarre and deadly weaponry.

Spider City is divided into three levels: Old Town (street level), Downtown (the middle layer) and Uptown (the skyscraper-realm of the elite). Under all of this stretches the Pit.

## *Old Town*

This is the lowest level of Spider City — the "mean streets" of the realm. This place represents the worst of the Weaver. It's stagnant, decaying, and crumbling. The neon lights and fluorescent bulbs that illuminate more hospitable regions of Spider City are absent. Piles of garbage, offal and filth litter the streets, and juice-rich travelers are almost certain to be accosted or attacked outright. The discarded plasm of a drained victim is tossed into the tunnels of the Pit.

The lords of Uptown mostly leave this area to its misery, but occasionally send their Spider Patrol into Old Town, to round up victims for juice processing or simply as a display of power. The residents hate and fear the lords of Uptown, but for the most part are too fearful and disorganized to do anything about it. Mostly, they hide or wander in search of the next hit of juice.

As Scar wanes, the powerful Banes of that realm have begun making inroads into the CyberRealm. Unsurprisingly, the Old Town has proven the most hospitable section for their agents (for now), and visitors here run the risk of encountering Banes as well as any hostile Weaver-spirits.

## *The CyberWolves*

The CyberWolves are the premier revolutionary group in the CyberRealm. They ceaselessly oppose the Uptown lords' greed and expansionism. This group, which is composed primarily of emanations and trapped



shapeshifters, hides in Old Town, ceaselessly waging war against the Spider Patrol of the Uptown lords.

CyberWolves are master scavengers, taking what technology they can scrounge and adapting it for their own use. Sometimes, this means melding the technology to their bodies. Certain shapeshifters have mastered the process of grafting technofetishes to themselves and others; they'll do this for characters, though for a high price. Characters must attune these fetishes to themselves normally, and they'll likely be suspect at best when they return to shapeshifter society.

The CyberWolves will help shapeshifters, offering them succor and shelter, but typically expect something in return. Shapeshifters might be required to donate some of their temporary Gnosis as juice, or might be required to help the CyberWolves in a juice hunt against the Spider Patrol.

### *Downtown*

Above the wreckage of Old Town lies the middle tier of Spider City — the Weaver-dominated Downtown. The Weaver protects its own — pattern webs seal off the shafts and stairwells between Downtown and Old Town. The only way to get from Old Town to Downtown is to physically scale the webwork along the sides of the buildings. This is a hazardous endeavor, though; spider-spirits usually detect intruders' vibrations and mass to prevent such illegal entry.

Downtown itself is a teeming urban wonderland. Unlike Old Town, Downtown is well maintained, well lit, and filled with conveniences and luxuries of every description. The lights of Downtown combine with the reflected lights of Uptown to form a weblike pattern of shadows shrouding everything in the city.

Downtown is a seemingly endless bazaar of technological wonders. Computer terminals line the streets; fetish computers brought into the realm and hooked up to these computers allow their users to access the Computer Web (p. 61). Automated maglev trains and hovertaxis serve the Weaver-spirits and emanations who dwell here. In kiosks, pubs, malls, offices and less reputable places, merchants of all stripes sell the latest technological toys. Being the "bestest with the mostest" is a way of life here; the emanations and spirits of Downtown want nothing more than enough stuff and juice to catch the eye of an Uptown lord and be "promoted" into the upper tier of Spider City.

Weaver Constructs (in the Appendix) run most of the establishments of Downtown. They'll take orders for nearly anything an emanation requests, should that emanation have the juice to make it worth the Construct's time. Potentially dangerous requests, such as powerful weapons, will be denied, and the customer flagged for

investigation by the Spider Patrol of Uptown; however, juice bribes to one Construct or other are not unknown....

The inhabitants of Downtown are many and varied. Foremost among them are humanlike emanations that resemble the busy urban dwellers of the material world (right down to being affected by the Delirium). Weaver-spirits of various sorts also dwell here, moving unaffectedly among the human-spirits with little notice from either group. Both "species" organize information, distilling it into juice and uploading it into the Computer Web. Everyone and everything in Downtown ruthlessly struggles for that all-important promotion. With the recent upsurge in Weaver aggression toward the Garou (and vice versa), the inhabitants of Downtown will not hesitate to betray any obvious shapeshifters in the Downtown area. Shapeshifters in Homid form who carry ID cards are treated as emanations; in any other form, though, they call down a patrol of Weaver-spirits on them. (The exception is Ananasi in Crawlerling form; spider- and cockroach-spirits scuttle throughout the realm, and one or even many more spiders typically go unnoticed.)

### *Uptown*

Above the rest of Spider City stands Uptown, lofty home to the lords of the Sprawl. This luxurious penthouse realm is lit by the Pattern Web itself. It is thick with webs and filled with informational geomids storing raw data, to be accessed by the mighty Weaver-spirits who make their homes here.

Uptown is heavily secured. Only those with ID Cards may freely access the elevators to Uptown; the guardian spiders that patrol all entrances to the area deter would-be intruders. One can attempt to climb the webwork along the skyscrapers, in a manner similar to gaining access to Downtown; this is exceedingly dangerous, though. Hovercars and helicopters patrol the skyways between Uptown's towers; the emanations that pilot them will not hesitate to pick off potential burglars.

The spirits who live in Uptown are exceedingly alien. A few emanations dwell here, either as servants or as beneficiaries of promotion; most creatures, though, are geomids or powerful Weaver-spirits. To live permanently in Uptown, one must be "promoted" into an appropriate spirit-form. This involves having one's old juice drained from one's plasm and being reinjected with new, empowered juice. When this happens, the promoted emanation is reshaped into a new physical form. Juice for this operation is often acquired by capturing and draining the spirit-scum of Old Town.

In past years, Glass Walkers had the run of Uptown; recently, though, the Weaver-lords of Uptown have met all werewolves with hostility. Glass Walkers entering the area will be met with the same resistance as Red Talons.



Uptown is kept meticulously safe by the Spider Patrol, a brigade of net- and pattern-spiders who tirelessly guard the lords of Uptown. The Spider Patrol also acts as a police and espionage branch, scuttling down the webworks into Downtown to keep a multi-clustered eye on the inhabitants.

### *The Pit*

The Pit extends far under the rest of Spider City. Originally, this area was used as the dumping ground for cast-off technology, failed experiments and other refuse. Now the Pit lies abandoned, a vast graveyard of forgotten artifacts and crazed inventions from every period of human history. Weird golem-constructs lie forgotten and web-covered next to bizarre congeries of gears and broken daVinci-esque devices. The place is a seemingly endless labyrinth of tunnels and corridors, dimly lit, with only the occasional fluorescent bulb to break the darkness. It stinks of battery acid and waste products.

Living refuse is likewise tossed into the Pit. The Pit is the final destination for "flawed," weak spirits: broken or wounded Weaver-constructs and Umbral travelers trapped in the realm often end up cast into the Pit. Their fate is a tragic one: They are typically rounded up by opportunistic Gnosis-scavengers and broken down for their "juice." Likewise, Banes occasionally enter the Pit to cannibalize what they can.

The Pit is a spawning ground for all manner of strange spirits: hybrid constructs of flesh, metal and plastic; weird conglomerations of discarded parts that somehow begin to act and move. Some shapeshifters speculate that a mad Weaver-spirit, cast down from Uptown, has taken up residence in the Pit and begun spinning these creatures. No one truly knows.

Ratkin have a rite, the Bolthole, which allows them to access this area. A few high-ranking Bone Gnawers are likewise thought to have the means to access the Pit.

### *The Computer Web*

The Computer Web stretches its silvery filaments high above the rest of Spider City. A recent construct, the Web is the spiritual reflection of the innumerable nodes and connections of data in Earth's real-world computers. Every computer on Earth connects to the Computer Web.

The Web appears like a gigantic, glowing spiderweb. Along the web, globular nodes gleam in the night sky — Umbral embodiments of data clusters. Each of these nodes represents a miniature environment — literally a self-contained electronic world. The strands of the web represent the various connections between linked computers.

There are several ways to access the Web. The easiest is by plugging a fetish computer into a Down-

town computer terminal and rolling Intelligence + Computer (difficulty 6); success transports the character to the Macro Level.

The second way is by using an informational geomid bound into a technofetish. A shapeshifter possessing such a fetish may "jack" himself into the Web directly, via any computer.

The third way to access the Web is by touching any computer screen in Spider City and making a Gnosis roll. This roll is only difficulty 4.

Finally, a shapeshifter can access the Computer Web by climbing the right web spun by an orb-spider in Uptown. Some of the strands link directly with the Web.

### *Macro and Micro Levels*

The Computer Web is divided into two distinct sections, the Macro and Micro Levels. The Macro Level consists of the external structure of the Web itself. Along its length, geomids and net-spiders scuttle back and forth, transferring and altering data as need be.

To move along the Macro Level, a shapeshifter stands on a strand, visualizes the area she wishes to visit, then makes a Willpower roll (standard difficulty). If successful, she's transferred to her destination with blazing speed. Ananasi, who are quite comfortable here, do not have to make Willpower rolls to travel along the Web.

Along the length of the Macro Level are various data clusters, some obvious, others difficult to see. Cockroach- or spider-spirits are good guides for finding a particular data-cluster; as well, various inhabitants of Downtown can be bribed for directions with juice. A skilled shapeshifter can roll Intelligence + Computer (difficulty 9) to navigate the Macro Level; if she fails, however, she might end up hopelessly lost.

To exit the Macro Level, a traveler must simply return to his entry point, then will herself out. She may also find any of a number of exit strands that transport her back to Spider City.

The Micro Level consists of the multitudinous data-worlds themselves. This level may be accessed through a series of doorways into the data-pockets. Doorways resemble informational geomids; to enter, a shapeshifter must touch a doorway, concentrate on entry and make a Willpower roll (standard difficulty). Once inside a data cluster, visitors will be confronted by daemons, Weaver-spirits bound into the cluster. Visitors who provide proper pass codes are allowed entry; others are denied or attacked if they attempt to force their way in.

Each data cluster is different, and each is a world unto itself. Most are labyrinthine chambers filled with liquid juice, daemons and net-spiders. The appearance of a data cluster depends on the data in question; a



heartfelt love e-letter might be downright pleasant, while a Pentex file or kiddie cyberporn cluster will appear accordingly repulsive. Some data clusters are open for visitation by the residents of Downtown, acting as lounges or recreation areas.

Exiting the Micro Level transports travelers back to the Macro Level. To leave, a shapeshifter must exit the original doorway or create a new one (Intelligence + Enigmas, difficulty 9).

### *The Wicked City*

This domain adjoins the CyberRealm in those areas of the Near Realms that overlap the Middle Kingdom. The Wicked City is the domain of Mikaboshi, who is a mighty Incarna native to the Yomi Realms of the Middle Kingdom. Mikaboshi is a ceaseless foe of the hengeyokai, particularly the Hakken Garou.

His realm, the Wicked City, is a bizarre, baroque caricature of a futuristic Eastern city as it might appear in a dystopian future. In the Wicked City, Weaver- and Wyrmspirits ruthlessly perform the bidding of Mikaboshi, ever seeking to expand the Yama King's influence over the rest of Spider City.

Mikaboshi has cajoled or coerced several Kumo (Eastern Ananasi goblin-spiders) to his service. These beings act as seneschals and guards for the Incarna, tracking and cruelly disposing of intruders whom Mikaboshi deems overly threatening or for whom he has no use. Cunning and malevolent, these spider-shifters prefer to use deception and guile (and, when necessary, poison) over outright violence when disposing of the Yama King's foes.

### *Entry and Exit*

The CyberRealm may be accessed through the normal moon bridge routes. Getting into the realm, though, is quite challenging. Weaver-spirits — drones, geomids, and pattern-spiders — relentlessly prowl the paths leading to the realm, challenging any "intruder." Ananasi, however, are freely permitted to enter, and they may petition the guardian spirits to let others in with them.

A shapeshifter can use the Computer Web to exit the realm, but this is a difficult operation. The shapeshifter must enter a Micro Level data cluster, create a doorway out, spend a Gnosis point, and roll Intelligence + Computer (difficulty 8 to enter the Near Umbra, difficulty 9 to enter the material world).

Some spirits believe that deep within the Pit lie tunnels that lead out into the Near Umbra. As well, certain Weaver Constructs in Downtown can wrap characters in webbing and smuggle them out of the realm...but the price is heavy, and there's no guarantee they won't be betrayed to the lords of Uptown.

### *Story Possibilities*

- Predatory Weaver-spirits from the Pit capture the pack's totem, seeking to take it back and drain it of "juice." The characters must enter the Pit in an attempt to rescue the totem.

- The pack needs to destroy important data in a Pentex computer, but the facility is too heavily guarded. To destroy the data, the pack must enter the CyberRealm, access the Computer Web, find the appropriate data cluster in the Micro Level, and destroy it from within.

- The characters must infiltrate the Uptown citadel of a particularly dangerous Weaver-spirit. To do so, they must enter Spider City, gain ID cards, pose as emanations, and somehow make their way up through the maze of towers and corridors.

### *Laws of the Realm*

- Weaver-spirits are at 150% of their usual Essence in the CyberRealm; thus, a Pattern Spider would have 23 rather than 15 Essence.

- Conversely, Wyld-spirits have only half normal Essence in the CyberRealm.

- On the Micro Level of the Computer Web, a shapeshifter may change her appearance by spending a Gnosis point and rolling Manipulation + Computer (difficulty 6). The Garou may change her form to whatever shape is desired, so long as mass does not change by more than 50%. A Garou who shifts into another of her five forms loses the false shape upon so doing.

- Time flows much faster in the Computer Web than in the CyberRealm.

- Cyberfetishes (see the Appendix) attached to a Garou do not regenerate; if damaged, they remain so. Also, each technofetish applied increases the difficulty of the Garou's shapeshifting rolls by one.

- Navigating through the Computer Web is a matter of understanding the Web itself. Garou must make Perception + Computer rolls to find specific locales in the Web; however, the maximum number of Computer dice they may add cannot exceed their Enigmas rating. Difficulties for navigating the Computer Web are at the Storyteller's discretion.

- Garou must touch a juncture and roll Willpower to shift between the CyberRealm's Macro and Micro Levels.

### *Optional Laws*

- Glass Walkers who spend a point of Gnosis to activate the Cybersenses Gift gain as many senses as they have current Gnosis points.

- A Garou "killed" in the Computer Web loses all current Gnosis and is reborn in the Pit. She also takes a health level of aggravated damage.



# Erebus

For the Garou, the Umbra contains countless hell-realms, such as the Atrocity Realm and the Abyss. It also harbors its share of heavens, such as the Summer Country and the Aetherial Realm. But only one place serves as the spiritual purgatory for the Garou: the Near Realm of Erebus, feared and revered as a place of punishment and purification.

Erebus is the realm to which the Garou travel to sear the stain of shame and sin from their souls. Only in Erebus can werewolves fully divest themselves of the Wurm's worst taint. This process is excruciating and spiritually perilous, however; the cleansing of Erebus involves a literal burning away of the Garou's sin, in a molten river of purest silver.

Even in this ruinous age, the realm of Erebus remains as it has since the beginning of recorded history. The realm itself consists of a vast labyrinth of ebon caves, twisting through a seemingly infinite layer of blackest shale. Throughout the caves flow searing rivers of molten silver, flowing like mercury to fill the entire realm. The rivers ultimately converge at the realm's nadir, flowing into into a vast silvery lake as wide as many earthly seas. Within the silver liquid, Garou lie immured, damned to burn in the waters until their sins are purged from them.

In the midst of the lake lies a vast island. On the island stands a great fortress, carved from the shale of the island and limned with silver-flaming braziers. This is the citadel of the Incarna Charyss, ruler of the realm.

Shapeshifters are free to come and go in Erebus, though the realm is designed solely to cleanse Garou. Any attempts to interfere with the operations of the realm will be lethally punished, however.

Erebus is a realm meant for Garou alone. No other shapeshifter may be immured in Erebus, nor may any other supernatural creature. In fact, if a non-shapeshifter dares to set foot in Erebus' "waters," he will be quickly burned to death; without the power of Gaia-given regeneration, it's impossible to survive the Silver Forge. Other Fera may suffer no effect, helpful or harmful, from immersion (except possible drowning), at the Storyteller's option.

## *Charyss*

Charyss is a mighty Incarna. She rules Erebus absolutely, and Garou simultaneously revere and fear her. She may take many forms: her favorites include a

## *Purifying the Fera*

Alternate versions of Erebus *do* exist for the purpose of cleansing other Changing Breeds, although these sub-realms are noticeably smaller and harder to access. Each one is different in tone, and the punishments vary from inmate to inmate; a fallen Corax might have to undergo purification in a great tree hung with white-hot golden cages, while a Mokolé might burn in a waterless desert whipped by winds full of gold and silver shrapnel. Even the Kitsune, who do not regenerate as such, can access their own private purgatory where the suffering is constant, but not lethal.

As with Erebus and the Garou, each "sub-Erebus" is accessible (and useful) only to the Changing Breed it exists to cleanse. Nobody but a wereraven can find the gate to Modgudur's Tree, and it would take some hefty persuasion to convince the pale-feathered guardian to let any other shapeshifters inside to see how Corax do penance.

No "Erebus" or other variant exists to cleanse humans, vampires or any other non-shapeshifter. The realm and its sub-realms are too lethal to cleanse anything that isn't fortified by being part spirit itself.

silvery female Crinos glowing with Lament Flame, a beautiful but forbidding human woman clad in red or silver garments, and a monstrous, medusoid Fury. Despite her chilling nature and punitive agenda, Charyss is not a creature of the Wurm. She exists to cleanse spirits of corruption. Not all Garou understand this, though, and many septs tell tales of Charyss as a brutal pain-spirit in thrall to the Wurm.

## *The Brood*

Charyss is served by her Brood, spirits bound to her by ties of vassalage. Brood members appear as enormous Crinos werewolves, with furless skin of ebon or silver. The Brood seems demonic, with pulsing red eyes, whiplike tails and long snakelike tongues. They bear silver spears, which they use to goad Unfortunates hither and yon. They are single-minded in their tasks of torment and ignore other creatures unless attacked or otherwise molested.

Brood members psychically feed on Rage, however. A Garou who spends Rage in Erebus acts as a



beacon to the rest of the Brood. If a Garou rages or, especially, frenzies, the Brood members can steal temporary Rage points from him, as an automatic action.

### *The Deal*

The Deal is a sinister game played by Charyss' Brood. Brood members without linked unfortunates sometimes seek out Garou visitors and challenge them to the Deal. The Deal consists of a facedown, gamnecraft, or similar contest. If the werewolf visitor wins, the Brood member rewards her. The reward can take many forms: Servitude to the werewolf, guidance through the realm or the Umbra in general, the location of specific Unfortunates, and Erebus-specific fetishes or rites are examples of rewards.

Failure, though, causes the werewolf to become an Unfortunate linked to the Brood member. The Garou will be summarily immured in a silver river. The Deal itself is a test of the werewolf's wisdom: Wise Garou should realize that nothing the Brood member offers could be worth the risk of damnation. A Garou who does not realize this is a fool, and potentially a dupe of the Wurm. Such beings are ripe for purification.... Werewolves who lose and refuse to go with the Brood member are set upon and subdued by as many Brood members as are necessary. One way or another, Charyss will have her due.

### *The Unfortunates*

Erebus is home to countless prisoners, doomed to suffer in the realm. These beings, the Unfortunates, are Garou of all tribes and auspices — even Black Spiral Dancers. They are immersed in the burning silvery lakes until such time as they are deemed purified. Some Garou have been immured in Erebus for over a human lifetime; these Unfortunates are typically quite mad.

Each Unfortunate is punished in his or her own way. Furthermore, each Unfortunate is psychically linked to a particular Brood member, who supervises the Unfortunate's punishment. Through such a link, the Brood member gains access to the Unfortunate's innermost and most intimate thoughts and feelings, which can be used as part of the torture.

This link may be broken in one of three ways. Charyss herself may break the link, as may the Brood member. Or, one hopes, when the Garou is redeemed, the link automatically shatters and the Unfortunate is free to depart.

### *The Citadel and the Cleansing*

As Unfortunates travel down the silver rivers, they come to the Citadel of Charyss in the midst of the Silver Lake. Only purified Unfortunates may enter the





Lake. Unlike the rivers, the Lake itself does not burn. Upon entering the waters of the Lake, Garou are instantly healed of all their wounds. All memories of their former sins seem distant, like faded dreams. Finally, the healing complete, Garou wash up on the shores of the island. Orbs of silvery light dance about the recently purged character. These orbs guide the character to the Silver Gate, an exit into the Near Umbra. At this exit, Charyss herself, in human form, waits for the survivor.

Charyss herself acknowledges that the Garou has been cleansed, then mystically restores all of the Garou's Willpower, Rage, Gnosis, and health levels. Charyss whispers "the secret of Erebus" in the Garou's ear; the "secret" is that Erebus itself is powerless to heal a Garou's soul. The physical pain of Erebus can cleanse the character's bodily taint and push the soul to the brink of repentance, but only the Garou in question can ultimately redeem herself. Finally, Charyss grants the penitent the Rite of the Silver Forge (see the Appendix).

Subsequently, Charyss guides the Garou through the Silver Gate, instructing her to envision a locale of her choosing, in either the Near Umbra or the material world. The Gate transports the character to that locale.

### *Visiting Charyss*

Non-Unfortunate visitors may also travel along the banks of the rivers to reach the Citadel of Charyss. Along the way, they will be tempted by Brood members offering them the Deal; they must resist these importunities, as well as avoid flying into a Rage from the suffering of the Unfortunates in the rivers. Failure to control one's emotions causes the character to become an Unfortunate herself, and the Brood will swiftly descend upon the character and immure her in the rivers.

Once on the shores of the lake, a pilotless, empty barge mystically glides to the shore, awaiting the characters' entry. The barge guides the characters to the island and the Citadel. The barge may not be commandeered or capsized; it unerringly guides characters to the isle. Upon arriving on the isle, visitors will be greeted by an "honor guard" of Brood and escorted to the towering Citadel.

The fortress itself is eerie and magnificent. Tapestries, trophies, and artwork of all descriptions fill the Citadel. Weapons and fetishes of great potency line the walls; attempts to steal these items earn the would-be thief a swift trip to the burning rivers. Eventually, the characters come to Charyss' throne room.

The Lady herself takes one of her many forms (depending on her mood) and greets the characters. She then asks them what they have seen and learned in the realm. (Any characters stupid enough to attack her in any way are mystically transported into a silver river, to burn as an Unfortunate.) Charyss listens impassively to whatever the characters tell her and replies as she sees fit. Particularly insightful visitors might be rewarded with knowledge of the Rite of the Silver Forge; others will simply be sent on their way. Following the audience, the Brood escorts the characters to a stone passage behind the Citadel; this leads into the Null Zone (p. 94), from which nearly any destination may be accessed.

### *Entry and Exit*

Erebus is never discovered by accident. The primary means of entry to Erebus is the Silver Road, a wide moon bridge. This road leads straight to the cavernous, dim Gates of Erebus. The Gates are forged from silver and black iron. At the Gates of Erebus waits the guardian, the great canine monster immortalized in Greek mythology as Cerberus. True to form, the monster has three heads and stands as high at the shoulder as a Crinos Garou. The beast is restrained by three silver collars and squats amid a ghastly litter of gnawed bones.

Cerberus embodies the Triad of Weaver, Wyld, and Wyrn, any of which in excess can send a character here. His left head is that of a Hispo with kaleidoscopic eyes; his center head is that of a Black Spiral Dancer Hispo, with batlike ears and flickering balefire for a tongue; his right head is cybernetic, forged entirely from black steel.

The beast does not prevent visitors from entering; per the myths, his duty is to keep damned souls in. Creatures foolish enough to attack Cerberus will provoke a furious response, and they'll likely join the pile of bones on the cavern floor.

Other entrances to Erebus are the Rite of the Silver Forge and the Dream Zone.

Getting out of Erebus is more difficult. The character must journey through the realm to the Citadel of Charyss, where an exit into the Null Zone awaits the traveler.

### *Story Possibilities*

- A member of the sept has been sent to Erebus to atone for a heinous crime — but the sept leaders have discovered that the Garou in question was innocent. The pack is sent to Erebus to free the wrongfully accused Garou.



- The pack is ordered to escort a powerful, wicked Garou to Erebus to be punished. The Garou is cunning and resourceful; if he escapes in Erebus itself (which is likely), the pack must hunt him down in the cavern-realm or take his place in the rivers.

- To cast a particular rite, the sept needs silver taken from the Silver Lake and enchanted by Charyss herself. The pack is sent to Erebus to beg this boon. Charyss will likely make the pack prove their worthiness to receive this gift.

### *Laws of the Realm*

- A Garou who undergoes the Silver Forge gains 1 permanent Honor and Wisdom Renown.

- Garou in Erebus regenerate aggravated damage as though it were normal. No Garou may drown in the liquid silver.

- The guardian of Erebus forbids exit through the front gates.

- Garou in the rivers suffer one aggravated health level of damage per turn — the same rate at which they heal. Thus, Garou in the rivers remain perpetually alive and in torment.

- The only light in the realm comes from the glow of the silver liquid, but it's enough: All sight Perception difficulties are reduced by two.

- Erebus is a crucible of the spirit as well as the body. Garou who survive Erebus forever have all frenzy roll difficulties increased by two.

- Black Spiral Dancers who survive Erebus and are cleansed may join whatever tribe will have them, beginning their new lives as cliath of the appropriate tribe. All their Gifts and rites are burned from them, forcing them to begin anew, but they become full members of their new tribe in every way upon their Rites of Passage.

### *Optional Laws*

- Because of the spiritual revelation they undergo, some Garou gain a point of permanent Gnosis from their experience in Erebus. Furthermore, Garou who have appropriate experiences in Erebus may use this to justify purchases of Gnosis, Willpower or Rage.

- The Brood and Unfortunates have a strong link between them; thus, no Unfortunate reaches the Silver Lake without being purified.

- The glow emanating from the rivers evokes images of tragedy and terror in viewers' minds. These images solidify as phantasms, which enact the scenes as they hover over the silvery liquid.

- Taint from the Weaver and Wyld is likewise purged in the Silver Forge.





# The Flux Realm

In days of yore, when matter and spirit were one, the domains of the Wyld permeated the Gaia Realm. The laws of reality were far more fluid, and time and space were at the command of those with great spiritual power. This era is gone, but the Wyld's demesne remains supreme within the Near Realm known as the Flux.

The Flux Realm is a remnant of the Wyld's formerly vast spiritual domains. Not so majestic as the domains of old, and besieged by the minions of the Weaver, the Flux Realm is still a place of great spiritual power. Within the Flux Realm, the Wyld ways of creation and change run rampant still. It is a place of chaos, of constant change and endless possibility.

Outside visitors find the realm extremely disorienting. There are no fixed landmarks, for the realm is in a constant state of metamorphosis. Mountain ranges spontaneously erupt and collapse, deserts bloom into jungles and forests wilt into ash only to be reborn. Stranger things have been known to occur: Expanses of forests float through the sky, the sky itself seeps down into the sea (or the sea rises to fill an area of sky), water ignites into flame and earth falls upward in defiance of gravity.

Even the celestial phenomena are uncertain here. Luna has vast power within the realm, and occasionally sprouts smaller versions of herself in the manner of an amoeba, then reabsorbs them later. The sun sometimes burns black, red, or other colors, while the sky flickers and seethes in a variety of hues. Stars and constellations wheel randomly in the heavens. Time itself is not constant here; a day can last for weeks or end in the blink of an eye. A few knowledgeable shapeshifters have learned how to use this concept to their advantage, entering the Flux Realm and reappearing in the material world at an earlier point in time!

The inhabitants are stranger still. The Flux Realm is inhabited by the spirit-children of the Wyld, as well as by various Bygone species that can no longer exist in the material world. Wyldstorms howl through the realm, rending reality in their wake, while great vortices rumble and tear through the firmament. Chimerae, griffins, Great Beasts and other lost monsters of the elder days rampage through the area, themselves changing as frequently as their surroundings.

Shapeshifter visitors are likewise caught in the constant chaos of the Wyld. Garou, Bastet, Mokolé and other shapeshifters find themselves rapidly — and usually uncontrollably — changing forms within the Flux Realm, shifting from human to hybrid to animal and

back again. Shapeshifters have been known to meet themselves, or versions of themselves (perhaps older or younger or opposite-sex) within the realm; some visitors have even transformed into different Changing Breeds: a Garou into an Ananasi or Mokolé, for example.

## *The Coil*

The chief inhabitant of the Realm is a powerful Wyld Incarna known as the Coil. This ancient being can take countless forms and shifts among them on a whim. Werewolf visitors have observed it sporting with the vortices and Great Beasts, riding the realm's tectonic shifts and assorted disasters, and otherwise playing amid the chaotic effects of the Realm. The Coil is thought to be most powerful and other visiting Incarnae seem to pay it great respect. The capricious, laughing Incarna seems to exert some degree of control over the region's phenomena, calming Wyldstorms with a wave of its appendage or turning an entire continent molten. Some Theurges speculate that the Coil has transcended his spirit nature to become an avatar of the Wyld; others wonder whether the old Incarna has bonded with — or been absorbed by — one of the great vortices that haunt the region.

Shapeshifters rarely attract the Coil's notice, much less treat with it. However, the Coil sometimes acknowledges shapeshifters as creatures bearing a brotherly spark of the Wyld within them and occasionally deigns to help them... though the Coil's "help" can sometimes be as detrimental as the harm that would have otherwise come to them. For example, the Coil might "help" a pack of Garou besieged by a Bane-army by mystically fusing all the Garou into a gigantic, monstrous colossus of heads, arms and maws... then forget to change the misshapen beast back to normal thereafter.

## *Entry and Exit*

The Flux Realm, as a domain of the Wyld, is accessible from any moon path. However, spirits of the resurgent Weaver have shrouded the realm in a vast Pattern Web. Thus, finding the realm is very difficult; to do so requires an Intelligence + Enigmas roll (difficulty 9). Once the realm is found, shapeshifters seeking to enter must breach the webwork barricading the realm; this requires a Gnosis roll (difficulty 9). Attempting to breach the barrier inevitably attracts Pattern Spiders; these creatures cannot exist in the pure Wyld of the Flux Realm (so Garou who succeed on the Gnosis roll to



enter the realm are safe from them), but will attack shapeshifters who attempt to breach the webwork and fail. Breaching the web takes a number of turns equal to 15 minus the breaching shapeshifter's Gnosis.

Exiting the Flux Realm is difficult. Exits appear randomly, as moon paths, Spirit Gates, or glowing spheres of radiance. These portals may lead to a variety of locations. To find the precise gate he seeks, a shapeshifter must roll Perception + Enigmas (difficulty 8). Failing this roll means the shapeshifter is uncertain whether the gate he's discovered is the correct one; a botch means he's certain that an incorrect gate is in fact correct. Gates from the Flux Realm may send a Garou anywhere, even to the Deep Umbra.

Additionally, attempting to travel directly from the Flux Realm to the material world is fraught with peril. Garou must make a Gnosis roll when using a gate from the Flux Realm to the material world. Failing this roll sends the Garou to the Mirror Zone (p. 94), while scoring five or more successes sends the Garou to the Null Zone (p. 94).

Because the laws of time and space are mutable in the Flux Realm, it's possible that Garou leaving the Realm experience a time warp. Garou exiting the Flux Realm must make a Gnosis roll (difficulty 8); the Storyteller applies benefits or penalties according to the following table.

| Successes | Effect of Time Warp                     |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------|
| Botch     | Double normal time has passed on Earth. |
| Failure   | No effect.                              |
| 1         | Up to 15 minutes saved on Earth.        |
| 2         | Up to one hour saved on Earth.          |
| 3         | Up to 12 hours saved on Earth.          |
| 4         | Up to one day saved on Earth.           |
| 5         | Up to one week saved on Earth.          |
| 6+        | Storyteller's discretion.               |

### Story Possibilities

- A pack learns of an imminent attack planned against their sept. The pack has no way to reach the sept in time to prevent disaster. The pack decides to risk traveling through the Flux Realm in order to arrive at their caern in time to assist in its defense.

- The pack is planning an expedition against powerful Weaver-spirits, and it will need a special klaive to defeat them. This weapon must be forged from the spirit-silver found in the Flux Realm itself. The pack must venture into the Flux Realm, gather the appropriate material, and forge the weapon using the spirit-energies of the realm itself to temper the blade.

- A character receives battle scars that effectively cripple him (blindness, paralysis or something similar). No healing Gift in the material world can aid the

character — however, the pack learns that an appropriate Gift, if augmented by the transformational powers of the Flux Realm and the creation-energies of the region, might be able to heal the character fully. The characters must enter the Flux Realm, bringing their wounded comrade, to use the Gift.

- The characters' arch-foe — perhaps a Black Spiral Dancer — has captured a mighty creature from the Flux Realm and is using it as a juggernaut and war machine. The characters are helpless against the beast — but they learn that the creature is actually part of a mated pair, and that if the beast can be reintroduced to its mate, it will return to the Flux Realm. The characters must enter the Flux Realm, find the beast's mate, bring it to the material world, and reunite the creatures.

### Laws of the Realm

- The landscape of the Flux Realm constantly changes composition, color, and geography. Generally, these effects are not severe enough to kill travelers (some Theurges speculate that visitors exercise sufficient unconscious control over the area to avoid lethal tectonic upheavals), but anything else is possible. Mountain ranges can rise, fall or flatten to plateaus; the sky can turn purple or be filled with seething arcs of color; strange objects can float or roll by. To simulate this, the Storyteller may roll a die every scene; if odd, something about the surroundings changes.

- Shapeshifters in the Flux Realm tend to transform uncontrollably. Upon entering the Flux Realm, shapeshifters must roll Intelligence + Primal-Urge (difficulty of their own Rage); the following table indicates the length of time between random shifts.

| Successes | Transformation                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Botch     | The character shifts continually and uncontrollably for as long as she remains within the Flux Realm; different parts of her might shift into different forms. |
| Failure   | The Garou shifts randomly every turn.                                                                                                                          |
| 1-2       | The Garou shifts randomly every five turns.                                                                                                                    |
| 3         | The Garou shifts forms every five turns (player's choice of form).                                                                                             |
| 4         | The Garou may make a Willpower roll each scene to avoid changing form.                                                                                         |
| 5+        | The Garou is able to resist the energies of the Flux Realm.                                                                                                    |

### Random Forms (roll one die)

|      |                                               |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1-2  | Homid                                         |
| 3-4  | Glabro (or equivalent in other shapeshifters) |
| 5-6  | Crinos (or equivalent in other shapeshifters) |
| 7-8  | Hispo (or equivalent in other shapeshifters)  |
| 9-10 | Lupus (or equivalent in other shapeshifters)  |





Optionally, if the player rolls an odd number, the character shifts into a duplicate of someone with whom she is familiar — probably a pack member.

- Transformations within the Flux Realm are easy; characters may transform without the need for a roll or Rage point unless they botch their initial roll upon first being exposed to the Flux Realm's energies. Thus, characters may forcibly change themselves back to their normal forms upon being affected by the Flux Realm's energies. Changing forms requires the normal amount of time.

- Shapeshifters may actually manipulate their local environment by spending a Gnosis point and rolling Manipulation + Enigmas. The Storyteller sets the difficulty, depending on the size and composition of the area being shaped; the effects last for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. If two opposing shapeshifters attempt to manipulate the same area, treat this as a resisted roll. Generally speaking, manipulations to increase an area's stability (changing a roiling volcano into a peaceful, grassy glade) are easier than attempts to disrupt it (changing an area into a conflagration or field of silvery knives).

- No entity may be psychically bound or controlled while in the Flux Realm, and all entities entering the realm are freed from such control. Psychic control includes Gifts that induce such states, as well as vampiric powers such as Blood Bonds and Dominate, spirit possession, mage Mind magic, and similar effects. Additionally, mundane fetters such as alcoholism, drug addiction, and even codependency are shattered for so long as the sufferer remains in the Flux Realm. Finally, spirits bound into fetishes are freed, though ephemera are not.

- The raw energies of the Wyld are extremely disorienting to shapeshifters. Shapeshifters must make frenzy rolls every scene or succumb to frenzy. The difficulty of the rolls is determined normally, by the phase of the moon. A botched roll inflicts a derangement on the shapeshifter. This derangement may not be cured while in the Flux Realm; subsequently, the Mother's Touch Gift or expenditure of great amounts of Willpower may cure the derangement.

- Knowledgeable shapeshifters within the Flux Realm may spend three Gnosis points and roll Charisma + Primal-Urge (difficulty 9) to consciously change their physical appearance or body composition. Cosmetic changes require a single success; more radical changes (transforming one's body to living silver) might require five or more. The more radical the change, the more likely it is that the shapeshifter will suffer detrimental effects upon returning to the material world; some metis have tried to undo their deformities in this way, only to have their imperfections redoubled when returning to the physical realm.



# The Legendary Realm

Fundamentally, the culture of the shapeshifters is derived from their records of past deeds, heroes and battles. Such an impact did these great deeds make that a realm in the Umbra was carved out to house their memories. This is the Legendary Realm.

The Legendary Realm is a place of myth and allegory. The great heroes of the past remain vigilant here, guarding the people from monsters and barbarians. Noble figures from the tales of the Silver Record still sit atop the thrones of millennia ago. The mightiest heroes arrive in this Elysian land to remain strong and skillful against the greatest battle of the End Times.

In recent days, though, darkness has fallen over the realm. In the center of the realm, amid a formerly prosperous kingdom, the Midnight Land has come from Malfeas to bring ruin to the realm's people. From the north descends the glacial Fimbulwinter to lock the land in shackles of ice, while from the South, the Great Dust brings famine and plague upon the land. Though the Realm is home to some of the Changing Breeds' greatest heroes, the challenges they must face are enough to daunt the Silver Record's greatest scions.

## *The Kingdoms*

There are a variety of kingdoms in the Legendary Realm. Each is ruled by one or more shapeshifter heroes from myth. In the Legendary Realm, Gaia Herself imbues rulership upon the great. To become a ruler, one must perform great deeds that find their way into story and song. One must then pass all manner of grueling ordeals and trials. However, when one is fit to become a ruler, the land itself will blossom and burst forth into harvest, as a sign that a new lord has emerged.

Kingdoms often represent one or more traits. For example, a kingdom ruled by a Get of Fenris might be a land of valiant but headstrong warriors, while a Shadow Lord's kingdom might represent Pride or Cunning.

## *The Wylderness*

Between the various cities and kingdoms lies the Wylderness, an ever-shifting landscape where the trees move and the paths are ever uncertain. In the Wylderness, monsters from myth and legend still roam, guarding enchanted caves and gleaming hoards of

treasure. Many of these monsters and situations are allegorical — for example, in confronting a dragon sitting atop a pile of treasure, is one confronting one's inner terror or one's inner avarice? These perils test the true measure of a warrior — Garou are expected to be wise and honorable as well as valorous, and such traits can greatly aid one in overcoming these obstacles.

## *The Midnight Land*

Not all legends are glorious. In the End Times, a little bit of Malfeas has found its way to the Legendary Realm. Formerly a fertile kingdom, the realm now known as the Midnight Land began to wither into a stony desert several years ago. The sky became perpetually black with ash and clouds, while the trees turned sickly and pale and the people died of plague. Finally, a great black castle — a projection of Malfeas itself — erupted from the soil followed by the ghastly, gargoyle-covered walls of an entire city. In this city, called the Third City by its Bane inhabitants, the undead walk the streets and depravities of all kinds are committed. Here, the Maeljin Incarnae have come to rule.

The people of the Legendary Realm fear that the Midnight Land will be the staging ground for an assault on the entire realm — and there is little to assuage their fears. Flights of Banes wing out from the twisted city, scouting the lands across the Wylderness. The werewolves of the realm are calling upon all the land's scattered heroes, but they may not be enough to withstand the might of the Maeljin themselves.

## *The Fimbulwinter*

The Legendary Realm as a whole is gripped in winter, the great Fimbulwinter of the Last Days. The winter is less strong in the tropics, strongest in the polar lands, but it reaches everywhere, sapping the strength of the realm's inhabitants. Astrologers of the Realm, noting that the winter began with the coming of the star Anthelios in the heavens, commune with the spirits of the Aetherial Realm for answers, but no answers are forthcoming.

The Fimbulwinter is more than a chill of the body; it is a chill of the soul. Entire kingdoms in the north lie gripped in icy shackles, frozen solid and imprisoned in great glaciers that grind down from the ice floes. In the material world, shapeshifter Philodox note that generation by generation, the stories are forgotten, and thus the legends die. So does the Legendary Realm.



## *The Great Dust*

In the south, the Fimbulwinter does not yet grip. But the realm suffers a bane perhaps worse still: the Great Dust. This famine swept up from the torrid veldts of the south, turning the grain to sand and withering the oxen and cattle. With the dust came plagues of locusts, swarming to the Midnight Land as if for instruction, then out to ravage the farmlands of the Realm.

Entire kingdoms have been laid waste, their farmers starving in the midst of brown desolation. The mightiest restorative magics cannot repair the blight, and the greatest of heroes are helpless in the face of starvation.

## *Entry and Exit*

In recent years, moon bridges to the Legendary Realm have become perilous and exceedingly difficult to find. The way to the Legendary Realm is increasingly beset by Banes. It's as if the heroes of the Realm are being isolated within — or those who could succor them are being kept without.

## *Story Possibilities*

- Characters must attempt to reach the kingdom of a great Silver Fang warrior from the past. First, they must battle their way along the Bane-ridden moon paths. Upon arriving in the realm, they must trek through the monster-haunted Wylderness, only to discover that the entire kingdom is locked in the ice of Fimbulwinter. To free the kingdom, the pack must seek out a great and wise dragon to burn away the ice. But what tests will the dragon make the characters undergo to prove themselves worthy?

- The pack seeks the services of a great lord in the Realm. To prove themselves worthy, though, the lord asks that they journey into the Wylderness to slay an invulnerable chimera guarding a sacred artifact. After a hazardous journey, the characters reach the chimera, to discover that it indeed seems invincible. The chimera and the treasure are, in fact, illusion; the quest itself, not the reward, was the ultimate aim.

- The characters are asked to infiltrate the Midnight Land to discover what the Maeljin plot. The pack must survive in this land of Banes, undead, and brutal desolation.

## *Laws of the Realm*

- To leave the Legendary Realm, one must undergo a form of the Hero's Journey. In some senses, any journey into the Legendary Realm must have a purpose, a beginning, middle and end, an obstacle to be overcome and a spiritual challenge to





master. The Realm is not simply a place to pop into and wander through. Storytellers should not let characters blithely enter and leave the Realm without satisfying these criteria.

- The time differential between the Legendary Realm and the material world is vast. Decades or centuries can pass in the Legendary Realm, while only days pass on Earth.

- The spirits of the realm are eternal — more like embodied object lessons or ever-living “extras” than true beings. They are there to perform their specific roles in the play that is the Legendary Realm, and if destroyed, they will eventually re-form in the same or a different part.

- Spirits bound to shapeshifters may enter at will. Other spirits must make Gnosis rolls (difficulty 10) to enter the realm.

- The Realm embodies many earthly myths — for example, the epic of Gilgamesh, the Odyssey, the journey for the Golden Fleece, the Quest for the Grail, the wanderings of Yoshimitsu, and even modern “myths” such as *Casablanca* and *Pulp Fiction* might be relived here. However, such stories are often changed significantly, and the outcomes are entirely in the hands of the heroes who play through them. Characters are certainly not destined to fulfill a role.

- All Garou add three to their Ancestors Background while in the realm. This is true even if the

Garou has no dots in Ancestors, and the Background may rise above 5. Bone Gnawers and Glass Walkers also gain this benefit, though Silent Striders do not.

- Likewise, Mokolé add three to their Mnesis Backgrounds while present here.

- Time spent in the Legendary Realm does not cause shapeshifters to disconnect from the physical world.

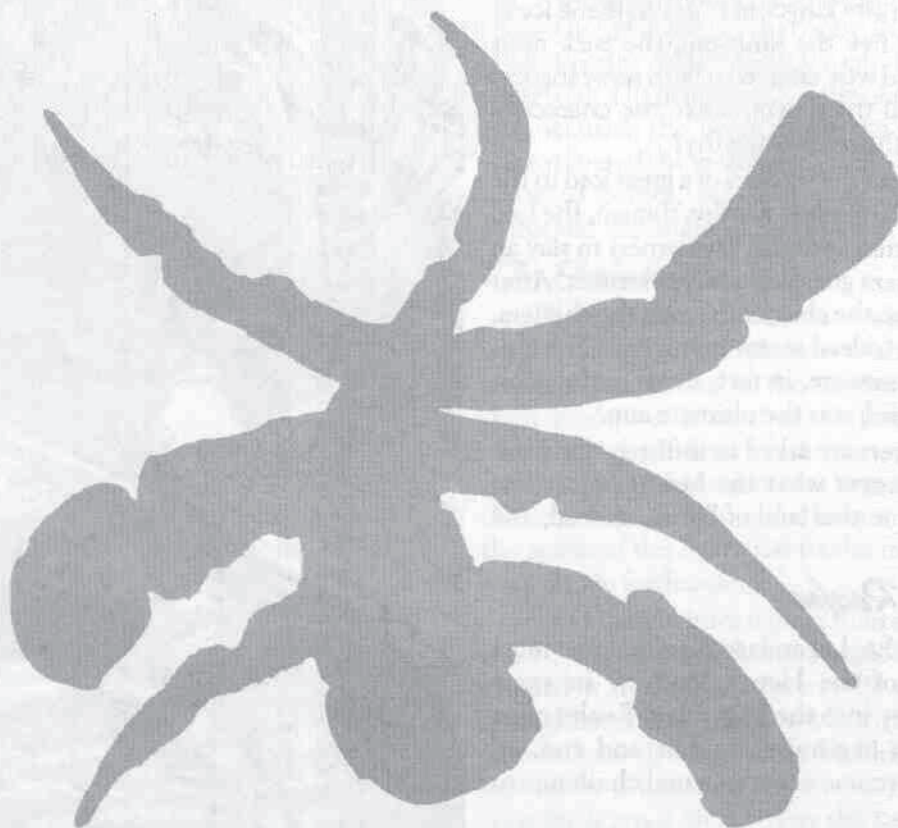
- Unlike some of the other realms (the Atrocity Realm, the Battleground), character combat and death are real here. A character that dies in this realm is dead for good, though his spirit might be reincarnated as usual in a future shapeshifter.

### *Optional Laws*

- Fetishes carried into the realm remain as they are, but other dedicated artifacts are reshaped into tools appropriate for heroes of myth. Generally speaking, this means no items above a Renaissance-esque level of sophistication are permitted to exist. For example, a Glock might be reshaped into a crossbow, a flak jacket might become a samurai's armor, and a pair of jeans might become woolen breeches.

- After completing a sacred journey in the Legendary Realm, all participants are restored to full Willpower.

- There is always “terra incognita” in the Realm, always something new to discover. Thus, the entirety of the Realm may never be mapped.





# Malfeas

This realm, for the shapeshifters, is Hell itself. Malfeas is the nexus of the Wyrms' power in the Umbra. The realm is formed from a tangle in the Pattern Web, the knot that the Weaver wove around the Wyrms in an attempt to trap it. The result is an entire world worse than a serial killer's most fevered fantasy.

A labyrinth the size of a continent, Malfeas is divided into so many realms even the Maeljin Incarnae who rule it don't know them all. Endless corridors lead to torture chambers, landfills, abattoirs, hellish factories belching forth filth, disease-ridden slums, extermination camps, and, of course, the lairs of the Incarnae themselves. Malfeas has millions of inhabitants, each a torturer and a victim intent on violating anything it comes across. Some inhabitants are subtle, others violent; virtually all are evil personified. This may seem somewhat simplistic, but remember that Malfeas is the realm that draws corruption to itself just as the Abyss draws things lost. Cream rises to the top of a jar of milk, objects fall toward the Earth — and spiritual corruption wends its way to the realm of corruption incarnate.

The realm is ruled by the Maeljin Incarnae, monster-lords that represent aspects of the Wyrms. The Maeljin continually fight among themselves for supremacy, yet all this does is create more chaos and degeneration — which is, one suspects, an activity that only feeds the Wyrms and makes it stronger.

Some Theurges claim that once Malfeas was a realm situated in the Deep Umbra, the very heart of the Wyrms' domain itself. Others dispute this theory, arguing that no realm could survive so long in such proximity to the Wyrms — how could anything survive next to the incarnation of Destruction itself? It would seem the truth lies somewhere in between; many gates to Malfeas take the form of Anchorheads, not unlike other portals to the Deep Umbra. And yet, it seems to those who've dared quest for the realm that Malfeas is somehow... closer than it should be. If it was once in the Deep Umbra, it doesn't seem to be there any more; the various means of reaching Near Realms seem to work just as well when reaching for the Wyrms' domain. The obvious conclusion isn't a pleasant one: Malfeas may well be drawing nearer to the Earth, as the Final Battles begin. When the Apocalypse comes to its utmost climax, Malfeas might be poised to spill onto the physical realm — literally Hell on Earth.

Even the bravest and most powerful packs should not enter Malfeas lightly. Some realms are deathtraps, but in Malfeas, one should be so lucky. To enter Malfeas is to forfeit one's soul.

## Geography

Malfeas is an ever-growing realm; as more and more portions of the Umbra are conquered or corrupted, the realm of the Wyrms grows vaster. The realm itself is impossible to

map; it is topographical madness, hyperdimensional terror, a spirit realm as twisted and convoluted as the thousand diseased minds of the Wyrms. The most fevered visions of Bosch and Goya clash with the impossibilities of Escher and Dali, breeding a landscape that is literally the stuff of nightmare. If it is to be feared, it can be found in Malfeas. However, as the realm constantly twists in on itself, a few things remain constant.

## Central Duchy

The heart of Malfeas as many see it, the Central Duchy is a tremendous half-city, half-fortress populated by the worst of the worst. The city itself is immense, practically the size of a small continent, all honeycombed with turrets, passages, oubliettes, catwalks, even industrial pipes and valves. It combines the most grandiose (some would say oppressive) features of Gothic architecture with the "amenities" of a colossal refinery or chemical plant, all blended together in a labyrinthine tangle. The towers reach upward for miles, and the dungeons and sewers stretch downward just as far. Somewhere within the Duchy lies Castle Cthonus, the citadel of Malfeas' "true" ruler — an entity said to outrank the Maeljin Incarnae themselves. If there is one solace, it's that the Central Duchy offers countless places for visitors to hide — but that's small consolation, given that a person might never find their way from their hiding place back out of Malfeas again.

## Maeljin Duchies

From the Central Duchy, a traveler can try to pass through the heavily guarded gateways to one of the Maeljin duchies, the domains of the Maeljin Incarnae themselves. Of course, these territories are no less dangerous than the Central Duchy or other portions of Malfeas; true, one need fear only one overlord at a time in a Maeljin Incarna's domain, but that overlord's attention is all the more focused in its home. Each duchy is a nightmarish reflection of its Incarna's dark desires, from Lady Aife's dungeons that rival Atrocity for variety of tortures to the endlessly twisting, echoing labyrinth of Doge Klypse, Incarna of Paranoia. Further out, the compass points are held by the four elemental duchies: the north is the icy domain of Collum, the south the hellfires of Kerne, the east the poisonous skies of Choke and the west the fetid seas of Yul. As with the rest of Malfeas, these places are best avoided unless the need is truly dire.

## The Temple Obscura

Certainly worthy of mention is the massive Temple Obscura, a colossal mix of mosque and cathedral, of Eastern minarets and Western fluting, all fashioned in green-veined black marble. The temple is no less than the very heart of the Black Spiral Dancers' religion — within lies the very Black Spiral that is the foundation of their rites of passage, their madness, their very corruption. Those who pass into the



Temple to dance the Labyrinth take part in a sacred ritual journey that guides them into the heart of the Wyrms itself. Some return somewhat lucid; many return almost completely functional. None return sane.

### *The Earth Pit*

It's hard to say whether the Earth Pit is a deliberate insult or merely an unintentionally mocking reflection. Whatever its origin, the Earth Pit is a massive and poisoned crevasse that shares more than a coincidental resemblance to the Earth itself. The various strata of the pit take on the semblances of poisoned areas of Earth, be they clear-cut forests or polluted coral reefs, with the total effect of a toxic parody of the planet. As a final insult, many moon bridges from Blights and Hellholes open into the Earth Pit, dropping unwary visitors in the middle of this corrupt reflection of their homeland. The very sight of the Earth Pit is usually enough to drive almost any shapeshifter, whether sullen Rokea or gentle Gurahl, into a murderous frenzy.

### *Entry and Exit*

It's easier than it should be to enter Malfeas. Moon bridges can deposit travelers in the heart of the realm, and most do so right in the courtyard of the Central Duchy. Calumns and Far Calumns, areas of the Near and Deep Umbra where the Wyrms is strongest, usually boast some sort of gateway into an appropriate Maeljin duchy or other section of Malfeas. There are said to be tunnels that lead from the Abyss's deepest caves to the tunnels under the surface of the realm, and strange moon bridges reaching from the Wyrms-poisoned sections of the Aetherial Realm to the Malfean skies. Calumns in Atrocity lead here, as does a hellish train that runs from Scar. There are allegedly even vortices that lead from the Dark Umbra to Malfeas — a thousand ways in, but only a few ways out.

Every exit is both a potential escape route for prisoners and a vital means of invading other sections of the Umbra, so they are watched carefully. Presumably each Maeljin duchy boasts at least one exit, although they are sure to be heavily guarded. Perhaps the safest way out (which isn't saying much) is by navigating the Gardens of Nightmare, a twisted vegetable labyrinth that preys on the fears of its victims by making those fears very real. If one can endure the trek to the heart of the nightmare, there he can escape into the nightmare sections of the Dream Zone, which, though horrible, are much preferable to Malfeas. This journey is exceptionally difficult for packs, however; as each packmate has different fears for the Garden to prey upon, their own fears separate them, forcing them down different paths to confront different obstacles. It would be the exceptional pack indeed who could escape without losing a member forever.

### *Story Possibilities*

Malfeas is not to be entered lightly; few stories can compare to a descent into the very heart of enemy territory.

(Indeed, a heroic quest into Malfeas may demand that the survivors sojourn to Erebus immediately afterward.) Storytellers are recommended to save a trip to Malfeas for the climax of a particularly epic story (preferably one where the characters have at least a small chance of surviving); journeying into the heart of the Wyrms's territory shouldn't be something the players get used to.

- **Rescue:** A common story hook for many realms, the rescue mission takes on added importance here. No Garou should be abandoned to the mercies of Malfeas, but is it worth risking an entire pack to try and retrieve the prisoner? The pack might be assigned to recover a prisoner that is particularly valuable — or forbidden to risk themselves for the sake of someone near and dear to them.

- **Assassination:** Destroying a Maeljin Incarna in its own realm is almost certainly impossible for any pack of werewolves. However, not every person of importance in Malfeas is as powerful, and notable mortal pawns have been known to "visit" for a time. Slaying an Incarna's guest is a tricky affair, and would certainly require more brains than brawn — even considering that it'd require a lot of brawn.

### *Laws of the Realm*

As a realm in a state of slow but constant change, Malfeas' laws may in fact vary from place to place and from year to year. Storytellers are encouraged to devise their own rules for whatever portion of the realm their players might visit, always with an eye towards the theme of that particular subsection's symbolism. For example, in the Duchy of the Maeljin Incarna of Pain all soak rolls might be at +2 difficulty, or all wound penalties might be doubled. The following laws, however, are recommended as appropriate for wherever a pack might wander within the realm.

- Everything in Malfeas reeks of the Wyrms; even innocent captives brought here begin to stink of corruption after mere minutes spent in the realm. Anyone foolish enough to use the Sense Wyrms Gift here must gain three successes on a Willpower roll, difficulty 9, or else be driven mad by the overwhelming stench of the realm. This madness may take any form, and lasts until the unfortunate is somehow cured (via Gifts, rites of cleansing, or even a stay in Erebus).

- Gaian rites do not function in Malfeas; any spirit that would respond to such a call would surely be caught by the swarming Banes and carried away to be transformed into a Bane itself.

- The difficulty to any rolls made to heal or regenerate wounds, or to cure any form of ailment, is increased by 2, thanks to the ambient energies of destruction and the Wyrms's sickness.

[Note: Malfeas and its denizens receive further treatment in *Book of the Wyrms*.]



# Pangaea

The Garou are creatures of long memory. Their Silver Record chronicles ages stretching far into the mists of prehistory. Yet Gaia is older even than they, and nowhere is there better evidence of this than in the Umbral Realm of Pangaea.

Umbral travelers depict Pangaea as a single enormous landmass, with scatterings of archipelagoes and islands off its coasts. This landmass continually shifts and alters in titanic displays of tectonic instability. Volcanoes belch ash into the steamy sky, and earthquakes level old mountain chains and throw up new ones.

Pangaea itself, in terms of geography, flora and fauna, is reminiscent of the world during the Paleozoic and Mesozoic Eras. In the far north, great glaciers carve fjords and fissures into cliffs of shale and granite, while great mammoths and titanotheres wander over the endless ice. Broad bands of tundra and taiga, punctured by strings of tar pits, provide homes to sabertooth tigers, monstrous elk, and packs of dire wolves. In hotter regions, boiling volcanic deserts offer sanctuary to nothing save blackened bones and the bloated finbacked reptiles that gnaw on them, while great cycad forests, steaming coal fens, and clubmoss jungles offer refuge to countless forms of life. Herds of ornithosaurs thunder over blistering savannas pursued by ravening antrodemi or tyrannosaurs. Titanic sauro-pods bellow and frolic in the continent's rivers and lakes, while plesiosaurs and mosasaurs sport in its shallow seas, battling with the megalodons and architeuthids that occasionally drift up from the deeps. Over the whole swoop flocks of pterodactyls and archaeopteryxes, scavenging what they can from larger, toothier predators.

Pangaea seethes with spiritual energy. Naturally formed caerns dot the landscape. Shapeshifters in Pangaea feel whole and fully alive, even in the midst of the realm's obvious perils. And there are dangers aplenty. Besides the ever-prevalent carnivores, the environment itself is exceedingly hazardous. Tar pits, active volcanoes, quicksand, ice floes and earthquakes can make an end of careless shapeshifters.

Those who can survive Pangaea's dangers, however, will discover a world of wonders here. For starters, the Changing Breeds themselves are stronger, more like they were at the dawn of time. No tribal distinctions exist here; there are no Fianna or Red Talons,

only Garou; no Khan and Bubasti, only Bastet. Shapeshifters entering Pangaea for the first time regain all temporary Rage, Gnosis and Willpower. Healing and shapeshifting in Pangaea are easier than they are in the material world.

This mystic vitality extends to the rest of the realm. Sometimes the very landscape alters, touched by the transforming power of the Wyld. Earthquakes and volcanoes rack the land, and rivers commonly flood.

## *The Elder Serpent*

Perhaps the mightiest resident of Pangaea is the spirit known as the Elder Serpent. This fearsome beast is so huge and monstrous that even the largest carnosaurs flee in horror from it. The creature resembles a dragon, and many shapeshifters are convinced that it's a Wyrms Incarna, perhaps even a new facet of the Wyrms. Mokolé do not share this view; they respect the Elder Serpent, though they don't worship it. Some of the savage tribes of Pangaea do, though, depicting the beast in cave paintings and crude sculptures.

The Elder Serpent lairs high in the tallest volcanic mountains of Pangaea. No shapeshifter has thus far reached its lair, though many (foolish) shifters long to battle and slay the creature (impossible). However, the Serpent has occasionally approached Changing Breed visitors to Pangaea. The sheer size and presence of the monster are such that even the bravest shapeshifter must make a fox frenzy check or run howling in terror.

The Elder Serpent asks (well, demands) that shapeshifters do favors for it. These favors often have to do with the thwarting of Weaver manifestations in other spirit realms. Occasionally, though, the Serpent has asked shapeshifters to undertake a mission against manifestations of the Wyld. The Stargazers postulate that the Serpent might be a manifestation of the Wyrms as it was in the primordial days, before it was corrupted. If so, the Stargazers say, the Serpent might be trying to teach the Changing Breeds that, just like the Wyrms, the Weaver and Wyld could be growing too strong and unchecked. As a Balance Wyrms, the Elder Serpent is trying to preserve the balance among all the Triat.

Most other shapeshifters scoff at this idea. To them, the Elder Serpent is but another manifestation of the Wyrms. Nonetheless, a surprising percentage of





shapeshifters do as it asks: Not only does it promise them favors (such as the teaching of rites) in exchange, but the Serpent is just so awe-inspiring and powerful that one cannot help but do its bidding.

Shapeshifters who dare to refuse the Serpent's demands are unharmed... the first time. However, the Serpent orders them to leave Pangaea, telling them that should it cross their paths again, it will slay them. Wise visitors heed this warning; foolish ones tend to disappear.

### *The Graveyard of the Lost*

Somewhere in the depths of Pangaea's forests lies a great mound of bones, exoskeletons and fossils. This is the Graveyard of the Lost, a sacred place containing the remains of all the extinct species of the material world. If shapeshifters find the Graveyard, they may treat it as a Level 6 caern.

### *The Mountains*

Pangaea's volcanic mountain ranges are riddled with trails and caves, whose inhabitants are supposed to be even stranger than the "normal" dwellers in Pangaea. Subterranean cavern complexes riddle the area. Legends persist of emanations of Mokolé progenitors who, defeated in ancient wars,

were forced to retreat deep into the caves. Over time, the legends continue, these Mokolé degenerated into frightful troglodyte savages who lurk and hunt for food in the dark.

### *Savage Tribes*

Interestingly enough, primordial, monster-haunted Pangaea has a scattering of human tribes dwelling (precariously) in its wastes. Alternatively hunting and being hunted by the continent's fauna and visiting shapeshifters, these tribes scavenge what they can from the treacherous countryside.

Why these "apes" dwell here remains a mystery. Some Garou speculate that the tribes are spiritual remnants of primitive humans who died before Gaia created a special realm (the Dark Umbra) for the souls of the human dead. Other Garou, particularly some among the Children of Gaia, believe that these tribes were led here over a spiritual moon bridge by human shamans during the days of the Impergium.

Technologically, the tribes remain at a Stone Age level. In character, these tribes range the gamut. Some fully embody the yesteryear concept of the "noble savage"—strong, clean-limbed, virile and honorable. Others are barbaric, cannibalistic, Wurm-tainted or



worse. Wars between various savage tribes spill over the whole of the supercontinent; shapeshifter visitors occasionally participate in these feuds, and Wyrmspirits sometimes stir up the tribes through false visions and enchantments.

### *Desert Barbarians*

Even in the blistering deserts of the continent's center, tribes of desert barbarians manage to scrape out an existence. These nomads hide from the scorching sun in sandstone caves or underground pits, coming forth to hunt and scavenge at night. They fashion axes from the black glass of the desert interior, as well as crude spears and spiny armor from a species of gigantic cactus. This cactus, the xixa, is central to the barbarians' existence, for it also provides nourishing pulp, water and, when fermented, wildly intoxicating liquor.

### *The Thulan*

Proud, tall and bronze, the manifold tribes of Thulan have spread their culture, flint tools and spoken language throughout much of Pangaea. Though illiterate, the Thulan have developed a crude confederacy and trading network. In character, the Thulan are like something out of a Burroughs novel—honorable and proud, but suspicious of outsiders and extremely superstitious.

The Thulan hate the Zarak-Ur with a passion, for the cannibal tribe often attacks them in pursuit of food and mates. Shapeshifters who can gain the Thulan's trust would find them a strong ally against the Wyrms' minions in Pangaea.

### *The Zarak-Ur*

The scourges of Pangaea, the Zarak-Ur haunt the jungles of the south. Formerly an honorable if savage tribe of hunter-warriors, the Zarak-Ur have become enthralled by visiting Wyrmspirits. Now they are malevolent cannibals that seek to prey on all living creatures, but prefer to eat the brains of sentient beings.

The Zarak-Ur are great hunters, stealthy and cunning enough to lay traps for the largest dinosaurs. However, other humans are their favorite prey. Zarak-Ur totems resemble Banes, and certain figures painted on their dwellings bear great resemblance to Black Spiral Dancers—this despite the fact that all Garou in Pangaea are tribeless.

Recently, agents of the Wyrms have taught the Zarak-Ur the secret of fire. They've learned this secret with great relish, and now they use the weapon indiscriminately. If left unchecked, the Zarak-Ur might

scorch large sections of the realm in their mad raids against the other tribes.

### *Entry and Exit*

Pangaea is not the easiest Near Realm to enter, but it's not the most difficult, either. A fair number of moon bridges lead to the realm, though the realm's proximity to the Wyld makes many bridges treacherous and difficult to follow. Then, too, because of the place's restorative powers to shapeshifters, the Wyrms often urges Banes to lurk along the Umbral paths to Pangaea.

Certain Glens in the deep wilderness link directly to Pangaea, and once in a great while, spirit-beasts from the realm will cross over into the material world. Most die out within hours, of course.

Rumors persist that certain natural phenomena deep within the earthly wilderness can lead to Pangaea. Garou travelers have spoken of cave complexes far beneath the earth that lead into subterranean grottoes where dinosaurs rove, or of great cataracts and tributaries deep within African and South American jungles that wash unwary travelers into the Timeless Land.

Glens are the primary means of exiting the realm. A shapeshifter who finds a Glen in Pangaea may automatically leave the realm, without making a roll. As well, shapeshifters may leave Pangaea for Dream simply by going to sleep in Pangaea while under the influence of certain narcotic herbs.

### *Story Possibilities*

- The pack discovers that one of its enemies, a powerful Bane, is making a play for control of the whole realm. The Bane is manifesting among the Zarak-Ur, stirring them up and sending them out to burn the realm's forests. The characters must, of course, stop this.

- A character falls in love with one of the emanations of the Thulan tribe. Though not technically a violation of the Litany, lasting union between a material creature and a spirit emanation is probably impossible, leading to what will undoubtedly be a tragic romance.

- The pack journeys to Pangaea to hunt one of the extinct beasts, parts of which are needed for a powerful fetish. In so doing, they must be most careful to appease the spirits and treat the hunt as a sacred and reverential event. They must also be most careful not to get eaten.

### *Laws of the Realm*

- All Primal-Urge rolls receive one automatic success, due to the primordial character of the realm.



- All shapeshifters in Pangaea regain a temporary Gnosis point with each dawn.

- All Garou, upon entering Pangaea, are considered to belong to the same tribe. They lose any signs of tribal identity, and even forget about tribal differences, while there. Characters may purchase and use tribe-specific Gifts at no penalty. Even Black Spiral Dancers are affected by this law, although other Garou may not purchase their Gifts, as these are from the Wyrms and not Gaia.

- Garou in Pangaea may not shift into Lupus form, only Hispo.

- All Bastet in the realm lose any distinguishing tribal characteristics. When shapeshifting into any form but Homid, they use the modifiers for Khan but add an additional +1 to Strength and bite damage. Essentially, their wereforms are those of sabertooth tigers. They cannot take Feline form, only Chatro.

- All Rokea gain +1 to Strength and bite damage, as their wereforms reflect the features of the *Carcharodon megalodon* native to Pangaea.

- All Mokolé in the realm gain +1 to all Physical Attributes and +1 to Willpower, Rage and Gnosis. Furthermore, upon entering Pangaea, a Mokolé may spend points of temporary Gnosis; for each point spent, the Mokolé will gain an additional feature to her Archid form while in the realm. This effect may be invoked only once per visit, and the effect fades once the Mokolé leaves.

- Shapeshifters double their healing rates (for aggravated and nonaggravated damage) in Pangaea. Two health levels of aggravated damage may be healed per night of sleep. Shapeshifters regain two lost health levels per turn when resting. In combat, shapeshifters automatically heal one health level per turn.

- Silver is extraordinarily rare in Pangaea, although the Zarak-Ur cannibals have a few silver weapons and captured klaives. If silver is used against Garou in Pangaea, they may use Stamina to soak the aggravated damage.

- The activities of Pangaeian emanations are governed by the phases of the moon. During the new moon, quiet overtakes the land, though small mammals creep out to steal the eggs of the dinosaurs. This time is dangerous, though, for it's when the velociraptor packs come out to hunt. During the crescent moon, animals migrate from place to place, and the human tribes enact their most important rites. During the half moon, predators and prey are at peace with each other, and violence is kept minimal. During the gibbous moon, animals (and humans) come together to mate. The full moon is the hunting season, when the jungles echo with bellows and the predators war with each other.

- Metis who enter Pangaea are cured of their metis deformities while in the realm. They are as whole and normal as any other shapeshifter. The deformities return when the metis leaves Pangaea. Although a metis in Pangaea can sire or bear a child, the child is always a spirit emanation of the metis' animal form, and cannot leave the realm; if a pregnant metis leaves Pangaea, the spirit in her womb osmoses into her body, never to be heard from again.

- Climate in the realm is one of extremes. The polar regions reflect the chill of the Ice Age, the deserts are broiling hot, and the jungles are as steamy and inhospitable as they were in the Mesozoic.

- All difficulties to change form are reduced by two while in Pangaea.



# Scar

The Scar is one of the most loathsome places in the Umbra. While the Atrocity Realm is more horrifying, the Scar is just plain vile. It is the cesspool of the Umbra, the greatest of Blights, a place where the worst of the Weaver and the pettiest of the Wyrms come together to create a singularly unappealing hell.

Most learned Fera believe the Scar to have been formed during the Industrial Revolution, when humanity gouged great holes into Gaia and raped her of her bounty on such a large scale for the first time. A few Galliards say that versions of the Scar existed long prior to that time — that even as far back as Imperial Rome, the Scar was festering in the Umbra. Most shapeshifters, though, scoff at this claim, for surely, they say, they would have done something about it.

Simply put, the Scar is a vast spiritual gulag, devoted solely to melting down hapless spirits for their Gnosis and Essence. It is a realm of a thousand smokes, each fouler than the rest; of clanking gears that relentlessly grind up spirits and use them for fodder; of row upon row of rotting tenements and firetrap slums. Countless factories belch smog into the already filthy air. Strip-mines ravage the muddy, eroded ground, and a few architectural abortions of office buildings provide headquarters for the Banes and Weaver-spirits that oversee the whole affair. Piles of debris and garbage make travel through the cracked alleys a slow and sometimes hazardous affair. Visitors who've survived the trip have claimed that the air is so filthy that one cannot determine whether it's day or night, and that one can quickly be covered in soot and filth simply by standing still.

The emanations that exist ("live" is too noble a term) in the Scar are wan, pale phantoms that exist only to run the machines of the factories, to make sure that one spirit after another is broken down for its Gnosis. Their "lives" are a mockery of industry: 80-hour work weeks, appalling working conditions, no benefits or overtime, and no future. Punishments for "dereliction of duty" range from beatings to loss of their meager energy wage (most of which goes into the maws of the slumlords anyway) to outright termination. These creatures work to exist and exist to work.

At least they're not as pathetic as the homeless derelicts forced to eke out an existence on the Scar's streets. Emanations who make the slightest of petty mistakes or simply can't keep up with the pace of the

machines find themselves terminated from their posts, evicted from their flats, and on the skids. Legions of urchins and bums lurch about the streets, futilely begging for a bit of energy. Their presence is tolerated, even encouraged, by the barons of industry — for they are often rounded up and used as fuel for the eternally clanking machines.

Over the whole lot is a mob of petty overseers: Scrag, spiders, and other Banes and Weaver-spirits that act as the foremen for the factories. Perpetually enforcing labyrinthine regulations and punishing the slightest infraction, these spirits keep the factories moving. The constant threat of demotion, combined with their inherent nature, makes these spirits among the worst and most wretched of tyrants.

The factories themselves endlessly churn out pattern webs, tainted fetishes, and just plain crap. They're stark hellholes of corrugated siding, rusting pipes, body-grinding gears, loose wiring, sparks, dim fluorescent tubes, hellishly hot ovens, and reeking smoke. It's a rare day in the Scar that an emanation isn't burned to death, electrocuted, or ground up in the gears. The assembly lines run 24-7, and any slacking is punished with whips or shock batons liberally laid into the back.

But the factories are paradises compared to the Scar's textile mills. These firetraps work at an even more frenetic pace than the factories, endlessly spinning out Weaver webbing to bolster the realm's Gauntlet. Sometimes the mills grow so overheated that they spontaneously burst into flame, incinerating everyone inside (no one's allowed out during a fire; the work must go on as long as the workers are able to perform it).

Many of the area's office buildings have been broken down and moved to the CyberRealm. What few remain are drab, soul-numbing pits of Dilbertesque hell. Employees stagnate in mazes of cubicles, deluged with endless emails instructing them to perform one pointless task after another. No one is promoted; no one ever gets a raise. The mere ideas of "vacation," "maternity leave" or "401(k)" provoke peals of laughter from the Scrag managers in their ill-fitting suits... if they can be bothered to take their attention away from the secretaries (not "administrative assistants" or even "receptionists") they're sexually harassing. The bathrooms are backed up, the phones are always ringing off the hook, the copier is always jammed, and the



intercom continually blares out vapid message exhorting "teamwork," "empowerment," or "total quality paradigms." Employees who don't like it can always be downsized onto the streets or (Gaia help them) demoted to the status of "intern."

Visitors to the Scar who are captured (and most quickly are) are shanghaied into this system. They're put to work in a factory or textile mill until they drop from exhaustion, whereupon their Gnosis is siphoned from them and the rest is thrown into a corpse-grinding machine.

Upon capture, a shapeshifter automatically loses a point of temporary Gnosis. Once enslaved at a factory, the stupefying miasma of the realm means that a shapeshifter must make one or more Willpower rolls even to contemplate escape. Failure costs the shapeshifter one or more temporary Willpower points. Eventually, the shapeshifter will be just another drone unless someone rescues her.

Fortunately, the nature of the realm itself facilitates escape plans. The rattletrap buildings can be easily sabotaged or set on fire to deter pursuit. More importantly, the barons typically store all the Gnosis and spiritual power they siphon from their victims in reservoirs beneath their corporate HQ. If these batteries are torn open, Wyld energy will fill the entire area, recharging nearby shapeshifters and spirits. Sufficiently empowered worker-spirits just might attempt an uprising....

### *Barons of Industry*

The lords of the Scar are a bevy of Weaver- and Wyrmspirits — mostly Banes — who pattern themselves after the worst of human businesspersons. Each of these spirits owns one of the realm's consortiums or corporations, which it rules with an iron fist, continually competing for resources against its fellows. Most of these creatures have gained some degree of autonomy from their parent Celestine... mainly because they're doing what they need to do for now, and so the more proactive high-ranking spirits in the Weaver and Wyrms' hierarchies have no reason to exert overmuch influence on their activities.

The barons enforce their will through their Guardsmen, a commonly utilized security force composed of the most brutal emanations and Scraggs. Any attempt at an uprising or, worse yet, a union, is brutally put down by the Guardsmen. Some Guardsmen double as racketeers, selling energy at grossly inflated prices to the most desperate emanations. The barons tolerate this behavior for now.

Most of the structures in the Scar are spun by Bane Spiders, creatures of the Weaver who have been corrupted by the Wyrms. These horrors sometimes serve the barons as overseers, but are more often the realm's architects, planners and consultants. Bane Spiders resemble other pattern spiders, but also know and use Bane Charms.

### *Losing Market Share*

Interestingly enough, the Scar seems to be changing, possibly even fading. Learned Garou Theurges speculate that, because the Scar is a remnant of the Industrial Age that spanned the 19<sup>th</sup> and much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is losing its dominant position in the postindustrial Information Age, replaced by the waxing strength of the CyberRealm. Simply put, the bleeding-edge juice converters and data nodes of the CyberRealm process Gnosis more efficiently than the obsolete, rickety factories of the Scar. Many of the Bane-barons that formerly tyrannized the Scar are attempting to upgrade to the CyberRealm's Pit and Uptown locations, leaving their holdings in the Scar as scraps for their former underlings to battle over.

Nonetheless, while the CyberRealm is proving to be the headquarters of choice for the greatest Incarna that terrorize the First World, the Scar's work relentlessly goes on in much of the rest of the world. As First World companies have moved their manufacturing operations into less developed countries, the Scar has followed them, oozing along the Umbral pathways like a mechanical amoeba. In Russia, where impoverished proletariats toil in the dilapidated factories of a shattered economy, the Scar is there. In the sweatshops of China, Thailand and the Philippines, the Scar is there. In the clear-cut forests of the Amazon, the Scar is there. The Scar may not be the most prestigious hell anymore, but it still may be the most industrious.

### *Entry and Exit*

The Scar is not hard to locate; plenty of moon paths lead to it. In fact, the relative lack of Banes and other horrors on these paths make them almost... inviting. Travelers getting too close to the Scar note the tangled, matted webbing that overlays the realm, the work of countless pattern-spiders. One can also reach the Scar through the Dream Zone.

Leaving the Scar is not so easy, though. The Scar's Gauntlet is among the most formidable in the Umbra (strength of 9). To escape, a shapeshifter must step sideways from the Scar into the Umbra. A shapeshifter can also attempt to dream her way out; however, the horror of the Scar makes it nearly impossible to dream of escape, or indeed of anything at all.



### *Story Possibilities*

- A septmate has fallen into the clutches of Banes and been taken to the Scar, where he's been forced into servitude. The pack travels into the Scar to free him.

- At one time, the Rat totem itself was attempting to start a resistance movement in the Scar. Recently, though, nothing has been heard from the resistance. The characters are encouraged to attempt to contact the resistance movement and find out what its progress, if any, is.

- A number of spirits in a totem's brood have been shanghaied, and were taken to the Scar for outright processing. The totem demands a rescue — or failing that, vengeance. If the pack is too late, they may be confronted with horrible, shoddy fetishes manufactured from Stormcrows, Falcon Gafflings or whatever spirits they hold dear....

- War between a Scar baron and a lord of the CyberRealm Uptown has spilled into the material world, causing local economic disaster as databases are erased, factories are torched, and subsidiaries are liquidated. The Garou must decide whether to stop the fighting, use the war as an opportunity to strike at their holdings in the Scar, or exacerbate the chaos. All choices likely involve trips to the realm at some point.

### *Laws of the Realm*

- Because of the bad lighting and acrid smoke that overhangs everything, all sight Perception rolls have their difficulties increased by one. Likewise, due to the stench of the place, all olfactory Perception rolls in the Scar have their difficulties raised by three.

- The Gauntlet around the Scar has a rating of 9. A shapeshifter who botches his roll to step sideways from the Scar is detected by Weaver-spirits, who will attempt to calcify him.

- Because of the palpable malaise that infects the realm, all difficulties to Rage rolls are increased by three. Likewise, all Primal-Urge difficulties are increased by three. This includes rolls to change forms.

- Spirits trapped within the Scar (not the Wyrms and Weaver-spirits native to the place) have nearly no Gnosis or Essence. They are barely "alive," replenishing just enough to keep them at a "starvation" level. The predatory Banes who live here often snack on these spirits.

- A shapeshifter who shatters a Gnosis battery will gain a sudden influx of temporary Gnosis, up to her current maximum level. So do all other beings in the area.

- Shapeshifters captured and put to work in the factories have their Gnosis drained from them daily. One temporary point is siphoned per day of labor.

- To find one's way around the place, a shapeshifter must roll Perception + Streetwise (difficulty 7, or 5 for Ratkin).

### *Optional Laws*

- The textile mills of the Scar manufacture the webbing that binds the area's Gauntlet so tightly. Damaging or destroying a textile mill reduces the Gauntlet in the immediate area by one.

- Countless emanations and elementals toil in the realm, reduced to hopelessness by the miasma of the place. A shapeshifter may attempt a Charisma + Empathy roll (difficulty 7, adjusted up or down by good/bad roleplaying) to give hope to such a spirit. The spirit may then try to escape, or possibly render aid to the shapeshifter.

- The difficulty to resist Harano is increased by two in this dreary place.



# Summer Country

Of all the Near Realms, the Summer Country is the hardest realm to find and enter. In fact, it's so hard to find that many Garou don't believe the place exists. These shapeshifters scoff at tales of the place, claiming them to be the result of a particularly lovely (but ephemeral) Vista or simply too much Fianna elderberry wine.

The Summer Country itself, if the tales are to be believed, is a lush, verdant isle rising from an ocean of purest azure. Here it is perpetually spring, and the sky is either crisp and clear or pouring with a gentle, nurturing rain. High in the sky is a floating island, Cloudtop High, which serves as an aviary for flying creatures of all descriptions — birds, bats, even a few pterodactyls. The birds freely ferry travelers to and from the isle. Atop the isle lies a great castle of vines, where mystics of all peoples may go to commune with Gaia.

Countless species of flora and fauna — many of which are extinct in the World of Darkness — exist harmoniously here. Predators and prey dwell together, each understanding the role of the other. While the laws of nature are still in effect here, and predators fulfill their assigned roles as hunters, they slay their prey as part of a sacred ritual, and the prey suffers almost no pain. All creatures that die or are hurt here are reborn whole the following dawn.

Other dwellers in the Summer Country include human emanations, fortunate shapeshifters of all Breeds, and spirits. All live in harmony with one another, treating each other and their opinions and differences with respect. In this place, all creatures exist in harmony and oneness with Gaia.

Besides Cloudtop High, several other geographical features remain constant from visit to visit. In the Mountains of the Moon, travelers can experience the rugged wilderness of the primordial earth. All manner of species roam the craggy peaks, and this place is where the creatures of the Summer Country go to exert themselves and keep fit. The center of the Mountains of the Moon is Mount Peace, the tallest peak in the realm.

The Garden of Delight is an Edenic realm, where new forms of life are continually being tested and created. The fittest of these creatures are incarnated on Earth as new species.

Two forests, the Forest of Longing and the Forest of Promise, cover the east and west sides of the isle. In the midst of the Forest of Promise lies the Enchanted Glade, which houses a vast amphitheater. The amphitheater is where the realm's inhabitants come to gather, discuss, and celebrate. The Forest of Longing is the gateway to the Summer Country. Its paths are wandered by those travelers who can't quite reach the state of soul to journey to the rest of the isle: bitter cynics who want to love but can't quite do so. In the beautiful Forest of Longing, these souls find some respite, but it is always tinged with wistful remorse.

In the midst of a lush turquoise lagoon formed by the Summer Isle's east and west banks lies a smaller isle, the Isle of the Self. This isle is the primary shrine to Gaia and is the power source of the entire realm. On the Isle of the Self is the Well of Life, a fount of purest spring water. All who drink from the Well are cured of any illnesses — mental or physical — that plague them.

## *Entry and Exit*

Moreso even than the Atrocity Realm, the Summer Country is a state of being rather than a "physical" realm. To have even a chance of finding the Summer Country, a shapeshifter must be at peace with herself and with other creatures. Simply put, she must love herself and everything around her, accepting that every being (even the Wyrms) has a place and is worthy of respect.

Easier said than done, in this latter age. Can a Garou truly not only forgive, but openly revere, the rival who slighted her, the ex-lover who broke her heart, the Black Spiral who tortured her packmate to death? Most of all, can a Garou accept and love her own weaknesses, failures, and faults? If this state of acceptance and enlightenment is not attained, the being will never enter Summer Country.

Some shapeshifters enter the realm through the Forest of Longing (see below). By passing through the Forest, the shapeshifter finds himself overwhelmed with memories of happier times now faded. Other shapeshifters can find the place through particularly happy and enlightening journeys through the Dream Zone.

As Storyteller, use the Summer Country as a reward for players who roleplay their characters' matu-



ration exceedingly well. Many characters — the hardened Ahroun, the manipulative Ragabash, the cynical Shadow Lord — should never visit the place at all. The Summer Country is open only to those who become truly one with Gaia, however briefly.

Upon leaving the realm, the memories of the place often seem hazy and distant, like a faded dream. It is this quality that leads many shapeshifters to question the realm's existence. In fact, the Summer Country is as real as any other Near Realm. Once back in the material world, however, the traveler's heart often hardens once more into the rigors of daily life — and thus the magic of the Summer Country fades and (in many cases) is forgotten.

### *The Latter Days*

The taint of the Wyrms has not yet touched the Summer Country, but the inhabitants of the realm are not naïve. They know that sooner or later, if the Wyrms continue to grow strong, its taint will reach even their soil. As such, the inhabitants of the isle increasingly divide themselves into two camps. One camp wishes to seal off the Summer Country from the rest of the Umbra forever, giving up Earth as lost and hoping to preserve a little pocket of beauty and peace. The second camp acknowledges that the fate of the Summer Country depends on the fate of the rest of Gaia. These beings advocate actively assisting the rest of Gaia's creatures, opening the Summer Country as a place of refuge and healing — even if it means risking being overrun by the Wyrms. Of course, the wisest among the Summer Country's inhabitants realize that the dissent between the two camps is itself divisive, and thus runs the risk of destroying the Summer Country forever. However, their voices go largely unheard amid the increasingly partisan calls for separation or action.

### *Story Possibilities*

- Getting to the Summer Country has always been difficult, but in recent times, since the emergence of Anthelios, the journey seems nigh impossible. An elder Theurge charges the pack with seeking out the realm, believing (perhaps rightly) that unless Garou continue to find their way to the Summer Country, it will wither and fade without their support.

- A great Garou warrior, one of the most legendary werewolves in the World of Darkness, has finally passed into the Summer Country to dwell. Unfortunately, the Wyrms' minions threaten, and only this hero can effectively deal with the threat. The pack





must somehow find their way to the Summer Country and convince the weary warrior to return to Earth. The leave-taking will be bitter for both the warrior and the pack, since they know that, once gone, they might never be able to return.

- A shapeshifter might seek to enter the Summer Country to cleanse himself of a terminal illness or soul-sickness — though truly soul-sick creatures rarely find the realm in the first place.

### *Laws of the Realm*

In order to enter the Summer Country, a shapeshifter must come to an inner epiphany. She must enter a state of true love and respect for all creatures, including herself. While in the Summer Country, should a shapeshifter act differently from this idealized state, she is summarily transported

from the realm back into the Near Umbra or the material world, with only a vague memory of her time in the Summer Country.

- Characters who leave the Summer Country may return to the material world at any moment in time after they left. They may return to the spot at which they entered, or they may return to another place of their choosing, so long as that place is filled with the nurturing energy of Gaia.

- Violence and death are not impossible in the realm, but all creatures that are injured or killed are completely restored to health with the coming of the next dawn.

- Pain may exist in the realm, but it is fleeting and never agonizing. All wound penalties are halved, rounding down.





# Wolfhome

This realm, which the Garou know as Wolfhome, is one of the strangest of the Near Realms. Most Garou Philodox are certain the realm exists to teach the shapeshifters lessons in humility and harmony with Gaia. In Wolfhome, a shapeshifter's mightiest powers are stripped from him, and he is forced to live as a hunted animal does. So he will remain until he truly comes to understand and accept his beast nature, at which time he may leave the realm.

Upon entering the realm, all shapeshifters are forced into their Lupus (or equivalent) forms: Garou become wolves, Mokolé become crocodilians, Ananasi metamorphose into Crawlerling form, etc. They had better be comfortable with their animal side, for they won't have the opportunity to shift forms.

While in Wolfhome, shapeshifters assume the mentality of an animal. Not only can shapeshifters not interact normally with the human inhabitants of the realm, they can't even fully *understand* them. To shapeshifters in Wolfhome, the doings of humans are fearful and incomprehensible. They don't understand why the humans are gouging holes in the ground, or erecting giant stone caves that stink of strange odors, or spewing forth tracks of hot tar that congeal into rocky black trails along which clanking armored beasts speed.

While shapeshifters in Wolfhome are just as intelligent as they ever were, many of their human faculties are lost. Storytellers should enforce this ignorance. For example, shapeshifters can't read any of the realm's signs, and they can count only up to their Intelligence. Unlike the realm's animal-spirits, shapeshifters can understand the humans' language, but they might have to make Intelligence rolls to understand concepts like "zoo," "laboratory," or "key to the cage door." In order to convey the proper mindset of Wolfhome characters, we recommend books such as *Watership Down* or even *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* or the films *The Bear* or *Twilight of the Cockroach*.

As well as shapeshifters, various animal-spirits dwell in the realm. All animals can communicate with each other and the shapeshifters, and animals typically display the sorts of personalities one would expect of them (a turtle is slow-paced and ponderous, a weasel hyperactive and vicious, a fox cunning, etc.). A few of the animals, particularly the dogs, are turncoats in

service to the humans; the rest of the realm's beasts revile these quislings.

All animals are on the run from the mysterious humans that dwell within the realm. What exactly the humans are trying to do is a great mystery to the realm's animals. All they know is that the humans are dangerous and hostile. Some humans fly above the woods in strange whirly-monsters (helicopters), killing wolves and other creatures with fire-sticks (guns). Other humans capture animals and take them to foul-smelling cages where they're tortured, shocked and injected with chemicals that make them sick.

The realm itself resembles a cross between rustic English countryside and suburbia. Human settlements dot the realm, mostly suburbs and farms. Here and there, laboratories and camps spring up behind electrified fences, off limits to visitors. Animals taken here find themselves subject to all forms of systematic abuse. Even in the deeper countryside, scientific outposts and ranger stations ensure that the humans' steel grip is everywhere.

The danger posed to a shapeshifter in the realm depends largely on the animal form of the character in question. Corax and Ananasi characters might be almost safe in the realm — if one considers "safety" synonymous with constant vigilance for predators (hawks and owls in the case of ravens, nearly anything in the case of spiders), kids with BB guns, exterminators, and other horrors.

Nagah have nearly as good a chance as Ananasi — there are a lot of places for a snake to hide. Once they're discovered, though, the good folk of Wolfhome will do everything in their power to crush the wicked serpent beneath their heel.

Werewolves *might* be able to pass themselves off as German shepherds or other large dogs (the human emanations of Wolfhome are tellingly ignorant). Of course, as strays, they'll be in danger of being rounded up and taken to a shelter. Otherwise, as wolves, they'll be mercilessly hunted.

Gurahl and Mokolé are pretty much S.O.L. Mokolé might be able to slither into the sewers under The Town; otherwise, though, they're best staying out in the countryside. A bear wandering about in Wolfhome will probably be rounded up for experimentation, sent to the zoo, or summarily shot by a forest ranger.



If, Gaia forbid, a Rokea ends up in Wolfhome, it will assume the animal form of a bull shark, enabling it to survive in fresh water. It will be very noticeable, though, and its best bet is to swim to sea. Even there, though, fishermen, oil spills, orcas, dolphin pods, and other sharks make life problematic.

### *Wolfhome for Non-Wolves*

Obviously, "Wolfhome" is just the name the Garou use for this realm; however, werewolves are the most common travelers to find the place (with the exception of Ratkin, who wind up near "camps" in far greater numbers than they like). Werewolves are the only surviving Changing Breed to have lost close animal kin to actual domestication (the occasional tame rat or tiger is a far cry from the widespread change of wolf to dog). They have also been, whether the other Fera like it or not, the dominant Changing Breed on the planet for a long time, and certainly the most famous in human folklore. As a result, Wolfhome is skewed considerably toward the wolf experience; if the Bastet had won the War of Rage, or if bears had become truly domesticated, things might have turned out differently.

In fact, most Fera races don't know about Wolfhome at all. The Nuwisha and Corax, expert Umbral travelers both, know about as much as Garou do. The Nuwisha call it "Wolfhome" as the werewolves do; the Corax have taken to calling it "Human Paradise." The Ratkin simply call it "Hell."

### *The Town*

The principal area of Wolfhome is known simply as The Town. Most humans live in The Town. The place stinks, and the animals forced to survive there are desperate indeed. Some are captured by humans, forced to live out their lives in cages where human children leer and poke at them. Other Town dwellers, particularly dogs and wolves, roam the poorer neighborhoods in feral packs, on the run from uniformed humans who try to round them up or kill them outright. There's not much to eat, so animals in The Town often fight with each other over the pickings from garbage cans and dumpsters.

A few humans in the Town — particularly families with children — are kinder than the rest. Werewolves might possibly be able to pass themselves off as dogs and be adopted as pets. Besides the humiliation of such a ruse, there's always the danger that "humane" society employees will discover that the "dog" is actually a wolf, then attempt to take it to a shelter. Then, too, a

Garou's most primal instincts often come out in such a place; a werewolf who's mocked by the Siamese cat across the street or whose tail is pulled by the family baby must make a roll to avoid frenzy.

### *The Sewers*

Some animals — Bone Gnawers, Ratkin, and Mokolé, for example — might try to make a go of living in the sewers beneath Wolfhome. This is feasible — the place stinks, and it's covered in filth, but there's plenty of food washed down from above. The problem is, many of the area's permanent residents — packs of dogs and rats, as well as some big gators — would rather feast on something a little more... fresh.

### *Shelters*

The term "shelter" is a misnomer; in Wolfhome, these are nightmarish places. Characters are thrown into dimly lit, smelly, cramped cages with various feral animals. Filthy, mangy and sometimes rabid dogs, cats and other critters share the kennels with the characters, and they're not known for their politeness. At the shelters, characters might be injected with all sorts of strange drugs, or perhaps even neutered (yes, the appropriate parts will regenerate, but such a procedure can strip away a lot of temporary Willpower). Characters who remain at the shelter too long run the risk of being put to sleep.

### *The Zoo*

Larger, more obviously dangerous animals get taken to the zoo (or, for Rokea, the aquarium). For shapeshifters, the zoo is like being sent to prison. They're locked in concrete cages, kept behind metal bars, while noisy, foul-smelling humans gape and jeer at them. The boredom is maddening, and while some of the zookeepers are humane, others are ignorant or outright sadistic. Then, too, the animals in the zoo have a distinct pecking order, and new characters are assumed to be at the bottom unless they prove otherwise. As with any prison block, there's usually an alpha male of the appropriate species, surrounded by a gang of thugs and bullies. Characters placed in the communal cages must submit to the alpha's dominance or fight — and fighting will likely bring down the wrath of the zookeeper on the newcomer's head.

### *The Camps*

"Camp" is a generic term for any of the numerous laboratories and medical centers that dot Wolfhome. Presumably, different camps serve different purposes. The animals of Wolfhome don't care. All they know is that being taken to a camp is synonymous with a slow, painful death. In camps, animals are injected with strange chemicals that make them sick, subjected to



grueling experiments, put in mazes and forced to find their way out, starved, and otherwise ill-treated. If a character acts too "smart," she might gain the notice of a curious researcher; this can be good or very, very bad.

### *The Countryside*

In the deep countryside, animals still run free. It's the best chance for survival any of the larger shapeshifters have. However, it's still a dangerous place. Much of the countryside is divided into hunting grounds for various established predators — wolf packs, bears, and the like. Trespassing on another creature's hunting ground is cause for a brutal fight, since the ever-expanding city ensures there's only so much countryside to go around. On the positive side, a Garou who defeats a wolf pack's alpha may assume leadership of the pack.

Even in the countryside, humans are a decided threat. Bands of hunters roam the area, shooting animals for sport. Some hunt their prey from the air, firing from helicopters. Teams of researchers attempt to capture wild animals, either to experiment on them or to study them.

### *Entry and Exit*

Few characters choose to enter Wolfhome. Generally, characters that have gotten "too big for their britches" and neglected their duties to Gaia — streetwise Glass Walkers or Ratkin, ruthless Shadow Lords, and other characters overly concerned with human ambition, greed and pride — somehow find their way there. Few moon bridges consciously lead to Wolfhome, though shapeshifters have occasionally entered the place from the Dream Zone.

Exiting Wolfhome, though, is not a matter of physically leaving the realm. To exit Wolfhome, one must get in touch with one's animal nature, truly understanding what it means to be a beast. The precise form this metamorphosis takes, and the moment at which it occurs, are up to the Storyteller's discretion; a trip to Wolfhome is meant to be an object lesson rather than a mere "adventure." At the Storyteller's option, characters might be trapped in Wolfhome until they accumulate sufficient experience points to purchase a level of Survival or Primal-Urge; once they do so, they may exit the realm.

### *Story Possibilities*

- Characters must journey to Wolfhome to rescue a trapped septmate. The septmate has completely succumbed to its animal nature, but rather than breaking free of the realm, he has begun living like a hunted animal. The characters must find him and "work him through" the process of leaving Wolfhome.





- Agents of the Wurm or Weaver have decided to use Wolfhome as a base of operations. The characters must foil the enemy's advance agents, while simultaneously staying alive in a hostile environment.

- A character voluntarily enters the realm, as part of a test or visionquest — or perhaps the character is ordered there by her sept as a punishment for hubris. Surviving such an ordeal will likely bring Honor and Wisdom Renown — or at least restore lost Honor and Wisdom.

### *Laws of the Realm*

- A shapeshifter in Wolfhome is trapped in its normal animal form and may not assume any other form. Even partial transformations are impossible.

- The "animal mind" limits characters' ability to understand the humans. They cannot comprehend written human languages while in Wolfhome. While they can understand human speech, they may be required to make Intelligence rolls to decipher the meaning or to understand the more abstract concepts.

- Humans in Wolfhome tend to fear and dislike most animals. Ananasi and Corax are not in as much danger, but even they tend to get shot at by hunters, farmers or bored children or stepped on by disgusted soccer moms.

- In order to use a Gift in Wolfhome, a shapeshifter must expend a Gnosis point and make a Willpower roll against a difficulty of 5+ the level of the Gift. This cost is in addition to any other prerequisites of the Gift.

Gifts invoked in Wolfhome last a maximum of three turns, even if their effects are normally permanent.

- No rites of any sort work in Wolfhome.

- Ironically, characters might well have to "think like the humans" (i.e., make Intelligence rolls to understand abstract concepts) to survive in Wolfhome. Doing so too often, though, makes it harder and harder to "understand one's animal nature" and thus be free of the realm.

- None of the denizens of Wolfhome are aware that they are spirits.

- All spirits not native to Wolfhome must be bound to a Garou or dedicated talisman before entering the realm; otherwise, they automatically enter dormancy for as long as they are in the realm.

- The only way to leave Wolfhome is to come to a true understanding of one's animal side (as determined by the Storyteller).

- Shapeshifters may not breed with the spirit-creatures of Wolfhome.

### *Optional Laws*

- Shapeshifters who use experience to buy Animal Ken, Primal-Urge or Survival after their first visit to Wolfhome need pay one fewer point than normal to purchase the next level. Also, they may use a story in Wolfhome as justification for increasing these three Abilities.

- In general, assume all Knowledges except Enigmas have been stripped from characters in Wolfhome.





## *Other Umbral Domains*

The Umbra is a place of infinite dimension and infinite possibility. The realms familiar to the Garou constitute only a small fragment of the immensity that is the spirit world.

Note that new realms are being created all the time. Spirit-beings of Incarna level or higher may reshape Umbral ephemera into a domain of their choosing, just as the Garou totems did to create the tribal homelands. On a lesser level, Jagglings often create Umbral pockets for themselves, while Bastet are known to form personal den-realms.

### *The Tribal Homelands*

Each werewolf tribe maintains a spirit "homeland" in the Umbra. These realms are ruled by the tribal totem. They are sacred places, not to be entered lightly; Garou entering these regions had best be in excellent standing within their tribes. Generally speaking, only tribe members of Ranks 4+ may freely enter the homelands, and admission of non-tribe members is forbidden except in dire emergencies. Poor behavior in a tribal homeland is grounds for significant Honor loss.

#### *Black Furies*

In keeping with the Furies' origin, their tribal homeland is a wilderness region reminiscent of mythical Greece. The land is mountainous and rocky, with numerous isles and peninsulas jutting into a turquoise sea. Pines and olive trees cloak the hills, while the mountaintops are shrouded in perpetual mist.

Spirits abound in the land: Umbral boars, stags, wolves, dolphins, lions and similar creatures stalk and play through the realm's groves and tracks. These creatures may be hunted, for the chase is sacred to the Furies, but a Rite of Contrition must be performed beforehand to show one's respect for the spirits.

All manner of buildings decorate the landscape—mostly Grecian, but anywhere the Furies have borne children is represented somewhere in the realm. Here the Furies, under their new leader Cassandra Shadow-Walker, hold their moots. Formerly, no males were allowed to enter on pain of death; in these End Times, though, the ban has been relaxed, as the Furies prepare for the end of all things. Still, males had best not enter without permission, particularly during the Furies' bloodthirsty rites.

#### *Black Spiral Dancers*

Originally, this nightmarish place belonged to the White Howlers. Now, this realm has assumed the characteristics of its Wyrms-tainted denizens, seething

in misery as it spirals away from the other realms and toward the waiting maw of Malfeas.

The realm itself is a dystopian vista of postindustrial hell. The air itself is sweltering, its ozone layer eaten by the thousands of smokes and vapors and poisons that ooze into the sky from countless pits in the cracked and stony soil. Twisted trees and phosphorescent leprous fungi sprout from foul-smelling tarns of toxic sludge. Sooty clouds slowly waft through the sky, spraying acid rain onto the landscape. Webworks of corroded pipes form a vast spiderweb across the ground, leaking oils and poison into the saturated earth. Even the Dancers find this disgusting, and venture onto the realm's surface only to conduct the occasional bloody ceremony in one of the warped circles of standing stones.

The true domain, however, lies underground, in vast networks of caves that honeycomb the subterranean reaches of the realm. The entire realm is considered one monstrous hive. The caves are lined with fungi and flickering balefire; grotesque Jagglings make their homes in the deeper recesses of the labyrinth. Here the Black Spirals congregate for their insane rites.

#### *Bone Gnawers*

The Bone Gnawer homeland resembles a public park, surrounded by the low-rent area of the city. Here, dumpsters overflow with fattening, edible junk, cheap restaurants are open all night, the pitchers are \$1 if that, the strippers are easy, and you can find a quarter or a place to sleep just by looking down. Outside the "city boundaries" stretches a sleepy, pastoral, scarcely populated series of hills full of briar patches, apple trees and fat cattle.

A subway system connects the various areas of the domain, as well as with various other Umbral areas such as the CyberRealm. The turnstiles to the subway are perpetually broken, so everyone rides for free. Rat Gafflings swarm throughout the area, dispensing gossip and dirt in exchange for goodies.

#### *Bunyip*

The Bunyip homeland is almost more conjecture than anything else; the reclusive Australian tribe kept their secrets very well when they were alive, and have proven even more secretive in death. Few Garou can claim to know anything of its nature; only a few Silent Strider tales give any hint. These stories paint a picture of an empty reflection of the Australian outback, a Dreamtime for the dead where the ghosts of marsupial Great Beasts hunt down any foreign spirits that enter the realm. Perhaps these stories are



true — perhaps they're only an educated guess. Nonetheless, many Silent Striders and other Garou have set out in search of the realm, in hopes that they might find some vital secret there that might guide them to victory in the Apocalypse.

### *Children of Gaia*

The Children of Gaia homeland is a lush area of gently rolling plains and meadows where Delirium-free humans live in caravans under the clear night sky. The realm is criss-crossed by streams of pure, refreshing water that run to a central pair of rivers; along these rivers are a few cities that resemble a cleaner, more attractive version of the ancient metropolises of Sumer. Occasionally, a traveler can see a unicorn or even a herd cropping the grass in the distance; the unicorns are shy, but willing to befriend those who approach them honestly and openly.

Upon entering the Children's tribal homeland, each shapeshifter gains a unicorn anamiae (p. 107) for the duration of its visit.

### *Croatan*

A ghostly, deserted realm, the Croatan homeland lies devoid of inhabitants. Though the Croatan are long gone, Garou of other tribes occasionally come here on quests to find any surviving members of the Croatan tribe. Thus far, their efforts have proven unsuccessful.

The homeland itself resembles the taiga regions of the North American continent, as they were before European colonization. The realm is cold and windy; pine forests, grasslands and empty seas offer their barren vistas to travelers.

### *Fianna*

The Fianna homeland resembles the Europe of classical legend. The land is adorned in countless shades of green. Hills, vales and dales dot the landscape, and stag-spirits run free across the realm. The forests here range from light and inviting to thick and foreboding. Faeries of all sorts also congregate here. The fresh air is filled with the sounds of revelry and merriment, and music of all sorts wafts over the verdant land.

The land is defended by the Wild Hunt; occasionally, visiting shapeshifters are "drafted" to join the Hunt. A few moon paths lead from the realm to the Arcadia Gateway.

### *Get of Fenris*

Like the tribe itself, the Get of Fenris homeland is a harsh realm. Stark fjords, bleak tundra, and

gloomy expanses of taiga cover a chill realm of perpetual winter. It is a land for exertion and vigor, not rest. Packs of dire wolves and herds of mammoth roam the wilds.

Various lodges dot the land, and here the Get come to drink, carouse, fight, drink, and fight some more. Stories of valor and glory are told (or made) here. Fights are commonplace, though sleeping in a lodge restores all health levels and Rage.

### *Glass Walkers*

In the Glass Walker homeland, the future is now. Thought by some to be an extension of the CyberRealm, the homeland is The City as the Glass Walkers would make it. Towers of glittering steel and glass cut through the heavens, adorned with garden levels and built-in waterfalls. Transportation and communication are futuristic, consisting of hovercars, maglev trains, and vidphones.

The Glass Walker homeland seems to be undergoing an evolution of sorts. In recent years, many of the realm's more miraculous technology has simply ceased to work. Robots lie inert in corridors, and the trains don't always run on time. The Glass Walkers have tried to figure out why this is happening, but thus far even Cockroach has no answers.

### *Red Talons*

The Red Talon homeland is a panorama of nature gone mad. The landscape is one of wild, tangled forests inhabited by a shrieking menagerie of beasts. Various extinct species crash through the undergrowth, competing for prey with the savage packs of wolves that howl through the land. Humans are thoroughly unwelcome here; even homids must have someone close to Griffin to vouch for them, or they may find themselves prey for the predators of the realm.

The population of wolves in the area has swollen to near overpopulation, and some Talons worry that the wolves will wipe out the prey-emanations in the area. Although visitors often assume that the numbers of wolves are the Talon's doing, it's far from the truth; the growing number of wolf emanations here seems linked to the numbers of wolves killed in the physical world. If the Talons had their say, there'd be fewer wolves in their homeland and more on the Earth's face.

The riotous growth of the wilderness seems almost to match Pangaea itself; vines and undergrowth tangle all but the most-used animal paths. A few Talons whisper that the realm has overcompensated, taking in too much of the Wyld. The usual answer is that no



other place is willing to serve as refuge for the persecuted member of the Triat.

### *Shadow Lords*

The Great Mountain, a lofty structure taller than Everest, dominates the realm of the Shadow Lords. Thunderstorms constantly rumble across the mountain, casting eternal shadow over the plains and peaks below. On these lesser peaks sit mighty fortresses, home to the greatest of Shadow Lords. Here these werewolves rule and scheme to gain control of others' fortresses. One prize is coveted above all: the shadowy fortress atop the Great Mountain itself. According to legend, the Shadow Lord who takes the fortress will become ruler of the entire Garou Nation. Many Lords have tried to climb the mountain. Most have disappeared, and a few have come back raving mad. Nonetheless, the attempts continue.

Below the mountain, the realm is filled with heavy, forbidding forests, rocky hills and crashing rivers. Stormcrows roost in the high treetops, acting as messengers between the various Shadow Lord enclaves. Legend has it that across the sea to the north of the Great Mountain, an extensive island kingdom is home to the Hakken ancestors, the forebears of the Eastern Shadow Lords of the Beast Courts.

### *Silent Striders*

Among the Garou, the Silent Striders are renowned (or infamous) for having no Umbral homeland. As the story goes, the land has been lost in the mists of legend and no moon paths lead there anymore.

Legends say that the Silent Strider homeland resembles the tribe's ancestral domains in ancient Egypt. Forever moonlit, the realm is a sea of silvery sand, dotted here and there by obelisks and other weathered monuments covered with hieroglyphics.

The homeland can still be reached, but it's difficult. To reach it, a Strider would have to use the Gift: Gate of the Moon versus a difficulty of 10. Once there, he appears on the shores of the River of Life and Death, where the ancient werewolf Wepauwet (p. 142) awaits him. Wepauwet will certainly dispense advice and gifts to the traveler, but will just as surely ask him to undertake quests against the monstrous vampire minions of the Dark God Set, ancestral enemy of the Silent Striders.

### *Silver Fangs*

The homeland of the Silver Fangs is as majestic as would be expected of such a land. It resembles a noble preserve of the Old Country, with great swaths of the countryside resembling nothing less than the Russian steppes. Castles dot the land, interspersed with woods

full of game and sweeping mountain ranges. Any Silver Fang who comes to the land will be accompanied by a Falcon Gaffling, which will swoop from the sky to perch on his or her arm.

The centerpiece of the realm, the Castle of Heroes, is off limits to all save Silver Fangs. Inside, monuments to the glory of the tribe meet the traveler's eye, and great feasts, masques and other entertainment lifts the spirits of weary heroes.

Upon closer inspection, the astute traveler notes that the castles are all crumbling, the mountains eroding, and the trees are taken by rot. The proud banners of the castles have been torn by the wind, and the moats are clogged with algae and scum. Only those not of the Silver Fang tribe can see this. The decay is not all-pervasive, and portions of the realm still shine with some glory, but things appear grim for the ruling tribe.

### *Uktena*

The Uktena homeland is a potpourri of what much of the Pure Lands looked like before the Wurmcomers came. Deciduous forests of the Southeast mingle with the prairies of the Midwest and the deserts of the Southwest. Emanations of lost Native American tribes dwell here as they did prior to European colonization. Many spirits of the forgotten Native American myths dwell here as well. Portions of the realm also reflect the homelands of many of the other cultures that the Uktena have come to breed with; an island resembling Ainu Japan, mountains like those of South America and even a swath of land resembling sub-Saharan Africa all dot the landscape here and there.

Uktena Skywalkers come here to sit in council, occasionally inviting Bastet, Corax, and Nuwisha. Some say that the Uktena occasionally drum up the spirits of the Dark Umbra as well. In any event, the realm is a repository of wisdom for the Uktena resourceful enough to make it here.

### *Wendigo*

This realm is a polar land of glacial ice and bitter tundra. It's always winter here, and howling blizzards whip across the landscape. The pine forests are heavy with snow, and game is sparse enough that a Wendigo must work for his meal. Even the lands like the plains and deserts of North America are in mid-winter, colder than one might think. Great furred beasts of ancient eras live here, and monstrous orcas crash through the icy waves of the frigid oceans.

No shapeshifters other than the Uktena and Gurahl are permitted here... not that most others would want to come. The Wendigo come here to gaze at the aurora



borealis and search for prophecies and omens. Before attaining Rank 5, a Wendigo must make a pilgrimage here as part of a visionquest.

Gates to Pangaea, the Legendary Realm, the Aetherial Realm, the Uktena realm, and Wendigo's totem realm exist here in deep glacial caves. The Wendigo use these gates to launch surprise attacks on their enemies.

### *Stargazers*

The Stargazers' tribal homeland is smaller than any of the others, perhaps because of the tribe's much-diminished numbers. The sky is always clear here; the sun shines only faintly during the day, and the stars stretch from horizon to horizon with exceptional clarity at night. The landscape is a simple, forested plateau surrounded by snow-capped mountains faintly reminiscent of the Himalayas; Stargazers sometimes go mountain climbing alongside the snow leopards to clear their thoughts.

Food is plentiful here, but company is not; many of the Stargazers who venture here do so alone. The realm seems to reassure even the most pack-minded shapeshifter, making solitude a less stressful thing. Meditation followed by sleep is an almost sure way to enter the Dream Zone from here, if that's what one is interested in doing.

The Stargazer homeland has drifted ever so slightly away from the others with the tribe's separation from the Garou Nation. It would seem that the realm echoes its tribe in more than one way; if the Stargazers seek to pursue their destiny apart from the other tribes, the homeland may do the same.

### *The Tapestry*

Not all places in the World of Darkness follow the same customs, rules, and laws, and this is equally true of the Umbra. In particular, the spirit worlds of Asia, commonly referred to as the Tapestry, have different denizens, strictures, and natures from other places in the Umbra.

The Asian Umbra is in constant flux between the eternal spirit-energies of Yin (passive, "negative" energy) and Yang (active, "positive" energy). Everything in the Tapestry is composed of Yin, Yang, or various proportions of the two in balance or imbalance.

Much as with the 13 Near Realms commonly known among the Garou, there are various realms in the Tapestry aspected to one energy type or the other. Some of these Yin and Yang realms seem to be manifestations of the Near Realms in the Tapestry, while others are unknown outside of the Eastern Umbra. Yin Realms tend to be quiet, peaceful, and/





or gloomy places, inhabited by the spirits of the dead; Yang realms tend to be vibrant, active, and alive (often terrifyingly so), inhabited by hosts of seething spirits and elementals.

Legends say that the various Lords and Incarnae of the Tapestry were once united in a great Heavenly bureaucracy, under an August Spirit Emperor of old. Though this Emperor (if it ever existed) has long departed, and though the spirit courts of the Tapestry largely conduct themselves as they will, the memory of the ancient ways remains among the spirits. Protocols and matters of etiquette tend to be much stricter than they are in other realms, and visitors seeking to curry the Tapestry lords' favor would do well to take heed of honorifics, greeting customs and other social niceties.

The shapeshifters of the East, known as hengeyokai, tend to be much more cognizant of their Tapestry and its inhabitants than shapeshifters of other lands are of their spirit neighbors. Jaunts into the Tapestry occur with some frequency, and alliances with spirit "nushi" (masters) irrevocably bind entire families of shapeshifters to Umbral patrons.

In particular, certain shapeshifter packs (known as sentai) dedicate themselves to preserving the ancient ways within the Umbra. These "mountain sentai" travel the Tapestry as much as they do the physical world, and they are quite familiar with the local spirit courts and power-players.

### *Yang Realms*

There are numberless Yang Realms, for it is the nature of Yang to propagate itself and spread ever outward.

#### • The Realm of Fighting Spirits

Many shapeshifters equate this tumultuous land with the Near Realm known as the Battleground. Similarly to the Battleground, mobs of warring spirits do battle across the landscape. Here, the boiling oil of the Warring States can scorch the fuselage of a Soviet-purchased MIG fighter, and katana-wielding samurai test themselves against the guns of the Viet Cong.

#### • Umi, the Dragon Kingdom of the Sea

This vast Yang Realm encompasses all the underwater realms of the Tapestry. Spirits of shark, squid, jellyfish and other sea creatures serve as viceroys to the lord of the Sea. Schools of Rokea serve as the realm's vanguard and samurai, maintaining order among the often-unruly spirit denizens.

### *Yin Realms*

Likewise, there are numerous Yin Realms, all radiating outward from the Yellow Springs of the Dark Kingdom of Jade.

#### • Lord Spider's Web

This Yin Realm is far from the other realms of the Tapestry, and some hengeyokai speculate that it might be a tributary of the Near Realm known as the Abyss. The realm consists of a monstrous web that crosses a gulf so wide that one edge cannot be seen from the other. The web winds every which way across the gulf, strands leading up, down, and in all directions. Within the web, countless spirits and relics are trapped, coated over with sticky strands. Travelers who can discern which strands are sticky and which are not may attempt to walk the web; those who fail will be trapped, coated over with strands, and lost forever.

Those who have traversed the web say the strands eventually lead out of the Yin Realms entirely. Furthermore, some shapeshifters believe that the strands occasionally vibrate and twitch, particularly as one draws closer to the web's center. These shapeshifters wonder if perhaps some monstrous battle is being waged far down in the dark.

[The Tapestry is described in more detail in *Hengeyokai: Shapeshifters of the East*.]

### *The Mirror Zone*

This weird realm is never entered intentionally. Instead, it's a trap, triggered by shapeshifters who botch Gnosis rolls while maneuvering from Earth to Umbra or vice versa. Like most good traps, it's subtle; victims often don't figure out they're in the Mirror Zone until it's too late.

No one knows exactly why the Mirror Zone exists. Then again, its true nature is also a matter of conjecture. The most accepted theory is that it's a sliver of reality that broke away from both Earth and the Umbra when the Gauntlet rose, separating matter and spirit. The Mirror Zone is, in fact, a series of seemingly infinite alternate realities — an endless parade of "What ifs" that differ in one way or another from the real world (if, in fact, the "real world" is the real world and not just another mirror in the Mirror Zone...).

Some Mirror Zone realities are subtle, insidiously so. The world seems just like the one the shapeshifter left, but something (or things) is slightly askew. A character's best friend has never met him before in her life. A former lover is still involved with the character, or the character's dead parents are still alive in this world. Sometimes, characters might stay for weeks in the Mirror Zone before they realize the differences.

Other realities are quite different. The Garou lost the War of Rage; or, conversely, the Impergium never ended. The Leeches that haunt the cities don't exist —





or they openly rule the mortals. The Roman Empire never fell; the Third Reich conquered the world; the 1969 moon landing discovered aliens or faeries; Kenny G. became President-for-Life of the United States in a coup backed by Jesse Ventura.... The possibilities are endless. Some pilgrims have even deliberately traveled to the Mirror Zone, in search of a particular alternate reality — perhaps one where a dead lover still lives, or a particularly challenging foe can be brought down again. However, no one has yet discovered a reliable way to sift through the infinite possibilities of the Mirror Zone to find the right one. Likewise, objects and persons brought from the Mirror Zone immediately vanish; a would-be Orpheus can't travel into the Mirror Zone to rescue a clone of his lost love.

Getting out of the Mirror Zone is difficult. Typically, to leave, one must solve the problems presented by the realm, rectifying the differences and setting things "straight." At this point, the Zone effectively becomes Earth, and the character is expelled to the point at which he originally entered the Umbra.

### *The Null Zone*

A truly weird place, the Null Zone is like an "Umbra behind the Umbra." It's practically impossible to find — shapeshifters can try, but it requires a Gnosis

roll versus a difficulty of 10. Otherwise, a few strange Umbral pathways might lead there, but finding them is a matter of sheer chance. Even the same paths don't lead to the Null Zone twice.

The Null Zone is a series of warm, wet, almost womblike tunnels. Scattered throughout the tunnels are various windows depicting scenes from a variety of places, both earthly and Umbral. Some shapeshifters compare being in the Null Zone to walking around backstage at a funhouse.

Characters may watch any of the scenes, and may enter the scenes by stepping through the windows. Once characters exit the Null Zone, they're in whatever place they were viewing, and they can't return to the Null Zone.

Debris litters the Null Zone, and various weird, lost spirits wander aimlessly through the place. Because the Zone has no ephemera, spirit powers don't work here, and the spirits can't even see the exits to the place. The laws of space and time don't seem to apply here; characters may travel backwards and forwards through time and may transport themselves across vast distances through the Null Zone. Characters may attempt to use the Zone as a shortcut between any two points they wish. Navigating through the place is



extraordinarily difficult, though (Intelligence + Enigmas, difficulty 10, 5 successes required to find the exact destination). A botch typically transports the character into a much worse, much more dangerous place, such as Malfeas.

### *The Dream Zone*

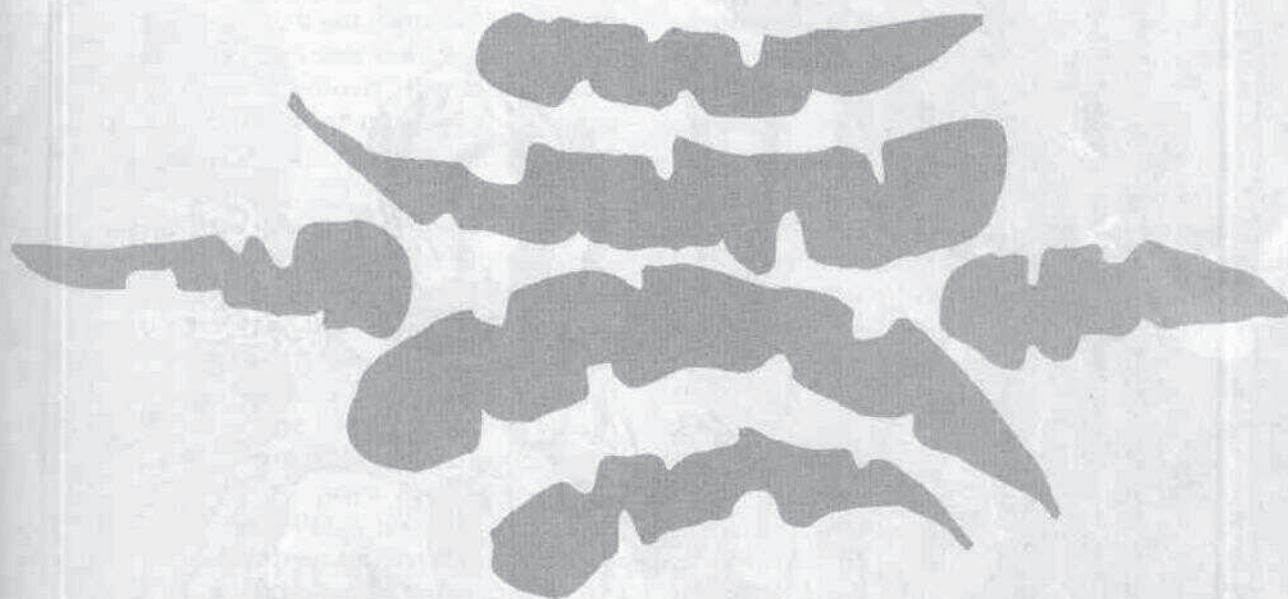
The Dream Zone is one of the "largest" of the subrealms; in many ways, it's a realm unto itself. It can't be reached via moon bridges. However, shapeshifters may easily transport themselves to Dream simply by going to sleep in the Penumbra.

Upon entering the Dream Zone, a shapeshifter is enveloped in a cloud of opalescent mist shrouding a faint gleam. The character is drawn through the mist and into the realm of Dream. The Zone is analogous to an immense gem of infinite facets; each facet is an entire tapestry, the contents of one particular dream. Upon first entering Dream, the character will see images from his own dream. If the character wishes, he may explore further, walking into others' dreams. Even deeper are the archetypal facets — areas embodying the primal aspects that dreams encompass. Examples of these facets include blood, drowning, falling, love, cars, and nearly anything else imaginable. Each facet draws the charac-

ter into a particular chain of events; when these events end, the character may end the dream or fall into another facet.

Some shapeshifters undergo dreamquests — journeys through a series of interconnected facets that collectively tell a larger story. For example, a character may fall into a dream-facet embodying drowning; the character finds himself suffocating in a milky liquid. Upon sinking for the third time, the character seems to wake up — but instead he's fallen into the facet of imprisonment, where he's manacled and helpless to act. A gaoler comes to him, wielding a headsman's axe, which decapitates the character — who promptly jumps to another dream-facet, this one embodying wind. The character is being buffeted about in a vast hurricane. Finally, this dream ends and the character awakens. How he interprets the dreamquest is up to him, but clearly he's feeling helpless in the face of some larger situation. Now he's got to figure out what that situation (a duty, a relationship, a peril) is.

Characters may leave Dream in several ways. The easiest is by waking up. Characters may try to wake themselves up by rolling Willpower (difficulty 10). Characters who end a dreamquest automatically leave Dream. Sometimes, characters may simply walk out of Dream to somewhere else in the Umbra.







# Chapter Three: Spirits

Though the Umbra contains no life as we know it, it is an active environment just the same. The Umbra houses spirits of all descriptions, attitudes, and levels of power. Though more “sentient” than animals and even largely more “aware” than humans, spirits are nonetheless very different from actual living creatures of the physical realm.

Ultimately, spirits are manifestations of different aspects of Gaia. Even the great Triat can be said to ultimately represent Gaia’s creative, preservative and destructive urges. Thus, each spirit has a purview, purpose or other reason for being. Some spirits represent parts of Gaia’s being, such as animals, plants, or minerals. Others represent concepts, such as war, or love, or rage. This purpose is, in fact, the spirit-“body” of the Umbral denizen in question. A war-spirit doesn’t truly choose to embody War — it *must* embody War, just as a material being must eat and breathe. In fact, the demands of a spirit’s nature are stronger than even some self-preservation instincts of material beings — a human can choose to go without food for a time, to abstain from sex and childrearing, even to commit suicide. A spirit, however, cannot go against its nature without changing its very structure.

Nonetheless, each spirit is unique, with its own personality, identity, and powers. For example, one war-spirit might be a savage berserker, while another might manifest as a stern Prussian general, and a third could take on the role a valorous defender. Although each spirit is unlikely to vary from the core of its own identity, they all prove that a spiritual concept can manifest itself in any number of ways.

This chapter delineates some of the spirits most universally known to the Fera at large, with special emphasis on the Garou. First, we discuss traits common to all spirits. Next, we discuss the spirit hierarchy of Gaffling, Jagglung, Incarna and Celestine, with the similarities and differences among each. We then cover the spirit broods of the tribal totems, along with a representative example that might be sent to aid a supplicant in time of need. Finally, we discuss the naturae — the elementals, plant- and moon-spirits — and conclude with a look at the spirits of the Wyld.

Spirits of the Weaver and Wyrms also exist in droves, and make fine antagonists or obstacles for a pack, but are more properly covered in *Book of the Weaver* and *Book of the Wyrms*.



## *Spirit Traits*

All spirits, even the greatest, share certain elements of their life cycle. All have Gnosis, Willpower, Rage, and Essence in some capacity. Moreover, all spirits adhere to certain basic rhythms and patterns.

### *Slumber*

Like living beings, spirits often enter a state of dormancy and repose. This state, known as Slumber, is where most spirits spend the majority of their existence. While in Slumber, spirits take on a state akin to that of ephemera. Indeed, while in Slumber, spirits devoted to Gaia seem to merge their consciousness with that of Gaia herself. This unity with Gaia is as nurturing and restful as sleep is to material beings. The more powerful the spirit, the less reliant it is on Slumber; still, rumors abound of even Incarna-level spirits dropping out of contact to sleep away a millennium or two.

As the End Times approach, more and more spirits sink into permanent Slumber, becoming dormant and refusing to awaken. As such, the formerly vibrant tapestry of Gaia fades into the monochromatic, bleak World of Darkness. Shapeshifters who know where to look can occasionally find Slumbering spirits and awaken them with infusions of temporary Gnosis. All too often, though, spirits simply desire to Slumber for eternity, convinced of the hopelessness of things to come.

### *Sustenance*

All spirits must replenish their energy from one of various sources. For example, entering Slumber is the most basic way to replenish Rage, Gnosis, Willpower or Essence, just as material beings restore their energy through sleep. As well, spirits can replenish their energy through worship by material beings (as with a Garou rite). Some spirits use material artifacts to maintain their Traits; as an example, a spirit of War might attune itself to a gun that's been passed down from soldier to soldier. As the gun is used in one struggle after another, the spirit feeds. As well, some spirits bind themselves to particular locations, feeding on the psychic residue of that location; Bane-spirits often hover around places of murder and horror, while naturae prefer unspoiled areas of rustic tranquility.

Sometimes, spirits actually hunt and consume one another; for example, Lion-spirits stalk and eat Gazelle-spirits, absorbing their energy in the process. This typically happens along certain predefined, "natural" lines, in accordance with the nature of both predator

and prey. Spirits that unconcernedly wreak harm among other spirits are typically Banes.

### *Broods*

Just as shapeshifters bind themselves into tribes and breeds, so spirits are part of larger spirit families, to which they refer as broods. All broods descend from one or more Incarnae and, ultimately, from Gaia. It is thus accurate to say that all spirits are of one ancestral brood, and thus all are ultimately related. This does not keep spirits from having conflicts with one another, just as members of the same family often fight and bicker among themselves.

Technically, some relations within a brood are adoptive; for instance, the great totem Lion joined Griffin's brood after losing his chosen tribe to the Wyrms. Although Lion is not technically descended from Griffin, his status as "adopted son" of the Red Talons' mighty patron is equal to that of any spirit of "true" descent from Griffin. And, of course, the aspect of Lion that relates to the Simba werelions isn't truly part of Griffin's brood at all. It's for reasons like this that genealogy charts for spirits are a pure impossibility, and the relationship of the brood is so important.

Generally, a brood is defined as a group of spirits descended from or sworn to a particular Incarna. Thus, all spirit-progeny of Grandfather Thunder are considered of the same brood. If a pack takes a thunder-spirit as its totem, that totem is related to all other thunder totems anywhere in the world or Umbra.

Ties among broodmates are strong. A shapeshifter who offends one spirit ultimately offends all spirits within that brood. More rarely, a shapeshifter of great merit can be adopted as a member of a spirit brood. This is a high honor indeed, and one that exceeds the relationship between a shapeshifter and his tribal totem.

### *Chiminage*

An understanding of and respect for chiminage is essential for safe and beneficial dealing with the spirit world. Simply put, chiminage is the concept of repaying an asked-for favor with a favor of equal or greater value. The concept of chiminage seems to be an integral part of Gaia Herself — the idea that sacrifice and cooperation benefit the world-system as a whole. Certainly, every one of Gaia's spirits understands and utilizes the concept.

Chiminage is the paramount way one shows respect for a spirit's worth. Failure to offer a favor of equal or greater magnitude when "asking for" a spirit's aid is the equivalent of saying, "Your favor is of so little value to me that I'm not going to bother with repaying it."



Failure to offer chiminage has consequences ranging from simple refusal to perform the requested favor (if the shapeshifter is lucky) to an outright attack by the offended spirit (particularly in the case of spirits of war, or of predatory, fierce or proud creatures).

Chiminage can serve other purposes. Sometimes it's a matter of redemption, in which a penitent shapeshifter (or, occasionally, spirit) offers up a favor as a means of making amends for its deeds. Conversely, shapeshifters in good standing with the spirit world as a whole might freely offer favors in order to strengthen their ties with a spirit, or simply to improve their reputation. (News in the spirit world travels fast, and deeds — good or bad — to one spirit will quickly be learned of by all. Indeed, Gaian spirits hold even those Black Spiral Dancers who keep their ghastly promises to their Bane patrons in marginally higher regard than their more treacherous brethren. Needless to say, the Banes themselves also value chiminage, although the favors they request are much darker in nature.)

Generally speaking, any favor requested as part of a chiminage pact should be "paid for" by a deed of equal or greater worth. Of course, to "balance the scales," the being so favored should then eventually perform another favor, probably tipping the balance of debt over to its side, and so on. Some shapeshifters and spirits enjoy years-long chiminage relationships with each other, each gaining the benefit of the mutual cooperation as they each try to one-up the other's favor.

The chiminage itself can take on almost any form. It might be, simply enough, an outright quest undertaken in the spirit's interest (a favor which is particularly appropriate as repayment for the spirit teaching a high-level Gift). It might consist of the shapeshifter offering to spread the word of the spirit's generosity and wisdom — a good PR campaign, if you will. Shapeshifters who seek to bind spirits into fetishes often try to sweeten the deal by making the fetish's vessel as pleasing to the spirit as possible — perhaps using materials that the spirit finds soothing or rewarding, such as sharpened steel for war-spirits or black silk for night-spirits. Sometimes, favors might seem minor or even strange. For example, Cockroach-spirits might ask that you scratch your nails over concrete (they like the sound) or leave out some delicious garbage in a convenient location. Really, whatever seems suitable to the Storyteller is fine; it's the attempt to honor the pact that counts.

### *Pacts*

Sometimes, an arrangement with a spirit transcends the occasional exchange of favors represented by chiminage. A shapeshifter or pack will approach (or

be approached by) a spirit and both sides work out a deal of more formal and long-lasting services. Such agreements, known as pacts, are matters of honor even more demanding than chiminage, but the benefits of a properly forged pact can be immense.

Pacts are not to be entered into lightly, and inexperience in forging a pact can be lethal. Some spirits enjoy tricking inexperienced Garou into forging pacts that benefit the spirit far more than the shapeshifter. It's all too common for young shapeshifters, unsure of exactly what they're seeking in a spirit ally, to wander into the Umbra looking for any old spirit to help them. In so doing, they might make a deal with a spirit who not only words the language of the pact in a tricksome way, but can't help them accomplish their goals even if it wants to.

As such, it's advisable for young shapeshifters to use tried-and-true methods of approaching potential spirit allies. The most common way is simply to ask for "references" from elders of the sept or tribe. Elder Theurges, in particular, know many spirits, some of helpful bent. More importantly, they often know the nastier local spirits and can at least steer supplicants away from the most common pitfalls.

Another way to gain good allies is to enter the Umbra and meditate. Such meditation often draws anamae, spirits that reflect personal aspects of the shapeshifter and thus are predisposed to enter into pacts with her. For example, Unicorn's Heart Guides and Luna's Moonshadows are spirits that tend to be attuned to Garou, and thus young Garou would do well to seek out and bond with such beings.

There are several types of pacts. Personal pacts are the simplest, while dealings with a pack totem can be difficult and convoluted (but extremely beneficial) arrangements.

### *Personal Pacts*

Most shapeshifters make one or more personal pacts with spirits, just as most people end up getting married at some point in their lives. Shapeshifters should perhaps take a cue from the high American divorce rate when seeking out such a pact — for personal pacts are as complicated and arduous endeavors as most marriages. However, properly forged, a personal pact can be equally as fulfilling.

Simply put, a personal pact is a friendship, or at least alliance, between a shapeshifter and a spirit. Much as with a friendship, it's the unspoken truths and commitments that mean more than any formal agreements. And, as with a friendship, a personal pact works out in the end only if respect and trust are adhered to on both sides.



Maintaining a personal pact takes great amounts of time and effort on the shapeshifter's part. Moreover, a spurned former spirit ally can be the worst of enemies. For that reason, if the shapeshifter ever senses that the relationship is unraveling, he'd do best to try to end the pact on an honorable note, rather than risk hurt feelings that blossom into rancor.

### *Fetish Pact*

In the elder days, the shapeshifters made many pacts with spirits and some of these pacts delineated procedures for the imbuing of spirits into items. These items, called fetishes (or, for single-use items, talens) allowed the werebeasts to use the spirit's power in the material world.

Fetish pacts are like any other pact: the spirit agrees to exist in the fetish for a time in exchange for favors. Additionally, each time a new owner uses the fetish, he must reestablish the pact with the spirit, in the form of Gnosis expenditure. Essentially, the spirit is getting a free "meal" of Gnosis, while the shapeshifter is getting additional power.

Because this agreement is based on Gnosis, only shapeshifters can use fetishes and talens.

### *Pack Totems*

More formal, lasting and binding than even a personal pact is a pact binding an entire shapeshifter pack to a totem spirit. Just as the bond among members of a pack transcends any other relationship in the material world, so does the bond between a pack totem and its pack transcend any other type of spirit relationship. Nothing is more fulfilling than a relationship built on trust between totem and pack; conversely, nothing is more hurtful and shameful than a breaking of that trust.

A totem spirit, when first bound to a pack, is typically one of a tribal Incarna's brood. Over time, though, it becomes something much more. It subsumes much of the characteristics of the pack members into it, and conversely, the characters should subsume its characteristics into their own spirits. Eventually, the totem is a living embodiment of the bond between the pack, and the pack is the material manifestation of the

### *Personal Totems*

Some shapeshifters, particularly those who run without packs, establish a one-on-one totem relationship with a spirit. A personal totem works much like a pack totem — it is purchased with Background points, can be made stronger with the expenditure of experience points, grants special favors and asks a ban of its child. The greatest difference, of course, is that its powers and attention are always focused on one shapeshifter, rather than distributed evenly among a pack.

A relationship with a personal totem is in many ways even more intimate than a relationship with a pack totem. The shapeshifter must still strive to do his totem proud by earning Renown and adhering to his totem's ban, but since his totem's attention is unwaveringly on his actions, his behavior becomes all the more important. Sometimes a shapeshifter's relationship with his personal totem is stronger than his relationship with his spouse or friends. It's not a bond to be entered into lightly.

Although some shapeshifters, such as Bastet, take well to personal totems, others have more difficulty with such a pact. In particular, pack-oriented shapeshifters like the Garou have a harder time bonding to a spirit without the support of packmates. In game terms, a werewolf or other pack-oriented shapeshifter may purchase a personal totem by purchasing the Totem Background

as usual. However, the costs double: each dot in Totem that goes toward a personal totem costs two Background points (or two freebie points) to purchase at character creation, and six experience points if purchased later on. For instance, a Silent Strider who takes Owl as a personal totem must spend at least 12 Background points or freebie points to purchase the totem at all. It should also be mentioned that a shapeshifter cannot possess a personal totem and a pack totem at the same time; such bonds are too intimate to be shared. A pack totem will reject any applicant who already has a personal totem, and a spirit will refuse to act as personal totem to someone who is part of a pack.

Werewolves (and other pack-oriented Fera) who have chosen to take a personal totem rather than join a pack tend to suffer mild social disadvantages as well. Wolves run in packs — that's simple nature. A wolf never chooses to hunt alone, for he would surely starve to death; a werewolf who chooses to hunt alone is seen as foolish, someone who doesn't accept his nature. It is exceedingly hard for other werewolves to trust him, for his choice of solitude seems to imply that he doesn't want a pack to rely on him. Even if his totem is an honorable and respected one, other Garou will still wonder why the loner has made such a choice.



totem's existence. This is not metaphorical; this is literal. After a while, if the totem departs, the pack ceases to be a pack anymore, while if the pack dissolves, the totem fades back into the ephemera.

To take a pack totem, the pack-to-be must come together as part of a Rite of the Totem. The members, aided by their elders, must petition the Incarna themselves to grant them a worthy spirit. After a spirit is found and, more importantly, agrees to adopt the pack, the rite is completed and the pack forms.

It's understood that, in taking a totem, the pack agrees to act in ways beneficial to the state of Gaia as a whole. In other words, to nurture the relationship with the pack totem, it's essential that pack members gain Renown. A pack with high Glory, Honor and Wisdom strengthens the totem and allows it to gain status in the spirit world. Conversely, a pack with poor Renown shames its spirit, who becomes sullen, withdrawn and less likely to help.

Other shapeshifters can join a pack, but the totem must agree to take these beings under its aegis. Furthermore, some packs can change members over time, as pack members age, leave the pack, and die, while new, young blood enriches the pack. Some ancient packs have stretched back for generations, and their pack totems are accordingly wise, powerful, and revered in both the material and spirit worlds. These spirits, of course, have exceedingly high expectations of beings that would seek to join the pack. In a few rare cases, a pack totem has agreed to accept shapeshifters from other Breeds or even particularly noteworthy Kinfolk into a pack. However, the pack bond has never yet been extended to mages, even those with Kin blood, and no spirit will accept the undead into a pack. A pack may run with allies whose loyalties ultimately lie outside the war for Gaia, but only Gaia's chosen are permitted to sign the pact of loyalty with a pack totem.

### *Caern and Sept Totems*

Some spirits are bound not to an individual shapeshifter or pack, but to a nexus of mystical energy in the land itself. These spirits typically become guardians of these caerns. Shapeshifter septs that form around the caerns always make pacts with these spirits in order to maintain the caern.

A caern totem is concerned primarily with the preservation of the caern. As such, it can make requests or even demands of the local sept, should it feel that a course of action is in the best interest of the caern. However, these requests typically aren't as extensive or involved as those made by pack totems; after all, the caern totem is bound to the stationary caern, so it needs the sept as much as the sept needs it. Typically,

a caern totem is satisfied with the sept's rites themselves, which release even more spiritual energy into the vicinity. Some caern totems, however, do require other sacrifices. Some caern spirits demand that the sept keep certain creatures out of a specific radius around the caern. Others demand a certain number of sacrifices (Wyrms-creatures, bullocks, possibly sentient beings in the case of Wyrms-spirits).

### *Tribal Totems*

The most powerful totems, the tribal totems, are Incarnae. Their pacts are with an entire tribe of werewolves (or other shapeshifters). These pacts were forged thousands of years ago, and all beings born into the tribe must honor the pact. Over the millennia, the totems have given much to maintain their end of the pact, and countless shapeshifters have sacrificed happiness, love, blood, and even life in the service of the totem. There is no greater bond in the spirit world, save perhaps that between the Wyrms and one of its slaves (and that tends to be rather one-sided).

Among other things, membership in a tribe imparts knowledge of tribal Gifts and access to tribal homelands; all of these advantages are part and parcel of the ancient pact. As a shapeshifter rises in rank, she gains favor in the eyes of the totem, gaining access to more powerful Gifts and rites.

Nonetheless, the relationship between a shapeshifter and tribal totem is never that of mutual understanding; it is veneration, virtually a form of ancestor-worship. No matter how high-ranking a werewolf becomes, most tribal totems will always consider him a subordinate and supplicant (although totems such as Unicorn might be more polite about it than, say, Great Fenris). As such, no true chiminage bond exists between a tribesperson and a tribal totem. The totem is free to ask of the shapeshifter whatever it will, and any entreaties on the shapeshifter's part are freely heeded or ignored. The totem already provides the homeland, Gifts, and rites, and so owes nothing more to an individual shapeshifter. This does not mean that a tribal totem will regularly scorn and ignore the calls of its tribe's greatest heroes — only that it is not forced to respond as swiftly as possible.

### *Violation of Pacts*

Spirits, as manifestations of Gaia, tend to honor their pacts. Rare indeed is the spirit that deliberately or even accidentally breaks a pact forged with a shapeshifter. That said, shapeshifters, as imperfect material beings, tend to violate their pacts with greater frequency. This violation can be through forgetful-



ness, lack of ability, poor planning or simple callousness. Ultimately, it does not much matter why.

Spirits don't just sit back and take it when a shapeshifter takes advantage of them. Most of the time, especially in relatively minor cases, the spirit simply treats the shapeshifter with disdain and hostility thereafter. It will also usually inform its broodmates of the transgression. This ostracism is more dangerous than it looks; a shapeshifter with a bad rep can find the Umbra to be an extremely hostile place. Spirits might not (and generally won't) attack the transgressor outright—but they won't lift an ephemeral finger to help, warn or otherwise aid the character, and they'll take whatever acts of petty revenge they can. However, spirits of Gaia are relatively forgiving (though not stupid). If the transgressor gives a valid excuse for his violation of the pact (and sometimes, "Yes, I'm a fuck-up" is fair), then undertakes chiminage to rectify the debt, the spirit will probably forgive him.

Sometimes, a character tries his best to fulfill a pact debt, but simply cannot accomplish what she needs to accomplish. In such cases, the conscientious character should tell the spirit and offer to perform an alternative deed in exchange. Again, most spirits of Gaia will accept such an excuse, provided the character did indeed try her utmost to accomplish the task set out in the pact.

A character that willfully and flagrantly violates a pact, especially if the violation endangers the spirit in question, is in a bit more trouble. Various bad things, of which the following are only a few possibilities, can come of such an occurrence.

### *Haunting*

Ghosts aren't the only beings who can haunt victims. Wronged spirits can do a frightfully good job of making a transgressor's life hell.

A haunting is generally designed to frustrate and aggravate the character rather than inflict physical harm. The spirit might continually badger and harass the character, appearing (to the character only) at the most inopportune times to shriek at him, scare him, drive him into frenzy or otherwise make him an emotional wreck. The spirit will likely steal and lose the character's small possessions — car keys, wallet, fetishes and the like. The spirit might also annoy and petition the character's elders until they take it upon themselves to correct the character.

Generally speaking, a haunting can be ended by begging contrition and agreeing to pay chiminage — though the chiminage debt will be greater than normal, because the spirit had to go through so much trouble to collect its due.

### *Rites*

The rites that shapeshifters enact aren't powered by the shapeshifters themselves — a rite works because it invokes the spirits to perform some form of boon, and in accordance to the Pact, the spirits respond. However, if a shapeshifter has sufficiently offended the spirit world, she may find that her rites cease to function — the spirits have decided that she has broken the Pact, and they are no longer bound to answer her call. It takes a particularly flagrant offense or series of offenses to draw down a punishment of this sort, but there is sometimes no better way to show an errant werebeast that she must mend her ways *now*, or risk losing Gaia's grace in even greater fashion.

Of course, sometimes the Wyrms' broods will still offer to fulfill the rites of a straying shapeshifter, as a means of seducing the stray pup toward their side. Obviously, no Bane can empower rites such as the Rite of Cleansing, but they can sometimes suggest rites with alternate wording — for example, a Rite of the Fetish that invokes the terrible power of the Wyrms to bind spirits rather than calling on the grace of Gaia. The best example of this is the Abomination — the rare and accursed werewolf unlucky enough to "survive" the transformation into a vampire. Gaian spirits refuse to empower any rite performed by an undead thing, but Banes find a perverse delight in answering such a call....

### *Curses*

Curses are a popular form of penance. To cast a curse, though, a spirit must be fairly powerful or have access to powerful broodmates or patrons. Often, a spirit must appeal to the Incarna or Celestine whom it serves in order to invoke a curse.

Typically, curses last a variable length of time. For minor transgressions, a curse may last for a fortnight, or one full phase of the moon, or a season. Most curses are designed to last until the transgressor pleads forgiveness and pays chiminage. For truly heinous violations, the curse can last for the rest of the being's life — however, an Incarna or Celestine can lift such a curse (or any other) if, in the spirit's eyes, the transgressor has paid the penalty.

Curses vary in intensity, depending on the nature of the transgression and the power of the spirit. Mild curses might involve receiving lousy service at every establishment the character patronizes, or striking out with every would-be lover the character approaches (both of these probably drain Willpower over time). More severe curses might involve traffic accidents, hideous and unregenerable boils on the skin (penalties to Attributes), loss of teeth (and appropriate bite



damage), or simple bad luck (penalties to all kinds of dice rolls). Typically, the curse reflects the nature of the spirit and the transgression. For example, a character who refused to attack the enemy of a spirit of war (as payment for the war-spirit attacking one of the Garou's own enemies) might find that any weapon he uses breaks, jams or turns in his hand to strike him.

One of the worst curses is the Mark of Shame — a mark that appears on the character's head whenever she enters the Umbra. All spirits can see the mark and know the character to be an oathbreaker. Accordingly, it's practically impossible for a character so marked to gain so much as acknowledgment, let alone aid, from any spirit at all. The Mark of Shame can be removed by the offended spirit or by a being of Incarna-level or higher; however, such beings never consent to remove the mark until the character has made restitution to the offended spirit.

Generally speaking, the best way to undo a curse is to apologize and make restitution. But sometimes a werewolf or other shapeshifter can offend a spirit without even realizing it. A werebeast might piss off a really bad-tempered spirit, who won't remove a curse out of sheer spite or who demands chiminage far in excess of the actual transgression. In these cases, a character might have to seek out alternate ways of removing a curse.

The most straightforward way is by appealing to a tribal totem or other Incarna for intervention. As a rule, Incarnae are largely fair; if a character has been grossly wronged or has acted in ignorance, the Incarna will probably remove the curse or at least direct the character toward the actions needed to remove it. In some cases, the Incarna might order an Umbral "trial" of the character, allowing the character to argue in his own defense. A few rare Galliards have done this so successfully that they've managed not only to be "acquitted," but to have their curse turned back on the spirit who laid it; of course, this is a good way to gain an enemy for life.

More martial spirits might demand an ordeal or fight before removing a curse. This battle can be in the Umbra or the material world; the spirit who laid the curse and the cursed character physically or spiritually do battle. If the character wins, the curse is lifted; if he loses, he must give in and do what the victor asks of him (at which point the curse is also lifted). A few vicious spirits insist that the fight continue until death or disincorporation; but then, he who makes pacts with War-spirits and the like should understand the consequences of violation.

The silver rivers of Erebus (p. 63) are a universally accepted ordeal for Garou; any Garou (and Garou

only) who endures them will be considered to have undergone sufficient punishment, and Charyss herself will lift the curse.

Finally, some other beings — notably mages and mummies — are rumored to have the power to lift curses. Using a non-Umbral means to lift an Umbral curse, however, is considered "cheating" of the worst sort. Such a character will gain an exceedingly bad reputation among spirits.

### *Attack*

Physical attack is the last resort of a scorned spirit — not least because, if the spirit loses, its power to rectify the debt is effectively gone.

An attack typically takes place in the Umbra, where the spirit can ambush the character on its home ground. Occasionally, the spirit will physically materialize and attack the character in the material world; only the most outraged spirits do this, however.

Attacks may be one of three types. For relatively minor transgressions, an attack may be a feint, a sort of "wake-up call" to let the character know that the spirit is upset. These attacks typically last only a few turns. Spirits sometimes use nightmares as an alternative, bedeviling the character with evil dreams of horror and carnage.

More outraged spirits really lay into the character, going so far as to inflict a battle scar. Again, the spirit's goal is not to kill the character, but to force it to repent and pay chiminage; this attack is more of an object lesson than a to-the-death battle. As an alternative, the spirit may attempt to kidnap the character, dragging him into the Umbra and imprisoning him until such time as he agrees to make amends.

An attack to kill is exceedingly rare, and only mortally offended spirits resort to such a thing. Still, lethal attacks do happen, and usually involve the materialization of the spirit (along with as many broodmates as are necessary to win the fight). If the character wins, however, all obligations to the spirit are cancelled; even Gaia's gentlest believe in a degree of natural selection. The character may likely suffer from an exceedingly poor reputation thereafter, though; it should never have come to this.

## *The Spirit Hierarchy*

It is the nature of spirits to be mysterious and unknowable. Yet humans and even shapeshifters love to classify and categorize. Thus, spirits, even those of the Wyrms, are often placed into one of several categories, similar to the phylum, class, order, family and genus of the biologist. The most common categories are Gaffling, Jaggling, Incarna and Celestine.



## *Gaffling*

Gafflings are the lowliest of spirits (though still important to the whole of the Umbra. They tend to be avatars of a greater spirit, such as an Incarna, or else simply pieces of ephemera given temporary life via Gnosis. They are the "animals" of the Umbra. Some Gafflings seem very clever — indeed, some of the trickster Gafflings often confound the brightest of material beings — but as a rule, Gafflings have no real sense of individual identity. In this they are no more developed than newborn human babies. One Gaffling of a particular "species" is much like another, and if destroyed, a Gaffling will eventually re-form as another Gaffling of the same type. Common elementals, animal spirits and the awakened spirits of vehicles are all examples of Gafflings.

## *Jagglings*

The Jaggling represents the common Umbral "citizen." Jagglings, unlike Gafflings, are usually sentient (as we know it) and, more importantly, have an individual identity. Some Jagglings represent very minor phenomena — for example, a particularly famous gem might have an elemental Jaggling that represents it, its life force linked to the gem and vice versa.

Jagglings typically serve an Incarna, but, unlike Gafflings, are not mere outgrowths of that Incarna. A Jaggling generally has its own personality, motivations, and goals, which do not always correspond with those of its Incarna patron. A Jaggling's power level can vary greatly, from the modest power of a Stormcrow to the might of a caern totem or Nexus Crawler.

## *Incarnae*

An Incarna is several orders of magnitude above a Jaggling. Incarnae are the greatest servants and manifestations of the Celestines. In fact, such service is the primary way of differentiating an Incarna from a Celestine — most Incarnae are subordinate to a given Celestine, while Celestines themselves acknowledge no superiors, save perhaps Gaia Herself.

Most Incarnae serve Gaia, the Weaver, the Wyld, or the Wyrn. The tribal totems of the shapeshifters are Incarnae. Incarnae seem to be embodiments of important concepts, but more powerful ones — the powerful Incarna of the planet Mars outranks any war-spirit a werewolf is likely to see. Unlike Celestines, Incarnae are not literally their concepts/phenomena — they merely represent them. If the Maeljin Incarna of Pain is destroyed, the phenomenon of pain, alas, will still exist. It can thus be inferred that Incarnae tend to identify with certain concepts according to their personalities, then structure their identities around those concepts.

## *Celestines*

The mightiest of spirits are known as Celestines. Gaia Herself is considered a Celestine (albeit the greatest one of all), as are the members of the Triat. A few other exceptionally powerful spirits (Luna and Helios, for example) also qualify, as do the very greatest elementals.

The best way to understand Celestines is to think of them as akin to gods. Celestines represent the most fundamental forces in the universe. Indeed, one way to differentiate a Celestine from an Incarna is in the statement that the Celestine literally is the phenomenon she embodies — not a mere avatar of it — and is thus virtually indestructible. As the wisest scholars of the spirit world understand it, an Incarna springs from its phenomenon, while a phenomenon springs from a Celestine. For example, if the Stag Incarna of Gaia were destroyed in a cataclysmic battle, a Stag Jaggling could be "promoted" to fill the Incarna's place. If, on the other hand, the spirit entity Luna were destroyed, the very moon would cease to exist.

This is *precisely* why the Garou find their battle for Gaia so important; if the soul of creation is corrupted or slain, existence as the Earth knows it will end.

## *Miscellaneous Spirits*

A few kinds of spirit beings don't easily fall into a particular category. Most notable of these are emanations.

## *Emanations*

Emanations are an interesting class of spirits, for they don't seem to fall into the normal categories of Jaggling, Gaffling, Incarna and Celestine. If anything, emanations are a sort of manifestation of a realm. Each Near Realm produces emanations in keeping with its character. In fact, some Garou theorize that emanations are the realm's "language," its way of communicating with material beings.

Emanations commonly appear as humans or animals of a type appropriate to the realm. For example, emanations in the Atrocity Realm are either victims or victimizers, while the emanations found in Pangaea can take the form of primitive humans or any of a number of monstrous extinct beasts. Emanations typically appear in all ways as creatures of the type they emulate — right down to having material instead of spirit Traits. For example, a werewolf in the Atrocity Realm who does battle with a serial killer will find that his opponent's strength is measured in Strength, Dexterity, health levels, etc. — not spirit Traits such as Rage.



## Important Spirits

### Spirit Traits

The spirits in this section are described as per standard Revised rules; players using 1st or 2nd edition rules can probably extrapolate Power Traits as needed. Charms marked with an asterisk appear in the Appendix.

### The Ciaron Totems

#### Pegasus

Pegasus is the proud, fey totem of the Black Furies. Originally, according to some apocryphal legends, Pegasus was created to oppose the Furies and check their depredations against early man. Though a series of matings with her first rider, a proud hero named Bellerophon, Pegasus produced a vast spirit brood. However, Bellerophon's nature changed from loving and respectful to arrogant and tyrannical, and the spirit-horse dashed him off her back to his death. Joining her former enemies, the Black Furies, Pegasus has ever since stood for the wild and mystic union between humanity (more specifically, the female) and the Wyld.

#### Pegasus Jagglng

Willpower 8, Rage 8, Gnosis 8, Essence 24

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Armor, Cleanse the Blight, Create Wind, Healing, Materialize, Open Moon Bridge, Re-form, Tracking

**Image:** A Pegasus Jagglng appears as a majestic, perfectly formed winged horse. Some are white, some sky blue, and others gray or black. They range in size from horse-size to gigantic, though their statistics don't change. In the material world, they often take the shape of horselike cloud formations, their hooves and teeth flashing like lightning when enraged.

**History:** Pegasus Jagglngs are their totem's most common messengers and servants. They wing their way through the clouds on errands for the Incarna. They occasionally appear to humans, particularly children and Kinfolk.

**Habitat:** These spirits roam the reaches of the Aetherial Realm, particularly loving to gallop among the cloudbanks. They also frequent the Black Furies' Umbral homeland.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Wisdom, messengers, sorrow, battle

**Material Correspondences:** To summon a Pegasus Jagglng, one must merely pray to the totem for aid. Such prayers commonly take the form of Greek choral chants, though this structure is not necessary.





**Gift Lore:** Pegasus Jagglings can teach Gifts pertaining to healing, speed, strength, and battle.

**Taboos:** Pegasus Jagglings are exceedingly vulnerable to the attacks of Weaver-spirits (their Armor charm does not protect them against such). Pegasus Jagglings often attack Get of Fenris on sight.

**Attitude:** Pegasus Jagglings are high-strung and majestic. One must treat them with utmost respect and do everything in one's power to soothe the creatures. Once befriended, a Pegasus Jaggling is loyal to a fault.

**Chiminage:** Those seeking to befriend a Pegasus Jaggling must treat the creature reverentially, but must never show fear or discomfort. Pegasus Jagglings respond most readily to those who would defend the Wyld or females.

### *Rat*

The city is not called "the concrete jungle" for nothing. As much as it seems humanity has sealed itself off from its primordial nature behind walls of asphalt and towers of glass, this assumption is in error. The Wyld exists even in the heart of the urban core, and the actions of predators and prey play themselves out as much as they ever did in the jungle.

The Rat totem knows this struggle all too well. It is the avatar of the Wyld survivors amid the cities of homids. In conjunction with its vast brood, Rat serves to remind humanity and Garou alike that the ancient ways of Gaia cannot be denied even in the End Times. Unlike the Cockroach, Rat is attuned to Wyld rather than Weaver; it lives in harmony with its surroundings, but as a hunter and conqueror rather than scavenger.

### *Rat Gaffling*

Willpower 8, Rage 6, Gnosis 7, Essence 21

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Materialize, Re-form, Tracking

**Image:** Fittingly enough, Rat Gafflings appear as rats, though there is a wide disparity in individual appearances. Some are as tiny as mice; others, as large as cats. Some are scrawny and emaciated; others, fat and bloated. Some Rat Gafflings are timid, hiding in whatever garbage or clothing is available; others will walk right up and leer at whatever's present (unless it's obviously a threat — no Rat Gaffling is stupid). A few Rat Gafflings, particularly those that haunt richer areas of the Penumbra, even dress in human clothes, stand on their hind legs like humans, smoke cigars, and display other human affectations.

**History:** Rat Gafflings first made their mark with the earliest human civilizations. It was they who taught their earthly counterparts how to break into granaries, steal beer, and otherwise act to bring a little of the

Wyld behind the Weaver-walls of the humans. As civilization has spread outward and across the planet, Rat Gafflings have become little fifth columnists, ever scuttling, listening, and keeping the totem apprised of doings "behind enemy lines."

**Habitat:** Much as with their earthly kin, Rat Gafflings can be found nearly anywhere. They infest the Penumbra, and most Near Realms have at least a few hidey-holes for the creatures. They swarm through the Scar, have a subterranean kingdom beneath the City of the Legendary Realm, and have even gnawed tunnels beneath the Battleground.

Within the material world, Rat Gafflings divide themselves into different classes depending on habitat. Sewer Rats skulk in the lowest, nastiest sections of the city. They keep an eye on the doings of Wyrms-creatures and undead, and also communicate with Ratkin. Tenement Rats inhabit dilapidated buildings, bars, sleazy motels and massage parlors, and the like. They're the most streetwise of rats and have an ear open for all manner of human gossip and goings-on. Roof Rats are the aristocracy of the breed. They're the most likely to dress in human clothes, and they gaze down on the city as a whole from their rooftop aeries. It's the Roof Rats who plan strategy for the Gafflings as a whole.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Rat Gafflings are war-spirits of a sort, but they are attuned toward guerilla warfare, sabotage, and infiltration rather than direct battle. They are also spirits of survival and adaptability in the face of adversity. Finally, as creatures of the Wyld, they are servants of chaos. Whereas Cockroach spirits love machines for their own sake and thrill to the organization inherent in technology, Rat Gafflings like to break those machines, wreck the workings of industry, and bring the Weaver's best-laid plans screeching to a halt.

**Material Correspondences:** Rats love junk — the older, stinkier, more worn-out and crappier, the better. They also love to eat. They'll eat anything except stuff that's poisonous to their kin (caffeine, chocolate). Within the wide range of their preferences, stomach-wrenching crud like salty popcorn and greasy chips works very well for summoning Rat Gafflings.

**Gift Lore:** Rat Gafflings can teach Gifts associated with stealth, survival, and the city. Specifically, the Gifts of Cooking, Infest, Riot and Attunement come naturally to them.

**Taboos:** Rat Gafflings tread warily around poisons and traps. They can lead their brethren away from them, but they can't themselves disturb them without materializing and taking the chance of being caught.



Most Rat Gafflings, as creatures of the Wyld, thrive on disorder. They like junk-strewn spaces with lots of hidey-holes. Cleaning up and sterilizing an area overmuch will drive the spirits away.

Finally, while Rat Gafflings are pack animals, they have to have room to spread out. Crowding them in on one another ignites their Rage, causing them to lash out at their own kind and anything else in the vicinity.

**Attitude:** Caution is ingrained in the Rat Gaffling; they're exceedingly skittish around people they don't know well. They tend to be nervous around all Bete except Bone Gnawers and, of course, Ratkin. Otherwise, personality largely depends on the specific type of Gaffling. Sewer Rats are feral and sneaky, Tenement Rats are savvy and sleazy, and Roof Rats can be somewhat elitist and full of their own cleverness.

**Chiminage:** Rat Gafflings are hard bargainers. They'll negotiate every term of service, down to the fine print. In some ways, this haggling is as much to test the summoner's cunning and patience as it is to actually gain anything. Nonetheless, Rat Gafflings rarely agree to serve unless they get the better of the deal up front.

### *Unicorn*

Unicorn is a totem of peace and mercy, and so it is with her brood. The spirits allied with Unicorn come from a variety of aspects and places, but all place the ways of war and rage as secondary to the pursuit of empathy and love.

This is not to say that Unicorn will not struggle in a just cause — some of her brood are defenders of the weak, and even she can channel her anger against a foe. The horn of the Unicorn brings healing and peace to those in need of it, but can just as readily be turned to impale the minions of the Wyrms who would violate the harmony of Gaia.

### *Heart Guides (Unicorn Anamae)*

Rage, Gnosis and Willpower equal to those of bonded shapeshifter; Essence equal to sum of Rage, Gnosis and Willpower

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Healing (only on bonded shapeshifter), Materialize (x2 cost), Open Moon Bridge, Realm Sense, Re-form, Tracking

**Image:** Unicorn Anamae look like unicorns, but their coats, bearing and other particulars reflect those of the shapeshifter to whom they are bound. For example, a Get of Fenris might have a strong, proud stallion as his Anamae, while a Ratkin might have a scruffy, feisty pony.

**History:** Unicorn Anamae ostensibly exist to teach the Changing Breeds that all shapeshifters are of

one larger family. They've appeared mainly to Garou, the instigators of the Impergium; however, in recent years, other Fera have found Heart Guides. As a Heart Guide, the Anamae guides its assigned charge along the proper path and acts as a living indicator of its companion's spiritual health.

**Habitat:** Unicorn Anamae are not found outside of the Children of Gaia homeland, save when accompanying a bonded charge.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** As a group, Unicorn Anamae are creatures of wisdom and unity. Each individual Guide also reflects the spirit nature of the Fera to whom it is bonded.

**Material Correspondences:** A Heart Guide values nothing more than something precious to the shapeshifter to whom the Anamae is to be bonded.

**Gift Lore:** Unicorn Anamae can teach Gifts that focus on communication, empathy, and unity with Gaia. Examples are Mercy, Calm, Dazzle, and Part the Veil

**Taboos:** Unicorn Anamae never initiate an attack. They fight only to defend their charges, and then only when flight is impossible.

**Attitude:** Unicorn Anamae reflect the positive parts of the Fera to whom they're bonded. Like a good therapist, they can coax out the good in just about any creature. A legend popular among the Children of Gaia holds that one Unicorn Anamae bonded with a Black Spiral Dancer and eventually guided the creature back to Gaia.

**Chiminage:** Unicorn Anamae bond with one specific shapeshifter, in a personal pact (p. 99). Once this pact is made, they're loyal unto death, but insist that their partner try to live up to the ideals of Gaia as closely as possible.

### *Stag*

Stag is an ancient and powerful totem of the wilderness, and his brood is one of the largest and most united of the totems. Stag has fathered many spirits and takes a paternal interest in those who would declare their loyalty to him. Many naturae and elementals — particularly air and earth elementals — have chosen to follow Stag. As well, Stag is an ally of changelings, and so many chimerical creatures of Dream join Stag's family as well.

### *Black Stag*

Willpower 10, Rage 9, Gnosis 7, Essence 30

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Armor, Blast (Flame), Materialize, Re-form, Tracking

**Image:** These fearsome creatures take the form of enormous, jet-black stags, similar to the prehistoric



deer of Ireland's past. They're as large as elk, with blazing red eyes and flickering tongues. Their aspect is terrifying to creatures of the Wyrms.

**History:** Many of Stag's brood are creatures of fancy and levity, dream and desire. Black Stags are not cut from this cloth. They are embodiments of Stag's rage, his agents of vengeance. These creatures can be found in the train of the Wild Hunt, goring Wyrminions and errant shapeshifters alike. When they appear to a Fianna, it is a sure omen that the werewolf is on the wrong path and had best correct his behavior immediately. When they appear to most other creatures, violence is soon to follow.

**Habitat:** When not embarked on a mission for Stag, they dwell in the realm of their Incarna, in a deep green forest made for them. When encountered outside this realm, they are almost certainly on an errand of woe and war.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Black Stags represent vengeance and furious (but righteous) anger.

**Material Correspondences:** To call upon a Black Stag, a petitioner had best have a good reason. If this is so, sacrifices of antler bark and blood into a bonfire is the best means of calling forth the Stag.

**Gift Lore:** Black Stags show up only to take vengeance on a transgressor. They teach no Gifts.

**Taboos:** Black Stags must attack the enemies of Gaia, be they Wyrms or Weaver.

**Attitude:** Black Stags are emphatically hostile to minions of the Wyrms, neutral to everything else. In their totem's realm, when not embarked on missions, they can be friendly to Fianna in good standing with the totem.

**Chiminage:** Black Stags do no favors for summoners, nor do they accept any, save assistance in slaying their targets.

### *Fenris*

A savage spirit of War, Great Fenris attracts a brood befitting its martial splendor. Spirits of war, frost, fire, steel and various predators all attend the Great Wolf. Those who would serve Fenris — spirit or mortal — must be ever ready to fight and back away from no challenge.

### *War Wolves*

Willpower 7, Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Essence 32

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Armor, Blast (ice shards), Freeze, Materialize, Realm Sense, Re-form

**Image:** Fenris' War Wolves take the form of monstrous Hispo with snow-white pelts, freezing breath and cold blue eyes.

**History:** Fenris' War Wolves have existed as long as Fenris himself. They form the vanguard of Fenris' brood and are the most common spirits chosen to interact with Garou. They are spirits of battle, sent to aid his Get when they find themselves hopelessly outnumbered or otherwise about to be vanquished through no fault of their own. Other spirits and tribes fear these fierce, merciless creatures.

**Habitat:** War Wolves wander the Umbra on missions for Fenris. They also may be found in the Fenrir's tribal homeland.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** War Wolves are spirits of battle, vengeance, the hunt, and winter.

**Material Correspondences:** To summon a War Wolf, the ritemaster must be prepared to make a blood sacrifice — commonly by opening a wound in one's hand with a knife. In extremis, a werewolf can tear a chunk of flesh from his arm, then hurl the flesh into a fire.

**Gift Lore:** War Wolves teach Gifts associated with war, tracking, and defense.

**Taboos:** War Wolves may not refuse a challenge to battle, nor may they allow a slight to go unpunished.

**Attitude:** War Wolves are friendly to Get of Fenris in good standing and neutral toward most other Garou tribes. They are antagonistic toward most other Fera, particularly Bastet and Nagah.

**Chiminage:** War Wolves will help only Garou who have never fled from battle. To learn from or bind a War Wolf, one must prove one's courage by hunting down and slaying an enemy of the spirit's choice. If a War Wolf is bound into a fetish, the owner of that fetish must always seek revenge on escaped foes; if he fails to do so, the spirit will depart.

### *Cockroach*

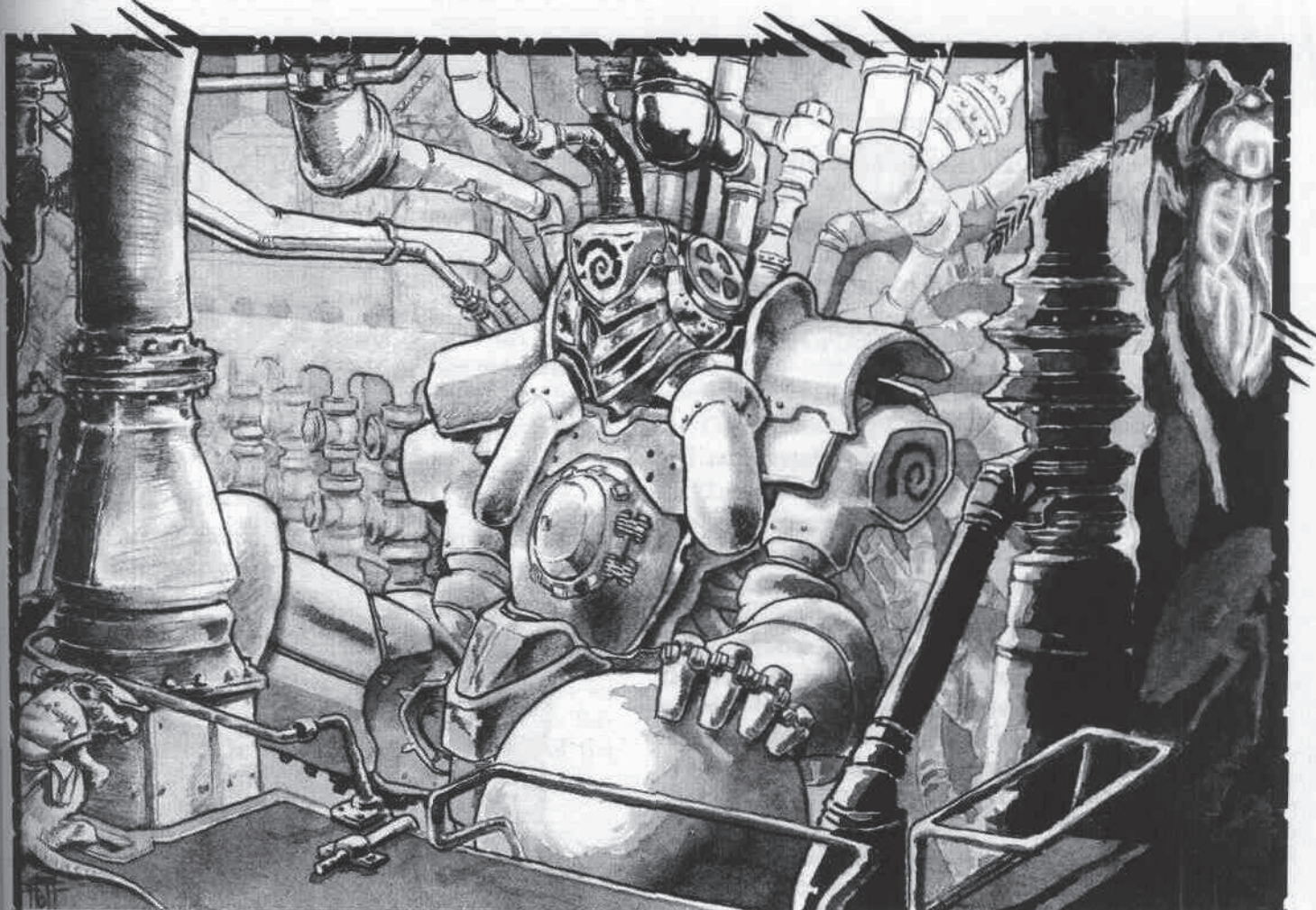
The Cockroach is a cunning and adaptable spirit, shunning direct conflict for subtle planning and gradual victory. Despite the totem's poor reputation among humans, Glass Walkers admire and revere its flexibility, cleverness and grit. Cockroach is one of the most ardent defenders of Gaia, and unlike many totems, is more concerned with its duties than with personal pride. The totem takes great pains to guard against the worst excesses of the Weaver while trying to coax the lost sister back into Gaia's fold. Cockroach understands the Weaver better than any other totem, and so he and his brood are essential in thwarting the Weaver's plots.

### *Cockroach Jagglings*

Willpower 5, Rage 2, Gnosis 8, Essence 15

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Control Electrical Systems, Materialize, Realm Sense, Short Out





**Image:** Cockroach Gafflings come in all sizes, from aphid-sized bugs to roaches as big as dogs. Some Gafflings glow with bioluminescent neon markings.

**History:** In the beginning of days, Cockroach spawned Jagglings and Gafflings to venture into the Realm and Umbra as its spies and servants. These beings went in various directions. Some went to the Realm, some went to the Weaver's domain, and some went to the Wyld's domain. Ever since, the coordination among all of these broods ensures the survivability of Cockroach and his children.

**Habitat:** In the Umbra, Cockroach Gafflings infest the Penumbral shadows of dilapidated buildings. They also crawl around nearly every domain, from the CyberRealm to the Scar to the Weaver's domain to the Atrocity Realm — never noticed, always watching.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Cunning, strength in numbers

**Material Correspondences:** To summon Cockroach Gafflings, a Garou must leave fresh food in a darkened area until earthly cockroaches come to feast. Once they've arrived, the Garou can then attempt to summon their spiritual kin by inscribing the glyph of the Cockroach. If attempting to bind a Cockroach

Gaffling into a fetish or talen, the Garou must use black string to tie the creature inside.

**Gift Lore:** Cockroach Gafflings teach Gifts pertaining to the Weaver, survivability, stealth and powers relating to insects.

**Taboos:** Cockroach Gafflings hate and fear caustic cleaning agents such as lye, Comet or toilet cleanser. If confronted by such things, the Gafflings will flee; otherwise, they'll lose one Power point per turn of contact.

**Attitude:** Cockroach Gafflings tend to be friendly toward those shapeshifters who can stomach their presence. They don't like Ananasi, though; both have ties to the Weaver, but the spider-shifters have been known to eat cockroaches when in Crawlerling form.

**Chiminage:** Cockroach and its brood enjoy fragrant garbage, Garou howling contests, and the sound of claws being sharpened. Other favors commonly asked for include protection of earthly cockroach broods (an inglorious and sometimes disgusting task), destruction of pesticide factories and the banishment of vicious Ant Gafflings. In exchange, Cockroach Gafflings will act as spies and saboteurs or willingly bind themselves into talens allowing scrutiny of electronic systems.



## Griffin

Perhaps the totem most attuned to the Wyld, the Griffin represents the most primordial aspects of creation, predating even the coming of humanity. Griffin's brood is more like an animal pack than any institution understandable by homids: a roaring, snorting menagerie of predatory outriders, monstrous juggernauts, and maddened renegades from the Wyld Reaches.

## Sabertooth Tiger

Willpower 6, Rage 9, Gnosis 7, Essence 23

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Armor, Materialize, Reform, Tracking

**Image:** Sabertooth tigers are blocky, massive creatures with powerful chests and paws that can crush skulls with ease. Their coats are typically tawny yellow, but can reflect the markings of any cat. Their wide maws hold the fangs for which they're known, eight-inch knives that can pierce the skull of an elephant.

**History:** The sabertooth was among the first of the predator-spirits to become truly enlightened, following its role in harmony with the way Gaia made it. Scorning packs, it stalked the glens and forests of the prehistoric world as the supreme terrestrial predator.

Then, around the time of the Impergium, sabertooths went extinct. Although this took place for many reasons — climatic changes and extinction of prey species among them — the spirits became bitter and filled with hatred. Griffin took the spirits under his wing, telling them that it was the fault of humans that they'd become extinct. Now, the sabertooths serve Griffin as his trackers and hunting beasts.

**Habitat:** Many sabertooth spirits live in Pangaea. Others dwell in primordial glens in the Penumbra, or in the den-realms of Bastet. Some dwell in the totem realms of Griffin, Stag, and Pegasus.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** The sabertooth represents predatory instincts honed to their highest level. It's not a pack animal, so it's most revered by solitary creatures: Bastet, Ronin Garou, even a few Mokolé.

**Material Correspondences:** The bloody meat from a fresh kill can attract sabertooth spirits. The summoner must have made this kill alone, and must have used only natural weapons in the kill. Furthermore, the carcass must be of a sufficient size to attract a great cat — an elephant would be best, but an antelope or deer will do.

Sabertooth spirits never permit themselves to be bound into fetishes.

**Gift Lore:** Sabertooth spirits can teach Gifts related to hunting and stalking.





**Taboos:** As the supreme predator, sabertooth spirits rely on their power alone to bring down prey. They won't attack in numbers or use pack tactics.

**Attitude:** Sabertooth spirits are bitter, surly, and hostile toward nearly everything. Homid shapeshifters had best beware them. They can be coaxed into a better attitude, but this is dangerous in the extreme.

**Chiminage:** Sabertooth grants few favors and asks few in return. The best bet is to ask the creature's aid in the hunting of a mighty Wyrmbest — or, better yet, an army of lesser creatures (as sabertooth-spirits don't like to attack outnumbered prey).

### *Grandfather Thunder*

Grandfather Thunder is a demanding Incarna, and those who would come to serve him had best be able to prove their worth. Those who would rise in his service, moreover, had best be able to hold their own against one of the most treacherous courts of spirits in the Umbra. Thunder's brood includes air elementals, Stormcrows and spirits that have forsaken service to "lesser" broods in search of the power only Thunder can grant.

### *Night-spirits*

Willpower 9, Rage 9, Gnosis 9, Essence 40

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Create Shadows\*, Realm Sense, Re-form, Shapeshift

**Image:** Night-spirits, in their natural forms, appear to be animated shadows of unclear outline and menacing aspect. Their voices are whispers that carry uncannily well, echoing in the ears of listeners as if the night-spirit were standing right beside them. However, these dwellers in darkness are fond of using the Shapeshift Charm to take on whatever form suits their fancy.

**History:** Although not all spirits of darkness and the night offer allegiance to Grandfather Thunder, these night-spirits feel a certain kinship to the brooding totem and his children. They were particularly charmed by the Shadow Lords' penchant for using darkness and fear to their utmost (as well as their tribal name), and so have gladly offered their services to the Lords' tribal totem.

**Habitat:** Night-spirits are creatures of darkness, typically of deep, shadowy forests. However, a growing number of them have become attracted to the shadowy areas of human habitation, such as ghost towns, cemeteries and urban alleyways. They prefer to avoid most living things, contacting only those who are "in the right frame of mind" — which may mean the depressed, the paranoid, or simply the contemplative.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Night-spirits represent secrecy, but in their pursuits of collecting secrets and revealing them as appropriate, they have also taken on a partial blackmail aspect. They are also, naturally, representative of darkness, shadow and paranoia.

**Material Correspondences:** Thick cloth, cloaks, shrouds, masks, hoods and other objects that conceal or create darkness are all favorites of the night-spirits. Some have a fondness for shadow puppets as well.

**Gift Lore:** Night-spirits teach Gifts of shadow, fear and secrecy.

**Taboos:** These spirits avoid light and flame, and also retreat from the honest truth. Speaking the truth in order to uncover a deception or undo a lie will usually cause night-spirits to flee.

**Attitude:** A night-spirit is not precisely malevolent, but the things these spirits find amusing — such as terror and deceit — tend to place them on the bad side of most "right-thinking" people. They dislike people who are unwilling to "play the game" and straightforward bargaining sessions. They become grumpy and unpleasant when provoked, all the more prone to use their abilities against some unwary target.

**Chiminage:** Night-spirits are best attracted with secrets — the darker and more personal, the better. Clever ritemasters reveal only the secrets of others, never their own — night-spirits have been known to gossip.

### *Owl*

Owl's brood is small and carefully selected, as befitting a totem more interested in wisdom than in sheer power. Spirits who come to Owl forsake status and domains in the Umbra in favor of a wandering existence in search of secrets.

### *Owl Gaffling*

Willpower 7, Rage 5, Gnosis 8, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Materialize, Open Moon Bridge, Re-form, Tracking

**Image:** An Owl Gaffling commonly appears as a large owl of whatever type is suitably present or admired in the area — commonly a great horned owl in the Western Hemisphere. Its eyes gleam silver in the night, and its flight is silent.

**History:** From ancient times, Owl Gafflings have acted as Owl's messengers and heralds. They can travel anywhere, and they are commonly used as guides to the realms of the Dead, the Aetherial Realm, and the Deep Umbra (all of which they're familiar with).



**Habitat:** Owl Gafflings have no permanent home. However, they can be found throughout the Umbra. Some fly into the dark maelstrom of the Lower Umbra; others fly out beyond the farthest planets of the Aetherial Realm. It's said that a few of the eldest owls know the hidden path to the Silent Strider homeland, but this is only a rumor.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Owl Gafflings embody wisdom, hidden secrets and travels.

**Material Correspondences:** Owl feathers, instruments to improve vision (glasses, contacts, binoculars), a pinch of dust from a distant land

**Gift Lore:** Owl Gafflings can teach Gifts pertaining to travel, stealth, and the learning of secrets. A few also teach Gifts for dealing with the dead.

**Taboos:** Owl Gafflings may not remain overlong in any one place. This includes fetishes. An Owl Gaffling will never allow itself to be bound into a fetish, though it might permit itself to be bound into a talen.

**Attitude:** Owl Gafflings prefer listening to talking, watching to interacting. They're neutral toward most beings, but friendly to Silent Striders, Corax, and Ronin who have retained some measure of honor. They despise creatures of the Wyrms, but rarely interact directly with such beings. Instead, they prefer to lure them into traps.

**Chiminage:** Tales of distant lands are a good way to get on an Owl Gaffling's good side. As frequent visitors to the Dark Umbra, an Owl Gaffling might also ask a supplicant to help lay a wandering ghost to rest. Sometimes, Owl Gafflings request summoners to guide a lost traveler out of the wilderness.

### *Falcon*

The kingly Falcon encompasses a vast and noble brood under his mighty wings. Those who would serve as spirit-knights of Falcon must be valorous, honorable, and able to command the respect of material and spirit being alike. The way of Falcon is hard, but those who can follow the Falcon's flight soar high above all other beings.

### *Falcon Gaffling*

Willpower 5, Rage 5, Gnosis 5, Essence 15

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Create Wind, Materialize, Peek, Re-form, Swift Flight, Updraft

**Image:** Among the most majestic spirits in the Umbra, the falcon-servitors of the totem appear as golden-feathered, regal members of their kind.

**History:** These Gafflings have long been used as messengers, scouts, and skirmishers by the Falcon

totem. From high in the Umbra, their keen eyes peer down, spying on the doings of lesser spirits. When at war, these Gafflings join into great flocks that descend like lightning on their foes, whirlwinds of feathers, screeching beaks, and diamond-hard claws.

**Habitat:** Falcon Gafflings prefer the cloud-peaks of the Aetherial Realm, but occasionally condescend to swoop into the higher reaches of Earth's atmosphere. A few flocks of Gafflings wing their way out to the Deep Umbra, flying majestically through the void.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** The Wyld, nobility, purity

**Material Correspondences:** A werebeast who has Honor of 5 or greater and who serves Falcon may entreat the totem for aid by spending two temporary Gnosis and making a Gnosis roll (difficulty 8). If the Garou scores one to three successes, a Gaffling appears; if four successes are scored, several appear; on five or more successes, an entire flock appears. Falcon Gafflings, while noble, don't have much more cognitive IQ than a smart earthly animal. Spirit Speech is needed to communicate with the creature, and it's limited in what it can be ordered to do.

**Gift Lore:** These Gafflings can teach Gifts pertaining to the creation, manipulation and control of winds and the sky.

**Taboos:** Falcon Gafflings cannot harm those whom they perceive as servants of Gaia. They must attack Wyrms-creatures, and they frenzy when fighting these beings.

**Attitude:** Falcon Gafflings are well disposed toward servants of Gaia and the Wyld, neutral toward servants of the Weaver, and hostile toward minions of the Wyrms.

**Chiminage:** Falcon Gafflings like things that their earthly counterparts like; wide open spaces, shiny things, and a few morsels of meat are a good way to start. Falcons also "eat" gifts of Gnosis. Temporary Gnosis expenditure is a good bargaining chip to get a Falcon Gaffling's aid. A shapeshifter of 5 or more Honor may also spend a point of permanent Gnosis and entreat the Falcon to be its spirit familiar; this entreaty, if accepted, is considered a personal pact (p. 99). The Gaffling will serve the shapeshifter as a companion for as long as its companion's behavior merits it.

### *Chimera*

Chimera is the totem of dreams, mysteries and enigmas. Her brood is formed from spirits of both the Umbral and Dream realms. Unlike many spirits, Chimera takes a hodgepodge of different singular spirits



into her brood, much as the Stargazers take werewolves of all origins into their tribe. Chimera values wisdom, and most of her brood reflects this bent.

### *Meneghwo, the Patchwork Wolf*

Willpower 10, Rage 5, Gnosis 8, Essence 30

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Armor, Freeze, Materialize, Open Moon Bridge, Realm Sense, Re-form, Shatter Glass, Tracking, Umbraquake

**Image:** The Patchwork Wolf is a bizarre Frankenstein's monster of a spirit. It's seemingly grafted together from many different Garou. His pelt is a motley of many different colors; his eyes and ears and mismatched, and one side of his snout is longer than the other.

**History:** The Patchwork Wolf is an ancient spirit and does not speak of its origins. Accordingly, there are many stories concerning the genesis of this unique Jagglings.

Stargazer legend says the creature was created long ago, in the time of the hero Klaital, near the end of the Impergium. At this time, the tribes called a moot to discuss the lifting of the Impergium. Tensions ran high on both sides of the issue, however, and argument exploded into battle. By the time Klaital arrived to cast his vote, the other Garou were dead, torn into pieces on the bloody ground.

Distraught, Klaital summoned Chimera. She caused the pieces of the dead Garou to whirl up and into life, then mystically grafted the pieces into one composite being. This being hovered over the remaining corpses, then said, "Farewell, pack mothers and fathers. I carry the wisdom of all of you, the wisdom you disregarded in attacking your own kind. I will not fall in conflict with other Garou, for I am the child of Garou conflict." After uttering a final Howl for the Departed, the being left with Chimera. Klaital, humbled, bore news of the event to the rest of the Garou.

The Silver Fangs dispute this claim. They say that Meneghwo was created from the corpses of great Garou heroes following a great struggle with the Bastet. The Fangs say that Gaia Herself made the creature as a tribute to the Garou's valor, then appointed Meneghwo as a protector to Chimera.

**Habitat:** The Patchwork Wolf dwells in a realm at the borders of Dream — a vast, fog-shrouded mountain. The realm is remote and difficult to reach save through Dream. Legends say that, if slain, Meneghwo re-forms whole in this realm.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Meneghwo represents the wisdom that Chimera represents, but additionally

embodies courage and loyalty (he is Chimera's knight and champion).

**Material Correspondences:** To call the Patchwork Wolf, a summoner must gather blood or hair from five different Garou, then place the mixture in a bag with pine needles and crushed pine cones. Following this, the summoner must hurl the bag into a fire that is allowed to burn until doused by waters from the next rain.

**Gift Lore:** Per his nature, the Patchwork Wolf can teach many Gifts: Gifts of war, Gifts of dream, and powers known to wolf-spirits and chimerlings.

**Taboos:** As a being made up of all Garou, Meneghwo cannot fight any Garou. Meneghwo often sinks into Slumber, but can be awakened by throwing the dust of five dead Garou on him (this act grants the participant two temporary Honor points).

**Attitude:** Meneghwo is friendly toward all Garou, but dislikes internecine squabbles among the tribes and will not stand for such things. He's particularly fond of Stargazers and likes to indulge them in discussion of Dream.

**Chiminage:** Those who seek Meneghwo's aid should agree to promote unity among the Garou Nation.

### *Uktena*

Uktena's small, reclusive brood consists of beings with affinities for water, shadows, and secrets. Unlike Owl, Uktena values mysteries not merely for their own sake, but also for the power such things grant their possessors. Like many water-spirits, particularly of the serpent variety, Uktena is a creature of great wisdom and lore, knowledge that can turn on anyone who uses it foolishly. Uktena's followers tend to be either serpentine water-spirits like itself or reclusive, eerie spirits who've chosen (or been forced) to turn away from their former broods and take up with the Water Serpent.

### *Snake Jagglings*

Willpower 7, Rage 5, Gnosis 9, Essence 21

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Materialize, Paralyzing Stare\*, Re-form, Tracking

**Image:** Snake Jagglings can appear as any earthly snake. They typically take the form of a snake indigenous to (and famous in) the area where they're summoned: copperheads or moccasins in the American South, adders in Europe, pythons or cobras in Asia, or anacondas in the Amazon.

**History:** As most students of human mythology are aware, the snake is an old spirit. In some cultures, the snake is the villainous instigator of the Great Fall;



in others, the snake is the servant of Creation or the guide to the Dreamtime. In any event, snakes are almost always the repositories of wisdom, forbidden or otherwise. Uktena, it's said, is as much a mighty snake-spirit as the snake Jagglings that are his children.

**Habitat:** Snake Jagglings can appear in many places. Some of the oldest dwell in Pangaea. Others live in glades or Glens in the Penumbra, near earthly domains where their material counterparts dwell.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Snakes represent many things to many people. Some represent deception and cunning. Others represent endings and beginnings, or perhaps healing. Most represent wisdom and hidden secrets.

**Material Correspondences:** To summon a snake Jaggling, a shapeshifter should have some part of a snake: a scale, fang, shed skin or other bit (preferably gotten without violence). Nagah can summon these spirits without such paraphernalia. To bind a snake Jaggling into a talen or fetish, the fetish in question should bear images of serpents or be made of snakeskin (again, the skin should be gotten without killing the snake in question).

**Gift Lore:** Snake-spirits can teach Gifts affiliated with stealth and wisdom, as well as the Gift: Paralyzing Stare.

**Taboos:** Snake-spirits' taboos commonly reflect the nature of the snake in question. For example, a cobra-spirit fears mongoose-spirits. A water snake should never let itself become completely dry. A rattlesnake-spirit must always give warning prior to attack.

**Attitude:** Snakes tend not to care overmuch about others' doings. Dealings with a snake-spirit depend primarily on what you offer it in return (and snake-spirits can hear just fine, though they might pretend otherwise).

**Chiminage:** Treating the snake respectfully and flattering it in a subtle fashion are good ways to start. Snake-spirits like to trade secrets, and a shapeshifter with an interesting secret can go far in getting a snake-spirit's aid. Snake-spirits may also ask supplicants to go on quests benefiting their earthly kin — for example, freeing a rare specimen from captivity, or stopping a poaching ring that hunts snakes for their skin.

### *Wendigo*

To some, the icy malevolence of great Wendigo is more fearsome than even the fiery rage of Fenris. Formerly the noble totem Sasquatch, Wendigo has grown dark and bitter through his many struggles with the Wyrms and the loss of his treasures. He is the shadowy hunter who sends fear-chills into the most

monstrous of Banes, and while he is a protector of Gaia, he is all too eager to reap a blood-price from those who dare to beseech his aid.

Those who would follow Wendigo are the outcasts, the desperate, the bitter for whom few things in Realm or Umbra provide any pleasure. Hungry for the life they deny themselves, the spirits of Wendigo attempt to assuage their needs in savage flesh-feasts. They commonly rip their way into Engling packs, and other spirits give those of Wendigo a wide berth.

### *Ice Haunter*

Willpower 6, Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Essence 21

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blast (freezing breath), Create Wind, Freeze, Frozen Breath, Materialize, Re-form

**Image:** Ice haunTERS are made from ice, and their hearts are frozen lumps that can be warmed only by ingesting human flesh and blood. They seem humanoid, but bluish and frostbitten, with feral stares and gaunt frames. Their claws and teeth are those of predators, and their breath is a freezing wind.

**History:** Ice haunTERS are repulsive cannibal spirits in service to Wendigo. Most Garou believe they're created when a starving human resorts to cannibalism out of desperation. They stalk the frozen northern reaches in search of lost or wandering humans, whom they chase down and eat. These violent spirits have no mercy and can't be reasoned with; if it's human, they'll try to eat it. No other food gives them sustenance. Even homid Garou are fair game, though lupus and metis are inedible to them and thus ignored.

Wendigo Garou occasionally summon these spirits to fight their enemies, though even they fear the wretched entities. Ice haunTERS generally don't attack homid Wendigo Garou, out of fear that the Wendigo totem himself will be angered and eat them. Sometimes, though, if hungry enough, they'll make the attempt. A Garou who can't defend himself against a hungry ice haunter deserves to be eaten anyway, as far as Wendigo is concerned.

**Habitat:** Ice haunTERS stalk taiga and tundra regions in the material world, along with the Penumbral areas juxtaposing them. If they venture too far into the warm lands, they'll melt.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Ice, snow, winter, hunger

**Material Correspondences:** To summon an ice haunter, a summoner must have enough ice for the creature to form into a body when materializing. It must also have some human flesh for it to eat.

**Gift Lore:** An ice haunter can teach virtually all Wendigo Gifts.





**Taboos:** Ice hunters fear fire. Fire inflicts three extra dice of damage on them. As well, prolonged exposure to above-freezing temperatures will melt them, as it would an equivalent-sized block of ice.

**Attitude:** If it can't eat you, an ice hunter will be indifferent to you. If you're good eatin', you'd best be prepared to run.

**Chiminage:** Predictably, ice hunters demand one thing and one thing only for their services: human flesh, in a quantity befitting the nature of the service. If encountered free roaming in the Umbra, they might be appeased with the simple promise of human flesh... for a little while.

## *Naturae*

Naturae are various spirit aspects of Gaia — the embodiments of different earthly phenomena. In some ways they're akin to the Shinto concept of "kami." Rocks, trees, animals and bodies of water can all have naturae affiliated with them.

Typically, a naturae is linked to a certain earthly phenomenon; if that phenomenon is destroyed, the naturae dies. For example, damming a river will destroy the water elemental that embodies the river,

while clear-cutting a forest will kill some tree-spirits and sicken others.

## *Plant Spirits*

Plant spirits are among the most ubiquitous of Gaian naturae. In this age, many plant spirits have chosen to enter Slumber and must be awakened with gifts of Gnosis. Some occultists consider them to be elementals (aligned with the element of Wood), while others consider them to be a separate class of spirit. In any event, they are generally good-hearted and aid the Changing Breeds however they can, though they're also peaceable and reluctant to participate in violence; werebeasts with uncomfortably high Rage find it difficult to befriend plant spirits.

### *Oak*

Willpower 9, Rage 3, Gnosis 8, Essence 20-80 (depends on age)

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Cleanse the Blight, Realm Sense

**Image:** An oak-spirit appears as a large, perfectly formed version of an earthly oak. Sometimes it has anthropomorphic features, like cracks in the bark that vaguely resemble a human face or boughs that resemble gnarled arms.



**History:** Long ago, oaks were everywhere, and oak-spirits often interacted with the humans and shapeshifters of the pre-Impergium world. They were sought out as teachers and chroniclers, renowned for their wisdom.

After the Impergium, humans forgot about the oak-spirits, and large areas of forest were cut to make room for the expanding human population. Fearful and sad, many oak-spirits entered Slumber, though a few managed to survive and stay awake — often with the help of shapeshifters. Now most oak-spirits await the rebirth of Gaia and the dismantling of the Gauntlet — if that happy day should ever come at all.

**Habitat:** Oak-spirits dwell in the Penumbra near the trees that house them. A few have taken up root in Pangaea, the Legendary Realm and other lands.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Oaks represent strength, serenity, and wisdom.

**Material Correspondences:** Because an oak-spirit is always near its earthly tree, it needn't be summoned. However, a shapeshifter must make a small offering to get the spirit's attention. A few drops of blood, which represent the sap of the ritemaster, are enough to awaken most oak-spirits.

**Gift Lore:** Oak-spirits can teach Gifts involving the control of plants, forests, or the sky.

**Taboos:** An oak-spirit must always honor a request from a bird- or squirrel-spirit (these animals spread the oak-spirit's seeds).

**Attitude:** Oak-spirits are neutral toward most beings, friendly toward Children of Gaia.

**Chiminage:** In exchange for favors, an oak-spirit commonly asks that supplicants plant seeds or preserve a section of forest. Oak-spirits will sometimes consent to enter fetishes, but the shapeshifter must offer up a piece of bark or acorn coated in its own blood.

Oak-spirits are gentle creatures, and creatures with high Rage frighten them. A shapeshifter with a Rage of 4 or greater will find communication with an oak-spirit impossible, nor may such a shapeshifter activate an oak-spirit fetish.

## *Elementals*

Among the most universally known spirits are those that represent the substances that make up the world as humans and shapeshifters know it. These primordial beings are thought to be the eldest children of Gaia, and most Changing Breeds give them respect accordingly.

There are many types of elementals. In the West, learned occultists speak of the four elements of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. In the East, the elements

stretch from Water (the element most filled with Yin) through Metal, Earth, Wood, and Fire (the element most filled with Yang). Air is not considered an element in the East, though air-spirits are spoken of as "Wind-dukes" and given great honor nonetheless.

Few know what to make of the new elementals that have appeared in the End Times. Recently, spirits of glass, electricity, plastic and substances even more bizarre yet have appeared in the World of Darkness. Some shapeshifters say these creatures are blasphemous minions of the Wyrms; others maintain that they've been around forever but remained unnoticed, or are simply new faces of the ever-changing whole that is Gaia.

All elementals of a type are considered to be of the same brood, and elemental Gafflings, Jagglings, Incarnae and even Celestines exist. Some Umbral travelers claim that elementals group themselves into great courts; others, that elementals have no true rulers or social structure. Elementals rarely deign to explain themselves or their ways to material beings, and so this aspect of their society is largely mysterious.

Elementals can be benevolent or hostile depending on the particular aspect of the element they convey. The laughing undine of a pure mountain stream will undoubtedly be friendlier than the hag-queen of the deeps who delights in raising storms and dragging exhausted swimmers down to her polyp-covered castle. Few are of the Wyrms, but some elementals have certainly fallen and become Banes. In particular, one branch of Pentex specializes in capturing elementals and "processing" them into forms hostile to Gaia. These elementals of Balefire (Fire), Smog (Air), Toxin (Water), and Sludge (Earth) are among the deadliest spirits known; their very presence is a blasphemy upon the Earth.

The following spirits are representative of only a few elementals; Storytellers should feel free to adjust these Traits freely to represent elementals of greater or lesser power.

### *Air*

Willpower 3, Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Essence 18

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Create Wind, Materialize, Re-form, Swift Flight, Updraft

**Image:** As a group, air elementals have a tendency toward vanity. They commonly manifest as gorgeously plumed birds, prismatic clouds, or fragrant whirlwinds. Sometimes they take human or animal shape; almost always, this shape is graceful and perfectly formed. When angry, though, air elementals literally darken, their forms dissolving into seething masses of amorphous mist and howling wind.



**History:** Air elementals are the firstborn of Gaia, existing in the great Void before there was anything else in the universe. They are vastly intelligent beings, and given to answering questions, for air elementals see themselves as the inventors of speech (which is, after all, dependent on Air). However, they tend toward the abstruse and capricious; talking to an air elemental is like listening to an entire conclave of voices talking randomly about whatever topic strikes their individual fancies. Other elementals see them as flighty and pretentious, and they like to answer questions in the form of riddles and wordplay in order to demonstrate their intellectual superiority.

**Habitat:** In the material world, air elementals dwell in the clouds and the upper reaches of the stratosphere. The more violent storm elementals dwell down in the troposphere, where they can easily descend to shriek and roar at the silly material beings below. Certain of the more enigmatic elementals remove themselves to the ionosphere or exosphere, whence it's easier to access the strange landscapes of the Deep Umbra.

In the Umbra, air elementals prefer the Aetherial Realm. They also love to "tailgate" along the Umbral Wind.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Air elementals represent wind and air in all its manifestations: storms, breezes, gusts and hurricanes. On a more abstract level, they also represent speech and certain aspects of rational thought.

**Material Correspondences:** Silver, circles, wind instruments

**Gift Lore:** Air elementals can teach Gifts pertaining to the creation, manipulation and control of winds and the sky.

**Taboos:** Air elementals may not violate the domains of the other elementals. They may not travel below the surface of the water or deep within the earth.

**Attitude:** Air elementals love to talk, but disdain their inferiors (which constitutes nearly everything that isn't an air elemental). They hate being disturbed, so summoners had better be interesting, obsequious, or both. An irritated air elemental's vengeance may take a number of forms, from a sudden gust of wind that tears clothes and rips items out of hands to an outright attack.

**Chiminage:** Talk, and lots of it, and all about the majesty of the elemental are good ways to start. Air elementals love flattery; this, along with music, will often bring around a surly sylph.

## *Earth*

Willpower 10, Rage 4, Gnosis 5, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Armor, Materialize, Reform, Umbraquake

**Image:** Earth elementals tend to take large, massive forms that look like crudely hewn rock glistening with quartz deposits and other minerals. A few more sophisticated earth elementals take the form of marble statues or the like. Most earth elementals speak in rumbling, grating, harsh voices (on the rare occasions that they choose to speak at all).

**History:** Earth elementals are the firstborn of Gaia, the foundation on which she built the rest of the world. Whether this is true or not is indeterminate, but earth elementals are certainly old beyond comprehension. They remember Ages long before the Impergium, and the very fossil record is theirs for the reading.

**Habitat:** Earth elementals prefer the Penumbra to the Umbra (which is too open for the agoraphobic creatures). They prefer to dwell deep within the earth's crust or mantle, in rocks that have never known the touch of drill or chisel. In earlier ages, earth elementals dwelt near the surface of the earth and would often aid the Changing Breeds; now, however, they dwell far apart and are nearly impossible to find.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Earth elementals represent the "bones" of the land itself: the rocks, mountains, hills, and minerals. They are slow to anger, but devastating when they do; manifestations of this anger include earthquakes and rockslides.

**Material Correspondences:** Jewels, stones, bones, harvests

**Gift Lore:** Earth elementals may teach any Gift involving the control or transformation of the earth, soil, rocks, minerals, or similar things.

**Taboos:** Earth elementals must always remain in contact with the earth. They lose 5 Essence per turn when not touching the ground.

**Attitude:** Even moreso than other elementals, earth elementals tend to be gruff and aloof. They are busy battling the other elementals (keeping the raging fire elementals imprisoned in the earth's core, keeping the continents safely above the roaring oceans) and have little time for the doings of lesser beings. Even the affairs of the Triat seem of little consequence to them; earth elementals take the long view of such conflicts.

**Chiminage:** Earth elementals tend to be more receptive to requests for aid against other elementals, who continually buffet the rocks with their energies. They also suffer from the depredations of human development, so any plan to stop mining, drilling, or clear-cutting will often meet with their favor.



## Fire

Willpower 5, Rage 10, Gnosis 5, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blast (flame), Create Fires, Materialize, Re-form

**Image:** Fire elementals can be fearsome. They appear as roaring columns, walls, or balls of flame, often with demonic faces in the midst of the flame. They can also appear as fiery versions of humans or animals. The color and intensity of the flames change depending on the elemental's mood and Power.

**History:** Fire elementals are the firstborn of Gaia, as the driving force that shaped the rest of the world. They are the principle of life and growth given form. They burn away the old so that the new may emerge, and they shape the inchoate matter of the world into new and refined elements. Fire elementals are great believers in fairness and justice, and so they magnanimously taught the secret of fire to the earliest humans, so that they'd have a chance against all the other creatures of the world. They keep the powers of death and darkness at bay and are ever vigilant against the vampires and other horrors that skulk in the shadows.

**Habitat:** Fire elementals roam the Umbra as they please. They are especially common in the Aetherial Realm, in the court of the sun. They may be found anywhere, though. In the material world, the most powerful fire elementals are kept locked away at the core of the earth, guarded by earth elementals who fear that they'll raven to the surface and unleash the Final Days.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Flames of all sorts; passion; rage; change

**Material Correspondences:** Flames, igneous rocks, gems, gasoline, nitroglycerine, ashes, smoke

**Gift Lore:** Fire elementals can teach any Gift relating to the generation or control of fire and heat.

**Taboos:** Fire elementals may not travel in or near water or water elementals.

**Attitude:** Fire elementals tend to be friendly, but passionate to the point of madness. They love to roar and dance and ignite things around them. They might try to light a living creature on fire, merrily unaware that this sort of thing hurts. Generally, fire elementals are friendly — too much so, sometimes — and well disposed toward summons.

**Chiminage:** Fire elementals like combustibles. The better something burns, the happier they are.

## Water

Willpower 6, Rage 4, Gnosis 10, Power 30

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Cleanse the Blight, Flood, Healing, Materialize, Re-form

**Image:** Water elementals can appear as amorphous puddles of water, as waterfalls or geysers, or as living waves. They can also form themselves into watery versions of people or animals.

**History:** Water elementals are the firstborn of Gaia. They are the primordial substance from which all life emerged. Everything comes from water, and to water everything returns. Living creatures are made up primarily of nurturing, life-giving water. Where there is no water, life cannot exist, and thus Gaia cannot exist.

**Habitat:** Water elementals exist in the Umbra wherever large bodies of water are present. They also find it easier than most elementals to exist in the material world; after all, oceans cover most of the planet, and there are plenty of places in the deeps where they can gather and flow freely.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Water elementals represent water in all its forms, from the nurturing spring to the violent tsunami. On a more abstract level, they represent intuitive thought.

**Material Correspondences:** Water and things from the water (seashells, starfish, seaweed)

**Gift Lore:** Water elementals can teach Gifts pertaining to the creation, manipulation and control of water, lakes, rivers and the sea.

**Taboos:** Water elementals may not leave their element.

**Attitude:** Water elementals are fickle and changeable, though not as mercurial as air elementals. The disposition of a water elemental depends largely on the condition of her home body of water. A foul body of water makes for a surly creature. Water elementals despise pollution and are likely to help Fera who wish to put a stop to polluters.

**Chiminage:** Water elementals prefer honest, simple requests to clever wordplay. They also enjoy expressions of dance. They'll take tribute tossed into their home body of water, but strongly prefer biodegradable tribute.

## Metal

Willpower 10, Rage 5, Gnosis 4, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Armor, Blast (shrapnel), Materialize, Re-form

**Image:** Metal elementals can take many shapes. Some appear as gleaming statues of whatever metal they represent. Others appear as animated suits of armor, while still others take the forms of clanking robotlike beings held together by bolts, rivets and screws.

**History:** Metal elementals are considered among the newer elementals in the West, though the



shapeshifters of the East have long recognized and treated with metal elementals, considering them equal to all other elementals. Metal elementals consider themselves the progenitors of human civilization and the lords of advancement and progress. In this sense, they have ties to the Weaver. They don't condone the wanton environmental destruction of the Wyrms, but, unlike other elementals, do concede that Gaia's face may be altered in the name of progress and the betterment of all Her creatures.

**Habitat:** Whether in the material world or the Umbra, metal elementals dwell in natural or worked metals. They especially prefer well-crafted items: masterwork swords, statues, and the like.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Metal elementals represent metals of all times, whether natural or alloyed. They also represent the ways of civilization, industry and advancement. A few represent money and currency.

**Material Correspondences:** Deposits of metal, blades, tools, currency, industrial music

**Gift Lore:** Metal elementals can teach Gifts pertaining to the creation, manipulation and control of metal.

**Taboos:** Because their goals differ from those of their fellows, metal elementals may not associate with or even confront the other ancient elementals (air, earth, water, fire).

**Attitude:** Metal elementals speak plainly and directly, but are hard bargainers. Summoners who call up a metal elemental had best be prepared to haggle, know exactly what they want, and not waste the elemental's time.

**Chiminage:** Metal elementals typically want tangible favors, and they want things spelled out in writing. They like new technology, loud noises, and some will even take cash payments (what they do with the cash is unknown, but some werewolves theorize that wads of cash grant status among the tribe).

### *New Elementals*

In the End Times, many new elementals have emerged in the world. Many shapeshifters fear these creatures, saying that they're embodiments of Wyrms corruption. Others say that they're simply reflections of Gaia's natural change. In any event, these creatures make powerful allies — or relentless foes.

#### *Plastic*

Willpower 8, Rage 6, Gnosis 5, Essence 19

**Charms:** Armor, Materialize, Re-form, Shapeshift, Spirit Static

**Image:** Most commonly, plastic elementals take the form of a hodgepodge of plastic goods fused into a roughly humanoid form. Some more sophisticated elementals, though, look like enormous action figures, complete with plastic accessories such as weapons and gear.

**History:** Plastic elementals haven't been around long, but have skyrocketed in population since the 1950s. Since that time, they've claimed various domains in the Penumbra as their own. Because their status among elementals is still very low and because they're resistant to Wyrms poisons, they're often shoved into Wyrms-tainted areas.

**Habitat:** Plastic elementals inhabit Penumbral domains around manufacturing plants, junkyards, department stores and toy stores. As mentioned, they also form crude communities in Wyrms-tainted zones, since they're very resistant to being corrupted or eroded by Wyrms energies. Hardy and adaptable, plastic elementals can live nearly anywhere. In the material world, they can live in nearly any plastic, but the prime spots are in action figures.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Plastic elementals represent plastics. They also represent modernism and adaptability.

**Material Correspondences:** Nearly any plastic item can aid in summoning one of these eager-to-please elementals.

**Gift Lore:** Most plastics' Gifts are pretty weird, but a plastic elemental can teach a few tricks involving creation and shapeshifting; Reshape Object is a prime example.

**Taboos:** A little underconfident, plastic elementals try not to make waves. They won't confront any minions of the Weaver, or any other elementals.

**Attitude:** Plastic elementals tend to ignore the doings of the spirit world. They're more interested in scientific advancement in the material world. They're friendly creatures, and they want nothing more than to prove their worth. Plastic elementals like human children, who play with action figures and treat them with love. A mission to protect or rescue children will likely appeal to these creatures, who'll take action-figure form and travel "to infinity and beyond" in pursuit of what's right.

**Chiminage:** More than anything, plastic elementals want to be treated respectably. They feel that their contributions to the world have been slighted, particularly by the snooty earth and water elementals that look on them with disdain. Plastic elementals are pretty open to doing favors for shapeshifters in return for consideration down the road.



## *Electricity*

Willpower 6, Rage 7, Gnosis 5, Essence 18

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blast (lightning), Control Electrical Systems, Materialize, Re-form, Short Out

**Image:** Electricity elementals typically take the form of balls, walls or arcs of crackling static electricity. Sometimes they'll form themselves into a crude quasihuman shape, but this is rare.

**History:** Electricity elementals first appeared in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the power of electricity first began to be the subject of experimentation. They multiplied rapidly in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; now, in the 21<sup>st</sup>, they're ubiquitous.

**Habitat:** In the material world, electricity elementals dwell amid circuitry and computer systems. In the Umbra, they dwell in the Scar, the CyberRealm, and the Glass Walker homeland, among other places.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Electricity elementals represent electricity; they also represent progress and the Damocles' sword of science.

**Material Correspondences:** Circuitry, magnetos, dynamos, turbines, and other places where electricity is created or harnessed.

**Gift Lore:** Electricity elementals can teach Gifts pertaining to the creation, manipulation and control of electricity and machinery.

**Taboos:** Electricity elementals must remain near a power source at all times. They may be grounded and shorted out through forcing them into nonconductive surfaces.

**Attitude:** Electricity elementals' attitudes and behavior are capricious and inscrutable. They tend toward obsessive personalities and nigh-insane urges. They won't hesitate to shock somebody just for looking at them funny.

**Chiminage:** Electricity elementals like being made into fetishes, particularly powerful or destructive ones that show off their sheer "juice." They also appreciate tribute of conductive material such as ferrous metal.

## *Glass*

Willpower 4, Rage 7, Gnosis 7, Essence 18

**Charms:** Blast (glass shards), Materialize, Shatter Glass

**Image:** Glass elementals can be beautiful or hideous, depending on the elemental in question. Some take the form of gorgeous stained-glass sculptures. Others take the form of jagged, jigsaw caricatures of living creatures made up of countless shards.

**History:** Glass elementals were among the first of the newer elementals to appear, as they began emerg-

ing in the Renaissance. Originally they considered themselves a higher development of earth elemental, but gruff rejection from their would-be "kin" has left them with a chip on their shoulder. Now they try to prove their superiority to other elementals, and will not hesitate to make any alliance that serves this end.

**Habitat:** Glass elementals dwell in the material and spiritual counterparts of their element. Thousands dwell in the CyberRealm and the Glass Walker Homeland.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Glass elementals represent their element. They also represent the tangible but transparent barriers to thought and action, such as prejudices, neuroses and phobias.

**Material Correspondences:** Stained-glass creations, particularly masterworks

**Gift Lore:** Glass elementals know Gifts affiliated with their element. Many also know Gifts pertaining to windows (through space, time, etc.) or other portals.

**Taboos:** Glass elementals are friendly with Glass Walkers, the first tribe to give them respect. They won't attack Glass Walkers, no matter the provocation.

**Attitude:** As mentioned, glass elementals have a chip on their shoulder about their status in the elemental pantheon. Unlike the easy-going plastic elementals, glass elementals can be neurotic, delicate, temperamental and extremely vicious when crossed.

**Chiminage:** Artworks, particularly glass creations, please the aesthetic sensibilities of the glass elementals. Flattery is also effective. Summoners should keep these beings' brittle nature in mind. One wrong word or perceived slight can send a glass elemental into a shrieking frenzy of attack.

## *Bane Elementals*

### • Hoglings (Smog)

Willpower 3, Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blighted Touch, Choke\*, Create Wind, Materialize, Possession, Re-form, Updraft

### • Furmlings (Balefire)

Willpower 5, Rage 9, Gnosis 5, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blast (balefire), Blighted Touch, Create Fires, Materialize, Possession, Re-form

### • H'rugglings (Sludge)

Willpower 9, Rage 4, Gnosis 5, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blast (sewage), Blighted Touch, Materialize, Possession, Re-form, Umbraquake

### • Wakshaani (Toxin)

Willpower 3, Rage 7, Gnosis 7, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Blast (toxin), Blighted Touch, Flood, Materialize, Possession, Re-form



**Image:** Bane elementals are corrupted versions of the four classic elementals. Smog (Air) elementals appear as reeking, noxious clouds of toxic smoke. Balefire (Fire) elementals appear as horrid, charred corpses limned in greenish balefire. Sludge (Earth) elementals appear as bubbling blobs of tar, sewage or slime. Toxin (Water) Elementals appear as acrid pools of withering, corrosive poison.

**History:** Bane Elementals are created through the Wyrms corruption of Gaian elementals. It's said they began appearing after the mass industrialization of the planet and the creation of Pentex processing facilities, although some occult manuscripts such as the *Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth* hint that they may have emerged much earlier.

**Habitat:** In the material world, Bane elementals haunt factories, landfills, Black Spiral caerns and other places of foulness and filth. In the Umbra, Bane elementals dwell in the Scar, Malfeas, and various Blights.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Bane elementals represent the forces that eat away at the natural landscape. They also represent spiritual pollution.

**Material Correspondences:** Filth of any sort

**Gift Lore:** Bane elementals can teach Black Spiral Dancer Gifts.

**Taboos:** Bane elementals cannot abide the touch of completely pure elements that counter their nature. A smog elemental shrieks and flees if fanned with a breeze free of any pollutants, a sludge elemental dissolves if immersed in completely pure water, and so on. However, thanks to the ever-present touch of humanity, there are very few completely pure examples of the elements left anywhere near human civilization, so the Bane elementals are relatively free to roam where they like.

**Attitude:** All Bane elementals live to befoul the Gaian landscape and destroy its creatures, both material and spirit. Balefire elementals tend to be the most wrathful and violent, sludge elementals tend to be bullies, smog elementals tend to be profane and condescending, and toxin elementals tend to be subtle and devious.

**Chiminage:** Bane elementals always demand destruction of the natural world as payment for their services.

### *Moon Spirits*

Luna has long been a symbol of fertility, and accordingly she has a large brood affiliated with her. Because the Garou have such ties to the moon, they often interact with various members of Luna's brood. The most common of such spirits are Lunes (see

*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*), but many others exist, from Gafflings to Incarna.

### *Moonshadow*

Willpower 3 (7 under the new moon), Rage 3 (7 under a full moon), Gnosis 3 (7 under the half moon), Essence 15

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Armor, Re-form, Shapeshift

**Image:** The darksome counterparts to Lunes, Moonshadows appear as nebulous indigo silhouettes of earthly creatures. They can change their shape into a shadowy reflection of anything they desire. They communicate via empathic telepathy, sharing emotions.

**History:** Moonshadows are Luna's gifts to her faithful. Every creature affiliated with Luna has a Moonshadow as a sort of "guardian angel." These creatures don't make themselves known to their charge unless he calls upon Luna for aid.

**Habitat:** Moonshadows dwell on the dark side of the moon, in a cool, dim area of calming blue shadows.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Moonshadows are guardian anamae of Luna.

**Material Correspondences:** Dark cloth and paper, incense, soft music, shadows from phosphorescent light

**Gift Lore:** Moonshadows teach Gifts affiliated with the moon and with darkness.

**Taboos:** Bright light is hurtful to Moonshadows, driving them into Slumber.

**Attitude:** Moonshadows are friendly toward werewolves and any other being partial to the moon; they are less friendly toward Mokolé and Rokea, and downright indifferent to Nuwisha, Ananasi and Corax.

**Chiminage:** Moonshadows can be bound by personal pacts, in a manner similar to Unicorn Anamae. They may be entreated simply by calling on Luna. They will never enter fetishes, however, and a shapeshifter who forces one into a fetish makes an enemy of Luna.

### *Spirits of the Wyld*

As the principle of creation, the Wyld has a vast brood. However, the Wyld's spawn don't seem to have the sense of unity or purpose that mark other spirit broods. Interacting with one Wyld-spirit doesn't generally affect dealings with similar spirits. The creatures of the Wyld are simply a bizarre hodgepodge of largely unrelated creatures.

Even though Garou and other shapeshifters are partially of the Wyld, they should tread carefully around the Wyld's minions. The Wyld embodies creation, but also chaos and possibility — even horrific



possibility. Interacting with the spirits of the Wyld is like trying to deal with an insane asylum of demigods. Still, when battling the Wyrms, sometimes its estranged sibling is the only place to which one can turn for aid.

### *Malleon*

Willpower 8, Rage 7, Gnosis 6, Essence 21

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Break Reality, Materialize, Re-form, Shapeshift

**Image:** Nearly anything; malleons are constantly changing shape, extruding and retracting paws, talons, heads, tentacles, pseudopodia and anything and everything else. They even change size, from enormous to tiny and back again in a matter of seconds.

**History:** As with many Wyld creatures, malleons have no real "history;" they simply are and always were. It's impossible to trace exactly when they were birthed by the Wyld, or perhaps changed into their current state from another spirit.

**Habitat:** Malleons tend to stay in the Deep Umbra or the Wyld Reaches of the Aetherial Realm. Sometimes they pass through the Flux Realm. However, they can be found nearly anywhere in the Middle or Deep Umbra.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Malleons represent chaos and madness, as much as they represent anything at all.

**Material Correspondences:** None.

**Gift Lore:** Malleons can teach Gifts of change, disguise, mind alteration and illusion.

**Taboos:** Malleons fear the Pattern Web and will not approach realms bound by it.

**Attitude:** By earthly standards, malleons are insane. They can fluctuate from friendly to hostile and back again in an instant. They are great tricksters and love to play pranks on boring, staid material beings. Going along with their tricks might get you on a malleon's good side, or it might get you killed.

**Chiminage:** Malleons don't practice chiminage *per se*, as they don't bother to honor any pacts they make. They might do a favor for a shapeshifter if he makes it sound interesting enough.

### *Color String*

Willpower 10, Rage 1, Gnosis 9, Essence 20

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Re-form, Intangibility\*

**Image:** Color strings appear as small, whirling threads or helices of color. Some remain one color, while others flicker rapidly between hues. They bounce, float, spin and generally appear like something out of a children's cartoon.

**History:** Color strings seem to have been around since the earliest days of the Umbra. Like most Wyld spirits, they seem to have no purpose beyond simply being.

**Habitat:** Anywhere in the Umbra, except lands held by the Weaver or Wyrms.

**Spiritual Correspondences:** None, really

**Material Correspondences:** Color strings seem to have a spiritual connection to bright, ever-changing colors, such as those cast by a prism, although they do not openly react to anyone carrying such.

**Gift Lore:** Color strings don't teach Gifts.

**Taboos:** None known.

**Attitude:** Unlike their more dangerous brethren, color strings seem to be playful. They'll whirl around travelers, tie themselves in their fur, and otherwise make silly pests of themselves. Sometimes they'll pass through one ear of a traveler and out the other, or challenge travelers to tag or hide-and-seek.

**Chiminage:** Color strings sometimes volunteer to act as Umbral guides. Occasionally, they'll even get you to where you need to go. But, like most Wyld beings, they don't practice chiminage as such.

### *Enemies*

#### *Dream Banes*

Willpower 6, Rage 3, Gnosis 9, Essence 18

**Charms:** Airt Sense, Corruption, Dream Journey\*, Neutral Scent\*, Re-form

**Image:** Dream Banes are appropriately nightmarish in form; no two are exactly alike. They tend to embody the irrational fears or dream figures of their latest prey, such as faceless or voiceless men, warped childhood memories or unnatural insects. Some, however, choose to corrupt their targets with honey, and take the form of demon lovers or succubi.

**History:** Not all spirits of nightmare belong to the Wyrms; fear is not inherently corrupt. However, these spirits go one step further than most nightmare-spirits, actively using their victims' fears and latent desires to encourage them to commit vile acts in the waking world. Each Dream Bane was once an "uncorrupted" spirit of dream or nightmare but has since fallen into the service of the Wyrms.

**Habitat:** Chimaeres

**Spiritual Correspondences:** Like all Banes, Dream Banes are spirits of corruption and destructive emotions. In particular, they are associated with fear and shameful desire.



**Material Correspondences:** Mirrors, particularly cracked ones, draw Dream Banes' attention. They are also mildly fond of bedsheets soaked with the sweat of a terrified dreamer.

**Gift Lore:** Dream Banes teach Gifts only to Black Spiral Dancers; they teach Gifts of fear and illusion, such as Terrify or Doppelganger.

**Taboos:** Dream Banes are deathly afraid of the moment their victim wakes, and try to flee whenever their target stirs or starts to realize that they're dreaming.

**Attitude:** Dream Banes are an oily lot, always attempting to insinuate their way into others' psyches. They relish gaining the emotional upper hand, but quail from targets that are stronger than themselves. They hate Gaian shapeshifters, but prefer to strike at such enemies subtly; a Dream Bane will not reveal its true nature if it can help it.

**Chiminage:** Black Spiral Dancers are said to appease Dream Banes by guiding the spirits to sleeping innocents, which the Banes prize over all other victims.





# Chapter Four: Storytelling in the Umbra

One of the most enjoyable features of **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** is the fact that it can encompass so many stories and genres. Chronicles can incorporate everything from rip-and-smash action-adventure to transformational odysseys of deep spiritual discovery. Of course, when a prominent feature of the characters is their ability to transform into superhumanly strong and tough, nine-foot-tall killing machines, it's sometimes easy to forget about the Changing Breeds as beings of spirit as well as matter.

As such, stories involving the Garou's other innate ability — that of traversing the Umbra — have the potential to be very special. When interacting with the bizarre denizens and "landscapes" of the Umbra, players and Storytellers have the potential to leave behind the mundane cityscapes and mechanistic blight of the World of Darkness. In the Umbra, the Garou can truly live up to their potential as creatures of legend.

## *The Silver Rule*

When running Umbral stories, application of one key rule can make the difference between wonder and boring normalcy. This rule, which could well be known as the Silver Rule, is simply this: *Make visits to*

*the Umbra special*. The Umbra is a special place. For the Garou, it is their connection to Gaia and the fountainhead of their magic. It is the better half of the world, a half from which they're all too often tragically cut off. The Umbra is not supposed to be a public-transit system or convenient cellar into which characters can duck when threatened. When the Umbra becomes just another superhuman power in the character's arsenal, to be whipped out and deployed with no more thought than using a firearm, much of **Werewolf's** unique ambience is lost.

In the real world, spirit quests and vision rituals were important cultural glue for the tribes that practiced them; they were matters of solemn ceremony, not undertaken on a whim. As the Storyteller, you have every right to ask spirit-traveling characters what they hope to accomplish by entering the spirit world. Characters who "just want to hang out" are probably not in the proper frame of mind to access the Umbra in the first place.

## *Umbral Storytelling Techniques*

When running stories set in the Umbra, the Storyteller should use techniques of description and mood generation to make the place seem different from more



mundane adventures. A trip to the Umbra should seem like an exciting diversion, not more of the same old, same old. Following are a few tricks to help you simulate this.

The Umbral world is generally perceived as more vibrant and colorful than the stagnant, more flat physical world. Storytellers should present characters with panoplies of color, sound and odor that they just don't experience in the World of Darkness. Which is not to say that all Umbral vistas are the spiritual equivalent of a Grateful Dead T-shirt, merely that even the most cynical characters experience a pang of realization at just how blue the sky is, how fresh the grass smells, etc. Visually, the Umbra has *texture* — objects become sharper or more rugged to the eye; blacks become deep and all-absorbing while whites take on a near-luminescence; reds seem to bleed while grays seem to be cool as stone. This increased texture works for ill as well as good, of course; an area blighted by Wyrnish taint will seem all the more vibrantly, aggressively poisonous in the Umbra. Good or bad, the Umbra's visuals should never be stale.

The Umbra is composed of spirit-stuff, ephemera, which is a living part of Gaia. As a result, objects that are normally inanimate in the material world can be imbued with life and sentience in the Umbra. Just like in *Alice in Wonderland*, objects such as trees, stones, mechanical devices and the like can move, speak, even display personality traits, subject to the Storyteller's desire. And, as with *Alice in Wonderland*, the laws that a realm or creature follows don't have to make any sense to material beings.

Umbral travel resembles a dream as much as it does travel in the waking world. Indeed, much Umbral travel takes place via the medium of dreams. If you remember some of your own dreams, you know that distortions of time, logic and space can happen at a moment's notice — for example, a scene can simply fade into another, or the characters can just... go somewhere because that's where they're supposed to be at that moment.

Sometimes, synesthetic effects occur. Shapeshifters can smell colors, or see sound, or taste music. Again, while the Umbra shouldn't be the equivalent of a corny Oliver Stone acid trip, a light application of such effects can make it very clear just how eerie the Umbra can be.

Shapeshifters are more at home in the Umbra than most material beings — but they should never be truly familiar with the place. Always be prepared to throw a curve ball to players who are getting too comfortable with Umbral travel. The road doesn't have to lead to





the same place it led to last time... and sometimes, things happen that just can't readily be explained.

Storytellers should be prepared to go with the flow regarding clever players creatively defying the region's "natural" laws. For example, it's not inconceivable that a werewolf surrounded by enemies could use the Might of Thor Gift to stamp a fissure in the earth, then jump through it to another realm entirely. Or, a werewolf might be able to climb the tallest oak in an Umbral forest, then, after swiftly changing to Lupus form, jump from the treetop into the Aetherial Realm in the clouds overhead. A wily Theurge who wins an Enigmas contest with a water-spirit might even be able to make the spirit's home river flow uphill for a scene.

As a "devil's advocate" point to the above, though, remember that you're dealing with real players who need some frame of reference to play their parts in an enjoyable story. Weirdness is fine, in fact encouraged, but a story that comes out more like *Naked Lunch* than a mythological quest will throw off a lot of players.

Change the environment of the playing area. For example, light the place with candles instead of turning on the electric lights. Burn incense; play some eerie music as opposed to the thrash/industrial/techno/metal/whatever you use when the pack is going to go kick ass. Decree that all Umbral interactions must be resolved by roleplaying; no dice allowed.

### *Storytelling Spirits*

Likewise, interaction with spirits should fundamentally differ from interaction with material beings. A Garou who parleys with a totem, Incarna or Bane should feel as though she's talking to something... not like her, or like humans, animals or any other denizen of the material world.

A spirit is commonly the embodiment of an idea, thing, or concept, and it must act according to the dictates of that concept above all else — sometimes in ways that seem fanatical or even frightening to the more well-rounded denizens of the material world. For example, when playing the part of a spirit of War, the Storyteller should keep in mind that every fiber of that being is devoted to the pursuit of war. It literally has no other purpose. Spirits with the same purview still have individual personalities — "war" can encompass everything from bloodthirsty berserkers to cocky top-gun fighter pilots to weary veterans — but the spirit will follow its purview with a devotion that can be downright scary to less monomaniacal sorts. A Garou who traffics with a spirit of War for the purpose of trying to enlist its aid to build a caern, for example, is likely to be disappointed.

When running a spirit, Storytellers might want to take a cue from Isaac Asimov's "Laws of Robotics." The laws were innate programming to which all of Asimov's robots were subject. They could try to find clever ways of accomplishing tasks that defied the programming, but they could no more outright defy the programming than you or I could will ourselves not to breathe.

In similar manner, Storytellers might want to make a list of a few "laws" under which each encountered spirit must work. When interacting with the players' characters, the spirits must try to accomplish their goals in accordance with these laws. Clever players can discover the laws and use them to their advantage.

### *Entry and Exit*

An easy way to make travel to the Umbra seem special is to modify, or even outright alter, the rules governing entry and exit. Storytellers who decide that characters aren't in the properly reverential frame of mind to enter the Umbra can decree that the Umbra is off limits. A cynical Bone Gnawer who doesn't give a rat's ass about Rat or any other totem discovers one day that... he can't go to the Umbra. He can be chased by a horde of Black Spirals, he can stare into the rear-view mirror until his eyes pop out. He's lost the connection to Gaia that allows him to walk between worlds, and until he goes on a quest of atonement, he's stuck in the World of Darkness just like any monkey.

Likewise, certain areas of the Umbra play out more like nightmares than real places. In these zones, characters may not be able to escape the soul-scarring vista, no matter how many reflective surfaces there are or what their Gnosis is.

This is not to suggest that Storytellers screw over their players at a moment's notice. Golden Rule or no Golden Rule, players have a right to expect that things work more or less the same from game to game. Still, the player who puts a lot of effort into treating the Umbra as a sacred place should gain more out of it than the player who pops in and out for convenience's sake.

### *Theme and Mood*

Theme and mood are important in any World of Darkness chronicle, but they are doubly so in the Umbra. A journey to the spirit world is as much an exploration of the visitor's soul as it is an actual trip to anywhere, and so the way the character perceives and feels is as important as the "physical" landscape itself.

As previously mentioned, Umbral travel should never be undertaken casually, and so the Storyteller should have a clear theme in mind when she designs an



Umbral story. Indeed, each story should play out like a journey, with a clearly delineated beginning, middle, and end. Ideally, the character should have learned something from the experiences. If he hasn't, maybe he's not ready to leave yet.

For example, suppose the theme of the story is "the characters must learn that too much Rage is as deadly as too little." Perhaps the characters enter the Umbra in search of a naturae spirit. Upon arrival, the characters find the naturae's Glen assailed by Banes. The characters throw themselves into the fray — but such is their anger that the psychic energy of the struggle poisons the Glen, and the naturae falls into Slumber. The characters must now quest for a mystic artifact to awaken the naturae, and this quest leads them to the Battleground, where they experience the horror of mindless carnage. The artifact is in the hands of a powerful Umbral Jagglings, but instead of bargaining for the artifact, the characters attack the Jagglings with the intent of stealing the prize. The Jagglings retreats from the Battleground, disappears into the Null Zone, and the characters lose any chance of finding the artifact. Finally, after taking a wrong turn on the way home, they find themselves immured in Erebus, as punishment for their foolhardiness.

Some themes naturally suggest themselves depending on the realm to which the troupe travels. A trip to the Atrocity Realm is more likely to involve themes of guilt, violence, and redemption than a trip to the Summer Country.

To establish mood, the Storyteller can use some of the same tricks she uses to evoke mood in the material world. However, since the Umbra is half a dream anyway, she can be more blatant, painting mental pictures with broader strokes. For example, to convey the savagery of Pangaea, the characters might witness a titanic, bloody battle between two ravening dinosaurs. When entering the Black Furies tribal homeland, the characters might be greeted by an eerie Greek chorus rising from far up the misty, pine-shrouded hills. And some realms, such as the Atrocity Realm, exist solely to convey a mood.

### *Storytelling Umbral Travel*

One interesting technique that can be used to convey the feel of Umbral travel is to change a scene depending on the characters' — or even players' — state of mind. For example, the characters are traveling through a relatively serene glade in the Umbra when they come across a suspicious and possibly malevolent spirit. The pack's Ahroun, headstrong and foolhardy, attacks the spirit, spending half his Rage in the process. The spirit flees, but the character's psychic effluvia

taints the journey thereafter; the trees, formerly sheltering, now seem to twist and rustle menacingly; a howling wind whips through the branches; thorny brambles begin to impede the characters' path.

This can happen even more readily when entering a zone controlled by a powerful spirit. When a powerful Jagglings or Incarna hits the scene, the very landscape (which is, after all, ephemera) warps and changes to fit its mood. A powerful moon-spirit might cause the entire world (as far as the characters can see, anyway) to glow with silvery motes, while the arrival of a Maeljin Incarna might cause everything in the vicinity to sprout razored steel barbs.

### *Foreshadowing*

Prophecies, omens and portents are the meat and drink of the Umbra. Stormcrows descend from the heavens to caw out mocking warnings. Stag-spirits flash out of sight into distant Glens. The very stones speak to the characters, warning of imminent doom. A Jagglings from one's totem appears, speaking a cryptic riddle. Umbral denizens are ideal for injecting a little foreshadowing into one's chronicle.

Omens are events that have their genesis in the supernatural (often Umbral) world, but manifest in the material world. For example, suppose the story revolves around a monstrous Wurm Incarna, a servant of the Defiler Wurm that manifests in the form of a sickly child. This spirit intends to appear in the material world and wreak havoc. Before the Bane actually makes its attack, the characters might have several preliminary encounters involving disease, children, or both. All the children in a nursing ward might suddenly take sick, or formerly healthy Kinfolk might fall mysteriously ill, or the characters might simply discover a nest full of sickly young birds, abandoned to die by the mother.

An Umbral journey — particularly, though not necessarily, one through the Dream Zone — can foreshadow events in the material world. For example, if one of the characters' Kinfolk is about to be victimized by a killer, the character might meet a very similar creature in the Atrocity Realm. Or the characters might discover a weird type of Bane in the Penumbra — an advance scout for a villain in the material world.

### *Dream Sequence*

Normally a peripheral part of stories set in the material world, the dream sequence technique can be pivotal to characters that wish to venture into the Umbra. Given that the Umbra is literally "the stuff of dreams" anyway, it makes perfect sense for characters to use their dreams as a way to enter — or even manipulate — the spirit world.



At its most basic, the dream sequence can be used in standard fashion by Umbrally attuned characters. Werewolves with high Gnosis might regularly receive omens and portents, explained as residual connectedness between the character and the Umbra. Beings and locales from the Umbra might regularly appear in the character's dreams. A character may well experience a dream sequence before the beginning of a story, then experience events reminiscent of the dream sequence while in the Umbra during the story itself. In such cases, the character might be able to make Enigmas rolls to understand the dream, or even to alter the dream as it's occurring (for example, to see what lies behind a "hidden" door during the dream, or to escape a horde of nightmare creatures long enough to discover the Bane that unleashed them).

The connection can extend further. Characters might travel to the Umbra in dreams, as part of a pack visionquest rite or a solo journey. This can be done by entering the Penumbra, then falling asleep and entering the Dream Zone.

The Storyteller can simulate dream-travel in one of two ways. He can simply decree that characters entering the Umbra in dreams are physically present in the spirit world and are subject to all of the risks that condition entails. This is not unreasonable; as shapeshifters are composed as much of spirit as matter anyway, an argument can be made that, for them, a dream-body is "real" and tangible. It is, after all, near impossible to divorce a werewolf's spirit from his flesh.

The second way to run a dream-based story is for the characters literally to project their consciousness — their souls, for want of a better term — into the Dream Zone. Essentially, while the werewolves' bodies (and spirit halves) remain in the physical world, their consciousness takes on a half-formed incarnation in the Dream Zone, becoming something like ephemera. While in this state, the characters don't have access to their true spirit forms, only to whatever strengths they can marshal through their own force of personality. They can "physically" interact with the objects and spirits around them, but the rules are different. To represent this disconnection, a character substitutes his Manipulation for his Strength Trait, Wits for Dexterity, Intelligence for Stamina, and temporary Willpower for health levels. Thus, if a werewolf's dream image gets involved in a brawl with an ephemera of the Dream Zone, the player would roll Wits + Brawl to strike with a claw attack, and Manipulation for damage. If the character runs out of temporary Willpower, the dream ends and the werewolf awakes as if from a nightmare (potentially having suffered a health level or two of actual sym-





thetic damage, at the Storyteller's discretion) — in all likelihood, no closer to achieving his ends than he was. This variant approach is a little more generous to the characters, since the danger is much lessened; on the other hand, it may be much more nerve-wracking for players with physically oriented characters to find themselves in a situation where their might has been stripped from them.

### *Symbolism*

Myths and legends are rife with symbolism. Characters and artifacts from Zeus's thunderbolts to Odin's eight-legged horse (symbolizing a coffin's bearers, and thus death) to the Golden Fleece to the serpent in the Garden of Eden are all representative of some larger truth or meaning. Umbral quests are a great place to incorporate similar symbolic motifs, in large part due to the malleable nature of the spirit world.

The characters themselves might display symbolic manifestations of their personalities — for better or worse — in the Umbra. For example, a Garou with high Rage and a penchant for violence might have a perpetual stain of blood on her fangs and claws when appearing in the Umbra. A character with high Gnosis, Honor and Rank might manifest a shimmering crown.

Nearly all spirits represent something. The "Spiritual Correspondences" section listed with the spirits in this book describes some of the ways in which spirits can stand for larger issues. For example, in defeating a storm-spirit, perhaps the character is confronting her own Rage. If an oak-spirit enters Slumber in the Umbra, perhaps the old and wise among the characters' sept are being callously cast out into the wild.

For other ideas involving symbolism, pick up some of the works of Carl Jung, or study an encyclopedia of mythology. In particular, the items and accouterments used by the various deities often have a symbolic as well as a literal meaning.

### *Gamecraft*

In myth, the ability to answer riddles often spelled the difference between a hero's success and grisly demise. Stories from the tale of Oedipus and the Sphinx through *The Hobbit* involve the use of riddles to defeat foes not easily overcome through brute force. It's a classic motif and one well worth appropriating for the myths you and your players are creating.

For example, the characters might come upon a deadly spirit or Bane whose function is to guard a particular place, being or item. As Storyteller, make it clear that the characters are unable to best this foe through physical force (and give the spirit the Traits to back it up). The spirit then challenges the characters to a contest of gamecraft. If the characters win, the

spirit leaves, turns over its charge, or what have you. If they fail, something... bad happens.

Ideally, the riddle contest is performed in "real life," with the players actually attempting to answer a few riddles of the Storyteller's creation. However, the gamecraft can also be simulated with resisted Enigmas rolls. Each net success on the character's Enigmas roll might cost the spirit a certain amount of Power. Failure drains a certain amount of temporary Willpower from the character; when temporary Willpower is reduced to zero, the character falls under the thrall of the spirit (and must be rescued by other characters).

### *Story Seeds*

Each Umbral realm has specific story seeds affiliated with it (see the appropriate realm description for details), but the Umbra itself can play host to countless stories. We've included a few sample story ideas hereafter.

- A character with the Ancestors Background suddenly finds herself unable to commune with her ancestors. When she tries, she receives visions of her ancestors, who are screaming, moaning and clearly in distress or agony. The character and her pack must quest into the Umbra to discover what is ailing her ancestors and alleviate the curse.

- A similar story involves the distress or kidnapping of the characters' totem spirit. Perhaps the totem is menaced by a Bane or imprisoned by a rival spirit lord. In any event, until the characters free their totem, they will have no access to their Background or any of the advantages gained thereby.

- A lord among the elemental spirits native to the Penumbra has become sick, mad, or simply gone rogue, and this is causing disaster in the material world. For example, a sick or angry river-spirit might cause the nearby river to dry up or flood its banks, to the detriment of the Garou and Kinfolk nearby. The pack must enter the Penumbra, seek out the elemental, and rectify the problem by one means or another.

- A new and extraordinarily virulent plague is ravaging the nearby area. In the material world, this might manifest as a viral strain, bacterial poisoning, or even STD. In the Umbra, though, the plague is being spread by Bane-spirits of disease, who are pricking or shooting victims with spiritual darts that cause the disease. Like shamans of old, the characters must enter the Umbra to hunt down the plague-spreaders and cure the disease.

- The characters are in need of a particular piece of information, and the only being known to possess the answer they need is a great Incarna spirit



dwelling in one of the Umbral Realms. The pack must go questing for this spirit, entering its home Realm in the process. Once there, they must persuade the spirit to help them, and this can entail a quest of some sort as well.

- A particular region in the Penumbra has become absolutely inhospitable to all spirits—from Jagglings to Incarnae, and seemingly even including Banes. This “dead zone” is like a barrier that permits no spirits to pass beyond its boundaries. The characters, however, as half-material beings, can pass into the region to discover its origin. Perhaps something in the material world is generating the “dead zone,” or perhaps the heretofore-unknown phenomenon is produced by something mysterious to material and spirit beings alike.

## *Umbral Chronicles*

Most chronicles involve the Umbra at one point or another—but it’s also possible to run “Umbral chronicles,” in which journeys into the Umbra constitute a major portion of the stories to be told. Depending on the specific nature of such a chronicle, characters may spend more time in the Umbra than they do in the material world.

Storytellers should use caution when designing Umbral chronicles. The Umbra is supposed to be a weird and mystical realm of the soul, and using it as a mere “Earth-2” can cheapen the impact of the spirit world. Overexposure to the Umbra can dull the characters’ reaction to it, as well as dilute the revelatory, transformational nature of journeys into the spirit world.

On the other hand, there’s nothing intrinsically wrong with “Dr. Who”-style chronicles involving intrepid werewolves who hop from Umbral realm to Umbral realm in search of adventure. In this case, the Umbral chronicle becomes a sort of “Nine Worlds” or “traveling the planes” series of stories; characters may routinely interact with whole nations, cities, and races of spirit-beings, traveling back to the material world only rarely.

- **Threat from Beyond:** The characters’ pack is dedicated at its rite of passage to eradicating the menace of one particularly powerful and malevolent Bane and its brood. The Bane’s machinations extend into the material world, and it certainly has material allies and servitors, but its primary base of operations lies in the Penumbra or Umbra—perhaps in the Atrocity Realm, the Scar, or even (for truly frightening chronicles) Malfeas itself. As the characters increase in knowledge and power—thus gaining the ability to battle and defeat the great Bane’s minions one by one—they gradually quest deeper and deeper into the Umbra. At the chronicle’s climax, the characters, now experienced spirit travelers, must face down the primary foe in its Umbral lair.

- **Wagnerians:** The characters are part of a special Garou society whose duty it is to search for another Gaia-realm. The Wagnerians believe that the world-soul of the current Gaia-realm is irrevocably dying, and thus that the only chance for the survival of the Garou as a whole lies in a mass exodus to another world. Finding such a world would involve explorations through the various Umbral Realms, as well as an eventual journey through the Deep Umbra.

- **Reconsecration:** The characters are part of a sept in or near an urban area. Banes from the Scar or Weaver-spirits from the CyberRealm have damaged the spiritual tapestry in the region, and this has in turn blighted the sept, the Garou, and the area itself. Crime is pervasive, pollution is rampant, depression and suicide (and Harano) claim victims in both the human and Garou population, and a general feeling of hopelessness permeates the chronicle. To save their sept, the characters must learn to battle the Banes on both the material and Umbral fronts. This chronicle will culminate with a journey into the Umbral Realm from which the Banes stem, as well as a great rite to cleanse the surrounding area. Gathering the necessary materials and completing the appropriate quests to perform the rite will also involve considerable Umbral travel.





# Appendix

## *Gifts*

### *Lupus*

- **Sense Wyld (Level One)** — The Garou may sense Wyld energies or spirits in the nearby area. Any Gaian spirit can teach this Gift.

**System:** The Garou rolls Perception + Enigmas against a difficulty determined by the Storyteller, based on the strength of the presence.

### *Ragabash*

- **Emergency Exit (Level Two)** — Sometimes things go sour, and the most important thing a pack can know is the way to the nearest exit. This Gift allows a Ragabash to smell out the nearest exit from a realm or enclosed space; obviously, it's at its greatest use in hostile and unfamiliar Umbral territory. Rat-spirits teach this Gift.

**System:** The player must spend a Willpower point and roll Perception + Survival, difficulty 8. One success indicates general direction; the more successes, the more information the Ragabash receives. This Gift doesn't point to the safest exit out — the exit may be guarded, or lead somewhere worse than the Ragabash's current surroundings — only the closest.

### *Theurge*

- **Sense Weaver (Level One)** — The Garou may sense Weaver energies or spirits in the nearby area. This Gift is taught by any Gaian spirit.

**System:** The Garou rolls Perception + Science against a difficulty determined by the Storyteller, based on the strength of the presence.

- **Sense Wyld (Level One)** — As the Lupus Gift.
- **Parting the Velvet Curtain (Level Three)** — The Garou with this Gift may open the Gauntlet, physically transporting creatures other than shapeshifters into the Umbra. This Gift is taught by a turtle-spirit.

**System:** The Garou must touch the creature to be affected; the player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Gnosis against a difficulty equal to the local Gauntlet plus one per creature affected. Kinfolk or other shapeshifters do not add to the difficulty as do other creatures. If the roll is successful, the Gift user automatically steps sideways along with his passengers.

A maximum of eight other creatures may be transported in this fashion. While in the Umbra, the



affected creatures are bound to the Garou with silk threads. They will always remain by the Garou's side and must leave the Umbra when the Garou does. However, the Garou may sever a thread and send a creature back to its starting point by spending a Willpower point.

If the affected creature wants to resist either the initial transition or the return to the physical world, she may make a resisted Willpower roll against the Gift-wielder (difficulty 6 for both rolls).

• **Web Walker (Level Three)** — The Garou may move across the Pattern Web through the Umbra, ignored and unmolested by any Weaver-spirits in the area. This Gift is taught by any Weaver-spirit.

**System:** To activate this Gift, the Garou spends two Gnosis points, then rolls Charisma + Science (difficulty 7). Success enables the Garou to travel through the Umbra as though she were on a moon bridge. However, there must be strands of the Pattern Web in the area through which the Garou wants to travel.

### *Philodox*

• **Realm Wisdom (Level Two)** — A wise Garou knows to obey the laws of a realm for maximum results; however, sometimes those laws aren't immediately obvious. Although experience is the best teacher, sometimes a Philodox needs to take a shortcut. By channeling the wisdom of a realm's spirits, the Philodox can intuitively guess important facts about the realm. This Gift is taught by an ancestor-spirit.

**System:** This Gift works in any realm or zone. The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Perception + Law against a variable difficulty; the more obscure or less traveled the realm, the higher the difficulty. For example, trying to glean wisdom about the CyberRealm or Battleground might be difficulty 6, whereas learning the laws of the Null Zone might be a 9. Each success gains a relevant fact about the realm, to a maximum of five successes. The Storyteller determines which facts are most relevant; for example, if the player gains only one success in the Abyss, the Storyteller might feel that the most important fact is "don't fall in; if you fall into the Abyss, you're lost forever." This Gift functions only once per visit to any given realm, and doesn't prevent redundancy; a Philodox might "learn" the same fact twice in successive visits to a realm.

### *Galliard*

• **Scent of Distinction (Level Three)** — This Gift enables the Galliard to mystically "sniff out" the general spirit nature of her surroundings (i.e., influenced by the Weaver, Wyld or Wyrn; under

the domain of a powerful Incarna; etc.), as well as the area's history. For example, a werewolf who sniffed out a caern might learn about the totem and purview of the caern, when it was founded, important events that happened near it, etc. This Gift is taught by a wolf-spirit.

**System:** To activate the Gift, the Garou must physically sniff out the area (in any form), meditate for 10 minutes or so, spend a Gnosis point, and roll Intelligence + either Streetwise (for urban areas) or Survival (for wilderness/rural areas). The Storyteller determines the difficulty. The Gift may be used over as large an area as the character can physically sniff, but information is more specific for smaller areas.

### *Ahroun*

• **Spirit Savage (Level Three)** — In the spirit world, a warrior often finds himself dealing with hostile spirits much more often than he'd like. This Gift allows the Ahroun to brutally savage a spirit with a bite, impeding the spirit's ability to attack or defend itself. Spirits find this Gift horrifying, and are unwilling to aid any warrior who uses it unjustly (such as against any Gaian spirit). It's taught by wolverine-spirits, who care little for the opinion of their fellows.

**System:** The Garou must successfully bite his spirit opponent and spend a Rage point. The player then rolls Strength + Brawl, difficulty 4; if the successes equal or exceed the spirit's Willpower, the spirit's Rage is effectively reduced by one point, plus one point for every extra success, for the rest of the scene. This Gift can be used only once per scene against any given spirit, and it cannot reduce a spirit to zero Rage.

For example, Tanya Riverjumper ignores the foul stench and clamps down on a Hogling. She gains six successes; three more than the Hogling's Willpower. The Hogling loses four Rage for the rest of the scene; it now has only four dice to attack and defend itself, and it's probably terrified to boot.

### *Black Furies*

• **Sense Wyld (Level One)** — As the Lupus Gift.

### *Children of Gaia*

• **Parting the Velvet Curtain (Level Three)** — As the Theurge Gift.

### *Glass Walkers*

• **Web Walker (Level Three)** — As the Theurge Gift, save that a Glass Walker need spend only one Gnosis point to activate the Gift's effects.



• **Virtual Umbra (Level Four)** — This Gift enables a Garou to transport himself into the CyberRealm's Computer Web (p. 61) from any part of the Pattern Web. Any spirit affiliated with computers can teach this Gift.

**System:** The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Intelligence + Computer (difficulty 8). The Glass Walker may also transport other (willing) characters into the Computer Web, but attempting this feat raises the difficulty to 10.

## *Rites*

### *Descent into the Dark Umbra*

#### Level Three

This rare rite is largely a secret held by the Silent Striders and the Ivory Priesthood of the Silver Fangs. By invoking the spirits in the proper fashion, the ritemaster attunes himself to the Dark Umbra, allowing him to cross over into the lands of the dead. This rite demands the sacrifice of a living thing; for that reason, many of the Garou who know this rite refuse to use it regularly, for fear that too much bloodshed for selfish reasons will bring the eye of the Wyrms upon them.

**System:** The ritemaster must make an Intelligence + Rituals roll, difficulty 7; she must then roll as normal to step sideways across the Gauntlet. If both rolls succeed, she crosses into the Shadowlands of the Dark Umbra.

### *Rite of Dreaming*

#### Level Three

Enacting this rite enables any number of shapeshifters to travel together through the Dream Zone. The enactor of the rite must paint a series of symbols on each of the rite's participants, all the while intoning the mystic phrases to accompany them. After this is done, all participants imbibe a special pasty concoction of certain mystic herbs, then go to sleep.

**System:** The leader of the rite rolls Charisma + Rituals (difficulty 7). The greater the number of successes, the greater the dream's clarity and the more control the characters have over it.

Characters using this rite may enter Dream either from the material world or the Penumbra.

### *Rite of Homecoming*

#### Level Three

This rite enables a Garou to travel instantly to her tribal homeland from any point in the Umbra. Members of the rite leader's pack may also accompany her.

**System:** No roll or expenditure is needed; however, the ritemaster must be in good standing with her

totem. Silent Striders may not access their homeland with this rite.

### *Rite of the Silver Forge*

#### Level Four

This rare punishment rite is reserved for culprits who have proven themselves to be demonstrably tainted yet who are deemed to yet have some hope of redemption. If performed correctly, this rite creates a direct link between the target and the Near Realm of Erebus; the next time the target steps sideways, she appears in Erebus rather than the Penumbra, and cannot leave until Charyss has deemed her "cleansed." This rite works only against Garou targets; non-Garou do not possess the proper connection to Erebus in the first place.

**System:** The rite is handled with the usual roll for a punishment rite (Charisma + Rituals, difficulty 7). The participants must know the target and must believe wholeheartedly that she is guilty of crimes against Gaia, but capable of repenting. The rite participants do not have to be in the presence of the target — all that is required is that they know the target's Garou name and be within 100 miles of the target. Upon successful completion of the rite, the ritemaster must then make a Gnosis roll (difficulty of the target's Gnosis).

If the rite is cast unjustly, the ritemaster suffers the effect instead, and must account for his lack of fair judgement in Erebus the next time he tries to enter the Umbra.

### *Rite of Phoebe's Stair*

#### Level Four

Only Phoebe herself teaches this rite. When properly performed, this rite transports the ritemaster and his pack, who must all follow Phoebe (or Sokhta) as their totem, to the surface of the Aetherial moon. The rite must be performed within a lunae, one of the crossroads of moon paths.

**System:** The ritemaster rolls Wits + Rituals, difficulty 7. Success transports the pack from the lunae to Phoebe/Sokhta's domain. Anyone accompanying the pack that does not follow Sokhta/Phoebe as a totem is left behind; only the lunar Incarna's children are brought to her realm.

## *New Charms*

• **Create Shadows:** The spirit can create, shape and manipulate shadows in the physical world. Apart from their unusual animation, these shadows are perfectly mundane, unable to attack or manipulate physical objects — although they can speak in



voices no louder than a whisper. Spirits with this Charm usually use it to unnerve or frighten humans, often to drive them away from the spirit's territory. A Gnosis roll against the local Gauntlet is necessary; the more successes, the more shadow the spirit is able to manipulate.

- **Choke:** By spending a Rage point, the spirit is capable of generating clouds of suffocating ash, smoke or noxious gas. Anyone inhaling the cloud must make a Willpower roll, difficulty 8, or begin choking on it helplessly, unable to do more than roll on the ground or crawl from the area. The radius is initially 3 yards around the spirit, and the cloud will drift on the wind for three further turns before dissipating. Any Garou caught in the cloud for more than one turn must make a frenzy check.

- **Dream Journey:** The spirit can invade the dreams of a sleeper. While there, the spirit can inflict no actual harm apart from very vivid dreams (which the target may or may not remember upon waking). This Charm requires the expenditure of a Gnosis point. If the spirit possesses the Charm: Corruption, it may use this Charm on the sleeper during the dream; the target's Willpower is reduced by one thanks to her vulnerability. If affected, the target may act on the suggestion at any point during the next day, but the compulsion passes once the target goes to sleep again.

- **Intangibility:** By spending one Gnosis and two Essence, the spirit can become intangible for the duration of the scene, unable to affect or be affected by anything around it.

- **Neutral Scent:** By expending three Essence, the spirit can conceal its Triatic affiliation. For the duration of the scene, the spirit does not register to any Gifts such as Sense Wurm, Sense Weaver or Sense Wyld.

- **Paralyzing Stare:** This Charm works much like the Shadow Lord Gift of the same name; the spirit spends one Gnosis point and rolls its Gnosis against the target's Willpower. The target (who must be able to see the spirit) freezes in place for one turn per success.

- **Sap Will:** The spirit is capable of undermining a person's resolve and determination. This power is usable across the Gauntlet. The spirit spends one Gnosis, and makes a resisted Gnosis roll versus the target's Willpower; each success drains one temporary Willpower point. If the target is brought to zero Willpower, she becomes extremely suggestible, and will follow almost any suggestion just to find some direction in her life.

## *Abyss* *Inhabitants* *Nightmaster*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Philodox

**Tribe:** Shadow Lord (Society of Nidhogg)

**Rank:** 5

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

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Empathy 1, Intimidation 7, Primal-Urge 3, Subterfuge 4, Crafts 2, Leadership 4, Melee 5, Performance 3, Stealth 5, Survival 4, Enigmas 5, Medicine 3, Occult 5, Politics 3, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** The entire Abyss and its secrets are open to Nightmaster; if he takes the time to look for something lost within the tunnels, he'll eventually find it. Nightmaster is notably Pure Bred, but has been cut off from any access to totem spirits or ancestor-spirits.

**Gifts:** Nightmaster has been around so long that the Storyteller can presume he has access to any and all Gifts that seem appropriate; all Shadow Lord Gifts in particular are his to command. He also wields a unique Gift granted to him and him alone by the Abyss.

- **Stealing the Soul (Level Five)** — By focusing on an opponent, Nightmaster may make an opposed Gnosis roll (difficulty of his target's Gnosis) against his victim (difficulty 10). For each success by which he surpasses his opponent, he drains two points of temporary Gnosis from his opponent. This is the only way that Nightmaster can regain Gnosis.

**Rage:** 7

**Gnosis:** 10

**Willpower:** 10

**Rites:** All

**Fetishes:** Assassin's klaive; Storyteller's choice of 4-8 other "toys" of the moment.

**Image:** Nightmaster always appears in his war form. He is tall even for a Crinos, and his ebon coat is torn by numerous scars. Instead of eyes, empty pools of darkness fill his sockets.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Nightmaster is the embodiment of the Abyss in spirit form. Like other Garou who have remained too long in the Umbra, Nightmaster is long beyond mortality. His incredible





force of will (and, some say, his pact with the Abyss itself) keeps him firmly in the mortal form he once wore, even if his sanity is mildly eroded. He does not fear the Apocalypse, but instead anticipates it keenly as a potential end to his hunger. However, he sees the coming of Anthelios as both a threat and a challenge. He's considering a trek into the Deep Umbra in order literally to eat the Demon Sun—if successful, he can then turn his attention to Helios....

### *Fetishes*

#### *Hearts of Midnight*

Level 5, Gnosis 8

These black gemstones stop Gifts involving Gnosis from affecting their bearer. They also prevent the bearer from spending any Gnosis (although he may still make Gnosis rolls, such as the one necessary to attune the fetish to himself). Hearts of Midnight are found only in the Abyss. Some werewolves murmur that the Wyrms plans to use the fetishes to strip Garou of their spirits.

### *Aetherial Realm*

### *Fetishes*

#### *Moonsilver*

Any item made from Moonsilver will do double damage dice to any shapeshifter vulnerable to silver that comes in contact with it. Also, unlike silver, Moonsilver increases the Gnosis of its holder by one. Moonsilver is never available to a character during character creation; it can only be quested for, and Phoebe/Sokhta will certainly punish any person who misuses such a valuable gift.

### *Wyldstones*

Level 5, Gnosis 8

Wyldstones appear as small dark pieces of rock found floating in the Wyld Reaches. When activated, Wyldstones glow with an entire spectrum of color. Activating a Wyldstone lets its bearer use the spirit Charm: Break Reality as if it were a Gift. These stones also aid shapeshifters with transformations; a werebeast who carries an attuned Wyldstone reduces the difficulty of any shapeshifting roll by 2.



## *Arcadia Gateway*

### *Fetishes*

#### *Faerie Weapon*

Level 2, Gnosis 7

Fae weapons never dull or break. They function exactly as earthly weapons (dealing the same damage) until they are activated; they then inflict aggravated damage.

#### *Airborne Faerie Weapon*

Level 4, Gnosis 8

The fae of the Arcadia Gateway have a penchant for ranged weapons —arrows, quarrels, spears, sling stones, and so on — and tend to grant them slightly more dramatic powers. An airborne faerie weapon is much like its mundane counterpart, save that it does aggravated damage when activated, will not chip or break, and usually possesses some minor dramatic power. Such a weapon might do any one of the following:

- fly around corners or through twisting woods (weapon ignores any modifiers for cover; **Werewolf**, pg. 208)

- soar straight towards a drawn mundane weapon (attacker may “shoot to disarm” at no penalty)

- seek out the most villainous person in a pack of targets (weapon selects the most “offensive” (to fae sensibilities) target; no modifiers to the actual roll)

- seek out a target who carries cold iron (weapon is automatically attracted to nearest target bearing cold iron, and the difficulty to hit is lowered by 1)

- always return to the hero who launches it (requires Dexterity + Athletics roll to catch it safely)

#### *Fae Armor*

Level 4, Gnosis 6

Faerie armor is lightweight, never wears or breaks, and never hinders movement or Dexterity. Its appearance is unearthly, like something from a painting. If worn by a Garou, it shifts form as he does, or (if desired) is only active and usable in Crinos form. In addition, when activated, it adds three dice to all the Garou's soak rolls (though it cannot soak silver). Envious Garou may kill to acquire it.

## *Atrocity Realm*

### *Inhabitants*

#### *Typical Victimizer*

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6, Charisma 1, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1, Perception 1, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Intimidation 3, Melee 3, Stealth 1, Subterfuge 4, Survival 1

**Attacks:** Str +1 blade (wounds inflicted by the victimizer's implements of torture add an additional -1 wound penalty; thus, a character who was brought to Wounded would be at a -3 penalty to all dice pools)

**Willpower:** 4

## *Cyber Realm*

### *Inhabitants*

#### *Typical CyberWolf*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ragabash

**Tribe:** Bone Gnawers

**Rank:** 1-3

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

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 1, Primal-Urge 1, Streetwise 4, Crafts 3, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Occult 1, Rituals 2, Science 3

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 4, Resources 2

**Gifts:** If Rank One, choose four Rank One Gifts; if Rank Two, add two Rank Two Gifts; if Rank Three, add one Rank Three Gift.

**Rage:** 6

**Gnosis:** 6

**Willpower:** 6

**Rites:** Any appropriate

**Fetishes:** ID Card, others at the Storyteller's discretion

**Image:** Scruffy urban street trash, of virtually any ethnicity and description. A few sport some mechanical parts grafted onto them.

**Roleplaying Tips:** The average CyberWolf wants to bring down the Lords of Uptown, as much for fun as any real concept of replacing them with something better. They're dedicated to the struggle, but most aren't visionaries; they have the “topple the bad” down pat, but aren't fully prepared to “rebuild the good.” In this, they're an excellent object lesson for player characters.

#### *Nanospiders*

The tiny architects of the realm, nanospiders appear as metallic dust. Travelling in swarms, they move about the realm shoring up the pattern webs.

**Rage** 1, **Gnosis** 2, **Willpower** 6, **Essence** 1

**Charms:** Solidify Reality





### *Weaver Constructs*

Weaver Constructs are composite beings made up of one to five cyberfetishes. The construct possesses any and all powers of their component parts; their Charms lists are highly variable, and the following is merely a suggestion.

Rage 7, Gnosis 4, Willpower 5, Essence 20

Charms: Airt Sense, Armor, Blast, Control Electrical Systems, Shatter Glass, Solidify Reality

### *Fetishes*

#### *ID card*

Level 1, Gnosis 3

This card identifies the bearer as an emanation from Downtown, thus helping to avoid scrutiny in the CyberRealm.

#### *Geomid Fragment*

Level 3, Gnosis 7

This geometric solid is a piece of an information geomid. While the fetish is activated, the wielder is considered to be "of the Weaver" by all Weaver-spirits; the Gift: Sense Weaver will also register the wielder as possessing strong Weaver energies.

### *Stabilizer Patch (Taken)*

Gnosis 5

This patch resembles a Band-Aid. When pressed against the skin, it sends swarms of nanospiders into the shapeshifter's body. The shapeshifter is automatically forced into breed form. Any Banes or other spirits possessing her body must make an opposed Gnosis roll against the patch's Gnosis plus the Garou's Gnosis, scoring more successes, or be expelled. Finally, the shapeshifter must make an opposed Gnosis roll against the patch's Gnosis or take one level of aggravated damage for each success by which the patch beats her. (This last effect also works against Wyld- and Wyrms-creatures.)

### *Booster Patch (Taken)*

Gnosis 3

This patch works similarly to the stabilizer patch. This patch increases one Physical Attribute by three points for an entire scene. At the end of the scene, the shapeshifter must make a Willpower roll. Failure indicates he becomes addicted to the booster patch and must seek out more.



## *Cyberfetishes*

Cyberfetishes are created by binding Weaver-spirits into a shapeshifter's body; this process turns the body part in question mechanical. Cyberfetishes are automatically considered dedicated items, remaining with the shapeshifter no matter what form he takes; they also count against the shapeshifter's limit toward dedicated items (which can be trouble, considering they aren't removable). If harmed, a cyberfetish doesn't regenerate with the shapeshifter, causing further potential problems.

The following are a couple of possible cyberfetishes; for more ideas, see **Book of the Weaver**.

### *Lightning Claws*

Level 4, Gnosis 5

To create this fetish, Weaver-spirits are mystically bound into the recipient's claws. The claws become metallic and remain extruded even in homid form. When striking with the claws, the shapeshifter gives off an electrical shock, adding two dice of electrical damage to the damage from the claws themselves. The shapeshifter may also attempt to short-circuit machinery by touching it and rolling Gnosis (difficulty variable, depending on the complexity of the machine).

### *Steel Hide (Technofetish)*

Level 4, Gnosis 5

This fetish is created by binding a metal elemental into a shapeshifter's fur, scales or what have you. The recipient permanently looks like a chrome statue of a human, animal or hybrid, making social interaction with humans downright impossible. However, he gains three dice to all soak rolls, even against aggravated damage. This fetish counts as two dedicated items.

## *Erebos*

### *Inhabitants*

#### *Members of Charyss' Brood*

**Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 0, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 2, Empathy 1, Enigmas 2, Intimidation 4, Occult 3, Melee 4, Stealth 3

## *Fetishes*

### *Brood Spear*

Level 5, Gnosis 6

These terrifying weapons are the exclusive property of Charyss' brood, and cannot be manufactured by

mortal shapeshifters. They are tipped with silver (Str +3 damage, +1 die to Melee rolls) and, when wielded, burn with silver fire (inflicting +1 health level of aggravated damage in addition to the normal damage of the weapon). If a wielder scores five or more successes, she impales her opponent (opponent loses action next turn).

### *Water of the Silver Lake (Talen)*

Gnosis 8

The waters of the Silver Lake bring serenity and ease the sting of painful memories. A shapeshifter who drinks this water gains +3 dice on rolls to heal the effects of any derangements, including Wyrms-induced ones. The water's beneficial influence lasts for one day, although any illnesses overcome during that time do not reappear.

## *Pangaea*

### *Inhabitants*

#### *Vshauik*

**Breed:** Metis (deformities not apparent in Pangaea)

**Auspice:** Philodox

**Tribe:** Black Spiral Dancer (no tribe in Pangaea)

**Rank:** 4

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

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 1, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 3, Subterfuge 4, Leadership 4, Melee 3, Performance 3, Stealth 5, Survival 4, Enigmas 4, Occult 5, Rituals 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 5 (Zarak-Ur)

**Gifts:** Vshauik knows all the Black Spiral Dancer Gifts of level four or lower in the main rulebook, and a number of metis and Philodox Gifts of lower levels.

**Rage:** 8

**Gnosis:** 8

**Willpower:** 8

**Rites:** Vshauik knows whatever rites are necessary for the story; he concentrates on mystic rites over all.

**Image:** In the material world, Vshauik looks like a hideous, drooling, snaggletoothed metis monstrosity. In Pangaea, though, he resembles a fairly normal werewolf (if that isn't a contradiction in terms); the feral light in his eyes seems simply predatory rather than off-kilter, and his bearing is respectable if not regal.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Vshauik, unlike other Dancers who travel to Pangaea, remembers enough of his tribal



identity to carry out his plan — stirring up the Zarak-Ur cannibals against their neighbors. He can't remember many details about the spirit that gave him his orders, although it sometimes becomes partly visible in his nightmares. On its advice, he has taught the Zarak-Ur how to use (and worship) fire. Its influence has also taught him enough to realize that most other werewolves in the realm, though "of his tribe," are his enemies. He tries to mislead and deceive any other Garou he meets in Pangaea.

*Sample Dinosaur: Large Carnosaur*

**Attributes:** Strength 15, Dexterity 2, Stamina 8 (+3 soak), Perception 2, other Mental and Social Attributes effectively 0

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Intimidate 9, Stealth 1

**Attacks:** Str +3 bite, Str stomp (gains +1 die to attack pools when stomping creatures of Crinos size or below)

**Health Levels:** 20

*Sample Dinosaur: Utahraptor*

**Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Social Attributes 0

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Intimidate 6, Stealth 4

**Attacks:** Bite Str +1, Slashing Talon Str +2 (gains +1 die to attack pools when slashing)

**Health Levels:** 9

## Scar

### Inhabitants

#### Skree

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Knife-Skulker

**Tribe:** Ratkin

**Rank:** 3

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

**Abilities:** Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4, Crafts 2, Leadership 4, Melee 3, Stealth 5, Survival 4, Medicine 3, Rituals 2, Science 3

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 4, Resources 3

**Gifts:** Any from the Ratkin list of Ranks One through Three.

**Rage:** 7

**Gnosis:** 4

**Willpower:** 4

**Rites:** Any appropriate

**Fetishes:** Klaive (appropriated from slain Garou)

**Image:** In human form, Skree has swarthy skin, curly black hair, horrid teeth, and a wiry, bent frame. In rat





form, he's a huge black beast with particularly disgusting incisors.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Skree serves the barons of the Scar as a mercenary, spy, and agent provocateur. It was he, working from within, who destroyed the Rat totem's resistance movement. Now he scuttles from one baron to the next, playing them against one another; he'll be happy to use any visiting shapeshifters as pawns in his schemes or (more likely, for he's not so very clever) as a "gift" toward whichever baron he seeks to impress.

### *Blight Spiders*

Age 8, Willpower 5, Gnosis 6, Essence 19

**Charms:** Calcify, Sap Will\*, Solidify Reality, Materialize

## *Wolfhome*

### *Fetishes*

#### *Tracking Collar*

Level 2, Gnosis 5

These collars, when placed on an animal, allow the Wolfhome scientist with the proper receiver to track the animal. Otherwise, they have no ill effects. However, any shapeshifter who's forced to wear one of these collars loses a point of temporary Willpower and a point of temporary Glory until such time as the collar is removed.

## *Tribal Homelands*

### *Black Furies*

#### *Cassandra Shadow-Walker*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Theurge

**Tribe:** Black Furies

**Rank:** 5

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

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 2, Primal-Urge 4, Subterfuge 4, Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 4, Leadership 4, Melee 3, Performance 4, Stealth 5, Survival 3, Enigmas 5, Linguistics 3, Occult 5, Politics 3, Rituals 5

**Backgrounds:** Past Life 3, Pure Breed 3, Totem 5

**Gifts:** (1) Breath of the Wyld, Heightened Senses, Mother's Touch, Sense Wyld, Sense Wyrms, Spirit Speech; (2) Beastmind, Command Spirit, Name the Spirit, Sense of the Prey, Sight from Beyond; (3)

Bacchantes' Rage\*, Exorcism, Pulse of the Invisible, Tongues, Visceral Agony; (4) Grasp the Beyond, Wasp Talons; (5) Gorgon's Gaze\*, Shadowplay, Thousand Forms, Wyld Warp

\*Gift printed in the *Werewolf Players Guide*

**Rage:** 7

**Gnosis:** 10

**Willpower:** 9

**Rites:** All

**Fetishes:** Phoebe's Veil, any others as appropriate

**Image:** In Homid form, Cassandra is lean and wiry, with black hair and blue eyes. In animal or hybrid form, she sports a shiny black pelt with silver markings. She dresses in a mix of contemporary fashion and nods to Grecian clothing, such as a Grecian tunic over modern pants or leggings.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Cassandra is probably the foremost Garou expert on the Umbra, having been forced to dwell in it much of her life. A committed wanderer, she nonetheless set such an example for her tribe that Pegasus herself asked her to take command of the Black Fury homeland. Cassandra obeyed, reluctantly, and put an end to her wandering. Now with the presence of a queen to match her regal confidence, Cassandra is an imposing figure among an imposing tribe. A natural prophetess, Cassandra sometimes speaks in riddles and oracles. She has tempered many of her early prejudices, but still dislikes the Get of Fenris, though she tries to overcome this instinct for the good of the whole. She doesn't really want to rule over the tribal homeland, but feels it's her duty, one she does her best to carry out. She returns to the physical realm once a year, in order to fight disconnection, but rarely feels as though she has the luxury to stay long.

### *Silent Striders*

#### *Wepauwet*

**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Ahroun

**Tribe:** Silent Striders

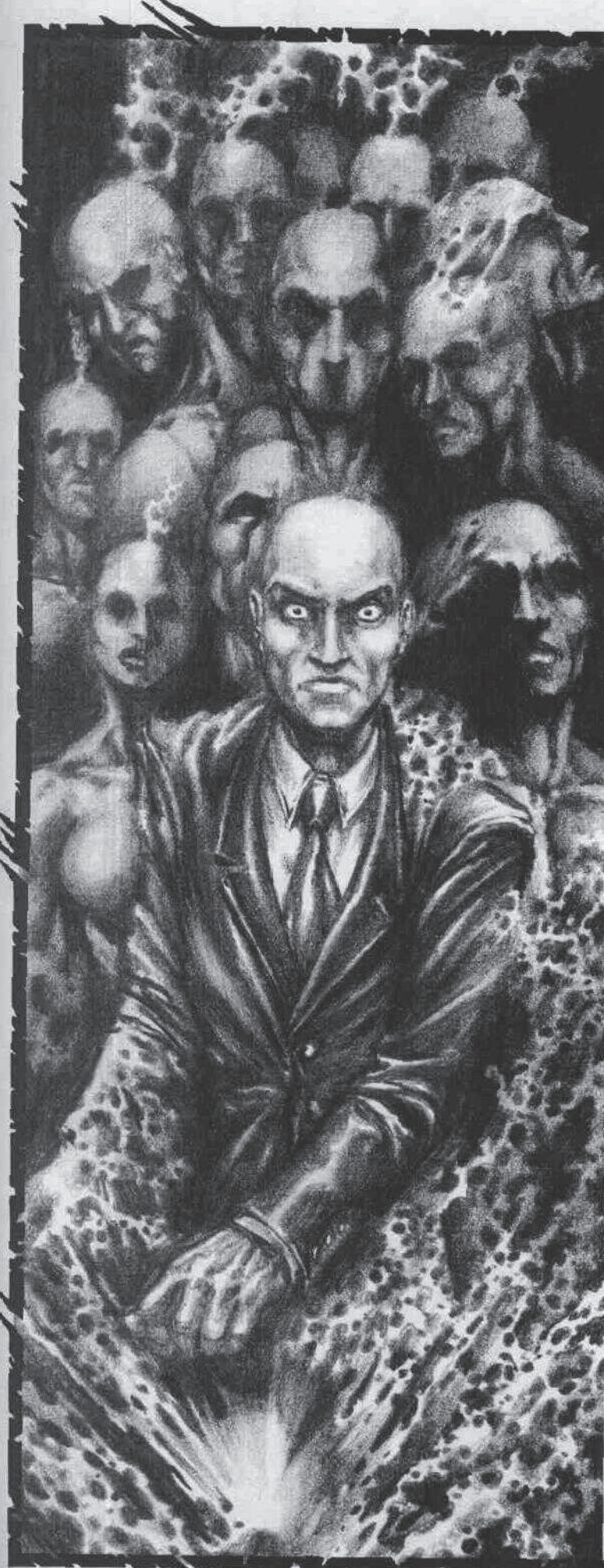
**Rank:** 5

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

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

[Note: Wepauwet's Abilities are actually much higher than these, although he must concentrate to recall





more than this "instinctive" selection. To remember Abilities other than those listed here, he must make the equivalent of an Ancestors roll; the rules mechanic works in much the same way.]

**Backgrounds:** Ancestors 7 (not an actual link with ancestor-spirits; see above), Contacts 5, Resources 5

**Gifts:** Virtually all available to homids, Theurges, Ahroun and Silent Striders, as well as a smattering of other outside Gifts

**Rage:** 7

**Gnosis:** 10

**Willpower:** 8

**Rites:** All

**Fetishes:** As many as the Storyteller cares to give him.

**Image:** In Homid form, Wepauwet appears as a dark-skinned man who dresses inconspicuously. In *Crinos* form, he is exceptionally tall and lean.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Wepauwet is an enigma, and acts like it. He seems as though he's forever contemplating a little secret just on the tip of his tongue. He's not overly prepossessing, but somehow, he can command respect from the wildest or surliest Garou.

[Note: Wepauwet was actually made immortal during his life, a trait that has carried over with his transition to spirit state. As such, he has persisted for over 2500 years and, if killed, will eventually reform in the Umbra. Treat him as a spirit with an Essence of 41 and the Charms Airt Sense, Materialize and Re-form.]