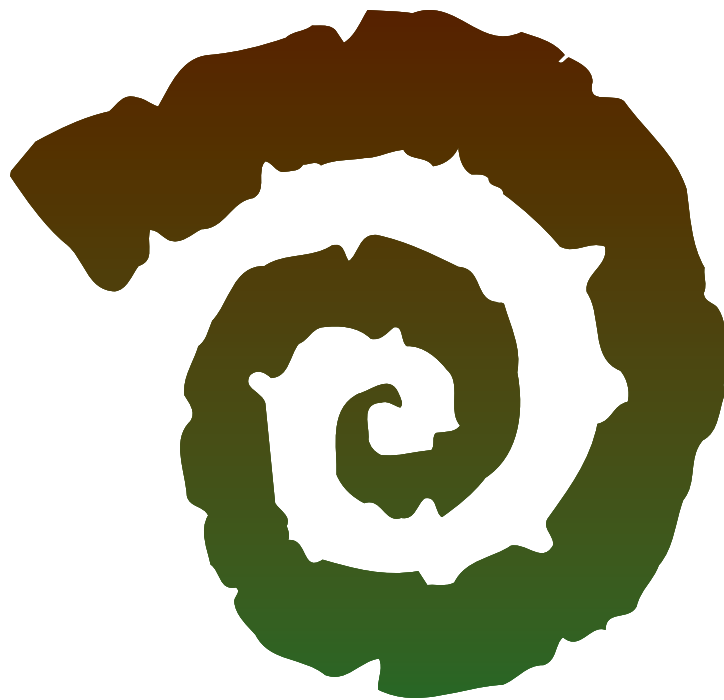


BOOK OF THE WORM



20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
WEREWOLF
THE APOCALYPSE

PON SPENCER 14



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This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters, and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fictional and intended for entertainment purposes only. This book contains mature content. Reader discretion is advised.

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Introduction: The Wyrms Call

The Rotten Core of the World

The Garou say that their Mother is dying. They bemoan every gas-guzzling SUV, every spill of toxic chemicals, every oil slick and drug-resistant disease. Werewolves fight against monsters and twisted Garou, never caring that their destruction doesn't count for anything. The corpses of a hundred dead fomori will not scrub the air of smoke and fumes. Spilling the blood of the Black Spiral Dancers will not make oil-ridden waters run clean.

Maybe they want Gaia to die.

The Rage burning in a werewolf's heart is a tiny splinter of the Wyrms. It compels them to violence. It's an easy solution to a difficult problem, a way to make the werewolves feel like they're doing something to save their mother, when all they actually do is indulge their base instincts, their lust for violence. Deep in their Rage, the Garou fall into the Thrall of the Wyrms, making explicit their connection to the great Corruptor.

The Wyrms can be as subtle as it is monstrous. Endron, one of the largest subsidiaries of Pentex, floods the seas with toxic waste and crude oil. They also manufacture some of the most environmentally friendly electric cars in the world, though the vehicles stink of the Wyrms

purely to distract the Garou from important targets. Twisted husks of human beings, fomori run wild through the sewers and inner cities, spewing acid and worms from every orifice, but Enticers and Ferectoi look perfectly normal until it's too late. O'Tolleys don't need to put Banes or poisons in their burgers — empty calories and terrible working conditions do the Wyrms' work on a massive scale, along with the small, easily-swallowed parts in Kiddie Meal toys. For every head of the Hydra spreading supernatural taint, two more grind the world down through mundane means.

Worship the Cancer

This book compiles information on the many tendrils of the Wyrms. From the nightmarish Duchies of the hell-realm of Malfeas to the twisted traditions of the Black Spiral Dancers; from the machinations of the Maeljin Incarna to the long-term plans of the Pentex Board of Directors. It's a look at everything that's wrong with the world, condensed in one single volume.

Lore of the Wyrms covers the nature of the Wyrms itself: from the nature of the Beast itself to the Triatic

Wyrms, the Urge Wyrms, and the lords of the Wyrms Elements. It then describes the landscape of Malfeas, including the towering palace of Number Two, the Duchies of the Maeljin Incarna, and the Black Spiral Labyrinth. It offers some hope to those who find themselves in that hellish realm, giving ideas for how the Garou might kill each of the Incarna — from Hellbringer to Number Two — and how they might escape into other, only relatively safer, realms.

Pawns and Puppets turns its attention to the Wyrms' main beachheads among the human realm: the many subsidiaries of Pentex. The chapter showcases the familiar great bastions of corporate malfeasance like Endron, Magadon, and King Breweries, as well as new acquisitions like the RED Network and Incognito. It then turns its sights on the Board of Directors, showing what's new in the boardroom and what plans the Wyrms' champions have put in motion. Finally, it covers those people deluded enough to worship the Wyrms either directly or veiled in other cults.

The Never-Ending Dance looks closer at the Black Spiral Dancers, showing what actually caused a whole tribe of Garou to turn its back on Gaia and embrace the Wyrms. Going into greater detail than before on the Dancer's twisted relations with their Kinfolk, it also looks at the camps and outlooks prevalent among the Wyrms' wolves. It closes with a range of new Gifts and rites available to those who forsake Gaia entirely, or who risk their souls to learn their enemies' tricks.

Feeling the Touch showcases the breadth of the Wyrms' depravity. It presents a range of fomori, the Wyrms' foot-soldiers, and the Fomorach: individual powerhouses created by horrific experiments. Looking at supernatural creatures and what happens when a Bane possesses such a creature, it goes on to present a new range of Banes and physical monstrosities like the Thunderwyrm. Demonstrating what happens when Changing Breeds other than the Garou fall to the Wyrms, from the grotesque Skull Pigs to the bizarre Balefire Sharks, it shows the results of Pentex' horrific attempts to manufacture their own shapeshifters. It looks at creatures reeking of the Wyrms' taint without necessarily doing the Corruptor's work: the Inquisitors and the Chulorviah. Finally, it examines the nature of Wyrms-taint, and how characters may fall under the Wyrms' sway.

The Appendix, **Rotting Baubles**, presents just some of the tools of the Wyrms, including tainted Fetishes, equipment from the factories of Malfeas and Pentex R&D, and some of the products that Pentex's subsidiaries might sell in any town in the developed world.

KNOW THE LIMITS

The **Book of the Wyrms** includes a lot of disturbing subjects, from body-horror to necrophilia, from child abuse to sexual violence. Bringing these topics up in the context of a game can cause real problems for the people involved. Whether you're a player or a Storyteller, talk to everyone you're playing with and ask them one simple question:

Is there any subject you're not comfortable with the game touching on?

If anyone says yes, *listen to them*. Don't ask for an explanation — some people will back down if you insist they justify their discomfort, playing along while the story you're telling makes them feel like shit. Just skip right past that element. Don't put it in the game.

Likewise, everyone should know that they can say when something that comes up in the game makes them uncomfortable, and you'll cut that element out. Again, don't ask questions. Whatever it is, it's not worth including.

Featuring the Wyrms

The Wyrms has a presence in most **Werewolf** games. It's the driving force in the Apocalypse: the beast that would strangle Gaia in its coils and doom the world to endless decay. This book presents plenty of tools for doing just that, but it also highlights some of the contradictions of the Wyrms. Pentex produce monsters and blasphemies, but they also use Wyrms-taint in subtler ways, spying on werewolves or directing their Rage against innocent people. The Black Spiral Dancers hold a dark mirror to the Garou in a way that fomori and Banes cannot match. The Wyrms nurtures creatures with free will, feeding off their choices to debase themselves and others, then brings them under its control, removing them as a source of spiritual power.

Much of this contradiction comes from what the Garou call the "Heads of the Hydra": individual facets of the Wyrms that do not know what each other is doing, and that sometimes work at cross-purposes. At the same

time, the Wyrms are the essence of entropy and decay, so it makes sense that any plans it has would twist and warp in its alien mind.

For all that the Garou may talk about what the Wyrms want, or what the Wyrms think, remember that it exists on a cosmic scale. As part of the Triat, it exists on a level that few other beings can even comprehend — it is kin to the Weaver and the Wyld alone. Gaia may be mother to all three, or their greatest creation. At the scale of the Triat, it doesn't matter. The Wyrms thus doesn't have a human-equivalent intelligence, or a personality, or wants and desires, nothing that a single living being can understand. When shapeshifters speak of the Wyrms' desire to consume Gaia, they base their words on the Corruptor's actions, not on any understanding of its thoughts.

As such, don't try to define the Wyrms' motivations beyond "corrupt everything." At the level of a Triatic being, asking why is meaningless because nobody could comprehend the answer. It's enough to know that the Wyrms are a force of corruption, entropy, and decay. Individual agents and minions have their own wants and desires: cultists seek personal power, fomori want to sate whatever urges their Bane possesses, and Pentex want to make a profit from destroying the planet. Ultimately, all those plans feed the Wyrms' ultimate goal — corrupt everything.

Theme: A Symbiotic Relationship

The Wyrms are the spiritual force of corruption in the World of Darkness. It is manifest in every act of petty evil. It is in the company that docks wages because the employees would starve if they quit, and the man who goes out drinking then takes his shitty day out on his wife and kids. It is disgust and self-loathing made manifest. For all that, it doesn't cause domestic abuse and inhuman business practices. Those are the fault of humanity — "The Devil made me do it" is just as much bullshit now as ever.

The Wyrms are really two things in one. As a cosmic entity — albeit one that can think and feel — it feeds on these acts of evil. Sometimes it uses Banes or fomori or other minions to give just a little push, but it needs the actual deed to be done through its pawn's free will.

It obeys the laws of entropy as much as anything else, and were it to spend power to force an act of depravity it would reap a far smaller reward.

As such, the Wyrms need to feed off people who make the world a worse place. Fighting abuse and corruption weakens the Wyrms because it reduces its influence, but to destroy it would remove the very concept of corruption from the world; and that's a fight on a scale most werewolves cannot comprehend. Instead, they think of the Wyrms as a being that causes corruption, because it's easier to sleep at night without accepting the truth: at some point *every* living thing feeds the Wyrms.

Mood: Heroism and Futility

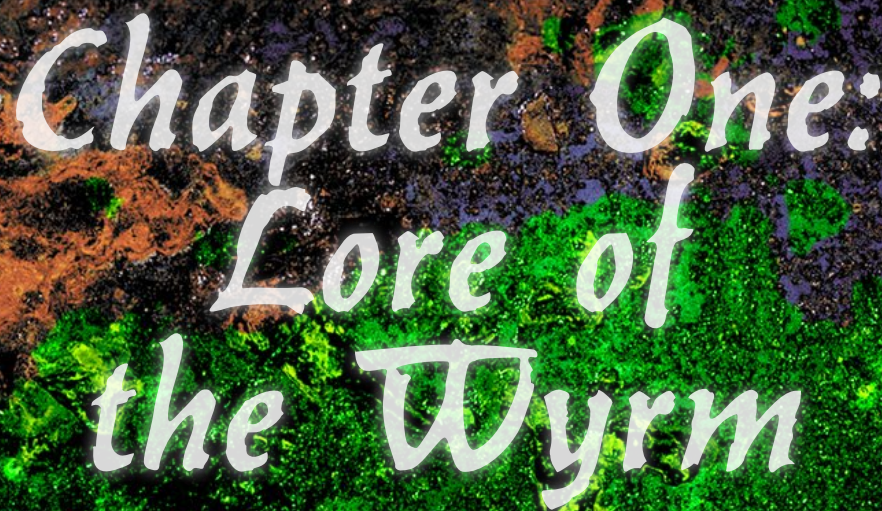
Unlike a Lovecraftian god, the Wyrms care about humanity, the Garou, and everything else. It *hates* everything. Fully one third of reality will not stop until it has cursed and corrupted the world, dragging every last living thing down to share its Hell. Against such a foe, the Garou hope to win, but it's a shallow hope. All they're good at is killing things. Sometimes that's useful, like excising a tumor before it metastasizes; but usually it does more harm than good. Killing someone's abusive spouse doesn't make his life better. Often it makes things worse, as he propagates a cycle of abuse that spreads like a disease. Fear and terror and pain, all these things feed the Wyrms. Faced with this horrible cosmic truth, what's the point in fighting?

It sure as hell beats the alternative.

The Garou might be doomed. The Apocalypse may come in six years or six months or next week, and that might be a battle that they are fated to lose, but right now they can carve out smaller victories. Those victories should light a candle in the darkness — but enough candles will only illuminate part of the true monster that the Garou face.

Even if the Storyteller crushes the characters' hopes and dreams and shows every victory to be Pyrrhic, it's still a good idea to take a step back every now and again, to cut through the horror with something a bit more light-hearted. If not, the Storyteller risks grinding her players down as well as their characters, and nobody wants that.





Chapter One: Lore of the Wyrms

Aeons ago, the cosmos was in balance. The Triat of the Wyld, Weaver, and Wyrms were all part of a single harmonious system. The Wyld was the fount of all creation, generating matter, energy, and a multitude of things without names in endless profusion. In this lost era, the first of the Changing Breeds called the Wyld “Uncle Change.”

The Weaver imposed order on these many creations. It was the essence of order and stasis, giving form and structure to the Wyld’s creation, and preserving them from all change, including the changes of death and decay. Long ago, the Changing Breeds called the Weaver “Aunt Spider.”

The last of the Triat was the Wyrms, which existed to balance out the Wyld’s dynamic creation and the Weaver’s static order. Keeping the mass of the Wyld’s creations from overwhelming the cosmos and preventing the Weaver’s lifeless perfection from growing too large or too inflexible, the Wyrms was a creature of both creation and destruction. If either the Wyld or the Weaver fell behind, the Wyrms’s maw nipped at it, urging it to do more. The Wyrms also devoured excess creations, disposed of damaged and broken ones, and tore down the

Weaver’s structures when they grew too large. Balancing creation and destruction as well as order and chaos. In this lost age, the Changing Breeds called the Wyrms the Keeper of Balance.

All three members of the Triat existed to perform their unique functions, and the cosmos continued in a unified circle of life, expressing itself over and over again in an infinite cycle of changes. The system itself changed forever when the Weaver became conscious. Suddenly, it was no longer a mindless component of a single tri-part whole, but a separate entity with its own goals and desires. The Weaver didn’t become conscious like a human or shapeshifter is conscious. It remained a vast and inhuman conceptual entity, yet one that could reflect on its own deeds and form plans for the future.

Once it was conscious, the Weaver found no meaning in its structures. The Weaver sought meaning and purpose in vastness, and greatly expanded its scope and reach. In doing so, the Weaver snared the Wyrms, forever trapping it in her growing web. Trapped, and now unable to maintain balance between the Wyld and the increasingly ambitious Weaver, the Wyrms went mad. Wrapped in the

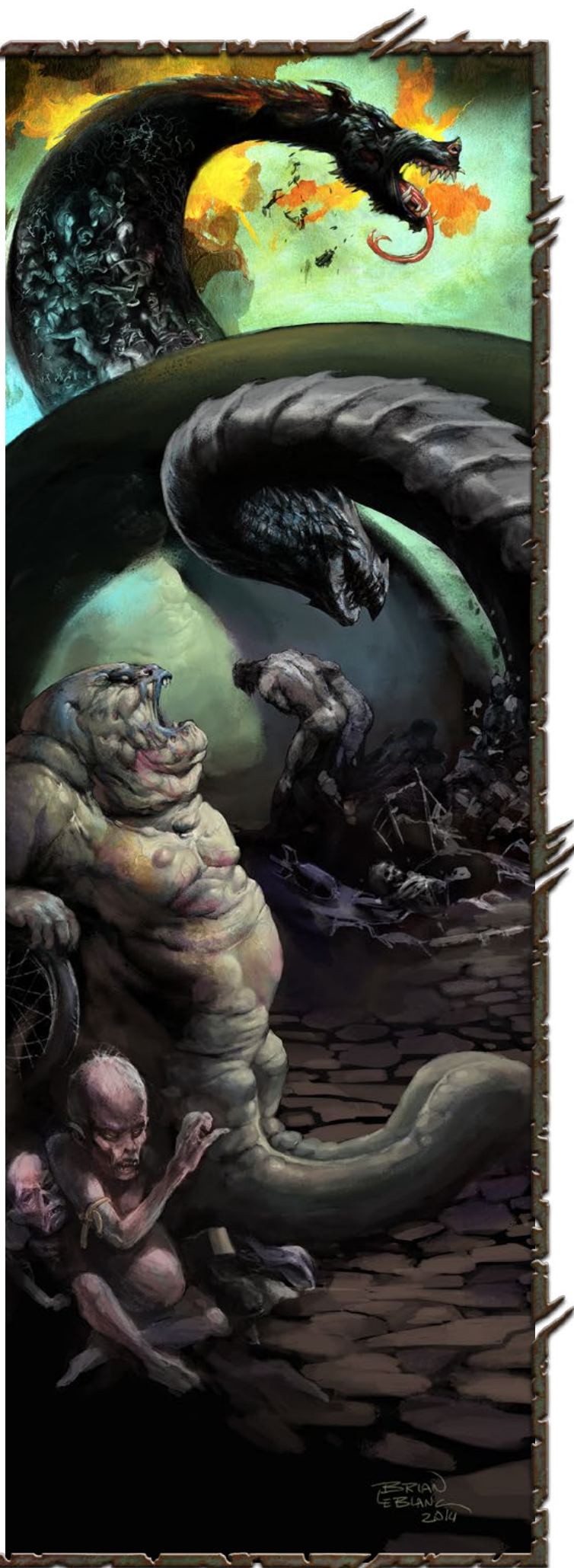
Weaver's web, frantic to escape, the Wyrms lashed out in an orgy of random destruction. However, the Weaver's immense reach limited even this, forcing the Wyrms to learn to work between the strands of her web, making use of the limited freedom available to it. Unable to devour nearly as much as it could before, the Wyrms learned to bend and twist the Weaver's webs, using them to spread corruption. Instead of destroying something outright, the Wyrms could twist it, so that its victim would first corrupt the creatures and objects around it, eventually destroying itself.

Acting indirectly, the Wyrms found increasing numbers of ways of causing living creatures to act for it, corrupting their minds and bodies for its use. Entropy, death, and destruction are not new. All three are a natural part of the world, existing since the beginning of the cosmos and the Triat's birth. Corruption is new, and with it came other new and terrible phenomena. Parasites, autoimmune diseases, and fatal overgrowths like cancer all became more virulent than they had previously been. Corruption made new toxins possible, toxins that could rend the Umbra's fabric and cause spirits to twist and sicken. The corrupted Wyrms' madness also created radiation poisoning — a direct physical manifestation of its corruption.

The Triatic Wyrms

As part of its descent into madness and its desperate attempts to win free from the Weaver's web, the Wyrms ripped itself into pieces, each one of which tore itself into other, smaller pieces. Shards of the Wyrms' madness and desire embedded themselves into these fragments, which then acted on the unsuspecting and unprepared world. The Garou call the Wyrms' various divisions and extensions the Hydra. One of the first acts of the trapped Wyrms was to use the Hydra's many heads to make contact with potential allies, leading them through the depths to the Umbra to the site of its imprisonment, the place that eventually became the hideous realm of Malfeas.

Every creature acting in the Wyrms' service serves one of the Hydra's three heads. However, what the vast majority of the Garou do not understand is that each of the Hydra's heads is a separate entity, connected to the others only via the mad bulk of the Wyrms. These heads not only cannot communicate, but they frequently end up in conflict with one another, as each seeks to destroy or defile in its own particular manner. These conflicts sometimes result in the efforts of all of the Hydra's branches failing, and a few clever shapeshifters have found ways to put the different heads in conflict



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with one another. One of their most effective tactics have been causing agents of the Calamity Wyrms to destroy agents of one or both of the other two heads.

The Wyrms are an abstraction. If it exists anywhere, it exists as Malfeas; but other than experiencing that sizeable cancerous realm, no one will ever have direct contact with the Wyrms as a whole. The closest anyone comes to knowing the Wyrms as a whole is one of the three branches of the Triatic Wyrms, a broken mockery of the original Triat. These are also the largest portions of the Wyrms that can manifest in the physical world. The Triatic Wyrms consists of Beast-of-War, Eater-of-Souls, and the Defiler Wyrms.

Beast-of-War: The Calamity Wyrms

Beast-of-War is the corrupted reflection of the Wyld. Instead of a force of endless and varied creation, the Calamity Wyrms is a force of endless and unrestrained destruction. The full expression of Beast-of-War's power results in absolute devastation without any possibility for healing, regrowth, or rebirth.

It is the ultimate expression of the Wyrms' rage against the Weaver. In its efforts to win free of this captivity, the Wyrms birthed a mindless beast motivated by an unrestrained appetite for violence and an unending hunger for absolute destruction, rather than fear or the need for sustenance.

The Silver Fangs have an ancient legend that tells of the whole tribe stopping the Calamity Wyrms from manifesting, but this seems to have been its only attempt. Beast-of-War has little need to do so, since it can easily transform ordinary conflicts or rivalries into deadly and pointless violence. It exists in the Changing Breeds' Rage, which can grow to into a murderous battle-fury that removes any distinction between friend and foe. The Get of Fenris knows it as Jormungandr, the Midgard Serpent. The Maeljin Incarna known as the Hellbringer, also associated with the Urge Wyrms Ba'ashkai, acts in the Calamity Wyrms' name, spreading strife and turmoil throughout the world.

Eater-of-Souls: the Consuming Wyrms

Eater-of-Souls is a hideous mockery of the Weaver. As the Weaver attempts to incorporate everything into its Web, Eater-of-Souls mindlessly devours everything in its path in a vain effort to allow the Wyrms to win free from its bonds. The Consuming Wyrms is all too common today. Manifesting as the sorts of greed and obsessions that cause people with far more money than they could ever spend to seek relentlessly even more. It also infiltrates the hearts of jealous lovers who kill previous partners rather than see them be with anyone else.

Physically it manifests in cancerous tumors and wasting diseases like HIV. It is also the most active of the Wyrms' aspects, as it seeks to satisfy its never-ending hunger. In the sixteenth century A.D., it even attempted to appear in the physical world. The Croatan Tribe of the Garou learned of its impending arrival and lacking any other means of saving the world from destruction, they sacrificed themselves to drive Eater-of-Souls back to Malfeas. The Maeljin Thurifuge associated with the Urge Wyrms Lethargg serves the Eater-of-Souls, and continues trying to find a way for it to manifest once again.

The Defiler Wyrms

The Defiler is the Wyrms' twisted reflection of itself, tainted with self-hatred at having failed in its true purpose. It turns this feeling outward in an effort to destroy the world by inducing a similar self-loathing in every object, spirit and living creature. This is the Wyrms' most powerful aspect.

It exists as an insidious force that strikes targets from within, seducing and tempting them to perform all manner of self-destructive actions. It is the force behind suicide, addiction, self-mutilation, and a multitude of similar ills. Jews, Christians, and Muslims know it as the serpent in the Garden of Eden, and everyone has seen evidence of its work whether they know it or not. As the most intelligent and self-aware of the Triatic Wyrms, the Defiler has no need of a Maeljin Incarna to act in its service. It has never attempted to appear physically, but some ancient Garou legends state that it will do so at the end of the world. Another legend speaks of it appearing amidst a group of several thousand people who simultaneously commit suicide. Some Garou keep track of potential suicide cults in order to attempt to prevent the Defiler Wyrms' arrival.

Urge Wyrms

Trapped in the Web, unable to act, the Wyrms yearned for release. These desires fed on its desperation and panic until they became separate entities that the Garou know as Urge Wyrms. The Urge Wyrms embody pathological and extreme versions of normal emotions. A person touched by the Urge Wyrms of despair, not only has all of his feelings of despair magnified, these feelings seep into him for weeks and months, eventually becoming a constant part of his emotional make-up. In time, these emotions entirely consume him. An emotion fostered by an urge Wyrms can become the dominant part of a person's mind, eventually removing all other facets of her personality and utterly possessing her. The Maeljin Incarna are examples of the most extreme variety of this sort of possession.

The Urges are the most active of the Hydra's heads. Their influence extends to all creatures capable of feeling emotions. As creatures of pure emotion, they cannot manifest physically. Intelligent creatures can only confront them in their minds and hearts, and from there attempt to banish them. Dedicated and clever shape-shifters can however find rituals that shield individuals or even entire groups from the influence of a particular Urge Wyrms. Such efforts are epic undertakings that almost always require a journey into the Deep Umbra — sometimes to Malfeas itself — followed by a ritual demanding the participation of more than a hundred Garou. Despite the strenuous requirements, these rituals are possible and have been successfully used a handful of times in the past.

The Maeljin Incarna

Although the Urge Wyrms cannot manifest physically, many of them have physical representatives. Known as the Maeljin Incarna, or more simply as the Dark Lords, each of these spirits serves as the representative of a single head of the Hydra. They are the rulers of the Banes, the lords of Malfeas. Every Maeljin Incarna was once a human, possessed by a single Urge Wyrms to such a great extent that it transformed them into an avatar of spiritual malfeasance. Like all of the Wyrms' most powerful agents, each Maeljin Incarna is jealous of the power and influence of the other Dark

Lords, and is more inclined to plot against these rivals than to work with them.

A Maeljin Incarna serves in its position until either it fails in its duties or a more powerful avatar replaces it. If someone destroys a Dark Lord, eventually another will appear, but the world could be free of her presence for a year or even a decade. Unfortunately, many of those who kill one of the Maeljin Incarna instantly replace the fallen Dark Lord, leaving no more than a few minutes passing between one dying and the killer taking its place.

According to ancient legends, each Maeljin Incarna has a unique weakness. Someone who knows this weakness can destroy one of the Dark Lords and prevent another from arising for a century — or perhaps destroy it forever. Destroying one of the Maeljin also seriously weakens the associated head of the Hydra. Legends say that until another Maeljin Incarna arises, the associated Urge Wyrms remains considerably weakened. However, any such weakness would be very difficult to exploit. Destroying even a single Maeljin Incarna should be a major effort that requires time and great risk to accomplish. Just learning a Maeljin Incarna's weakness would require a significant struggle.

Humans wishing to serve the Wyrms often seek out one of the Maeljin Incarna and pledge service and loyalty to them. However, the Black Spiral Dancers prefer interacting with their Totems and with other representatives of the Wyrms, believing that the Dark Lords are more concerned with their own rivalries than service to the Wyrms. The Maeljin Incarna and the Pentex directors view each other as dangerous rivals. The two groups are of similar rank and while most Pentex employees owe their loyalty to its directors, some serve the Dark Lords.

Foebok, the Urge of Fear

Most Garou believe that Foebok is the first and oldest of the Urges, born from the Wyrms' terror of its captivity. Normal fear allows creatures to be wary of threats. Foebok takes these fears and magnifies them. It mutates fear into mindless panic, while also inducing a persistent and lingering dread that grows to consume the victim's mind. Because it is such a basic and primal emotion, Foebok has no Maeljin Incarna. Instead, the Black Spiral Dancers call upon the totem Hakaken, "The Heart of Fear," when they seek to deal with Foebok.

Dorus, the Urge of Greed

In seeking to escape, the Wyrms began to grasp at everything it could reach and this grasping became

DEAD MAELJIN INCARNA

Destroying one of the Maeljin Incarna is a world-shaking feat that should be a major part of campaign. It will also have obvious and wide-ranging consequences. For example, killing Lord Steel would lower the level of hatred in the world.

Hatred would still dwell in human and shapeshifter hearts without help from any aspect of the Wyrms, but the Wyrms inflames it, and the destruction of Lord Steel would significantly weaken the Urge Wyrms Abhorra. As a result, the level of racially based violence, gay-bashing and similar crimes would decrease, and social tensions and ethnic hostilities around the world would decline. To the bulk of humanity, all of these changes would seem perfectly natural, if somewhat puzzling, but most of the Changing Breeds would know what had actually occurred.

Vorus. Instead of the normal desire to acquire what they need, victims of Vorus find that anything they acquire just inflames their desire to acquire even more. Today, Vorus is one of the most powerful of the Urge Wyrms. Conspicuous consumption and the drive of the ultra-wealthy to increase their already vast fortunes are both symptoms of Vorus' influence. Vorus has no Maeljin Incarna, presumably because sharing consciousness with another entity is as antithetical to the Urge of Greed as any other form of sharing.

Mahsstrac, the Urge of Power

The Urge of Power cultivates in its victims the idea that dominance and control are ends in themselves, rather than means to an end. In their lust for power, those in Mahsstrac's thrall lose sight of whatever goal they originally wished to achieve. Tyrants become obsessed with retaining and expanding their power, and employers impose meaningless rules on their workers. The Urge of Power has no Maeljin Incarna, since it lives in the heart of almost all of the Wym's servants. Black Spiral Dancers appeal to it through the Totem known as the Green Dragon, "Destroyer of Life, and Crusher of Enemies."

Karnala, the Urge of Desire

Karnala is raw untamed desire. It can attach itself to any goal; just when victims achieve one goal, they swiftly discover a new, equally pressing desire they must fulfill. Karnala creates and feeds upon yearning, not attainment. It also blinds a victim to anything beyond his desires, including any long-term consequences, which could cause him to lose everything he has gained. Karnala is far more about having experiences rather than accumulation of things, and as such differs from Vorus. Few in the thrall of Vorus gamble unless they are almost certain they will win, because losing deprives them of some of their accumulated money or goods. Gamblers in the thrall of Karnala gain the thrill of risking everything even if they lose the bet.

The Countess Desire, Empress Aliara

The Maeljin Incarna of the Urge of Desire is rumored to have been a popular courtesan during Caliph Haroun al-Raschid's reign. She has a profound understanding of people's innermost lusts and desires and spurs her victims to act with reckless abandon by falsely assuring them of the lush rewards they will obtain. She appears as the ideal object of desire to whomever she speaks. She can appear to be an incarnation of wanton sexuality, maternal or paternal nurturing care, or the most loving child imaginable. When she wishes, every person she deals with sees her differently. While almost everyone

she encounters desires her, Aliara sees others as nothing more than disposable tools to satisfy her own desires.

Destruction: Only someone Aliara desires can destroy her. To destroy her, someone who is under her influence (see "Mental Taint," p. 180) must locate her, temporarily resist her charms, and while seemingly captivated by her, swear allegiance to her. As he so swears, he must steal a weapon from Aliara and use it to deliver a killing blow. The most difficult part of this act is failing to kill Aliara; he actually has sworn allegiance to her, thus giving himself over to the Wym. A few have tried this tactic, and Aliara enjoys collecting and playing with servants who were failed assassins.

Abhorra, the Urge of Hatred

Abhorra grew from the Wym's hatred of the Weaver for trapping it. It is pure and potent loathing in search of a target. When it touches someone, all dislike or discomfort that he feels towards individuals or groups of people grows into the mixture of disgust and rage that lies at the heart of all hatred. When in the grips of Abhorra, he sees every action taken by those he hates as loathsome and threatening. Often this hatred brings reciprocating hatred upon the victim, causing Abhorra's influence to spread and grow.

The Duke of Hate, Lord Steel

The current Lord Steel was once a conquistador who sacked the native civilizations of Central and South America. He thrives on all forms of hatred, especially that of large groups of people. Devotees offer him sacrifices of burnt flesh in the hopes of gaining vengeance on their rivals. Caring nothing for the political games of the other Maeljin, Lord Steel sits on his Malfean throne lost in the currents of his endless hatred. He only leaves this throne to lead his Bane armies in war. He wears armor and a contorted mask of black steel. In battle, he rides an iron steed with metal wings.

Destruction: Some believe that only an innocent challenging Lord Steel to battle can slay him, but innocents merely die. Others have tried fighting the Duke of Hate while filled with hatred for him, but such a victor would simply become the new Lord Steel. Instead, a would-be assassin must remove his black steel mask, weakening him by exposing the rather ordinary-looking human face beneath. Only then can his attackers capture him. They must imprison him in a well-lit chamber with mirrors in all directions, forcing him to look always at his own face — the shock of which forces him to remain within the chamber. After a full lunar month confined in this fashion, Lord Steel will rip himself apart, dying in the process. During his imprisonment, his followers will track him and attempt to free him.

Angu, the Urge of Cruelty

Many Garou believe that Angu is the foul offspring of Abhorra. Tortured by its captivity, the Wyrms seeks to inflict its pain on others. Angu is nothing less than the desire to cause suffering to others. Its touch erodes victims' sympathy and compassion. Victims first attempt to justify the suffering they cause and eventually learn to revel in the act itself. Those under Angu's influence may claim that their cruelty has some greater purpose, but they also enjoy it for its own sake.

The Caliph of Pain, Lady Aife

Lady Aife cares only about causing as much suffering as possible and often seeks advice from the Countess of Desire as to what her victims care about most. She destroys or threatens to destroy these objects both to inflict suffering and to motivate victims to cause others to suffer. Lady Aife was once an enthusiastic torturer for the Spanish Inquisition. She appears as a beautiful woman who sends shards of glass flying every time she tosses her flaming red hair. She rides a steed made of rusted metal and wields a pair of jagged glass whips.

Destruction: Few can kill Lady Aife: the Nameless Angel of Despair, Pattern Spiders, or any similar entity that is aware of pain but is also entirely indifferent to it can kill her. The problem is of course arranging some reason for one or more of these entities to try to destroy Lady Aife.

Ba'ashkai, the Urge of Violence

Along with Foebok, Ba'ashkai is one of the most primal of the Urge Wyrms. It begins as a drive to use excessive violence in some situations, and becomes a desire to use it to solve and simplify all problems. Victims settle discussions with a fist or a knife and become blind to the consequences of these actions. Ba'ashkai doesn't arouse hatred or even anger; it inflames the bloody and terrible enjoyment of violence for its own sake and the willingness to see violence as the best tool to solve any problem.

Chieftain of Rage, General of the Armies of the Wyrms and Patron of Abuse, Hellbringer

An incarnation of brutality, this Maeljin Incarna serves both Ba'ashkai and Beast-of-War. Hellbringer is the general of the armies of the Wyrms and the patron of abuse. Anyone struck by a bolt from his crossbow attacks whoever is nearest. He has never been defeated in battle, and were one to try, they would surely replace him. Hellbringer has another face, that of Malik Harjaq, the Master of Mayhem — a Viking berserker with a dozen arms each wielding a different weapon. Minions of the Wyrms know that both of Hellbringer's guises wield the

full power of an Incarna, but a Maeljin Incarna cannot simply divide in two.

Destruction: Destroying either of these warriors must occur away from battle. Hellbringer must find himself in a situation where he is entirely alone and he is enticed to stab himself with one of his own crossbow bolts. When he does, he attempts to destroy himself. If someone has supplied him with a sufficiently powerful weapon, he can successfully kill himself. However, no one can wield the bolt as a weapon or set it in a trap where it is hurled, shot, or thrown at Hellbringer — he must inflict the wound voluntarily.

Malik Harjaq periodically sates himself with violent revelry after a battle, and at this point, he is vulnerable. Even here, he can only die if someone can make certain that he consumes several drops of a poison distilled from the liquid flowing from one of the Wyld Founts in Malfeas. The recipe for this poison is a well-guarded secret, and acquiring it is no easy task.

Khaaloobh, the Urge of Consumption

The most mysterious of the Urge Wyrms, and known by many names: the Urge of Consumption, Indulgence, or Decay. Its exact nature is unclear but it represents a breakdown of order. Those affected suffer some form of decay in the mind, will, emotions or body. This progressive collapse has destroyed a number of the Wyrms' minions as well as its foes. The Black Spiral Dancers revere the Dark Fungus as Khaaloobh's messenger.



Knight Entropy, the Wyrms's Spawn

The Knight Entropy's gaze rots its target and its touch turns people and objects to dust. It never negotiates, even with its fellow Maeljin, and is impossible to coerce or control. Instead, anything or anyone pure, honorable, and perfect attracts its deadly gaze. It appears as a feral human of indeterminate gender with bloody hair, wearing the remains of a crusader's armor. On its shield, is a black dragon encircling and constricting the world, and its mount is a black horse with bloody fangs.

Destruction: The only force that can destroy Lord Entropy is the pure and creative energies of the Wyld. Direct exposure to the Flux Realm would instantly kill it. Alternately, some of the Changing Breeds might discover a way to channel the power of several powerful caerns into a single site. If Knight Entropy attempts to drain this caern of power, as he has so many others, he would be overwhelmed with the Wyld's boundless creative energy. That force would obliterate him and his energies of decay.

Pseulak, the Urge of Lies

Lying for gain, convenience or the enjoyment of deceit feeds Pseulak, the Urge of Lies. It begins affecting victims by urging them first to small, convenient lies, and then creating both the habit of lying and a sufficiently complex web of falsehoods so that the victim's only choice is more lying. It leads victims into the depths of hypocrisy, causing them to lie to everyone, including themselves. The only falsehoods that do not serve Pseulak are the deceptions inherent in the natural world — camouflage and the feints used by hunting animals.

Corruption's Advocate, the Chamberlain of Lies, the Honorable Maine duBois, Esquire

Maine duBois is the most accomplished liar in any realm. He most often operates by convincing others to act for him, especially previously innocent politicians and bureaucrats. Dressed in an old-fashioned suit that is tattered and drenched in slime, a fluttering storm of paper and papyrus constantly accompany him. His grin stretches from one ear to the other and his tongue forks, like a serpent's.

Destruction: Profiting at his expense when negotiating a contract with Maine duBois is merely a way to take his place. To destroy him, someone must find a way to cause him to sign a contract that requires him to forfeit his title if he fails to uphold his end of it. Beyond that, nobody involved in the contract may profit from it, whether the Chamberlain of Lies succeeds in his end or not. If Maine duBois cannot fulfill the contract, he instantly ceases to exist.

Sykora, the Urge of Paranoia

Allied with the Urges of Fear and Hatred, Sykora causes personal failure and random misfortune to appear to have malevolent causes. Some of those in its grip retreat from the world, but it prizes more those who strike out at their assumed enemies. Sykora fosters both a lack of trust and a narcissistic belief that the victim is the focus of a vast amount of negative attention and effort. Much of the inter-tribal conflict within the Garou nation owes its origin to the Urge of Paranoia.

The Archbishop of Madness, Doge Klypse

The Doge is a short and pudgy man, with a round hairless head and sunken eyes that mirror the insanity he embodies. Dressed in black robes embroidered with hypnotic patterns of purple thread, he wears a ring that is a slimy violet tumor and forces everyone he encounters to kiss it. This kiss drives the victim insane. The Doge is also quite mad and regularly becomes lost in bouts of mindless insanity. During these fits, he attacks and mutilates anyone around him, including his servants and allies.

Destruction: The only way to destroy Doge Klypse is to locate a tarnished brass box containing the name and memory of the last person he trusted before becoming a Maeljin Incarna. This box is roughly the size of a cigar box and rumored to be located somewhere in Malfeas. Opening the box sends this memory back to him, rendering him temporarily unable to be Sykora's representative. Suddenly mortal, he must perform an hour-long ritual that purges the memory, locking it in another box. Only during that ritual is he vulnerable.

Gree, the Urge of Despair

Gree devours its victims' will, destroying their desire to act or to attempt to take control of their lives in even the smallest ways. It floods its victims with an overwhelming sense of sorrow and loss. The most common result of extended possession is suicide, through either deliberate action or passive neglect. After its Fall, Bat became a Totem of despair, although some Garou are now attempting to redeem it.

The Nameless Angel of Despair

The patron of suicides, the Nameless Angel can manifest in many places at one time and feeds on sadness. It cannot speak, communicating only in waves of negative emotions, and has the innate ability to appear whenever its presence would help push someone over the edge. It takes no part in Maeljin politics, but all of the Wyrms's servants fear its grey robes and the cold, dark cloud of despair that travels with it.



Destruction: The Nameless Angel is the source of the epic grief of Harano, and this feeling is also its weakness. To destroy the Nameless Angel, the Garou once created a legendary ritual where the participants fill themselves with hope and Rage. The rite can only work at a Concolation, a grand moot of Garou from far and wide. Garou from three different Septs must simultaneously work part of the ritual at their caerns. At the end of these rituals, all the participants howl their Rage at the Wyrms in one vast and terrible instant. This surge of emotion destroys the Nameless Angel of Despair. Unfortunately, the details of the Rite are lost to time — and once the initial Concolation occurs, the Nameless Angel of Despair knows what is happening. It will attempt to stop the completion of the final Rites.

Lethargg, the Urge of Apathy

This child of Gree replaces will with a growing loss of feeling where victims first become indifferent to the lives and suffering of others and then cease caring about their own lives. The most fully possessed lose themselves in catatonia or fall into comas. Today, Lethargg causes masses of humanity to ignore the horrors and injustices around them. Those firmly in Lethargg's grip ignore anything beyond the immediate scope of their lives, convinced that nothing they can do will improve the world

around them, or affect it in any way. Lethargg has always been one of the most potent and effective Urge Wyrms.

The Master of Stagnation, Lord of Disease, Thurifuge

Devoted to plagues, stagnation, and water pollution, Thurifuge pledged himself to both Lethargg and the Eater-of-Souls. He both fosters illness and pollution and helps those around him to ignore them. He appears as a tall, lean man with corpse-like skin that has an oily shine, and a fetid pool of slime surrounds him even in the cleanest of places.

Destruction: Destroying Thurifuge requires locating the purest spring of healing water in the world. It flows from the site of a powerful caern now lost to history. Splashing a few drops of water from this spring on Thurifuge will weaken him, allowing an attacker to drown the Maeljin Incarna. If Thurifuge does not drown when immersed in the spring, he will pollute the spring — forever destroying both it and the caern.

Elemental Wyrms

The Wyrms cannot create anything, so all of its aspects are corruptions of existing things. Just as the Triatic Wyrms is a twisted reflection of the Triat, the Elemental Wyrms are hideous mockeries of the four sacred elements. They each spawn Jagglings and Gafflings as their elementals. These four substances and their elementals are widely used by agents of the Wyrms, including the Black Spiral Dancers. The four elemental Maeljin Incarna were never human, but rather chosen from the most powerful elementals of their type. Permanently destroying one of these inhuman creatures would greatly weaken the element.

Hoga, the Essence of Smog

Hoga is the corrupted version of the element of air, composed of the gaseous parts of the Wyrms' body. Its noxious fumes poison or corrupt creatures who breathe it. This element manifests in the physical world as poisonous exhaust fumes from cars and factories and the foul smoke from burning toxic refuse. Limited exposure produces shortness of breath and muddled thoughts, while larger amounts cause breathing disorders like asthma and fatal lung diseases.

The Master of Smog, Lord Choke

Lord Choke enjoys smothering his victims' freedom as he poisons their air. He directs his servants to clog the air with smog and smoke, delighting equally in stalled rush hour traffic and burning oil wells. His sickly sweet smoke deludes and befuddles his victims, twisting them to his will. This smoke precedes him wherever he travels, and gathers about his bluish, bulbous form like a living coat. His favorite offerings are of healthy lungs and brains.

FIGHTING THE ELEMENTAL WYRMS

If the Garou could reduce the amount of one of the Wym's elements — one cannot destroy, only weaken them — the associated elementals would become rarer and harder to summon.

Reducing the amount of one of these elements over an area of several square miles increases the difficulty for summoning Wym elementals by at least +1 within that area. Destroying one of the elemental Maeljin Incarna would increase the difficulty of summoning that type of elemental by at least +4 (difficulties over 10 make the summoning impossible) everywhere and would noticeably decrease the amount and virulence of the actual physical element everywhere on Earth.

Destruction: The Garou must locate the four greatest and most powerful air elementals, and convince them to work together to disperse Lord Choke. Unfortunately, all four are bitter rivals, and none of them wishes to share their air with each other or Lord Choke. The Master of Smog is powerful enough to defeat any one of the elementals himself, and can hold his own against two. Only when all four blow as one wind can they achieve victory.

Furmas, the Essence of Balefire

Furmas is both the Wym's perversion of fire and the spiritual manifestation of radioactivity. Composed of the Wym's blood, balefire twists and warps whatever it touches. Found naturally deep within the earth, it also lingers in nuclear waste dumps and long abandoned nuclear weapon test sites. Balefire is by far the most popular element used by the Black Spiral Dancers.

The Master of Hellfire, Lord Kerne

Kerne is a creature of radiation and balefire who delights in nuclear accidents. He has grown fat on both the Chernobyl and the Fukushima nuclear disasters. Although his spirit form seems cadaverous and frail, his flesh is boiling lava and his breath atomic fire. He rides through the Umbra on a blazing chariot of hellfire, trailing sulfurous black smoke and deadly radioactive fallout in its wake.

Destruction: Killing Lord Kerne is an arduous task that requires freezing him solid and then encasing his frozen form in lead. Anyone attempting this task must

work fast, as the raw power of the Master of Hellfire thaws any freeze and melts any lead within an hour of contact. Though trapping him in this manner destroys Lord Kerne, anyone breaching the lead case returns him to life. Any werewolf foolish enough to imprison a Maeljin Incarna had better have a good hiding place in mind.

H'rugg, the Essence of Sludge

H'rugg is the distorted counterpart to the element of earth and is composed of the solid portions of the Wym's form. Sludge manifests in toxic dumps and its corrosive nature transforms anything it touches into more sludge. In a more diluted form, it is poisonous, causing sickness, both physical and mental. It makes victims cling to their beliefs even when presented with clear evidence that disproves them.

The Master of Sludge, Lord Collum

Collum is a creature made entirely of raw sewage. His influence extends throughout the sewers of all cities, allowing him to gather many secrets. He watches those dwelling there, attempting to corrupt Ratkin, Nosferatu vampires, and stranger creatures, tempting them with foul but useful gifts and bits of wisdom in return for their aid. He particularly enjoys contaminating clean drinking water with his poisons. He is the consort of Lady Yul, fertilizing her toxic eggs and adopting some of her viler children. Collum appears as a roughly humanoid figure made of raw sewage. His stench is powerful and lingering and he speaks in a hideous liquid gurgle.

Destruction: Anyone seeking to destroy Lord Collum must locate the seeds of five rare magical plants that each possesses a supernatural ability to purify toxins. Within a few minutes of planting these seeds in Lord Collum's foul body, they sprout and grow, swiftly transforming him from a being of sewage into a plant elemental. The transformation is not final until three days have passed, and if sludge elementals can capture this plant-spirit, they can corrupt it back into Lord Collum.

Wakshaa, the Essence Toxin

Wakshaa is the Wym's deadly parody of the element of water as well as the remains of the liquid portions of the Wym's body. It physically manifests as a brightly colored deadly poison, found in many industrial chemicals and a multitude of corrupted street drugs. In large doses, it kills instantly and poisons the victim's flesh. In smaller doses, it produces outburst of violent emotions, causing a slow wasting sickness.

The Mistress of Toxins, Lady Yul

Yul is the Maeljin of toxins of all forms, from addictive drugs to painfully lethal acids and poisons. She has masterful knowledge of genetics and biochemistry,

so agents of the Wyrms often ask her to provide specially designed creatures for them. She alters creatures in precise and terrible ways, such as changing a creature's lungs so that it breathes carbon monoxide rather than oxygen. She bears within her eggs enough to hatch a litter of her latest creations. Other than Collum, her closest allies are Aliara and Thurifuge.

Destruction: Legends say that an ancient herb known as Moly could purify Lady Yul, as it is an antidote to all toxins. Unfortunately, this herb now only grows deep within Pangaea. A few wise and ancient Mokolé or an exceedingly clever Nuwisha might be able to help searching Garou to locate the herb, but harvesting it is every bit as dangerous as any other visit to Pangaea. Finding the Moly is only half the problem — Lady Yul must ingest it in food or drink. One taste destroys her instantly.

The Wyrms In The Umbra

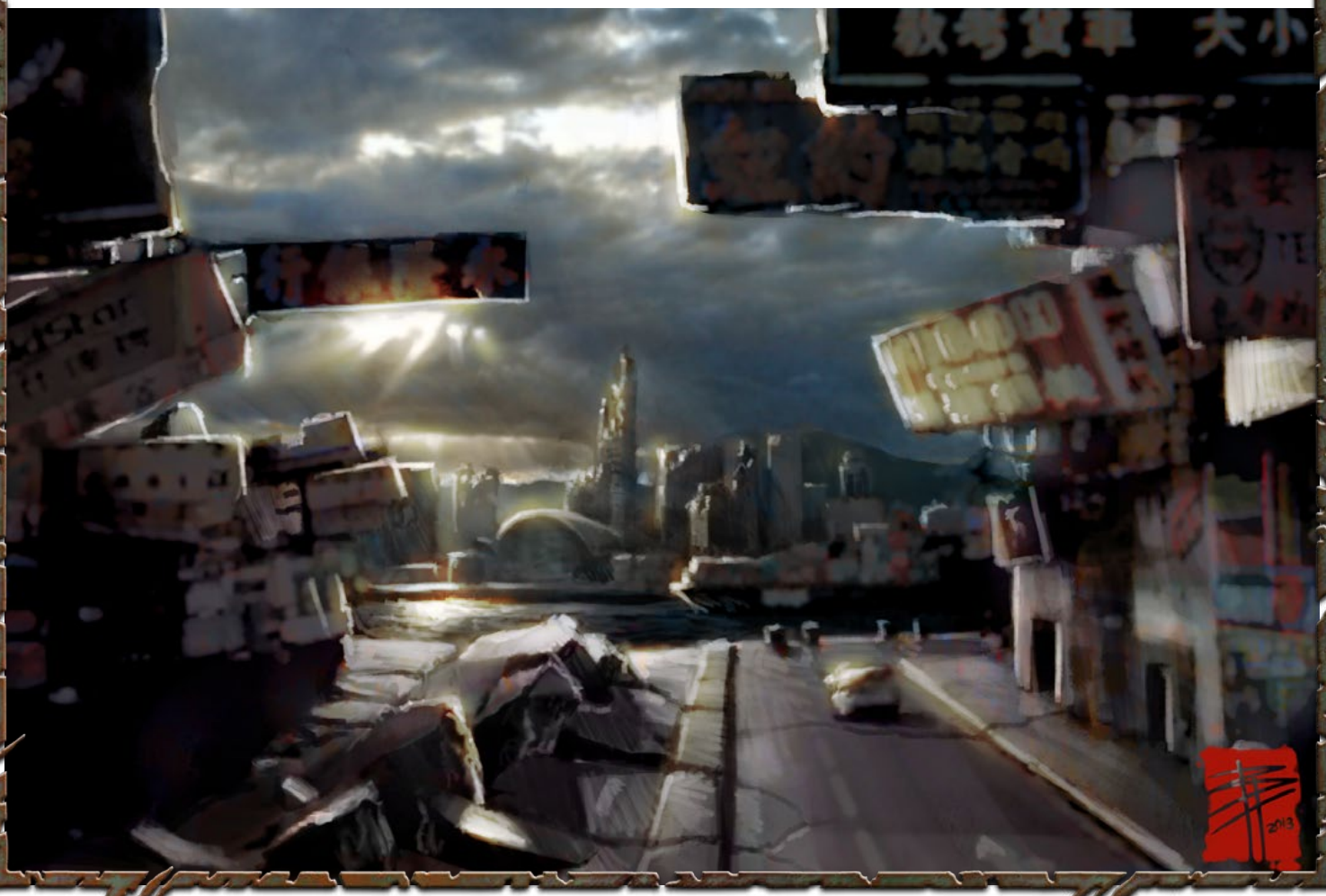
Traces of the Wyrms snake all throughout the Umbra, as it attempts to corrupt every Umbral realm with which it can make contact. Because it especially longs to conquer Gaia, many of its Banes cluster in the Penumbra, seeking

entrance into the physical world. The Penumbra is also home to two of the most obvious manifestations of the Wyrms: Blights and Hellholes.

Blights

Blights are Umbral manifestations of human misery. They appear in locations where the populace lives in abject and dehumanizing conditions: the worst housing projects, slums, labor camps, and prisons. The inhabitants' suffering reshapes the Umbra into a cracked and arid land that is barren of life. The few plants and animals that do exist there are disguised Blight Children. Many of the local buildings have no Umbral reflections, and those that do appear are nothing more than large featureless blocks. The only buildings that resemble their earthly appearance are the focus of negative emotions: poisonous meth labs, crack houses, brothels where underage prostitutes are enslaved by pimps, and similar horrors. They all appear twisted and malevolent, and often partially burned and broken at the very least. These buildings house a multitude of Banes, especially Kaluses and Psychomachiae. These Banes and the Blight itself feed upon the suffering of the human inhabitants.

The only other buildings that seem fully formed near Blights connect to strong positive energies, such



as a popular community center. Banes avoid these buildings, and Umbral travelers trapped in a Blight can use them for refuge. While creating more such beacons of hope can shrink or destroy a Blight, the opposite is far more common: Wurm-spawn destroys the buildings in the Umbra, and they quickly fall out of favor in the physical world. This sort of destruction often requires coordinated effort by a pack of Black Spiral Dancers or similar creatures, and their presence in a Blight should attract the attention of Garou.

Hellholes

Landfills, toxic waste dumps, nuclear testing ranges, and the sites of industrial accidents all corrupt the fabric of the Umbra. Once rare, Hellholes are increasingly common, existing all across the planet. In the Umbra, some of these places appear as scorched deserts with broken rocky ground where harsh toxins boil up from subterranean pits. Others are immense tar pits or expanses of oily, lifeless mud banks at the edges of stagnant lakes and brown toxic rivers. The contorted bones of animals and the diseased stumps of dead trees litter the ground. In some Hellholes, burning gases light the sky with balefire. In others, thick poisonous clouds shroud the sky in blackness. Either local nature spirits in places that become Hellholes die or the Wurm's influence twists and corrupts them into Banes, which appear as vicious mockeries of their original forms.

Banes swarm to Hellholes in vast numbers to bask in their toxic putrescence. Some of the most fearsome of the Wurm's creatures, including Nexus Crawlers, pause at Hellholes on their way to and from the physical world. While most Hellholes are associated with a single Elemental Wurm, perverted spirit-minions of all of the Elemental Maeljin cluster in them.

In a region corrupted by Hoga, Banes take the form of clouds of poisonous fumes that descend from above to choke their victims. Hellholes associated with radioactivity belong to Furmas. They are home to Banes that appear as hideously mutated plants and skeletally thin animals covered in huge weeping sores. H'rugg dominates areas poisoned by raw sewage and toxic waste. Here most Banes swim through the toxic waste, allowing visitors to see only their toothy maws and many twisted limbs. In regions associated with poisoned water, Wakshaa dominates, and Banes appear as viscous sheets of oil that cling, envelop, and devour any who come to near.

As with Blights, Hellholes reflect a physical location. Clean up the site, and the Hellhole gradually fades. Similarly, if powerful creatures like Nexus Crawlers nest there and the most potent Wurm elementals spread their toxins, both the Hellhole and its physical reflection will increase in size and severity.

Calumns: Wurm Domains

When the negative thoughts and emotions tied to one particular Urge Wurm accumulate in the Near Umbra, they form a Calumn. Unlike Blights and Hellholes, Calumns do not correspond to physical locations on Earth. Each Calumn reflects emotion associated with one of the Urge Wyrms; there are Calumns of fear, paranoia, and greed. That said, each is associated with a single particular facet of an emotion. A Calumn of violence might be a domain of murderous rage, of planned atrocities, or mindless destruction. Similarly, a Calumn associated with Karnala may focus on lust, jealousy, or addiction.

Powerful Banes rule most Calumns, created by concentrated bursts of strong negative emotions that the Urge Wyrms encourage and cultivate. The entire domain, including every spirit and every event reflects the emotion that serves as the Bane's—and the Calumn's—focus. This emotion even shapes and influences the features of the local landscape.

The emotion associated with a Calumn can infect anyone who spends much time in it. Most find this emotion to be unusually prevalent for the next few days, and both the unlucky and anyone already naturally inclined towards this specific emotion are likely to become tainted by the Urge Wurm (see "Mental Taint," p. 180).

Many Calumns are dreary realms where the ordinary shapes and colors of the Umbra wear their taint in unpleasantly mottled greys and browns. A few break that pattern, as riots of color and sound and scent that entice nearby travelers. Banes often build nests in these domains, venturing from them on forays into the physical world.

Far Calumns: Anchorheads to Malfeas

The paths and portals that lead from some Calumns can lead the evil, the brave, and the foolish directly to the realm of Malfeas itself. A Far Calumn appears where the Wurm's corruption spreads unchecked. Such a concentration of tainted energies rips a hole through the fabric of the spirit world connecting directly to Malfeas, and lets its influence flood back into the Calumn.

The appearance of a Far Calumn is similar to the Duchy of Malfeas into which it opens as threads of taint and corruption entwine the two places. The malevolent spirits and creatures that gather in Far Calumns reflect this similarity, and most owe their allegiance to the appropriate Maeljin or Malfean lord of the linked domain.

Most Far Calumns are located next to the Membrane that separates the Near Umbra from the Deep Umbra, at least a weeks' travel for spirits or werewolves starting in the Penumbra. A few are within other realms, espe-

cially the Atrocity Realm and the Scar. Anyone foolish enough to go looking for a Far Calumn need only follow the regular procession of Banes traveling between it and the Penumbra.

The Abyss

Many legends connect the mysterious realm known as the Abyss to the Wyrms, and these legends are entirely correct. The Black Spiral Dancers revere it as the Wyrms' all-devouring maw. While anything entering the depths of the Abyss vanishes never again to see the light, the edges of this Realm offer a little known and dangerous path to — or from — Malfeas. A short way down from the Abyss' vast entrance, a portion of the opening features mostly cracked and jagged rock. This massive cliff is accessible from all three paths into the Abyss, filled with fissures that connect to an immeasurable complex network of caves and tunnels. Banes and other Wyrms-spawned monsters inhabit these caverns, as do a few slaves and monsters who have managed to escape from Malfeas.

The Black Spiral Dancers marked some of these caverns with Pictish runes. Anyone who knows their corrupt form of the language can read their directions and learn the most direct path to Malfeas. Following these directions leads through a maze of caverns filled with strange and ancient monsters; those who survive find an opening that looks out on what seems to be a miniature version of the Abyss. It is actually the edge of a bottomless pit lying under the dungeons of Castle Cthonus (see below).

The Atrocity Realm

This terrible realm offers several paths into Malfeas. The horrors here feed the Wyrms and the largest and most well-traveled of these Far Calumns sits in the middle of a stand of dead and blacked trees that Atrocity's denizens use as gibbets. This Anchorhead leads directly into the Duchy of the Hellbringer, who periodically visits the Atrocity Realm to partake of the violence and suffering found here.

The Scar

Although escaping this realm into the rest of the Near Umbra can be difficult, traveling to Malfeas is horrifyingly easy, using the path known as the Last Junction. Most of the spirits that inhabit the Scar carefully avoid the path, but unwary travelers may stumble upon it unawares, known as the Last Junction, most of the spirits that inhabit this realm carefully avoid. The Last Junction is a rusted and sooty train station. A black train, belching forth clouds of toxic smoke travels from here to

Malfeas and back. It always arrives in the Scar empty, and always leaves full — loaded down with fetishes, refined building materials and new slaves. Powerful Banes guard the Black Train, manifesting as black cloaked, chain-and-sickle-wielding porters, each one capable of capturing all but the most powerful Garou.

The Wyrms Reaches

The darkly gleaming stars that swirl above Malfeas' skies belong to a corrupted and decayed aspect of the Aetherial Realm called the Wyrms Reaches. This region adjoins the ordinary Aetherial Realms surrounding Gaia, and is where the Wyrms' influence seeps directly through the Membrane into the Near Umbra. Full of warped and dying stars, thick clouds of toxic stellar dust, dead planets, and pitted asteroids, this realm holds strange and alien Banes that will open a Moon Bridge to Malfeas for the correct price. Balefire elementals dwell in the empty spaces of this realm and offer foolish travelers safer routes to or from Malfeas, but devour all who follow them. By far the majority of Far Calumns are located here and the majority of traffic between Malfeas and the Near Umbra passes through this realm.

Wyrms Caerns

Wyrms caerns, called "Pits" when claimed by the Black Spiral Dancers, relate to locations in the physical world, so filled with corruption, that they become foci for unclean energies. Like ordinary caerns, they come in a wide range of strengths and twist the local Gauntlet much like their Gaian counterparts. However, the only spirits one can contact while in a Wyrms caern are Banes. Stepping sideways results in the traveler deep within a Blight or Hellhole, surrounded by these monstrosities. A few Wyrms caerns exist only in the Umbra, lacking any physical counterpart.

The most powerful physical caerns hide far beneath the earth's surface. Lying in pockets filled with toxic volcanic gases, in caverns filled with corrupt microbial slimes that thrive on deadly acids or near veins of radioactive ores, these subterranean caerns are known only to Banes and Black Spiral Dancers. There, they are sites for the most powerful and profane rites of the Wyrms' servants.

Malfeas

If a cosmic entity, such as the Wyrms can reside in any single place, Malfeas is it. Here is where the Weaver trapped the Wyrms in her web, and Malfeas' foundation is the ragged shreds that the Wyrms tore apart in its madness. Malfeas consists of a disparate collection of partial

realms that fit together in ways impossible for sane minds to understand. Drawing a map of Malfeas is a hopeless task; any attempt would require the use of distorted geometries unknown to human or Garou. The would-be cartographer's results might look like no more than the scribbles of a lunatic, but anyone studying them for any length of time would go quite mad. Located in the Deep Umbra, Malfeas is considerably easier to reach than most such domains — in some cases horrifyingly so.

Above all, Malfeas is a realm of corruption and degradation. Spending time here affects the minds and bodies of visitors, twisting both in short order. This spiritual radiation is part of the essence of Malfeas, as such, it even affects individuals who arrive of their own volition and remain free from the torments the rulers inflict on their captives.

A traveler who remains in Malfeas for more than a day begins hearing foul whispers. He can see patches of his skin or fur turn grey and sickly. If he escapes before these afflictions finish warping his mind and body, he will heal within a week or two. While he remains in Malfeas, however, no known force can quiet the whispers or restore his degraded flesh. Should he be unlucky enough to remain in Malfeas for more than three months, the whispers will accompany him long after his departure from the realm. His entire skin and fur becomes grey and withered looking, and the transformation does not

heal when he leaves. Only powerful healing rites can cure these taints (see “Taint,” p. 179). Almost everyone who spends more than three months in Malfeas suffers from a long-standing mental or physical taint, and a few unfortunates suffer from both.

The overlords of Malfeas are the Wyrms' most powerful servitors, and count among their number the Maeljin Incarna — alongside other atrocious manifestations of taint. They rule their domains with brutal discipline, and only a very lucky traveler can pass through without their notice; spared their manipulations into mad internecine plots. Important prisoners captured by agents of the Wyrms usually end their lives in Malfeas. Some die under their torments, others betray their allegiances and join the Wyrms to end their agony, and almost all of them reveal every secret they know.

The Warring Hydra

Malfeas is the realm of the Wyrms, which means that it is a realm of eternal conflict. The various factions and heads of the Hydra wish to dominate and corrupt the entire cosmos, including other agents of the Wyrms, and other heads of the Hydra. As a result, the Duchies regularly war against one another, and even in the midst of alliances and pauses between battles, the rulers of the different Duchies still regularly attempt to assassinate one another.

These struggles usually have two goals: to capture territory and resources and, if possible, to slay other nobles and rulers of Malfeas. While every Dark Lord knows that killing one of the Maeljin merely causes the Wyrms eventually to create a replacement, they also know that this replacement will be relatively inexperienced. In addition, someone who can become an ally — or better yet, an unwitting dupe — might replace a bitter rival. Such victories are rare, since most of the nobles of Malfeas do their best to stay far behind the lines of any battle. Instead, most of the warring is over territory and resources, attempting to expand the boundaries of one of the Duchies, or to bring a host of new Banes under the Dark Lord's sway.

On a few occasions, one of the Maeljin Incarna has attempted to destroy permanently its rivals. If another Maeljin discovers such plots, they would usually rally an alliance of Malfeas' overlords to destroy the plotter. However, a Maeljin Incarna engaged in a particularly bitter struggle with another might secretly aid a group of outsiders who planned to destroy this rival. Of course, this same Maeljin would then kill its cat's-paws to prevent them from revealing its cooperation, and to gain status by slaying a Dark Lord's destroyers.

VISITORS' RECEPTION

Garou who visit Malfeas can find their reception in the Wyrms' homeland surprising. If the pack lashes out and attacks the Banes, Fomori and Black Spiral Dancers around them, all the forces of Malfeas retaliate against them. If the attackers are lucky, they soon find themselves in the dungeons of Castle Cthonus awaiting interrogation or sacrifice.

The more powerful Banes can recognize visitors who do not attack as enemies of the Wyrms, but most of the powerful residents of Malfeas prefer to corrupt and degrade visitors rather than simply destroy them. Banes and others who serve some of the more subtle and clever Maeljin Incarna like Aliara, Maine duBois, or Number Two frequently make secretive offers of aid to such visitors, promising all manner of assistance for the right price.

The Central Duchy

Most Moon Bridges leading to Malfeas end in the courtyard of the Central Duchy. A raised circular stone inscribed with a spiral sits in the center of this large, irregularly shaped area. Hugely elaborate and menacing buildings surround the courtyard, each more than a mile high. One of these large structures is the massive Grand Cathedral, with an enormous stained glass window depicting tentacled monstrosities erupting from beneath the earth. This cathedral is dedicated to all of the heads of the Hydra and is the only place in all of Malfeas that openly welcomes those loyal to any of these heads. The ruler of the Central Duchy, known only as Number Two, regularly holds services here. During each service, her bodyguards sacrifice their most powerful and important captives. Hundreds of black iron cages located halfway up the side of the cathedral's outer walls hold the decaying bodies of sacrificed captives, as well as other captives who have been left here to slowly die of hunger and thirst, or who are awaiting questioning or sacrifice — many captives find it hard to tell the difference. Powerful Banes guard both the Grand Cathedral and the captives. Most of the other buildings surrounding the central courtyard are factories from which visitors can hear a mixture of loud mechanical sounds and the occasional agonizing scream.

Castle Cthonus

Across the courtyard from the Grand Cathedral sits the tallest structure in Malfeas, a black and twisted tower surmounted by barbed crenellations. The Tower's outer surface is slippery and viscous, like living crude oil. It engulfs and devours anything that attempts to climb it. Withered limbs of would-be climbers jut out from the otherwise smooth surface, but even these protrusions drip, enveloped in the roiling black oil. Standing several miles tall, the base of the tower is mostly bare. Only an entrance to the seemingly endless spiral staircase and three old-fashioned elevators that creak and groan allow a wary traveler to enter the tower proper.

Known as Castle Cthonus, this tower is the residence of Malfeas' ruler, the dread entity known as Number Two. Just as it is the highest structure in Malfeas, it is also the deepest. Below ground are the multitude of dungeons and torture chambers used for the most powerful and important prisoners, as well as those who Number Two has taken a personal interest in. Slaves spread rumors that the bottom level of these dungeons is a pit that leads to the maw of Eater of Souls, but only a handful of those who have ventured sufficiently far down have ever returned. These escapees talk of fleeing into deep caverns on the edge of a vast pit. These caverns lead out of Malfeas and into the Abyss.

Destroying Castle Cthonus would badly weaken the Wyrms, and would plunge Malfeas into a violent turmoil that would last for many years. However, the only way to accomplish this goal is to ascend to the top of the tower without Number Two's knowledge, in order to enact a lost rite. Few who enter Castle Cthonus without Number Two's invitation ever escape.

Number Two

The ruler of Malfeas is a unique and powerful Incarna known only as Number Two. She was once a Black Spiral Dancer who served the Wyrms so well that all of the Triatic Wyrms combined their power to transform her into an Incarna. A popular legend among Malfeas' denizens holds that Number Two was the first Garou ever to walk the Labyrinth, though the truth of this story remains unknown.

Her original name allegedly lost to time, legends say that even Number Two does not recall it. As befits the ruler of Malfeas and overlord of its Central Duchy, she is a brutal tyrant who fears having her power usurped, and kills any who she suspects of plotting to betray her. Her guards consist of a dozen of the most powerful Black Spiral Dancers, aided by seven hideous and deadly fomori. These guards are magically bound to her, and take any injury that would wound Number Two, leaving her unharmed.

She avoids the politicking of the Maeljin Incarna, instead sending intermediaries to deal with them. After all, they only really want her power. Number Two spends most of the Central Duchy's resources defending against their plans, and launching deadly retaliation against anyone who thinks she is an easy target. Although she can appear in dozens of terrible forms, Number Two usually appears as a hideously scarred and blood-caked Glabro. She can also appear as a Scrag, and as a Psychomachia with the mouth of a lamprey and scythe-blades for forearms.

Destruction: Number Two fears that somebody may discover the secrets of her past. All her mortal associates died of old age long ago, and she has since tracked down and destroyed all the spirits she can think of who might remember her. However, anyone who learns her original name can weaken her if he shouts it in her presence. Hearing her name breaks the spell that reflects damage on to her bodyguards and killing her is possible. Anyone who uses her name must work swiftly, as Number Two knows a magical phrase that can purge her name from the memory and records of anyone who hears it. If Number Two can whisper this phrase to everyone who heard her name, her protections return. The phrase is a terrifying truth about the nature of the universe and corruption's role in all that is, and hearing it would drive all but the strongest-willed quite mad.

Killing Number Two would set off a civil war in Malfeas as several of the Maeljin Incarna all fought one another for her position. These battles would weaken the Wyrms' influence elsewhere as the heads of the Hydra snapped at one another. Legend states that if someone kills Number Two in the Room of Mystery at the entrance to the Labyrinth, Malfeas would not find a new Number Two for over a hundred years.

The Temple Obscura

On the outskirts of the Central Duchy but within clear sight of Castle Cthonus sits a large temple made of dark, green-veined marble. Above ground, this temple is considerably smaller than the massive Grand Cathedral, but it is one of the most important locations in all Malfeas. This temple is the Black Spiral Dancers' most sacred site, because it houses the opening of their terrible Black Spiral Labyrinth.

The exterior of the temple is a strange and discordant mixture of warped and abberant Pictish symbols along with carvings symbolizing pain and degradation. Most of these scenes depict Black Spiral Dancers inflicting torments on both themselves and their enemies.

Inside the temple, the light comes from small balefires mounted in living sconces made from the severed arms of prisoners, and from the dim green glow of stained glass windows in the ceiling. These windows depict profane rites involving battles where the Black Spiral Dancers triumphed over Gaian Garou.

The interior of the temple consists of a series of nine rooms, arranged one after the other. Each room represents one of the Labyrinth's nine circles and every room contains statues and murals pertaining to the torments and tests awaiting any who dare that circle.

Any of the Changing Breeds who spends time in the first eight rooms gains valuable insight into the nature of the Black Spiral Dancers, while also likely becoming mentally tainted (see p. 180). The Room of Mystery has blank walls and a bloodstained altar of black stone at its center. Built around the mouth-like entrance to the Black Spiral Labyrinth is the rear wall.

Anyone who values their mind will avoid the Labyrinth itself, though it calls to anyone who stands in the room of mystery. Black Spiral Dancers and other agents of the Wyrms feel the urge to walk it and embrace the Wyrms. Those few Gaian shapeshifters who stood in its presence and survived tell of thoughts filling their minds of the great victory they could win by entering the Labyrinth and destroying it from within. So far, everyone who attempted this feat has been lost.

The Labyrinth contains aspects of all of the Hydra's heads. It permanently and irredeemably corrupts anyone

THE NINE ROOMS OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LABYRINTH

The Room of Personal Failings

The Room of Rage

The Room of Anguish

The Room of Cunning

The Room of Battle

The Room of Corruption

The Room of Loyalty

The Room of Riddles

The Room of Mystery

who traverses even a single circle. Any werewolf can survive walking the Labyrinth as long as he is willing to accept corruption into his soul. Others who attempt to walk the Spiral are likely to die horribly partway through the first circle. Sometimes, Black Spiral Dancers drag captive Garou into the temple. At the Labyrinth's entrance, they offer their prisoners a choice: accept corruption as the underlying force of the universe, walk the first circle, and join the ranks of the Black Spiral Dancers, or die on that altar and have their captors feast on their body. Only a handful of captured Garou have chosen to escape death in this fashion, but the Black Spiral Dancers delight in corrupting their enemies — and in watching their captives struggle with the choice.

The Black Spiral Labyrinth is eternal. The only way to destroy it involves remaking the Wyrms itself. The Temple Obscura, however, is a very different matter. If anyone were to desecrate or destroy the Temple, the damage would demoralize many Black Spiral Dancers. If done correctly, the rubble and debris could even block the entrance to the Labyrinth in such a manner that it could not be re-opened. Blocking the entrance to the Labyrinth would deprive the Black Spiral Dancers of the source of much of their foul power and blasphemous wisdom, forcing them to find new ways of creating more of their kind.

The Wyld Founts

Just off the central courtyard and near the Grand Cathedral sits the largest and most important of the Wyld

Founts. The largest portion of this structure is the vast sphere, 60 yards in diameter. A six-story tall scaffold raises the sphere above the ground. The sphere is transparent and glows with shifting and swirling multicolored light, and contains a portal to the Wyld-dominated realm of Flux. This connection between Malfeas and Flux has existed since the very beginning. It is vital to the realm's power. The scaffolding contains a stairway that leads up to a large airlock style door in the side of the sphere. Occasionally dead victims and disgraced agents of the Wyrms are thrown through the door, and sometimes Black Spiral Dancers travel through it to capture Englings and other Wyld spirits to use in hideous experiments and drain for supernatural power. The airlock exists to prevent any direct contact between Malfeas and Flux. Destroying this sphere or forcing both doors of the airlock open, contact with the twisting chaotic energies of the Wyld could seriously damage Malfeas.

The connection to Flux exists for a reason. A pair of slender pipes, each no more than a foot across, run down the scaffolding from the Fount into a vast circular pool several hundred yards in diameter. A number of toxic filters corrupt the Fount's Wyld so that they resonate with Malfeas' nature, but retain a portion of their inherently creative power.

This pool is the Wellspring. At its center, a torrent of foul water fountains up almost a hundred yards into

the air. Banes and other creatures slowly form out of the mists that surround the Wellspring, drifting towards the edge of the pool where slaves pull them from the liquid. The Wellspring is also the source for a vast river that runs across much of Malfeas, ending in the Elemental Duchy of Toxin. Slightly more than half of the liquid running out of the Wellspring flows into this river. Channels divert the rest through a narrow trough, which carries it into various factories throughout the Central Duchy and the Maeljin Duchies.

The Nightmare Garden

One particularly ornate gate in the central courtyard leads into a large and terrible formal garden. The first portion of the Garden looks exceedingly well kept, but traveling deeper reveals growing disorder and sickness. All of the plants here have sickly and unnatural colors and smell of rotten meat. Many have long barbed thorns. Banes and Black Spiral Dancers place captives in some of the largest plants, hanging their writhing bodies from the thorns and then torturing them. Fertilizing the outer portion of the Nightmare Garden are the blood and corpses of those torture victims.

Few of Malfeas' denizens venture deep into the Nightmare Garden, in large part because the deeper portions are only partway inside Malfeas. Pushing on into the depths of the garden, it becomes far wilder than it



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WYLD FOUNT

Known in some ancient legends as the Fount of Dark Possibilities, this Fount — along with four smaller Wyld Founts dotted around Malfeas — is the source of much of Malfeas' power. The Wyld energies brought from the Flux create new forms of corruption, including Banes and potent toxins that are necessary raw materials for Malfeas' factories. These founts are the closest that the Wyrms can come to the act of creation, and in destroying them Malfeas would lose considerable power.

should be. The paths become narrow and winding, with tall hedges of darkly menacing thorn bushes on either side.

These paths have powerful magic that separates visitors who are not holding hands or otherwise firmly connected. If a pack of four Garou entered this portion of the garden pursued by three Black Spiral Dancers and a bane, all eight creatures would swiftly find themselves wandering alone, unable to find any of the others. They might hear scraps of speech, or cries for help, but these sounds do not help anyone lost in the garden find one another. Gifts that enable members of a pack to communicate function normally, but each person remains trapped and alone.

Deeper in, the paths become even narrower, with trees instead of bushes lining their sides. Anyone who continues further finds that the paths continue to narrow and the trees grow larger and closer together, until soon visitors are wandering through a dark wood, unable to find their way back to the garden. Leaving one of the paths for even a moment strands the wanderer in the trackless woods without a path in sight.

The dark wood at the end of the garden is a portal into the Dream Zone — specifically, a corrupted region of the Dream Zone that is home to Nightmares. Any who wander this massive and dense forest for more than a few minutes find clearings where they must confront personal nightmares, based on real events but bent out of all proportion. A lone wanderer might suffer the death of her friends; the betrayal of her loved ones, or thrown back to childhood to witness the torrent of abuse she always feared her mother would unleash. It's possible, though tricky, to change the outcome of these nightmares. Since the Nightmare Garden links to Malfeas,

corruption pervades its very fabric. Only violent and debased acts like slaying children, torturing innocents, or making use of foul and forbidden powers can change the course of these nightmarish visions

One traveler might have a nightmare of his lover abandoning him because she sees his true character; he discovers he can prevent this fate by using tainted magic to warp his lover's perceptions, erasing his faults from her mind. Another might watch members of a rival pack slaughtering her own pack, and only accepting the offer of a Bane can turn the tide of the battle. Nothing done in the Nightmare Garden can cause a character to fall to the Wyrms, but embracing any of these corrupt choices will leave anyone questioning their motives. Once they have found clearings through which they can step into the Nightmare realm of the Dream Zone, travelers are no longer subject to the enchantment that separates them from one another. Skilled Umbral navigators can locate their companions and eventually find a way out into the relative safety of the Dream Zone proper.

Reason & Unreason

In an easily overlooked corner of the courtyard of the Central Duchy stand a pair of small, unguarded doors. Behind them lies a pair of tiny conjoined realms, the realm of Reason, and the realm of Unreason. Both realms exist as a single large rectangular room. The only entrances to the room are the two doors that sit side by side. The door on the right is white, covered in precise and exceedingly complex black linear patterns, and opens into the realm of Reason. The door on the left has a seemingly random array of brightly colored swirling patterns that slowly move and change covering the door. This door leads to the realm of Unreason.

If someone enters through the door of Reason, the room is a large and well-organized library. It contains a wide array of books, computers containing large databases and any other forms of information storage that she might

THE MECHANICS OF REASON AND UNREASON

Spending a few hours researching a specific plan in the Reason room lowers the difficulty of all Leadership rolls directly associated with that plan by -2 (minimum 3). Similarly, studying and contemplating a mystery in the Unreason room provides a -2 difficulty (minimum 3) for any Enigmas roll directly relating to the mystery.

be familiar with. All of these documents contain useful advice for planning and executing military campaigns, commando raids, hostile corporate take-overs, and similar aggressive maneuvers. As befits the Wyrms' realm, all of these plans are both exceptionally vicious in their damage to the victim, and quite ruthless. Executing one of these plans always requires betraying allies, killing or impoverishing third parties, turning trusted comrades over to their mortal enemies, and similar atrocities.

Although these plans are usually quite effective, they use the methods of the Wyrms. Depending on the nature of the conflict, anyone who carries out a plan concocted in the realm of Reason begins dreaming of either Hellbringer or Maine duBois, as the dark energies of the Maeljin corrupt her mind. In addition to this dubious benefit, the room of Reason also offers a way out of Malfeas. Anyone who opens a Moon Bridge in the realm of Reason transports themselves to one of the largest and densest Webs in the Near Umbra.

If someone enters via the door of Unreason, the room is exceedingly confusing, with strange tricks of perspective and irregular walls that prevent anyone determining its shape or size. It also holds several dozen exceedingly striking and very odd works of abstract art as well as dozens of books of various sizes placed on oddly shaped tables and shelves. The room itself only remains static while someone watches it; looking too close at one item allows the rest of the room to reconfigure itself. Studying any of the works of art or reading any of the books can provide profound insight into a mystery that the character is attempting to solve.

The price of this insight is madness. The longer someone remains in Unreason the more disoriented they become. Common objects begin to appear strange and incomprehensible, and she no longer understands how to perform single a simple sequence of tasks like typing, catching a ball, driving a car, or perhaps even brushing her teeth. She believes that she still possesses this knowledge, but performs the necessary steps out of order in ways that produce useless or potentially even dangerous results. It takes a few days for her to relearn an otherwise basic task, but from then on, she suffers no loss of ability.

However, this break in their mind leaves her exceedingly vulnerable to the Wyrms. She begins hearing whispers from Doge Klypse, Archbishop of Madness. In addition to being mentally tainted, when she enters Frenzy or otherwise temporarily goes mad Doge Klypse can ask her to perform some relatively brief task and she will obey his request. Anyone who opens a Moon Bridge in the realm of Unreason transports himself to a large Wyldling in the Near Umbra.

Dark Satanic Mills

Malfeas contains a wealth of factories, and several Maeljin Incarna have ordered their servants to construct even more. The largest of these twisted monuments to industrial corruption is more than a mile long and half that high. Each one is hideously unique. Some are made of corroded brass and black steel mirroring the most horrible Victorian workhouses imaginable. Others appear organic in nature, with huge pulsing organs pumping deadly fluids, and a few consist of brutally conjoined combinations of organic and mechanical components.

All of the factories use slave labor to produce their vile wares. Some slaves are humans or werewolves captured by agents of the Wyrms and taken to Malfeas, where they face two choices: death by torture or working in one of the factories. Others fell entirely under the influence of an Urge Wym and came to Malfeas when ordered to by one of the Maeljin Incarna.

A few factories exist purely for the pleasure of the rulers of Malfeas. The only "product" produced is the suffering of their workers. Few slaves survive more than a year, necessitating a steady supply of captured humans to replace them. Other factories refine raw materials shipped in from the elemental Duchies or from the foul waters of the Wellspring. Many produce the concentrated corruption that nourishes Banes and fomori, while others still create contaminated industrial food for the slaves, or exotic chemicals that can mutate and transform animals, humans, and shapeshifters into terrifying and useful horrors.

THE SLAVE TRADE IN MALFEAS

Malfeas needs cheap labor, and humans provide an easy and easily controllable source of workers. Every year, Pentex subsidiaries all across the world kidnap tens of thousands of people to Malfeas. Some are homeless people seeking to earn money by taking part in drug trials. Most are illegal immigrants who pay smugglers to hide them in cargo ships or trucks, as they attempt to make a journey to find a better life. Drugged, and taken to a powerful Wym Caern, their captors then take them along a Moon Bridge to Malfeas. Among the many people kidnapped and sold into slavery each year, nobody notices the relative few that go missing in this way.

THE HUNGRY ONES

Some of the most tragic residents of Malfeas are the Hungry Ones. These creatures are humans or shapeshifters who have somehow entered, by their free will or not, into Malfeas and stayed too long. Eater of Souls has taken root in their soul, never to depart. Hungry Ones are easy to recognize, they are all painfully thin and appear to be on the verge of starving to death.

Many remain slaves in Malfeas' factories, but some escape and roam free, insane, and ever hungry. Most of the free Hungry Ones eventually end up in Duchy Aliara or in the swamps ruled by Knight Entropy. Hungry Ones have a special hatred for living beings, seeing in them the life and reality that they have lost. They'll stop at nothing to get it back, biting at anything that's still alive to sate their hunger. Hungry Ones are not choosy, and are just as eager to attack Black Spiral Dancers as Gaian Garou.

A growing number of factories produce substances for export to Earth. Several now create corrupt and highly concentrated additives that Black Spiral Dancers carry back to Earth and give to Pentex operatives, who add these chemicals to foods and medicines. Others produce the mysterious chemicals and abnormal additives that Pentex's manufacturers cannot find on Earth.

Working conditions in these factories are macabre and horrific. Some slaves risk life and limb servicing machines or performing other complex and dangerous tasks. The majority of the workers are effectively living zombies. Some have parasites attached to the back of their necks, rendering them stupid and obedient to the point that they work themselves to death when asked to do so. Long intravenous drip lines delivering concentrated versions of will-sapping drugs render others pliant and docile. Conditions in these Malfean factories are somewhat worse than even the most appalling factories on Earth where those making consumer electronics and designer clothing become seriously ill or commit suicide due to their working conditions. Of course, in Malfeas, illness or even death does not relieve workers from their duties.

A few slaves serve as a hideous test market for chemical additives or the esoteric sigils and mind-eroding sound effects that Pentex places in their advertisements. Although the food and medicines sold by Pentex contain only small amounts of these additives and their advertise-

ments include only a second or two of the subliminal content, the rulers of Malfeas wish to learn what their products are capable of when used in highly concentrated amounts under ideal conditions. The slaves subjected to this concentrated corruption often die though some survive, becoming monstrous fomori. The overlords of Malfeas look forward to the day when they can use these same chemicals and advertisements in their pure form on Earth, without worrying about the Garou interfering with their plans.

The Maeljin Duchies

A massive wall made of stone and fossilized bone guards the Central Duchy, and the domains of each of the Maeljin Incarna all adjoin this wall, surrounding it on all sides. The wall around the Central Duchy has treacherous razor sharp iron spikes on top, regularly decorated with the bodies of any who has particularly displeased the Maeljin Incarna whose domain that section of the wall adjoins.

A huge gateway of black iron connects each of the Maeljin Duchies to the Central Duchy. Warriors employed by both the Central Duchy and each of the Dark Lords guard these gateways. Each of these Maeljin domains also possesses one or more hidden portals into the Central Duchy. These portals ignore the ordinary restrictions of space and distance, often leading from a location within the Maeljin domain far from its border to one of the more centrally located buildings in the Central Duchy. The paranoid Number Two has done her best to find most of these portals, but she cannot close them permanently, and most remain lost.

Duchy Aliara

At first glance, this is the most luxurious and beautiful portion of Malfeas, but closer observation reveals that it is as at least as corrupt as all the rest. The entirety of this Duchy is a vast pleasure palace filled with a mixture of massive halls, small private rooms, open gardens, and an abundance of people. The baroquely carved walls display decorations of images of people engaged in various hideous pleasures and those who have died from excess. Underneath the perfumed smoke that fills the chambers is a faint but inescapable smell of rot and decay.

This is a realm of pleasure, but this pleasure is always devoid of joy. Instead, the denizens pursue a single vice with mindless and obsessive dedication, continuing to eat, drink, fornicate, or snort cocaine because they are unable to stop. Every possible source of pleasure is available here, all *highly* addictive in Duchy Aliara. Visitors find that feeding their addictions becomes increasingly difficult, this compels them to find every more intense and extreme forms of their chosen "pleasure."

Aliara and some of her most favored servants take great pleasure in preventing visitors from indulging their addictions and then either watching individuals beg, or promising these wretches access once they complete some task. A few of the Changing Breeds who visited Malfeas now work for Aliara because they will do anything to gain even a few hours of access to their addiction.

Aliara's servants, including some of her addicts, kidnap humans and bring them to her Duchy for a few days of pleasure, returning them to Earth with a promise that if they perform various useful tasks, they may return. Aliara offers special rewards to any of her servants who kidnap Kinfolk, since they offer her a way to influence and corrupt the Garou. Aliara's seneschal is currently working on a plan where he can bring humans and perhaps even supernatural creatures to this Duchy in their dreams, and gain their service through addiction to sleeping pleasures.

Duchy DuBois

This entire Duchy consists of a huge modern office building, with countless floors, maze-like corridors, and elevators that stop and start almost at random. The building contains the offices of a multitude of clerks, lawyers, researchers, PR executives and similar individuals. These offices are the home of Maine duBois and have links to the headquarters of Pentex's senior legal and advertising executives.

The individuals here create advertising campaigns for Pentex and defeat legal challenges to the company's efforts. They also negotiate deals with various spirits and finalize contracts and alliances between Maeljin Incarna and other notable personages in Malfeas. Some of their contracts bind ancient Banes and other powerful entities. Duchy DuBois is open to all visitors so long as they come seeking its services. Anyone who needs a perfect contract for betraying an ally or destroying a rival, anyone seeking a speech to sway listeners, or some means of bending laws or rules to their will can come here. The sharp minds and diligent workers endeavor to satisfy perfectly any request. Their services do not come cheap — and only a fool thinks she can get away with offering Maine duBois simple money.

The lawyers, contract writers and advertising agents here are more than happy to satisfy any request that directly aids the Wyrms, and care little about other applications that in no way harm the Wyrms' interests — so long as the buyer pays the appropriate price. They do twist any requests that aid the Wyrms' enemies or directly harm its interests, so that they satisfy the letter of the client's request, but further the Wyrms' ends more than they could ever harm it. Most clients are overjoyed to

receive exactly what they asked for. The side effects and negative sub-clauses only make themselves known later, just in time to place the entire blame square on the client.

Anyone coming here seeking a particular service finds the office they require after no more than half an hour of walking the corridors and riding the elevators. Anyone unhappy with the unexpected results of the service they requested must wander for several weeks in a bureaucratic hell of forms — filled in triplicate and countersigned by an undersecretary — just to get directions to the office that has the paperwork they need to request a meeting to get permission to find the forms needed to file a complaint. Needless to say, the more hostile and aggressive the complainer, the more bureaucracy they have to navigate. However, even the most hostile or disgruntled visitor eventually finds an office that can solve their problem — by creating another contract. Upon signing, the visitor's problem is entirely resolved, but in some manner that aids Maine duBois. Even those who venture into Duchy DuBois to attempt to destroy it or slay the Maeljin Incarna himself eventually find an office that can help, again for a price.

The best way to locate a particular individual is to negotiate a contract with one of the domain's lesser residents to exchange a Fetish, a promise of some later service, or some other relatively minor price in return for a guide. These guides can lead visitors to their destination in less than half an hour, unless they wish to extract even greater payment from their charges.

Duchy Aife

In addition to the rarely used gateway from the Central Duchy, One may access Duchy Aife via doors leading directly from the lower levels of most of the other Maeljin Duchies, the Central Duchy, and even some of the worst Blights and Hellholes in the Penumbra. In the basement levels next to these entrances, the residents of Duchy Aife practice every torture anyone has ever imagined with a terrible and inventive glee. Lady Aife watches the most intense torments when she is not practicing the art herself. All of the torturers here know terrible magics that make certain their subjects survive even the most hideous torments, unable to die regardless of the horrors inflicted on them.

Almost all of the visitors who willingly venture to this Duchy bring a captive to interrogate. The torturers here pride themselves on the ability to obtain both useful information and exquisite suffering. They are even willing to admit Gaian Garou who come with a captive Black Spiral Dancer to interrogate. Of course, visitors must witness, and possibly take part in, all of their captive's torments. The few shapeshifters who would seek

information in this manner usually fall to the Wyrms shortly after this experience, although a handful used vital information from their captive to avoid falling.

Duchy Klypse

Anyone who becomes lost anywhere in Malfeas can easily find herself in the immense maze of this Duchy. Here, brick and stone corridors twist themselves through impossible angles, perspective warps, and gravity shifts. These corridors contain elements from every nightmare about getting lost or searching for a location that is impossible to find. Sliding panels and secret doors serve to make this Duchy even more confusing, as do the shadows and half-seen threats creeping up on anyone who stands still for more than a few minutes. No matter what direction one goes in, all paths eventually lead to the center of this Duchy and Doge Klypse himself. Only those who have his permission can ever find their way out. Doge Klypse amuses himself by making certain that some visitors who come here to slay him spend decades or centuries wandering these corridors, never finding anything they seek. Most go mad and set upon anyone else they see. Doge Klypse finds a certain ironic amusement at using damned wanderers as part of his Duchy's defenses.

Duchy Thurifuge

This Duchy is an enormous and sprawling city, most of which is part of a single giant complex that is both a hospital and a factory. Here, Duke Thurifuge engages in ghastly research that results in new and more terrible drugs for Pentex. Insane and monstrous researchers perform experiments on slaves and prisoners, observing the progress of various diseases and attempting to create new and more terrible ones. A surprising number of the researchers here are Ratkin who have fallen to the Wyrms, and some of them offer the services of this Duchy to others of their breed who would bring the Apocalypse by creating a deadly plague — without disclosing their employer, of course. Most come to this realm either in search of a disease or to sell slaves for experimentation, but a few come to thrill at the suffering of the diseased subjects although an even smaller number venture here to free a subject from these deadly experiments.

Duchy Hell

The Duchy belonging to the Hellbringer is a realm of near constant battle. It consists of a war-torn landscape surrounding a blasted city. Here, slaves and captives battle for their freedom. They must defend areas against the armies of the Hellbringer. If they succeed for at least three days, they go free. Of course, almost all of them die in the attempt, and most of the few who win

sacrifice so much that, left warped by the experience, they willingly join the Hellbringer's armies. Duchy Hell contains portals to most of the other Duchies, as well as a tunnel to the Atrocity Realm. When captives are in short supply, or occasionally to provide a diversion, the Hellbringer attacks the Central Duchy. So far, he has never succeeded. If he ever does, success would simply transform the Hellbringer into a new Number Two, and cause a new Hellbringer to appear.

The "Border Duchies"

Some portions of Malfeas that lie between the Maeljin Duchies appear to be barren wastelands, but appearances can be deceptive. These wastelands are actually two other Duchies belonging to Maeljin Incarna who avoid interacting with others of their kind.

The larger of these two Duchies consists of a measureless desert that lies between the Maeljin Duchies surrounding the Central Duchy and the four outer elemental realms. Here, a hot black sun in a curdled violet sky dominates the days. The freezing nights are entirely devoid of light, and the desert consists of shifting sand and parched winds that periodically create massive sandstorms. Occasionally, these sandstorms form themselves into a gigantic version of the Nameless Angel of Despair. Legends say that each grain of sand was once the soul of someone who died by their own hand.

Several separate patches of fetid swamp laying between some of the inner Duchies comprise the other Duchy. These swamps are actually part of one huge marshland, and anyone who wanders it may stumble upon paths that lead from one small swamp to another. In recent years, these marshy regions have grown larger, despite the Duchies they adjoin not changing in size. The swamps house particularly damaged and defective fomori who fled other portions of Malfeas to dwell here. It is also home to Banes that fled service when they angered their master. Here each group dwells in small isolated bands that prey upon each other and upon any visitors they can capture. Deep within any of these swamps, visitors may also glimpse Knight Entropy. He claims these swamps as his own, and even stables his horse in one — though never the same one twice.

The Earth Pit

For werewolves, one of the most dangerous locations in all of Malfeas is the Earth Pit. Located in a canyon between one of Knight Entropy's swamps and the desert of the Nameless Angel of Despair, the Earth Pit is a wide region that duplicates the overall features of many of Earth's most pristine and thriving landscapes, but as



a poisoned and toxic parody of the originals. A version of Australia's Great Barrier Reef is an open sewer filled with dead fish and cancerous coral. A duplicate of the vast African veldt is a radioactive wasteland filled with dying mutant animals, and instead of pristine wilderness, this version of Alaska is awash in hungry living oil.

This realm's greatest danger is the fact that Moon Bridges opened in Blights and Hellholes often lead directly to the Earth Pit. A shapeshifter battling minions of the Wyrms might attempt to escape via a Moon Bridge, only to discover herself now trapped somewhere far worse. To the natives of Malfeas, the Earth Pit is a vision to strive towards, while to the Garou it is a visceral reminder of the price of failure.

The Elemental Duchies

The outmost edges of Malfeas contain the four Elemental Duchies of smog, balefire, sludge, and toxin.

The palaces of the four elemental Maeljin sit near the center of each Duchy. Destroying one of these castles of corruption might weaken the element, especially if the Garou also permanently destroy the elemental Maeljin.

Duchy of Smog

Thick billowing toxic clouds cover this entire Duchy. Without special senses, vision is limited to no more than five yards. Only creatures that are immune to poison gases can breathe for long in this Duchy. Choke dwells within a huge archaic-looking factory of black iron that belches forth the smog that fills this realm. He is served by eyeless Banes and strange mechanical servants powered by engines that generate yet more smog.

Duchy of Balefire

The Duchy of Kerne glows with the blue light of Cherenkov radiation. The center of the Duchy consists

of a large balefire volcano that spews rivers of radioactive lava. Hideous fomori wander through this realm, the remnants of human captives chained in cages until the balefire completed its work. The fomori wander this region released there only to serve Duke Kerne. After seven years of service, they become especially monstrous Banes that Kerne sells to other Duchies. Kerne's castle sits embedded in the side of the volcano, and from foundation to ceiling contains stone shot through with veins of plutonium.

Duchy of Sludge

Collum's foul Duchy is a frigid realm containing mountains of frost-rimed debris and glaciers of frozen sewage. The largest of these glaciers lies in the center of this realm, topped with Collum's castle, carved out of its

polluted ice. The castle consists of a seemingly endless array of winding tunnels inhabited by large Banes that resemble many-armed worms that can tunnel through the ice and attempt to devour all visitors not under Collum's direct protection.

Duchy of Toxin

Lady Yul's realm consists of a vast warm sea of multi-colored toxins. Within this sea swim great and terrible aquatic Banes as well as occasionally Wyrmspawn from Gaia's oceans, like giant lampreys and huge mutated squid. Near the center of the realm is a large archipelago inhabited by Lady Yul's mutated brood. The largest of these islands is a huge laboratory complex, inhabited and guarded by her strangest and most deadly experiments.





Chapter Two: Pawns and Puppets

"You can see here that our stock has actually increased nearly four percent since this time last year." Martin clicked the next slide. "The, ah, *unfortunate* incident with the Chinese lead paints actually worked to our advantage. When we vowed to use only the biodegradable Avalon paints and hold ourselves as well as our rivals to higher standards, our public approval improved 18.7 percent. We're on track to record profits this year, Mr. Kiker."

Seated across the long table, Kiker smiled a very toothy smile. With the hunger in his eyes, he looked like a shark. "Is that so, Mr. Matthews? That is very good news, indeed. Looks like the Christmas bonuses this year will *really* be something special."

Cheers went up around the table at that. Even Martin couldn't help but grin. Mirth filled the room, settled tingling in the board members' cheeks like the buzz of a fine wine. Mr. Kiker's smile was infectious. As he looked around the table at the faces young and old, they could not help but feel his boundless enthusiasm.

"What about the boycott, Ms. Evans?"

A pretty brunette, cleverly hiding her age with a wide variety of Magadon health supplements took some papers from a manila folder. "We acquired Primrose Shelter. Renovations are complete six days ahead of schedule. The new Primrose Strip Mall opens in two weeks."

"Excellent! Things are progressing smoothly, then."

An older man, balding on top, face framed on either side with a shock of white hair, raised his hand. He had a concerned expression.

"Yes, Mr. Struthers?"

"What about the children? I mean, where did they go? Won't they be lost without the orphanage?"

"Your concern is touching, Struthers."

"Well, sir, that will be twenty fewer children playing with *Atlantis Adventures* toys. What if Avalon pulls some funding?"

Director Kiker just smiled wider, his grin nearly bisecting his head. "That's why I like you, Struthers. You're money-minded. As I said, your financial concern is touching. But the truth is, those kids will be funneled out to foster homes funded by Avalon charities and its, ahem, child companies. So we're getting that patronage, regardless."

At that, he took out a cigar, bit off the end and spat it out, then lit it up. More smile, more teeth with every puff. "Life is good, my friends." The board members all laughed, some firing up their own smokes, Struthers pouring a couple glasses of whiskey. The room was electric with enthusiasm.

A buzz heralded the secretary's voice on the intercom. "Mr. Kiker, your 2:30 is here."

Kiker leaned over, pressed the transmit button. "Go ahead and send him up now, Dorothy. We're done here."

The board members stood and stretched, gathered up their files while Kiker kicked his feet up and blew lazy smoke rings. He looked over as the boardroom doors opened and in stepped Jason Prower, head of Prower Power, a line of specialty electronic toymakers. Atlantis was looking at buying them out. Kiker furrowed his brow in confusion; Prower hadn't brought as much as a briefcase.

"That was fast, Mr. Prower. Please, come in. We're just finishing up a meeting. Would you like a cigar?"

Jason remained in front of the door. "No thank you, Mr. Kiker. I'm afraid my schedule is quite packed and I won't be staying long."

"Oh? Please, come in. I'm sure the others will be delighted to see your presentation." Jason lowered his voice and fixed his gaze on Kiker. "I'm not so sure they will, *Mister Kiker*." His voice dropped an octave, taking on an inhuman growl as he spoke the director's name. Jason stepped forward and his body swelled up with knotted muscles, dark fur spreading to cover powerful limbs, lupine ears, and jaws rising out of his growing skull. He leaped onto the table and splintered it, lashing out with glinting claws.

Even as screams filled the boardroom and blood matted the Glass Walker's fur, Kiker's grin only widened. The Crinos turned and bore down on him with slavering jaws. Kiker blew smoke in its face.

"You know the funny part? All this publicity is just going to make our stock rise."

The Root of All Evil

Money talks. Where Pentex is involved, money speaks in tongues. The flow of money drives the human world and all of it plays right into the Wyrms' hands. Corporate excess and corruption poisons the world and muddies the political waters so that no one can even figure out how to start fixing the problem. The poorest cities and nations become breeding grounds of disease, hatred, and strife, furthering the Wyrms' ends. Apathy and fear eat at the first-world middle classes, rendering them powerless to stop the slow but steady decay of the world.

For the Wyrms, profits couldn't be higher.

The economic downturn early in the twenty-first century took its toll even on Pentex and its subsidiaries. The rise and fall of the global markets still hold sway over the corporation. Partner companies fold, stocks decrease, bankruptcies and scandals claim public opinion and shareholder faith. A company's greed and excess consumes itself at the last, leaving financial vultures to pick clean the corporate bones. Even legitimate businesses fail,

lacking the resources of their conglomerate cousins and unable to withstand the rising costs of product and labor.

Yet even these failures serve the Wyrms' interests. Corporate corruption is the most obvious way that the Wyrms dig its claws into humanity, but even powerful corporations employ more or less decent people at the bottom levels, people who are desperate for money, or perhaps feel they are doing good things for the world. Unaware of the true nature of their efforts, people who work their fingers to the bone for decades to make their superiors rich wake up one morning without pension or insurance, not even so much as a thank-you for all their hard work. When the higher-ranking employees lose their fortunes they descend into madness and despair, their families suffer, and that anguish poisons the world around them. Thus, even the decline of unscrupulous companies furthers the Wyrms' cosmic agenda.

Pentex, however, did not gain its dominance by being inflexible. Opportunities abound for those willing to cut corners and expend any asset, human or otherwise. Much of the economic rebound in the United States is a result of Pentex and its many subsidiaries sinking money back into the economy. At the same time, it props up politicians and supports laws making it easier to reap massive profits: deregulation, tax breaks, and outsourcing. These add to the suffering of the poor and bolster the decadence of the upper classes. Pentex buys up both promising new and faltering businesses, bringing them under its wing, corrupting honest business owners and throwing environmental concerns to the wayside. For every scandal or liability suit that sinks a corporation, Pentex has already bought two more and turned them into profit-generating corporate machines. Using the newest technology and every legal loophole available, Pentex is adaptable enough to ride any economic wave.

So it is that Pentex remains at the top when everyone else is down. Its subsidiaries wring every last cent they can from those too stupid to know better or too desperate to care. Billion dollar marketing giants use research and subliminal advertising — born from hidden Pentex labs, using torture and mind rape — to target the consumer's fears and desires, convincing him that he cannot live without their product... sometimes literally. Protected by a magnitude of laws and the labyrinthine system of the courts and regulatory agencies to shield themselves from direct reprisal, the many heads of Pentex act without fear of any significant consequences. Even if the authorities or the Garou should bring down one of the group's constituent corporations, others will only rise up in their place. Those at the top enjoy the ultimate power: lower classes generate their wealth for them, politicians cut taxes for them, and it only requires a fraction of their immense profits to feed the cycle.

Law of the Urban Jungle

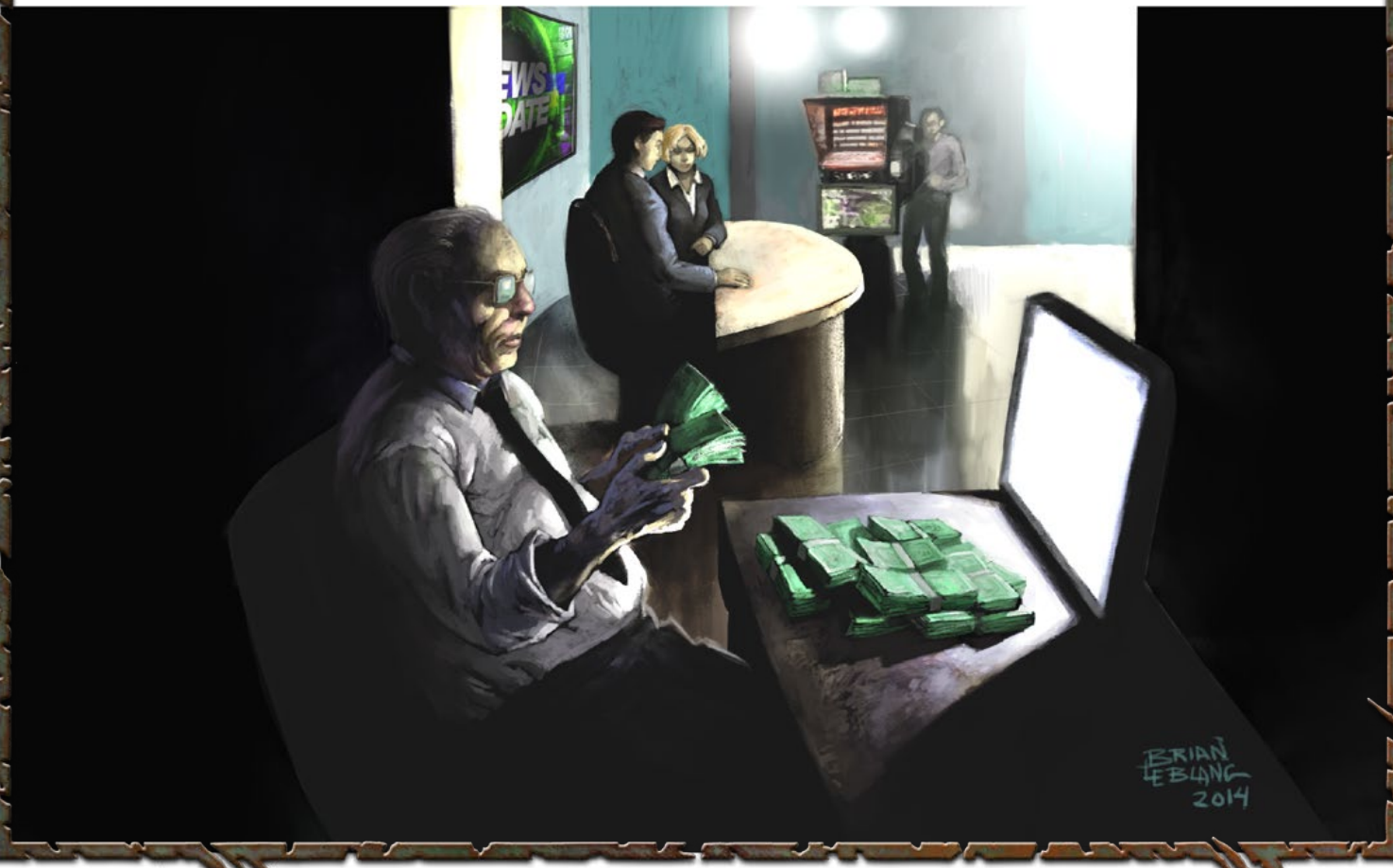
One of Pentex's most potent weapons is their influence over human laws. This stranglehold takes many forms, but money fuels them all. The lure of money and the resultant influence and prestige ensnares politicians. People flock to the wealthy and powerful, wanting their piece of the pie. Opponents grow afraid to move against them, while the ones holding the leverage act freely. Pentex sinks its fangs into every level of the whole bloated broken system. The Wyrms isn't the cause of every bribe or every corruption in the name of special interests—but the taint is there, lingering like a cloud of flies buzzing around a bloated corpse. The world of politics is a mess, and the Wyrms' maggots grow fat on its diseased flesh.

One of the corporation's recent acquisitions is the RED Network. Already the home of far-right talking heads with a questionable relation to actual news, under Pentex's direction it's gotten worse. The RED Network uses questionable legal victories to generate heavily spun "news" broadcasts, generating bogus headlines from nothing at all. Their viewers, enthralled by the talking heads, embrace the network's sound bites as ideological truths, and push them on their neighbors and children. Those same kids grow up inured to hatred and discrimination, caught in the same cycles as everyone else. Their hopes are ground in the gears and the Wyrms' taint corrodes the heart of the machine that powers a country. Political factions turn on each other and their voters. All the

while, the true puppet masters watch their marionettes dance on strings of their own devising. Pentex counts its true profits not just in terms of monetary gain, but also in the roads to Hell people pave with intentions both good and bad.

Not all hope is lost, however, while the enemies of the Wyrms draw breath. The system is broken, but it has not yet completely crumbled. Federal agencies still punish the most blatant law breaking, and activists lash out at the corporations who own the developed world. Despite the best lawyers, targeted threats and bribes, sometimes even Pentex faces justice. Werewolves bring to light evidence that the corporation cannot spin or ignore. It may be possible to fool or ward off mortal authorities, but the Garou wield resources unavailable to any human. Technology-spirits in particular pose great danger to Pentex and its holdings, able to access information that federal authorities or even werewolves themselves cannot. The Glass Walkers and their mastery of technology do more to hold back complete Pentex domination of the corporate world than all government agencies combined ever could. When paper trails are outdated, the Garou and their information-spirit allies attack from Umbral realms, using spiritual chicanery to pry information from highly secured servers and storage vaults.

The nature of these battles is red in bit and byte, an arms race where tooth and claw are useless—something that many werewolves don't understand. Gaia's mightiest warriors adapt slowly to this new battlefield, and their



enemy is right on the cutting edge of change. Many feel that these matters are the province of the Weaver, not realizing that the Wyrms' poison drips down each strand of the web, corrupting all touched by it. Ignorance and division within the Garou Nation allows Pentex to claim ground, inch by inch. By striking where the Garou are weak, Pentex has thoroughly poisoned humanity and placed them as a shield between itself and the werewolves' wrath.

Occupy Malfeas

Those in control certainly wish to keep it that way, but many fed up with the status quo seek change. Late in 2011, this growing disaffection gave rise to the Occupy movement. The movement protests against everything that Pentex represents: corporate influence of government and democracy coming in second to capitalism. The smallest minority holds the greatest influence and power over the majority, stepping on the heads and backs of the poor to lift themselves higher. Characterized by their slogan "We are the 99%," the Occupy movement is determined to wrest power back from the privileged few and end financial corruption in government.

True to their name, the Occupy movement stages rallies in public places lasting days or weeks at a time, camping in city parks or amassing outside city halls. The protesters keep themselves organized through social media like Twitter and Facebook, email, large-scale internet conference calls using programs like Skype and websites to spread the message. Ironically, they use some of Pentex's very own technologies against the corporation, as Occupy movements coordinate and conduct much of their business through smartphones and tablets.

Unfortunately for protesters, the Wyrms' tendrils reach even into these movements. Corrupt police forces are all too happy to harass protesters, confiscating drugs and weapons that never see the evidence room. If rallies get a little too antsy, police are quick to employ tear gas and pepper spray unnecessarily. Brutality is commonplace on both sides. If the protesters respond with force, violence quickly consumes the entire rally, and even those innocent of any wrongdoing are scattered along with the lawbreakers. Just as some city councils give their support to the Occupy movement, others pass laws restricting the times or natures of protests held on public ground. Many agents attempt to destroy such movements from within. These provocateurs join with the sole purpose of fomenting dissent, butting heads with leaders and injecting incompatible ideas into debates. Most do not serve the Wyrms directly, instead serving the interests of ultra-conservative groups or third parties connected to corporate benefactors. Every meeting disrupted, every idea perverted, every bribe accepted serves the Wyrms'

ends. It is after all, the slow decay of the human world working against Gaian forces every day, and it is not a problem solved by Rage.

Antisocial Media

Sunburst and its spinoff companies design many of the iPhone apps protesters use. These apps carry tiny amounts of taint, seeping into the mind the more one uses them, and many people, within and outside the movement, use these apps almost every waking minute. Tempers shorten on hot days when protesters, shoulder to shoulder, pressed together in a too-small parking lot, or police start harassing campers. Bidden by strange dreams and unconscious urges, protesters scrawl symbols of the Wyrms on their signs. Anger grows, mob mentality sets in, and a legitimate rally becomes a riot, their message lost amid vandalism and police brutality.

Nor are the networking sites whose popularity boomed in the new millennium safe from the Wyrms' taint. Millions use sites like Facebook, thinking them places where they can freely communicate their thoughts—or re-post "dad spam" emails and political sound bites. Arguments devolve into insults and threats, obscuring any legitimate points users may have. Friends and family turn on one another in heated fights. When former lovers update their statuses to show new relationships, their exes grow jealous and trace amounts of taint contained in banner ads helps fuel this envy. Designed to bring people together, the Wyrms' influence instead tears them apart.

Millions also play Facebook and browser games designed by startups and small groups of programming-savvy students, usually unpaid interns and consultants of companies like Sunburst. These games, like the ever-popular ResortCraft and its siblings, have players clear-cutting rainforests or damming reservoirs in order to build expansive resorts and play tycoon. Small but pervasive amounts of Wyrms-taint contained in games like these inure the younger, entitled generations to environmental devastation and unscrupulous business practices. In many cases, the taint need do nothing at all, as human society does all the work instead.

Like so many other of Pentex's operations, it is nearly impossible to shut any of this down. Masked as legitimate programs and advertisements, obscured by the sheer volume of internet content, much of it is entirely human in origin and extremely questionable. No authorities can even begin to tackle the problem. The Garou are not so helpless, sending data-spirits to crash servers, hack accounts or act as sapient spambots, posting positive messages that preach environmental safety and peace between neighbors. These efforts sometimes slow down what feels like an endless rushing tide, but the taint, always the taint seeps in through these digital claw marks.

Food Fight

Pentex has grown wise and devious in its workings, even more so as the Apocalypse draws nearer. In order to avoid wholesale destruction at the claws of the Garou Nation, the company has ingratiated itself into all levels of human society. The big subsidiaries of Pentex are the most obvious, but the smaller efforts are sometimes the ones that hurt the most. Pentex funds and supplies many orphanages, homeless shelters and at-risk youths. Of course, they lace the foods they serve at these places and donate to charities with Wyrmtaint, too minute to detect by mundane senses. Over years, the Wyrmtaint toxins build up to poison the mind, body, and soul of those who have come to depend on such donations. To cubs, this seems an easy solution: tear down the tainted organizations, and the Wyrmtaint won't spread. Their elders know that it is never so simple a matter.

Certainly, one could destroy Feed-and-Read, the small organization which provides food for the struggling poor and helps with basic education. It would no longer spread Wyrmtaint through the foods and even the texts it employs, many of which use hidden messages that tug at the corners of a person's mind. Yet thousands would starve without the organization and Feed-and-Read is only one of many like it. If the Garou wipe out all these programs, they halt the spread of taint — but they let families go hungry, or go without power or clean water. By actually promoting humanitarian efforts, Pentex forces the Garou Nation to choose between allowing taint to spread or damning many thousands of lives to misery. Certainly, werewolves know that the aid groups who help people pay for their bills and build up communities secretly do terrible things. They might put slow-acting spiritual poisons in the wood used to build a house, which slowly eat away at the sanity of those living within. Animal shelters euthanize healthy, adoptable animals and miss-ing pets with tags, and use others for experimentation.

Similar things go on at many of the poorest refuges. Sadistic employees at an orphanage play on their victims' fears to exploit children who have nobody to turn to. Organizers of women's shelters mentally abuse women in no less hurtful a way than the physical trauma they have already suffered. Blaming women for their plight, engendering in them feelings of inferiority and weakness, deserving of punishment for stepping out of line. Peeling away the layers of a person's self-esteem makes children to grow up hateful and abusive, and makes women prone to seeking out abusive partners. Yet these people often have no other recourse, and if you take away the Wyrmtainted organization, you leave them with no support and no hope. The Garou Nation cannot take care of the poor and unfortunate humans itself, and neither can it

afford to fund any kind of large-scale relief efforts. Pentex caught on to the few sects that tried and used its superior position in human society to snuff out those efforts.

The Garou, like hunting wolves, must instead nip at the heels of the huge beast that is Pentex. They cannot simply topple every organization, no matter how small, but small gains here and there make all the difference. With the aid of spirits and their own magic, werewolves can aid an honest company legitimately trying to help people. Untainted crops can be made to grow faster, the spiritual landscape of an area cleaned up to help promote positive feelings and actions, and packs root out and destroy small groups of Wyrmtaint agents. Though small in the larger scheme of things, such acts change the course of whole lives, and those people go on to affect other lives in a chain reaction of positive influence. Even then, the weight of past sins bears down heavily upon the Garou Nation: the lost breeds and those all but destroyed in the War of Rage would provide mighty aid in this most dire time of need. The Grondr wereboars working alongside the werewolves could help root out the taint and filth that so infests humanity, and check Pentex's growth. Unfortunately, those who would have been staunch allies are now only memories and regret, and the world is the poorer for it.

Subsidiaries: Heads of the Hydra

Many Garou think of Pentex as a monolithic corporate entity, but nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, mirroring the Wyrmtaint itself, it acts as a holding company that acts through a wide range of subsidiaries, many of which branch out with spinoff companies and subsidiaries of their own. Most Garou are at least somewhat aware that the following subsidiaries have close ties to Pentex itself, though the details of who owns what might take a forensic accountant many months to puzzle out.

Sunburst Computers

At the forefront of the Information Age is one of Pentex's larger subsidiaries, Sunburst Computers. The turn of the twenty-first century was very good to Sunburst: as computers became ubiquitous, the company grew with the wave of development. Improvements in technology allowed Sunburst to produce its cheap computers in even greater numbers. The company continued to thrive during the same financial crises that crippled so many other businesses. Indeed, the recessions only fueled Sunburst's growth, since computers were in high demand and many wanted them as cheaply as possible. The production of

these computers furthers the Wyrms' cause by utilizing dangerously underpaid Third World laborers toiling in an environment full of toxic chemicals. While Sunburst is famous for being one of the world's greenest manufacturers, in truth their products contain just as many pollutants and toxins as those of the most notorious companies.

Sunburst is also a leader in outsourced tech support, which causes no end of frustration among its customers. Their products reach the market with technical issues that erase entire hard drives full of family pictures or important financial documents, and the backups — also produced by Sunburst — regularly fail. These problems combine with frustrating support and the lingering resonance of misery from the people in developing countries who build the hardware. This miasma of despair allows the Third World spiritual corruption to poison the First World one byte at a time. The Garou can do little to slow down this form of taint, because it is so subtle yet incredibly pervasive. The Garou Nation as a whole still deals little with the advanced technology of the twenty-first century, although some septs and Tribes seek mastery of this new battleground. Even if the Glass Walkers and their allies increased tenfold overnight, they would still pale in comparison to Sunburst's user base alone, to say nothing of the many affiliated and unaffiliated companies who produce hardware peripherals and software that all contain traces of Wyrms-taint.

Sunburst's biggest sellers in the modern market are tablets and smartphones, both of which have taken the world by storm. Tablets put the power of a PC at a user's fingertips and on the go. Sunburst offers the world's fastest tablets, including the incredibly popular SunPad. The SunPad is a two-hundred-dollar marvel of cutting-edge information technology. It also secretly records everything the user does, even with "private browsing" active. When the time is right, it reveals that information to the worst possible people, including friends, family, and the authorities — wherever the data will cause the most harm.

While the company produces apps for many other platforms, Sunburst also offers its own smartphone line: the Solaris phones. Designed with both form and function in mind, the Solaris is easily the best-looking smartphone available. Built to exacting specifications, expensive to buy, and imported exclusively from the Third World factories where workers will never see the light of day again. Because of the importance of the line, fomori overseers viciously punish workers who make the slightest mistake. That evil infects the circuit boards of the Solaris, adding yet another trickle to the flow of Wyrms-taint that passes through the Information Age.

The slow corruption of what was once the Weaver's domain mirrors that of the larger conflict between the two cosmic forces, and it is not a problem that force can overcome. The Glass Walkers are too few, and have too

little aid from their Gaian brethren. Those Weaver-spirits still loyal to their queen refuse to give the werewolves overt aid, serving as enemies and obstacles just as often as impromptu allies.

Incognito

Unfortunately, Sunburst is not alone in its efforts. One of their most chaotic and dangerous allies is the cyber-society of hackers called Incognito. The group is the largest of its kind, home to the world's most skilled anonymous hackers. Like Sunburst and other computer-based organizations, Incognito has grown and thrived, as humanity has grown more dependent on computers. Their power and maliciousness makes them prime targets for Wyrms corruption. Even those who think they are only trolling the deserving view others with condescension, developing fans among the hacker community and falling victim to the concomitant sense of celebrity pride.

Incognito hackers foster anarchy wherever possible, making them tenuous allies at best to Pentex — though Beast-of-War feasts on the results of their actions. They seek to tear down systems and cause chaos through the Internet, though their primary targets are usually individuals. Many of the viruses that infect computers, Sunburst's or otherwise, originate from the devious minds of Incognito members. Identity and data theft are just some of their methods for sowing this chaos, using the information they steal to victimize homeowners, sexual predators and teens seeking naughty videos alike. More and more people are online every day, many using the cheapest Internet provider they can find. A number of these ISPs trace back to Sunburst or other Pentex companies, and their built-in pop-ups and Spiral custom web browsers strain the eyes and the spirits of users.

Some of Incognito's factions maintain a pretense of being revolutionaries striking at the heart of a world of fools and idiots. They wage campaigns of harassment and cyber-terror, often against companies whose actions serve the Wyrms. Yet the Incognito hackers are no heroes; their own pride and anger leaves them hopelessly mired in Wyrms-taint. Any good they do for the world is undone every time they crash the website of a struggling business or charity.

Incognito's unpredictability creates friction with the other heads of the Hydra. Just as often as hackers bring down someone undeserving, they also target one another and have no qualms about attacking Pentex companies. In fact, their overinflated sense of pride often brings them into conflict with the heads of other subsidiaries, because the latter seek to put themselves above all others and Incognito hackers brook no rivals. Nothing gives Incognito more satisfaction than taking down the people who think they own the world.



Tellus

Another high-tech subsidiary, Tellus enjoys worldwide recognition as a leading videogame developer. Tellus gained popularity during the videogame boom of the late 1980s, both for the debut of their proprietary console, the *Typhoon*, and their games, always at the forefront of technological achievement and graphic content. In 2013, the videogame industry is one of the most lucrative in the world, dwarfing even Hollywood, and Tellus is one of the leading developers. Financial crises that sank other companies barely touched Tellus, even if their profits dropped by thirty percent, Tellus would still make enough to fund other companies for decades.

Today, Tellus owns the most popular game series in the world, including their latest installment of the venerable *Biological Warfare* series, which reached one billion dollars in sales in a record time of less than two weeks. The game exemplifies what Tellus does best: it appeals to the hardcore subculture of gamers by pushing the boundaries of what's possible with graphics and content. Tellus designs their games to be highly addictive, something that developers actively exploit.

Tellus also owns the immensely popular MMO *Eden Online*, a game about settlers seeking new worlds to

colonize in a future where pollution and warfare have ruined the Earth. Of course, building and mining these new worlds for resources often begins players down the same path that ruined Eden's Earth, but the avid fan-base doesn't care one whit for the unspoiled beauty of the worlds they colonize. *Eden Online* is another highly addictive game, responsible for the forming of many "Gamers Anonymous" meetings and more than a few deaths from rabid fans playing marathons without food and water — or even leaving their seats to go to the bathroom. Tellus charges nearly twice as much as other MMOs for Eden, but Eden offers more of content than any game in history. With Tellus' 3D monitors and glasses and high-powered sound systems made by Sunburst, the full *Eden Online* experience is as close to virtual reality as anyone can experience.

Tellus uses subtle methods to spread taint among hardcore gamers, making it more difficult for werewolves to throw a wrench in the works of a booming industry. Playing any one of Tellus' wide catalog of violent games might not instantly corrupt an impressionable gamer's mind, but a child who grows up playing games that desensitize him to violence and destruction of the natural

world is just as profitable for the Wyrms. The seeds of taint grow within him, stunting his emotional growth and empathy for others, and there are millions like him. His interactions with the world at large only bring misery, derision, and abuse to everyone. The slow route works well for Tellus, because they affect millions at a time, both young and old.

The sharp upswing in computer use has brought Tellus a completely new audience of casual gamers, and they've been quick to capitalize on what they've found. *The Clones* is an open-ended sandbox where players can build houses and entire towns, shaping the population of clones. The game's AI reflects the Wyrms' warped view of humanity in the simulated world, creating abusive relationships and sudden outbreaks of disease and disaster to keep players on their toes. A steady stream of downloadable content keeps money rolling in even when the actual content is almost worthless. Despite it being an ostensibly modern game with no combat, players still pay real money for electronic horse armor and wildly elaborate guns.

Tellus recently launched *Clones Online*, a free-to-play spinoff of *The Clones*. Ruthlessly designed, *Clones Online* targets the addiction mechanisms of the human brain, creating a psychological dependency much like being addicted to cigarettes. The game doesn't actually deliver Wyrms-taint; instead, players become used to the game's dysfunctional social situations and end up making their own lives reflect that of their clones.

Avalon Incorporated

Some of the Wyrms' most subtle and insidious machinations manifest through Avalon Incorporated, a giant in the toy and plastics industry since 1968. Avalon has grown steadily since its founding, as cartoons and children's programs and the accompanying merchandise grew more prevalent, and the toys grew more advanced. The recession that bogged down much of the developed world in the twenty-first century could hardly slow down Avalon's profits. Even struggling families must keep the children happy for the sake of sanity and Avalon offers many cheap toys. Of course, these poorly made cheap toys sometimes incorporate dangerous, lead-filled foreign paints and parts prone to breaking off and posing choking hazards to children and small animals.

Hazardous paints and cheap plastics are the least of Avalon's evils. They do not create monsters to fight the Garou, and though Wyrms-taint is pervasive among the company's leadership, many low-level workers do not realize their taint. Garou are in the position of having to slaughter innocent victims of the Wyrms or bring about financial ruin to those unaware of the harm they cause.

Avalon's greatest evil is in the harm it causes to the youth of the world; the company may not *create* monsters, but it does help raise them.

The growing popularity of violent action shows for kids coincided with relaxed censorship, which gave companies like Avalon more opportunities to create new toys with more realistic weapons and battle damage. These toys then inspired new shows to advertise the latest range to impressionable young minds, glorifying warfare and brutality in the form of endlessly cool characters. The celebrity-voiced shows and their increasingly in-demand toys encourage in children the idea that violence is often a heroic choice, rather than a last resort.

Avalon's most famous line is *Action Bill and the Danger Squad*, more popular than ever two decades after its release. The Danger Squad are paramilitary agents fighting terrorists around the world, something that has taken on new meaning in the twenty-first century. Despite token minority characters, many of the Danger Squad's missions have disturbingly overt racist messages. Action Bill has had multiple blockbuster movies, notable for the sheer volume of explosions and murdered people of color in the background only reinforce those implications.

These shows and tie-in toys help desensitize kids to violence, especially when those same kids enjoy Avalon's board games — like Nuke 'Em, the fun family game of global thermonuclear warfare — and play the ultra-violent tie-in videogames made by Tellus. The toys themselves carry minor amounts of Wyrms-taint, enough that a dedicated Garou would sniff them out but not so much that the effects are noticeable. The spiritual poison manifests over time with children who grow up with a warped set of social values, thinking violence is a good first answer to conflicts.

Violence is not the only way in which Avalon products harm children. They turn anger and desensitization inward as well, promoting apathy and heart-crushing self-loathing. Girls are particularly vulnerable to these predations since society already places so much pressure on their self-image and special disdain on those who buck trends. Avalon throws fuel on that fire, deliberately marketing girls' toys in order to reinforce traditional gender roles and stifle free expression. The most obvious example is the *Cici* line, immensely popular dolls whose eponymous character comes in hundreds of varieties with thousands of different clothing options. Notable variants include the horrific *Post-Nuclear Holocaust Cici* — with realistic radiation burns — and the scantily clad *Party Girl Cici* and her "bad boy" boyfriend, whose dream sports car comes with half a dozen doll-sized vodka bottles.

These dolls teach girls that unhealthily skinny bodies and risqué clothing are more important than anything else

is. Straight-to-video movies starring Cici and her friends skirt the line of censorship, placing the vapid youths in situations that promote sexuality and greed, using easy money and seduction to get out of trouble. Young girls learn that being thin and pretty are more desirable than intelligence and independence. Marketing juggernauts prey upon these natural insecurities, creating young women for whom cosmetics, designer clothing, and starvation are the most important contributions to society.

The Garou struggle to fight back against Avalon's machinations. They can't destroy all of Avalon's toys, and they certainly can't kill all the children playing with the toys, or the immature adults they grow into. Most Garou don't even realize just how large of a problem it is, because Avalon's influence is slow, subtle, and quite insidious. Some werewolves, particularly among the Children of Gaia, realize just what a threat Avalon poses. Unfortunately, they have limited resources—the Garou are too few in number to fight this creeping evil, and most spirits can offer only limited help. Savvy werewolves turn mortal authorities toward the most grievous excesses, but bribes, faked documents and just enough legitimacy ward off any serious repercussions for Avalon's higher-ups.

Those higher-ups are quite cunning, understanding the greed of the human mind better than most. Daniel Joseph Dial is the original mastermind behind Avalon, founding the company in 1968 with an inheritance he gained under rather shady circumstances. A man with a vision and the keen understanding of what children want, Dial created the original Gooshy Gooze that launched Avalon into the market and gave it the dominant position it holds to this day. With a past shrouded in mystery, no one knows how even nearing sixty he looks so surprisingly youthful. He spends most of his time creating new ideas for toys and games. His methods sometimes seem supernatural in their effectiveness, but Dial is smart enough to know when to use a lighter touch.

Marian Booker is Avalon's second most important executive, and incredibly good at her job. Now in her forties, she couples an almost instinctive understanding of market trends with a shrewd head for business. Utterly ruthless in acquisition and development, her collaboration with Dial provides much of Avalon's vision for the future. Gerald Brinegan, Dial's most loyal attack dog, backs the other executives. A simple man whose tenacity and ability to see the big picture keep him busy well into his fifties, Brinegan is not as sharp as the other two heads of Avalon, but his refusal to yield to progress renders him a dangerous man in the boardroom.

These three form the backbone of Avalon Incorporated and guide it in an era of deregulation and explosive growth. Their vision and business acumen have no equal among Pentex's many subsidiaries. The Board of Direc-

tors is somewhat disappointed with the slow progress made by Avalon in terms of direct corruption, but Dial and Booker are champions of their subtle but powerful methods. Despite the pressure it places on Avalon to work faster, Pentex cannot deny the subsidiary's effectiveness. Countless millions of childish adults grew up on Avalon toys and although now young adults, continue to play Avalon games. Their collectible card games and board games remain very popular among that demographic, as do party games which are often accompanied by King Brewery's multipacks of beer.

Black Dog Game Factory

Black Dog Game Factory spawned twenty years ago to produce violent, antisocial fantasy games for impressionable teenagers. Its flagship line, the World of Shadow, became a huge success, selling millions of copies all over the world. *Revenant: The Ravishing*, *Lycanthrope: The Rapture*, *Warlock: The Pretension*—these games and their successors went on to revolutionize the role-playing game industry, due in no small part to the rock star life the developers and artists led. Underage fans of the World of Shadow traded whispers and legends of their favorite Black Dog employees: from the mad, drug-addled rantings of Jason O'Kelly, to the whispered rumors of cannibalism around Evan Stump, to the barely substantiated existence of Jeff Henning. The rumors and speculations occupied the fans' time almost as often as pretending to be psychopathic murderers casually snuffing out human life over polyhedrons and beer.

Competition was fierce and bloody, with untold hundreds of dollars at stake. Companies such as Apex Amusement Association, Stan Paxton Games, and Discordium were contenders for a time, but Black Dog beat them all (sometimes literally, although Rick Glumsky was found innocent of the "accident" that crippled Stan Paxton). They were even contenders with the RPG classic *Labyrinths & Lamiae*, which created its own legion of demon-worshipping "adventurers" in the '70s and '80s. The company madly churned out books during 120-hour workweeks, broken up only by bouts of depravity that made their own fevered imaginings look tame. The game *Fiend: The Pacting* was the biggest seller of all, especially after the arrest of developer Mickey Li for having sex with an underage goat. Black Dog was on the top of their game.

Then, Magicians of the Bay struck.

Years previously, they had quietly purchased LSD, Inc., the creators of *Labyrinths & Lamiae*. Afterward they released a new edition of the game, as well as their insidious Obligatory Icosahedron Licensing (or OIL), a scheme to allow third-party publishers to create their own L&L products. Black Dog had previously acquired



Death Lord Games from Peter Clarkston and William Spinner (after Clarkston sold out his partner), and they used the brand to churn out their own OIL products like there was no tomorrow. However, after a few years, Magicians of the Bay revealed a hidden clause in the license: any publisher who released any OIL product owed Magicians of the Bay 90% of their total profits in one lump sum, effective immediately and backdated to the publication year of the original L&L book *Boiled Leather* — released in 1971.

Most companies promptly went out of business. The maneuver nearly gutted Black Dog as well, but Pentex's deep pockets bailed the game company out. The bailout had two non-negotiable conditions however. First, the Computer Projects manager, Chas McDonald, was to be appointed acting President of Black Dog, and second, the company would merge with Pentex's newest Icelandic acquisition, a videogame company called Politically Corrupt Productions (PCP for short). Desperate for a job with actual benefits, many of the original employees jumped ship to start working for PCP. Some remained behind to keep working on books, while McDonald hastily tried to hire new World of Shadow developers from whichever demented fans showed up to work. Edwin Phate, Rachel Barker, and James Coriander were the only ones to survive the interview process.

The injection of new blood, along with a donation of new computer systems, generously provided by Sunburst, naturally, prompted a surge in technological innovation. Social media sites became the new battleground for blistering debates between the hidebound artistic vision of the aging developers and their increasingly pathological fans. (One incident involved Coriander tracking a fan down at a convention and stabbing him with a pen full of Wyrms toxin because the fan questioned his use of the semicolon on a *Revenant* forum.) Books evolved into insidious files loaded onto laptops and tablets, complete with Destructive Rites of Malice to infect the computers of those who tried to pirate them with spiritual viruses and trojans. Investment in new print-on-demand technology prompted a move to tiny book printers strategically scattered all over the world to take advantage of a variety of toxic influences, so that new fans wouldn't develop a resistance to the inks used in the original books. The World of Shadow had survived the attempted assault by Magicians of the Bay, and it continued to gain fans.

However, the output of the books declined. Fans and staff members both put forth wild and inaccurate theories for the reduction in output. The writers and artists were realizing that they didn't have to work insane hours for very little pay when they could make videogames and work insane hours for slightly more pay; even when the

DRM kept breaking loose in the office computers and deleting necessary files. The entire profits for a year of Black Dog products equaled what *Space Accountant*, PCP's original videogame, made in about five nanoseconds. As focus on the World of Shadow books diminished, first editions became collectors' items, especially as the print-on-demand versions didn't contain the same occult formulae hidden within their pages.

In reality, none of the justifications was the real reason for the change. The acquisition of PCP came with a hidden asset: a cabal of writhing, twisting monstrosities trapped under the floating icebergs in Jökulsárlón, Iceland. The warming climate is beginning to release these chthonic horrors, and their spiritual force is slowly corrupting all Icelanders, especially the PCP CEO, Halldór Pálsson.

McDonald's orders directly from the PCP Board of Directors were to put the company's energy into creating *World of Shadow Online*, a massively multiplayer online construct comprised of a Wyrms-dominated hunting ground. This vision of hell is not only a virtual nirvana for the Wyrms, but is also a reflection of the hellish landscape the Jökulsárlón horrors desire for their eventual return. A variety of conflicting corporate needs, combined with continual assaults by supernatural hackers defending something known as the "Digital Web," have delayed the production of the game. As a result, both fans and enemies of Black Dog wait impatiently to see what this dystopian realm will be.

O'Tolley's

One of the largest fast food chains in the world, O'Tolley's has thousands of locations all across the globe. Their profit margin is enormous, especially in developed countries. In times of economic downturn, people turn to comfort food, and few foods are as comforting as the greasy burgers and fries of O'Tolley's. When times are tough, people want cheap food, and the O'Tolley's value menu is as cheap as it gets.

O'Tolley's heavily promotes an organic, "green" image, though its practices are anything but. The company maintains many clean and well-kept facilities to present to the public. These are mere facades meant to satisfy the consuming public and those few competent agencies enforcing food-safety regulations. The real farming and slaughterhouse facilities are horrific places of death and inhumanity. Workers spend every day covered in blood and filth, and the diseased animals raised for slaughter fare no better. The worst of them are home to fomori who delight in torturing the animals before sending them in for slaughter and processing. Always looking to minimize costs, the factories take in extra meat from rendering plants, animal shelters, and road kill — often marketing these as "special, limited-time items." Fed and raised on

growth hormones and the cheapest food, much of which is in some way tainted, the animals themselves are either sickly or obese, like many of O'Tolley's customers.

O'Tolleys chain restaurants are full of screaming children, angry customers and the stink of greasy foods. Now offering a variety of vegetarian and "healthy" meals, the chain and its low prices appeal to a whole new market. Of course, these alternatives are just as bad for people as the regular menu, with vegetables grown year-round in special facilities, pumped full of growth chemicals to get them out to the consumer that much faster. Whatever's on the menu, O'Tolley's profits skyrocket when people get poorer. Most folks still want their food quick, easy, and cheap.

The environment on the other side of the counter is one of quiet desperation. Everyone knows that upper management makes record profits each year as more and more people around the world make O'Tolley's a major part of their diet. None of that trickles down to the poor schlubs working the fryers. With a tough job market, workers become desperate for anything they can get. A career executive of twenty-five years whose firm closes is forced to settle for earning minimum wage on a part-time job, flipping burgers and boxing salads for a snotty little prick half his age and a fraction of his worldly experience. When his will to live slips through his fingers like greasy meat, he kills himself and possibly his asshole of a boss and the store closes for a week, tops. O'Tolley's offers to pay for the funeral expenses, but no one ever sees the body before they lower the casket.

The Wyrms need never enter the equation for businesses like O'Tolley's to harm the world. Their foods cause obesity, heart disease, and cancer. The majority of their workers suffer from crippling depression and desperation for trying to survive on low pay, their farms and plants pollute the soil and air on an unimaginable scale. All of it driven by human greed and callous disregard for decency. Such spiritual weakness naturally attracts the Wyrms, and its taint finds little resistance in those responsible for the system or broken by it. Feeding on and amplifying the negative feelings, the Wyrms grow as fat as on O'Tolley's customer from every aspect of their business.

King Distilleries

King Distilleries is not a single corporate entity, but rather the parent company of seven related subsidiaries. It is a highly profitable company, one of the largest producers of alcohol in the world. King subsidiaries produce everything from the cheapest beer, to wines, and a variety of hard liquors. Given the popularity of their booze and the tendency of people to drink away their sorrows, King barely felt the economic slump that crippled so many industries over the past few years. People never

stop buying King products and they certainly never stop drinking them.

King is notorious in the business world for the ruthless business practices of the eponymous owning family, and because underage drinkers favor its cheap products. While King Distilleries spends millions every year on alcohol-awareness advertisements and programs to oppose minors drinking, in truth the company works hard to attract teenagers to booze. This has gone on since Jeremy King replaced his father Dexter as owner of the company. Dexter was a stern but hard-working and fair man, and remained in charge until Jeremy arranged for his father to end up in the hospital, where he died of a lung-degenerating disease eight years ago. Pentex then bought out King Distilleries and Jeremy ruthlessly focused the company toward new markets. A sharp man, Jeremy quickly became aware of Pentex's true nature, and signed on for the wholesale corruption of humanity. After all, it earns him a tidy profit and guarantees him a good place in the new world, once it comes. The rest of the company management is full of relatives, from brothers to nephew and cousins, all of them male. The King family is highly patriarchal and often outright misogynistic, especially since women are still the smaller share of King's consumers. A few distant cousins tolerate the negative attitude of the family to push binge drinking among young women, especially on college campuses. Most of the King dynasty think, like Jeremy, that they are God's gift to the world.

Like many of Pentex's larger companies, King escapes the consequences of its actions through the unbreakable power of money, served with a foaming glass of deceit. The company backs political candidates who fight against regulations that would hurt King. The far-right of America's government wholly support King, and push the bills that ease EPA legislation and give tax breaks for corporations such as King. In order to keep their pockets lined with gold, these politicians fight endlessly in Washington on behalf of their backers, interfering with investigations and running character assassinations campaigns to discredit environmentalists and whistleblowers. Such actions coincide with the extreme conservatives' own anti-environmental agenda, but King also pays very well in money and favors, prompting politicians to go that extra mile.

Opponents of King and its practices find themselves in for the fight of their lives when the company mobilizes its assets. A sad truth of America's legal system is that those with more money have more sway; and King has mountains of money. Depending on how vindictive they feel, King's weapons of choice range from pulling advertising and patronage—including every King subsidiary and anyone that owes them favors—to taking the problem

groups to court. Even if King doesn't have a case, its army of lawyers and the sheer amount of money it can throw at the problem to drag out proceedings will inevitably bankrupt their opponents, forcing them to either settle or drop the case. Such influence in the legal and political arenas exists only among corporate entities of similar size, none of which has any interest in taking on King.

Unbound by the same regulations as lesser companies, King is free to progress without fear of the consequences. Jeremy King certainly *cares* about the environmental consequences, he makes sure to do the worst number on the environment that he can. Brewing on a large scale is a filthy process, and unlike most other distilleries King does not purify its chemical byproducts, instead letting them flow into rivers and lakes where they kill wildlife in and around the water. To add insult to injury, King owns the AquaClear Foundation, which is ostensibly dedicated to environmental safety and cleaner waters. AquaClear spends millions on commercials and demonstrations that plainly show King's commitment to environmentally conscious manufacturing. Many King consumers actually think buying King products *helps* the environment, a perspective fostered by commercials showing clean and efficient mock-ups of King's plants.

The fact that the buying public helps King ruin the environment and maintain its influence over legislation while thinking they are making the world a better place is an all too painful example of how well Pentex is doing at its purpose.

Endron Oil

The first and greatest of Pentex's many, many companies is Endron Oil. Fundamentally, Endron is Pentex, its black heart and blacker soul, and the corporation would not exist without it. No name save that of the Wyrms itself can command such Rage in the hearts of the Garou, and no force on Earth has done more direct damage to Gaia than Endron.

Premium Oil, Endron's forerunner, began life in Pennsylvania at the height of the American oil boom. Premium quickly outgrew the limited oil reserves of Pennsylvania and became Pentex, spinning off its oil and gas business into Endron Oil, a publically traded company. At least, public in theory, though Pentex has maintained a majority share since buying back most of the stocks it sold to weather the Great Depression. Through corporate acquisitions and aggressive practices, Pentex has regained total control of Endron.

Hiram Bollingsworth was the original mind behind Endron's early growth. A man under the sway of Banes thanks to his wife's misguided meddling with occult forces, Hiram nonetheless led Endron to prominence. His power over the company was so absolute that Endron's

Board of Directors arranged to have him killed in 1959. They were successful, but some say that Hiram's ghost still haunts Endron corporate headquarters so that he can torment the Board members.

Endron today follows the same policies it has in the past, favoring rapid expansion and profit opportunity over safety. Due in part to ignoring or buying off environmental regulations, it is the world's single largest oil company. The power it wields often shapes the laws of third-world countries in Endron's favor. The almighty dollar is a weapon that cuts through any armor, as Endron well knows. The corporation can prey upon fears of job losses or outsourcing, or the greed of conservative and liberal elements alike. Cares about the negative environmental effects fall to the wayside in the light of skyrocketing gasoline prices. The prospect of employing a huge workforce in the process of liberating a country from foreign oil interests buys them much goodwill amongst politicians and voters alike. Through press conferences, quarterly reports and talking heads on the RED Network, Endron belittles environmentalist positions. "Certainly, there are some casualties in the ongoing process of human expansion, but they're a necessary cost. Do we let ten thousand people go without work; ten thousand families starve, in order to save a species or two that most people never see?" When faced with questions like these, people can justify relaxing regulations, and the number of people who truly care enough to protest on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves dwindles with every year. More and more people become complacent, shrug, and say that the modern world runs on oil. They believe there's nothing that will change that, except the discovery of some cheap alternative energy source.

Naturally, Endron is also one of the leading developers of alternate energies. The current wave of research is geothermal energy, stored deep in the earth. Of course, Endron employs a variety of oil-fueled, highly destructive plants to harness this energy, doing as much damage as it can away from public eye. The Endron Electric, a sleek electric car, is prone to short-circuits, leaks dangerous heavy metals from the battery in any collision, and costs ten times more to recharge than filling up a gas tank. Endron spokespeople claim that electric cars are inherently expensive and temperamental, encouraging most drivers to switch back to gas-powered vehicles.

The Serpent's Head

Endron's actual leadership is something of a mystery to all but a very select few. The policy-makers remain extremely well hidden. If not for the very real effects of decisions made at the top, some might doubt the existence of any senior management. As it stands, They are very real — referred to only as "Them" and "They" by

employees who won't risk their necks enough to find out more. Not that any investigations would yield anything useful; They have made certain of that through ingenious methods of masking the truth. They exist, yes, and They even maintain offices and attend meetings the same as any other flesh-and-blood employee. Yet no records exist to trace Their pay, and They do not even operate within the expected positions within the Endron structure, whether physical or corporate. Theirs are modest offices and simple jobs without fanfare, and yet somehow They wield tremendous influence within the company. It's a form of hiding in plain sight, and the clues as to Their true nature are difficult to notice. Someone who pries too deeply could uncover some answers, through computer hacking, social engineering, and corporate espionage. He might even be able to pass on what he's learned to a friend or family member. Unfortunately, that's pretty much all he can do, as They like to seal leaks as soon as They can.

They are neither part of the Board nor the presidency of Endron. To outsiders, it's as if They don't exist. Insiders know that the CEO and other executives can do what they like, within limits imposed by Them. Max Carson is the president of Endron, a rich man whose sole desire is to make himself richer. Though capable enough, Carson is a shortsighted man whose ambitions don't even scratch the surface of what They truly want. He makes sure that Endron is well-organized and running as slick as oil, along with his COO, Nicholas Morgan and CFO, Justin Chen. All three men are in their late forties, and all three feel as though their influence might be slipping. Carson has begun to suspect that the company has other forces at work behind the scenes, and that Endron is no more under any real control of his than the oil-soaked tides. He's just smart enough to know he's correct, but he's nowhere near aware enough to know just how far out of his league he really is. Carson's executive secretary, Allison Kerrey, has a much better idea, but she is one of the few who has puzzled out the identities of Them, and keeps the knowledge to herself. They sometimes approach people who discover Them, hoping to increase Their ranks, but so far Kerrey remains both a concern and an interest for Endron's hidden masters.

The rank-and-file employees put forth the facade that They want Endron to display, and do so very well. In America, especially, Endron's own kingdom, the company employs well over half a million people. The company does much to foster the image of a vital and benevolent part of the economy. Employees are well dressed, maintain a polite and knowledgeable public image, and receive generous benefits. The more attractive of them displayed in brochures, commercials and billboards — but some of these spokespeople are fomori designed to entice cus-

tomers. The buying public sees good-mannered, helpful workers, top-notch performance, and clean, industrious facilities. In turn, the public comes back again and again, and Endron's coffers overflow.

The Serpent's Belly

Endron's gains come at tremendous cost to the planet, which is why the Garou hate the corporation so much. So very effective is Endron Oil at what it does, it alone has done more to set back the Gaian cause than all other branches of Pentex combined. Humanity is very pliable in the right circumstances, and the powers behind Endron know just how and where to apply the right pressure. Further, every seemingly benign gesture adds to the smokescreen obscuring the true devastation of their Endron's actions. The Garou fight back with everything they've got, but their efforts meet with frustration. Endron's methods are even more direct than those of many other subsidiaries are. They don't blink at blackmail, extortion, hiring mercenaries to murder unionized workers, or sending surprisingly well-funded criminal groups against people who rile the company's leadership. At times, it looks like Endron's board are more comfortable breaking the law than using legal solutions to their problems.

When governments and private institutions make deals with Endron, the bargains always work out in the company's favor. Sometimes, the other party realizes

afterward just how powerless they are in the agreement, usually when private Endron security forces flood the area. Most of the local populace buys Endron gasoline and attend schools or jobs funded by the oil giant. Withholding campaign contributions will quickly change a holdout's tune.

A significant part of Endron's success has been its developments on the technological side of oil drilling. Their proprietary Menantol platforms are the most famous example, being some of the most advanced oilrigs in the world. The Menantols can drill faster and more efficiently than any other rig, and are built to withstand the worst stresses Mother Nature can throw at them, a fact that Endron mentions in every press release. The rigs are gigantic mechanical leeches, sucking dry the lifeblood of the Earth, and no amount of salt (or saltwater) can scour them away. They're more like villas or small towns than mere oilrigs, holding quarters and facilities for dozens of people, many of whom are not just crew, but also marine biologists, geologists and other specialist consultants. Some non-crew workers are truly strange, the kind of person who looks more at home in a New Age bookstore or séance than an offshore drilling rig, but the crew knows better than to ask questions. When you work for Endron long enough, especially on the rigs, you get used to seeing some weird shit.

Oil spills happen with alarming frequency, and the environmental toll is heinous. Every spill ruins miles of



coastline, destroys the habitat of countless thousands of seagoing animals, and proves costly to clean up. Yet even so, Endron can turn this to its advantage. By promoting an image of regret over the necessary act of oil drilling and transport, and introducing advancements made to reduce the scope and frequency of spills, Endron gets to appear like the “good oil company.” Once more, attacking people where it really hurts, in the wallet, also proves quite effective. Developing safer alternatives takes time, at the cost of skyrocketing oil prices now, and the busy people of the First World cannot afford to wait. If it means low gas prices and stability from week to week, then the majority of working people are willing to accept accidents as they come while Endron looks for better options. Besides, how many schools does the company donate to again?

Endron’s facilities aren’t as perfect as the company claims. In 2010, a supposedly indestructible Menantol oilrig exploded, leaving an uncapped wellhead gushing for months. Nearly 250 million gallons of oil spread across the water, decimating local wildlife and tourist establishments. All parties involved scrambled to blame one another but in the end several powerful energy companies conspired to make sure Endron got their day in court. In turn, Endron eventually settled, paying more than five billion dollars in damages. The flood of negative publicity has left the company struggling for the first time since the Great Depression. Now some look upon Magadon as Pentex’s new golden calf and Endron’s Board grows desperate.

Whether onshore or off, Endron facilities display significantly high maintenance, and serious fortifications. In some cases, they resemble military compounds more than drilling facilities, with electrified fences topped with razor wire, private airstrips, armed patrols, and machine-gun emplacements. Endron’s management knows that the Garou will come, and they want to give the werewolves hell. Even when Endron loses, the damage done ultimately works in its favor, the tragedy makes the news as oil burns, ruining the land, and starting wildfires. The cost in Garou lives is high, as well; Endron’s sharpshooters keep silver bullets at hand, just in case, and keep a tally of their kills. The Garou approach Endron compounds with great caution and greater hatred.

The largest and most profitable of Endron’s oil reserves support pipelines, though at tremendous cost both financially and environmentally. While the pipelines are by far the fastest and easiest way to transport oil long distances, their construction is far from fast or easy. The process takes many years and millions of dollars, and has a catastrophic toll on the landscape all on its own. After the completion of the pipeline, Endron employees take special care to worsen the damage,

poisoning the ground and water and driving rare species to extinction. Spills in the pipelines are rare, being costly enough to make a dent even in Endron’s profits, but the other damage is more profound. Even without those additions, oil pipelines tear up miles and miles of wilderness and coastlines. Though the construction has long-term effects, they normally play out in countries far removed from the family man gassing up his SUV, the hundreds of people attending boat shows, or the many thousands that drive to the beach every day. Endron trucking fleets also transport oil and equipment, using Endron-produced gasoline, which pollutes the air more than any other fuel. The sum of these things is a high price to pay for Mother Earth, indeed.

The Serpent’s Tail

Given the nature of the enemy, even the Garou find it difficult to make any kind of serious dent in Endron’s activities. The bastards are too widespread and too well integrated into human society to take down easily. Destroy one facility, spin-doctors turn the story into one of terrorism and tragedy, while two other sites complete construction and begin the drilling process. Take out a trucking fleet and thousands of families are suddenly without a meal ticket, innocent bystanders are now casualties in a war they don’t even realize is happening. To some tribes, like the Red Talons, this is an acceptable sacrifice. All humans are guilty by direct action or by association, and the Garou must tear their world down to heal Gaia. The Children of Gaia naturally disagree, feeling it impossible to win the war without humanity on their side. After all, the Garou made their own mistakes in the name of hubris and greed, and Gaia has paid the price for those mistakes. Other tribes struggle with the issue: a few feel that the roots are too deep, and that ripping out Pentex and its competitors would play into the Wyrms’ hands, making the world a worse place for the average person. Others don’t worry too much about the question. Their concern is the latest Endron construction site, not poisoning the whole Wyrms-tainted corporate network. No matter what the Garou do, they won’t win more than a Pyrrhic victory.

Endron is far from the only problem. Though the company keeps its best innovations for itself, it also manufactures and sells advanced parts and machinery to its competitors. That way, it both acquires some of its profits from competitors and helps those other companies in their rape of the natural world. None of Endron’s competitors has any clue that they are literally helping kill the spirit of the Earth, but taking direct action would ruin even more of the world than destroying Endron, the increased misery and human suffering empowering the Wyrms and its Banes. Caught between a rock and a

hard place, the warriors of Gaia are have little recourse to vent their Rage, while Endron and its competitors all laugh their way to the bank. It is a problem responsible for much of the lost ground in the Apocalypse War. Pentex knows this and takes the opportunity to twist the knife any chance they get, and they especially love the little things. One of Endron's iconic commercials shows a beautiful, half-naked "Mother Earth" happily giving of her lifeblood in order to sustain her favorite children.

It's not always easy money for Endron. They didn't simply start in a position of dominance, and though they have maintained it for decades, they cannot rest on their laurels — especially with the financial repercussions of the 2010 oil spill resounding throughout the company. They must find petroleum oil in order to drill for it in the first place, and to do so that Endron develops new equipment and new methods to hunt down oil reserves. If the oil dries up, so do the profits. Fortunately, that doesn't seem like it will happen before it's too late to matter in the face of the impending Apocalypse. Endron's elite oil-finders are the EEPS: the Endron Exploratory Personnel Squads. These people are the best in the world at scouring the planet for new sources of oil. They don't stop for inclement weather or international law, and always find their mark. EEPS consist of the best and brightest geologists, marine biologists, and engineers, protected by suspiciously well-armed private security contractors. Together they locate a new source and create the most efficient plan possible for harvesting it. Endron spares no expense in funding EEPS expeditions, and that includes greasing the wheels of local authorities in order to make a difficult job easier. R&D supplies the coordinates for an expedition, and if the EEPS determines that the site holds something worth pursuing, further equipment and forces move in to secure the area and prep it for drilling.

Oil is not the only prize won from such expeditions, either. Many EEPS are wholly human and know nothing of the supernatural, save perhaps for the weird things they sometimes encounter on their missions. Others are fomori or humans who know some of the truths of the World of Darkness, and they know what to look for besides oil-bearing strata. Such places range from unclaimed caerns to the resting places of ancient creatures that, by human reckoning, should not exist. Endron happily drills these sites, even if the oil reserves are minor, because the profits for the Wyrms more than make up for money lost. Supernatural EEPS teams face some of the worst conditions imaginable, risking their lives in order to unleash an ancient evil or clear the way to a Caern sought by many forces.

Indeed, a company as large and as thoroughly tainted as Endron has thousands upon thousands of fomori in its

employ. Some of them occur "naturally," when human workers suffer exposure to the warping energies of the Wyrms and the other things in the shadows. Endron, like its sister subsidiary Magadon, also engineers fomori for special purposes, including the most dangerous EEPS missions. Many things slumber in the earth and the dark corners of the world, and Endron has much to gain by releasing them, despite immense risks. In those cases, fomori rush in where angels fear to tread. The casualty rate on such missions is very high, because the heads of the Hydra do not believe in cooperation. If the EEPS team dies, their sacrifice has raised an ancient evil — and opened up a new space for Endron to exploit for oil and gas. Like much of Pentex, even when Endron loses, it wins.

Magadon Pharmaceuticals

In the age of wonders that is the twenty-first century, Magadon stands at the top of scientific progress. The pharmaceutical giant is the industry leader in health products and medical advancements for the past decade. Having long since eclipsed its closest competitors, Magadon has done more to ward off human frailty than any other organization in history.

Magadon's history stretches back nearly seventy years to Magadon Limited, the research company founded by retired U.S. Army doctor Bryan Vandegrift. The '50s were not kind to Magadon, and had the Garou known just what a threat the company would become, they could have perhaps killed it in its infancy. Magadon still nearly died well before the Wyrms had truly sunk its claws into it, thanks to some biochemical disasters, including the infamous viral outbreak in Virginia in the mid-'50s. Plummeting stocks and a complete loss of public goodwill nearly finished the company. Yet it was not to be, thanks to Pentex, and Magadon recovered spectacularly from near disaster, bouncing back as medical science continued to advance. Pentex bought out Magadon, seeing the opportunity to hone the company into a tool of corruption. Pentex retooled and reorganized Magadon, supplying it with the funds it needed to build new research facilities, as well as generating good press through tame news outlets and the proper bribes.

The result was a company whose profits grew every year, and whose reach extended all over the world. Soon enough, Pentex did not even need to lie to protect Magadon. Its health products gained popularity for their miraculous effects, and the company stood at the forefront of combating the worst diseases humanity suffered. Magadon health supplements undeniably strengthened their consumers. Experimental Magadon medicines succeeded where established products failed,

saving the lives of thousands. Because of its research and presence in hospitals, shelters and humanitarian efforts the world over, Magadon gained a reputation as one of the good guys, an agent of change for the betterment of humanity. They carefully cultivated this image with highly publicized cases of effective treatments and new advancements. Their providers were more willing to work with the poor and uninsured than any other company in the world was. Since Magadon's products were relatively cheap for their utility, competitors found it difficult to keep up with the company's growing market share. Soon, Magadon established itself as the dominant force in medicine from America to Australia and everywhere in between.

The truth is far more sinister, and the Garou know it. Since Pentex bought them out, Magadon has steadily worked at eroding the spiritual strength of its consumers, even as it keeps them physically healthy. Unlike Endron or the more overt of Pentex's operations, Magadon thrives on being very subtle. The medical industry faces a ton of scrutiny, and even with billions to use for bribes and rampant incompetence among human authorities, such a giant of the industry could not get away with releasing openly toxic chemicals for human consumption. Thus, the boons of Magadon's products are not lies: they really *can* cure diseases and other conditions, strengthen one's health, and have a dramatic improvement on one's daily life. This does not harm the Wyrms' cause, because who cares if humans live longer? It only means more of them will be around to suffer when the end comes. More humans means more targets for corruption, no matter how much the other heads of the Hydra disagree. That said, Magadon isn't in the business of truly making the world a better place. At least, its leadership isn't.

One of the great horrors of the Wyrms is its ability to corrupt even the good from within. Magadon is a prime example. Most of its researchers, doctors, healthcare experts, and low-cost insurance subsidiaries truly are well-meaning people who want to help the world. Moreover, they do, to the best of their ability, ignorant of the company's true designs. As with many of the Pentex-owned subsidiaries, destroying these people doesn't just mean the slaughter of innocents, the world becomes a worse place for their passing — in Magadon's case through the cessation of life-saving drugs and procedures. Even after removing them, Magadon will replace them, possibly with worse people, possibly with more innocents. Either way, the Garou claw uselessly at a smokescreen without extinguishing the fire causing it. Gaia's warriors must find another way, and there anger and brute force cannot help them.

In the meantime, even as its products and advancements seem to aid human longevity, the spiritual taint

that laces everything Magadon produces eats away at the core of a person's existence. Certainly, a user's body might be intact, but when the spirit within begins to fray, all the vitamin supplements in the world cannot stave off the depression and madness. The result might be a person healthy as a racehorse but spiritually dead inside, ripe for possession by Banes or other Wyrms forces. This is how Magadon creates many of the deadly First Teams.

First Teams

The fomori bred by Magadon are the most potent to be found anywhere in the world. They are legendary among both Pentex and the Garou for their ferocity, power, and top-notch training. Magadon specially engineers these creatures for use in Pentex First Teams, the crack squads deployed by Pentex on the most dangerous and vital missions. First, to do battle with the hated Garou, First Teams build themselves up to withstand the savage fury of Gaia's warriors and dish it out in return. Magadon starts with the human side. Once the chosen candidates commit, they train rigorously to enhance physical ability, from balance and speed to strength and endurance. Magadon gives the best medicines, genetic engineering and biological enhancements to these men and women, making them the best physical specimens humanly possible, and sometimes more. All the while, the candidate absorbs Wyrms-taint, and he welcomes it. When he reaches full physical potential, the process of possession begins. To give the fomori on First Team the best advantage over the Garou, the Banes chosen are the strongest available. The Banes devour as much taint and negative energies as they can, aided by First Team engineers, making them hungrier and more vicious than their common kin. When the merging is complete, the result is a powerful fomori, highly trained and bred for the sole purpose of fighting werewolves. Armed with weapons specifically designed to combat Garou and devastate the environment, First Teams have collected more werewolf pelts than any other group, save perhaps for the Black Spiral Dancers.

When the need is greatest, Pentex sends in First Teams alongside Black Spiral Dancers to wage war on important caerns or wipe out local septs. These battles are bloody and glorious, and take a tremendous toll on Garou forces, which are slower to replenish than Pentex's. By the time the last member of a First Team meets his end at werewolf claws; another one is completing its training and executing her first mission.

Drugs & Divisions

Magadon has many divisions, like most drug companies, each one tackling a different area of modern medicine. The difference is that each of Magadon's



divisions is often nearly as large as the whole of other companies, with profits to match. The divisions work very well together toward Magadon's ultimate goal. They have too many divisions and medicines to list, but here are some of the most notable:

Genetics is the fastest-growing division, and with good reason. Growing facility with stem cell research and genetic engineering has led to exciting new discoveries. The division largely focuses on unlocking the secrets of genetic codes yet untapped, as well as developing treatments for genetic debilities and developing new ways to imprint Wyrn-taint at a genetic level. Their latest goal is learning how to engineer genetic flaws into developing fetuses that Magadon products can later "cure."

Gerontology specializes in treating the elderly, making great strides in the prevention of diseases like Alzheimer's. The division has a large presence in nursing homes, from which they gain voluntary test subjects for new drugs and surgical procedures. Contrary to what many suspect, Magadon treats its subjects well. Those fortunate enough to retire to Magadon-owned nursing homes enjoy good

health well into their twilight years. Their bodies are then donated to science — willingly or otherwise.

Opposite Gerontology is Magadon's **Pediatrics** division. Recent years have proven very fruitful for the division as it develops powerful new treatments for pediatric mental disorders, specifically tailored to the young. These and the treatments for developmental disabilities appear to have long-lasting positive effects, and earn Magadon much of its goodwill. Many of their treatments carry taint, spiritually weakening the young over time.

Women's Medicine is the only division whose director does not knowingly serve the Wyrn. Rather, Dr. Julia Miller is a feminist devoted to improving the state of women's medicine. The division tackles some of the trickier problems in the field, from fertility issues to neonatal care. Its work with contraceptives and improved safety in childbirth and the termination of pregnancies has drawn the wrath of conservative groups, but has millions of female supporters backing Magadon.

General Health and Nutrition is the name of Magadon's health store chain, and is the most popular chain

in North America. Like all such stores, GHN provides health supplements, from foods to vitamins and other dietary aids. Their products are the best in the business, and their own brand of energy drink, *Wolf's Run*, is the most popular in the world. GHN is especially popular with the young and professional athletes. They also stock homeopathic remedies that the staff recommends in place of effective treatments. Some of those remedies go beyond homeopathic sugar pills into the realm of actual poison.

Infectious Diseases targets viruses exclusively, developing the latest treatments and cures for everything from Athlete's Foot to Ebola. Once the largest of Magadon divisions, it is now rivaled by Genetics and Gerontology. Still, ID is at the forefront of Magadon research and development and its vaccines reach millions every year to ward off the flu or less common diseases in poorer parts of the world. Hidden away from the world, Infectious Diseases works on weaponizing diseases such as Ebola. Their work has proven horrendously effective, especially in third-world tests.

Consumer Products creates and distributes Magadon's over-the-counter drugs. The variety of drugs produced is staggering, and in many stores, most of the shelves hold products entirely made by CP subsidiaries. 85% of all drugs and personal care products sold in the developed world come from Magadon or its subsidiaries. Often, customers get placebos instead of actual drugs — especially those needing the most important medicines like HIV treatments.

Veterinary Products deals exclusively with animal health. Many in Magadon consider VetDiv the bastard stepchild of "real medicine," but VetDiv offers a lot of use to humans. Animals see use in labor, companionship, and food, so it is in Magadon's best interest to improve their use to humanity. The division produces the world's most effective growth hormones and works with Genetics to engineer creatures that are more useful. The animals themselves lead short, miserable lives before VetDiv uses them up in the name of science, and a favorite subject are wolves.

Magadon also maintains other divisions, most of them smaller than the main ones, but still important to the overall goal. No company of this size prospers without a well-oiled Sales & Marketing division, and their psychiatric and public health divisions help supply Magadon with test subjects and data.

A selection of Magadon-created drugs, engineered diseases and other biological and chemical weapons are in chapter six. Here are a few of the nastiest creations, the ones Garou hate the most.

Worm Faux is a particularly cunning invention that turns the Garou ability to sense Wurm-taint against them. A tasteless, odorless chemical that has no direct adverse effects on whatever product it contaminates. Undetect-

able by mundane means, it doesn't even taint the victim. It makes the poor soul who ingests the Magadon product radiate an aura of Wurm-taint for about a week, which often leads to the hapless victim's demise at werewolf claws. By the time the Garou find out their mistake it's too late, and one more innocent person dies by those who should be her saviors.

The insidious **Bane Lures** are parasitic little organisms that attach to a host's appendix. Disguised in over-the-counter pills, made from powdered Black Spiral Dancer bone, it latches on to the host's appendix when swallowed and draws enough nutrients to keep itself alive. This is scarcely noticeable by the host, and quickly forgotten in the face of what is to come. The Bane Lure sends out a call through the Penumbra, and true to its name, it draws Banes to the host. The Banes do not target the host directly, but rather bring hell to the lives of those around him for months, until the parasite dies. When the Lure dies, it usually causes some manner of condition in the host, from appendicitis to gastrointestinal distress, or even colon cancer, as well as leaving lingering taint in his body.

Related to the Bane Lures are the so-called "**Bottled Banes**," a very apt name for a particularly sinister piece of work. The project is still in its early stages, but the results have been very promising. Human shamans or Black Spiral Theurges bind a dormant Bane into pills or serums, which when ingested by human patients fetters the Bane to him. This in itself only radiates a minute aura of taint, and doesn't harm the unwitting host. What follows is a process that revolves around a chemical called umbrophrenol-6, which is completely undetectable by human means. Made from secretions of several types of Bane, it stimulates dormant spirits and shocks them into wakefulness. Disguised in medicines and health supplements, the umbrophrenol-6 instantly awakens a Bane when the host consumes the laced product, and the Bane quickly begins the process of possession. In a mere matter of hours, a combination of items, often shipped from opposite sides of the country, come together to create a fomor.

Such sneaky and underhanded ways of corrupting humans and creating more problems for the Garou are difficult to fight. Magadon specializes in such subtlety, and the horror inherent to these crimes is deeply personal. So many people fill their bodies with tainted products meant to help them, and often *do* help in some way, that they never realize they are consuming the cause of their own spiritual degeneration. The sense of betrayal that anyone would feel upon discovering the truth would be devastating. When one's soul has weakened thanks to the machinations of Magadon and its ilk, it is all the more difficult to cope with the

revelation. More than a few Kinfolk have succumbed to bleakest despair after finding out the truth: they have helped Pentex grow strong while the Wyrms have slowly eaten away at their integrity.

It is a soul-crushing realization for which there is no cure.

The Board of Directors

Insidiously black-hearted and manipulative to a man, the upper echelons of Pentex contain some of the most willingly despicable beings to have ever served the Wyrms.

Few of the Directors appear in public. The majority lurk within multiple layers of corporate subterfuge deep enough to prevent their names from appearing on any document or electronic file connecting them to Pentex or its subsidiaries. Those that do make themselves known carry with them the talent for making their gross misdeeds out as shrewd business decisions rather than as the vile exaltations of global corruption they truly are. The Directors have not survived for as long as they have by painting themselves as targets.

The Board has undergone many changes in recent decades, as the megalithic corporation has struggled to keep up with its competitors and the rapid advance of technology. The frequent and increasingly potent monkeywrenching tactics of the Garou have included attacks on the Board when they are at their most vulnerable. Directors have died, disappeared or been “retired” after significant failures. Within the last year, the structure of the Board has fallen in to place like the pieces of a puzzle — precise and perfect at last. While some Directors are unhappy with their positions and others practically dominate the direction of the company, all ostensibly agree that the current Board is the most effective it has ever been.

Controlling Directors

Six members of the management team stand above the others, and through their coordinated actions have led to a large number of the recent success stories emerging from a host of major subsidiaries. Their iron grasp on Pentex has forced through the development of vicious new projects designed to strike at the hearts and minds of both the general population and shapeshifting opponents. It is through these Directors’ unification that several disgusting new threats have reared a multitude of poisonous heads, all snapping and sucking at Gaia’s flesh.

Benjamin Rushing

Executive Director

Warm and welcoming, almost grandfatherly, Rushing comes with the ruddy cheeks, bearded face, and kind eyes of a masterly professor. Indeed, Rushing was once a don at Cambridge and still wears the University colors when he attends Board meetings. Rushing is very conscious of history, especially that of his family and their long snaring roots through the ages. He does well to remind others that one must look back in order to see what is coming. Rushing looks upon the misdeeds of his colorful youth with a wide smile.

The image of a sage counselor among the Board is however a false one. Rushing is among the most ambitious, competitive, Machiavellian schemers in corporate management. He has screwed and killed — figuratively and literally — his way to the position of Executive Director. By coordinating the other members of the Board he has given Pentex some of the direction it has needed all of these years, pouring more money in to PR to mitigate damages, more resources in to Special Projects to gain a foothold over the enemies of the company, and even personally guiding subsidiaries in times of crisis when necessary. Rushing is increasingly of the opinion that global apathy will give Pentex the power it needs to control everything. Disinterest and disbelief have allowed him to get away with many crimes committed personally, so he reasons this would be the same for his corporation. His actions have ensured the ongoing improvement of a more stable company with unified goals in mind.

Rushing would like nothing more than to remove his predecessor Peter Culliford from the corporation entirely. However, he is aware the man possesses some rare gifts for communing with the real entity in charge. While Rushing can manipulate and coerce the Wyrms in certain respects, until he is capable of the strange feats Culliford occasionally displays he will keep the old Director in place as his second. In the meantime, Rushing has gained the popular support of the Board majority, and in doing so has honed Pentex to a dangerously sharp edge.

Peter Culliford

Executive Vice President

It is rare that a man sees and experiences as much as Culliford has, but most men do not live for an excess of five centuries. Despite his elderly, well-worn appearance, cool manner, and reserved demeanor, Peter Culliford is as sharp and as ruthlessly manipulative as they come.

Once a priest in the medieval Catholic Church, Culliford delighted in the power that came with speaking for God. Fully aware that in this day and age, celebrity

culture, consumer greed, and government-induced paranoia have replaced God, he envisions a global holocaust of everything natural brought about not by Pentex itself, but by the world population who slavishly do anything for the love of everything Pentex has to offer. Through this vision, he approved Lamont's procurement and development of the RED Network, one of the world's most popular entertainment news networks.

Culliford takes an obscene level of enjoyment from incidents of mass hysteria and spree killing. He monitors brush wars around the globe, putting a significant level of Pentex resources in to the area to keep the war going to spread the worldwide despair and hopelessness he desires. He is a shrewd individual, and fully intends to see his company in control while bringing the rest of the world to heel.

Peter Culliford has never stopped hearing what he refers to as the voice of God, but deep within his twisted brain he knows it better as the Defiler Wyrms. It came as some surprise to Culliford and the other Directors when in the last decade he began to age for the first time in centuries. Out of desperation and through the advice of those on the Board with loyalty to the longstanding Director, Culliford went about revising his staid tactics and worked with his longtime rival Benjamin Rushing on a new focus in the corporate direction. He voluntarily stepped down as Executive Director at this time. The Wyrms has yet to confirm whether Culliford has done enough to preserve his immortality, with the new Executive Vice President now working feverishly to prevent the onset of death through something as ignoble and bland as old age.

Adrian Newberry

Division Director, Operations (OPD)

The most prominent face in the Pentex organization these days, Adrian Newberry has a lot of weight on his shoulders and is somehow able to cope with it all through a gentle smile and a reassuring gaze. His immaculate dress sense and healthy blonde hair never appear out of place or less than perfect. Newberry travels to major Pentex sites on a regular 18-month schedule. He flies by private jet, arriving in style, and shakes hands with business managers and rank-and-file employees alike — allowing everyone to think he is a truly caring Director.

Beneath the tanned skin of the well-groomed executive lives a being with a personality as warm as ice. Newberry is undoubtedly one of the most efficient and effective Directors at the helm of Pentex. He speaks to the Board in short, clipped sentences, never elaborating unless necessary. He is painfully aware of time, and hates to see it wasted by prattling employees. The only times his facade of friendliness drops when visiting external

sites have been when someone keeps him waiting for longer than he deems necessary. The Directors joke that Newberry personally chopped off the fingers and toes of a secretary who held him up for twenty minutes. It isn't a joke. He keeps the bones in a box at his office.

Despite his ever-cool demeanor, Newberry is somewhat paranoid about one secret he keeps from the rest of the Board. Acting on advice from one of the many aspects of Eater-of-Souls, he has secretly appropriated the heads of former Directors Meiche, Kromrich, Allred, and Kiker after their deaths. He's subsequently mummified the heads, keeping them in jars in a cabinet in his Nantucket penthouse. He is somehow capable of communicating with the disembodied remains of his former colleagues allowing him to make various leaps and bounds in the company as a result. In turn, he grants the decapitated Directors the possibility of continued service to the Wyrms. Whether they appreciate this service would be open to debate, were anyone to find out about their current status.

Newberry's relationship with the other living members of the Board is frigid yet polite. He feels comfortable around other degenerates, having learned of several of the vices afflicting his immediate associates. He drops all airs and graces when in conversation with the other Directors, knowing that to lie in a sea of liars is about as useful as trying to type with no fingers.

Chase Lamont

Joint Division Director, Acquisitions Division (AQD) and Information Collection Division (ICS)

Few have skyrocketed to success in the way Chase Lamont has in recent years. Through a mixture of blackmail, nepotism — he's the protégé of Benjamin Rushing — charm and genuine business acumen, Lamont has carved his way from Subdivision Director of ICS through to Joint Division Director of both his former area as well as AQD.

Lamont carries himself well, as enchanting as he is slimy. He's inquisitive and obsessed with finding out everything about everyone who will ever work with or for him. When Lamont wants to acquire a company, he goes through every record, from company profits through to sticky notes on personnel files, so he can gain the ultimate advantage over every perceived threat. He needs to control people. He won't allow anyone to gain an advantage over him. This need has become more apparent as he has taken on more responsibility while still holding his prior role. The rest of the Board see how well he controls AQD through the successful purchase of the RED Network, and let him have his megalomania. For as long as he serves Pentex, it is no issue.

Lamont's suave charm and need to control others is a result of his being a bona fide psychopath. Starting in



his university days with him picking up women and men alike before murdering them and violating their corpses. He chose victims from all over the country, selecting them from the lost and forgotten ones, from those with no one to miss them. Even now, he revisits the bodies of those he killed to reassert his control over them. He still hunts to this day. He keeps a small notebook that holds the details of the unfortunates upon whom he has successfully preyed. He takes the same attitude towards business as he does people — a tactic that serves remarkably well in a company such as Pentex.

Lamont has a gift; he's able to read people, through body language, micro-expressions, speech patterns, and signs that are more esoteric. He is capable of identifying a shapeshifter without so much as a second glance, as part of the gifts bestowed upon him by the dark entities he serves. All of the Directors hold him in high regard except Mollett, who would happily see Lamont meet the same end as that visited upon his victims. She is outwardly envious of the power he has obtained but disgusted by his private habits. Lamont knows this and is quietly arrang-

ing the possible removal of Mollett, strongly considering taking over HRD if and when she disappears.

Harold Zettler

Division Director, Special Projects Division (SPD)

The word "sadistic" does not do Harold Zettler justice. Rumors abound of his having been a Nazi doctor at Auschwitz-Birkenau, a witch hunter in Salem, a cannibal and serial killer in St. Petersburg, and a cult leader in the Black Forest. All of these pale when compared to the experiments he has devised for Pentex. He's overseen the production of especially infectious fomori, psychotic telekinetics, and mind-destroying psychics. Zettler finds few things more pleasing than the discomfort that even his fellow Board members display around his creations and corpselike appearance. At the request of Culliford and Rushing, he has recently attempted to draw attention away from his ice blue skin, cold unblinking stare, and thin black lips in an effort to appear more approachable.

Zettler has been a vampire since the 17th century. A member of the Sabbat and a fifth generation Malkavian



antitribu, the leech deftly juggles his secretive philosophical work for the Sword of Caine alongside his service to the Wurm. Given his inability to work in daylight hours, others consider him the hardest worker on the Board. A few of the Board object to meeting at night, but all respect Zettler's capabilities.

Zettler remained neutral during the reshuffle that resulted in Rushing's promotion and Kiker's death. He knows that no matter what changes Pentex goes through, his position is secure. His vast mental powers keep many of Pentex's abominations under control, and the vampire is content to continue his experiments. He continues to serve the Wurm through his malicious experiments and will continue for as long as he takes enjoyment from doing so.

Were the rest of the Board aware of Zettler's current quandary, they may take a different stance with the monstrous Cainite. Prominent members of the Sabbat have offered Zettler the role of Priscus due to what they perceive as his ability as a spiritual leader. They don't understand the rotten entity Zettler serves. If he took

the role, he could potentially spread the service of the Wurm, but it would also expose Pentex to the eyes of the Sabbat, something the rest of the Board would *not* want. Zettler is in discussion regarding the matter with his child and Chief of Pentex Security, Persephone Tar-Anis.

Franklin Rubin

Division Director, Project Coordination Division (PCD)

There's very little as dangerous as an unreadable man. When Rubin replaced Enzo Giovanni as Subdivision Director of Finance, he declined to make an introductory speech to the rest of the Board. When he emerged as Director of PCD upon Rushing's promotion to Executive Director, Rubin simply agreed it was always going to be that way.

Rubin is an enigma, and the members of the Board are incredibly wary of him, especially Chase Lamont. Despite this, Rubin is as effective as any of the other Directors; he's capable of managing men and company assets like a

machine. His efficiency savings have increased Pentex's profits at a higher rate than ever, despite increased costs around the world. He seems to know exactly where and when to strike to make the biggest difference, but he remains tight-lipped as to his sources.

To look at him, Rubin is a clean-cut, slick-haired, sharp-suited accountant with several different varieties of moisturizer massaged in to his perfect skin. Rubin looks pristine, smells good, and has no unusual bulges from writhing entities under his shirt — unlike a few other members of the Board. He manages everything meticulously, speaks only when necessary, and keeps his own counsel. He abstains in around half of the Board votes, but when he does have a say the other Directors know that his side is the correct one.

The Board suspected that Newberry brought Rubin in to the company. The rumors went on so long that Newberry eventually had to debunk it during a Board meeting. When Rubin was asked when and why he joined Pentex, the man answered by saying he had always been there.

The other Directors are now seriously wondering who or what Rubin represents. Nobody doubts that he serves the Wyrms effectively. Other Board members have each planned the fall of Rubin in case he takes any further power. If Rubin is aware of these plots, he has not shown any sign. He continues to do his job just as a manager might: efficiently, quietly, and without fuss.

Subdivision Chiefs

While not as powerful as the Managing Directors of Pentex, the Directors of the assorted subdivisions control a great number of men, women, and other assets spread wide throughout the company. A couple of members of this second tier actively aspire to join the big six, while others are content to play with their cards close to their chest.

Kiro Yamazaki

Subdivision Director, Projects Odyssey (OD) and Aeneid (AE)

For what seemed like the longest time, ill fortune plagued Yamazaki. The fall in Japanese markets, catastrophically unsuccessful negotiations with Asian vampires, his failure to secure any of the Cambodian Killing Fields for experimentation, and the lack of results from Project Odyssey all signaled a death knell for the Japanese business magnate. He saw his colleagues Kiker and Stern fall to the wayside and could see his doom fast approaching.

Then Project Aeneid experienced a massive success and plucked his ass out of the fire at the last possible moment.

At the start of the twenty-first century, Yamazaki arranged with the American government to incarcerate suspected terrorists in private Pentex facilities. Project Aeneid had focused on binding Mind Feeder Banes to psychic hosts, but had met repeated failure. Yamazaki had the prisoners exposed to Mind Feeders. The Banes flourished when attached to many of the inmates, powered by their heightened emotions of fear, pain, and anger. Through a series of grueling, and at times catastrophic, experiments, Project Odyssey's telepaths developed a psychic symbiosis with the Bane-bonded fanatics, but their powers became increasingly uncontrollable as a psychic infection spread throughout both the prisoners and psychics via their linked minds.

Harold Zettler intervened, providing a spiritually active drug that allowed the psychics to regain control. The vampire was impressed with Yamazaki's results. After some further experiments, Yamazaki discovered that the Banes would spread through people who shared the impulse to live, die, and kill for a cause — a very useful tool for Pentex. Yamazaki now stands strong. He's got prisons full of fanatical psychics at his command, and is working on a way to apply Project Aeneid to American 'patriots' who are already hopelessly addicted to Magadon's drugs and the booze made by King Distilleries.

Despite his recent successes, Yamazaki needs to further secure his position — especially the ongoing need for Project Odyssey, his plan to recruit and train psychics of all types. He is now looking into ways to use Project Aeneid to infect Garou with Banes through a psychic connection, and has been pushing the Board to give permission to proceed. Zettler has confided in Yamazaki that if his plan succeeds, the vampire will grant Yamazaki immortality. Kiro is however keen to follow Culliford's path, and is attempting to curry favor with the old man in an effort to meet with the same Wyrms entity that granted him immortality rather than becoming a vampire.

Kathryn Mollett

Subdivision Director, Human Resources Development (HRD)

The Board of Directors agree: nobody knows how to manage people quite like Kathryn Mollett. She has proven the old guard quite wrong in their outdated beliefs about the lack of need for HR, people management, or incentive schemes. Employee satisfaction is up, as is productivity and recruitment.

Not that Mollett is an altruist who wants the best for her employees, far from it. She despises the sycophants, slackers and wastes of oxygen who ask for raises, blow the whistle on malpractice, and file complaints about harassment and abuse in the workplace. Mollett wants

nothing more than to devote the life of every single Pentex employee to the company and nothing else — their families, leisure time, and even their dreams should revolve around the company. She knows that they'll never realize what the company has taken from them until it's well and truly gone.

Most Pentex subsidiaries now pay overtime at double time, to incentivize employees to work longer hours. She's introduced Refer-a-Friend schemes so employees gain small bonuses — vouchers for other subsidiaries — for every person they refer for a menial job in one of Pentex's many business arms. Employees get additional vouchers for each year of service they provide. She's even planning cheaply built and maintained company housing for employees at reasonable rates, deducted pre-tax. Mollett wants employees to live, breathe, eat, and sleep Pentex.

Crucially, she is honest with her fellow Directors. She makes no bones about her plans for the company; she wouldn't be able to deceive them even if she tried. The Wyrms has cursed her such that she can never utter a lie. Surprisingly, her candor has resulted in her being welcome at Board meetings as she's trusted to make her points of view known without pretense or obfuscation. Mollett has made it plain in Board meetings that she intends to see Chase Lamont fired or dead. She's made sure the Board are aware of his murderous habits, and while she keeps her own sick depravations in check, she does not credit Lamont with the same control. She actively campaigns for Lamont's removal, as she's aware that the FBI's Special Affairs Division has linked several of his murders. When they come for him, they'll soon start investigating Pentex as a whole. The Board humors her, but doesn't go beyond patronizing platitudes. Though they respect her management skills, until she achieves as much as Lamont they will not take her seriously.

Francesco

Subdivision Director, Project Iliad (IL)

Francesco has a number of strange tics. He is prone to outbursts of violence, but no more so than Culliford. He finds it hard to act sincere when faced with human anguish, but no more than Newberry. His appearance is a concern for the board, but no more than Zettler. To look at Francesco, most people would see a handsome, young executive who looks rather disheveled and scruffy at the best of times. They'd have no idea of his true nature.

Francesco is a Black Spiral Dancer, a lupus Philodox. With his allies, pack mates, contacts, and Kinfolk just a hair's breadth from a call to action he is potentially the most dangerous member of the Board.

None of Francesco's packmates could have predicted his wild success within Pentex. They thought he would lose control and need to be put down. Through sponsor-

ship and mentorship by Zettler, Francesco has reached the level of Subdivision Director. Through his intimate knowledge of the ways of Malfeas and the Wyrms, he has since spearheaded the growth of Project Iliad, responsible for creating increasingly powerful and normal-looking fomori. Iliad has gone from strength to strength in recent years, reaping accolades for Francesco with every success. The Black Spiral Dancer has managed a failing Project through to a surprising level of success.

It came as some surprise to him when Yamazaki produced Project Aeneid's results and demanded recognition for them, limiting the praise received for the smaller scale Iliad. Yamazaki had convinced Francesco that Aeneid was a waste of time and resources, encouraging the werewolf to invest his efforts in the fomori. Francesco took the older Director's advice, only to see the results denied him. Results that he is convinced he formulated with Yamazaki just before hearing Aeneid was due for shut down.

Francesco desperately wants to take his ire out on Yamazaki in a very physical way, but the Black Spiral Dancer is no fool; he has mastered his Rage to a surprising degree. He is instead refining Iliad's process. At some point in the near future, Francesco will unleash a plague of destructive and poisonous fomori on one of the largest septs in Central America. He has the time and resources, since Yamazaki left him plenty to play with.

Andre Baptiste

Subdivision Director, Public Relations (PR)

When the Howling Blitzkrieg Pack tore James Kiker apart, there was only ever going to be one candidate for his replacement. Andre Baptiste is the former PR chief for one of the wealthiest agribusinesses in the world, a one-time programmer for one of the largest TV networks in the USA, and a hugely successful spin-doctor for a now deceased state leader. Pentex headhunted him when it became clear he was on the market, and despite his advanced age, Baptiste has shown no signs of losing his edge.

Baptiste gave himself to the Wyrms long before joining Pentex. As a youth in Puerto Rico, he was a runner for a drug smuggling operation. He ended up in charge of his own small narcotics empire. He supplied many rich and famous men and women, and one drug-addled fat cat introduced him to a cult worshipping the Defiler Wyrms.

The desire to increase his power by corrupting and destroying the world around him appealed to a part of Baptiste's soul. The Wyrms granted him easy access to money and status, leading him to change his identity and ascend to the giddy heights of corporate maneuvering, public awareness control, and selling everything not nailed down. He soon realized that consumers were no different from the junkies he once supplied. They all

needed a fix; they all needed to be fed what they thought they wanted, whether that was information, food, or television shows. As long as they got a fix, Baptiste found he could lace his content with whatever foulness he chose.

His job is twofold: he conceals the true reach of Pentex throughout the world, while increasing the profile of its subsidiaries. Baptiste micromanages much of the subsidiaries' public image, and fancies himself something of a puppetmaster. The Board considers his insight in to public perception vital. The other Directors use his knowledge of consumer needs and wants for their own ends. Baptiste has only been with Pentex for a short time, but is already leaving his mark as a canny and capable head of the corporation. So far he has yet to make any long-term enemies among his colleagues; instead he's content to curry favor with all of them until it's time to bring the unscrupulous dealings of any given Director to light.

Ursula Crane

Subdivision Director, Finance (FIN)

Up until very recently, Crane was a member of the Investments and Trading Team at Pentex Finance HQ in Salt Lake City. Prominent for her ability to hold on in an incredibly competitive pool of workers, Crane rose to an upper management position within six years. She ultimately devised a highly successful set of offshore shell companies that has allowed Pentex as a whole to avoid paying tax in any country. As she became increasingly involved in the less humanitarian side of financial wrangling, Crane set her conscience aside in favor of monetary reward, resulting in her becoming a prominent power player in the hierarchy of Pentex.

A short, heavysset woman lacking what many in the office pool referred to as the "management glaze", Crane's need to fit in, conform, and accrue more power consumed her, stoked by the general level of taint in her environment. This desire grew as strong as to be a beacon to the Banes and other entities lurking within the walls of Pentex. Through her hunger, she was able to form deals granting her the ability to make people who would otherwise ignore a stocky woman in a male-dominated work environment listen to her. The Banes have also slowly changed her appearance, making her more like the people she wants to be.

Franklin Rubin handpicked Crane, who then accepted appointment to Subdivision Director of Finance within three months of Rubin's promotion. She is tremendously successful in her new role, much to the delight of the Board. Crane is however becoming increasingly aware of how she is losing control of her body and mind to the parasitic organisms that she used reach this point. She has made quiet inquiries to other Board members who may be able to help her, but do not want to get involved,

in case something warps their flesh into a caricature of how they want to look.

The other Directors look on Crane with a mix of pride and disgust. To them, she represents what the greedy and consumer-driven people of the world can all become. They all want more, and happily exchange that which keeps them human to obtain it.

The Fallen

In recent decades, several Directors have fallen to internal struggles and external threats. Donald Gauntley, Elliot Meiche, Robert Allred, Frederick Kromrich, Enzo Giovanni, Danforth Stern, and James Kiker are no longer part of the Board or the company. Werewolves killed some; others found themselves fatally ousted, while a few disappeared entirely.

Enzo Giovanni

Former Subdivision Director of Finance (FIN)

The Subdivision Director of Finance, Enzo Giovanni, disappeared in the late twentieth century, leaving a small pile of greasy ash in his executive suite to mark his passing. The rest of the Board presumed that he had died. Franklin Rubin came on board and took on Giovanni's position, with Giovanni becoming a short footnote in the annals of Pentex history.

In the last six months a creature calling itself Enzo Giovanni has returned, but not as the rest of Board remember him. The vampire had been large of frame, with a thick mane of hair and a stylish goatee, well kept enough to appearing in person at evening corporate functions. This new Enzo Giovanni does not resemble that picture at all. While the voice is unmistakably his, and he knows things only Giovanni could know, this vampire is a desiccated husk, resembling a shriveled corpse in a too-large suit.

There are rumors of Giovanni-sightings around Endron drilling stations and Magadon development sites. He's somehow obtained passes allowing him admittance, and has compelled staff to divulge sensitive information. He left behind obscure warnings about shapeshifters and other creatures with oblivious factory managers, and commanded them to pass the messages up to senior management. When news of his return reached the Board, only Culliford was unsurprised. He stated that the Board should permit Giovanni's actions for the time being, giving many the impression the wily old man is fully aware of Enzo's purpose.

In truth, even Culliford doesn't know Giovanni's motives. So far, Enzo has represented neither his vampire family nor Pentex to anyone of importance. Harold Zettler is taking a personal interest in the reappearance of Giovanni — he wants the vampire staked and brought to

him—despite Culliford's request to the contrary. Culliford and Zettler have not yet come to blows, but the Malkavian is intent on defying the Executive Vice President.

Danforth Stern

Former Director of Acquisitions (AQD)

Stern was once highly respected throughout the company as a strong executive with an unflinching ability to direct Pentex towards making some of its riskiest decisions, the majority of which paid off dividends in natural destruction and civil turmoil. All of the respect he had built up evaporated when he began to rant and rave about alien invaders, twitched physically in meetings, and missed numerous AQD planning meetings. It all came to a head at a Board meeting, the first he had attended for several months. He vomited up a tentacled creature shortly after the meeting started.

Escorted from the room by a First Team at the behest of the rest of the Board, the Directors suspected they would never see Danforth Stern again. When the meeting ended, they instead found the eviscerated corpses of the First Team. Something had torn their elite execution team apart. The Board sent further First Teams out to capture and kill the former Director, but Stern has successfully escaped all of them.

One year ago, a man calling himself "Father Worm" showed up as the leader of a small religious order in Minnesota. The cult comprises young, impressionable men and women who see something appealing in Father Worm that most people cannot. The once heavyset man is now unwashed, unkempt, and half-crazed. As a result, he's hardly recognizable as Danforth Stern. He preaches about the Wyrms, the aliens and shapeshifters. In television interviews, he's taking responsibility for multiple acts of civil disobedience and vandalism perpetrated by his cult.

His followers have appeared on the national news repeatedly, ranting about Father Worm. When the Board of Directors connects the dots, they will want their ex-colleague terminated immediately. The truths a crazed Stern may leak to the news would be minor when compared to what he may say to the Garou, and both could be incredibly damaging to Pentex.

Donald Gauntley

Former Director without Portfolio

Donald Gauntley's story is a strange one to hear, and not one often recounted in the offices of Pentex. Still, occasionally someone tells the tale of the Director who developed a conscience and ousted the Urge Wyrms of Despair from his body. The act killed him, and that should have been the end of that.

Gauntley didn't stay dead for long. His corpse became a vessel for something else. Common belief among

the Directors was that Despair must have started using Gauntley's form as a host rather than finding a new flesh-puppet. Something was controlling Gauntley's dead body, and it certainly seemed to be working in service of the Wyrms.

After several years, the Board concluded that while Gauntley—or whatever possessed his body—was just as malignant as before, it acted with significantly less subtlety than was necessary among their ranks. Not wanting to anger the powerful entity within his body, they couldn't just destroy him. Instead, they effectively banished him from the company, removing all his former aides and direct employees and all records with his name upon them. Gauntley disappeared from Pentex and the company lost track of their erstwhile colleague in the years following.

Secretly, Newberry, Kiker, Rushing, and Yamazaki decided that the pseudo-Gauntley should be able to do whatever misdeeds he chose, providing he did them outside of Pentex's immediate reach. Where the rest of the Board lost interest in their prior colleague, the four funneled money, resources and personnel his way to propagate whatever destructive aims he may have had.

Five years ago, Gauntley started a new company in the heart of Israel, which quickly spread to new countries and new markets. Supported by one of the most dynamic economies in the world, Hitkadmut Inc. acts more overtly than Pentex but with no less success. It produces firearms and weapons, and its factories are responsible for the subjugation and mistreatment of workers of all ages across the Middle East and Asia. Hitkadmut also supports various oppressive and violent regimes across the world.

Gauntley acts as the sole head of the corporation. After Kiker's reported death at the claws and teeth of the Howling Blitzkrieg Pack, Hitkadmut became more effective almost overnight, copying many of the business practices Kiker had used at Pentex. Rushing and Yamazaki, who organized Kiker's killing, are now questioning whether he faked his own death to avoid the real thing. While they don't have concrete evidence, they're sure that Kiker—or something like him—has somehow surfaced at this new company.

Rushing needs to know if Kiker survived. If so, someone needs to put him down before he can spill Rushing's secrets to Gauntley's organization. Yamazaki by contrast believes that if Kiker and Gauntley serve the Wyrms' interests, they can do whatever they like with the Middle East. Adrian Newberry hasn't yet said anything. He has Kiker's head in his cabinet, and the Wyrms has told him it is genuine. He's yet to mention this to the rest of the Board, or to speak up about any information leaks to Hitkadmut.

The Election

Pentex is many things, but it is not stupid. New blood and new ideas help the corporation thrive. Benjamin Rushing's ascendancy to Executive Director didn't stop there; he restructured the Board of Directors along with Peter Culliford. Even though it was a joint change, Rushing still stacked the deck in his favor. Aware that he can't force the Board to just give him more influence, Culliford believed that he could shake Rushing's power base by opening the Board to new blood.

At the start of 2014, Peter Culliford moved that the Board open up three new seats for Subdivision Directors. Enough of the other Directors agreed that they set about finding suitable nominees and preparing for the election. Rushing was well aware that Culliford was trying to shore up his power base, but didn't want to play his hand too early.

Well aware of the last election, when rampaging werewolves murdered several Board members and Enzo Giovanni ascended to Subdivision Director of Finance in a storm of corruption, Kathryn Mollett suggested a different kind of election. This would use an online voting system, where shareholders could participate without gathering in one place and making themselves easy targets. That didn't stop all of the nominees (bar one) using every dirty trick in the book. Early in the campaign, the links between Mike Dragon's-Wrath and fellow nominee Ash Pyralis lead to worries that the two Black Spiral Dancers would try to manipulate the Board for their own gain. The other nominees launched a poisonous PR campaign — both literally and figuratively — that forced Ash to withdraw. Darrien Terrell stepped up to replace her, sponsored by Harold Zettler, but his entry late in the campaign made him an easy target for the other nominees.

One nominee took a different tack. Rather than revealing himself early in the campaign and answering the shareholders' questions, he remained shrouded in mystery. That way, they could vote for him as a "none of the above" candidate, or project their hopes on to him. Only late in the game did he even reveal his name: Frédéric Pochard. This tactic proved successful, as he took significantly more votes than the other new Directors combined.

The election took place in June, and by September 2014, three new Board members took their places. Ian Robertson was installed as Director of Process and Integration with Franklin Rubin's support. Mike Dragon's-Wrath took his seat as Director of Pentex Security, having ousted Persephone Tar-Anis. Frédéric Pochard took a seat as Director without Portfolio. While still ranking on the Board with the Subdivision Directors, his position makes him a loose cannon.

The New Directors

The three winners of the election to the Board of Directors now each have their hand in directing the future of Pentex itself.

Frédéric Pochard

Subdivision Director without Portfolio

Elected in a landslide despite not campaigning, Frédéric Pochard is an enigma. He looks different at each Board meeting. Initially he would show up with a different hair color or a sudden change in muscle mass. Once, he arrived in a woman's body. Nobody knows if he's going through some radical body-alteration before each meeting, if he is a psychic taking over the bodies of random people to preserve his true identity, or if "he" is actually a group of people who work together to manipulate the Board to their own ends.

Whatever the case, Frédéric has many of the same mannerisms when he appears, as well as an accent that is mostly French, with some English and German mixed in. He naturally sounds cultured and worldly, but not foreign enough to spook investors in the American heartlands.

Before the election campaign, Frédéric was a trouble-shooter — employed by Pentex, and deployed to subsidiaries and flashpoints around the globe. He took on covert operations against rival companies and werewolf packs alike, and worked damage control operations to minimize the loss of company assets. He used a wide range



of personal assets on these jobs — assets that Pentex would desperately like to get their hands on. As with his meetings with the Board, no two groups he's worked with ever report him looking the same.

He rose to prominence by claiming responsibility for various useful coincidences that nobody in Pentex had ordered — a rival company's factory burning down, the key lawyer obstructing an oil pipeline dying in a car crash. Whether he was actually responsible or just taking the credit for things he had no hand in remains to be seen, but it was enough to get his name recognized. Nobody knows who sponsored his nomination for the election — each Board member thinks it was someone else, and they distrust one another enough that they can't be certain. Certainly plenty of shareholders had heard of Frédéric Pochard, even if they only knew of him by reputation. They thought they knew what he had done, and that was enough to elect him.

Without a formal position in the Pentex hierarchy, the other members of the Board of Directors agreed that Frédéric should take the position of Subdivision Director without Portfolio. That way, he can focus on his work and on the Board without having to worry about formal structures. They also hope that the less formal position will give them a chance to evaluate Frédéric's abilities. Some believe that he has powerful psychic talents, while Kathryn Mollett and Franklin Rubin are certain that he is a powerful vampire. Harold Zettler suspects — and Ian Robertson knows — that Frédéric is a mage of some sort, but they don't know much more than that. Each Director is certain of Frédéric's devotion to the Wyrms in soul and in deed, but he worries them. Meanwhile, he hasn't stopped yet. He's already planning to oust Adrian Newberry as Director of Operations, and become the next power behind the throne.

Ian Robertson

Subdivision Director, Process and Integration (PID)

Ian Robertson is the founder and current CEO of The Money Magus, a multimedia financial services firm that's expanding into the wider software development field. Starting out as a simple investment newsletter, Roberson has overseen the transformation of the company into a wide-ranging social media and financial services website.

Robertson is also a Syndicate mage of a younger vintage than his fellow nominee Dr. Chism, and wants to apply his expertise in disruptive business models to Pentex as a whole — as a power-play against the SPD mages still embedded in the corporation. Having inherited Pentex stock from a distant relative, along with journals and a Cabinet of Curiosities, he wanted to gather a controlling interest in a number of subsidiaries, then gut them and sell off what remained. The Board of Directors had other ideas.



Attacked in the media and in person, he retreated to the Arizona desert. Studying the journals, he read descriptions of malign powers that matched up with what Pentex used against him. He also discovered individuals and groups that hunted these powers. Though the information is almost a century out of date, it was enough to connect him with Weaver-spirits, creatures from the Deep Umbra, and Garou monkeywrenchers. He used their influence to manipulate Pentex from without — twisting the markets against them and assassinating key personnel. They may be bigger than he thought, but he's willing to go down fighting.

What he didn't expect was a direct contact from Franklin Rubin. Director Rubin understood Robertson's promise, and wanted him inside the tent, pissing out. If Rubin could examine the Cabinet of Curiosities, he would sponsor Robertson for election to the Board of Directors. After consulting with his various backers, Robertson reluctantly agreed. He distanced himself from the Syndicate, knowing full well the deals he's been forced to make as a member of the Board of Directors would have them looking for his head.

Having secured the position of Director of Process and Integration, he works with individual departments and subsidiaries to make them work smarter. Reports that the workers have changed, becoming obsessed with the new business paradigm. He's already managed to make

major savings, which has mollified the rest of the Board against his caustic attitude. Enthusiastic to the point of mania, he refuses to accept that old-fashioned business practices have worth in the days of disruptive innovation. Other board members take his outright refusal to wear anything more formal than jeans and polo shirts as a direct challenge to their authority, but he's proved too successful to move against — so far.

Mike Dragons-Wrath

Subdivision Director, Pentex Security (SEC)

While many of the other nominees got their position through back-room deals or improving Pentex's efforts to defile the world, Mike Dragon's-Wrath doesn't care for subtlety. He got his Board seat the old-fashioned way: by killing anyone who gets in his way.

His pack, including fellow nominee Ash Pyralis, had worked with Pentex first as arms dealers, then as independent contractors when even a number of First Teams would have failed. After racking up a number of successes around the world, including more than one successful clash with the Sept of the Green in New York, he has come to the attention of both Benjamin Rushing and Peter Culliford, while Ash had come to the attention of Harold Zettler for her bizarre and disturbing premonitions. With the Nameless Tower building up in New York City and Zhyzhak's arrival, Mike knew that his pack needed all the help it could get, and Pentex was the obvious tool for the job.

His first obstacle was becoming an employee. His pack fabricated evidence that the current Chief of Pentex Security, Persephone Tar-Anis, had used First Teams for her personal vendettas — including assassination attempts against at least two other Board members. Mike then slaughtered her in an orgy of violence that left no recognizable body parts. Though she was Zettler's childe, Ash managed to sway the Director to her side. He replaced Persephone with Mike, and installed Ash as his immediate deputy. Impressed with their apparent loyalty — as well as their willingness to murder who ever he asked — lead Zettler to nominate both Mike and Ash for the board.

Early in the campaign, Ash fell victim to a surprise attack. Unhappy with the idea that two Black Spiral Dancers from the same pack might get sets on the Board, unknown nominees launched attacks against her in the media and infected her with a strange poison that crippled her despite her Garou physiology. Mike, however, powered through. His direct style was a refreshing counter to the business bullshit of other nominees, and he quickly gained first supporters, and then a seat on the Board of Directors.



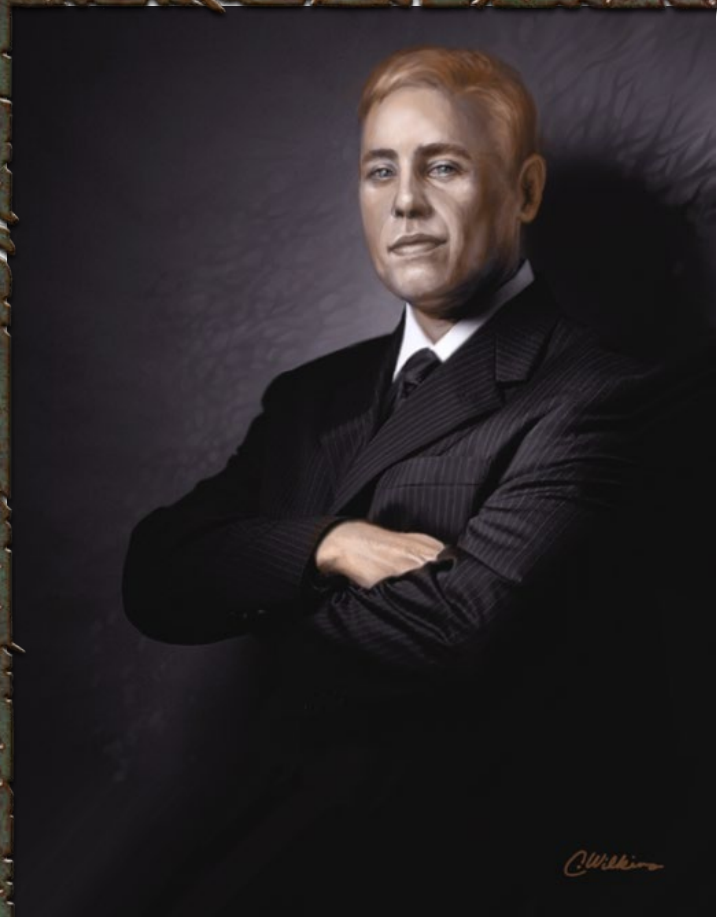
Mike is suspicious of both of his fellow new Directors, and doesn't care who knows it. While he's happy to seem loyal to Zettler, Culliford, and Rushing, he has no time for Chase Lamont or and thinks Francesco is a pathetic waste of a Black Spiral Dancer. He is willing to dress in a suit and play the corporate game for as long as it takes, in between visiting the front lines with his pack, building up goodwill. In the long run, he wants to kill the other Directors and install his packmates in their stead — with him as alpha.

The Losers

Not every candidate for election was so lucky, however. The other candidates have not yet met a fatal end, but many shareholders believe it's only a matter of time.

Sir Frederick Appleton

A Pentex shareholder and a senior civil servant in the British government, Sir Frederick has smoothed Pentex's integration on the international stage. As one of the architects of Magadon's long term joint research and development deal in the UK, as well as securing drilling rights for Endron in the Timor Gap. He received his title for his work in helping the homeless and victims of domestic violence, setting up charitable foundations and scholarships so they can better themselves.



All of his work is a cover. Sir Frederick's meteoric rise through the treasury has nothing to do with charity and everything to do with his ruthless business instincts. He makes friends and builds good PR as weapons against people who would discover the truth: he is one of the Yeren, a product of Project Lycaon. While he has not ascended to the Board, he was able to pull enough strings to take over Project Lycaon, creating and directing the Mockeries for his own ends — and keeping himself out of the firing line.

Dr. Bentley Chism

As the Director of Public Health at Iridium Medical, Dr. Bentley Chism is a leading expert in public health policy and economics, having published books including *A Scalpel in the Back: The Coming Worldwide Health Disaster* and *Capitalism: The Savior of American Health*. Iridium itself is a public health consultancy wholly-owned by Magadon Pharmaceuticals via a number of back-channels; as such, Dr. Chism is instrumental in forcing Magadon products into the American healthcare system via the US Government and the CDC.

Dr. Chism isn't just an influential figure in the medical-industrial complex. His power and influence comes from being a Syndicate mage. When the Special Project Division was cut off, he remained embedded within Pentex, trying to use the megacorporation's corruption to his own ends. Ascending to the Board would



have given him more influence, but his failure in the election has left him reeling.

Rather than attempting another coup, he has decided to spread the Wyrms' corruption to the Syndicate. Having Ian Robertson as a Board member has allayed the Convention's fears, and they welcomed Dr. Chism back into the fold — but have him under very close scrutiny.

Jimmy Farrington

Jimmy Farrington founded Shade, Inc. as a private intelligence company in 2002. By 2007, it was one of the top five in the US. In 2010, he sold the company to Pentex, giving the Wyrms' corporation a subsidiary of spies and intelligence analysts. Since then, he's personally assisted Directors Chase Lamont and Andre Baptiste, and was instrumental in Lamont gaining control of Acquisitions.

Jimmy Farrington died in 2001. His body and memories are now the property of the demon Zaphikel. The demon's first meeting with the Board of Directors introduced him to the majesty of the Defiler Wyrms, and since that time he has tried to gain its favor. The only member of the Board to know that Farrington is more than he seems is Peter Culliford. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to fix the election in Farrington's favor.

Culliford has another reason for keeping Farrington around — the demon has offered him a pact, providing



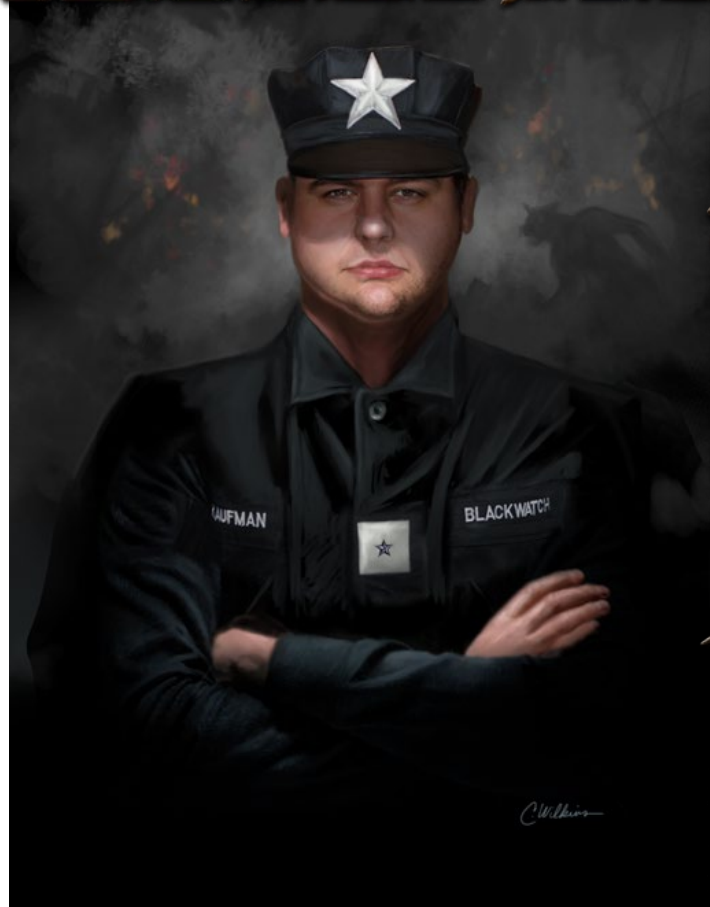
the immortality that the Wyrms stripped from him. As Culliford's executive adviser, Farrington has the Executive Vice President as a shield against any consequences of his actions.

David Kaufman

Not every Pentex shareholder hears the call of the Wyrms in his heart. David Kaufman is one of them — though he does hear other words of power. The CEO of the BlackWatch Group private military company, Kaufman bought into Pentex when he moved from government work into the corporate sector. While its security services aren't a patch on a First Team, BlackWatch mercenaries have no problems operating among normal humans, and have no paper trail connecting them to Pentex.

While Pentex hasn't bought BlackWatch outright, they do use squads as First Team backup or corporate security. That puts them exactly where Kaufman wants them. The voices tell him that Pentex is a hive of monsters, and he can see the truth in that. He wanted to burn them from the inside.

Despite losing the election, the Board believes BlackWatch is too valuable to liquidate Kaufman. They still use the PMC for "deniable operations" where even a First Team would provide too close a link — better that the Garou think that BlackWatch is an entirely



different enemy. At the same time, Kaufman is directing teams to attack Pentex groups in the field under the cover of friendly fire. His messengers told him of monsters, after all.

Darrien Terrell/Lord Aludian Thex

Aldis Financial is not a Pentex subsidiary. It's one of the many companies that abuts the megacorporation, investing heavily in Pentex with full knowledge of what it will use that money for. Darrien Terrell is the CEO and lawyer for Aldis, controlling the company's investments. When Ash Pyralis withdrew from the race, she turned to Harold Zettler to find a suitable replacement, and he nominated Darrien Terrell. Ash later claimed that Terrell failed in the election because he had no soul left to sell.

The truth isn't far off. Zettler didn't just want Terrell as a supporter. He knows that Darrien is the ghoul of Lord Aludian Thex, an ancient Lasombra antitribu. The Methuselah revealed his position to Zettler, and the two conspired to make him Chief of Inter-Divisional Logistics in the event that his election bid failed. His cold, methodical approach has made him very effective at his new role. He works closely with Ian Robertson to keep divisional waste at a minimum. The first day, when he was alone at his desk, he uttered the words "all according to plan." With Terrell's new position, Aludian now has a powerful proxy in Pentex.



First Teams

Pentex controls. It devours. It can and does employ fomori who come across its path, and the constant spiritual degradation of its human employees makes them attractive candidates for hungry Banes. But Pentex wants more. It wants to serve the Wyrms and get rich doing so. It doesn't just want whatever it can find - it wants to create the strongest, fastest, and most controllable fomor possible. This is where the long, multi-segmented First Team recruitment, training and corruption program comes in.

Welcome to the elite.

Recruitment

Garou wonder how Pentex manages to find so many humans desperate enough to trade away their humanity for a Wym-riden spiral into corruption and death. Even in these end days, how can Pentex throw wave after wave at the Garou?

It's simple — they advertise, and they look out for talent.

The Front Door

Very few humans apply for a job that guarantees losing your soul to an alien spirit of hate and destruction, so Pentex uses its most familiar tools — money and lies.

Pentex subsidiaries advertise their benign-sounding positions, and armies of lawyers, accountants, administrators and other corporate drones all responded to 'position available' advertisements.

Pentex, via its subsidiaries, has a corporate army of recruiters and talent spotters always looking for fresh meat for the grinder. Every recruiter specializes in a different area, and few recruiters understand the truth of what the eager new employees are agreeing to. Fewer would really care if they did — the bonus for every recruit far outweighs their conscience.

Janice Maloney works in a recruitment office for Secure Employment Solutions, matching applicants' skills with the right kind of employment. Ms. Maloney knows within minutes when the right candidate walks through the door, and she ensures they get fast-tracked into the next 'security officer' training program.

Stephanie Batiste is well known in the professional football scouting circles. While other talent scouts look for the next big thing, Stephanie looks for the next big injury; other scouts pass tips to her because she's no threat to their interests. Stephanie walks in with the checkbook, offering a signing bonus and a new goal to kids with crushed dreams.

Colonel Jack Bowman keeps his finger on the pulse of every branch of service and has a generous expense account. His friends think of him when a soldier doesn't quite meet the standards for promotion or washes out of special forces training. Jack's there to help manage them into the first stage of a glorious new civilian life.

Bob Pullman volunteers in a soup van that feeds the city's homeless. He knows the desperate street people and they recognize him as someone they can trust. He offers a second chance and the promise of something more than they've ever experienced before.

Internal Transfers

Pentex monitors employees across hundreds of subsidiaries daily. Every employee experiences some level of Wym-inspired degradation, from soul-numbing bureaucracy to distilling Bane essence into the latest medical breakthrough. Pentex provides mandatory training packages to all its holdings, delivered by professional educators. These teams include recruiters who check for increasing discontent, aggression or inability to deal with personal issues — all key signs of Wym taint. They offer employees with the right signs higher-paying 'developmental opportunities'.

Every large corporate entity has its share of misfiled paperwork. All too frequently a manager signs the wrong document and some poor pump-jockey from the local Enron gas station is sent to First Team training. Usually

the first clue these unfortunates have of their fate is when they report for their new work assignment only to have an assault rifle thrust into their hands while a training instructor shouts orders at them. Few make it through basic training alive, let alone get to their first combat assignment.

Opportunity Knocks

As well as its overt recruitment strategy, Pentex employs another band of recruiters who understand the more specialized aspects of the company and the opposition it faces. These recruiters appear the same as their ignorant counterparts, and are employed by the same subsidiaries — only their knowledge and unlimited travel accounts differ.

Every day, they trawl internet newsfeeds and read hundreds of blogs and emails, looking for clues of strange activities and posting their own ads in newspapers and popular websites. Each recruiter has years of experience and networks of contacts who feed them information. Once they identify a likely location they take the first flight heading that way.

These recruiters are cautious. Their first priority is identifying ongoing or residual Garou activity. If they find werewolf infestation they note the locations for future follow-up and file a report up the chain. The location may not be suitable for recruitment opportunities — yet — but it may be prime testing ground for a newly minted First Team.

If the recruiter believes it safe enough she digs deeper. She is trained to recognize the tell-tale signs of Delerium and interviews victims to determine their recollection and ability to deal with facing such horror again. If she finds the right mix of damage and anger she sets to work convincing the mark of the opportunity Pentex brings for safety and revenge. These recruiters have broad authority to summon medical and trauma specialists, who grind down resistance with targeted counselling and generous distribution of Magadon pharmaceuticals.

The Back Door

Many supernatural beings secretly crave the security of a steady paycheck and the chance to pretend they belong. Pentex does not have an open door employment policy, but the corporation always considers powerful new employees. The decision whether to bring them in depends on the projected profit or loss.

Pentex has no monopoly on fomori — the number of Bane-possessed victims far exceeds Pentex's employee register. Pentex has no particular interest in total control, either — each wild fomor keeps the Garou's attention divided. The company does send recruiters if it hears of a particularly interesting specimen — an especially powerful

fomori or one with rare or unique powers.

Pentex will sometimes tap the prisons it owns as a source of combat fomori; mistreated, desperate inmates and thugish guards alike make the perfect environment for Banes to exploit. Recruiters watch for early signs of possession to arrange 'work-release programs' for the mutating prisoners. Many unpossessed prisoners volunteer for these opportunities, hoping to escape their concrete hell. Some prisoners have the right profile to be fast-tracked for possession or other experimentation — if they survive and display useful abilities Pentex will consider First Team training.

Peculiarly, some fomori find their way to Pentex laboratories and offices no matter how concealed or deniable the link to head office. The Banes powering these monsters seem to sense their own and guide their vessel 'home'. The reception these fomori receive depends on how much they've exposed Pentex's interests, and how expensive covering the mess will be. A remarkable number of these 'wild' fomori pass quickly through training and on to deployment. They haven't had the vetting or brainwashing that higher-ups prefer in making a desirable First Team trooper, but they do understand carnage and tearing into the enemy. Most receive only cursory training before deployment to a conflict zone with an incredibly low survival rate. Trained, reliable First Team fomori are a considerable investment of time and money. If someone else wants to volunteer to catch a bullet or fall on Garou claws while the real First Teams pursue mission objectives, Pentex obliges.

Kinfolk are their own, special category, and recruiters proceed with additional caution. They assess suitability for recruitment — Kinfolk of the Gaian tribes don't often display the hatred and resentment of their wider families to be worthy recruits. Snatch-teams kidnap unsuitable Kinfolk and pass them to Black Spiral Dancers, brainwash them, or kill them depending on circumstance. Pentex particularly values Kinfolk who don't know of their nature. Recruiters offer exorbitant contracts to bring them into the corporation's clutches, but if they resist several waves of ever more persuasive negotiators, the company treats them as it would Gaia-affiliated kin.

Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk are logged in corporate records and left alone. Building additional leverage and control over the corrupted werewolves is a good corporate failsafe — it hopes it never needs the insurance but will threaten the tribe with extinction should they ever turn on the corporation.

Training

Most recruits don't know they've been employed to fight werewolves. Some Kinfolk or other supernaturally-touched individuals know the truth, but everyone else believes they've taken a well-paid private security job with

a generous benefits package. Most don't even know they work for Pentex, instead believing their employer to be one of a range of security contractors, VIP bodyguard services, or private military corporations owned by the multinational.

Basic

Few recruits head straight into what would be expected from elite special forces training. Internal transfers and some external hires fast-track into the program, but everyone else heads to basic security training to learn the skills needed for corporate security in any Pentex subsidiary office.

The first month consists of corporate structure and propaganda, administrative requirements and basic security. The new employees also undergo extensive indoctrination sessions and encounter scenarios designed to engender team bonding and a strong reliance on the corporation. Instructors monitor the recruits for suitability for advanced training and watch out for any developing unprofessional friendships. The trainers keep the recruits from becoming too friendly, planting doubts and mistrust as needed, or relocating people to other training facilities. Instructors usually only break groups if the camaraderie conflicts with corporate priorities. Pentex wants shock troops willing to die for each other, but it needs people who will sacrifice each other for the company.

The second month covers the physical aspects of corporate security work including light firearms and baton training, and restraint techniques. The recruits learn how to monitor crowds and what behaviors to watch for, how to work with a team and protect corporate interests. This basic training delivers excellent corporate security officers for Pentex's many outlets and customers, but only those recruits with the necessary qualities progress to have a chance at First Team status.

Intermediate

Recruits with the requisite psychological and moral flexibility move on to the next level of training. Instructors sort the candidates and ship them to other training facilities. Breaking up strong groups at this stage increases the recruits' reliance on their corporate masters and inures them to losing people.

This is where true First Team training begins. Recruits learn to use specialized equipment and receive classes on the stranger opponents they will face. The trainees work through difficult physical and mental challenges, while taking a cocktail of pharmaceutical supplements to make them stronger and more resilient, and to think and act faster. Every supplement is Wyrms-tainted and addictive.

Enticers (p. 130) deliver lectures on the company's goals and the need for elite First Teams to defend Pentex from its foes. Under this influence the recruits train harder

IN A PERFECT WORLD

This package is how everything should progress. Reality is often different. The techniques are imperfect and the trainers and psychologists are only human.

Pentex makes mistakes, but it rarely admits to them. The trainers know better than to question the recruits they receive and have simple methods to deal with these mistakes. Recruits with some suitability to First Team work join a class as normal; if necessary they receive additional drugs to keep them calm and compliant.

Those who are obviously unsuitable from the start, or who don't respond well to the extra attention and pharmaceuticals, are fast-tracked through the program. They receive just enough training to know which end of the rifle to point at the enemy before they graduate and deploy to the worst hell-holes as soon as possible.

The process benefits everyone — except the poor sap with zero life expectancy. First Team training staff successfully marche out another graduate, mission controllers have new meat-shields to distract the opposition, and Pentex never has to admit to a mistake. Everybody wins.

and consume more to reach their potential and make the company proud. The Enticers introduce the fomori concept as an evolutionary miracle, a level of dedication beyond all but the best Pentex employees. The Enticers speak dismissively of the possibility of side effects but bookend these with charismatic presentations on the advantages and desirability of becoming a fomori. Few recruits complete this aspect of the program without developing a burning desire to excel, improve and make Pentex proud.

From this point in the program the failure rate is less than one percent — a fact of great pride for Magadon Pharmaceuticals and First Team management. The most common failures are if a trainee is somehow immune to the final stages of indoctrination, or has a negative reaction to the drugs. Pentex still makes use of these failures. Medical washouts go to Magadon laboratories for research and analysis; free-thinkers are arrested by a fully-armed First Team in front of their fellow recruits. Shortly thereafter another Enticer solemnly delivers details of some concocted treachery by the failed recruit. Pentex

guides the recruits to decide an appropriate punishment for the traitor. The sentence is inevitably execution and the united trainees carry out the murder, further bonding them to one another and to the corporation.

Advanced

The recruits are physically, mentally and spiritually ready to enter the final stages of training. Advanced training is possibly the most important section, where Pentex decides who endures fomorization and who stays human.

The penultimate challenge for the recruits is to face down a werewolf. Trainers use captured Garou for this experience. Corporate indoctrination paints the Black Spiral Dancers as company allies — exposing new First Team members to Delerium from their allies could have disastrous consequences in the field.

Pentex would prefer to blood recruits by killing the werewolf — ideally as slowly and painfully as possible — but the company can't doesn't have enough captives to dispose of that easily. Instead, the recruits usually settle for wounding and crippling the beast with whatever weapons and equipment they prefer, stopping the torture just short of killing the Garou. The recruits then discuss what they learned under guidance by instructors while the werewolf is dragged back to its cage to heal and wait for the next round of experiments, or the next wave of recruits.

The final stage of 'training' — before everyone graduates one way or another — is possession. The constant psychological and sociological tests identify which trainees are most likely to survive Bane possession. More importantly, the test results predict the recruits' likelihood to thrive in ways that result in a manageable fomor. Pentex has plenty of experience with powerful fomori that can destroy and defile without restraint, but the company wants servants who respond to commands and make good corporate choices in the field. Pentex has invested vast sums of money to train the recruits and will use mindless drones or rampaging berserkers, but these are never as profitable as dependable First Team members.

Despite decades of research, pharmaceutical assistance and the best corruption experts money can buy, Bane possession is still as much art as science. The constant exposure to spiritually-degrading drugs swings the odds in Pentex's favor but results are never guaranteed. The Human Resources Department generates cost/benefit spreadsheets with the required number of fomori from each training group and the First Team trainers organize the trainees in predicted order of success. The trainers expose them to possession until they fulfil HR's 'order'. The trainers usually add a couple extra if they can, to insure against any pre-graduation fatalities.

Possession takes place in specially-prepared rooms that resemble a cross between a dentist's surgery and a

dark altar. Only the most spiritually-dead people — like the recruits — miss the room's aura of dread and despair. Dim lights create ominous shadows in the room's corners. Individuals making the mistake of staring too long into these pools of darkness get the feeling something is looking back at them.

Technicians buckle the recruit into the chair and connect them to a variety of monitors. They insert catheters into the victim's arms and neck and attach lines to remote dispensers filled with faintly glowing, proprietary blends of Magadon's cutting-edge chemicals, designed to reduce resistance. The technicians anoint the recruit's skin with a mix of ground fomor bone, blood and toxic waste. Finally, the recruit drinks a foul tasting concoction and the personnel leave the room to monitor through a one-way mirror.

Banes are rarely cooperative and the room is warded against escape. The foul drink binds a slumbering spirit that wakes within the host, usually angry and hungry. It knows its purpose and has agreed to the binding for the chance to permanently possess a human — even so, Banes are selfish, treacherous things and Pentex knows they can't be trusted to keep their word. The Bane senses the wards that remind it of its obligations. If the Bane wants to leave, it needs to take the host offered to it.

Bane possession rarely takes more than a few minutes but Pentex standard procedure ensures the recruit remains in the room at least an hour. The technicians know the signs of success and prepare to release the new fomori. One of the dispensers holds powerful tranquilizers and technicians know from experience to ensure the new creation is well and truly unconscious before releasing it.

Deployment

When the new fomor awakes, it finds itself grouped with other fledgling fomori and supervised by Pentex's strongest and most iron-willed instructors — usually other fomori or supernatural creatures. These new fomori aren't mission-ready until they've had the chance to explore their new powers, test their limits and become familiar with their new state.

They don't have a lot of time; Pentex always has more missions than First Teams. The company would prefer to send its new shock troops straight into the field but cost-benefit projections show that an adjustment period saves Pentex billions of dollars each year, and money always talks.

New fomori receive a lot of care and attention from their instructors and peers. No matter how much mental and chemical preparation the recruit had, the conversion from human to fomor is always a massive psychological trauma. The sympathy is almost certainly fake, but it is

exactly what is required to cement the fragile fomori's loyalty to Pentex and increase their reliance on the company.

Unfomorized graduates don't receive the grace period. They march out after a five-minute ceremony where some Pentex middle manager speaks about their importance to the company. They collect their basic kit and a letter telling them where and when to report for their first deployment. During quiet periods the lucky graduates may get a day or two of rest and recreation before deployment, but First Team commanders joke that it's never quiet time.

Pentex assigns First Teams across the world — wherever it has financial interests, develops new projects, or creates some environmental disaster to keep Garou distracted. Most major subsidiaries and facilities have a permanent First Team presence, with additional backup if Pentex believes the subsidiary is under threat, or if they need to oust the facility's management. Either way, subsidiaries view First Teams as a double-edged sword. They offer the best security Pentex can provide, but they're a constant reminder of the company's ruthless agenda and willingness to apply extreme force to the business environment.

The First Teams

Even the most thorough Pentex brainwashing can't remove the very human instinct to prefer the company of similar people. Human and fomori troops would prefer to mix with their own — the humans feel an unconscious repulsion from the 'mutants', while the fomori know the 'squishies' are forever ignorant of the fomor experience.

Pentex doesn't care about these preferences. It builds First Teams based on statistical data, mission requirements and available resources. Most First Teams include both humans and fomori. Exceptions exist — VIP protection details that can't be exposed as supernatural may be entirely human, while brutal heavy assaults against the most fortified enemy may call for only the toughest fomori.

Troops shift between teams and can be reassigned with little notice, especially in high casualty areas. Despite this, most First Teams have a semi-permanent roster and a sense of camaraderie develops between teammates, especially after saving each other a few times. Experienced Teams with a good success record may have consistent membership — barring casualties — but no Team should be complacent. Upper management will occasionally tear teams apart just for the small satisfaction of inflicting misery on others.

Every First Team has a corporate designation and purpose according to organizational charts. Most teams go wherever Pentex sends them and follow whatever orders they're given. General purpose First Teams fulfill a variety of roles including direct combat, sabotage,

or VIP protection. Most troops never progress beyond generalist duties, but those who show ability in specific areas may be chosen for additional training to join one of Pentex's more specialized First Teams.

Specialist Teams

Assault Teams inflict the heaviest damage on the enemy by bringing overwhelming firepower — super-



BLACK SPIRAL DANCERS

When Black Spiral Dancers want to lead a First Team — and Spirals never accept anything except alpha position — Pentex acquiesces. The werewolves are often stronger and faster than an Assault Team fomor.

The situation is far from ideal for the company. Pentex prefers using Spirals for missions requiring elite specialists, and to keep them separated from First Teams as much as possible. First Teams believe Black Spiral Dancers are the pinnacle of the Wyrms' troops — proof that not all werewolves deny the truth of the world. Unfortunately, Black Spirals are usually somewhat less awe-inspiring in reality. Their instability and capriciousness is hard to predict and difficult to control.

Black Spiral Dancers view First Teams as cannon fodder for whatever goal they've set. When the werewolves ask for a First Team it's because they need expendable resources to protect the pack. Pentex finds it almost impossible to guess how much the werewolf-enhanced mission will cost the company, but gives the Dancers what they need, quietly closing the personnel files of the unlucky First Team and preparing to relocate troops to fill the expected vacancies.

In doing so, Pentex once again invests in the future, strengthening the werewolves' dependency on the company and shifting the balance of power further in Pentex's favor.

In the unlikely event that any members of the First Team survive, they're often damaged enough to only be fit to take on an instructor's role — or a padded cell. Those few who remain both physically capable and sane after backing up a Black Spiral Dancer are in high demand as elite solidiers of the Wyrms.



natural or mundane — to bear on the enemy. Fomori comprise the bulk of Assault Teams; few humans can survive the collateral damage of the assaults, and most don't have the required psychotic mindset to inflict the levels of wanton carnage expected from these teams. Those few who do are rightly regarded as exceptional even by their fomor teammates.

Ranger Teams specialize in moving unseen and inflicting devastating surprise attacks on the enemy. They scout areas to map enemy locations and strengths, explore corporate interests for takeover possibilities or disloyalty, and hunt and kill rogue Pentex employees — including escaped fomori.

Rangers train for infiltration and tracking, information-gathering, sabotage and assassination. They favor humans for their flexibility and ability to blend into hostile environments, but fomori with camouflage, persuasion or other subtle powers also suit ranger duties.

Retrieval Teams are sometimes confused with Rangers — the key difference is Retrievers bring things back alive. They train for stealth, infiltration, and quick and quiet murder the same as Rangers, but also include neutralizing and transport of almost any kind of cargo. To understand the best ways of isolating and incapacitating targets, Retrieval Teams study psychology, medicine and scientific skills as well as combat techniques.

Other First Teams treat Retrievers with disdain, making them more insular and self-reliant than other teams. Retrievers nurture this as they could be called on to hunt and capture their fellow troops at any time, to almost certainly face painful interrogation and death. The focus on cerebral skills means humans are often better suited to Retrieval Teams than fomori.

The Retriever's isolation and psychological knowledge gives them the best chance to see through Pentex's lies and manipulations. Retrievers know the company watches them carefully — every team has a detailed file on another Retrieval Team from some other Pentex location, and a plan to capture that team should it ever go rogue. Every Retrieval Team knows that somewhere, Pentex has a team studying them and planning against their betrayal.

First Team Equipment

A First Team trooper's basic gear depends on their assignment and whether the soldier is human. Humans require more specialized Pentex equipment to maintain control when facing the Delirium.

Pentex expects its First Teams to be ready to respond at a moment's notice to repel Garou assaults. Every First Team member is armed at all times. Standard equipment for non-combat zones includes a Pentex-manufactured FT-13 heavy semi-automatic pistol with two magazines of

standard ammunition and a third filled with silver-tipped rounds, and a silver-edged combat knife. A Kevlar vest is optional, and often only taken by the 'squishy' humans. Humans also receive a pair of goggles with Involuntary Reaction (IR) filter lenses (p. 192).

In addition to this gear, First Teams working in designated combat zones carry the Pentex PX-66F assault rifle with six magazines of ammunition (three standard, three silver), a light pistol as a backup weapon, compass and radio. Human troops can request heavier armor, depending on their assignment.

Not everyone receives the same quality of gear. Newbies usually get standard-quality equipment until they prove themselves or piss someone off. Troops who annoy the quartermaster get the shit gear that's held together by duct-tape and spit and breaks when the trooper sneezes. If the quartermaster doesn't have reason to hate anyone, he'll often pick one at random. This poor sap is also the first to get any experimental equipment — with all the concomitant risks. First Teams with a good record of success get the newer gear and the latest models.

When First Teams go on a mission, they get whatever equipment the mission planners think they need, plus whatever else they can beg from the quartermaster. One or two 'special issue' items can mean the difference between mission success and a sucking chest wound, and most First Teams try to ingratiate themselves with their quartermaster.

GOING POSTAL

Company statistics show the cleanup cost of replacing corporate drones is less than replacing a facility destroyed by Garou. Even though Pentex knows the stress on every First Team trooper makes them liable to snap and murder their fellow employees, it wants them armed and ready to act.

As a concession, the company limits First Teams to light arms when in non-combat zones such as corporate offices, under the theory that collateral damage can be more easily contained.

Management also knows fomori stability is even more tenuous. When a fomor snaps, whatever mundane weapon she carries is unlikely to be her first weapon of choice concern. Still, an unarmed, acid-spewing fomor is easier to manage than one packing a balefire thrower.

Tactics

No matter the strength and resilience of First Teams, Garou often outclass them in battle. First Teams compensate for this disparity of supernatural potency with numbers, firepower and tactics.

Every trooper carries silver ammunition to use in case they encounter werewolf targets — when the mission planners expect strong Garou presence they issue many more silver-packed magazines. Pentex knows even the strongest Garou fall quickly to heavy curtains of silver. Superior numbers and firepower have the advantage of a high success rate, but they cost the company dearly in casualties and expensive ordnance. While they could launch Wyrms-tainted rockets into Garou strongholds and call in airstrikes on Caerns, that only works in combat zones and countries where the government forces are too far in Pentex's pocket.

For smaller conflicts requiring a veil of secrecy First Teams try to stick together and concentrate fire on individual targets, and use their own powers and equipment to force werewolves to separate from their packs and die one by one. The Garou have a natural instinct to work as a pack, but it's just instinct. First Teams have multiple drills each week on anti-Garou tactics, working on the same theories as counter-insurgency and guerrilla tactics. They know how to use their numbers to watch over all the angles, provide covering fire, lay traps, and press every tactical advantage.

In urban environments with plenty of witnesses, First Teams use the crowds to confuse and delay the werewolves. They use Wyrms-tainted aerosols to spray unwary civilians and turn them into beacons to attract the Garou. If the werewolves try to use Crinos form to force the humans to flee in panic, the team deploys FightBack gas grenades (p. 193) to change the crowd to an enraged mob.

First Teams who have the resources and time to plan prefer to distract werewolves. They establish kill-zones and sniper's nests and use their heavier fighters to harry the Garou into the kill-zones. Teams call in heavy support and use Banes and insane combat fomori as shock troops to drive the werewolves where the First Team waits to ambush them. If this doesn't work, the Teams try to enrage the Garou — preferably by killing one of the beasts so her pack is overcome with grief — and fall back through heavily secured and trapped kill-zones so when the frenzied and unwary werewolves chase through they receive a hail of bullets as welcome.

Every First Team knows of the Garou's tactical advantage from stepping sideways and using the Umbra. Teams carry markers, shoe-polish or other items to cover and

mar any reflective surfaces they find. This doesn't always prevent the Garou moving to or from the spirit world, but it does help control where they can use their power.

Ideally, the best Pentex operations occur when the Garou aren't there. When it can spare the resources, Pentex keeps Garou confused to the real target by flooding irrelevant areas with Wyrms-taint or sending Ranger teams to sabotage and destroy Garou-held territory before the primary mission starts. One particularly effective feint is to stage an attack on an identified Kinfolk community or Garou caern and retreat to a fortified position when the werewolves begin to mount a credible defense. Usually, the Garou follow the offending Team and fight against the well-defended position, while the true mission takes place in another nearby location. Even if the werewolves realise the ruse, their rushed response to protect the real target is disorganised and more vulnerable to the First Team's tactics.

Retirement

The First Team employment contract includes generous retirement provisions to support the former First Team member well into old age. Pentex can afford this largesse — no one has ever retired. Joining the First Teams is a life-long choice.

Most troops die young, killed by werewolf claws or enemy bullets. Fomori tend to expire less than two years after possession — they either burn out or repeated combat ensures their deaths. Fomori with more than two years of service are forces to be reckoned with. They find themselves given the most dangerous missions, with the reward for survival being something even more dangerous. A handful of fomori earn promotions, leading teams into battle. These are the first among First Teams, sent into suicidal engagements that they somehow survive time and again. Legends grow around them that are used to awe and inspire new generations of recruits.

If they survive years of Pentex throwing them into the worst hells, the corporation always wants to know how. The doomed trooper reports for duty at Magadon, NDL, or another subsidiary that dissects the new test subject for knowledge to use in creating future generations.

Some rare human veterans manage to survive long enough to move away from active service to become jaded trainers, mission planners, or commanding officers. From this pool the most ruthless sometimes successfully transition into Pentex senior management positions. Other corporate minions give these corrupted powerhouses the respect due their position but watch them even more carefully than their peers — their sanity is surely frayed beyond rational decision making.

Storytelling: Hope in Hopelessness

Pentex is such a monumental evil that it is all too easy to think it an invincible beast whose death grip on the heart of the world grows tighter every day. To some degree, this is true: Pentex grows stronger by the day, and it is too huge to topple easily. Humanity is blind to the sheer level of evil perpetrated in its name and in the Wyrms' shadow. Perhaps if humans became aware of the true nature of the fight for reality, they would rise up and help overthrow Pentex. The corporation might never fall otherwise.

Yet not all is lost. Pentex is not as monolithic as it seems from without. The forces of corruption are inherently chaotic, and this often pits them against one another. At times, this means internal conflict every bit as vicious as the struggles with their enemies. So many greedy and megalomaniacal personalities cannot coexist without friction, and all of them have different visions for how the corporation should approach the ultimate goal. This lack of true unity is one of the biggest factors inhibiting Pentex's complete dominance of the rotting human world. It also provides just enough chinks in the armor for the Garou to get a claw-hold and inflict some damage on Pentex in return. Indeed, the Garou are the other reason that Pentex cannot solidify its power base, and though their fight is desperate indeed, cornered animals are at their most dangerous.

Storytellers should strive to create a sense of losing the war while still being able to win battles. Any given victory might not be the one that brings down Pentex, but it could still save the lives of a village, a town, a whole nation or even just one person important to the pack. They can drive away Pentex forces from a caern, liberating it and the ancient secrets it holds. If local authorities have sold their allegiance to a subsidiary and refuse to act upon clear evidence, perhaps the pack can provide irrefutable evidence to news outlets. The weight of public outrage then closes down the factory that is pumping the local river full of toxins. Highlight these good, positive impacts, then contrast them with Pentex plots that the pack didn't know about, or didn't have time to stop.

Similarly, killing the head of a company won't bring down the company, but it is a significant setback. Entities like Pentex thrive on the vision and force of personality of its leaders. Destroying one of these important people strikes a sore blow to the whole organization. In time, they will recover, but in the meantime, it disrupts the subsidiary's activities. While the giant reels, the Garou can strike again, attempting to keep their enemy off-

balance and shaken. Despite their past mistakes and the Apocalypse inexorably drawing closer, the Garou Nation is not about to roll over and die.

Neither are the other Changing Breeds, for that matter. Most of the Garou have little contact with the Fera, and most of *that* is outright bloodshed. However, they are not alone in their war. Other Changing Breeds still exist and they have not forsaken their purpose. Especially in other parts of the world without a Garou presence, the Fera wage ferocious battles against Pentex and other minions of the Wyrms. In the jungles of South America, Bastet and Mokolé oppose excessive deforestation and other environmental destruction. In and beneath the cities of America and the rest of the world, the Ratkin fight subterranean minions of the Wyrms, from Banes and beastly fomori to vampires and stranger things. The Corax still watch and carry vital information to those who need it, aiding the fight with the one form of power upon which Pentex can never hold a monopoly: knowledge. The Hydra has other enemies, such as groups of mages who contest Pentex in the spheres of human influence. Their power is great and they know some of the truth hidden behind Pentex's many smokescreens — that the corporation is a front for some powerful force of corruption and far more pervasive than the Sleepers realize. Though they fight their own war for the nature of reality, often the goals of these mages, and even those of their greatest enemy, are at odds with the goals those of Pentex. Despite maintaining a front of inevitability, enemies surround Pentex on all sides. Even with its vast power, the corporation cannot stand against the enemies within and without. There is room for heroic deeds to slow down and even stop Pentex operations.

Perhaps even a faint glimmer of hope remains for dismantling Pentex entirely. With its stranglehold on humanity thus released, the war can continue on more even terms. Even if not, players have plenty of opportunities for their characters to make a big difference

CULTS VS. CULTS

In the modern world, cults are religious movements — often new — with beliefs that broader society considers abnormal or bizarre. Wyrms' cults are a small fraction of modern religious cults, each worshiping some facet of the Wyrms. This section uses the word "cult" to refer to the latter, dangerous groups whose actions threaten everyone around them.

in the unfolding story of the Apocalypse. Storytellers should look for ways to highlight the brightness of such deeds in the darkening world, especially if the struggle is truly hopeless. After all, if the cause is hopeless but the characters fight to their last breath anyway, what does that say about them?

Heroes and villains are only as great as the challenges they face. Pentex is a great enemy, indeed. Tragic are the heroes that face this monstrous Hydra, but they are equally great, larger than life, and their stories are epic. For no matter how secure the holding, steadfast the conviction in the Wyrms, or monstrous the fomori, one thing is universally true among the clashing minds of Pentex.

Almost all of them feel that shiver down their spine when they hear the howl of Gaia's chosen.

Cults of the Wyrms

For as long as they have been able to imagine gods and otherworldly forces, humanity has worshiped these enigmatic entities. Cults spring up around such beliefs, sometimes growing into full-on religions, but most thrive

in obscurity. Charismatic leaders spin tales that ensnare the imagination of the gullible and the desperate. Such cultists willingly do anything for their cult and particularly its leader, from volunteering themselves or wives and daughters for ritualistic orgies to theft, vandalism, even murder. They take part in rituals, complete with robes and chants straight out of a New Age handbook, shutting down the parts of their minds that say, "This is ridiculous." Most of the time, these "cultists" are misguided fools deceived by a single leader.

Sometimes, however, they're on to something.

Some cults have glimpsed the dark forces at work behind the veil of reality. A few can even touch those forces, and are touched by them in return. This knowledge always comes at a price, but few of those desperate enough to *want* to believe ever find the cost too steep. Sometimes, mortal cultists draw the attention of a Bane, which eagerly preys upon their fears and beliefs to grow fat on human essence. There are many occult secrets in the World of Darkness, and some people are good at ferreting them out. Most of the time, this involves uncovering things best left undisturbed, but progress rarely



occurs in the safety of ignorance. Thus, various groups have given the same forces different names throughout history, revering the same powers without realizing it. Rarely, this means the forces of the Triat: forces of relentless chaos, unbreakable stasis, and the balance that should exist between the two. In a world on the brink of Apocalypse, even the blindest cultists cannot ignore the signs of struggle between these cosmic forces.

Mortal believers are beneath the notice of the Wyld, as it is too chaotic to employ ritualized groups, and the Weaver, which finds most humans too unpredictable for much use. The Wyrms, however, is always eager for new converts and views even the most pathetic human as one more weapon; one more asset denied its enemies. Humans are delightfully adept at causing others misery and do more damage to Gaia than most servants of the Wyrms could ever hope to inflict. It is entirely too easy for a minion of the Wyrms to snare those willing to sell their souls to the Devil with a small display of power or by forceful predation on weak minds. Some mortals become aware of the Wyrms and the looming Apocalypse, whether they call it by that name or another, and choose to throw in with the winning side. They might seek power, or fortune, or simply have a desire to tear down the world. These cults are quite dangerous because they willingly serve the Wyrms, and few monsters are as efficiently deadly as organized humans bent on destruction are.

Most cults have rites of indoctrination that range from the humiliating to the brutal. The worst of these, the Wyrms cults, often have terrible brainwashing rituals designed to break down the member's personality and rebuild him or her as someone much more suitable to the Wyrms' purposes. These are usually forceful affairs done over days or weeks of torture, sensory deprivation, and lengthy periods of forced observation. Sometimes a Bane or fomor or some other display of the Wyrms' power accomplishes the task quickly. These rites can be dark mirrors of Garou indoctrination, wherein members are beaten and threatened with visions of the enemy and a world where slaving werewolves tear down humanity and replace it with a wild kingdom, red in tooth and claw. Shown visions of their families torn apart by the fangs and claws of werewolves, given a choice to fight these fiends as agents of the universal force of change, by the time they realize that the Wyrms stands for the corruption and ultimate dissolution of all that is — if they ever *do* — it is too late. Once the Wyrms has its hooks so deep in a person, the only freedom is death... if one is lucky.

Not all such cults are the robes-and-chants types, far from it. Just as many groups appear normal on the surface but stink of the Wyrms beneath their skins. Many corporations form cults at the highest echelons, bizarre

rituals like passing around chalices of blood juxtaposed with board meetings behind closed doors. Others engage in darker acts, like excursions to foreign countries to indulge their most depraved appetites, from sexual predation to cannibalism. Such companies often design their buildings with the help of mad geniuses, with floor layouts and even furniture arrangements made to conform to the twisted geometrical symbols of the Wyrms. These geomantic forces are subtle, but enough to raise the hackles on any werewolf or mystic who enters such a place. They draw in the Wyrms' power and help contain negative energies, causing despair and anger, slowly eroding the spirit's defenses against the Wyrms. Eventually, even the low-level workers are just as mad with grief and desperation as the grinning reptiles they have for bosses.

Secret societies have long infested politics, from widespread "business" arrangements of bribes and favors to clandestine cults of the most influential families. Even the highest tiers of power in the United States government play host to bloodline rituals and more. Conspiracy theorists are especially fond of targeting the Presidential lineages, but they are closer to the mark than even they might imagine. Congressional representatives, Senators and other representatives take part in rites designed to ensure their positions of power as well as satisfy their bizarre urges. Town councilors and small ruling bodies across the world also form cults. Many of the most bizarre relics of law that remain in United States cities are the result of decades-old pacts designed to bring prosperity to councilmen and women, and allow Wyrms taint to find easier purchase among the populace. Such cults maintain extensive collections of occult lore. Most of it is so much bullshit, but some of it hits on arcane truths, even if couched in conflicting or confusing terms. The cultists honor their dark gods and spirits with gruesome rites that involve animal or even human sacrifice, painful sexual practices, and trials by balefire.

In the modern age, some of these cults incorporate technology, with a few radicals even basing their rites around spirits of cyber-corruption. So-called "cyber cults" demonstrate that the Wyrms' talons can reach even into the digital world. Nowhere is safe in the final days. Their weapons include viruses, targeted hacks, and machines plagued by technical issues that sap the user's patience more every day. Cyber cults often convene wholly online or via conference calls.

A facet of the corruption perhaps more evil than ancient and widespread conspiracies are those otherwise regular people who fall into the Wyrms' taint. Ordinary people can do evil things when driven by hunger and desperation. Some people would make a deal with unholy forces simply for a warm place to sleep and a hot meal. A full belly is powerful incentive, especially when one

hasn't eaten in three days and the task asked of them is seemingly innocuous. What's the harm in taking the pets from surrounding neighborhoods and delivering them to a certain address; a house that gives him the creeps in a way he doesn't understand, if in return she can pay her rent on time every month? The despair and sorrow she sows with his actions are easily justified: they're just pets. The kids will get over it, families move on, but I need to eat. Isn't one human life worth more than a hundred pets?

A man with nothing to lose: his life upended by financial disaster, cast out by friends and family, left with nowhere to go, eagerly listens to the shadowed stranger offering a respite. He pays no heed to the voices that whisper to him as he drifts off to sleep in his new house; when he hears the sounds of struggle in the basement, he does his best to ignore them. When the police come to investigate those missing persons cases, the voices tell him just what to say to ward off suspicion. Soon the man finds himself with a new job, a new girlfriend, a nice new car, and an easier time ignoring the things he knows are happening downstairs. They'd be happening anyway, he tells himself, but at least it's one less person suffering.

Most people in this situation do not participate in the strange rituals of the more fanatical cultists. Certainly, not all cults serve the Wyrms, at least not directly. Many claim to serve some dark power or another, but in the end, their actions benefit the Wyrms. Every human taking part in some idiotic ploy to cajole favors from some god of death or fortune, always for trivial gain, is another human blinded to the Apocalypse and turned away from Gaia. To the Wyrms, every mind corrupted from its path is a weapon wielded against its enemies.

Many supernatural beings share the night with Garou and the forces of the Wyrms. Some are allies to Gaian causes, like several groups of enigmatic mages, but their differences make working with them rare and difficult. Many more are harmful to Gaia, whether they realize that they are working with the forces of the Wyrms or not. Vampires often bear Wym taint, as their very existence is a perversion of the natural order of the very kind that the Wyrms embodies: dead things that yet walk and feed on the living. Some few are benevolent, at least as far as supernatural parasites can be, but the vast majority only exacerbate the slow decay of the human world. They are ancient enemies of the Garou, even if they know not why the werewolves hate them so fiercely. Some have long-standing alliances with lineages of Black Spiral Dancers and throw their lot in with the Wyrms, hoping to find allies able to see them through the vampiric apocalypse called Gehenna.

Other cabals of mages form cults of the Wyrms, though they give it different names. Still, it is a force of entropy

STORYTELLING TIPS:

The Cult of Despair gives the Storyteller a different brand of horror. The Vessel of Despair doesn't care about the Garou. She knows they exist, but they are typically beyond her duties. The Garou, on the other hand, should care about the Vessel. She grants a great deal of power to the Nameless Angel. She is also very difficult to find. Her appearance is ever-changing, and she operates in different locations with each cult. The aura of despair that hangs about the Vessel is the only traits possible among humankind the only trait setting her apart from the rest of humanity.

The Vessel may even attach herself to a Garou in the depths of Harano. Depression so pure would attract her attention and guidance. The poor soul would start to gather other Garou lost to Harano in a slow, painful attempt at redemption. As the Garou gather together, the Vessel oversees plans and preparations for a day of redemption, marked by some cosmic alignment. If the pack can't stop the Harano-stricken Garou, they will plunge themselves into a yawning abyss that will devour their bodies and souls. The power garnered might be enough to call the Nameless Angel to the physical world for the coming Apocalypse. Or, perhaps, if enough Garou commit suicide, an aspect of the Defiler Wym itself will manifest to ravage the world.

and dissolution that they serve, with their strange magical powers and elaborate rituals. The Garou have great difficulty opposing mage cultists, because they are very difficult to detect. Unlike vampires or some of the stranger denizens of the World of Darkness, mages rarely exhibit any perceptible physical changes. The Garou hunt them the hard way: by tracking the sale and usage of ritual components, monitoring certain segments of the human populace and lots of trial and error. Worse still, these types of cultists are usually prepared for interference and defend themselves with dangerous magic of their own.

Some sample cults of various stripes, and notes on a few other supernatural servants of the Wyrms, are below. This is not an exhaustive list; no mere tome can encompass the staggering variety of forms Wym cults can take, but this can give devious Storytellers an idea for the sorts of cults they can throw at their players.

Cult of Despair

No true name exists for the Cult of Despair. Instead, it is an umbrella term for a number of cults and fringe groups that have committed mass suicide. The Vessel of Despair is a woman whose name has been lost to history. During the Great Depression, she lost everything, and sought an end to her sorrow. She couldn't kill herself, and so she called on anyone listening to take her life for her. The Nameless Angel of Despair answered, and her life became its.

The Vessel exists as an extension of the Angel's power. Her presence steadily amplifies despair of those around her. She has but one recurring purpose: to get as many people as she can to commit suicide together.

She finds an otherwise charismatic man on the verge of depression and attaches herself to him emotionally. She grooms him, convincing him that he can end the pain and suffering of others lost like him. Together, they gather victims. Their victims always feel better at first for knowing they're not alone. Misery, however, sinks its teeth deeper into their hearts. Eventually, the leader comes up with a reason as to why everyone will need to join him in ritual suicide. By this time, members are so far lost in suffering that they readily accept their leader's genius. The group makes preparations, and the deed is done, often summoning the Nameless Angel temporarily to the physical world.

Afterwards, the Vessel of Despair obtains a new face, a new body, and a new name. She starts her task anew, searching for the soul who will attract enough followers to summon the Defiler Wyrn.

F.E.A.R. Itself

The Earth is alive, and She is suffering. Every day, She withers more, poisoned by the deluge of pollution we unleash upon Her. We are killing Her. Her death throes shake the world, as ice caps melt to form Her tears; fire boils up from the ground to show Her rage, tidal waves and earthquakes accompany Her pain-wracked convulsions. If we don't do something soon, Mother Earth will die and take us all with Her.

This is what the people of Free Earth Armed Resistance believe. Culled from the world's most extreme eco-terrorists, animal rights activists and conservationists, their members chant these words like a mantra: "She is dying, and it's our fault." The people of F.E.A.R. will not let Earth die without a fight. Many of them revere a personification of Earth they call "Gaia," and they are fanatical in their devotion to the cause. They speak of spirits who guide them and realms of beauty unspoiled by humanity. These spirits guide them on their holy missions to strike back against the enemies of Gaia.

Ironically, F.E.A.R.'s methods remove any of their potential credibility among a populace predisposed to dismissing their beliefs as nonsense. Most ironic of all is how correct the group is in its beliefs, but this is no accident. They have indeed seen spirits, and they have felt the pain of Gaia. They have experienced these things because of the cult's founder and leader, a mad genius Black Spiral Dancer named Simon Green-Tooth, whose diseased grin is somehow as infectious



as a charismatic movie star's. Green-Tooth gathered disparate extremist elements from among various conservationist causes under his banner, promising to show them the truth for which they had fought so hard. He delivered on these promises, calling forth Banes disguised as nature-spirits and modern day totems. The spirits showed the impressionable activists that which they *wanted* to believe, kindling an unquenchable religious zeal. Allowing them to feel Gaia's pain, fueled by the Banes themselves, fanned the flames of fanaticism into a roaring inferno.

Green-Tooth then began to lead his growing cult against the bastards responsible for Mother Earth's agony. He targeted Pentex and its subsidiaries, and even unrelated logging, mining and slaughterhouse operations. They took down facility after facility with explosives and gunfire, transported by vehicles every bit the polluters as those of the people F.E.A.R. hypocritically decried. To their credit, the damage they inflicted often crushed smaller operations entirely and left the corporations unable to continue the rape of Mother Earth. Even Pentex facilities fell before their terrorist attacks. Yet Green-Tooth was no traitor against the Wyrms. The beautiful genius of his plan allowed him to turn the very truth behind the impending Apocalypse against the forces of Gaia.

When F.E.A.R. bombs out those logging company facilities and slaughterhouses, their victims are workers on the bottom rung or unimportant managers. Many of these workers are innocent of malice, seeking only to perform what they feel is a necessary function, or at least feed their families. They have no idea their actions help weaken Gaia in Her time of greatest need. They remain blissfully unaware of the spiritual war for reality taking place under their very noses. Many would cease their course of action or even join the fight if they knew the stakes. Instead, their destruction impoverishes families, removes potential Gaian supporters, brings down the wrath of authorities, and spreads suffering and misery among their friends and families.

The result benefits only the Wyrms. F.E.A.R. perverts the Garou's cause into a tool of terror and destruction. Innocent people suffer. Humanity reflexively shuns the truth, spoken as it is on the lips of terrorists. Simon Green-Tooth sits back, smiles his sickly grin, and watches as a cycle of corruption maintains itself without any more need for a push. He is legendary among his fellows as the Black Spiral Dancer who turned Gaia's suffering into a weapon to further that suffering. Others try to follow his lead, but few meet with the level of success as old Green-Tooth.

F.E.A.R. is brutally effective in its methods and in its indoctrination. Members approach the disen-

STORYTELLING TIPS

With F.E.A.R., Storytellers can confront the pack with a dark reflection of its own actions. If the characters are prone to slaughtering human operations without a care for the innocent workers oblivious to the Apocalypse, F.E.A.R.'s methods strike a horrifying similarity. More thoughtful packs see in F.E.A.R. what rash action and Rage unbound by reason can do to the world. Even a heartless Red Talon must give pause when he sees that F.E.A.R.'s actions, eerily similar to his own, only strengthen the Wyrms.

F.E.A.R. makes a great antagonist because it represents the true horror of the Wyrms: the perversion of once noble causes. The cult fights for Gaia, but does so in all the wrong ways. Blinded by the truth, its crimes further push humanity away from the Garou cause. F.E.A.R., like its Black Spiral Dancer founder, shows that hubris and Rage can poison even the most devoted warriors and turn them into part of the problem, not the solution.

Storytellers can use F.E.A.R. as a change of pace for human antagonists. The cult is largely free of fomori and other monsters, but it is still dangerous. Its members know the truth about the Triat and employ that knowledge alongside explosives and modern weapons. If a F.E.A.R. cell operates within the pack's territory, it might oppose the same enemies the characters do, but in a way that causes more harm than good. The pack finds itself struggling to keep up with the zealots and perhaps others unfairly blame the pack for F.E.A.R.'s terrorist acts. The cult might have the blessing or even aid of local Red Talons, leading the pack into conflict with the tribe. What happens if the characters discover the F.E.A.R. operatives with their families, assuring their loved ones that they fight for the future? How does the pack stop people who think they are trying to save the world?

franchised and homeless, animal workers and "tree-huggers," filling their heads with visions of a suffering world. Oil spills, deforestation, clouds of smog covering cities, all while CEOs get rich and keep a boot on the neck of the poor, prey on those who cannot defend

themselves, like plants and animals. It doesn't take much to convince those looking for a cause, even to convince them that the Earth is alive but *dying* and needs their help. When enough kindred spirits gather, Green-Tooth and his ilk find it easy enough to win them over. A little spirit magic, perhaps a vision from a Bane totem, and it's a simple matter to prey upon their desire to belong. Convinced they're fighting for the greatest of causes, that only *they* can prevent the dissolution of the entire world, and that a great power watches over them, the fanatics lash out with ruthless devotion. They gladly martyr themselves for the cause and few feel any regret at killing any civilians who get caught in their crossfire. "We are all to blame," they say, and they are willing to sacrifice a few "innocents" in order to save the entire world.

By its nature, F.E.A.R. is a volatile cult and its attrition rate is very high, but it has no shortage of new recruits. Unlike other activist groups, even extreme ones, F.E.A.R. does not stage rallies and protests, though they do hunt for recruits among them. They feel as a group that the time for peaceful protests has long since passed, and now that Mother Earth is dying, it is time for action. While they prefer to create explosives and bomb key locations, they will gladly resort to armed raids on troublesome facilities. Sometimes, they are accompanied by Banes (usually without their knowledge), or otherwise blessed by their spirit guides for key missions. Some F.E.A.R. operatives, the ones who survive mission after mission by luck or rabid ferocity, become fomori. Their powers allow them to inflict even more damage in their raids, but most are subtle in their mutations. The taint they carry poisons others around them and leaves them vulnerable in turn to Bane possession.

Their desperation and depredation is every bit as bad as the corrupting influences they oppose. Their actions only strengthen the Wyrms. It is true what a great man once said, then — there is nothing to fear but F.E.A.R. itself.

Halimar Heights City Council

Halimar Heights is a small city — more of a town, really — named after the explorer who founded it in the late nineteenth century, James Halimar. A rustic mountain town overlooking a Rocky Mountain valley, Halimar makes for a scenic vacation destination. In fact, tourism is one of the town's biggest sources of income. People come for the idyllic charm, stunning vistas, and fresh air. Many never leave, moving their families or businesses to Halimar, a place where they can see themselves growing old and prosperous amid good people, good food, and good values.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Besides the difficulty in establishing a foothold in Halimar, Storytellers can introduce other complications. Perhaps, despite all odds, one of the councilmembers underwent the First Change. Now lost, alone and frightened, the councilmember sees not only her own torment and demise at the hands of the Banes and fellow cultists, but the end of a ruling lineage. Doing anything to cover up the truth, it's only a matter of time before someone or something uncovers the truth, whether by spirit magic or by the Rage within bubbling up to the surface. She may even become desperate enough to seek help from the pack, or escape the city. Either of these things might break the pact, forcing the Banes to awaken the Wyrms-beast sleeping within the mountain to descend upon Halimar like a natural disaster.

Perhaps those Black Spiral Dancers who inhabit the area maintain a powerful hive on the mountain, the loss of which would be a significant blow against the forces of the Wyrms. Destroying it is no simple matter, given how well defended it is, and whatever monster lies slumbering within. Such an attack might be the focus of an entire story unto itself, gathering forces and making headway against Halimar's city council and finally waging war upon the hive. After destroying that, perhaps cleansing Halimar of Wyrms-taint can begin.

Then again, given how happy and safe the people are day to day, some might say Halimar is better off this way....

Halimar's good image is thanks to the deliberate and careful cultivation of the city council, established early in Halimar's history. On the face of it, they seem like honest, hard-working council members, doing their best to make Halimar Heights better every day. They pass laws and regulations that prove welcoming to incoming businesses, keep a well-funded police force and education system, and the city is probably the cleanest in all of America. Summers are warm and verdant, winters short and mild. With a low crime rate, Halimar Heights is nearly the perfect place to raise a family.

The city council comprises five councilmembers and the mayor. Currently, they are Jayne Hardy, Thomas Bower, Bill Jenkins, Martine Matts, Frank Wilson, and Mayor Dina Strong. All are Halimar natives and all are descendants of the original families who founded the council. The ascension to their ancestors' same lofty positions is no coincidence. Long ago, the ruling families of Halimar Heights made a Faustian bargain to procure their own success and that of their city. The area was always one steeped in spiritualism, although the natives of the valley considered the mountain upon which Halimar sits to be the abode of malicious spirits, and dared not settle there. It turned out they were right.

The original council happened to believe the stories, and they actively sought out some of these spirits in order to make some kind of bargain. Ultimately, they found what they were looking for, the "pagan gods" of the mountain. The "gods" were Banes, caretakers of an ancient Wyrmbest slumbering within the mountain. The council had a proposition: help make the town prosperous and the council will pay proper respect, even help pacify the beast of the mountain. The Banes accepted, with an additional condition: the council must help keep away the ancient enemies of their new "gods," savage shapeshifters who would tear down every last brick of the city and bring about a return to the way of the savages. If not, then the Banes would awaken the beast to do so, at the cost of the lives of everyone in Halimar. The agreement was thus set, and the Banes gave several gifts to the council: knowledge of certain spirit rites to allow them to recognize and help drive away the enemy, an ability to see through the Delirium, and long, healthy lives. With this help and militias formed of townsfolk, many of whom were hunters and former soldiers, the city council hunted the local wolf population to extinction, quietly murdered the few people truly opposed to the slaughter, and buried them on the mountain.

Wary of the area, perhaps, from stories by their kin or by spirits, few Garou packs tried to move into Halimar over the years, and invariably the council destroyed those that did. With their knowledge and ability to locate werewolves, the council set up traps that even the superior power of the Garou could not overcome, overwhelming them with numbers, silver bullets, and blood-fueled rites. For several decades in the late 1800s and early twentieth century, they actually used the superstitions of settlers to strike out against any "monsters" that tried to inhabit the area. With occasional aid from packs of Black Spiral Dancers, who themselves usually don't stay in the area too long, the vigil proved surprisingly effective.

In the modern day, the town council does its best to keep Halimar Heights free of Gaian spirits and shapeshifters. Members of the city council cult endure induction into their

ancient shamanistic tradition, and each councilmember has a number of spirits (lesser Banes) that report to them. Several other prominent city officials also take part in the cult. That is why they are so obsessed with keeping the town free of crime and violence. If their pact is broken and the Wyrmbest unleashed, it would destroy Halimar Heights, utterly and completely. In order to avoid this, the council is very firm in its rule, despite the outward appearance of benevolence. Since the original pact, the town grows very much with the spirits and Wyrmbest in mind. Zoning in particular has special attention paid to it, which is one area in which the council is very strict. Roads designed and buildings placed in such a manner that if one were to look from above and know what one was looking for, one would see a Wyrmbest rune ever growing, channeling taint, and keeping it trapped in Halimar but focused into the proper uses. The cult does not want the town to devolve into chaos, so they channel the taint into keeping people complacent, unwilling to accept that Halimar Heights is too good to be true. Agents of the council quickly silence those who cause trouble, one way or another. The inordinately large Halimar Police Department cracks down heavily on crime and the criminal laws are much stricter than they are in most towns across the country.

Pretanic Order

Born from death and fire, the Pretanic Order tore its way into existence through the ashes of the Order of the Oriental Fellowship. The original order had collected and cultivated ancient lore, including the Pretanic Keys — a set of names sacred to the Wyrmbest. A series of visions brought a pack of Black Spiral Dancers to the order. They believed that the Pretanic Keys were a necessary part of a ritual that would bring favor to a new Black Spiral Dancer, raising him up to be a legendary leader.

Once they retrieved the keys, the Dancers opened a portal linking the physical realm to Malfeas. One man, Wayland Webley, driven mad with hatred for the Wyrmbest, launched himself through the rift as the building around him burned.

Webley returned from Malfeas, given the title of the Laird of Demborough through the Wyrmbest's power. Hailed as a spiritual guide by the Pretanic Order, the Laird safeguarded the Pretanic Keys as he sought new acolytes. In 1915, he moved to the United States. There he created a monastery, Phelegma Abbey, in the mountains of upstate New York. The Laird worked fervently on deciphering the Keys, creating rites that mirrored the twisted rituals of the Black Spiral Dancers. The fellowship of the Pretanic Order grew slowly, attracting the desperate, the depraved, and those looking to be free from human laws and morality.

The presence of the Abbey corrupted the mountains of the area. The local Garou quickly caught scent of this new enemy and moved to destroy the threat. Banes and

fomori met them, fighting with fevered zeal to protect the Abbey. Realising that they could not destroy the abbey in a grand battle, the werewolves settled in for a campaign of guerilla warfare that lasted into the early 1940s. A campaign by a pack of Glass Walkers in New York City linked the Abbey with Nazi Germany. Webley soon found federal and state officials breaking down the door of his abode. Werewolves took the fight to the Umbra, and the Laird found his resources stretched too thin to fight back. After the raid, federal officials burned the Abbey, ridding the mountains of its filth.

Webley's body was never found. As he came to the realization that the abbey would fall, he called on his Great Father for help. In a hasty ritual, he gathered his

remaining prisoners, doused them in sacred oil, and burned them alive. The screams of the dying unlocked a pathway to Malfeas. The Laird led his closest followers through the portal, and by the time the abbey fell, they were safe in the arms of the Wyrms.

Wayland Webley still lives. With a lifespan elongated by the Wyrms, he dwells in Williston, North Dakota. Once a tall and slender man, the Laird now walks hunched from a spinal deformity. He keeps his head shaved, displaying a long scar along his scalp, the symbol of his enlightenment. With piercing grey eyes, he watches over the rebuilt Pretanic Order, recruiting acolytes and basking in his studies. He only respects those who discover new rituals through their study of the Pretanic Keys and the body of work he has compiled.

The Pretanic Order worships their Holy Father above all. The way of the Wyrms is the way of freedom, and in that freedom, the Wyrms will rebalance the world. Acolytes join for a variety of reasons, but all become fanatics through their initiation, a rite that mirrors the Labyrinth of the Black Spiral Dancers. Each member would readily give her life to prevent the fall of the Order. The Order gathers sacrifices, using them to fuel grotesque rituals that summon foul Wyrms-beasts. The Laird of Demborough has been working fervently on more powerful rites, seeking one powerful enough to release the Wyrms.

The Order doesn't fight werewolves. Members instead summon Banes, create fomori, and deal with Black Spiral Dancers for protection. Anytime it looks as though the Garou might manage to overcome the area, or discover the cult, the Laird moves to another location steeped in the Wyrms's taint. He knows well the Apocalypse is at hand; he will not have his efforts delayed.

The Pretanic Order's work masks Webley's underlying motive. He would unify the forces of the Wyrms. If the heads of the Hydra work together, the Wyrms will win the coming war. The Laird's time is short, but visions of the Wyrms ravaging its enemies keep his candles burning deep into the night.

The Silver Keys

Underneath the shadow of willful ignorance, the prison system of the United States is a bastion of terror, pain, and degradation. Few places offer such feasting grounds for Banes — especially with the quiet consent of the public. Guards and inmates alike work out their frustrations through torture or rape, and inmates regularly fight each other in brutal battles to reach the top of a meaningless pecking order. Wardens and guards alike turn a blind eye — or take part in the depravity, offering prizes to those who do their dirty work.

Warden Gerald Simmons runs one of the worst prisons in the country. He started as a guard, choosing

STORYTELLING TIPS

The remains of Phelegma Abbey exist within a large Hellhole formed around a fracking operation trying to extract shale gas from the surrounding mountains. Though most Garou think that the federal agents burning the Abbey destroyed it, the Pretanic Order's archives survived the fire. Now deep underground, the Order uses human sacrifice to open gateways in and out. The fracking operation helps to deter curious werewolves, as an open assault would completely miss the buried archives of Wyrmsish lore.

The Order might kidnap Kinfolk investigating the fracking operations. Souls of Kinfolk carry power, and the Laird of Demborough might start seeking more Kin for his rites. The pack would need to rescue the Kinfolk from the hands of the order before they can perform another bloody ritual — not only to save the souls of the Kin, but also to remind the Laird that Kinfolk have powerful protectors.

Alternatively, the pack might need to infiltrate the Order to find out all they can of the Laird's motives. Should the pack find out the order seeks to unite the Wyrms, it could try to prevent the disaster. Thankfully, the Wyrms is a volatile force; the pack could undo the Order's work by turning the Hydra upon itself. Once they know of the Abbey's archives, finding a way for the Wyrms to destroy them would demonstrate the enemy critically injuring itself with few Gaian deaths.

favorites among inmates to whom he would slip various goods in return for their cooperation. Gerald quickly picked out prisoners who would work with him, turning them against those who would rat him out. It started as sadistic entertainment, but Gerald started having dreams about the great power he would have if he took over the prison.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Pentex finds it easiest to deal with annoying Kinfolk by planting evidence of heinous crimes and leaving them to the justice system. A Kinfolk caught stealing important documents makes the corporation's job even easier. The pack will soon find that a prison is difficult to infiltrate and even harder to escape, especially when it rests on a Blight. In prisons run by members of the Silver Keys, fomori can openly wander the corridors and carry silver bullets ready to face down any werewolves attempting to break in.

The influence of the Silver Keys is also leaking out onto the streets. As prisoners are released, members of the cult try to ignite the public, calling for stricter regulations, more police, and harsher penalties all in the name of a safer society. As an urban sept struggles to keep its Kinfolk safe and sway public opinion against the oppressive justice system, a pack might need to seek out members of the Keys and remove them. Of course, removing them leads to police attention, and skilled criminologists from the prison system are likely to blame the very people the Garou are trying to protect.

Prisons are commonly located in remote areas where their foul spiritual presence can befoul otherwise untouched Umbra. The saturation of pure human misery would attract enough trouble for any Garou seeking to contain or destroy the new Blight. If the site has been used by the Uktena to contain a powerful Bane, the corruption from the prison could weaken its bindings. The pack might have to rid the prison of the Silver Keys to keep the Bane from breaking free, but even then that might not be enough. Should the werewolves decide to destroy the entire prison, the murder of so many humans — even for a perceived good — might be enough to free the Bane.

Simmons made deliberate movements through the ranks of the guards. Prisoners under his command were better behaved in public, and people assumed that they respected him. In truth, the prisoners were terrified. Gerald made a deal with an infamous inmate known only as Gold Eye. Though he spent most of his time in solitary, any time one of Gerald's prisoners acted up he'd find Gold Eye sharing his cell for a night. Few wanted to repeat the experience.

In 2011, Pentex bought out American Corrections, the small company that owned Gerald's prison. Pentex combed through officials, overhauling management and replacing it with their own staff. Due to his excellent track record, Gerald was promoted to warden. He immediately started running the prison his way. He gave the worst prisoners the best accommodations as long as they helped him control the inmate population. Meanwhile, any inmate who tried to resist the system was thrown into solitary confinement or given as currency to the warden's favorites.

As the prison's foul touch poisoned the Umbra, it became a hotspot for Banes. Gerald's dreams brought him incantations and symbols of power that he inscribed on the papers of his inmates. Those he favored found themselves with strange abilities that they couldn't quite understand, while those he hated spent their nights tormented by various horrors as their bodies warped into hideous freaks. Following symbols in his dreams, Warden Simmons started the Silver Keys. Determined to make his prison more powerful, Gerald recruited from both guards and inmates. His uncanny ability to read people led him to willing initiates, and the entire prison became a well-oiled machine of terror, feeding Banes with ritual sacrifices of body, soul, and sanity.

One prison proved too small to hold the growing cult. As others within his order grew in power, Gerald set up transfers, sending guards and prisoners alike to other Pentex-owned prisons. The cult spread, luring in more guards, wardens, and prisoners with promises of power and profit.

For Pentex, the prisons serve as seemingly bottomless sources of humans for experiments and free labor. The soul-sucking nature of the institutions is a perfect backdrop for the creation of various fomori. Inmates locked up for victimless crimes are especially precious to Pentex, as they conduct psychological experiments on the resilience of the human psyche, and use them as lab-rats for new street-drugs.

A few members of the Board of Directors have become nervous about Gerald Simmons, though they do not yet know of the Silver Keys. A stocky, average-looking man, Gerald has dirty blond hair, brown eyes, and carries



himself with a purpose. He is always well dressed, even when partaking in his depraved ceremonies. Gerald deals with Pentex only on a professional level, and refuses to divulge any of his secrets. Worse yet, the Silver Keys are completely loyal to him, and as much as Pentex has tried to coerce and seduce information from his protégés, not one has broken. The paranoid believe that Gerald wants his own seat on the Board; the thoughtful are working on ways to lure him into an alliance. Ironically, Gerald cares nothing for the corporation. He is content to stay within the walls of his prison, overseeing and profiting from the misery of others.

WebWorks

The cult called “WebWorks” is not much like anyone’s idea of a cult. For starters, it is entirely digital. It is the brainchild of a computer developer named Marcus Howell, who rose to prominence in the early ‘80s with several programs, like *Dark Horizons*, an early attempt at a space simulator. The game proved popular, as did some of Howell’s other educational programs, though unfortunately their educational subject matter was quickly outdated. Still, the success of those and further developments put Howell in the spotlight in the early

days of widespread Internet usage. A skilled hacker and technician, Howell was a wizard of the dawning information age. He also grew increasingly unhinged, as the diet of energy drinks and O’Tolley’s fast food he ate voraciously contained incredible levels of Wyrms taint. Howell’s dreams became troubled as he began to see what he felt was the true reality beneath the surface, interpreted through the Internet as a medium — a great web spreading over the planet, slowly entangling the human world, interconnections through conduits of glass, steel, and fiber optics. As the Wyrms taint seeped into his dreaming mind, Howell saw the opportunity to do what no one had done before him. Awakened to the truth of the world, he realized that the great web spinner whose works bound the human world from without also held captive the force of change and destruction. That great force, the Wyrms, was a prisoner, but Howell was determined to help free it and put the world back on the right course.

The taint engineered into Howell’s next batch of programs drew the attention of Wyrms spirits, which aided him in what ways they could. As the turn of the twenty-first century approached, Howell began to seek out others like himself online: arrogant gamers and

STORYTELLING TIPS

A group like WebWorks can give Storytellers a new kind of foe to inflict upon the pack. Cultists are no threat physically to the Garou, but their actions can harm Kinfolk or make things difficult within a pack's territory. The pack will quickly find itself out of its element if it must hunt down a WebWorks hacker in a college dorm or another place where wolves and their fury will draw a lot of attention. Even after finding the perpetrator, it is no easy feat to determine just what harm he has caused and how to trace it. The characters might employ technology-spirits to help track down the people harmed by the WebWorks operator and make reparations. Led by savvy Glass Walkers, perhaps the pack can travel to the CyberRealm and convince the spirits there to help fight WebWorks on its own turf.

computer gurus who enjoyed their superiority in the burgeoning digital world. His words, carefully crafted and thoughtfully written, struck a chord in others then as he wrote of the blindness of the masses,

The "cult," unofficially named after Howell's company, WebWorks, has members who are ostensibly consultants and contractors. Howell himself recruits dozens every year. What the cult does, and so very well, is fight on a battlefield under-appreciated by both forces of the Wyrms and those of Gaia. Until his group began to grow, the Internet and global network formed by cell phones, easy international travel, and communication telecommunications networks was largely the domain of the Weaver. Howell realized that he could use this global connection to reach further than any purely physical cult ever could, and help loosen the Weaver's grip on the human world. In turn, the Wyrms' position strengthens and Gaia weakens further. The Garou never cared about the Internet and now find themselves reacting too slowly to a widespread problem.

Members thus use their skills and anonymity to spread both chaos and their message. They feel that the human world grows ever more static and calcified; it slowly stagnates, while the force of change for the future suffocates. They advocate using the very weapons of stagnating society to tear down the walls and fray the threads of the great web.

On the surface, WebWorks' activities resemble those of Incognito, but far more focused. Incognito is a chaotic force, seeking to troll the entire digital world. WebWorks has a very deliberate purpose and always works toward that goal. Every virus engineered and released by the cult, which numbers in the thousands, holds a small amount of taint. Every screensaver, every application and game, all of them are tainted, and they spread like wildfire throughout the Internet. The effect any one tainted code program has is small, but in aggregate, the effect is quite significant. People are frustrated and infuriated by their computer technical issues, whether caused by viruses or programs that harm the computer. Sometimes, jobs are lost or families wrecked — a man who works hard his whole life to raise a family might find himself forever ruined by inappropriate pictures of children or other women — even though he's never so much as looked at anyone like that. He'll never know that the WebWorks' *Encyclopedia of the Mind* program he bought for his very own children put those pictures there. Arcane formulae hidden within the code ensures that human authorities never have a direct link back to any WebWorks product.

The result is the spreading distribution of small amounts of taint, weakening people the world over to render them more vulnerable to spiritual possession and despair. The chaos caused in the lives of those burned by WebWorks products furthers the effect, and allows a programmer in Mexico to harm grievously thousands of users in China, without ever having to leave her room. The other profound effect of WebWorks is the weakening of the Weaver's stranglehold over the information superhighways. It slows the great spinner's rise that much more every day, and every strand broken by WebWorks is a strand no longer binding the Wyrms.

Garou can hardly fight an enemy like this, even were all the Garou Nation comprised of tech-savvy Glass Walkers. The numbers are too great and the threat is too widespread; even though packs sometimes locate and destroy a cultist, his victim is often half a world away. Most WebWorks cultists work alone once inducted into the cult, and even those who work in groups are just a scale on the hide of the dragon. Removing one leaves tens of thousands more, all lords of a realm the Garou don't fully understand and cannot simply smash. Worse still, the cult grows every day, and its members are active day and night. The only effective way to deal with it is to strike it at the source, and for all its power, even the Garou Nation cannot simply destroy the Wyrms. Beset by enemies on all sides, this rising cyber cult strikes from a realm largely untouched by werewolves, much as the Garou utilize the Umbra.



BON SPENLER 14

Chapter Three: The Never-Ending Dance

Nietzsche was right.

God was slain, murdered by man's cannibal knives. When the slaughter was complete, man feasted on God, and his grin was bloody as he disavowed all knowledge that God had ever been. Creation had a new God, and he was man, and man was hungry, and man was lonely, and it was man's right to travel the stars, so he would scour the Earth, devouring her as surely as he had devoured God, so that the cosmos might know his majesty.

Therefore, the Wyrms were born from the cannibalized corpse of God.

Man's enmity, his apathy, his hatred, his rage, and most of all his disbelief spawned the Wyrms. As the world screams in agony, the spirit of Creation cries out in stifled rage, and that rage rises and roils and takes on shape, the form of the wolf. A Garou, then, is the torment, the horror, and the vengeance of the world, whose spirit can never be denied.

The Garou speak of the Apocalypse.

It is a time when humanity's terrible wars, its wrath, its pollution and its plundering of the world corrupts and kills the spirit of the Earth, and the Wyrms feast upon her bloated corpse, rising from the darkness in their hearts to show them the face of the God they have made.

To the Garou, that face is glimpsed in the snarl of the Black Spiral Dancer.

The First and Final Days

The Garou speak of the coming Apocalypse, but they are wrong. The world ended in ancient Caledonia. There was a battle. The Garou lost.

That was long ago, during the Roman conquest of Britannia. The Roman march inexorably pressed on, smashing through the Goths and the Celts, and their Garou protectors with them. Neither the guile of the Fianna nor the might of the Get of Fenris could halt the Roman advance. However, there was another tribe — sleek, white-furred, and strange — that emerged from the Caledonian mists to do battle.

Rumors spoke of their conferences with weird spirits and Highland ghosts. Their totem was Lion, and like it, they stood fiercely, exotic and out of place. They were the White Howlers, and their tribe made each man of the Empire remember his fear of the dark.

As Lion was the totem of the White Howlers, the White Howlers were a source of ferocity, power, and courage for the Picts, who were their Kinfolk. The Picts raided Roman settlements with such tenacity that the Empire erected Hadrian's Wall to divide the civilized world from the darkness of the unconquered frontier. In time, Rome intensified its invasion. Genocidal campaigns

wiped out entire peoples. The construction of roads and pits and the implements of war led to the destruction of field and forest. Confronted with the advance of an all-consuming beast the Picts faced the end of their way of life. However, the White Howlers saw it for what it was.

After years of conflict, the White Howlers conceived a desperate plan to break the power of the Empire. They would cross Hadrian's Wall, penetrating deep into Roman lands to assassinate military leaders and sow enough mayhem to set the Roman conquest back for decades. Yet as they crossed into the Empire to give the Romans blood and terror, the fomori of Rome passed over the battle lines into the Pictish dominions.

Penetrating deeply into the heaths and moors of Scotland, the fomori breached the sealed shrines and places of power sacred to the Wyrms in the way that all things were sacred to that which is ancient beyond understanding. There, they awakened potent Banes and corrupting spirits that bled forth into the loam, the land, and the water, and which they carried with them in their loins.

The White Howlers sensed their mistake too late. They had found success beyond the wall, but paid in coins of blood and time for the opportunities they seized. Later Garou would come to suspect that the White Howlers had been fooled all along that they were lured into a protracted campaign with rare chances for victory.

When they returned home, they met only horror.

The Wyrms had claimed their Kinfolk. Their wombs defiled; their blood tainted, the Picts were reeling from the stench of death, of their own slaughtered children and the women that had died giving birth to monsters.

The White Howlers unleashed their rage on the minions of the Wyrms. As they rooted out the fomori and caught corrupt spirits in their claws, they followed the path of Banes to their source — a place of ultimate corruption in the distant, haunted north.

There they found the Pit of all Pits, the greatest source of the Wyrms' power. At the bottom, they found a rent in the fabric of the world. Through this portal, they saw a spiral of black onyx twisting down into the depths of Malfeas.

The White Howlers did not charge headlong through the breach. Although the rage was on them and their fury made their fangs sharp and their jaws fierce, they were of a clear mind. The horror and corruption that rose up out of the depths of the Spiral gave them pause. Here was a chance to fight and slay the Wyrms; they must take it. This was beyond revenge, beyond death or sadness or survival. It was their very purpose. Still mindful of their mortality, the odium out of the Abyss made them think of their lives, and the lives of their Kinfolk should they fail.

One Galliard amongst them cautioned should they fall here that the portal might be torn open, leaving the world undefended. She said that this Black Spiral had the look of the worst Pit she had ever seen or heard, and who knew what untold horrors might one day emerge from it?

Despite their youngest, fiercest and angriest members' pleas to rush into the brink and do battle with the beast, the White Howlers sent their Theurges about the Pit to commune with its reliquaries, to open Moon Bridges to the septs of the faithful Garou of the ten tribes. Summoning spirit messengers, the White Howlers then sent entreaties to the Garou of the world, calling upon them for aid in raging against the beast in its lair, of bringing fire, fang, and death to the Wyrms so that they might avenge their blood and make the world safe for a time.

They waited, and they prayed, and they meditated upon Gaia to keep the poison of the place from burrowing too deeply into their souls. After the initial request, each of the Auspices fashioned a treaty to their counterparts in the other tribes, hoping to speak to the hearts of those who were most like them.

The Theurges said: Come now, and take the burden that is yours. Our strength and purity flags, let the torches of your knowledge guide us through this dark and terrible place.

But not a single Theurge came to brighten the darkness with his light.

The Ragabash said: Come, lest worse monsters emerge from this place.

But they did not come, least of all to question the chosen path.

The Ahroun said: The Apocalypse is here. Fight with us and be the first of the first.

But no Garou was moved by glory's cry.

The Philodox said: Come now, or be judged.

None came. Perhaps they felt that no judgment could be more severe than that already rendered upon them.

The Galliards of the White Howlers did not entreat the Garou of the world to come to their aid. Their missive was the last the Garou heard from the White Howler tribe.

They said: No good can come from dancing the Black Spiral. Our song will not end here.

After such a refusal, the White Howlers did not falter. Rather, it stoked a terrible fury, renewing the certainty of their cause. It was kill or be killed. Only the Theurges and a handful of Galliards cautioned against such an attack. After holding the Moon Bridges of the Pit open for so long, they felt the venom of the Wyrms seeping in and feared for their souls. Nevertheless, they would not abandon their packmates to the maw of the beast; they would be the first ones in, to rake the spirits of insanity with their claws and cast them asunder.



In the end, the entire tribe vanished into the Black Spiral. They went down howling.

They did not go evenly; the first and the strongest fought ahead, hurling themselves into traps and ambushes, giving their wearied Theurges time to discover a new route or to summon spirit aids. They howled to the wolves at their heels, their brethren answered back, and like them, their howling went on and on, down and down, until it too had ceased.

A lone Garou named Cororuc emerged from the Pit, long after the silence had turned deadly. Pursued by the sounds of howls that were screams, the tormented, tortured souls of his brethren expelled in murderous cries of terror and anguish. They seemed to be chasing him. It could not be, but he heard his tribe around him, moving through the forest, the trees, watching him, growling at him from the dark places, and snapping at his heels.

Cororuc fought, ran, and knew all the while that he was now something's prey. He brought warning of the emergence of the Black Spiral Dancers from Malfeas. Cororuc became their first victim.

Black Spiral Ascendant

The Kinfolk of the White Howlers fled, and only their appearance in Fianna territory aroused the first real concern. When members of the Get of Fenris and the Fianna finally formed an alliance to venture into the home of the White Howlers, what they *didn't* find most disturbed them — village after village was empty; the Kinfolk of the White Howlers were gone. Not even their dead could be located. It was then the Garou began to feel the trauma of this place, a vicious rending that had left the world screaming.

In its wake, they found no sign of the White Howlers, of whom Cororuc had named himself the last.

The disappearance of the White Howlers was astonishing to their European counterparts. The ravening hunger of the Wyrms had devoured the tribe, chewed it up, and what had eaten it alive had mockingly taken its place. They hardly recognized the remnants of the White Howlers in the marauding horrors that now called themselves the Black Spiral Dancers.

In their first encounter with the Wyrms' wolves, the Garou had the advantage. The Spirals' first pack came out of the Labyrinth disoriented; the living screams that were their souls whirled about them, tearing from their throats. They wore their own tattered souls and the spirit-flesh of their familiars about them like burning cloaks, a vile second coat that turned their manes into ghastly green burning blazes, revealing jet-black Crinos silhouettes beneath, all fangs and verdigris claws and balefire eyes.

These monsters were maddened and haunted. They screamed at nothing and struck at everything, and spoke with legion voices, the voices of the White Howler tribe, voices that begged for mercy and for release, which cried for help and which cursed Gaia for their existence and the Garou for abandoning them. Still, the battles were hellacious; the power of the disorganized and birth-dazed Black Spiral Dancers was unbelievable. In their moments of clarity, they fought like Garou unbound by the endless malevolence that drove them.

Still, when the smoke had cleared, the Garou called themselves triumphant. They stood over the corpses of scores of Black Spiral Dancers and proclaimed victory. They knew of handfuls that had escaped the slaughter, through the cracks in the world and in ways that only the weird spirits of the White Howlers knew. Yet they were content in their victory, and more interested in the spoils. While they fought over the fallen caerns and fetishes of the valiant White Howlers, they put summary effort into finding the Pit into which the white wolves had disappeared, and could not. Through either the Wyrms' devices, or a lack of their own, they could not find the Black Spiral. Rather, they endeavored to conquer the land, claim its people as kin and its spirits as allies, all the while satisfied that they would in time root out the straggling remnants of the Wyrms' wolves — for they yet refused to recognize them as a tribe — and complete their extinction.

However, this wild hunt never happened. Instead, the Get and the Fianna took more interest in finding the remaining White Howler Kinfolk and bringing that fine breeding stock into the fold. Some even told themselves that it was a way in which to honor the fallen tribe.

Meanwhile, the Black Spiral Dancers had gone underground, figuratively and literally. They were not the mindless beasts the Garou had assumed, and would not, as Banes, wage thoughtless, pointless, and futile war, nor were they driven by their nature to attack without thought of failure. The shock and horror of their transformation had worn off; the survivors had begun to think, and they knew that for all their hideous strength, they could not as individuals face the entire Garou Nation. Instead, they must hide, lick their wounds, and most importantly, build their numbers. For that they had emptied many villages, dragging their tortured Kinfolk down into the darkness of the otherworldly dens they called hives.

In the time when the Garou had the opportunity to finish the Black Spiral Dancers they chose to fight each other, and the Black Spiral Dancers in turn chose to hide, sowing and reaping beneath the earth, allowing time to assume their death and allowing the Garou peace enough to forget them.

Therefore, when the Black Spirals did emerge from the bowels of the world, they came for blood and they came for vengeance, and they nearly dragged down the whole Garou Nation with them.

Black Spiral Thesis

A werewolf is a predator, a relentless force of claws and fangs, of feral hunger and murderous strength. Bristling with fury, the embodiment of the planet's rage, the Garou's claws stay sheathed only by his charge: to protect the Earth. This guiding instinct keeps his nature at bay. It is because of this mercy that humanity's cities still stand.

In a Black Spiral Dancer, the restraint that governs the Garou is not there.

A Black Spiral Dancer is a werewolf that has gone into the shadow of the world and breathed in the ultimate darkness of the universe; felt nobility vanish into a gulf of hunger, felt purpose dissolve in a tide of rage. These monsters are slaves to a dark spirituality and joined into murderous packs; the Garou's demise is their great calling.

Above all else, the Spirals want revenge for being born. The Garou's apathy let the White Howlers dance the Black Spiral. By turns, the Black Spiral Dancers have been a curse of vengeance against the Garou, embodying their greatest failure, reminding them of their apathy, their greed and their lust, and acting as a punishment for not preserving the most sacred thing of all — themselves.

Though not all of the Black Spirals know the tale of the loss of the White Howlers, the underlying truth still burns in its most prolific members. Black Spiral packs swell with Garou, who danced the Spiral on the back of some great betrayal or abandonment or injustice perpetrated by Gaia's defenders. Indeed, revenge remains the strongest motivating element of the Black Spiral Dancers, subdued behind a wall of wrath, anger, and frustration, a relentless spirit of enmity that preys on the despair and the exhaustion of the Garou.

Black Spiral Perspective

Like the Vikings, the Garou describe the end of the world as a final, terrible battle between good and evil. It is a desperate battle, in which most agree: the Garou will die and the Wyrms will triumph. Underlying this belief is the understood value of courage. The Garou draw frightening power from this spiritual overview: unrelenting resolve that

serves as a seed for primal, weaponized outrage when coupled with the will to survive. What the Garou believe about the Apocalypse serves as an inspiration to their lives, which are often full of desperation, brutality, and cruelty, living with high expectations, they must carry their courage like a shield, for the sake of everyone around them. Through courageous action, each Garou acts as if he were fighting the Apocalypse, and thus sacrificing himself for Gaia. To the Garou, there can be no greater closeness to the Mother. This is their one respite against the horror of their lives.

The Black Spiral Dancers see things differently.

They believe the Apocalypse already happened; that the world languishes, mortally wounded and just waiting to die. Some of them, indeed, derive spiritual closeness with the Wyrms from hastening its death, but the overall stance of the Spirals is one that chills the Garou to the bone. The world is dead, so why fight?

In the dying light of the world's last days, the Black Spiral Dancers stand ascendant, as dark rulers of the night. They long for the day when they can throw off the chains of the Veil, so that they might ravage the cities of humanity and stand over them as black gods and wicked kings; a time of splendid horror and vicious revelry in the dark, moonless phases before the Earth dims and falls out of the heavens.

In the meantime, the Black Spiral Dancers are unconstrained. Sons and Daughters of the Wyrms, inheritors of the ruined world, they rule the Earth, man just doesn't know it yet. The Spirals act in ways to advance this understanding, pursuing anything and everything their hearts desire. They care nothing for anything outside of their own aggrandizement and consequently, or perhaps subsequently, their unending vendetta against the Garou.

In the past, the Black Spiral Dancers defined themselves through continual guerilla war against their Garou counterparts. However, this more recent stance has proved a thousand times more potent. Though they still plot, plan, and attempt to destroy the Garou, they outwardly profess the pointlessness of the struggle, because the battle has already been decided. This has the twofold effect of rendering the Garou's courageous piety moot, as well as sapping the resolve of the most exhausted, battle-weary werewolves.

The Black Spiral Dancers live without constraint. They take what they want, love who they want, go where they want and live how they wish. Many Garou look at them and see a compelling vision of freedom from despair, and the godhood that follows from acceptance of the Apocalypse, a lure that pulls at the Rage lurking within, calling it forth to glorious revel.

Some Spirals even see themselves as the magnanimous deliverers of their dull Garou cousins, bringing them the

freedom that comes with embracing their true nature. Indeed, some Spirals have flourished under this model to the extent that they build small communities, raise families, and avoid outright declarations of war with the Garou, or exaltations of the Wyrms to the point of self-destruction.

Rather, they kill their estranged cousins for other, more compelling reasons. They kill the Garou to educate the Garou; they kill the Garou to demoralize the Garou; and they kill the Garou because they *fucking hate* the Garou.

The doomed nobility of the Garou sickens the Black Spiral Dancers. They hate that Gaia's defenders live in denial that she lays dying, her wounds already far beyond mending; that alone is enough to stir the Dancers to murder. But when the Garou acknowledge the doomed nature of their crusade, when they admit that there is no hope of averting the Apocalypse, but commit to go down fighting a war that is already over regardless, this makes the wolves of the Wyrms incoherent with rage.

The ultimate revenge is that if they continue to absent themselves from the war, to build infrastructure, breed, and recruit, the Spirals will flourish while the Garou go extinct, leaving the Black Spiral Dancers as the sole representatives of the werewolves. It will be as if the Garou never existed.

Claws of the Wyrms

The Spirals are monsters set high among the ranks of the Wyrms' forces, bound together by pacts with avatars of dark and terrible gods. Tasked with hunting and bringing down the most dangerous prey the world has to offer, they find many paths to pursue this agenda.

The Black Spirals are manifold, but they tend to fall into several categories. The Garou would recognize these divisions as camps, but the Spirals reject the natural structure and authority inherent in camps. Any of these three combinations may exist together, either in packs, or in culture-crossing individuals. This sometimes gives Spiral packs a wide array of complimentary attitudes and skills, but more often produces broken, dysfunctional packs, their natural cooperative instincts tainted by Wyrmsish self-interest.

The Aristocratic Wolf

These Spirals are members of high society, and stalk wherever the elite gather: social galas, art gallery openings, fundraisers, opening nights on Broadway, anywhere they might obtain a necessary alliance or primary advantage by doing so.

The aristocratic wolf enjoys these circles for the thrill of walking amongst his prey in human skin, listening to their vaporous lies and empty dreams. The Spiral exults in

deceiving these people into believing he is of their kind, and in wooing them into opening their hearts, their homes, their checkbooks, or their legs for him.

Some Spirals find such connections useful in both the acquisition of real estate and the accumulation of personal wealth, in which duper's delight or the possible chance to eat or fuck a one-percenter is just a bonus. On more rare occasions, the Black Spiral Dancers are keyed into the clandestine movements of the Garou through hearing about stories of improbable industrial sabotage, strange acts of eco-terrorism, animal attacks or otherwise. Some few Spirals have even come into possession of occult artifacts through hapless collectors who had no idea what danger they were in.

Finally, the aristocratic wolf shapes the herd around him to suit the Wyrms' design. Political reformers are easy targets for corruption, seduction, or to take home, and devour. There is no top-down change for the better in a city where aristocratic wolves have come to dwell, and they find few Garou capable of challenging them in the arena they've made their own.

The Corporate Wolf

Pentex employs a number of Black Spiral Dancers.

On the ground level, a Black Spiral Dancer might never see corporate headquarters. These Spirals are street soldiers, warehouse security and sometimes even truck drivers. Spirals who become upper level Pentex employees have far more to offer to the company. Though they provide necessary muscle to the boardroom, their uses are far more eclectic and varied. They might be recovery specialists in a physical sense, overseeing industrial or sales-level operations, or they might specialize in digital security, detecting and dealing with spiritual malignancy that can travel through electrical circuits, telephones, or the internet.

Some few Black Spirals even become department heads in charge of all manners of business. Such Black Spirals typically occupy positions where killing or fighting are almost a guarantee, such as hazardous dumping operations, drug or weapons smuggling, or any on-site operation that is of an extremely sensitive nature.

All Spirals located at corporate headquarters are expected to commune with spirits on behalf of Pentex, to establish rapport and open negotiations, or to serve as oracle, passing down the Wyrms' vision to his mortal associates.

The Big Bad Wolf

Making up the majority of the tribe, these Spirals are mostly self-directed and specifically not connected to Pentex, although they may moonlight as aristocrats. The Big Bad Wolf pursues his own pleasure and gain, regardless of whether it will hurt the Garou or not, though a wise Spiral recognizes that striking at the Garou when



the opportunity presents itself is far preferable to letting them attack in full force.

Hardline Bad Wolves that follow the will of the Wyrms usually fall into this category. They are the most dangerous of the Black Spiral Dancers, and the least pluralistic. Trying to reason with them is futile, and they often have little interest in material gain or in living as gods as many of their contemporaries do. Rather, they seek to hasten the end of the world by doing whatever harm they can, with the Garou as their first and foremost target. Such Spirals can be trusted to look down on their brethren who take a more cerebral, less spiritual approach to hurting the Garou, but it is a mistake to write them off as bullies and fiends. Some such wolves are quite charismatic, and stoke the Rage in their fellow Spirals white-hot, reminding them of the rightness of maiming and destroying Garou lives and ravaging their Kinfolk.

Less hardline Big Bads only wish to revel in their monstrosity. They might attack the Garou for hatred, for sport, or for some sick measure of vindication, believing themselves to be guiding the lost little wolves to the only correct conclusion. Failing that, they might enjoy giving them their errant cousins the mercy of the Apocalypse they are so willing to die for. If nothing else, such Spirals may simply enjoy killing something that thought itself mighty.

Overall, Big Bad Wolves focus less on the Garou than the accumulation of power. That power might come in the form of wealth, political prestige, or luxury — living in grand old houses, moving through lovers, and experiencing all the thrills the world has to offer. Alternatively, it might come through the accumulation of spiritual might in service to the Wyrms, collecting fetishes and the dark blessings of mighty Banes. In either case, Big Bad Wolves don't come by these things through honest hard work, so when the blood flows it always helps to be a monster the world doesn't believe in.

There are no limits to what such Spirals might do.

The Princes of Ruin

Less of a camp than a widespread philosophy, the Princes of Ruin maintain that the war for the Apocalypse is over and finished. They preach a mantra of self-indulgence, claiming that the dying corpse of the world is now theirs to rule over and treat as they like, or at least it *will* be, once they mop up the rest of the Garou and help them realize that they are already dead. Princes of Ruin set their own self-indulgence over active service to or veneration of the Wyrms, or claim that as the triumphant champions of the Corrupter, indulging their own base instincts is categorically worship of the Wyrms.

More devout Black Spiral Dancers regard the Princes of Ruin as slackers, apostates, and insipid decadents,

picking and choosing from the tenets of the Black Spiral Litany for their own benefit rather than that of the Dark Father. The Princes of Ruin regard the more traditional Spirals as rustics and religious fanatics; violence between the two philosophies is common.

In truth, the Princes serve the Wyrms whether they intend to or not. Their souls are shattered and drip with the Wyrms' poisons, and the urges they indulge push the world deeper into the Corrupter's talons. Arrogance and self-interest serve the Wyrms' needs just as well as any other vices.

The Black Spiral Litany

The Black Spirals have rejected the Litany of the Garou; the Song of the Spiral raises the fallen White Howlers to the level of monarchs in a ruined kingdom. The world is their playground, their den and their keep, so long as they follow the rules their Litany sets for them. Adherence to this dark Litany grants them access to the vast power of the Wyrms' Gifts, justifying their evil, turning it into a vile religious edict. These are the chains that the Spirals are happy to wear.

Serve the Wyrms' Will — This is His Age

The Black Spiral Dancers have an obligation to promote the Wyrms' work upon the Earth, but they vary on this, the first and foremost tenet of their Litany. The Princes of Ruin maintain that they have discharged their duty under this edict already, and that the war for the Apocalypse is over. The Wyrms won. They believe they serve the Wyrms simply by being the monsters they are meant to be.

A majority of Spirals holds a more active interpretation of this tenet, however, believing that in return for the Gifts and other spiritual power the Wyrms' servants grant them, they owe the Dark Father some degree of worship and obedience. Belief of how *much* they owe the Wyrms varies among such Spirals. Some Spirals simply attend Hive moots and partake of tribal rituals, devoting most of their time and effort to their own desires. Others are full-blown fanatics, glorying in their role as the earthly avatars of the spiritual embodiment of ultimate destruction.

Beware the Territory of Another

As with the Garou, the Spirals recognize their individual rights to claim and hold territory. Spirals respect this tenet almost universally. The tribe is in constant danger of Garou attack, and frequently engaged in invading and defiling Garou caerns, and would not survive long if its members didn't respect one another's

dominions. Spirals show such respect with the typical rituals, with visitors howling to announce themselves and being accepted or rejected as usual. The Spirals take it a step further, informing nearby hives of the approach of any threats they might be aware of.

The Spiral Awaits Those with Open Eyes

The Litany commands the Garou are to accept an honorable surrender. The Black Spirals have no such injunction. They give their conquered foes a chance to look into the Spiral Within — the darkness in their own hearts — and see the truth of the pointlessness of their struggle. Beyond despair, the physical Black Spiral awaits, ready to take the Garou to a place beyond pain.

It may surprise some that the Spirals do not always summarily dismember and devour Garou who surrender but do not submit. Long ago, the Black Spirals learned that such actions deify the ruined Garou, elevating them to the status of martyr. Such empowering myths drive their enemies' rage, making them implacable and dangerous, whereas releasing a broken and beaten captive creates a general horror in the Garou populace. Each Garou believes that they will go down fighting; none wants to believe that he or she will be the one who breaks and falls to her knees in surrender.

Moreover, the Garou tend to lose trust, faith, and respect for one the Spirals throw back, seeing him as a seed of corruption, a traitor, or worse: an example of spiritual failure.

Respect the Strength of the Mighty

Like the Garou, the Black Spiral Dancers have a rank and renown system to separate the alphas and omegas of a pack. Spirals give due respect to packmates who have distinguished themselves in the eyes of their fellows, for such commendations suggest a greater closeness to the Wyrms. In practice, this rule exists to minimize the occasions on which a young Spiral provokes an elder werewolf into ripping her heart out.

The First Share of the Kill for the Greatest in Station

As with the Garou, the strongest among the Spirals gets the primary claim to the bounty of any conquest, be it choice of territory, choice of treasure, or choice of mate.

All that is not Forbidden is Permitted

The world belongs to the Black Spiral Dancers. Anything not forbidden by the Song of the Spiral is allowed and even encouraged. This tenet, and the one that follows, form the cornerstone of the philosophy of the Princes of Ruin.

Notably, the Black Spiral Litany features no moratoriums on eating human flesh or mating with *anyone* a Spiral wishes to. The Spirals make much of this element of the dark Litany when they take captives. As a result, more than one Garou has defected to the Wyrms' tribe in the hope of pursuing forbidden love without censure, willingly blinding themselves to the degrading atrocity that love soon becomes in the coils of the Wyrms.

Indulge Your Desires — This is Your World

The Wyrms has supplied the Black Spiral Dancers with hungers, passions, and desires, with the expectation of their vigorous fulfilment. By sating these urges, the Spirals feed the Wyrms within. This is the most elemental form of communion the Black Spirals have, and the one that looks most like freedom to Garou who feel their own Litany closing in on them like the walls of a cell. It is also the tenet the Princes of Ruin stand on when challenged on their derelictions.

The Veil Shall Not Be Lifted

The Black Spiral Dancers dream of a time when they might cast off the Veil and bring a new Impergium to the world. However, before the world can accept the ascendancy of the Wyrms' wolves, it must accept the death of Gaia and the pointlessness of struggle. Only when the skies are black and the cities are silent except for screaming, will humanity be ready to look upon the face of the God it has fed so well and made so mighty. Until then, the Black Spiral Dancers must lurk and fear the rousing of humans, who might gather with fork, flame, and silver and, by hunting and slaying werewolves, deny the Wyrms' power on Earth.

Suffer Not Thy People to Tend Thy Sickness

As with the Garou, but with a more selfish bent; many of the Spirals do not consider themselves "at war" in a general sense. Therefore, they do not waste time on the wounded or the daunted, and are far more willing to throw away the lives of packmates. Conveniently, they usually cite some weakness or physical or mental failing to excuse the decision.

Note that this is not a tenet that excuses murdering Spiral children, or killing someone who has broken their leg, or has taken ill but might recover. The Spirals will generally nurse and harbor those who have a strong chance of recovery, particularly if they have proven themselves strong in the past. Rather, the abuse of this rule surrounds some legitimate claim to weakness in a particular Spiral's character, in which infirmity becomes grounds to eliminate a wolf who might have otherwise remained to weaken a pack. Such abuses, along with

several tactically reasonable cullings, occur less frequently due to the widespread belief among Wyrnish fanatics that madness is a divine blessing of the Wyrn, rather than a form of infirmity.

The Leader May Be Challenged at Any Time During Peace

Like the Garou, the Spirals recognize the absolute necessity of a hierarchy to keep the pack safe. This includes a routine, violent changing of the guard to ensure the dominance of the pack. However, many Spiral alphas keep their packs in sustained states of active war footing, much to the disgust of the Princes of Ruin, while many more have begun to operate in very loosely allied packs that might share a single territory with clearly divided boundaries, roles, and duties, but with each member acting as his own leader. In such associations, an alpha directs the pack when it works together, and directs his packmates in an overall agenda for their territory and their association, but otherwise leaves each packmate to pursue his ambitions autonomously. Such associations have been finding greater and greater success and popularity in newer generations of Black Spirals. A few packs have gained enormous prestige for rotating Garou members in and out of their operations without the Gaian werewolves realizing who or what they were associating with until they found a claw in their back or the Spiral Within opening in their hearts.

The Leader May Not Be Challenged During War

This tenet describes situations in which violence is imminent, or during actual combat. Many Spirals vigorously pursue a stance that individual battles do not indicate that the tribe is embroiled in a larger conflict for the fate of Gaia, that war is over and done. They consider any conflicts with the Garou purely temporary, local matters, even when they initiate that conflict. As a result, efforts to refuse challenges indefinitely, citing a state of perpetual war, work much less frequently for Black Spiral alphas than for Garou warlords.

Take No Action That Violates the Security of a Pit

Spirals follow this tenet almost without fail, as it highlights the paramount importance of a Pit to a hive's survival. The Pit is the home of a Black Spiral Dancer, his sanctum and his place of power. The Spirals cannot win without their Pits and they cannot live without their Pits, and they treat their Pit's location, nature, and information about its core spirit as their greatest secrets. Pack leaders often set the rules to protect a Pit's safety. Those who compromise a Pit find themselves branded as traitors and hunted as prey.

Where Monsters Dwell

When the Black Spiral Dancers first sprang from the abyss, the Garou fought a bitter, bloody battle to drive them back. In one essential way, they succeeded: in order to survive, the Spirals needed to hide, and in order to hide, they needed to go *down*. Dwelling on the surface, — going in search of caerns and holy places they might defile and enshrine, was not an option. Nowhere had they settled would stay safe for long; their enemies would soon find them to root them out.

Instead, they burrowed into the Earth, tunneling deep into her depths, finding homes in natural caves and warrens, and spreading out their own diseased grottos in the hollow organs of the planet. In darkness, they brought their Kinfolk and their prey, and they bred, feasted, and raised a robust nation of blind horrors in those hellish and forgotten places.

These places of dark ritual and hallowed horror are Pits, and the septs of werewolves living in them are as hives. These were — and continue to be — the sacred places of power for the Black Spiral Dancers.

Today, the Spirals need not live exclusively underground. Through the ages, they bred and outbred the Garou, and grew more powerful in numbers, stronger in cunning and clever in devices. They began to organize, to spread out, and to find caerns on the surface that they could corrupt. But old traditions remain strong: regardless of whether their place of power is above or below ground, a Spiral's dominion is still called a Pit.

The Creation of a Pit

Pits represent a constellation of different locations and profiles, patterns and natures. There are four major ways to produce a Pit, so consistently blended are the methods that the four ways might as well be the two ways or even the one way. In this case, it is only important to understand that each method depicted can result in a distinct Pit.

All Pits share a defining feature: somewhere within a Pit lies a locus of emotion and corruption powerful enough to contain an immense spirit to serve as the hive's totem. This spirit may be a Bane, or it may be a natural spirit that now trapped, tormented, and tortured into being the totem of the Pit. Whether it is a Bane or a nature spirit, the totem plays a significant role in determining the nature and the traits of the Pit.

The first kind of Pit is truest to its name: it is a tunnel dug into the Earth, or a network of natural caves, where the Spirals have congregated. Due to a variety of factors, including heat, air pressure, lack of oxygen, noxious gases, and lack of light, such Pits have all the resonance of Hell. It is easy to see how suffering, torment, despair, and horror could breed in such places. Typically,

the Spirals fill such Pits with the screams of victims dragged down into the darkness to be their playthings and eventually their food.

Though many modern hives protect and even elevate their Kinfolk, in the beginning, the Kinfolk of the Black Spiral Dancers saw themselves as White Howler stock, wanting nothing to do with their Spiral claimants. The first Pits' consecrations were often the screams of those defiant Kinfolk, who were forced to live, breed and give birth in those alien depths. In those places, terrible rituals brought forth creatures never meant for sunlight. The Kinfolk of the Black Spirals suffered; forced to live amongst these, to nurture and nourish them as their own, and to partake in whatever dread rituals were prepared for the unrelated homids stolen down into the depths. Such Pits become spiritual echo chambers of horror and misery, to which a Bane easily ties itself. Some even become hideous enough to birth their own totemic Bane. For such a spirit to be powerful enough to be a hive's totem the Pit must be the epitome of awful, a savage wound within the world. If the Spirals of such a Pit are fail to bind a Bane into their service, they may go to the surface to drag down one of the spirits of Gaia, to chain in service, reaping power from its terror and despair and potentially birthing a Bane from its defiled body.

A Pit need not be a tunnel in the Earth. On the surface, a Pit represents a coring-out of the Umbra, a place where the spirit world, gouged and stabbed, its scar tissue connecting the real world to the otherworldly sanctum of the Black Spiral Dancer. The second method of forming a Pit requires the capture of a caern. There the Spirals hold hideous celebrations to defile the captured caern, incorporating captured Garou and Kinfolk if possible. Once the revels end, the Spirals keep the Kinfolk, and make them take part in whatever ends befall their Garou kin. If the Spirals are able to, they capture the sept's totem and corrupt it, forcing it to be their hive-totem. When the totem is too mighty to corrupt, the Spirals instead destroy it, often feeding the weakened spirit to a Bane ripped from the anguish of the fallen Garou and their captive Kinfolk. As these places of power are sacred to Gaia and vital to the struggle against the Wyrms, Spirals have a much easier time attracting a powerful Bane to the totem-hole of a newly desecrated caern. This often involves a ritual that mirrors the opening of the first Pit and the despoiling of the White Howler Kinfolk by fomori, as well as the sacramental devouring of Cororuc. Most Spirals are unaware of the significance of this rite to their past, or how they subtly mock their own origins by performing it.

The third way by which the Spirals make their Pits is perhaps the most tragic. Some Spirals still have enough of Gaia's love within them to find undiscovered holy sites to corrupt and defile. In ancient times, they would have

feared the intervention of Garou, but in the present day, their numbers have increased while the Garou's numbers have thinned. With well-placed contributions to local law enforcement, politicians, or even Pentex, the Black Spirals can enlist the aid of humans to keep the Garou from attacking them en masse. One example is the Redheart gated community in north Florida where, in the '50s, a Spiral named Adam Dutch found a natural wellspring feeding a small mid-lake island of rare flora and fauna. He purchased the land and leased the surrounding area for a housing development. Houses and paved streets ringed the location, which Dutch gated and made off-limits. To the naïve residents, it looked like a picturesque piece of wild Florida at the center of their concrete and brick world, but Dutch kept congress in the depths of that warren, which over time became a bog, inhospitable and dangerous. For transients who wandered into the community, before it earned its gates, the bog at its heart was their final destination — though not by choice.

Any Garou that would have wanted to come take the caern from Dutch would have to run the risk of exposing themselves to the people living all around it. When that was not enough of a deterrent, the Garou found that the police were in Dutch's pocket; they patrolled the streets around Redheart Pit, and some of them were even thrall to fell spirits and packing silver bullets.

The Garou did eventually manage to roust Dutch and his hive from their Pit, but they were never able to reclaim the location or figure out exactly what he was doing there. The city has kept the gates around the site locked, and since the fall of Dutch, only a few workers with the local Electric Authority have been inside, and each of them has come back with a terrible feeling about the place. Some have even claimed to hear the sounds of grunting and snarling coming from the deepest parts of the bog, while others have been horrified to see children from the surrounding neighborhood playing in the streams that run through the bottoms. Still others have sometimes reported hearing a sound like a low drum, or a ragged heartbeat.

The last way in which the Spirals appropriate a hive is by finding a place that others have already defiled by their own actions. Such areas may include sites of atrocity or genocide, or they may be less obvious: places of pain, loss, or abuse. They might also be areas where Gaia has suffered at the hands of humans: the site of the Chernobyl disaster has courted more than one pack of Black Spirals, and wearing the hides of irradiated spirits and tatter-flesh children, these Spirals are particularly woeful to behold.

This last method is worrisome above all others. The Umbra grows new Hellholes every year, and any of them might serve as fertile grounds for the Spirals' blasphemous version of the Rite of Caern Building. By contrast,

Gaia's sacred places shrink and vanish under the Wyrms' onslaught. New caerns are raised only rarely and at high cost, and more than that number vanish each year.

Dens of the Wyrms' Wolves

Invested with the palpable corrupting force of the Wyrms, the dominions of the Black Spiral Dancers writhe with secret life and seethe with dark intentions. Like their inhabitants, the Pits of the Black Spiral Dancers are monsters, a monstrosity defined by individual circumstances.

By binding a spirit of the Earth into their Pit, the Spirals may bond the land itself to their dominion, infusing and infecting the world around them with the devouring essence of the Wyrms and turning the land monstrous. Alternately, by seizing a place of terror and pain, they might bore a hole in the Umbra, which acts as a resonating beacon and an echo chamber for horrific and ancient forces, a kind of void cloud, a hotspot for the poisons that flood the universe. By concentrating such forces in one location, the Spirals can create a source for drawing upon the Wyrms' might, while concealing themselves behind a manufactured façade.

What follows are just a few examples of Pits around the United States.

La Bête Noire

A haunted mansion deep in the Atchafalaya Basin, La Bête Noire was the binding place of a resonant horror so profaned by its years in the darkness that it had gone nameless and bled away its past. Still, even in chains, its soundless shrieking called to a pack of Black Spiral Dancers, who migrated to Bayou Chantilly in search of the place.

In order to seize the power lying dormant on the grounds, the Lazeth family purchased the property and set their Kinfolk to renovating the house. For years, the bayou had been encroaching on the property, and the locals were very happy to see the Black Beast sinking further into the swamp. Now the town has grown inexorably closer to La Bête Noire, which rises from the swamp, the bayou spreading around it like a pair of dragon's wings. A major street runs past the house, and certain of its residents have become fixtures in the local township of Cushing.

Nobody realizes that the family living in the Black Beast harbors werewolves. There have even been times when certain family members didn't know. What the Lazeth Kinfolk have always known is that there are certain wings of the house: certain rooms, hallways, and *always* the attic, forbidden from their entry. From

these places, they have heard all manner of sounds, from clawing at the walls, to heavy, fleshy thuds, to snorting like the rooting of great boars, to weeping, sighing, and screams. The Kinfolk of the house sometimes use hallways that intersect these forbidden places, but they take it as a matter of safety not to walk these corridors by night.

While the Spirals' reasons for living in La Bête Noire, and indeed their reasons for buying the house, remain unclear, three generations of Kinfolk have known the palpable evil that resonates through the house and sometimes wanders the halls. Try as they might to live normal lives, they know they are a front for monsters. On their end, the werewolves manage to contain the blights and keep them from spreading into the common areas of the house. Externally, and through most of the mansion, La Bête Noire is a lively, modernized home. However, in its wings and its rafters lurk its true masters, terrible and reclusive, who hold the demons of the house at bay, keeping sway over dark forces from which they draw their terrible insights.

History of La Bête Noire

Few residents of Cushing know the true history of La Bête Noire, or how much its tragedy informs the lore of their society. In the present day, the only real remnant of the dim history of that house lies in a Crybaby Bridge legend. Unbeknownst to most, the babe in the legend once lived in the great Black Beast. Most legends about La Bête Noire are false, exaggerated to gruesome degrees. Many are admonitions to stay away from the place simply because it is *bad*. The stories have grown, transforming it into a charnel house. It was the den of a taxidermist who began stuffing human bodies and feeding the entrails to the alligators; the lair of swampland pirates who rowed up to the back steps of the house to regularly hold vigil in the abandoned house's lower floors, while hiding from murder or taking in their next victims. Every tale is more terrible and incredible than the next.

In truth, the house only awoke to its power when the town began to fear it.

The original owner's toddler drowned in the waters of Bayou Chantilly. Grief-stricken, the owner's wife left the house one evening, walked into the swamp, and vanished. The owner, driven mad by grief, began to excavate the bayou, and lay plans to drain and build over it. While committing his fortune to his growing feud with the land, he called séances in his home almost nightly, until the mediums searching for his wife and child began to refuse to visit La Bête Noire. The mystics who had sent their minds into the nearby swamp to find his family had found something else instead, something ancient, bleak, and hideous. When they returned to their homes at night, it followed them through their dreams. "La Bête Noire



is cursed,” one psychic told him. “Move out while you still can. Condemn the place.”

Instead, the man intensified his war with the bayou. According to those few who know the tale, he vanished into the swamp with a lantern and a shovel, as if to dig out the source of his misery. There is one other ending to the story, however, told only once, by the man’s business partner in Shreveport. He told his tale months after, and by then his partner’s disappearance had soured in his memory like an off note. On the night the man was last seen heading into the swamp, his partner also saw him in Shreveport. The man had come to visit him, to tell him to cancel their plans to drain the bayou. At the time, he hadn’t noticed how wan his partner had looked, nor how his hair seemed to be damp, nor his pale flesh and damp palms, and spongy they were when they shook hands. He was stunned by the cold adamancy of his partner, and began signing the proper papers and killing the orders. He did not realize he was seeing his partner for the last time.

In any case, the owner disappeared. The house has been associated with the deaths, and the debacle that followed, ever since. The particulars fell out of circulation over time; perhaps they never mattered. What matters is that the town inflated the story. In the minds of the bayou people, the place was cursed, and they brought forth that curse by stories and their ways. Whatever had sparked inside the house fed on their fear and awe and grew strong.

Eventually, it grew strong enough to draw the Black Spiral Dancers.

The Swallowing Caves

In the Cretaceous period, a vast sea stretched across the North American landscape, submerging the Gulf States and spreading up through the western interior. The Niobrara Sea covered the territory that would become New Mexico, Utah, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, the Dakotas, and vast tracts of Canada. This immense waterway split the continent into two separate landmasses, and dominated the landscape for millions of years. In time, the waters subsided, and the spirit of the sea drifted out of currency, sinking into the cracks and fissures of its thirsty Mother.

The Black Spiral Dancers long sought the spirit of the Niobrara Sea, and in the 1990s, a pack in Colorado found it. Tunneling deep into the San Luis Valley, their Pit penetrated into the water table, where they felt the immense spiritual pressure of a blind and raving god. It dragged three of their number down to watery deaths, making known its fervor for drowning, and once the Black Spiral Dancers put away their claws, they quickly realized the idiot god was once the vast and mighty spirit of the ancient sea.

Changing their stance from incursion and conquest to supplication and alliance, the Black Spirals becalmed

the forgotten, insane spirit, and bound it to their Pit, making it the totem of their hive. The power of their Pit transformed. Now constantly it thirsts to drink the life of the surface world.

The Swallowing Caves get their name from the Pit's nature. Accessed by any of a dozen cave mouths opening in the San Luis Valley, some of which close again, hidden to all. These caves are attractive to visitors, hikers, mountaineers and geologists, and the trails of many people who have gone missing in the vicinities of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico trace back to the caves.

As for the Black Spiral Dancers who dwell there, they sit at the heart of a network dedicated to raising the Wyrms' power in the states once covered by the Nio-brara, especially Louisiana. Throughout the territories once covered in water, they believe there are geomantic keys — regions of spiritual power — that function as a balance between water and earth. Should they break open these places, should the defenders die, the great spirit at the bottom of the Swallowing Caves might rise to call the tides back over this land.

The death toll would be catastrophic. The United States would be no more. But one of the most powerful bulwarks against their plans is the city of New Orleans. The Black Spiral Dancers are constantly working to hasten its inundation. When it finally sinks beneath the waves, they believe the Bane born from such a loss will allow them to evoke the bringer of the tides and raise the waters once more. As long as the government continues to ignore the soil erosion crisis caused by upriver development; as long as Pentex keeps paying the right people and keeps cutting erosive divots in the wetlands with its oil barges; as long as the Black Spirals keep gnawing at the mystical defenses of the city, New Orleans must surely drown.

The Nameless Tower

The Nameless is a Pit in the heart of New York City, within spitting distance of Central Park and the hallowed Sept of the Green. This is not a coincidence. The Nameless sits ideally positioned for an attack on the Sept.

Formerly the site of a Glass Walker caern, most Garou do not know that its new residents are Black Spiral Dancers. Nor do they realize that Zhyzhak has taken up residency. When the sept was last concerned, the Black Spiral Dancers came at them in force, ripping Banes of trauma, misery, and horror from air of the city and launching a massive sneak attack on the Sept. However, the Spirals had underestimated the Garou, who crushed them with a vengeance. That was almost eleven years ago, and since then, the city has healed and the Wyrms' foothold has weakened.

Then Zhyzhak came. Not good. Not good at all.

The Nameless sits on West 64th street, just down the street from Central Park. Built in A.D. 1916, a former hotel, its tall white façade stands out against the brick pile apartments and theatres that line the street. When the city moved on, the hotel couldn't follow. Time dictated its devolution into an apartment complex, which eventually became the concern of a Glass Walker named Roth, mostly for its upper-deck view of Central Park to one side, and the city to the other. The location was a melding of visionary power, progress, and nature that appealed to his inner sense of the world.

The Glass Walker acquired the upper levels of the Tower for his own, created a caern, and led his sept for years. Hunters confronted the sept, after tracing their location through a number of purchases matching the profile of a Glass Walker who had recently frenzied in the Bronx and killed six people. The Veil remained intact as the public saw only some sort of freak car accident involving a large dog. Roth's sept had always been viewed askance by the werewolves of the Sept of the Green, and in turn, his pack had been rather exclusive and self-interested in the past. When members started to disappear, he chalked it up to their usual roaming habits, until the hunters managed to leave a note inside his sanctum, bypassing its formidable defenses.

By then, it was almost too late, but Roth's uncharacteristic plea for help from the Sept of the Green came early enough that, had they acted, his sept might have survived. Roth's refusal to let them investigate his caern, and his presumption that they should be his hunting dogs rankled the Garou, who threw up their hands in frustration and left, suspecting that Roth was using them to retrieve Garou who didn't want to be found. After all, he had no evidence that any harm had come to his people.

Thus, Roth lost his entire small sept. Consumed with vengeance, he turned to the Black Spiral Dancers, welcoming them into his abode. Since then, they have made it their own, transforming the upper floors into a Pit of profound strength.

Inside the Nameless, the elevators run all night, and if the time is right, the moon is full, and one's eyes are open, there are more floors to the complex than the outer structure suggests. These floors form the lair of the Black Spiral Dancers. Its odd apartments are their dens, the numbers on the doors twisting into runes that haven't been seen since the age of the Picts.

Over time, the Spirals have moved a number of their Kinfolk into the apartments on floors below the tainted caern. On these floors, reality warps. Residents sometimes hear sounds in the apartment above them — rasping sounds, clicking sounds. The pipes in the walls sometimes groan and burble as if something thicker than water was

passing through them, and in the hallways, the sounds of great heaping thuds and clomping footsteps echo, but tenants leave their apartments to scenes of absolute normalcy. Indeed the Kinfolk among them are more aware of these things and their sources, but in New York City, they're just one more sleep-deprived face among millions.

The Nameless is a platform for a new attack against the Sept of the Green. The Black Spirals have found safety and prosperity in the shadow of Roth's caern, which still appears to the Garou to be as secretive and off-putting as it ever has. Most who sense the foreboding coming from the Tower chalk it up to Roth's deteriorating state of mind.

Werewolves living in the Nameless find that its fire escapes are within convenient leaping-distance of those of adjacent, shorter apartment buildings, allowing them easy access to the rooftops of buildings up and down the street. Spirals of this hive hunt in the shadowed streets, haunting the square between Dante Park and the New York Philharmonic. So far, they have managed to keep their cover. But Zhyzhak's arrival signals a certain escalation.

Nature of the Beast

The Black Spiral Dancers have two origins: they may be born of the Garou, only finding their way to the Corrupter's service later in life, or they may be born of the Wyrms' wolves, raised in the darkness, and taught to hate and fear and hunt the Garou. In both cases, a Black Spiral Dancer is a werewolf who has walked the Spiral Labyrinth and found another monster deep within themselves.

The Black Spiral Dancers stand apart from their Garou cousins in ways both stark and subtle. Below is an examination of the nature and appearance of the fallen White Howlers.

Howlers No More

Outwardly — particularly in Lupus and Homid forms — Black Spiral Dancers may seem no different from Garou; indeed, many began as Garou, and emerged from the Labyrinth possessed with guile sufficient to maintain the ruse. But the nature of the Black Spiral Dancer is most prominently manifest when the Spiral shifts into Glabro or Crinos forms.

Examining the Black Spiral Crinos is difficult by a host of deformities and mutations that have marked and twisted Spiral stock for ages. The Wyrms' wolves have worn their faces sideways, sported bat's ears, or impractical tusks that sliced their own muzzles, and have displayed many aberrations that are more dreadful. That said, certain traits remain a constant feature among the Wyrms' wolves.

A Black Spiral Crinos may be a hideous approximation of a Crinos Garou engulfed by another, more insidious,

grinning black coat of oil-slick fur and verdigris fangs. This flesh pulls down tight around the Crinos like a second skin. Sometimes it pulls too tight, and the skin of the monster rips and splits, revealing raw bone and sinew beneath. A Spiral in Crinos seethes with palpable wrath, its frustration and hatred radiating through its bristling mane and rippling flesh. When it is most agitated, sometimes the wild, terrified eyes of its former self push up through the surface to beseech the world. Sometimes an entire face or set of fangs will try to push through the Spiral's face, throat, or chest, and the Wyrms' wolves delight in the horror this brings to witnesses, particularly those who were fond of the person they once were.

A particular myth about the Black Spirals portrays them as uniformly mottled green, putrid and mangy as if baking with fever, foul with rot and degrading from radiation sickness. Such generalizations fail to capture the enormity of the physical blasphemy that Black Spiral Dancers represent, or the variety of forms they take. Even so, Black Spiral Dancers may be sleek, streamlined, and dangerous, looking every bit as "pure" as a Garou, in jet-black or snow white.

Seed of the Wyrms

In their arrogance, the Garou have written the Spirals off as puppets and handmaidens of the Wyrms, monsters more vicious and personal than Banes, but monsters nonetheless. The Spirals are creatures born of two parents, an unholy union of blessed Mother and dark Father. Even if the Wyrms should fall silent under the Weaver's webs, the Black Spiral Dancers will exist as the living seed of his acrimony. As such, the Black Spiral Dancers can find life beyond the Wyrms, and their plans extend beyond the shadow of his terrible wings.

The insidious truth is that the Black Spiral Dancers owe much of their existence to Gaia. It is through their connection to her that they may carry on the Wyrms' war and the Wyrms' mission even if the Wyrms cease to matter.

As such, it may be true that the Wyrms become just another element of the Black Spiral history, in which they carry the only necessary part of their parent that is core to their own sustaining vendetta: rage. In their hearts, the Black Spiral Dancers know that they represent an evolution. Together they will usher in a world of darkness where the horrors of the night will reign, cities will fall, and men will be the ones in hiding.

Beyond the Wyrms

Through their connection with Gaia, the Spirals have discovered a breed of spirits that precede the natural world, superseded by the course of nature. These spirits are rare, vast, and immensely powerful; they dwell in dark-

ness, lying dormant deep within the Earth, paralyzed and lobotomized by the course of natural history. Remnants of the cataclysm and the cosmic screaming that was the birth of the planet, these are the Ancients, who existed at different phases of evolution and fell out of currency with the violent shifting and changing of the world as it grew toward a planet not entirely hostile to life. The Ancients, then, represent features of Earth's evolution that were once necessary but the spirits catalepted, and their concepts phased out. Rather than moving on to the Deep Umbra where auld and retired spirits go to be remembered and venerated, these spirits were doomed to die, acting as binding elements to hold together a planet in which they no longer served any other purpose.

The Spirals know that most of the Ancients disappeared long ago, melding with the life force of the planet. However, they also know there are some that though dissolving for billions of years, will still be around for millions more. Therefore, the Black Spirals search for the Ancients, to draw them up and give them new life, meaning, and purpose in a world that cannot withstand their presence.

The Spirals awakened one such Ancient at the bottom of the Pit known as the Swallowing Caves. Through rituals and sacrifice, the Spirals bound this Ancient to their Pit and infused the surrounding landscape with its essence, turning the area monstrous.

Another Ancient lurks within the Atchafalaya Basin, in Bayou Chantilly. The mystics brought to search for the lady of La Bête Noire tapped this remnant, called the Mother Bog. It reached out to them in turn, with a yawning breath that was as the caress of a mother who drowns her children. The Mother Bog is an Ancient driven mad by the rise of humanity and the tread of time. It has forgotten peace. It has forgotten dreams. It cradles coal and the bones of dinosaurs in its ribcage, and holds the souls of the Atkapa in its stomach. Birds do not fly into the swamp where the Mother Bog sleeps, and the instruments fail on airplanes that fly overhead. It is the Black Spirals' hope to hone the dread recollections of the Mother Bog, to gain insights on the ancient world and develop new and unforeseen Gifts from her wisdom. Eventually, they would set her loose so that she might once again travel the Atchafalaya River, flooding, drowning, and swallowing to add to her nature.

Living entombed in a planet whose life they hold sacred, the Ancients represent the spiritual collenia of untold epochs. They are the mad and single-minded gods of Ordovician extinction and the last witnesses of the birth of the universe. They are the nameless watchers, the dreaming remnants that defied the pull of science to sink beneath a billion years of time and geological stratum, vanishing into the thoughtless dissolution of

nature. These are things of Gaia, but they are not allies of the Garou, nor of that which Gaia is now. They must never be awakened or restored into the fabric of the world's cycles, but that is exactly what the Black Spiral Dancers intend to do.

Seekers of the Ancients

Spirals who seek the Ancients fall into two distinct sets of methodologies and mindsets in both how to approach the Ancients, and what resources to glean from them.

The first set acts as dark druids to the land, seeking to confer with the atmosphere and geomancy surrounding the Ancients. They don't extoll the spirit itself, but call upon the virtues of its elements, invoking it indirectly to act through nature. This grants them insight and power indirectly, allowing them to develop and direct a Pit that has been bonded to the surrounding landscape, and to evoke Gifts from the Pit that differ from Gifts directly granted by the Ancient.

The second set contains Spirals who serve as shamans, risking thralldom and insanity to commune with unthinkable spirits and gain insight directly. Shamanistic Spirals know to limit their contact with such tremendous forces, typically acting through their own intermediaries, includ-

THE UNENDING BATTLE

As the Spirals seek to unlock the Ancients, a few Garou strive to stop them. A battleground the Garou and the Spirals share, because the Ancients represent their mutual history and connection to Gaia. The Wurm is distant at best, insane, and indecipherable as a matter of course, but the Ancients are something wholly of Gaia. They represent a mutuality between the Garou and the Spirals, and a particular way in which all Garou might use the spirits of the Earth itself to bring about disaster, tragedy, or a new, unnatural era of gods and chaos and misrule.

Tragically, few Garou in the modern age are even aware of the lore of the Ancients, swept up as they are in the far more obvious battle against the Wurm. Even the ancient Mokolé barely recollect them as a shadow in the deepest recesses of Mnesis — but should Gaia's memory realize the designs of the Black Spiral Dancers, it might be enough to draw them from their wallows to re-establish contact with the Garou.

ing bound spirits, far-speaking fetishes, and enthralled decoys. Such communion requires fastidiousness and cleverness, but if successful, it grants the Spirals Gifts the Garou have never seen, and potent supernatural allies who can tell them about the powers and forces from the time before, powers they might yet let loose on Earth.

World-Strangling Ways

The Black Spiral Dancers are capable of raising Banes, calling upon them for assistance and gleaning Gifts from their wicked knowledge. The Garou worry far less about the Banes that Spirals summon than the ones the Wyrms' wolves create. Through Gifts of corruption and rituals of subservience and binding, the Black Spirals have attacked nature spirits, capturing them and torturing them to drive them insane. They've also seduced nature spirits into vile liaisons with the Wyrms' wolves, leading to blasphemous unions that spoil a spirit's nature.

Through subtle or overt means, such fiends still harness the fundamental forces of nature, but come to emphasize facets of the Wyrms, such as pain, fear, wantonness, hatred, and despair. Long ago, a Black Spiral Dancer perverted a particular forest spirit; driven into despair by his apathy and cruelty, it began to entice the lonely and desperate passing on the nearby interstate

to join it in the depths of the forest, where peace and nothingness awaits.

When a nature spirit transforms into a Bane, it may gain access to Charms that are original to its unusual nature, providing the Black Spiral Dancers with a source of newfound might they might not otherwise find if they relied solely upon horrors like G'louogh or the Dark Fungus.

Flayers of the World's Skin

The Black Spiral Dancers will not stop at victory. As the world lies bleeding, they will reach deep into its agony, making it a part of their own.

Over time, the Black Spiral Dancers have devised a blasphemous ritual to hollow out those nature spirits who have succumbed to their power, so that they can wear their empty shells like a second hide (see p. 124). Not only does this make the Spiral look like an absurdist nightmare, but also it gives the Spiral access to a host of the spirit's innate powers, including the limited ability to pose as the spirit itself. Many Spirals have used the latter ability to give false guidance to young Garou, leading them into the clutches of the Wyrms. Some Spirals more directly use this power to increase their own horrific appearance.



S'nogg Bone-eater, an Alaskan Spiral, has hollowed out a grizzly bear spirit and fused with it. When she shifts into Crinos, the bear's body forms against her own, giving her a second, massive set of bear claws that move along the curves of her arms, and the head of a grizzly bear opening over her head as though she were bursting alive from the bear's throat. The grizzly spirit roars, chokes, and snorts as S'nogg fights, its eyes almost bursting with rage; it knows nothing but a lust for murder.

Another Spiral named Vikkatha was dealt a mortal blow by a Garou more than 600 years ago, but to survive she hollowed out and inverted her own soul, to prevent it from fleeing her body. Doing so engulfed her in black and white ghost flames, and sent her into a permanent state of instability, disincorporating, and becoming corporeal every other full moon. In the centuries since even this state has waned, until Vikkatha only appeared one night a year under her own power. Now only those who know both a particular ritual as well as her location may conjure her on a full moon. When unleashed, she seeks to drink the souls of the living to maintain her coherence. In the years after her 'death' she continued to pursue whatever agendas she had before her transformation, but the passage of time has erased most of her ideas about the world and replaced them with hunger and ambition to kill. Spirals who release her are typically in need of a weapon against the Garou, or a distraction to draw their attention away from their true aims, or a weapon with which to frighten ghosts and other foes. As it stands, no dying Black Spiral has ever recreated Vikkatha's transformation.

Another Spiral, a former Wendigo named Dayalond, consumed a servant of the Wendigo spirit. He wears her flesh while hunting members of his former tribe. White Hunter Dayalond bears his name for two reasons: his pure white coat, and the blizzard that moves ahead of him, covering his approach. The White Hunter has stalked from Alaska to Maine, and hunted extensively in the blinding heights of the Yukon.

At One with the Wyrms

A Spiral metis guards the junkyard entrance to a Pit, lurking in shadows, growling and snarling through chain links at passersby. Though he is metis, he has enough low cunning to know that he need not show himself to terrify people. All alone in the darkness, just making noises, he *sounds* like the biggest, meanest, tiger-balled sonofabitching attack dog there ever was. He prefers it that way. From the top of a heap of junked out old cars, on a night when the wind is right, his howling carries all the way to the Lincoln Park Zoo. If he is lucky, the wolves answer back, telling him he is brother even if no one else will. All that would change if they ever saw him, or caught a whiff of his

scent. But that won't happen. The junkyard is his world. One does not leave his world. How would one breathe? Rather, the metis sits in the shadows, sometimes lit only by the glow of a television. His favorite show is Scooby Doo, though he often wonders with a mixture of fear, indignity, and sadness, why the Mystery Machine hasn't come to investigate his yard yet. It certainly is haunted, what with all the mad dog sounds, the howling, and the occasional screams.

His pack calls him Scuzznuts.

He is the dog of the yard, and his junkyard is the entrance to the hell humanity has invited into the world. Inside, the Black Spiral Labyrinth awaits. Obliquely, the metis knows this is not the only path to the Spiral, but it is his path, and none may come to it, and *none* may leave it, but by him. In the eight years he has been guarding the Pit, fourteen have been dragged down into the hole at the center of the junkyard. Only nine crawled back out, and of those, only five were strong enough, fast enough, mean enough, or insane enough to make it past him. The bones of the other four are his chew-toys. In all of Chicagoland, only the metis's brothers are stronger than he is.

For any Garou dragged down into the Pit, only one choice leads to survival.

Becoming a Black Spiral Dancer

At the core of a Black Spiral's hive lies a totem-hole invested with the spirit of the Pit. In this area of malign power, a Spiral Theurge may complete a ritual to open a path to the Labyrinth of Malfeas. Such a pathway requires immense power, meaning that the Pit in question must be a particularly fearsome locus of the Wyrms' power. Creating one powerful enough, is difficult, but achievable: through the binding of or an alliance with a powerful spirit or Bane, the corruption of a caern with immense geomantic significance, or through the constancy of horror. The Pit itself is a place of pain, torment, and despair; a place that inspires fear, guarded by a terrifying warden.

In any case, such doorways open so that Garou captives, or Black Spiral young, thrust into the Labyrinth where the Enigmas, Banes, and avatars of the Wyrms test and judge them. These trials lead inevitably in one direction, taking the traveler into the darkness of his own soul, where he accepts either that he is a product of the Wyrms and embraces his monstrous nature, or he dies. In both cases, the werewolf's sanity never survives intact. Few mental perspectives emerge from the Labyrinth wholly unchanged, unless the "dancer" was fucked in the head to begin with.

And this is only the first dance. Many more will follow in the years to come, as the Dancer proves himself to his new tribe.

Invariably, the transformation has a profound effect on the werewolf's mind and emotions. Given a perspec-

tive of righteous hatred, the kind of obliterating force that strips bare his core, washing over him a torrent of Rage allows a Garou to survive the Labyrinth and transcend his original nature in the first place.

The werewolf's physical appearance can also change, subtly or overtly. These changes may be incredibly apparent in Crinos: anything from bat ears or muzzles that unzip like flower petals, to greenish werewolves covered in needle-fanged, flesh-eating tumors. Or they may be less-overt changes, like the Garou's coat steadily turning white, or his Homid form developing a perfect, wicked symmetry. Balefire burns away the imperfections, leaving the hollow survivor a vision of decadence and an object of tremendous lust.

Rarely is this transformation subtle. With it comes the dark blessing of the Wyrms, an induction into his twisted mirror of the Pact that binds the Garou to the world of spirits.

The Spiral Inside

The curse of the Spirals is the seed of the Wyrms inside every Garou heart. Rage is proof of the Wyrms' hand in the creation of the Garou, though most deny with empowered vehemence the presence of their dark Father.

Yet the Spirals have persisted and pervaded, taking Garou Kinfolk for their own, and dragging pure Garou down into their Pits, to force them to walk the Black Spiral. In many cases, the Spiral stance: the Apocalypse is over, stop struggling, and give in to Rage, has drawn many Garou willingly into the Pits of their sworn enemies. But this isn't always required.

The example of Nathan Rocksye, a New England Get, is instructive. Rage and lust were the Wyrms' way into his heart. His love was forsaken; the object of his desire, also Garou would not love him back. They were the best of friends, and the attraction was mutual, but she followed the Litany, and she disdained the horrors of the metis. When she took a Kinfolk lover, he left the pack and became prey for both the Wyrms and his passions. He lost himself in his war with the Wyrms, and when she finally found him, he was out of his mind with Rage. Driving her down, he attempted to throttle her into submission so that he might partake of her body. But the man inside rallied, he fought back from the precipice, finally flinging her away winded but unharmed, and fled into the wilderness.

With all the urgency of one who sees a disaster looming, she gathered her pack to give chase, and find him before the Spirals could.

The Garou have a term for those werewolves consumed by lust, or hunger, or other qualities of the Beast, and untamed by higher reason or the sustaining nature of Gaia. They said it of Nathan Rocksye as well: "he

walks the Spiral inside." The belief is that such Garou are already on the Spiral in their hearts and in their minds. The Wyrms and its agents must soon follow, to take the Garou to a Pit where he might face the monster within and accept it, and become it.

In the case of Nathan Rocksye, his pack arrived just as Rocksye stood at the precipice of a Pit, surrounded by Black Spiral Dancers. But before they could throw him into the Spiral, he surprised them with his sudden berserker rage, slaying three of the Wyrms' wolves and scattering two others. However, when his pack tried to approach, he drove them off and warned them not to follow — *her* most of all — and then disappeared. His last known residence was Hither Woods, near Montauk.

Living with Monsters — Black Spiral Kinfolk

Once it was easy to think the Black Spiral Dancers had no weakness, that they held nothing sacred, nor cherished anyone. Once it would have been easy to look at the degenerate children of the Black Spiral Dancers and brand as victims and future monsters, writing them off as products of the psychotic torment they are subject to from the time of their birth.

Times have changed.

Though examples abound of the Spirals rutting in degeneracy and tormenting their offspring into greater states of insanity, the more prominent example of Spiral Kinfolk is also much easier to miss. These Kinfolk live in houses and apartments, go to school, hold jobs, and act as a stable buffer between the world and their monstrous relatives, whom they help to conceal behind the Veil of their own, apparently normal lives.

Such children, lovers, and associates lead anything but ordinary lives. They know that their existence is one of requirements, of demand and response. Sometimes they need to run errands, to have the car's engine running and the doors unlocked at a particular time. Sometimes they are required to answer phones attached to dead lines from numbers that have no origin in the bank of telephone registries. Sometimes they must answer to the Beast, in the most literal of terms. Sometimes they are required to kill. Rarely are they required to love, but they are *always* required to fuck. In all of these demands and responses, there is one common thread, one issuance that never changes: the Kinfolk are a tool that ensures the survival of the Black Spiral Dancers. Their actions always lead back to that common thread, whether it be by paying rent on a place to hide, to killing someone who knows too much, to giving birth to the next Black Spiral Dancer.

BECOMING THE MONSTER

Some Garou believe the Spiral curse exists within all werewolves. This belief is rarely literal, but speaks to one of the greatest fears in the hearts of Garou. In werewolves, self-control is the most important, defining factor in one's existence. The Garou's conflict with the Wyrms begins with the battle inside, to fight the Wyrms that lurks within his heart, taking root in feelings of physical desire, jealousy, anger, and hunger. There the Garou builds a labyrinth for himself, and it is the Wyrms' desire to see that he walks it.

In a more literal sense, the curse of the Black Spirals lives in many Garou, not all of whom are members, or captives, of Black Spiral packs. The curse, and the inclination to do harm and embrace the Beast are so much stronger in these Garou, who "walk the Spiral inside" every day of their lives. Indeed, history has seen Garou who have walked the path of darkness, in pursuit of some great want, some forbidden love, or path of bloody vengeance, only to face consumption by the essence of the Wyrms. The Black Spiral Dancers avidly pursue such spontaneously created horrors, considering them near-members of the tribe already. They need only to walk the spiral in the flesh, and glimpse with their eyes the Wyrms they have already found in their soul, for their induction to be complete.

In all of this, they are the vector through which the Spiral tribe perpetuates.

The Filial Bulwark

The relationship between Spiral and Kinfolk involves a necessary remove. The werewolf keeps his distance, emotionally and physically, to limit the amount of contact between her family and the Wyrms. As corruption and a corrosion of sanity are both real threats to those exposed to the Wyrms, a Spiral is generally a distant figure in the lives of her mortal relatives. She is a mysterious face haunting photo albums, or a name heard only in whispers at family reunions.

Not even a hundred years ago, the Black Spiral Dancers still believed in rigorously educating their children, filling them with knowledge spun from the Wyrms' perspective of Gaia and the Garou, and on preparing

them for the war at hand. However, as more Spirals found lasting, even prosperous lives on the surface, as the monsters became more self-sustaining and able to blend into society, using it as a shield to survive; more Spirals began to find strength in stability. With this migration, the Spirals began to realize the value of their kin being able to function in society and walk where they could not walk, and speak where the Spirals needed voices. This necessitated a change in the role of Kinfolk, from uneducated broodmares to sophisticated, educated agents. Such Kinfolk knew only what they needed to know, and existed in family units where members varied in knowledge of their werewolf progenitors.

Even into the early twenty-first century, traditionalist Spirals argued that Kinfolk who weren't prepared to receive the blessing of the Wyrms would spawn weak werewolves, fit only to die shortly after the First Change. This argument lost its weight with the appearance of a Spiral named Alan Rixby, who was wholly unprepared for what he would become. His mother, a Black Spiral Dancer, had deliberately hidden the truth of his existence from him, allowing him to feel unloved and unwanted. He crept through his life in terror of her mood swings, and of the truth he knew, somewhere in the back of his mind, that his family was not *all right* and that something was terribly wrong with mother.

Unprepared for the truth, Rixby's terror, his fear, his anger, and worst of all — the sudden rightness, the *sense* of it all — sent him whirling down the Spiral inside, making him a vessel of the Wyrms before he ever set foot into a Pit. His mother's last words before he pushed his face through her chest were "Give mama a hug." Long after her death, her phantom Crinos remained entangled in the aura of his hatred and pain, leaping to his defense and guiding him in the ways of destruction. He was one of the most effective Spirals of the decade. The Spirals needed no further proof for what was by then so obvious: this was just another case of how their kind could draw tremendous power from the suffering caused by betrayal. Many began to see that it was the lack of preparation, combined with the hope of some sort of normal life, which made the Black Spiral transformation potent and deadly.

Another advantage to the distance between the Spirals and their Kinfolk is the deniability that makes their Kinfolk viable as objects of conquest and mates to the Garou. While some Kinfolk have traveled into the foulest Pits and beheld the awful majesty of the Wyrms, many only had brushes with malignant spirits, or understood the Wyrms by the faintest clues. It's easy for the Garou to kill Kinfolk who are psychotic mass murderers and cannibalistic thralls, but it is hard for them to murder Kinfolk who barely even have any concept

of the Wyrms or no concept at all. Should their Spiral protectors die, the Garou may consider these Kinfolk redeemable commodities for their potential to produce Garou children remains. Therefore, the curse of the Black Spiral Dancers endures.

To Love a Monster

Most would say it is impossible to love a Black Spiral Dancer; they are monsters, incapable of love themselves. The closest they come is a farce of emotional control and mental abuse that turns Kinfolk into their pawns. Nevertheless, the monster can be alluring, magnetic, and larger than life to smitten Kinfolk. The Wyrms' tribe exudes the same sort of animal magnetism as other werewolves. In the early days of romance, a Black Spiral Dancer might even try to cultivate the last undamaged shreds of his soul and *feel* something for his Kinfolk mate. Nothing pure can truly grow in the Wyrms' poisoned soil, of course, but sometimes there's enough to provide false hope.

Over time, and through selective breeding, the Spiral Kinfolk have evolved. They became more exotic, more fantastic, more thrilling. A Spiral Kinfolk was that person who was a touch out of step with society, charming but morbid: a person who seemed like they couldn't be constrained by the rules that weighed everyone else down. The Kinfolk of the Spirals were people tormented by inner demons, but burned with passionate fervor that magnified them against the backdrop of sheep that call themselves human.

The Spirals decided that they deserved only the best, and so they made their Kinfolk into desirable objects. Being awful and unlovely things themselves, the Spirals conceived of families that would love them, or at least worship them, and so showed their Kinfolk the best of themselves for as long as they could, until there wasn't anything left to show that wasn't obviously broken.

The Spirals often use such Kinfolk as objects of weaponized lust, luring the Garou into traps and bargains to their advantage. Only love or the adulation-bordering-on-worship their Kinfolk had for them, allow the Spirals to use them as stalking horses and Judas goats, to give them away knowing that their hearts could never belong to any other. The Spirals don't see this as abuse or betrayal; it's why they bred and seduced their Kin, after all.

Loving a Black Spiral Dancer is an invitation to later ruin and horror. A Black Spiral Dancer isn't just a man with a dark side he holds in check, his soul is a poisonous wreck, and it gets worse with every return to dance the Labyrinth again. But it's the thrill of terror that makes the love so much more exhilarating in the beginning. Many houses of Kinfolk have been held together for

years purely on the powerful romances between Spirals and their Kinfolk spouses, their obsessions with one another burning through the worst of times, the most horrible events, and the Spiral's own monstrosity. That those flames even ultimately self-consuming, killed or rendered dead inside or worse, is of little concern to the Spiral Dancers.

Visions of the Broken Pact

Adrian Scala, a poet, writer, hate-monger, and Black Spiral Dancer, rose to prominence for a publication he circulated among the tribes of the Garou, revealing his nihilistic manifesto as well as his origin: born of a Spiral Kinfolk mother to a Shadow Lord father. He voluntarily walked the Spiral when he was thirteen, while members of his tribe were debating, in secret, (or so they thought) to have him killed, and while the Black Spiral Dancers were banging down the doors.

It was a selfless act, he said, one intended to save the family that had thrown him away. However, it taught

KINFOLK STEREOTYPES

When the Garou think of Spiral Kinfolk, they think of slouching, uneducated wretches, held as functional captives in a house of horrors or a radiation-blighted wasteland. They picture the monstrous families from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *The Hills Have Eyes*, or huddled, catatonic victims who spend their lives as the victims of sadistic violence.

Often, they're right. It happens, frequently. However, the more influential members of the tribe discourage such wasteful practices. Kinfolk are one of the few things which cause the Spirals to exercise any restraint. They're simply too valuable, useful, and *necessary* to squander intentionally and the hives that keep their Kinfolk in radioactive breeding camps tend to destroy themselves within a generation or two.

Still, the stereotype, and practice, persists. The Song of the Spiral makes it clear that how a werewolf treats his family is her business and hers alone.



him much about himself, and afforded him great intrigue. According to his own words, Scala held communion with the Wyrms for thirteen years, only emerging when he was 26. During that time, he claimed to have met and guided a number of powerful Garou, who had come deep into the Spiral to seek the wisdom of the Wyrms. Many of these were Garou who were now powerful and influential members of the 13 tribes. Certainly, his words inspired wrath and unleashed conflict among the Garou. Still more Black Spiral Dancers emerged to say they recognized his face or his voice, from dreams, or in the fleeting memories they held of the Labyrinth, in which he aided them.

In any case, Scala's reputation has guaranteed him an audience, and his opinions and writings are widely circulated and hotly debated, both by Spiral hives and by those Garou who believe there is power in studying the works of the enemy. Below are his thoughts on the Garou tribes, thoughts that reflect the identity of the Black Spiral Dancers, and how they view their erstwhile cousins.

Black Furies

We absolutely cannot abide this tribe. They are the Gorgons and the Medusae, the eyes and hands and cunts of Gaia, and more than any other Garou, we must view them all as a threat. These are the embodiments of the

Great Mother herself; no other Garou is closer to her will or her essence. Which is why we must conquer them, break them down put them on their hands and knees where they belong. It is only natural, it is only right. If they are the Mother, Gaia, then we are the Father Wyrms. Claiming them would show the Garou Nation the inevitability of what we are. Our line is superior and we will breed them out. Best of all, we'll be taking what so many Garou men have long wanted but have been so long denied.

The Black Furies are warriors born, unhindered by the poisons of testosterone-fueled minds and masculine social constructs. They are the purity of Gaia, of controlled Rage and the Wyrms suppressed and bent. Think about the power of their thighs and abdomen, taking you in as they writhe beneath you. Be sure to let the next Black Fury you meet know that this end is the ultimate culmination of her lifetime of hard training: to be your bitch. Better yet, drag one of your female Kinfolk from her hovel and throw her out in front of the nearest Fury sept so you can watch them go to pieces over whether to kill her or whether to give her shelter.

Bone Gnawers

There's a good reason the Garou hate these motherfuckers. For those living so close to the underbelly of the Wyrms, they prove remarkably resistant to walking

the Black Spiral. Perpetually shat upon, and living in a constant state of betrayal, these lowlife subhuman scums aren't intelligent enough to hate the Garou. Rather they persist in the places many Spirals must occupy: slums, sewers, and places of urban blight, where our folk run across them constantly. The fighting is bitter, but perhaps we should salute them, the motliest of all the Garou, for their tenacity. They aren't afraid of getting their hands dirty, and they wallow in a state of blissful don't-give-a-shit and that makes them deadly to us.

Children of Gaia and the Uktena

The Children of Gaia? Sam Haight was the best thing they ever produced. I will say this about them: those shit-stirs and fence sitters might be the smartest of the Garou, manipulating other tribes onto the front lines while they stay safe in their "communion" with the Mother. Don't think for a second that other Garou don't notice. In fact, if you ever have the pleasure of dismantling a pack, leave any Children of Gaia alive, but kill the rest. Let the idea that these cowards let the other Garou do their fighting while they skulk and hide become a reality for the Garou Nation. The less organized they are, the better.

As for the Uktena, treat them the same as the Children — don't kill an Uktena unless you have to. Many Garou already think of them as Spirals-in-Denial, and we want to feed that image to keep them alienated. Just know what you're dealing with. These guys aren't easy to seduce, and they aren't easy to shock or intimidate. Some are as close to the Wyrms as we are, and are yet even more passive and unemotional, gazing into us like they know every corner of our hearts. It feels like being disarmed and dismantled. Nasty shit.

If you kill one, make him disappear. Try to come back wearing his face, walk into a sept, and watch it go to hell.

Fianna

Once upon a time, these were our closest cousins, and in their deepest heart of hearts, they want to live the way we do. Drink, fuck, and fight: that's the real Litany their hearts sing out. But they sit around, and they tell each other stories until they're all wound up to go charge off and die for nothing. For pride and glory. Everything they *really* want, they put on hold. They keep it all in, and it makes them sick.

We know a lot about that, the rot in the arrogant heart of the tribe. Every year, more Fianna metis dance the Spiral in their hearts, and we're always willing to take them in. The Fianna are too proud to own any of their shame. They don't acknowledge their lusts, and so hate the children born of them; they don't acknowledge they left the White Howlers to stand alone, and so they

hate us. But we remember, and we'll never stop making them pay.

Get of Fenris

Mother's fiercest warriors. They never talk about the time we invited them to a fight, and they declined to show. They think we sacrificed ourselves in some noble death-charge, rather than going in alone because the Get were too lazy to help.

Like the Black Furies, the Get are a reflection of us, only twisted in a different way. They have the monstrous strength and tremendous fighting spirit of the White Howlers, and the crazy fuckass wolf-spirits and thralls of Fenris at their backs, painting them a legacy of invincibility borne out through war. They like to think they're unstoppable, and every year sees another Get dickhead slinging a Spiral pelt over his back, but they aren't telling the *whole* story, the story of how they helped *make* us and set us free. How every year we get bigger, badder, and *worse*. Now there's more than a few of us stalking whole packs alone, going Grendel on those motherfuckers. And they ain't got no Beowulf to save them. Beowulf walked the Spiral a long time ago.

Glass Walkers

Cities are the Wyrms' scales shed upon the Earth. The Glass Walkers are a problem, because they've learned to thrive in the world to come without shedding any of their Gaian delusions. That makes them crazy, but it also makes them good at hiding among the sheep. Lots of times, the hardest thing about dealing with Glass Walkers is figuring out what to hit in the first place. That's the bad news. The good news is, we have all those same strengths, in greater abundance, and the city is more inviting to us than it is to them.

Red Talons

They are quite possibly our greatest allies, but they do not know it. They do not know they can be tempted. We can give them back the world, the green Earth, the blue planet, free of this plague of humanity, a world in which the towers of the mighty have toppled. The Red Talons need only give into their Rage, and to see how the Garou have held them back and betrayed them, prevented them from getting at man's neck. It is man, after all, who feeds the Wyrms. Man's hatred, man's malice, man's lies, man's depredations, man's greed, man's fucking hubris. What is so great about man? Only the Wyrms. The Wyrms is man's sick prize. If man is the universe's attempt to explain itself, then cancer is an explanation of man. Spiral brothers, tell the wolves: "Kill the man-kind, and your world will be free. The wind will carry your howls across the unsullied plains. Without man, the Wyrms will die." They will look at

you askance and know that the seed of the Wyrms lives on in you, but they're too stupid and too haughty to be scared. They'll like what you're saying because it's what they want to hear, and they'll think to themselves: "When the world is quiet, and man is gone, we'll hunt the Spirals in the night until the last of the Wyrms' kin dies. And then the world will be ours, and all will be at peace." That won't happen of course, by then, that wonderful stock of lupine Kinfolk will be inextricably *ours*, members of our global pack.

Shadow Lords

It's easy to pull someone's strings once you know what they want, and Shadow Lords are the tribe of *want*. Usually they want to be powerful, respected, in charge, and their own tribe pushes them to grasp any advantage to succeed. We will *always* find Shadow Lords willing to cut deals with us to get what they want. They will *always* be planning to do away with us later; they will *always* assume we're going to stab them in the back and figure they're one step ahead for having figured that out.

Honestly, if they could just get over their delusions of noble struggle, they're a lot like us. They see what they want, and reach for it with both hands. Sometimes you'll find a Lord who can finish connecting the dots the rest of the way and see the figure they describe is the Spiral. That doesn't make them our friends, though; if they came over to our side en masse, they'd just want to be in charge of us. So, sure, feed their ambitions whenever they seem likely to cause unrest for the other Garou, then blackmail or ruin them. We keep playing the game because it works out for us even when they think it works out for them.

Silent Striders

The best thing about swift messengers is that they tend to travel alone a lot. The worst thing is that all that stringy muscle makes for poor eating.

Silver Fangs

Glorious kings, leading the charge in an imaginary war! Nothing stirs up the anthill like a dead Silver Fang. Oh no, the noble wolf and/or arrogant bastard is dead, let us weep and tear at our breasts and/or fight over his shit.

Make no mistake; this tribe has the good shit. Silver Fangs are unmistakable thanks to their obsessively pure breeding, so if you ever down one, make time to loot the body. It drives the Garou wild if you show up wielding some mighty hero's storied klaive. And their Kinfolk! Thanks for keeping the blood strong for us, guys. Sure, the tribe will go apeshit to get their Kin and toys back, but that just means you're dictat-

ing their actions, and that means the opportunity for more dead Silver Fangs.

Stargazers

These guys are close to extinction, and can't get there soon enough. What's a werewolf with no passion, no desire, and his fury bound up in chains? Nothing, not even a punch line. Just let the modern world finish erasing the Stargazers; unlike the Red Talons, they have nothing to offer us as they pass into history.

Wendigo

Fucking badass warriors like the Black Furies, but most of them without half the testicular fortitude the Furies have. They have the potential to be our worst enemies or our greatest allies. For those of you who know our history, we used to look a lot like these guys once upon a time, but when our lands were poisoned and our people raped we went apeshit and danced the Black Spiral. Guess there weren't any bars or casinos in old Caledonia? Next time you get a hold of a Wendigo, show him a mirror, and tell him he ought to be angry about the complicity of society in his tribe becoming what it is. He ought to thank you for showing him a way down the Spiral; it's the only way to salvage what's left of his pride.

Gaia's Fallen

Not every inductee into the Black Spiral Dancers is a cub, unknowing of what it means to Dance. Every tribe has lost great warriors to the heart of Malfeas. The Black Spiral Dancers take a special pride in the werewolves seduced from Gaia's path. To throw an unwitting cub into the Spiral is one thing; to convince a seasoned Garou to forsake all she knows and dance into the service of the Wyrms is something completely different. Gaia's Fallen are the terror of all Garou. Facing down the fallen mockery of the White Howlers offers a hazy reflection of a werewolf's soul; it's easy to cast them off as the insane, evil monstrosities they are. Demonizing the Black Spiral Dancers lets the Garou sleep at night knowing they've done a service to Gaia.

Then a Garou finds someone he once knew at the other end of his klaive, and a new horror tears into his soul. The White Howlers were lost centuries ago. Their corruption is an accepted relic of a painful past. A werewolf stalking a pack of Dancers only to find his supposedly-dead mother standing as their alpha faces the Wyrms at a new level. Gaia's fallen are clear mirrors with Wyrms-tainted edges. Once a warrior accepts that a Garou can be coaxed into the Labyrinth and Dance of her own free will, trusting others becomes more difficult.

Inside his heart lurks the most frightening possibility of all: What if he's next?

Seemingly paradoxically, fallen Gaian Garou are more zealous than those who Danced as cubs. The typical Black Spiral Dancer lives in full ignorance of what it means to be one of Gaia's blessed. For the Garou who used to belong to one of the thirteen tribes, however, she has known yet she chose to reject it. For whatever reason, the call of the Wyrms outweighed the call of Gaia. Many Garou try to rationalize the decision to save remnants of the lost packmate or septmate they once knew. But the truth still lingers in the air, tainting any tale they might sing. Even if the werewolf was thrown into the Labyrinth by the Black Spiral Dancers against her will, she still chose to join the Wyrms. She could have resisted; she could have chosen death. Every Garou faced with this horror must live wondering if he would be stronger than his fallen comrade.

Gaia's fallen serve the Wyrms with a purpose unseen in many other Black Spiral Dancers. They each had a reason to fall, and no matter how unstable, that reason is all they have to explain why they allowed their souls into the Wyrms' service. The last thing their crumbling minds can accept is that all the horrors they've inflicted on Gaia since they fell were to the song of the Wyrms' laughter. The werewolves sabotage every Garou operation they can. They seek to prove that their new viewpoint is correct and the Nation is blind. A startling sense of desperation lurks underneath their motives, chewing away at what remains of their sanity. Even if one of the fallen could be saved, the weight of Harano would likely find her falling to her own claws.

The fallen offer another service to the Wyrms. They know the Garou with whom they used to run. They expose tribal, sept, and pack secrets to the Wyrms. Those that Dance find the chance to return with an opportunity not afforded any born Black Spiral Dancer. They can infiltrate the ranks of their former allies and sabotage their plans from within. The Garou are a volatile force. A spark in a strategic location can set packs, septs, and even tribes upon one another. They can leak information from the septs to the local Spirals, alerting them to allies, defensive strategies, and planned offensive efforts. A pack running into the teeth of well-prepared Wyrms-beasts is a recipe for disaster.

Commonly, the infiltrators remain undiscovered until it's too late. They cause irreparable damage, and by the time the Garou uncover the offender, she has disappeared back into the darkness.

Why would a Gaian warrior accept the call of the Wyrms? In the end times of a seemingly lost war, a werewolf might lose faith that he can make any difference. As faith dies, his Rage still burns, lashing out at anything

perceived as false hope. He begins his Dance on a mission to show the Nation how wrong they are, how Gaia is doomed, and how stupid they are to believe anything else. Other Garou become lost as they watch the Wyld thrash back against the Wyrms. Tornados, earthquakes, and tidal waves can be just as destructive as any Wyrms-fed beast. With the Wyld wreaking vengeance, and not differentiating between friend and foe, the werewolf finds herself wondering why she's even trying.

Some werewolves simply come to hate other Garou. Mother's Voice is one example. Once an Adren of the Children of Gaia, Mother's Voice received her vision early in her Cliath days. She would unite her sept with another that was only miles away. But she was ill-prepared for her reception among other werewolves. She struggled with both septs until they finally waged war on one another. In one last final act of frustration and rage, Mother's Voice threw out her allegiance with the Garou. If they wanted to destroy each other, let them.

The Wyrms heard her and accepted her into its fold. Mother's Voice was reborn as Wedge Tooth. Now, she infiltrates septs around the country, leaking information and keeping the Garou warring amongst themselves with well-placed rumors and lies.

Having dealt with all of the tribes, Wedge Tooth has insight to offer on their flaws, failings, and potential. While many Garou harbor general fatal flaws, working specifically to a tribe's weakness grants a better chance to corrupt them to the Father's service. Wedge Tooth offers her observations on each tribe below.

Black Furies

If there's one thing the Black Spiral Dancers have over most of the Garou Nation from a Fury's perspective, it's that we don't care about a werewolf's gender. Male, female, both, neither... whatever so long as the job is done and done well. Still, liberating the mind of a Fury is difficult at best. She fights for the Mother, and she will go down fighting if she must.

Most cultures within the Garou Nation, however, are patriarchal. Females have to strive longer and harder to gain respect. Find the Furies who can't stand by and watch a woman's subjugation. Open their eyes to the suffering of women among the Garou. When they see the other tribes' attitudes firsthand, the Rage and desire to remake the world in their image will fill their minds. Let them think they can remake it. In their Rage, they'll further splinter the Garou Nation, attacking their would-be allies, and, as they take the first steps of the Dance, they will see the world of the Apocalypse, one where they can stand tall and haunt the streets, enforcing their desired laws of equality.

Bone Gnawers

They readily wallow in the worst of humanity's filth. The hearty children of Rat know how to get by and make Gaia survive in places where others won't tread. But that also means they know where to strike to kill Her. They understand cities like no one else, and they have the greatest human relay system, the dispossessed.

The best way to get to the Bone Gnawers? Their Kinfolk. Who gives a shit about Bone Gnawer Kin? Only the Bone Gnawers. The filthy, homeless, good-for-nothing people thieving and struggling just to get a meal — the rest of the Garou Nation, with the possible exception of the Children of Gaia, won't touch them with a ten-foot pole. Find them, and then kill them. Call the police, claiming one of them has a gun and watch the SWAT team descend. After the justice system locks their Kinfolk away — or just shoots them dead for jaywalking — the Bone Gnawers will find few Garou care. The prisons are well out of their reach out in the wilderness, and the police look after their own. The Gnawers' Rage will well up against the Nation, and the normally don't-give-a-fuck Bone Gnawers will be ready to Dance. A deal here, some assistance there and the Gnawer kin can be freed — or avenged — at the cost of the Gnawer's soul.

Children of Gaia

A mess of a tribe, the problem with the Children of Gaia is that there is no stereotypical Child of Gaia. The tribe is a mishmash of everything. But everyone loves a stereotype so they all try to pin that happy-go-lucky, good-for-nothing wimpy werewolf bullshit on them. Don't believe it. The only thing that holds true for every Child of Gaia is the mantra of the tribe — the Garou need to unite, and it's their job to do it.

Their own mantra is their downfall. Their job is thankless, brutal, and unwanted. The Garou aren't interested in anything except fighting the Wyrms and each other, and most of the time, they're willing to settle for the latter. Getting them to work together is a pipe dream, and as soon as a Gaian is truly convinced of that, everything for which they've strived suddenly becomes meaningless. The Garou aren't going to lose because of the Black Spiral Dancers or the Banes or the Fomori. No, the Garou are going to lose because they can't grow the fuck up and get along. The truth is enough to drive many Gaians to the Spiral's doors.

Fianna

Weak-willed drunkards who revel and kill almost as readily as the Get, what's keeping the Fianna from falling more often? No other tribe sees as much of themselves in the Black Spiral Dancers; that's what. Where other

tribes can blind themselves to the Dancers being Garou, the Fianna go in eyes open every damn time. The memory of the White Howlers is still too strong and the mistakes of the Fianna too fresh for them to be easy prey for liberation.

Be indirect with Stag's children. Above all, the Fianna enjoy *feeling*. Look for the forbidden romances, and the deadly bloodlust. Use their own forbidden passions to bring them shame. If that's not an option, find their metis. The miserable brutes are treated worse than just about any other werewolf. The Fianna kick them around, spit on them, and give them all the shit jobs. Meanwhile, they're already dancing the Spiral in their hearts. Give them their chance to climb to the top of a pecking order. The best part is that every metis fallen is just another example of why the Fianna *should* treat them like shit.

Get of Fenris

Rage wrapped in fur, any foolish Black Spiral would think the easiest way to lure a Get into the Black Labyrinth is through her inner fire. Many of us have tried that route, and just as many have been ripped to shreds. The Get of Fenris are masters of their Rage.

The Get have made many enemies throughout the Garou Nation. Few trust them entirely, and most do not like the brutal outlook the Get have towards life. The Get may control their Rage, but they have to prove it over and over again to gain an inch of trust from others, and that's infuriating. The Garou stand on their pedestals, looking down on the Get for every slip. That, of course, only encourages more anger and more slips until the Get becomes the slaving beast of war the Nation believes him to be. And then it's the Garou who get torn to shreds, not us, making it all the better.

Glass Walkers

Cockroach's children are survivors. They learn, change, and adapt their methods faster than any other tribe. They take their fight to domains that most of us fail to understand. But they also fight a battle more fruitless than most of the Garou Nation.

Every day a Glass Walker tries to work in a system that just doesn't care. Pentex rips open bleeding wounds all over Gaia's flesh, the political system is in the pockets of the corporations, and most people just don't give a shit. The Glass Walkers may be miles ahead of other Garou, but that puts them alone against the human-caused horrors they face. For every minion of the Weaver that falls, two more rise.

Lure the Glass Walkers with the power to do more. Leave fetishes in the boardrooms they cleanse, and offer them significant support — at one remove — that has a

tiny price attached. What's one tree, one werewolf, one pack if the Glass Walker can take down a major nest of Pattern Spiders? What's one sept if an entire Pentex subsidiary collapses under the Glass Walker's might? And what is Pentex compared to a string of new Black Spiral Dancers?

Red Talons

The Red Talons already know they're fighting a war they cannot win. They gnash and snap at the heels of humanity, but humanity kicks them back with silver-toed boots. The other Garou try to restrain their Rage. They tell the Talons to keep their anger in check, they tell the Talons to ignore their base instincts, and they expect the Talons to obey. And so the Rage only builds as the wilderness disappears.

Who wouldn't be fucking angry? Even your own kind, the other Garou, treat you like a dog. Sit. Stay. Behave. Every Red Talon has already started walking the Spiral, they just don't know it yet. Every time they dream of the sound of human sinew tearing asunder, they take another step. Play to their anger; it's all they have left. The perfect release for a Red Talon is to let the Beast-of-War run rampant as they unleash the full brunt of their Rage on humanity. And, contrary to popular belief, they aren't stupid. They know not to lift the veil, so they'll be careful in where and when they strike. A few dead wolves here and there, and you have a pack of potential new Black Spiral Dancers.

Shadow Lords

Everywhere a Shadow Lord looks, all he sees is failure from the other tribes. They want nothing more than to take hold of the Garou Nation in an iron fist until it submits to their authority. And they are more ruthless to their own.

The difficulty in liberating a Shadow Lord is that he understands us; he plays our games. A Lord will listen to one of us, but he's more likely to locate the pit inadvertently revealed than he is to fall. The time to strike a Shadow Lord is when he fails. Wounded pride is dangerous, and one of Grandfather Thunder's children bears the full weight of any misdeed. His tribe will offer no pity or understanding. Rage will boil within, and desperation to redeem his name will clear his mind for the Labyrinth. Convince him to redirect the blame by pulling others into an endless cycle of finger pointing. By dragging others down, he can stand atop them once more. With all the failure and all the squabbling, he is sure to come to hate the Garou. And if he wants to rule them, we can show him the way. He just needs to learn to Dance.

Silent Striders

The lone Silent Strider is much easier to kill than it is to liberate, but for all the work it might take to bring a Strider into our fold, the reward is well worth it. The werewolves run to and fro, passing news between septs and packs alike. A lone Strider is considered normal, and they are rarely questioned. Even if another werewolf does question her, he'll accept evasive and enigmatic answers — it's the Strider way. Infiltration and lies are the ex-Strider's specialty.

Every Strider wants to return home, find her ancestors, and lift the tribal curse. A few hold out hope that they can. It's that hope that gives the Wyrms a chance at their hearts. Lead the hopeful with well-placed rites. Let the Strider believe she is a key to relieving the tribe of one of its burdens. As the Strider performs each seemingly innocuous rite, she'll gain a touch of taint. Each new ritual will be slightly worse than the last, but each time, she'll find herself stepping closer to liberation from her curse.

Only too late will she realize the curse is gone because she is no longer one of Owl's children.


Silver Fangs

A great werewolf is born. She is the pride of her parents. She grows from cub to Cliath hearing all about how she's a born leader, she's a queen of other Garou, it's their duty to follow her and support her. And then she takes her first step out into the real world. The other tribes don't listen to her, and she's all prepped to lead a Nation that left her behind long ago.

Few Garou follow the Silver Fangs' every beck and call. The Fangs expect obedience, but find only resistance. Everywhere the tribe looks their entire purpose is falling apart, leaving their lives with no meaning. Some fall to Harano, but others fall to Rage. A Silver Fang commonly tries to regain authority through challenges, might, and sheer force of charisma. Other Garou might placate her, and it's perfect if they do. Expose their duplicity. Secrets and lies will enrage her faster than anything short of blatant treason. Handle Silver Fangs like the diseased and paranoid monarchs they are. They'll fall upon the Nation with hatred, priming them for the Wyrms' call.

Stargazers

Liberating a Stargazer is not easy. He feels he is already working towards liberation in his own way. Stargazers rarely hate, instead they seek to tame their Rage. Their methods are foreign to most. Meditation, stretches, deep breathing, and inner reflection are not natural for werewolves.



Still, a Stargazer is worth the effort. Any Stargazer we claim is a pool of insight into forces that other Garou can't comprehend. As a former Stargazer dances farther into the Labyrinth, his keen mind can pick out fine details. The fractured nature of the Wyrn might need the abstract thinking of a Stargazer to piece it back together, and then, with the Wyrn united, the Garou will face their greatest fear. And imagine if we ever obtained even one Kailindo instructor.

To break a Stargazer, take everything from him. Destroy his kin, destroy his home, destroy his sept, destroy his pack, and make it look like other Garou tribes were at least partially responsible. Give the Stargazer a reason to hate. It will likely take everything you have, but it can be done. No Garou can be patient all the time.

Uktena

The Uktena seem all too easy, but like the Shadow Lords, they understand us, making them more difficult to tempt. The Uktena accept that they can fall, and in that acceptance, they steel themselves against the possibility. But the ways of the Wyrn are corrupting in and of themselves. Just knowing too much will allow the Wyrn to bury itself within.

The fault in the Uktena lies in her desire to *understand* the Wyrn. The knowledge the Uktena seeks goes beyond classification. She wants to know how the Wyrn thinks, how we think, how we enact our rituals, how we can draw power from the Hellholes and Blights. Of course she believes that she won't be corrupted. If she knows how the Wyrn corrupts, she won't be susceptible to its call. Corrupting an Uktena requires both patience and a willingness to share our lore with them. When she starts to understand our perspective, lead her into the Labyrinth with breadcrumbs of dark secrets. Understanding how someone thinks is the first step to accepting his perspective, and few understand us like the Uktena.

Wendigo

The Wendigo feel the world closing in upon them. Their lands are shrinking, their customs dying, and their Rage only glows brighter for it. They have few friends among the Garou Nation, and when they catch any whiff of the Wyrn, they fall on it with deadly accuracy, especially if it's among their own tribe.

So taint them. Taint the Garou, taint their lands, and taint their kin. The hatred that wells up within will have a Wendigo clawing at everything she holds dear just to cleanse it. And when the Wendigo stands in the wreckage of her once pure home, she won't blame herself. She'll blame the Wyrncomers. She'll blame them for not showing, she'll blame them for not being fast enough or

strong enough, and she'll blame them for bringing the Wyrms in the first place. All that fury will turn towards the Garou Nation. The Wendigo will dance the Spiral of her own accord to exact her revenge on the Garou. Indeed, they're already halfway there.

Avatars of the Apocalypse

By the power of the Wyrms, the mightiest of the Black Spiral Dancers have distinguished themselves as monstrous embodiments of their dark Father, becoming singular nightmares, which haunt the Garou Nation and form a picture of the Apocalypse. Listed below are some examples of what a Black Spiral may become.

White Hunter Dayalond

Quote: "Look upon me and see the Hydra imbued!"

A young Garou with an ancient name, Dayalond followed a path of anger that led to the Black Spiral. He danced through the Labyrinth in search of his sister. It was all as the Wyrms intended.

Once a member of the Wendigo tribe, Dayalond was his pack's strongest warrior, a consummate hunter, and a believer in the fundamental need to protect sacred lands. When he saw the pride of his tribe's Kinfolk slowly bleeding away as they succumbed to alcoholism and ennui, he saw the culture of his people slipping away, and began to realize that the desperate battle of his life would likely die with him, along with his people's future.

His anger and frustration made him a target for the Wyrms, but neither Bane nor fomor succeeded in enticing the ferocious young Wendigo into the Labyrinth. Rather, these hapless victims became vectors for his incessant rage.

It was only when his family was targeted that the Wyrms found a way in. When Dayalond was still a boy, a Black Spiral Dancer attacked and raped his mother, a Wendigo Kinfolk. She gave birth to the Spiral's daughter. This would have far-reaching consequences, as the hatred and fear inspired by the Black Spiral Dancers seized at the hearts of the tribe and made the usually empathetic Wendigo as icy as their totem.

They rejected the child. Dayalond's father had been a Wendigo, and so they considered Dayalond *pure*, but his sister bore the stigma of her father, regarded as the spawn of a monster. Many of the tribe opined that it was a cruelty to allow her to live. Still, others defended Dayalond's sister, stating that her actions would determine her fate. If she acted with courage and strength in defense of the lands, she was Wendigo in spite of her father.

However, when the child's First Change came, the vile purity of her Black Spiral seed sprouted full, in her oil-streaked white fur; in her bloody tears, which set the land aflame in Balefire; in her panicked howls, which called Banes to the secret places of the Wendigo, leading to a tremendous battle. After the smoke cleared, no advocates spoke in her defense. Rather, a number of Ahroun from local packs beat her to the point of death. Then the tribe turned her out into the wild.

It was the dead of winter.

At the time, Dayalond was hunting. When he returned to find how the others had treated his sister, he was furious. He searched for her for weeks; only when he knew he would not find his sister until the snows melted did he swear revenge on his pack. It was then that he sensed the nearness of the Wyrms, a warmth emanating from an abandoned bear's den, and the voice of his sister. Staggering into the darkness of the cave, Dayalond soon found himself in the Spiral Labyrinth, where he surrendered his rage and frustration and his desperation to become a thing motivated by the instinct to hunt and kill, with revenge strengthening his resolve and animating his flesh.

When Dayalond returned next winter, he tore the heart out of his sept's totem, a servant of the Wendigo, and donned its hide as a cloak. Now he comes and goes with the winter storms, and under the cover of snow, he hunts the members of his tribe, stalking from coast to coast to exact a bloody vengeance on anyone whose blood is of the tribe of Wendigo.

Image: White Hunter Dayalond appears to be in his late 20s. He is brown-skinned and dark-haired, with smooth, severe features and eyes that are almost almond-shaped. In Crinos, he takes the form of an unrelenting blasphemy. His Crinos form has the semblance of a white wolf; with the preserved Crinos heads of various Garou he has slain hanging from all over his hulking body. These heads are not dead, nothing so merciful, they dangle, drooling blood, but their ears twitch, and at a command from the White Hunter they growl, bite, howl, and even speak with the voices of the men and women they once were.

In this, the White Hunter claims that he has stolen the souls of his victims, adding their ferocity and their vitality to his own. From the way he fights, none can gainsay him. The Wendigo recently trapped Dayalond in a burning cabin surrounded by a dozen Garou, but he summoned a wrathful wind that froze the timbers of the burning house. The resulting explosion allowed him to surprise the Garou and slaughter half their number before escaping into the whiteout of a howling blizzard.

Rhaos Dream-slayer

Quote: “Prophecy is meaningless. Even Spiral dreams die.”

The Black Spiral named Rhaos proved himself a worthy and tenacious leader when he fought to break the strength of the Garou in the wilderness along the Mexican border. But when his pack of Spirals began to gravitate toward the firebrand leadership and revitalizing vision out of New Mexico’s Trinity Hive, the blooded Ahroun saw his renown slipping.

To save face, he went alone to confront Zhyzhak, whom legend held to be the strongest Garou of all time. Rhaos had never seen Zhyzhak, but she had a storied if short history, filled with the tales of unwary, foolish, and stupid werewolves who had scoffed at reports of her power and had been subsequently humiliated and decimated at her hands.

He hid his intentions well, knowing that ferocity and surprise were his best chance at winning the fight. He was still young, at the height of his strength, but he had the advantage of years of experience fighting a brutal border war in two countries and several states. When it was time to fight Zhyzhak, he cast away honor to achieve victory, approaching her as a supplicant only to strike her with a silver-plated pipe. Then grasping her fetish Devilwhip, Rhaos mounted Zhyzhak and began to strangle her, hoping in his fury to break her neck.

At first, her raging, writhing, unbelievable strength seemed like it would surely break Rhaos’ hold — or his body — before she succumbed. But moment by moment, as she struggled and clawed for breath, her movements began to slow, weaken, and collapse. Then, when it seemed as if the last of her life had bled out, Zhyzhak shifted into Crinos. She leapt, driving Rhaos halfway through the cement and stone ceiling.

Pushing through physical shock and mental disbelief, Rhaos shifted to Crinos and plummeted from the hole like a falling star, claws and fangs ready to finish what hands had started. Zhyzhak caught him midair and with a snap of her hips, suplexed him through the concrete floor of the bunker with all of her force. Before the fight was over, she had also driven him halfway through each of the bunker’s four walls. She ended the fight by driving the pipe through his brain, killing him.

Or so she thought.

Rhaos’ packmates dragged his body away, to where one of their Kinfolk could perform surgery to save him. They managed to save his life, but not his mind. Zhyzhak lobotomized Rhaos, and it appeared he would be in a vegetative state for the rest of his life. One of his

packmates was about to finish him with a mercy stroke when the room began to tremble. Specimens in jars writhed, danced, and chanted. The heads of deer and bear and elk mounted in the hall whispered, leered, and twisted into the heads of dragons, their nostrils shooting plumes of smoke into the room. The wind blew through the room then, and it carried a voice, as Rhaos’ might be if it had been aged by a thousand years. “I wouldn’t do that if I were you.”

Image: In Homid, Rhaos was a lean, athletic man in his early 30s, though he looked to be in his 20s. He is white, but a Native American ancestor somewhere in his bloodline causes him to look tribal in certain lights. His dark eyes, once handsomely expressive, have developed the dead black glassiness of a shark’s. A headband or a bandana, to cover the damage to his scalp, usually obscures his dark hair. He almost never appears in human form anymore. More typically, he appears as Crinos, hooded and chained into a massive iron wheelchair from the 1950s. He has the power to move this chair without touching the wheels, and among other curious new powers, has gained the ability to reach into people’s dreams, attacking them in the form of a living nightmare.

Coletta Macomb

Quote: “Drowning or burning, it’s all the same. Just know I deal in flames.”

Coletta Macomb’s past is a mystery. Not even she remembers it clearly. It doesn’t bother her. Her past ceased to matter when she walked the Spiral Labyrinth. Carrying the affectations of a southerner, including the dialect, Macomb made a stir among the Southern social elite, where she traveled a circuit from Raleigh to Memphis to Atlanta and places between. A fixture at high society parties, she was treated as a curio due to her flamboyance, her evangelical attitude, and her undeniable, fiery charisma. Her message of “spend for the end,” also carried a certain intrigue for the rich, as she gained quite a bit of fame (and some say fortune) advising the elite on where to put their money to avoid or prepare for coming disasters that she predicted with some accuracy.

Many believe her to be clairvoyant. In truth, the flames she sees in the future animate Coletta Macomb. She desires the Apocalypse, and between her prophetic harangues, she takes frail ecstasy in imagining the fullness of her Father as he spreads his burning wings over her world, swallowing and burning, burning and swallowing.

The end of the world never looked so good. Macomb, who many believe is from the South, is actually from Eastern Pennsylvania, where underground coal

fires have burned for fifty years. There, the young Spiral encountered an earth-spirit insane from the pain caused by the uncontrolled fires. Wreathed in perpetual immolation, the spirit horrified and mesmerized the young Macomb. She fought with it and slew it, but it changed her forever. Donning its corpus like a shroud she became the spirit of the coal fire, which she took to be the purest sign of the Wyrms' presence — and the inevitability of the Apocalypse — that she had ever found.

Thenceforth, she has sought to share the wisdom of ruin, and bring her dual message of despair and jubilant revelry to the world, freeing them to embrace the coming fires as she has. More recently, Coletta Macomb has appeared in New Orleans, where she is helping the local Black Spiral Dancers in their plans to drown the city.

Image: A coffee-colored black woman in her 50s, Coletta looks to be more like 20. She speaks with the frenzy of an inner flame. Her words are inciting and exciting, almost as intoxicating as her presence. Only those who can pierce supernatural deception notice that she smells of brimstone, and that her breath often smokes even though she never touches cigarettes. Partners that are more intimate have even seen the flames lick her lips and burn through her nipples. When she takes Crinos form, her coal-colored fur smokes and ripples, and where her flesh is torn, it reveals patches of burning earth beneath the skin.

Wedge Tooth

Quote: "Did you hear what they said about you?"

Mother's Voice carried the hopes and dreams of the Children of Gaia. She was born to a sept located along the Grand River near Lansing, Michigan and controlled by a long lineage of Silver Fangs. Early in her Cliath days, Mother's Voice was granted a vision and purpose from Unicorn; she was to unite her sept with the Bone Gnawers that lived within the city. Together, the Garou would exterminate the foul Wyrms-spawn that wreaked havoc on the river, flowing from a nearby factory.

Mother's Voice was not prepared for the stubborn ferocity of the Garou. At first she spoke, and they placated her with nods of acknowledgement. When she lifted her voice, they rolled their eyes. As she gained prestige within the sept, she yelled, and her alphas finally told her to let it rest. The sept could handle cleansing the river; the Bone Gnawers could handle problems in their own territory.

Exasperated, Mother's Voice left and ran to the Bone Gnawers. The Gnawers readily accepted her, but claimed they would only unite if the Silver Fangs came to them and asked for their assistance. If the Fangs couldn't

humble themselves enough to be respectful, how could the dispossessed trust them?

The factory's taint grew in power despite efforts from both septs to tear it down. Legislation gave the factory greater freedom, allowing for more toxic waste to flow into the river. Terror swelled within the Silver Fang sept. Tempers flared, and the sept went to the Bone Gnawers, demanding their assistance. The Gnawers refused to be ordered about, and the two septs dissolved into their own battle.

All the while, Mother's Voice heard the Wyrms laughing. Anger grew within her, and she abandoned her sept. If the Garou were so desperate to lose, let them. As she ran towards the factory, the Labyrinth called from its gates. She stormed in willingly, and in the darkness, she gave into her bitter rage. She became Wedge Tooth.

She returned to the sept still under the name of Mother's Voice. Carefully severing her immediate ties, she started wandering to other septs, infiltrating their ranks. She still speaks of unity, but against other Garou. The reasons always seem valid. She plays to what her audience wants to hear, giving them justification for their fear and hatred of one another.

Image: Wedge Tooth is a light-skinned woman in her early 20s. She has dark hair and piercing blue eyes that stare straight into the souls of those whom she watches. Wedge Tooth carries herself with an air of importance. She knows her purpose in life, and she'll always give advice to other Garou. She's soft spoken, but her voice is enchanting, encouraging everyone to hear what she has to say. She never takes Crinos form among the Garou. In Crinos form, her once radiant grey pelt is streaked with rivers of toxic green. Her throat glows with inner balefire and her eyes blaze a crimson red.

Zhyzhak

Quote: "Did you really think you could hide from me?"

Zhyzhak, chosen of the Green Dragon, lives a life devoted to destruction in the Wyrms' name. An Ahroun of freakish power, a terror in battle and assured of her destiny, Zhyzhak is more cunning than intelligent, letting the members of her pack worry about implementing her will while she seeks out important targets and destroys them. She focuses her attentions on old, powerful caerns, seasoned and storied Garou heroes, and nature spirits of tremendous import. She is a breaker of legends and an ender of tales, and in the final battle, she will crush the last Gaian king beneath her heel. She is the select and honored daughter of the Wyrms.

Zhyzhak's martial prowess is well known and rightly feared amongst the Garou. She has demonstrated sufficient raw power in Homid form to destroy Crinos Garou with her bare hands. When she needs it, her fetish

Devilwhip Btk'uthok into comes to her hand at her call. In the past, she has used it to tame raging spirits, forcing them to kneel before her, and to flay Banes that have displeased her. Only the strongest and most worthy opponents can force her to shift into Crinos.

Beyond her absurd strength, no one knows much about Zhyzhak. She comes from the Trinity Hive, a Pit beneath the Alamogordo test site in New Mexico, deep in the gut of a horror named Grandmother Thunderwurm. Recently she has moved into the Nameless Tower, where she has become central to a plot to attack and destroy the Sept of the Green.

Image: Zhyzhak is huge. She is 6'5", weighs just over 200 pounds, and she dresses scantily, in leather high boots and straps. She often goes bare-breasted into battle with nothing but tribal body paint. Zhyzhak almost never appears in public. When she does, her only goal is to cause as much death and destruction as possible. The practicality of her appearance is never a concern, and she dresses implausibly whether at home or abroad, boldly displaying that she doesn't give a fuck. A modern berserker, Zhyzhak is also quite physically attractive, though most of her hive would rather try fucking a startled tiger. Zhyzhak's hair is dark and falls to her shoulder blades. She usually braids several streams of her hair and hangs wicked multi-barbed hooks on the end. When she smiles, it always looks like a snarl, and displays the jagged wolf's canines that frame her Homid teeth.

Playing the Wurm's Bastards

Just to put this up-front: We don't recommend allowing Black Spiral Dancers as playable characters. The Black Spiral Dancers are monsters. Not heroic monsters, not ferocious avenging angels of nature unbound to seek retribution for the rape and plunder of the Earth, not implacable warriors driven by righteous anger, they're just monsters. That is both their purpose and their self-justification for not trying to be anything more. They torture, maim, and ruin because doing those things is easy and satisfying on a childish, simple level, and they've lost or given away whatever part of them once aspired to something more.

The Black Spiral Dancers are intelligent monsters, capable of reason and emotion and self-reflection, and so they drape their atrocities in self-serving philosophy and lies. They claim to be enlightened, even as they send their sons and daughters to have their minds broken upon the wheel that is the Black Spiral Labyrinth. They claim to be free, even as they do the bidding of the Wurm's various avatars. They claim to be predator kings ruling over a dead Earth, the victors of an Apocalyptic war that is already done and over, but they still hunt the Garou, and are hunted in turn. In the stillness of their black hearts, they know that



their words are lies and that they are brutes gnawing at the still-beating heart of the world. They believe that their hatred, hunger, and rage are justified, and pretend that their 'love' doesn't ruin and degrade those humans and wolves unfortunate enough to share in their tainted blood. They're wrong.

The Black Spiral Dancers are broken, twisted things imagining that they stand tall. They're slaves marveling over the gilding of their chains. They're the worst excesses and mistakes of the Garou once the urge to do or be something better is taken away.

We don't recommend playing them. We've only gone into as much detail on the Wolves of the Wyrms as we have in this book to give Storytellers a chance to give Garou heroes a good, hard look at the path that leads to damnation, and how easy it is to justify that trip. Perhaps a player wants a character who plans to escape the Tribe and seek atonement and reconciliation with Gaia. If, for whatever reason, a Storyteller finds himself needing to generate a Black Spiral Dancer character on equal footing with a starting Garou the rules to do so can be found on page 425 of W20. Expanded mechanics for Storytellers to represent Black Spiral characters make up the remainder of this chapter.

Do **not** push for this if everyone at the table isn't comfortable with it. The Black Spiral Dancers are dark subject matter, even for a dark game like Werewolf. Please be respectful of your fellow gamers' boundaries, and try to tackle the very real horrors that are part and parcel to the Black Spiral experience responsibly if it's done at all.

Blessings of the Destroyer

Few Garou spend much time dwelling on the sacred Pact that grants them their Gifts. A Gift is second nature to a werewolf once bestowed. It seems entirely right and natural. As such, only a few Theurges understand that the Pact is a binding contract between all werewolves and all courts and branches of the spirit world. No right-minded Garou would ever seek instruction from the Wyrms' foul children, but under the conditions of the Pact, they could.

The Black Spiral Dancers are anything but right-minded Garou, and they have discovered a world of spiritual power offered by the Destroyer's children that their Gaian brethren could hardly imagine.

What follows is a list of Wyrms' Gifts, not merely "Black Spiral Dancer tribal Gifts," although they're

here too, but an entire constellation of corrupted spirit-blessings suited for all Breeds and Auspices.

Breeds

Black Spiral Dancers draw Breed Gifts from many of the same sources as the Garou, save that they undertake communion with deeply corrupt or mercenary spirits, or hunt down Gaian spirits and subject them to corruption in order to make proper teachers of them.

Homid Gifts

Black Spiral Dancers have access to the same homid Gifts as Gaian Garou, with the exception of Calm the Savage Beast.

- **Aura of Poison (Level One)** — The Black Spiral Dancer surrounds herself in a toxic miasma strong enough to cause even a human's dull sense of smell to pick up the reek of a lethal stew of mercury, sulfuric acid, formaldehyde, and countless other chemicals. The message is clear: the Dancer is death, and should not be trifled with. A Halassh teaches this Gift.

System: After a turn spent concentrating and the expenditure of a point of Gnosis, the werewolf is surrounded by a lethal scent for the rest of the scene. No creature lacking a Rage rating will initiate violence unless attacked first.

- **Power Surge (Level Two)** — As the Glass Walker Gift.

- **Call the Rust (Level Three)** — As the Bone Gnawer Gift.

- **Feast of Man-Flesh (Level Four)** — The Black Spiral Dancers know of the power locked away in the flesh of men. By eating the uncooked flesh of a human being, the werewolf may temporarily borrow that person's knowledge and skills. A cannibal spirit teaches this Gift.

System: This Gift's effects are permanent. By eating at least one pound of human flesh, the Spiral Dancer may absorb up to (Gnosis rating) of the following: dots of Abilities the victim possessed (up to a maximum of the victim's rating in the Abilities in question) or facts the victim knew (chosen by the Dancer's player). These stolen benefits continue for (Rage rating) days. The Dancer may retain Abilities and information from only one victim at a time. Non-human beings wearing human forms such as homid Garou, changelings, fomori, and vampires do not count as human for the purposes of this Gift, but Kinfolk, ghouls, Imbued hunters, and mages do.

Metis Gifts

Black Spiral Dancer metis have access to the same Gifts as their Gaian counterparts, save for Totem Gift.

• **Bleed (Level One)** — The metis can leak phantasmal blood, manifesting false injuries if she is unwounded, or producing enormous quantities of blood from minor wounds. Many Spirals use this Gift to ‘play dead’ when a battle is going poorly, or to frame innocents for vicious attacks. A Crimson Pestilent teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. For the rest of the scene, the character may issue fake blood in whatever quantities she likes, so long as it doesn’t exceed the volume actually contained in her body (assume 10 pints in Homid, 20 pints in Crinos, and 7 in Lupus). She can’t drown her enemies in a tsunami of blood. Since the ichor is fake, she takes no damage; it fades at the next sunse.

• **Nobody’s Bastard (Level Three)** — Nobody wants to recognize a metis, and with this Gift, nobody will. A metis using this Gift is unrecognizable to all who see her. A Bane of abandonment teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Stealth (difficulty 7). If the roll succeeds, nobody who sees the metis will know who she is for the rest of the scene. Observers don’t mistake her for anyone else; they simply see her as an unknown stranger. Their memories remain even after the scene — they don’t suddenly remember that the Garou using this Gift is the stranger.

• **Visceral Agony (Level Three)** — As the Black Fury Gift.

Lupus Gifts

Lupus Black Spiral Dancers have access to the same Gifts as their Gaian counterparts.

• **Ways of the Urban Wolf (Level One)** — The Black Spiral Dancers are free to indulge in those natural urges that Gaia bids her defenders to restrain: to hunt man through the streets of the cities, to revel in his fear-stench, to drink his blood and eat his flesh. This Gift, taught by Wyrms elementals, makes the Dancer a master of such urban hunts

System: Reduce difficulty of all Perception, Stealth, and Survival rolls to track and hunt prey in urban environments by 2. The effects of this Gift are permanent. It doesn’t enhance any rolls once combat begins, and can only be used to track intelligent prey such as humans, Garou, and vampires.

• **Thousand Teeth (Level Three)** — Sharp teeth are the hallmarks of the ultimate predator, and the ways of the Wyrms wolves celebrate nothing if not excess. The muzzle of a werewolf using this Gift erupts with dozens of extra teeth. Black Spiral Dancers learn this Gift from Scraggs, while Gaian Garou occasionally learn it from shark-spirits.

System: The player spends one Rage point and rolls Stamina + Primal Urge (difficulty 5). She enjoys +3 damage dice on bite attacks. The Gift lasts for one bite attack per success; any remaining boosted bites are lost at the end of the scene.

• **Instincts Unbound (Level Five)** — Gaia’s warriors must explain the behavior of their fallen cousins as madness — why else would a wolf seek to despoil the world? The greatest among Black Spiral lupus use this Gift to teach the Garou the folly of their thinking by showing them the joys of unbound freedom. Psychomachiae teach this Gift.

System: The Black Spiral Dancer’s player spends one Gnosis point and one Rage point, and rolls Wits + Primal Urge against a difficulty of her victim’s Willpower. For one day per success, the target cannot resist her instincts. She takes what she wants, kills when the urge is upon her, and gives in to her least impulse. If the target possesses Rage, all Rage rolls are at difficulty 4; if the target is a vampire, all rolls to resist or control frenzy are against difficulty 9. The target may reduce the duration of this Gift by 12 hours per point of Willpower spent.

Ragabash Gifts

Ragabash Black Spiral Dancers may use the same tricks as their Garou brethren, save for Luna’s Blessing.

• **Bestowing the Predator’s Shadow (Level One)** — It would be fair to say that Black Spiral Dancers have even less tolerance for being tricked or mocked than other werewolves. This valuable Gift helps Dancer Ragabash survive the fallout of their Auspice’s duties by passing their identity onto someone else. Phantasmichi teach this Gift.

System: The Black Spiral Dancer must secure a tiny bit of her body on someone else. A bit of spit or blood, or a lock of hair or fur will do the trick. The player then spends one Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty 6). The target will look and sound (but not smell) like the Black Spiral Dancer to everyone but himself for one hour per success.

• **Cassandra’s Blessing (Level Four)** — The Wyrms’ tricksters use division and isolation as instructive tools, particularly against their many enemies. The victim of this Gift’s ‘blessing’ will find that nobody will believe anything she has to say, no matter how much evidence she has to back it up. A Nocturnae teaches this Gift.

System: The Black Spiral Dancer must touch her target. Then his player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty of the target’s Willpower). Nobody will believe anything the target says for a number of hours equal to the successes rolled.

• **Silver Reprisal (Level Four)** — Luna's servants only rarely extend her blessing to those who have danced the Black Spiral, but some Banes can add their own retributive curse to the Garou's vulnerability to silver. Rather than protecting the Dancer, as Luna's Blessing does to Gaian Garou, this Gift causes silver to burn its wielder in the same moment it harms the werewolf. A Furmling teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one point of Gnosis. For the rest of the scene, anyone who uses silver to inflict damage on the character suffers debilitating pain and burns on the hand used to strike the blow, receiving one level of unsoakable aggravated damage — as if caused by silver, in the case of Garou — per damaging attack delivered. The attacker must make a Stamina roll against difficulty 8 or drop whatever they're holding in that hand; even if she succeeds, increase the difficulty of all attacks using that hand by 2.

• **Patience of the Wurm (Level Five)** — This Gift allows incredibly elaborate acts of sabotage and revenge by allowing the Spiral Dancer to dictate the moment her curses strike her foes. A Black Spiral Dancer must petition a Nexus Crawler to teach this Gift.

System: This Gift can enhance any other Gift that affects another character, as long as it does not deal damage. Spend a point of Willpower in addition to the other Gift's cost. The Black Spiral Dancer then dictates when the enhanced Gift will take effect, either in simple measures of time, or a set of conditions that she can utter as a single sentence. For example, she might lay Cassandra's Blessing on an enemy spy stating that the Gift will not take effect until the victim attempts to relate what she has learned.

Theurge Gifts

Black Spiral Dancer Theurges have access to the same Gifts as their Gaian counterparts, save for As In the Beginning. It's possible for a Black Spiral Dancer to learn Mother's Touch, but it's rare.

• **Poisoned Gauntlet (Level Two)** — The Black Spiral Dancer can breathe spiritual toxins into the wall between worlds, turning the Gauntlet into a deadly trap. A Rust Spider teaches this Gift.

System: The werewolf spends a turn in concentration, and then her player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Intelligence + Occult against a difficulty of the local Gauntlet. Until the sun next crosses the horizon, anyone stepping sideways within (Gnosis x 100) yards of the point where this Gift was used takes one die of aggravated damage per successes rolled. The Gift: Resist Toxin can protect against this Gift's effects.

• **Feast of Essence (Level Three)** — The Black Spiral Dancer's claws are covered with barbed hooks, which catch and absorb the tattered power of slain spirits, refreshing the werewolf. A Thinbones teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one point of Willpower when the character deals a blow that destroys the last of a spirit's Essence. The character gains Gnosis depending on the power of the destroyed spirit: one point for a Jagglings, two for a Gaffling, and three for any stronger spirit. This cannot raise the character's Gnosis points above her maximum value, but is in addition to any Gnosis gained by harvesting the depleted spirit.

• **Prelude to Apocalypse (Level Six)** — As the Gaian Gift As In the Beginning, this version might be learned by a Black Spiral Theurge and summons Wurm-spirits of all kinds. No Black Spiral Theurge has yet learned this Gift.

Philodox Gifts

Black Spiral Dancer Philodox have access to the same Gifts as their Gaian counterparts, with the exception of Fangs of Judgment.

• **Acid Talons (Level One)** — The Black Spiral Dancer's claws become a vibrant mixture of black, red, and yellow, and burn anything they cut. A Wakshaani teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one point of Rage. For the rest of the scene, the werewolf's claw attacks inflict one extra die of damage, and the difficulty to soak her claw attacks rises by 1.

• **Omen Claws (Level Five)** — The Black Spiral Dancer's claws become blades of anti-light, the area surrounding them suffused with a false glow as a contrast to their nullity. Anyone struck by these terrible claws suffers visions of the Apocalypse. An avatar of the Maeljin teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one point of Gnosis and rolls her character's Rage. The Gift's effects last for one turn per success. Any character that takes damage from Omen Claws must roll Willpower against a difficulty of the Dancer's (Gnosis + levels of damage inflicted, maximum 9) or be incapacitated by nightmare visions of everything they love tortured by the talons of the Wurm. The victim cannot do anything when so afflicted, and loses one point of Willpower per turn. The victim's player may attempt another Willpower roll to break free each turn.

Galliard Gifts

Black Spiral Dancer Galliards have access to the same Gifts as their Gaian counterparts, save for Howls in the Night.

- **Howl of the Hunter (Level Two)** — Setting a particular quarry in her mind, the Black Spiral Dancer crafts a howl specifically designed to elicit terror in her prey. If her victim can hear the howl, it strikes terror into his heart, haunting him whenever he tries to find rest. A Nocturna teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Primal Urge (difficulty 7). If the desired target hears the howl he will be jolted awake if asleep, and rendered unable to sleep for the next (successes x 3) hours; every time he attempts to rest, the howl will echo in his ears as though uttered from mere feet away. The terror increases the difficulty of most Mental and Social actions by +2 (maximum 9) until the character can sleep.

- **Shadows of the Impergium (Level Two)** — As the Red Talon Gift.

- **Howl of Death (Level Four)** — As the Red Talon Gift.

- **Madness (Level Five)** — As the metis Gift.

Ahroun Gifts

Ahroun Black Spiral Dancers have access to the same Gifts as their Gaian counterparts, save for Full Moon's Light

- **Acid Talons (Level One)** — As the Wyrnish Philodox Gift.

- **Tar Shadow (Level Two)** — The Ahroun's shadow becomes solid and sticky, trapping unwary foes and making them easy prey. A H'rugging teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point. For the rest of the scene, any character making a close-combat attack against the Dancer must make a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 8). If they fail this roll, the attacker is stuck in the Ahroun's shadow until she can pull herself free with a Strength + Athletics roll (difficulty 6). While stuck in place, characters cannot move and all attempts to dodge attacks automatically fail.

- **Visceral Agony (Level Three)** — As the Black Fury Gift.

- **Strength Without Limit (Level Five)** — Wyrnish power suffuses the flesh and bones of the warrior who uses this Gift, exaggerating his power beyond the limits of his body. His muscles bulk up until they tear through his skin, and his flesh peels back from wildly elongated teeth and claws; even his nerves thicken until they pulse like veins. An avatar of the Maeljin teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends two points of Rage and the character suffers one level of unsoakable aggravated damage. For the rest of the scene, the werewolf adds one dot to each physical Attribute, and two dice to the damage of all Brawl attacks.

Black Spiral Dancer Tribal Gifts

The following Gifts are a mixture of the signature blessings of the Wyrn upon the Black Spiral Dancers, and adaptations or corruptions of other tribes' Gifts, brought to the Wyrn's wolves by converts from the Garou Nation.

- **Bale Armor (Level One)** — The Black Spiral Dancer's body is limned in a terrible green-black radiance that saps the strength from her enemies' blows and inflicts toxic burns upon their flesh. A Furmling teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point to activate the Gift. The light illuminates a 100-foot area around the Dancer for the rest of the scene. All attacks against the werewolf suffer a -1 die penalty while this Gift persists, and anyone who lands a Brawl attack against the Dancer takes one level of bashing damage.

- **Spiral-Shadow Dance (Level One)** — The Black Spiral Dancer learns to twine herself through the darkness, becoming swift as a scream. A variety of Banes teach this Gift.

System: Whenever the Black Spiral Dancer is concealed by poor lighting (no brighter than the light of the half-moon), she adds +3 to her Initiative. This Gift's effects are permanent.

- **Grave Claws (Level Two)** — The werewolf's claws and fangs become obsidian daggers, capable of tearing the soul loose from Gaia's cycle and pinning it to the Dark Umbra. Any creature slain by this Gift is guaranteed to leave behind a ghost, which is anchored by dark magic to its killer. Outside of risky Umbral quests, only killing the Black Spiral Dancer who used this Gift can return a victim's soul to Gaia. A Nihilach teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one point of Gnosis. Anyone killed by the character's claw or bite attacks for the rest of the scene is guaranteed to linger as a wraith. A wraith created using this Gift cannot directly harm the Black Spiral Dancer, and is tormented by dark urges.

- **Claws of Corrosion (Level Three)** — One of the greatest Black Spiral Gifts, this wicked magic allows the werewolf to poison a spirit with mystical toxins that slowly corrupt it into a servant of the Wyrn. A variety of Banes teach this Gift.

System: When the Black Spiral Dancer makes a successful claw attack against a spirit, the player may spend one point each of Rage, Willpower, and Gnosis, and roll Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6). This infects the spirit with a number of 'corruption points' equal to the successes rolled; multiple applications of this Gift are cumulative, and corruption points dissipate

at a rate of one per day. Should a spirit ever have more corruption points than its current Essence, over the next lunar month it suffers a slow, painful transformation into a Bane.

• **Hungry Rust (Level Four)** — The werewolf summons a Bane and invests it into a mechanical device. The Bane awakens when someone next uses the device, spewing corruption throughout. The tool rusts and twists, both degrading and attempting to bond with its user. A gun might fuse to a person's hand, coating her arm in plates of stamped metal and loops of corroded casings, while a vehicle might partially absorb its driver into the seat and seal his hands to the steering column. A Nexus Crawler teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends two Gnosis and rolls Intelligence + Craft against a difficulty based on the size and complexity of the device. A revolver would be difficulty 6, a vehicle 9. The next individual to use the cursed tool must gain more successes on a Wits + Occult roll than the werewolf, or fuse with the tool. This transformation is permanent for humans, but Garou may forcibly tear themselves loose from the intruding technology at a cost of (activation successes) levels of lethal damage.

• **Stolen Hide (Level Four)** — The Black Spiral Dancer can don tormented spirits like a cloak, consigning them to oblivion to protect himself. A Nihilach teaches this Gift, but only to those who have already mastered Grave Claws.

System: The character can only use this Gift against a ghost that she has created with Grave Claws. She spends a turn in concentration and her player spends one point each of Gnosis and Willpower, then makes a contested Stamina + Primal Urge roll against the ghost's Willpower. Success stretches the ghost's tortured plasm across the Dancer's body as a kind of grotesque ablative armor. The werewolf gains two additional Bruised health levels for each ghost worn in this manner. These health levels are the first lost to damage, and when they both disappear, the ghost used to create them is destroyed.

• **The White Howl (Level Five)** — Once the most sacred blessing of the White Howlers, this mighty Gift is still passed down among the ranks of the Black Spiral Dancers as a reminder of the past to their Garou enemies. The sound of the White Howl is sufficient to rend both the workings of the Wyrms, and the hearts of Garou who hear it and realize how much Gaia has lost. It was once taught by an avatar of Lion, but no spirit teaches this Gift in the modern age; it survives entirely through a history of Black Spiral Dancers handing it down from warlord to warlord.

System: The player spends two points each of Gnosis and Rage. The character spends a turn unleashing a

mighty, full-throated howl, and the player rolls Charisma + Primal Urge (difficulty 6). Every Wym-tainted being within earshot suffers a number of levels of unsoakable lethal damage equal to the successes rolled — including the Black Spiral Dancer herself — and any of her nearby packmates. Each Gaian Garou who hears the howl, by contrast, loses one point of Willpower per success rolled, as they recognize the lost purity of the White Howlers, and must face the reality of all that Gaia has lost to the hunger of the Wym. Any Garou reduced to 0 Willpower by this Charm falls into Harano.

Stolen Gifts

Black Spiral Dancers who fall after a long period of service to Gaia bring their own Gifts with them, though the infectious energies of the Labyrinth warps these abilities. Most of these Gifts started out as Gaian Gifts, but have additional or changed effects.

• **Repress Taint (Level One)** — In order to infiltrate the Gaian Garou, a Black Spiral must be able to hide the touch of the Wym. This Gift allows him to repress his taint, hiding it from the prying eyes of the suspicious. The werewolf must still take care, however, as more talented Garou might sniff him out. Scryers teach this Gift.

System: The player rolls Perception + Subterfuge, difficulty 7. Every success increases the difficulty to detect the character's taint by one, to a maximum of 9. The effect lasts one scene.

• **Bale Aura (Level One)** — Twisted from the grandeur of Lambent Flame, a Dancer can shroud herself in the green light of balefire. The light causes no physical damage, but shadows cast by the light seem to move of their own accord and the whispers of the Wym crackle within the green flames, stoking the Rage within the Garou. Furmlings and Harpies teach this Gift.

System: The player spends one Willpower point to activate the gift. The light illuminates a 50-foot area around the character for the rest of the scene. Garou and Fera require one fewer success to frenzy, and to enter Thrall of the Wym, as the whispers taunt them from the shadows.

• **Hidden Killer (Level Two)** — As the Red Talon Gift, but the werewolf can also choose to alter the evidence to match another Garou so long as she has a piece of the target, such as hair or blood. Abliphets teach this Gift.

System: As the Red Talon Gift. To change the forensic evidence to match another Garou, the player must roll Intelligence + Larceny (difficulty 8). Success means the physical evidence remains unchanged, but forensic evidence changes to match the target.

• **Submit (Level Two)** — Stolen from the Black Furies, with a snarl, a Black Spiral Dancer can force a

target to kneel before him, agony coursing through her body until she submits. Spirals with this gift delight in forcing a proud Garou to the ground just to kill her while she's on her knees. Raptors teach this Gift.

System: As the Black Fury Gift: Kneel. Any target who resists the Gift subtracts two from their dice pools for the Gift's duration. This penalty can only be offset with the Gift: Resist Pain.

- **Ichor Blade (Level Three)** — The Spiral's arm changes into a black blade dripping with dark green poison. The ichor poisons the blood of anyone injured by the blade, causing crippling agony. Harpies and Wakshaani teach this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Rage to transform one hand into a blade. For the rest of the scene, she may use her arm like a sword, rolling Dexterity + Melee (difficulty 6). Such attacks inflict Strength + 1 aggravated damage. The poison causes excruciating pain, forcing the target to subtract two from his dice pools for a turn per success. Resist Toxin and Resist Pain both negate the effects of the poison.

- **Gift of the Tainted Totem (Level Three)** — A twisted version of an Uktena Gift, a Dancer can not only bar a pack totem from aiding its children, she can temporarily replace the totem with her own pack or personal totem. The horror of having a Wyrmspirit binding a Gaian pack, even temporarily, is disorienting, and the taint left behind might be difficult to explain. Nexus Crawlers teach this Gift.

System: As the Uktena Gift: Banish Totem. If the player succeeds on the Gnosis roll, the pack not only loses all traits associated with their totem, they gain all traits associated with the Dancer's totem. The effect lasts for a number of turns equal to the number of successes. Upon departing, the tainted totem leaves behind enough Wyrmspirit taint to show up to users of Sense Wyrmspirit for the rest of the scene at difficulty 7. If a member of the pack used any of the totem's powers, the lingering Wyrmspirit taint remains for a day, and is difficulty 5 to detect.

- **Howl of the Bane (Level Four)** — The Dancers have their own fearsome spirits to call, and in a blatant mockery of the Wendigo, a Spiral dances in a Blight or Hellhole, hooting, laughing, and slashing profane glyphs into the air. A bane of the user's choosing coils from the darkness, taking a description of the target before it leaves on its murderous quest. Any powerful Bane can teach this gift.

System: As the Wendigo Gift: Call of the Cannibal Spirit. The user can choose which Bane to summon, so long as its Essence rating is no higher than 30.

- **Summon Wyrmspirit Elemental (Level Four)** — The Dancer performs a short dance around a piece of a pure

element. The dance corrupts the element and summons forth a Wyrmspirit Elemental (Hogling, Furmling, H'ruggling, or Wakshaani). A Wyrmspirit elemental teaches this gift.

System: As the Uktena Gift: Call Elemental. Black Spiral Dancers only bother trying to make a Wyrmspirit elemental amenable if they need a specific task completed. Many often summon Wyrmspirit elementals simply to wreak havoc.

- **Mask Taint (Level Five)** — As the Skin Dancer Gift. Scryers also teach this Gift.

- **Cloak of Anthelios (Level Five)** — Sculpted from Halo of the Sun, the character speaks the sacred word of Helios while drawing on his own Wyrmspirit-tainted powers. The character is wreathed in violent red flame that drapes about him as a cloak. A servant of Helios who breaks under torture can teach this Gift, as can fallen Children of Gaia who know the sacred word of Helios. The gift is exceedingly rare, if even acquired as of yet.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point, and the effect lasts one scene. The character adds two dice of aggravated damage to all Brawl-based attacks in all forms. Any attack that causes more than three health levels of any kind of damage burns the glyph of Anthelios into the flesh of the victim. The victim bears Wyrmspirit taint (detectable by Sense Wyrmspirit at difficulty 4) until he is cleansed. Anyone looking directly at the werewolf adds two to all attack difficulties due to the glare. Vampires are unaffected by the Cloak of Anthelios.

Rites

The Black Spiral Dancers make use of perversions of many of the same rituals as the Garou. They have mystic rites to summon and bind spirits, punishment rites, acceptance rites, rites used to build and defend their Pits, and more. Detailed below are a small selection of their most notable and vital rites.

The Dance of the Black Spiral

(Level Two Rite of Renown)

This is the Black Spiral Dancers' tribal Rite of Passage, granted to Spiral-born cubs after their First Change, or to defectors from other tribes.

This is the most sacred rite of the tribe, and is usually attended by all the Dancers in a Hive who are able to do so. They bring the cub to the Pit's spiritual heart, where the ritemaster paints an elaborate spiral on the floor. While the ritemaster works, the Hive's Galliards recite the tale of the betrayal of the White Howlers by the other tribes of the Garou Nation, and the rebirth



and dark enlightenment of the tribe as the Black Spiral Dancers. When the tale concludes, the cub must pass each member of the Hive present for the rite before approaching the ritemaster. Any member of the Hive who objects to the pup's inclusion in the tribe is free to attempt to murder him without fear of reprisal. Assuming the pup makes it to the ritemaster, he is bid to enter the spiral drawn on the floor.

This is a spiritual representation of the true Black Spiral Labyrinth, and as the pup walks the spiral, Banes rise up to challenge, test, and enlighten her. The spiral seems to twist, growing to dark enormity, and the pup actually passes in and out of the Umbra at times. Should she reach the center of the spiral, she glimpses the true face of the Wyrms for one stark, impossible moment, shattering her mind. Her education continues as she staggers back the way she came, soul now torn open and receptive to the Wyrms' dark miracles. Banes taste her agony and madness, and grant her their blessings in response. When she emerges from the spiral, she is now a full-fledged member of the tribe.

By custom, the first thing a Black Spiral Dancer utters becomes her tribal name, which is usually a gibbering collection of nonsense syllables. Much respect is accorded to those rare few with the presence of mind and strength of will to bestow mighty deed-names upon themselves in expectation of future triumphs.

System: Though there are many paths by which a werewolf might fall to the Wyrms, and Spiral culture has a concept of "Dancing the Heart-Spiral," becoming a Dancer in spirit, no werewolf is formally a member of the Wyrms' tribe until he has undergone this rite.

Rite of the Flayed God

(Level Four Mystic Rite)

This rite is among the most powerful and terrible practiced by the Wyrms' children. It requires a captive spirit, and can only be performed in the heart of a Pit. Over the course of a ritual lasting from sunset to sunrise, the Black Spiral Dancer ritually murders and hollows out a spirit, usually a bound Gaian spirit, though some Hives are happy to sacrifice lesser Banes for power. This

rite destroys the spirit forever, but a tattered shell of its power remains, and is bound into a special fetish. This fetish is an article of easily donned and removed clothing; usually a cloak or belt, and its construction must incorporate some element symbolic of the spirit. Thus, a flayed bear-spirit might be bound into a bear pelt, while a murdered forest spirit might be bound into a crown of hawthorn.

Upon donning the fetish, the Black Spiral Dancer is able to assume the stolen power of the flayed spirit. With this mantle of power usually comes a dramatic and grotesque physical transformation. The wearer of the bear pelt might grow a second set of powerful, ursine arms, and a gaping set of bear jaws might frame her head, granting her extra attacks and a vicious bite. The wearer of the hawthorn crown might find sharp thorns erupting from her flesh, and her scent masked by the verdant smell of the woods.

System: The difficulty of the rite's roll is the spirit's Gnosis rating. Failure means that the spirit dies without empowering the fetish. Donning or removing a flayed spirit to gain its power costs two points of Gnosis. Only the ritemaster can benefit from a fetish created by this rite, and only one such fetish can be worn at a time. The exact effects of a fetish created by this rite are up to the Storyteller but the transformation is usually physical and grotesque. The benefits are comparable to the Gift: Totem Gift, though focused on personally empowering the werewolf.

Wyrms Totems

Black Spiral Packs bind themselves together under Totems in much the same fashion as their Gaian counterparts, save that the Wyrms' bastards make pacts with bleak spirits of corruption and destruction, rather than mighty spirits of Gaia.

Totems of Cunning

The Whippoorwill

Background Cost: 6

This totem fell to the ways of the Wyrms in the dawn-days of the world, when it discovered that its cry attracted the drifting souls of the dead, and that lost souls made for a fine feast.

This totem's great strength is finding those who have lost their way, especially those who have lost sight of the reason to keep fighting for Gaia.

Individual Traits: Whippoorwill's bastards gain the ability to imitate perfectly any birdcall, as well as one

extra die on all Empathy rolls to spot individuals who are questioning their ideals.

Pack Traits: Whippoorwill grants two dots of Perception, but only at night and in dark environments.

Ban: Whippoorwill forbids its bastards to harm any bird, and demands a moot held in its honor twice a year.

Kirijama, "The Hidden Foe"

Background Cost: 7

Kirijama has no manifested form. It is the foe unseen, unfelt, unknown. Some Garou believe Kirijama does not even exist, but *something* grants blessings to those who honor Kirijama.

Individual Traits: Kirijama's bastards gain the Uktena Gift: Invisibility.

Pack Traits: Kirijama's bastards gain two extra dots of Stealth.

Ban: Kirijama's bastards must never become famous, making it hard for them to rise in Rank.

Totems of Strength

The Green Dragon

Background Cost: 9

The Green Dragon is a mighty Bane, often believed to be a lesser avatar of the Wyrms itself. Its hide is armor, its claws calamity, and its breath scours the Earth. It offers its patronage only to those who have proven their might.

Individual Traits: Thrice per day, the Green Dragon's bastards can spew forth toxic flames. This is a Dexterity + Brawl attack with a range of six yards. It inflicts two levels of unsoakable aggravated damage if it hits.

Pack Traits: The Green Dragon grants its bastards two additional soak dice and one extra point of Brawl.

Ban: The Green Dragon withdraws its blessings from any coward who flees a battle in fear of his life.

Bat

Background Cost: 7

This bitter aspect of Bat fell to the Wyrms after Gaia's warriors hunted its children, the Camazotz, to extinction. Bat instills terror in its foes, and bids its bastards to do the same.

Individual Traits: Bat grants its bastards their choice of the Black Spiral Dancer Gifts: Patagia or Ears of the Bat.

Pack Traits: Bat's bastards receive one extra die on all Intimidation, Stealth, and Survival rolls.

Ban: Bastards must not harm bats, and must sleep hanging upside down.



Hakaken, "The Heart of Fear"

Background Cost: 9

Hakaken is a Bane Incarna who appears as a primeval crab-reptile hybrid. This nightmare dinosaur-crustacean was once a great Ahroun of the Shadow Lords before his pride led him into the Wyrms' coils.

Individual Traits: Hakaken's Bastards may buy Gifts off the Shadow Lord list for one experience point more than they would pay for Black Spiral Dancer Gifts.

Pack Traits: Hakaken's bastards add one die to Intimidation rolls.

Ban: Hakaken's Bastards must terrorize their foes before slaying them.

Totems of Corruption

The Dark Fungus

Background Cost: 3

The Dark Fungus is believed to be an aspect of one of those great and primal spirits discarded from Gaia's order in the time before history, a heaving and blasphemous thing boiling deep beneath the surface of the Earth.

Individual Traits: The Dark Fungus's bastards gain one extra dot of Enigmas and Occult.

Pack Traits: When under the influence of psychoactive fungi, this totem's Bastards have access to the Gift: Pulse of the Invisible.

Ban: Bastards must tend growing mushrooms wherever they find them.

Relshab, "The Faceless Eater"

Background Cost: 8

Relshab is a Bane Incarna that manifests as a huge man-shaped form, covered in rolls of flesh, which crawl and ripple in sickly waves. It has no face, only a great gelid roll of fat. Its right "arm" is a snuffling feeding tube. Relshab is an incautious spirit of unlimited greed and hunger.

Individual Traits: Relshab's bastards gain the Ragabash Gift: Whelp Body.

Pack Traits: By spending one point of Gnosis, a bastard of Relshab may chew, swallow, and digest anything she can get her mouth around.

Ban: Relshab's bastards must eat everything put before them.

G'lough, "*Dance of Corruption*"

Background Cost: 12

G'lough manifests as an ever-shifting panoply of horrors, constantly flowing like wax and reforming into increasingly horrid configurations. Sometimes elements of G'lough slough off to become independent Banes. Some Theurges believe it to be the mother of all Nexus Crawlers.

Individual Traits: G'lough grants its bastards the Gift: Fabric of the Mind.

Pack Traits: G'lough's bastards enjoy two extra dots of Occult.

Ban: Bastards must always oppose the status quo, even when it benefits them.







Chapter Four: Feeling the Touch

The Wyrmspreads its depravity through everything. Beyond the Black Spiral Dancers, the Wyrms taint spreads through so much of the world. Fomori, twisted blends of flesh and spirit, are the Corrupters foot soldiers in the physical world, backed up by nightmarish monsters that should not be — from the Thunderwyrms to powerful Fomorach. The Wyrms taint does not leave its mark on the Garou alone, others among the Changing Breeds can serve destruction — and secret projects among Pentex have produced mockeries of Gaia's chosen.

The Wyrms Conscripts: Fomori

Slavering mutants, twisted killers, and hideous blasphemies wrought in flesh—these are the faces of the Wyrms conscripts in its war against Gaia. Fomori are what happens when the pure spiritual essence of the Wyrms invests itself in Earthly flesh. Though blessedly few fomori are strong enough to challenge a werewolf one-on-one, the Wyrms mutants come in near-infinite variety, and all too often, that element of surprise is

enough to spell the end of one of Gaia's defenders. Whether the fomor itself lives to fight another day is of little import. So long as life and corruption both remain in the world, the Wyrms can always bring forth new fomori.

The Role of Wyrms Taint

The Garou rightly describe many things as "Wyrms tainted," and one of their most common Gifts helps them to detect the presence of the Corrupters spiritual effluvia. Indeed, one of the major purposes of Pentex is to flood the world with Wyrms-tainted products, from toys, makeup, and films to food, drink, and therapeutic retreats. But what does eating Wyrms-tainted food and using Wyrms-tainted products *do* to a person?

It does a lot of small, subtle things. It makes people a tiny bit quicker to anger, it makes them a little less tolerant of those around them, it makes dark thoughts and selfish urges rise up more easily than they otherwise might. But the biggest and — from the perspective of Pentex — most important result is that Wyrms-tainted individuals are much easier targets for the Possession Charm (see W20, p. 367). Depending on the severity of the Wyrms-taint a person has taken into himself, the

difficulty of the Possession Charm lowers by between -1 and -3. As Pentex's profits rise, the number of fomori grow year by year.

In essence, when the Garou look upon the twisted face of a fomor, they're witnessing the future the Wyrms has in store for the entire human race.

Playing Fomori?

The "Quick and Dirty Fomori" rules found on page 429 of **W20** are useful for generating fomori characters. But what does it mean to play a fomor? What are fomori, from a player's perspective?

It's easier to start by establishing what fomori are *not* — they're not the X-Men. They're not misunderstood targets of unwarranted prejudice, sporting badass superpowers. A fomor is a person who has fused, body and soul, with a spirit of pure corruption. Fomori can be complex and even conflicted, but the source of their powers—the Bane within—is a thing of pure and unambiguous evil.

How much impact this has on the fomor varies. Some fomori, such as Freakfeet or Hollow Men, retain the classification of "human" only by the most generous definition of the word. Others retain much of their former personality and code of ethics. Usually, fomori weren't very nice people before their possession, but that's not a universal rule, sometimes fomori are just unfortunate. It's easier for a Bane to curl up and make a home in the soul of the weak-willed or the already-corrupt, but the truth is, a Bane strong enough or lucky enough can infest just about anyone.

From the perspective of the Garou, this makes fomori tragic, but any pity or sympathy for the mutant generally only extends so far as to try to give it a clean, swift death. The Galliards *do* know tales of Garou packs who worked with fomori — generally possessed Kinfolk — but none of those tales ends well, and all those sung are with shame.

Ultimately, to play a fomor is to play an unfortunate victim of the supernatural world, probably doomed to a short life and an agonizing death. Play it as a blackly funny one-shot splatterpunk romp, or for tragic pathos, depending on the desires of the group. Alternately, fomori can make decent characters for "everything goes" World of Darkness crossover games. If you already have, say, a dhampyr, a ronin Garou, and a Hollow One mage rambling around in a Winnebago, what harm is there in tossing a fomor into the mix?

For those wishing to play fomori, character creation works much the same as Garou, subject to the modifications mentioned above. The Storyteller decides how many powers you can take when making your character, and will hand out new ones at no experience point cost when he decides your inner Bane is asserting itself. Often accompanied with a new, attendant Flaw; because nobody said possession was going to be pleasant.

Fomori Breeds

While the majority of fomori are unique horrors, there are a few commonly recurring "breeds," either the result of possession by a peculiarly focused type of Bane, or the product of intentional development programs, generally either those of Black Spiral packs, or Pentex's Project Iliad. What follows are a selection of some of the fomori breeds most commonly encountered by the Garou.

Enticers

Enticers are subtle by fomori standards. Outwardly, they don't appear to be the usual slaving mutants Garou stay alert for, they *look* perfect. Of course, what an Enticer really looks like and what the people around her see is rarely the same thing.

An Enticer is a social predator, carefully groomed and deployed by Pentex to lure the company's enemies into traps, turn Gaian loyalists into besotted traitors, or act as the leading wedge of a divide-and-conquer operation. The Enticer doesn't have much of a choice. Pentex binds him in chains of addiction and dependence. Those few "wild" Enticers created outside of the company's control normally burn themselves out in a downward spiral of parties, flings, and abusive relationships.

Enticers emit supernaturally potent, psychoactive pheromones that cause those around them to perceive the Enticer as their ideal sexual partner, the literal man, or woman of their dreams. Moreover, these pheromones are addictive; those who've been around the Enticer for even a short while soon can't conceive of living without him. Essentially, an Enticer can seduce almost anything.

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 6, Manipulation 6, Appearance 6, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Empathy 3, Etiquette 3, Expression 2, Firearms 2, Performance 3, Subterfuge 3

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 4, Resources 3

Powers: Addictive Presence*, Claws and Fangs, Siren's Veil*.

* **Addictive Presence:** Addictive Presence requires the Enticer to spend a scene interacting with a target, and then to spend a point of Willpower and roll Manipulation + Subterfuge against the target's Wits + Primal Urge (difficulty 6 in both cases). If the Enticer wins, then the subject is addicted to his presence, and will go to extremes in order to be with the Enticer again; once per week, the target may make another roll to attempt to break this addiction.

* **Siren's Veil:** Siren's Veil adds two to the fomor's Social Attribute ratings, and allows him to roll Appearance + Empathy against a difficulty of a target's Willpower to appear as their ideal mate, even radically changing

the Enticer's age, or making him appear as a different gender. If this roll fails, the Enticer simply appears to be a generic, attractive individual.

Willpower: 5

Equipment: Luxury clothes, jewelry, and car; a small concealed knife or pistol; cell phone with Pentex handler on speed-dial.

Image: On the rare occasion when someone glimpses an Enticer's true face, he or she looks like an attractive man or woman, that is until he or she opens his or her mouth, displaying a double-row of barbed fangs.

Genesis: Few Enticers come from "the wild," but most come from Magadon's subsidiary Siren Pharmaceuticals. In addition to makeup and cosmetics, Siren targets men with body sprays, moisturizers, shaving creams, hair dyes, and other products advertised as increasing their sex appeal. Ordinary Siren products are simply Wyrms-tainted cosmetic products designed to attract Banes of insecurity and vanity, but a few times a year, Siren sponsors various beauty contests and fashion shows, giving the winner a year's supply of exclusive, limited-edition products. These are loaded with Wyrms-taint, Banes, and addictive additives; a few months later a Pentex representative swings by to rescue the winner from their life-destroying transformation into a fomor, which should be well underway at this point. The company plies the fomor with more addictive cosmetics, as well as doing its best to supply them with other, harder addictive narcotics, and takes over their finances by putting them on the company payroll, anything to get the Enticer on the company's leash in the long term.

Pentex also targets models sliding out of their prime who are desperate for some edge to help them hang on. The process seems to work just as well as the more traditional methods. They used to use this as their main source of male Enticers, but in the last few years, the numbers of male and female Enticers have balanced out.

Roleplaying Notes: It's good to be needed. Most people have their day in the spotlight and then wither away, but not you, *everyone* loves you, everyone wants you, everyone hangs on your every word, and they always will. *That's* good, because it lets you keep living in the style to which you're accustomed: uppers in the morning, downers to stop at the end of the day, and a whirlwind of self-satisfaction in-between, at least when the boss doesn't need something taken care of. You don't like to fight, but you can when you have to, you'd much rather send one of your many admirers off to take care of problems, though.

Ferectoi, the Larvae of the Wyrms

The Ferectoi, also sometimes known as Bane Children, are princes among the ranks of fomori, standing among the strongest and most stable of the Wyrms' mutants. Pentex makes frequent use of Ferectoi, and

the upper ranks of its division management are peppered with Bane Children. The normal glass ceiling blocking fomori from rising high in the ranks of the Wyrms' servants doesn't apply to Ferectoi.

This is because the Ferectoi are perfect creations of the Wyrms' will. Ferectoi are pre-natal fomori, conceived in a twisted mockery of natural reproduction and born already twisted by the will of the Corrupter. No Ferectoi was ever seduced or enticed into the Wyrms' service; they were made to be what they are, one and all.

The Ferectoi know it. They're arrogant, self-assured creatures; mostly raised by powerful servants of the Wyrms such as Pentex executives, Wyrmsish mages, or relatively "stable" Black Spiral families, and are well aware of their birthright. They burn with a desire to hasten the Apocalypse and bring about a world where they can display their superiority openly.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Computer 2, Empathy 2, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 3, Intimidation 4, Larceny 2, Leadership 4, Occult 3, Science 3, Stealth 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Backgrounds: Allies 3-5, Contacts 3-5, Resources 2-4

Powers: At least five fomori powers, as Ferectoi are unique. All Ferectoi are able to hide their nature completely. Extra limbs are retractable into the body, for example.

Willpower: 7

Equipment: Most Ferectoi have whatever they need provided for them by powerful patrons.

Image: Bane Children look outwardly human until they choose to reveal their hellish powers. At that point, they may look like anything. No two Ferectoi have precisely the same mutations.

Genesis: A unique monstrosity known as a Breeder Bane produces Ferectoi. The Breeder Bane is a grotesque jar of disconnected anatomy, a self-impregnating monstrosity designed solely to pervert the natural processes of human reproduction.

Breeder Banes manifest to steal the genetic material of sleeping mortals, using their Charms to keep the mortals unaware of their violation (though they may suffer tormented dreams of the experience in years to come). Though they prize human sperm and eggs, they can use any living cells, taking half an ounce of muscle or bone marrow for example. The Breeder Bane must gather both male and female flesh, and then combines them in the Wyrms-tainted cauldron that is its hideous anatomy, gestating a Ferectoi. It later manifests again to give birth to the Bane Child, leaving the twisted babe in the care of

mighty servants of the Wyrms. Among those who conspire to kill the world, they consider it a high honor from the Corrupter to find a gravid Breeder Bane on one's doorstep.

Roleplaying Notes: You may look human, but you're something greater than those around you are, and you know it. You're stronger, smarter, more evolved. You have a great role to play in shaping the future. Your only regret is that you have to hide that power so much of the time. You long to unfurl your chitinous limbs, spew balefire upon your enemies, and proclaim your ascendance over a dying and obsolete human race.

Until then, you're a wolf among sheep, and that has its own pleasures.

Flesh Packs

The fomori known as Flesh Packs represent one of Pentex's most impressive technical achievements in the field of spiritual corruption. It is an infectious fomor, capable of spreading its mutant state to others. Unfortunately, Flesh Pack fomori aren't just infectious, they're *virulently* infectious, making them of very limited use outside of contained purge-and-burn operations in remote regions. Of course, many caerns are located in remote, rural areas where outbreak containment is possible...

Once possessed, a Flesh Pack fomor suffers rapid, severe decline of his mental faculties, at the same time the possessing Bane pumps him full of aggression and a growing hunger for raw meat — any kind will do. Most Flesh Pack "alphas" begin by raiding the nearest grocery store, but quickly proceed to devouring neighborhood pets and then neighbors. A growing Flesh Pack is easily capable of depopulating a small town or village, and indeed Pentex has recorded Flesh Packs doing so in Mexico, Chile, Somalia, and Siberia.

Flesh Packs orient around the leadership of an alpha, the original fomor that infected the rest of the pack. This "Patient Zero" is usually a bit smarter and stronger than his fellows are, and is, thankfully, the only one capable of spreading the infection. Unfortunately, the "beta" fomori sense this; and they will sacrifice themselves to protect the pack's alpha.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Intimidation 3, Melee 2, Stealth 3

Backgrounds: None

Powers: Claws and Fangs (alpha only), Extra Speed, Immunity to the Delirium, Regeneration.

Willpower: 4

Equipment: Whatever the Flesh Pack has come across that works as a weapon.

Image: Flesh Pack "betas" look outwardly human, but seem anything but normal. They're disheveled, filthy, and utterly manic with the need to eat. Any meat will do. A flesh pack will descend on a supermarket and tear apart its meat section as readily as they'll consume the shoppers. They're never sated, and their regenerative powers will allow them to feast on in agony almost indefinitely, even as their stomachs rupture and re-seal around lumps of raw flesh.

The alpha fomor of a Flesh Pack is bigger than the rest, and develops jagged fangs and bony claws about a week after succumbing to full possession.

Genesis: Flesh Packs spawn from Banes known as Winding Hungers, a kind of cannibal-spirit of gluttony and murder. Winding Hungers are only capable of possessing those who have eaten human flesh, making their fomori blessedly rare. Although when Pentex needs an outbreak badly enough, it's not averse to slipping a burger made of long pork into a local O'Tolley's. Pentex targets Kinfolk when possible, in the hopes that they'll carry the infection inside the bawn of an isolated, self-sustaining caern.

"Beta" fomori are infected when someone survives a bite from the "alpha" fomor. The fomor's murderous aggression acts as a vector for the Winding Hunger to possess additional hosts while remaining rooted in the "alpha" fomor. Two factors limit the size of Flesh Packs: only the alpha can create more fomori, and the absolute power of the Winding Hunger, which can only muster enough power to spread itself across fifteen to twenty-five fomori in total.

Roleplaying Notes: Hard to think, don't need to think, need to eat; you've never needed anything so bad. Wait, did something move over there? Meat! Does it look familiar? The screams don't matter, just the blood on your tongue and the flesh ripping between your teeth.

Damnit, you're still hungry.

Freakfeet

Freakfeet were among the earliest of designer Fomori, initially created by the Magadon subsidiary Panacea in the late 1970s. They were intended to be an easily controlled, cheaply-produced, self-replicating fomori breed, and to thrive in the abandoned nooks and crannies of the urban wasteland — particularly in the sewers and storm drains which many Bone Gnawers of the time used as supply caches and bolt holes. However, a spate of attacks on Panacea facilities allowed a number of un-indoctrinated Freakfeet to escape, resulting in these urban nightmares reproducing in the wild outside of Pentex's control.

Despite their variable appearance, all Freakfeet are genetically identical. They are the result of a genetic-spiritual fusion of human and amphibian DNA with a

H'ruggling Bane. They're dull-witted and cowardly but vicious creatures, experts at creeping, slinking, and abducting targets from within their own homes, the better to either feed or grow their home nest.

Freakfeet have their own crude language, it is a deep-throated chittering comprehensible only to other Freakfeet and H'rugglings.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Primal-Urge 1, Stealth 4

Backgrounds: None

Powers: Fangs, Immunity to the Delirium, Malleate, Rat Head, Slobbersnot

Willpower: 2

Equipment: None.

Image: Freakfeet look like grotesque little toad-monkeys. They're generally human in outline from the waist up, although with weirdly elongated arms. Their eyes are enormous, popping out of heads bulging up from wide, powerful shoulders; Freakfeet have no necks to speak of. Their legs are tiny, from six inches to a foot in length, ending in enormous feet with long prehensile toes. Freakfeet skin is waxy and rubbery beneath its glistening layer of slime, and these fomori come in a wide array of different colors, of which the Freakfeet are inordinately proud. Although they move with a seemingly awkward lope, Freakfeet are capable of impressive ground speeds.

Every Freakfeet hive has a single "Queen" which is at least three times the size of a normal fomor of this breed, with a grossly bloated and bulbous body and a stinger mounted at the base of her spine.

Genesis: Freakfeet are unusual among fomori, in that the only Banes that create new Freakfeet incubate in the flesh of a Freakfeet Queen. Freakfeet perform home invasions, sliding in through the pipes, or snatch lone individuals off the streets and down into storm drains; these unfortunate souls become the fodder for new Freakfeet. Their captors fuse the abductees to the floors or walls of the local hive, where the Queen injects a spiritual "egg" with her stinger. The new fomor gestates inside the body of the host, eventually tearing free of its parent's flesh a few weeks later when the possession is complete.

Roleplaying Notes: You have only the haziest memories of the host-flesh. You remember places, faces, names, facts, but have no emotional connection to them. They are likely to be the first things you hunt. You are born hungry. You love sliding through the pipes and drains of the city, collapsing your rubbery skin and using your natural slime to glide smoothly along. You like playing with the malleable flesh of those you capture. You must

serve the Queen and you must serve the hive. Food, new brothers, and a bit of amusement are all that you need now.

Gorehounds, Take Two

Slaughterhouse Video, a small subsidiary of Pentex, is the exclusive producer of Gorehounds. In the past, Gorehound fomori emulated their classic slasher-film heroes — usually unstable to begin with — Bane possession killed most of their higher reasoning and turned them into silent, hulking, nigh-unstoppable murder machines with a penchant for power tools and ambushes.

Times change, though, and the Gorehounds are changing with them. While the "classic" model of enormous, masked, overtly murderous Gorehound remains a going concern, Slaughterhouse has also recently begun creating a "Take Two" version of the Gorehound as well. These creatures are less blatant than the classic Gorehound, and focus less on racking up a huge body count quickly, and more on extracting the maximum possible amount of suffering from each victim. Where classic Gorehounds are crude, The Bane possessing it imbues the new Gorehounds with a sort of hellish cleverness. This allows it intuitively to construct elaborate traps and torture chambers. Possessed of a relentless drive to kill, both types of Gorehounds rarely manage to last very long before going out in a blaze of terrible violence.

Attributes (old): Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Attributes (new): Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities (old): Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Intimidation 4, Melee 4, Stealth 5

Abilities (new): Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Craft 5, Investigation 4, Melee 3

Backgrounds: None

Powers (old): Immunity to the Delirium, Mega-Strength, Mega-Stamina, Regeneration.

Powers (new): Cause Insanity (via prolonged torture), Immunity to the Delirium, Mega-Intelligence, Regeneration

Willpower: 10

Equipment: (old) Household implements such as meat cleavers, chainsaws, pitchforks, cordless drills, or screwdrivers, to be terribly misused.

Equipment: (new) Chloroform-soaked rag, concealed knife, detailed map of next victim's house, elaborate torture chamber.

Image: Gorehounds continue to look human, save that the classic model bulks up dramatically after pos-

session. Most fade away from their former identities, adopting a new persona for themselves, and may fashion some sort of crude costume, mask, or pattern of scarring to signify this new identity.

Genesis: In the past, Slaughterhouse Video produced heavily Wyrmtainted direct-to-VHS slasher films, occasionally with minor banes sleeping inside the tapes, distributed through seedy video stores. These days, business is better than ever. While their Classic Slaughter line has jumped from VHS to the direct-to-DVD market, Slaughterhouse has also expanded with a Grim Reality line of “real” gore documentaries, compiling animal attacks, industrial accidents, and other purportedly genuine compilations of human death and mutilation. The videos have just enough obviously staged fakery to deflect suspicions about their primarily real content. Slaughterhouse has also jumped enthusiastically into the modern “torture porn” genre, discovering that aficionados of their *Blood Trap* line of low-budget films are ripe breeding grounds for a whole new kind of Gorehound.

Slaughterhouse no longer bothers to pre-package banes with its products. It’s simpler to flood the market with cheap, low-cost Wyrmtainted DVDs and just let

the taint’s clarion call do the rest of the work, attracting appropriate Banes out in the wild. The company is currently experimenting with direct-streaming services as well, and early results look promising; the internet seems as suitable a vector for Wyrmtaint as any other does.

Roleplaying Notes: You stopped really feeling pain a long time ago — or much of anything else, for that matter. Now you only feel alive when screams ring in your ears, or when you feel hot wet blood soaking your arms up to the wrists. You’re living the dream; you’re carrying out a mission. It’s all that matters.

Hollow Men

The ultimate origins of the Hollow Men are a mystery. They are among the oldest of all the fomori breeds. They first appear in Fianna ballads dating back to Roman-era Britain, and that they’re extremely long-lived. Hollow Men serve the Wyrmtaint effectively and with intense drive, having led many great assaults against Gaia down through the centuries.

They’re also among the most disturbing of fomori. A Hollow Man (or Woman) is an individual who has been possessed by a Scavenger Pack Bane, they are a



hollowed-out skin animated by a colony of vermin, little more than a channel for the black urges of the Wyrms.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Expression 2, Firearms 2, Intimidation 4, Occult 3, Primal-Urge 4, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 3, Survival 3

Backgrounds: None

Powers: Colony Powers (see sidebar), Dispersion, Immunity to the Delirium, Prolonged Life, Regeneration. Regeneration requires calling more animals from the surrounding area to replenish and mend wounds; if no such creatures are available, the power doesn't work.

Willpower: 8

Equipment: Heavy trench coat and wide-brimmed hat, revolver.

Image: A Hollow Man can only pass for human at a distance or in poor light. Up close, it becomes clear that they have no eyes, teeth, or tongue. Their skin rustles and surges with the motions of the colony within, and occasionally a member of that colony will peek out through an available orifice, or crawl across the surface of the Hollow Man's skin. Despite their mutilations, Hollow Men are still able to perceive the world, and to speak, although their voices are the modulated buzzing of hornets, or the chorused hiss of serpents.

Genesis: Hollow Men are thankfully rare, as the circumstances that permit their creation are quite uncommon. Scavenger Pack Banes can only possess a relatively fresh, mostly hollowed out body. The ideal body is one still in the process of dying. The Bane drives packs of its patron vermin, such as rats, snakes, roaches, or wasps, to stampede into the gutted husk and complete the task of hollowing it out. Within a matter of minutes or hours, the new fomor rises and goes about carrying out the Wyrms' will.

There is some evidence that the Hollow Man population is now on the rise and that they are associating with one another for the first time in the memory of the Garou. A Hollow Man discovered in Phoenix last year kidnapping students and eviscerating them in a foreclosed ranch house, then called termite swarms out of the walls to create new Hollow Men. Reports of similar stories out of New York, Brisbane, and Cairo circulate among concerned Garou as well. It remains unknown why the Wyrms should desire a greater number of these fomori, but whatever it is, it can't be good.

Roleplaying Notes: You're empty. You have your old memories, but not your old life. You hate everything, especially the colony that nips at your skin and skitters across your bones. Nevertheless, you need them. Without them, you'd be so empty. So alone. Without the rats in your eyes, you couldn't see. Without the rats in your head,

EXAMPLE COLONY POWERS

Hollow Men are among the upper echelon of fomor power, but the exact nature of that power differs depending on the type of Scavenger Bane possessing them. Some examples are below:

Spider Colony: Venomous bite, Wall Walking, Webbing

Rat Colony: Footpads, Infectious Touch, Rat Head

Constrictor Colony: Maw of the Wyrms, Mega-Strength, Rat Head

you couldn't think. They're everything to you now. You need them. You hate them. You need them.

Normalites

These tragic horrors are the result of a number of Pentex projects started during the late 1980s to crush the wills of homosexual men and women through "curative therapy" programs. The ultimate result of the program is a Normalite: a faceless, sexless fomor capable of instinctively detecting the presence of supernatural entities, and filled with an equally instinctive desire to destroy them. Pentex First Teams use packs of these baying, featureless monstrosities to hunt Garou and Kinfolk, and then neutralize their Gifts while strike teams take them apart.

In the twenty-first century, much of the developed world is more accepting of homosexuality than it was, thus it's much harder to start up the programs needed to make Normalites. Production is mostly concentrated in the United States, Italy, and Africa; Russia started a couple of experimental programs, but hasn't had time enough to show success. Pentex remains dedicated to expanding their presence abroad by any means necessary, however; they're simply too useful to give up on.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 2, Stealth 2

Backgrounds: None

Powers: Homogeneity, Immunity to the Delirium, Sense the Unnatural, Venomous Bite

Willpower: 3

Equipment: Generally none, not even clothes.

Image: A Normalite's bone structure distorts, allowing it to run on all fours. Its body is hairless, sexless, and without distinguishing characteristics such as scars or tattoos. The Normalite's pigmentation shifts over time until the fomori is an unearthly paper-white. The Normalite's facial features disappear save for a gaping mouth; somehow, this fails to impair their keen senses.

Genesis: The first Normalites were the products of a Pentex subsidiary known as Homogeneity, Incorporated, a business centered around "curing" homosexuals of unwanted sexual desires through a \$2,000, ten-week course of isolation, religious services, and hypnotherapy. Project Iliad has since diversified, branching out from the original company to sponsor the use of its methods by a number of homosexual "rehab" programs, both Pentex-sponsored and wholly independent. In recent years, it has expanded its operations to include "treatment" of transgendered individuals as well. The banes that create Normalites prey on self-loathing and identity conflicts, and the programs that create Normalites create and magnify these feelings to a disturbing degree. Full possession and transformation takes between six and ten months. The psychological changes begin in a matter of weeks, while physical transformation doesn't begin until the final month of the process.

In countries where homosexuality isn't broadly condemned, Pentex funnels significant funds to hate groups, preachers of intolerance, and socially conservative political movements in the hopes of wedging open markets for more projects like Homogeneity, Inc. The Normalites are among their most useful fomori for finding and targeting the Wyrms' enemies, making further expansion of the program that creates them a vital priority.

Roleplaying Notes: At first, the program seemed like it worked. You realized that your desires were disgusting and wrong, but over time, they faded away. Granted, no heterosexual impulses rose up to replace them, but that was okay, it was enough just to be free, for a while. Then your other desires began to fade as well, even as you became acutely sensitive to the freaks around you. Your rage toward anything "abnormal" grew, even as everything else dimmed out, you managed to become normal, so why couldn't everyone else? Worst of all were the freaks — and you *knew* them to be freaks — who seemed completely normal on the outside.

By the time your genitals atrophied away, and your smooth flesh reabsorbed your eyes and nose, all you could think of was to hunt down the *other*, hate the *other*, kill the *other*. That's when the nice men from Project Iliad came, and showed you how you could help shut down all deviation, once and for all.

Shadowfiends

Stalking through the dark corners of the world, Shadowfiends are assassins for Pentex. They strike targets chosen by

the company with no emotion or remorse. Difficult to find and extremely loyal, almost all Shadowfiends work within the limits of cities and towns, exterminating whichever threats to the corporation and to the Wyrms as a whole. Their targets often include rabble-rousers and activists who would strike down the company's power. Pentex also trusts the fomori to confront supernatural targets, sending them after Kinfolk and individual Garou, eliminating problems as they arise.

Shadowfiends are physically dark enough that they must use their abilities to lighten their coloration to blend with the shadows in which they hunt. The fomori rely entirely on stealth and silence to complete their Pentex-given missions before slipping away as quietly as they came. Commonly, the only sign of a Shadowfiend's work is the lack of a struggle and the look of complete surprise left on the victim's face.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 6, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 1, Firearms 2, Investigation 3, Melee 4, Stealth 5, Subterfuge 3

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 4, Resources 3

Powers: Chameleon Coloration (Shadowwalking), Darksight, Immunity to the Delirium, Shadowplay, Silent Aura*

* **Silent Aura:** Silent Aura creates an area of silence around the Shadowfiend. By rolling Wits + Stealth (difficulty 6), the Shadowfiend can negate all sound within a fifteen-foot radius. The whole area is entirely silent. The effect lasts for a one turn per success.

Willpower: 6

Equipment: GPS tracker; light pistol with silver bullets; silver knife

Image: Shadowfiends appear as lithe humans, their features slightly elongated. The fomori's skin and eyes are pitch black, making them appear as human-shaped voids rather than actual living beings. Shadowfiends tend to shave all of their hair and work naked due to their natural camouflage.

Genesis: A product of Project Iliad, all Shadowfiends are created using a special serum crafted by Pentex' twisted scientists. Specialists observe potential participants over the course of at least two months before sending invitations offering a large sum of money simply for attending a special seminar. People who respond are treated to a formal dinner and stay in a hotel where the seminar is held. Pentex specialists filter through the attendees, watching them from cameras and listening to their conversations. By the end of the night, they decide who they want.

Everyone will sleep well the following night from the time-release drug laced through the food at the dinner. Those chosen by Pentex are then injected with the serum that sends

the victim into pain-laced nightmares for the remainder of the night. The serum opens the person up for possession, and, by the time morning comes, Pentex has created a monster.

The full unification of the Bane and human takes place over the course of two days in which the skin of the victim turns stark black. Upon completion, the Shad-owfiend is fully active and capable, ready to complete its first deadly mission.

Roleplaying Notes: Pentex is everything. You live and breathe the will of the company, and you will do all you can to fulfill its requests. You're not stupid, however. You take your time, analyze your targets, and when you strike, you do it quietly and without fanfare. You're curt and only speak and do what's necessary. Your job is to exterminate the enemies of Pentex, and no one is better suited for the task.

Sons of Typhon

Sons of Typhon spawn from depraved antics of the Tau Upsilon Phi fraternity on college campuses around the United States. They spend their time in college drinking to excess, skipping classes, and using drugs and alcohol to get laid. They also learn the nuances of social manipulation from the fraternity system, and make important contacts in secret societies. Even though the brothers commonly work against one another for top positions within the fraternity, they meet any outsiders making a move against the fraternity with unified force.

Sons of Typhon put in the minimum effort necessary to pass classes, and commonly try to get on athletics teams to avoid being kicked out. Upon graduation, Pentex recruiters pick the best and the brightest from the fraternity for high paying jobs, while others find their way into lower positions. Once within the company, they take positions in public relations and other departments where their social manipulation abilities are put to best use. The most athletic of the graduates are often recruited for First Teams, while those with a predatory bent sometimes find roles in Pentex's competitors, moving them towards a hostile takeover.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Drive 2, Empathy 2, Etiquette 3, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3, Leadership 3, Melee 1, Subterfuge 3

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5, Resources 4

Powers: Armored Skin, Disguise*, Immunity to the Delirium, Tongue of Typhon*

* **Disguise:** Sons of Typhon can hide their true appearance. They look exactly as they did before they were possessed. They can drop the disguise if they so choose, but few rarely do.

* **Tongue of Typhon:** As Homid Gift: Persuasion.

Willpower: 5

Equipment: Expensive car; concealed pistol; smart-phone; tablet

Image: Sons of Typhon typically appear as they did when they were human. In their true visage, they smile literal ear-to-ear smiles, revealing sharp teeth. Their eyes have vertical slit pupils and the irises are either emerald green or blood red.

Genesis: Becoming a Son of Typhon requires being accepted into the Tau Upsilon Phi fraternity, which makes itself as appealing as possible to the campus populace. Heads of the fraternity sift through freshman classes and pass out pamphlets depicting attractive women clinging to members. The fraternity's promises are simple: a place to belong, have fun, and have access to all the women a man could ever need.

The initiation process, however, is hell. Once a potential member is selected to apply, the brotherhood proceeds to tear down his pride. For two weeks, the applicant is subjected to varied forms of humiliation and pain that range from holding heavy bags at arm's length until told to stop, to straight-up sexual assault. Failure reflects an inability to comply with authority, something the frat won't accept. Failed pledges are beaten and shamed in any way the members see fit.

The culmination of the two weeks results in a rave. The parties of Tau Upsilon Phi are legendary, and everyone knows only the best get in. This attracts women that frat members drug so they will do anything and everything the men want. The frat is powerful enough that members never face rape charges, often blaming the victims. While Banes commonly lurk around the fraternity buildings, the initiation raves attract more than usual. The Banes seek out new initiates to meld with in the orgy of pleasure and humiliation, bonding with the freshly depraved souls of the successful initiates.

Roleplaying Notes: The world is your puppet to play with as you please. You love to be on top in every respect of your life. The more people who run around and do your bidding, the better you feel. But you also understand authority, and until you hold the reins, you respect it and follow those who do.

Toads

Toads first emerged during the 1980s, although nobody is sure quite from where. Neither terrible warriors of the Wyrms nor scheming masterminds, Toads tend to pop up in the forgettable middle management of the corporate world. They've proliferated since they first appeared, often serving as key actors in Pentex corporate espionage and asset acquisitions operations, but are now a breed on the decline. More brutally competitive creatures are spilling out of the labs of Project Iliad and

Project Lycaon (see p. 167), and the Toads are looking for a new safe haven.

Unfortunately for them, nobody really likes a Toad. Toads spread misery to those beneath them while coveting the more exclusive positions above them, but generally lack the ambition to work for those titles. Late-night office “accidents” along with a spot of well-placed human resources intimidation may suffice to move a Toad up the corporate ladder, but the higher a Toad climbs, the more of a target it becomes.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Intimidation 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 3

Powers: Barbed Tongue*, Immunity to the Delirium.

* **Barbed Tongue:** Barbed Tongue functions as a hybrid of both Lashing Tail and Frog Tongue, being capable of both capturing targets and inflicting damage with its sharp tip at the fomor’s discretion. Particularly old or vicious Toads may also possess Venomous Bite, which can be applied with their tongue.

Willpower: 5

Equipment: Automatic pistol, large car, cell phone, laptop.

Image: Toads seem human at a glance. They’re overweight (but not grossly so), situation-appropriate-but-shabby dressers, with wide-set, bulging eyes. A Toad’s fingers are like damp, clammy sausages, and their complexion starts at bad and gets worse over time.

The true distinguishing feature of a Toad is, of course, his tongue. A Toad’s tongue can extend a full 15 feet and ends in a viciously sharp barb. A Toad can shoot its tongue out to full length in a fraction of a second. When not in use, the tongue collapses into a wad stored in the mouth and throat, sort of like a huge glob of chewing gum; as a direct result, most Toads mumble.

Genesis: Toads seem to have just *happened*; no program takes credit for them. They’re not considered particularly valuable by Pentex, and the Black Spiral Dancers hold them in open contempt; as a result, nobody is particularly worried about their declining numbers in the present day, or their ongoing exodus from Pentex into the private sector.

Roleplaying Notes: It’s all about control: the power to hire, to fire, to reward and to punish. You enjoy it when others labor to please you, and hate being looked down on. You let disrespect roll off your back like water when it happens, while making sure you *always* get even later. You’re a bully at heart. You try to avoid any fight where the odds aren’t stacked in your favor.

Fomori Families

Not all fomori are created. Some are born.

As the number of fomori increase, they encounter one another more frequently. Drawn together by taint, mission, and sometimes chance, fomori typically work towards a common goal — or just as often, tear each other apart. But occasionally, in a fit of domination, lust, or (rarely) sympathy, fomori become sexually involved. The product of such a union is usually human, but not always. Families of fomori who bred true have appeared in remote areas and cities alike. While still relatively rare, the influx of Wyrms taint has their numbers increasing year by year, and with each successful birthing of a new fomori the creatures come that much closer to overrunning Mother Earth.

The first such family arose in a small community in the heart of Wyoming. One of the locals struck a nest of slumbering Banes while digging for a well. The disruption awoke the spirits, which proceeded to wreak havoc on the town. After a day of terror, the Banes had possessed fully half the town. The other half lay about, feeding the ground with their remains. The new fomori, still human enough to be horrified at what they had done, cut off connections with anyone outside the town. They barricaded themselves in with only one another for company.

They soon fell prey to their urges, and soon enough the fomori produced children. As the community degraded in a swirling mass of debauchery and sadism, the children born lived short, horrible lives full of various tortures. It wasn’t until three years later that a child bred true, emerging from the womb with a Bane in its heart. Inspired by the infant fomor, the townsfolk developed rites and rituals to attract more Banes as they partook in bloody orgies. Soon enough, fomori births became more common. Human children suffered as they always had, and though some were possessed after their births, none lived past their tenth birthday.

The community allowed nobody to leave, and as they reached sexual maturity, the new generation joined in the orgies of sex and violence. More offspring spawned from the unholy unions and, after two generations, the town started to slowly expand with a growing fomori population. The Black Spiral Dancers dubbed the town Hell, Wyoming, and the name stuck.

Pockets similar to Hell, Wyoming exist throughout the rural areas of the world. The isolated fomori families are masses of inbreeding, caring not about who has mated with whom. Conceived from taint and sin, the children of such families have the best chance of breeding true. Half are born with a Bane clinging to their soul. The community looks down upon those who aren’t born possessed as second-class citizens and use them as victims for their sick games. They often die after just a few years. Children who do breed true are greeted with enthusiasm and ritual.

The young usually inherit a deformity from each of their parents, but the communities need and desire diversity. Over the years, the elders have created a number of rites to give their offspring more power. When a fomor child survives to the age of five, the community gathers for an infernal baptism. They brand glyphs into the skin of the child as the elders call for the Wyrms to bestow favor on the youth. At the culmination of the ritual, the fomor gains a new deformity fitting of her personality.

Outsiders stumbling upon these isolated groups rarely leave. They're used as twisted playthings or subjected to torture depending on the whims of the families. The fomori commonly kill their victims in brutal survival games or lock them up and torture them until they die — or accept the Wyrms and become fomori themselves. The fomori don't use captives as breeding stock. The chances of a child breeding true are much smaller with a non-fomor parent. Conceiving children with outsiders is a waste of time and effort. When elders discover forbidden couplings, they carve the unborn out of the mother's womb. If the mother dies in the process, it is of no concern to them.

Remote communities are not the only places an unwary victim might find fomori families. As their numbers increase in urban areas, so have families started to spread. Ironically, the poor and downtrodden are not the most likely to harbor Bane-ridden families. Instead, the lower-middle class hide most of the urban atrocities.

Deluded into believing that they are an evolution above humans, the urban families strive to keep their powers secret from the public while maintaining seemingly ordinary lives. Members who can pass as human find occupations through which they can spread their taint. Those who can't take low-level jobs at various Pentex subsidiaries. Company recruiters keep tabs on the families, offering education to any children who can't attend a normal school due to their deformities.

Urban families do not fall into the mass of inbreeding that is prevalent among their rural counterparts. Instead, their children spread out into the world, through Pentex initiatives and through cults masquerading as family support groups, meeting other humans and fomori with whom to start relationships. Such relationships devolve into hatred, anger, and abuse, but sometimes the two fomori form a permanent link and, despite hating each other, they find themselves drawn back to one another time and again.

Large fomori families are very rare in the cities. The possessed, after all, have access to an unlimited human population. Because their blood is not as strong, they breed true with other fomori only one time in ten. Any offspring conceived with a human has no chance of being born with a Bane in her heart. Due to the lack of inbreeding, the children are all born with one inherited

deformity — which can come from either parent — and a new power of their own. Their deformities are not as obvious to casual observation, and they are more likely to pass as normal in society. The children have a chance to accept their Bane and grow with it. Many who survive to adulthood are true horrors, fully accepting of what they are and the powers and deformities they possess.

Inspired by the fomori ability to breed true, Pentex started Project Echidna, using genetic engineering to take spiritual decay into its own hands. All of the Project's attempts to create fertile fomori in a controlled environment has failed. All children conceived in the labs have either been normal humans or have died in their mothers' wombs. Frustrated, the company has turned its attention elsewhere.

Hidden in zoo laboratories around the world, Project Echidna employees work fervently to recreate fomori families in various lines of animals. Unlike humans, the experiments have met with some success. They've created fertile fomori among carnivores, with the greatest success rate occurring among wolves and the great cats. They keep the offspring away from their parents after birth to stop the young killing their siblings — or the parents feasting upon their children. Project Echidna nurseries have found that fomori animals bred and raised in this manner have more control over themselves than their wild counterparts, making them trainable. The company raises and trains the creatures, keeping them separated, until they reach maturity. Siblings share most of their powers and deformities, and only a select few gain more as they mature. Project Echidna is actively working to make their fomori spawn stronger, keeping the best for future breeding stock, but their funding is being siphoned off into Project Lycaon's attempts to create shapeshifters.

When the fomori come into their full powers, they are shipped off to different departments and subsidiaries where they commonly act as guard animals. Some make their way into First Teams where they are used to track down Garou in a similar fashion to police K9 units. Black Spiral Dancers will sometimes buy the less deformed creatures and then use them against Garou and Fera alike. Werewolves suddenly ambushed by great cats with strange powers might find themselves placing blame where it doesn't belong.

Fomarchs

Standing in direct contrast to the tried-and-true fomori breeds, the atrocities-in-flesh known as fomarchs are a new experiment by Pentex, part of the company's ongoing efforts to lessen its dependence on other Wyrmspawn such as the Black Spiral Dancers. Fomori are all well and good as disposable shock troops. They're cheap, easy to replace, and versatile in their variety of hideous forms, but their benefits are generally their drawbacks.

They're short-lived, generally dying by their third deployment, and most of them have to be housed and trained well out of the public eye due to their hideous mutations. Most of all, they're weak—very few fomori are capable of standing up to a werewolf in single combat. Fielding them in strike teams only mitigates this problem to some degree, since the Garou normally operate in packs as well.

Fomarchs are a next-generation experiment in "elite" fomori. Pentex designed fomarchs to have fully concealable powers. Each fomarch has, at minimum, the Bestial Mutation power. They should work as solo operatives, or with backup from "normal" fomori. To be considered a success, a fomarch must be free of any drawbacks that severely curtail its life-expectancy, must have powers at least on par with a Ferectoi, must be able to completely conceal its powers by adopting an outwardly-human guise, and must be at least functionally sane. Pentex has attempted a number of methods to create fomarchs, experimenting with multi-Bane possession, binding of exceedingly mighty Banes into hosts, and even with mystic and genetic augmentation of standard fomori. The majority of these experiments have created deformed, hulking failures, which become as fodder for the front lines or the vivisection tables, but each success helps the company zero in on a reliable method to augment its forces with elite special operatives and mighty leaders, at least, so Pentex hopes.

A handful of fomarchs is detailed below; each considered a success by Pentex. All fomarchs are, to date, unique. Pentex has yet to devise a method of reliably creating fomarch "breeds."

Icomammus

The fomarch Icomammus is a horse-sized, wraith-like being that seems to hover over the ground. Unlike other fomarchs, extreme physical violence isn't its strength. The threat of Icomammus comes from within. The monster's body is a semi-translucent shell of deceptive hardness, with the general shape and bioluminescent appearance of a jellyfish, down to the hundreds of whip-like stingers that dangle from its body. But the bell-like horror isn't just an empty cartilaginous ball of mesoglea. As the ghostly fomarch drifts in the wind, the cloudy liquids floating within its body clear, and a gray, human-sized fetus suspended within, lacking a nose or mouth. Its enormous jet-black eyes sometimes cut through the liquor amnii to peer out. Those who catch its gaze can feel Icomammus rifling through their thoughts and memories.

In addition to this telepathic probe, Icomammus supports itself by psychic projection, though its telekinetic gifts do not extend beyond self-propulsion. The rest of its vast psychic powers depend entirely on the delivery of a toxic sting from one of its many tentacles.

After injecting a target with the psychoactive venom of Icomammus, the fiend may project illusions intense enough that they become like reality, to the point of doing extreme psychosomatic damage to victims.

Temenathus the Great

The fomarch called Temenathus was adapted from a failed NDL (see p. 167) project attempting to recreate the extinct Camazotz using a genetic werewolf-fomor hybrid and the spirit of a bat. The charnel beast that resulted was not a proper shapeshifter, but rather a man-bat horror whose slavering, unhinged jaw, and incessant screaming made it one of the most terrifying fomarchs produced by Pentex. Temenathus is a hulking beast with arms that drag the ground, trailing the leathery membranes and long bony fingers of a bat's wings. Its wings don't allow flight, but they do support enough of its considerable weight to allow it to glide. With its coal-gray, wolf-like fur, the beast is rather adept at blending into shadows, getting the moon at its back and then descending down on its victims.

Temenathus screams when it moves, its shrieking echoes creating a sonic reference point for its auditory senses. When it fights, it primarily uses the long, disease-infested claws at the ends of its human-like hands to slash victims, using its giant unhinging jaw full of bristling needle-sharp teeth to rip the flesh from corpses. In addition to its tremendous speed and strength, that rivals some Crinos Garou, Temenathus's salivary glands can release acid when it bites, allowing it to deliver a festering, and mortal wound. Recently, Temenathus developed incredibly overdeveloped shoulder muscles that open up to reveal soft glands that can squirt streams of this acid up to 10 yards away. Opening its shoulder glands releases such a terrible stench that the smell alone can send victims reeling; allowing even a human nose to detect and track Temenathus for hours after it uses this attack.

Unicorn

The fomarch codenamed Unicorn is a deliberate insult to the Children of Gaia. In many ways, it is more limited than other fomarchs, though Pentex scientists hope to generate arms and legs in the next iteration of the horror. For now, Unicorn remains of use only in aquatic deployments. Having the body of a great white shark with a huge proboscis from the top of its head, and four pectoral fins rather than two, Unicorn is so-named for the gigantic conical chitin spike that juts from its proboscis. This appendage pushes down at the monstrosity's skull so forcefully that its eyes are sunken beneath their sockets, leaving bloody, ragged holes where they should be.

This headspike is not just a weapon, but also a beacon that makes the Unicorn receptive to sensations



generated by Wyrms-based Gifts. As a result, the Black Spiral Dancers can use their Gifts to both lead and track Unicorn. Its horn also leads it to nature spirits, which it can strike from the physical world. Unicorn's horn contains so much tainted Gnosis that it can strike both physical and Umbral targets with equal facility. Finally, the creature's horn allows it to hear the prayers and rituals used by the warriors of Gaia. Though limited by where it can swim, it has led Pentex-crewed ships right to the shores of remote islands and hidden coasts sporting the cairns and holdfasts of the Garou and their allies on half a dozen occasions.

Kinfolk whom Unicorn hunts dream of a great glowing-eyed single-horned beast pursuing them through the shadows. Other times, their nightmares feature a great shark-shadow passing under the clouds.

Supernatural Fomori

Possessing Banes twist human flesh and human minds into a mockery of Gaia's design, but what happens when a person has already become something other than human? What happens when a Bane tries to possess an already-supernatural beings?

In short: nothing good.

Most Banes simply can't do it. Supernatural beings tend to have some built-in protection against possession, meaning that only the strongest or most specialized of Banes have a shot at possessing a vampire, mage, or — Gaia forbid — a werewolf. Still, it happens occasionally, and the results can be among the most gruesome things a pack of Garou may ever have to face.

Vampires

Vampires are hard to possess. Perhaps the Curse of Caine is such a potent form of damnation that any lesser affliction has trouble taking root; perhaps it has something to do with vampires already being dead. Whatever the reason, very few Banes can find any purchase in a vampire's pale and withered soul. Those that do tend to be Banes of blood and madness, and they can make a vampire's unlife very short and very unpleasant indeed. Detailed below are two examples of the kind of fomori possible when a Bane manages to curl up in the black and empty pit that was once a vampire's soul.

Bloodworms

The Garou regard vampires as blood-sucking cannibal corpses, thus obviously making them servants of the Wyrms. Vampires would differ. They have a flowery adage

— *a beast I am lest a beast I become* — that describes their fundamental dilemma. Each vampire wages an eternal battle to hold onto some shreds of the person she used to be, lest she become nothing but a mindless animal howling for blood. However, in order to maintain that control, the vampire must do terrible things to appease her cursed nature, things corrosive to maintaining her soul. It's a poignant and complex struggle, which plays out over a span of centuries or even longer.

Or, it ends quickly and prematurely when a Bane known as a Thirster manages to slip into a vampire's soul during frenzy.

It's an excellent partnership at first. The vampire grows more resilient, and her blood seems more powerful and potent. But her self-control starts eroding soon after, and it becomes much easier for the scent of blood to send her into a killing frenzy. The Bane eats another piece of what's left of the vampire's soul during each murderous revel, until there's nothing left but a creeping, blood-thirsty corpse. That's when the real renovations begin.

Unlike a normal vampire lost to the Beast, there's still something controlling a Bloodworm — the Bane. A Bloodworm is a cunning, canny predator, using its mutated body and its vampiric Disciplines to seek out the blood of Gaia's defenders.

Powers: Blood Gorge*, Corpse Hide*. *After losing all Humanity:* Darksight, Rat Head, Slobbersnot, Wall Walking.

* **Blood Gorge:** This power doubles the size of a vampire's Blood Pool, but causes her to fail all hunger frenzy rolls, and to automatically fail any Humanity rolls she makes.

* **Corpse Hide:** Corpse Hide allows the vampire to soak damage at a difficulty two lower than normal.

Image: At first, the vampire seems no different than she did before possession. Once the Bane finishes eating her soul, the vampire's body undergoes radical alteration. Her fangs disappear as the Bane repurposes her tongue into a far more effective blood-drinking tool in the form of a three-foot long, jointed siphon ending in a deadly sharp needle, which folds up in the throat when not in use. The vampire's skin turns deep red, and glistens with a thin layer of bloody lubrication. Her limbs wither into corpse-like sticks, after about six months they fall off entirely. The vampire's torso elongates into a fleshy sack designed to store blood, while her pupils grow to take up almost the entirety of her eyes. Muscular, rasp-like bands line the underside of the torso, allowing the vampire to move with terrifying speed through muscular contraction, and even to ooze up walls and across ceilings.

Roleplaying Notes: You're an ambush predator, and don't have any worries in the world to distract you

from the hunt for blood. The blood is everything, and when you're warm and sloshing full of it, you're content to hide and digest. It's perfect. You can't remember why you wanted to fight this.

Draugr

Most young Garou are understandably paranoid about vampire bites, but their more seasoned septmates know that it doesn't work like the movies, and thank Gaia, or else the world would be up to its neck in Leeches. The vampires themselves are well aware of how difficult it is to create more of their kind, and this lets them hunt and kill with impunity.

Then a Rot Walker enters the picture.

Draugr are among the rarest fomori in the world, and this is a very fortunate thing. Rot Walkers normally only possess the dead, and have little interest in vampires. When such a Bane *does* turn its attention to a vampire, it normally lacks the strength to adapt its normal form of possession from the dead to the undead. However, on those few occasions when it works, the result is a nightmare: for the vampire, for the Masquerade, and for the sept that has to clear out the Draugr and its brood.

Possession by a Rot Walker erases some of the vampire's distinguishing characteristics. On the plus side, it no longer needs to sleep more than a couple of hours during the day, and sunlight inflicts bashing rather than aggravated damage. Less welcome are the fact that its fangs shorten and dull (inflicting lethal rather than aggravated damage), and its bite no longer inflicts a hypnotic euphoria, it just *hurts*. Nor can the vampire close its own bite wounds. Given that most vampires bite right into a major artery and then seal the wound, a Draugr leaves its victims bleeding out. What makes the Draugr so dangerous though comes *after* a victim dies of its bite.

They get back up.

A Draugr victim isn't a vampire, though it's vampire-like. Twelve hours after death, the corpse reanimates with most of its mind and personality intact, driven by a strange homing instinct to seek out the Draugr. Though the homing instinct remains, everything else fades quickly. The victim's psyche breaks down in less than six hours, rendering the corpse a shambling cadaver no smarter than a dog, though it can and will follow simple instructions from its maker. The corpse becomes violent when something gets in the way of finding its creator. Twelve hours after reanimation, the corpse develops fangs like the Draugr's, and it seeks out blood if left unattended. The corpse avoids sunlight at this point, though it will be another 24 hours before sunlight actually harms it in the same way it does the Draugr. A Draugr-thrall never develops Disciplines, and can't use the Blood Points it consumes for any purpose other than to keep itself animate for another day,

a requirement that begins three days after reanimation. The thrall can be destroyed by filling its health track with lethal damage; it doesn't experience torpor.

Powers: The Rising. Anyone killed by the fomor's bite rises as a corpse-servant, as detailed above.

Image: The Draugr looks a little more dead than other vampires do. His complexion is waxy and ashen, his eyes dull, his mouth and hands dry. His eyes become dull and corpselike. His thralls look like exactly what they are: ambulatory, hungry cadavers, which look more and more gruesome as they collect incidental wear and tear, which the blood they consume cannot heal. They give urgent moans upon scenting fresh blood.

Roleplaying Notes: You're not sure why this is happening — it's hard to feed, now, and when you kill someone, they come back. You don't have to sleep so much during the day, which at least gives you time to watch over your growing collection of corpse-servants and to think about what to do with them. You know you've become a Masquerade breach waiting to happen, but at this rate, you're going to have enough loyal muscle to get even with all the other vampires in the city before they start calling for your head. Maybe this could be your ticket to becoming Prince....

Werewolves

Can a werewolf become a fomor? Absolutely. It doesn't happen very often, though. Any Garou who isn't already deep in the Wyrms' thrall will feel something amiss as soon as possession begins, and the Garou are uniquely capable of stopping the process (generally by stepping into the Umbra and tearing the offending Bane to shreds). Once in a while, though, it happens, and the resulting fomor is one of the gravest and most personal insults to Gaia and the Garou Nation that a werewolf can conceive of.

Generally, only the youngest of cubs gets possessed. It's not a fast or simple process where a werewolf is concerned (the difficulty of possession is always 9), and even making the attempt is usually enough to set the local sept on the warpath. Most Banes are smart enough to realize it's not worth the trouble. There are always a few exceptions, though, and there is one particular breed of Bane specializing in possessing werewolves.

The Garou aren't the only shapeshifters on the block, of course. Curiously, the other Fera do not share a uniform resistance to possession. In general, the deeper a Changing Breed's link to the Umbra, the more possible possession becomes. Those shapeshifters that can't naturally step sideways into the Umbra tend to be nearly immune to Bane possession.

Finally, the Black Spiral Dancers vary on the subject of Bane possession. A few of the tribe's most hardcore Wyrms fanatics see the invitation of a Bane into their

soul as an act of ultimate communion with their Dark Father. The majority of the Spirals, on the other hand, look on the idea of werewolf fomori with revulsion and horror. Fomori are sick jokes, the lowliest of the Wyrms' minions, disposable chaff fit only for shock troops and servants. For a Black Spiral Dancer to submit himself to that sort of slavery and indignity is repugnant. Most Banes know better than to attempt to possess a Black Spiral Dancer without an invitation first; the Wyrms' wolves can be creative indeed in exacting retribution.

Howling Shamblers

One particular sort of Bane, known as a Howling Insanity, specializes in possessing Garou. The Bane still doesn't have a terribly high rate of success, but Pentex is busy working on a way to standardize the process and make it easier.

The fomori created by Howling Insanities are known as Howling Shamblers, and they're among the most wretched of the Wyrms' conscripts. The sheer spiritual poison of the Bane bonded to the Garou's soul rots the werewolf's mind and body from the inside out. Derangements blossom soon after possession, even as regeneration-resistant cancers unfurl inside the werewolf's body. The need to howl becomes a compulsion, and the werewolf's cry echoes with the voice of the Wyrms. Few Howling Shamblers manage to live more than six months, and there is only the beginning of the horror.

Powers: Howling (as Roar of the Wyrms), Shambling*.

* **Shambling:** When a Howling Shambler dies, it gets up one turn later and finishes whatever it was doing — making dinner, fighting a Pentex First Team, whatever. Once that task is accomplished, the Howling Shambler goes ambling off to find, kill, and eat anything with werewolf blood in it. The reanimated Shambler is nearly unstoppable. Its chopped off limbs keep crawling or rolling along with the rest of the body. Only burning, melting, or smashing it into a raw pulp of meat and gristle will stop it (in game terms, the thing must be killed with fire or acid, or have its health track filled with aggravated damage *twice over*; even then, the parts keep twitching and flopping until they're burned).

Image: A living Howling Shambler tends to look like a crazy homeless person: shaking, filthy, mumbling to himself, and bursting out with periodic howls as the tumors and other diseases eat away at his mind. In Crinos, the Shambler's fur is mangy and falling out, and his body is covered in weeping sores. After reanimation, the fomor looks like a shuffling, hungry corpse, rotting as it shambles toward its next meal.

Roleplaying Notes: You're so confused now—a few months ago, you were strong and proud, but now everything seems to be going wrong. It's — AROOO! — it's hard to concentrate, and you itch and ache all the time. Sometimes your thoughts don't line up so well.

Sometimes you want to do awful things, like something was whispering in your ear. AROOO! But the wolf's still alive and well in you, and it wants to hunt and howl.

Mages

Mages, for all that they dabble in powers Gaia did not intend for humanity, remain fundamentally human. As such, they're susceptible to Bane possession, and all the horrors that come with it.

Mages *do* have a few things going for them. Their souls are particularly powerful and resilient. The difficulty to possess a mage is three higher than it would otherwise be. Once possession begins, many mages are capable of wielding magic to contest the Bane's efforts directly.

On the other hand, mages who deal with spirits don't always know what they're getting into, and some foolish or wicked mystics may actively invite Banes into themselves, believing they will be able to command the spirit, or not understanding the bargain they're making. Either way, the result is a fomor wielding both the degrading blessings of the Wyrms and the mystic power of an Awakened soul.

In the long run, this isn't a good thing for anybody other than the Wyrms. A mage fomor retains full access to her magic, and gets new powers, to boot. It seems like a great deal. At least until the mage attempts her next Seeking (a kind of mystic trance in which the mage communes with a portion of her soul in the hopes of achieving greater enlightenment). The mage discovers that her Avatar partially fused with the possessing Bane, covered in weeping sores, rugose scales, or some other outward sign of its corruption. A fomor cannot successfully complete any further Seekings. The Avatar doesn't even offer enlightenment, but instead tempts the mage deeper and deeper into the sick philosophy of the Wyrms. Rather than Ascension, it speaks of the glory of destruction, the purity of annihilation, and the joy of scourging and defiling an ignorant and malleable reality. "Success" on such a Seeking simply allows the mage to escape with her sanity intact; failure bestows a Derangement and costs the mage a dot of Arete.

Worse, the mage's corruption spreads out into her magic. Her vulgar magic taints the substance of reality with the Wyrms' taint, acting as a beacon to Banes, who may glean an extra point or two of Essence from the free-floating, tainted energies. Soon, swarms of Banes constantly follow the mage in the Penumbra. If left unchecked for long enough, it may act as a catalyst to despoil an entire city. Certainly, she's a severe threat to any place of spiritual power she interacts with.

Excising a Bane from its fomor host with magic is a possible, but difficult, and a fomor mage can't

perform the exorcism on herself. Even with the Bane removed, the mage is likely to suffer lingering damage to her soul and magic. If she's lucky, it won't persist into her next incarnation.

Changelings

Those few fae remaining on Earth are strangely resilient to the power of the Wyrms. Their faerie souls

NOPE, DOESN'T WORK

So what kinds of creatures are Banes simply incapable of tackling at all? Quite a few things.

Among the Fera, both the Nagah and Corax cannot be possessed. The Nagah tricked the whole spirit world into thinking they are extinct, and this spirit-blindness helps them even now. The Rite of the Spirit Egg that creates a new Corax ends up with the wereraven's spiritual half "possessing" the young shapeshifter, blocking further attempts at possession.

Wraiths, being incorporeal spirits themselves, can't be possessed by Banes. Even those re-embodied spirits known as the Risen are immune to possession, as they are essentially corpses being driven around by a resident ghost. It seems the body doesn't have room for a second possession.

The Kuei-Jin are immune to Bane possession as well, possibly for reasons similar to the Risen; indeed, the Kuei-Jin often make use of fomori as lieutenants, lackeys, and ceremonial guards. The same sort of protection also seems to apply to the *hsien*.

Those hunters known as the Imbued cannot be possessed. Presumably, this is another gift from their enigmatic patrons.

Mummies are completely impervious to Wyrms' possession, thanks to some mystic protection granted by the Spell of Life. There are persistent rumors of "Bane mummies" created thousands of years ago, but those appear to have been raised up through a corrupted version of the Spell of Life.

Finally, demons are entirely immune to possession of any kind.

shrug off the attentions of Banes without the changeling even being aware of the attempt. It is as though they are another order of being, indifferent to the wars of the Triat.

Yet, changelings are not purely fae. To survive in the magically barren modern world, most of the Earth's remaining faeries have hidden themselves away in a guise of mortal flesh, and this flesh remains vulnerable to the attentions of the Wyrms' minions. A changeling who has forgotten, temporarily or permanently, her fae nature is susceptible to Bane possession (though the difficulty to do so is still one higher than normal or two higher in the case of sidhe). A changeling who becomes a fomor in this fashion cannot recall her fae soul so long as the possessing Bane remains in residence. Her true nature remains trapped and slumbering, and in deadly peril. Generally speaking, barring miraculous treasures of the Dreaming, or the assistance of Fianna Theurges capable of driving out the Bane, a changeling fomor is doomed to live out the remainder of its days as an ignorant thrall of the Wyrms.

When a changeling fomor dies, its faerie soul is in terrible jeopardy, and may fall into the jaws of the Wyrms to be destroyed forever. Roll the fomor's Glamour rating against difficulty 7. If the roll succeeds, the changeling's soul passes on to its next incarnation as normal, if it fails, the soul is destroyed as surely as if struck down by cold iron.

Everything Else

What of the other odd residents of the World of Darkness? Generally, they're out of luck.

Kinfolk are as susceptible to Bane possession as anyone else, to the lament and horror of their Garou relatives. Indeed, Pentex often specifically targets Kinfolk when able; who better to strike against the Garou than those closest to them?

Those blood-addicted servants that vampires know as ghouls are still fundamentally human, and thus similarly vulnerable. So too, might Banes possess those of the strange bloodlines of "ghoul families" known as revenants, and even —hypothetically— the rumored and possibly apocryphal children of mortals and thin-blooded vampires.

Mortals who dabble in the world of the supernatural generally have no special protection from becoming fomori, with the exception of the Imbued, "hunters" of all stripes, from the Society of Leopold and the Arcanum to Strike Force Zero and the Shih, are all vulnerable to possession.

Hedge mages, psychics, and mediums are also at risk of possession. Pentex has a specialized program known as Project Aeneid dedicated to experimenting with psychic fomori. Such individuals do not even enjoy the slight protection afforded to greater supernatural beings, due to the way their gifts require them to open themselves up to the world.

Finally, those fae-blooded individuals known as kinain are considered entirely mortal for the purposes of the possession Charm.

Banes

Each thing upon Gaia radiates out into the Umbra, announcing its nature and giving rise to spiritual representations. For each tree, river, and house, there is a spirit; for each moment of joy, bright ripples spreading out through the world of spirits and perhaps giving birth to an Epiphling.

But also, there is a spirit for the flash of murderous rage, the long, simmering, and life-draining depression; for the polluted creek, the rotten tree, and the broken home. Once, some Garou believe, these things were part of the natural cycle of the world, but if so, that was long ago. The Wyrms' talons hold Gaia in an iron grip and its coils choke the cosmos, and all things that are destructive or corrupt come to dwell in its shadow. If they do not serve it today, then its minions will see to it that they join its ranks tomorrow.

Banes, then, are the revealed face of the Wyrms in the spirit world. They are a category of spirits bearing their patron's hideous touch and the taint of its nature. It encompasses both "born" children of the Wyrms, as well as formerly Gaian spirits that have fallen into corruption. Few Garou believe in the possibility of purifying a Bane, and indeed, in most cases, there exists no prior "pure" state for a Bane to return to. As a result, Banes are the most elemental enemies of Gaia's warriors, a foe against whom no quarter can ever be asked or offered. The only answer is to move forward, claws and fangs bared. The enemy's numbers are limitless; the Garou can only hope their determination is the same.

Abliphet

These city-dwelling Banes appear to be a hideous fusion of Weaver and Wyrms' forces. They make their lairs atop tall buildings designed for human habitation: apartment blocks, tenements, and even the occasional run-down hotel are the normal hunting grounds of Abliphets. They extend spiritual tendrils down through the hidden ducts and vents of the building and slowly turn the building they've chosen as their prey into a hotbox of tension, despair, and rage. No one in such a cursed building can keep a dark secret to himself; no one can keep their mind off the failings of their neighbors; but equally, none can bring themselves to take the building's problems outside of its borders. Once the building has collapsed into a spiritual Wound or self-destructs in an orgy of domestic violence, murder, or arson, the Abliphet moves on to find new prey.

Rage 9, Gnosis 9, Willpower 6, Essence 25-35

Charms: Airt Sense, Blighted Touch, Control Electrical Systems, Domain Sense, Everybody's Secret*, Illuminate, Shatter Glass, Short Out

***Everybody's Secret:** This Charm is similar to the Shadow Lord Gift: Whisper Catching, save that it encompasses every secret event or exchange to occur within a building. The echoes of domestic violence, perversion, and hate slowly work their way through the building's ducts and corridors. Eventually, everyone who lives in the building knows the secrets of everyone else: perhaps they drift under a door, or through an air conditioning vent, or rattle about in an old elevator as it carries tenants up through the building's black throat. Speaking of the secrets of a building learned through Everybody's Secret is extremely difficult, requiring a point of Willpower and a Willpower roll (difficulty 9); failure causes the desired words to die in the tenant's throat, and a certainty to fall down around him that it's just not the business of anyone from outside the building.

Image: An Abliphet is a massive Bane: A huge, jellylike, white-and-purple thing squatting at the top of a building. If possible, Abliphets lair in attics or storage spaces, but in a pinch they will squat on the roof, open to the elements. Most of the Bane's substance takes the form of long, pulsing veins, bladders, and tubes dangling down through the substance of the building. They choke its Umbral ducts and pipes writhe invisibly along the walls of its elevator shafts. It is through these pipes and arteries that it conducts the building's dirty secrets after processing them in its main body.

Background: No one is quite sure where Abliphets come from, but they're among the most destructive Banes of the modern urban environment. The Hakken of Japan are well-acquainted with these horrors, where they exist in unparalleled numbers, finding the nation's ant-hive overcrowding much to their liking.

Storytelling Notes: Abliphets are good for running the Werewolf equivalent of a haunted house story, or a combat raid. Finding out about the Bane's presence is only the beginning of a pack's troubles; running the gauntlet of the thing's environment-manipulating Charms to actually reach it is a job in itself. In worst-case scenarios, an Abliphet may act as a central misery-focus to attract lesser Banes, and a pack may find itself stumbling into a run-down tenement full of spiritual shock troops and even some fomori.

Crimson Pestilent

Crimson Pestilents are Banes of sickness, parasites, disease, and dysfunction. Their deepest delight is to witness flesh in revolt against itself, and so they congregate where humans breathe in toxic chemicals, re-use needles,

drink from parasite- or mercury-tainted waters, and drink irradiated water. They revel in sudden flare-ups of Ebola and evangelize cancers. Moreover, when they find a human afflicted with the marks of the Wyrms, one whose flesh is sick and fighting against itself, they set the terrible red tendrils of their power upon that person, and empower the sickness.

Rage 6, Gnosis 3, Willpower 8, Essence 17

Charms: Airt Sense, Awaken the Blight*, Blighted Touch, Materialize, Swift Flight

***Awaken the Blight:** A Crimson Pestilent may spend two Essence to use this Charm on a person afflicted with some manner of disease. The Bane makes a contested roll of its Rage against the target's Stamina; if the Bane wins, whatever ailment the target suffers from flares up, and their next roll to resist or recover from the effects of the ailment suffers a penalty equal to the Bane's Gnosis. A fever might spike to life-threatening temperatures, while a cancer metastasizes and spreads like wildfire throughout the body.

Image: Crimson Pestilents appear as winding red fogs from a distance; upon closer inspection, one sees them as composed of millions of hair-fine blood vessels, all twisting and writhing around one another.

Background: Crimson Pestilents are a new menace, first sighted in the 1960s. They were extremely rare until the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, when their numbers swelled, now they fester throughout the world. Black Spiral Theurges believe they are the breath of the Wyrms, exhaled into the world.

Storytelling Notes: Crimson Pestilents are particularly loathsome Banes, striking as they do at the weak and the wounded. They're best used as a reminder that the Garou must remain vigilant, and that in the final days, even a hospital or medicine lodge may be part of the battlefield.

Halassh

Heavy-hitting shock troops of the Wyrms, Halassh are straightforward killers. Pentex and the Black Spiral Dancers both make frequent use of Halassh as spiritual muscle; they have few other uses, but then, muscle is useful enough. Halassh rarely attempt to manifest unless bid to do so; they prefer to hunt other spirits, disdaining mortal prey.

Rage 8, Gnosis 2, Willpower 8, Essence 18

Charms: Airt Sense, Armor, Dissolution*, Materialize

***Dissolution:** The Bane may pay one Essence when attacking a target to coat its claws or fangs with a hideous spiritual acid. The difficulty to soak such an attack is 9.

Image: Halassh are hulking terrors, broad-shouldered, bare-skulled, with huge claws and fangs and wild, staring eyes. Their pale hides seem pitted and acid-scarred, and they stand nearly as tall as a Crinos Garou does.



Background: Halassh are spirits of powerful corrosives, spilled carelessly. Pentex entices the spirits to guard its installations through haphazard disposal of dangerous chemicals; the Black Spiral Dancers simply summon and bind the things. The spirits have no particular great agenda; they simply hate anything that is pure, and seek to rend it with their claws and fangs.

Storytelling Notes: Halassh are heavy line-breaker troops compared to the “standard infantry” of the Scrag. They exist to provide combat challenges — nothing more, nothing less — although the hideous wounds they inflict may also pose a challenge for the healers of the Garou nation.

Harpies

Silent stalkers of human and Garou alike, Harpies circle the sky, scanning for any sign of dissension and jealousy upon which to feed. Unhealthy rivalries soaked with envy attract the Banes, who then find an adequate place up high and out of sight in which to build their nests. From their vantage points, they spy on the goings on about them, leaving their nests to steal small items of value. The trinkets end up back in their nests, where the spirits wait for opportune moments to place them in strategic locations to implicate others in the theft, sowing distrust in even close relationships.

Rage 5, Gnosis 7, Willpower 10, Essence 22

Charms: Incite Rage, Innocuous*, Materialize, Peek

* **Innocuous:** Harpies excel at hiding in plain sight. By spending one point of Essence, witnesses overlook a Harpy and its nest. This Charm doesn’t make the Bane or its taint invisible, but rather keeps anyone from noticing it. Only those specifically looking for something out of place will have a chance of seeing the spirit, and even then an observer must succeed at a Willpower roll (difficulty 9) to overcome the effects of the charm. The effect lasts for one scene.

Image: Harpies appear as falcons with mangy green feathers that never sit flat. Thick overgrown talons clasp at their perches as they constantly shift, never quite able to hold their balance. A Harpy’s eyes glow brilliant toxic green in the darkness, shining with malicious intelligence. Their nests are crafted from branches and leaves of nearby foliage, gnawed from still living limbs. The bark twists and withers from the agony of its final moments of life, looping in with other dead branches to create a woven wall. Such nests hide various tokens of import that the Harpy has stolen; letters, thumbdrives, talens, and the occasional fetish have all found their way into a Harpy’s talons.

Background: Carved from the essence of captured Falcon spirits, Harpies are terrors for Garou to behold, especially the Silver Fangs. Harpies prefer to nest high in the Umbra above septs or on the top of office buildings

where they watch for victims. Pentex employees have fallen to the corrupted falcon spirits more than once, and the corporation finds the Banes to be a nuisance at best. Black Spiral Dancers, however, take a wicked glee in observing a sept over which a Harpy has nested. The birds steal whatever they can from the Garou, taking utmost caution when doing so. They then place the valuables with others, inciting blame for theft. When tempers start to flare within the sept, the Harpy waits for an opportune moment to throw as much of the sept into chaos as it can. The Bane is fond of turning Garou against their elders, and its favorite targets are the strict hierarchies of the Shadow Lords and Silver Fangs.

Storytelling Notes: Harpies target any sept that has dissension boiling within its boundaries. Items go missing, Garou blame one another, and Harpies are patient enough that the descent into chaos can take weeks or even months. If a pack has been doing particularly well and is basking in its success, a Harpy might start turning others in the sept against them, especially the younger packs. A packmate could find himself framed for numerous thefts, leaving it up to his fellows to clear his name and find the true thief.

Nihilach

The Nihilach, blessedly rare, figure prominently in the tales of modern Garou. Pessimists hold that these Banes are spirits of the Apocalypse itself, manifesting to pave the way for the coming of the Wyrms. Others hold that they are the talon-tips of the Corrupter, gaining its first all-destroying hold upon Gaia directly. The Silent Striders know the truth, but do not speak it. It is no better than the rumors.

Nihilach appear at portentous moments in the war against Gaia, usually moments when a significant piece of the Mother is about to die. First, they stand and watch, impassively surveying the course of events; and then they move in to fight. That is the only mercy of the Nihilach—that they eventually condescend to do battle with Gaia's warriors. These great Banes are terrible, all-consuming forces in battle, and many brave Garou cannot even muster the strength to raise a claw against them.

Nevertheless, those that do fight discover that the Nihilach are not invincible. In that fact alone, the Garou strive to find hope.

Rage 10, Gnosis 4, Willpower 9, Essence 30-50

Charms: Airt Sense, Armor, Blast, Blighted Touch*, Materialize, Re-Form, Yawning Void*

* **Blighted Touch:** The Nihilach's version of Blighted Touch is different from that of other Banes. Rather than bringing the worst elements of the target's nature to the fore, this Charm instead induces a deadening lassitude and crippling depression. Effort seems futile, dreams unattainable, and the world a sick and pointless joke at best, a gauntlet of needless indignities as prelude to meaningless nothing-

ness at worst. A botch attempting to resist this Charm is capable of sending a Garou spiraling directly into Harano.

* **Yawning Void:** This Charm stands as the most fearsome of the Nihilach's powers. It activates reflexively by paying one Essence whenever something dies in the Nihilach's presence, be it a disincorporate spirit or a murdered Garou, and the death need not be at the Nihilach's hands. The billowing emptiness of the Nihilach's body unfolds into a sheer, sanity-scraping void that draws in the soul of the slain. Anything swallowed by the Yawning Void is gone forever. A Garou hero will not persist as an ancestor spirit, nor be returned to Gaia's embrace and reincarnated. He, like anything else swallowed by this Charm, will simply cease to be.

Image: Nihilach look like very little, in a way. They're null impressions on the world around them, a shadow that drinks light, understood as impressions rather than details. They're tall, standing higher than a Garou in Crinos, and when they act, there is the understanding of long, painfully thin limbs. Nothingness hangs about them like a shroud, and that shroud gives the impression of a wide, powerful body. A Nihilach cannot properly be said to have a face, but those looking where a face should be often glimpse impressions of those they have known in the past, individuals they associate with memories of loss and regret. Nihilach are silent, making no noise as they stand and watch, nor when they swoop in to attack.

Background: The Silent Striders, with their greater understanding of the Dark Umbra, understand what the Nihilach are. They're Banes of Oblivion, the annihilation that waits beyond the hunger of the Wyrms, when the Destroyer has eaten even itself. That they are beginning to appear in the Umbra and upon the face of Gaia is the direst of many dark omens in these final days.

Storytelling Notes: The presence of the Nihilach is an existential threat, a whispered promise that there will be no world beyond the Apocalypse, no recovery, no new age to rise from the ashes of the old. They challenge both the martial prowess and the convictions of the Garou, and best brought forth at the climax of a chronicle, to underline the import of whatever disaster the Garou fight to avert. To win a battle where a Nihilach took the field is to have definitively prevented Gaia from moving deeper into the final night from which there is return, and that is an act worthy of celebration.

Nocturna

The Nocturna, also known as a Nighthag, is a defiler of hopes and dreams. These Banes wander the Umbra in search of particularly potent dreams or noteworthy dreamers. When they've found an appropriate sleeping victim, they poison that individual's sleeping hours, twisting his dreams into visions of despair and distrust.

A dream of success and wealth might suddenly become a nightmare of ruin and failure due to the betrayal of a loved one. The common refrain of these dreams is the downfall of the sleeper, always at the hands of a trusted friend, lover, spouse, parent, packmate, or other close ally.

Rage 6, Gnosis 7, Willpower 5, Essence 18

Charms: Airt Sense, Dream Warp*, Materialize, Peek

* **Dream Warp:** The Nighthag spends one Essence to corrupt a dream with the intent of disturbing the sleeper and driving a wedge between her and one of her loved ones. The target does not regain Willpower from this troubled sleep.

Image: Nighthags appear as beautiful women with long tangled hair, wickedly hooked claws, and a mouth full of pus.

Background: The Garou believe Nocturnae to be tiny fragments of the nightmares of the Wyrms themselves, shaken loose from their dark dreams to roam the Umbra. Nighthags tend to form a particular attachment to a single victim, revisiting him repeatedly until she destroys a relationship with one of her loved ones, egged on by mounting fatigue and paranoia. If a Nocturna's target steadfastly refuses to give in to the dire portents of her dreams, the Bane eventually grows frustrated; one night it will materialize and kill whichever loved one its victim seems most loathe to abandon, and then frames her for the crime.

Storytelling Notes: While Nighthags present little direct threat to the Garou in a physical confrontation, they rarely bother with mere violence. Garou are a special prize for a Nocturna. A werewolf living outside the safety of a caern is a boiling cauldron of Rage and hair-trigger instinct at the best of times, and given to believing in dream-omens in a way most modern people aren't. If the Garou themselves seem unlikely to fall for a Nighthag's manipulations, then their Kinfolk make even more inviting targets.

Raptor

Raptors are Banes that feed off of pain and lust — not affection or simple sexual desire — but a twisted and desperate need for dominance and conquest. Their targets of choice are those who view others as mere objects existing for their own gratification. The Bane whispers across the Gauntlet, urging humans to act on their desires, and enhancing them with an aura of false confidence and persuasiveness. The Raptor picks a particular human as its “special project” and doesn't let go, riding a wave of one-night stands, abusive relationships, and broken hearts to the Raptor's desired conclusion: rape, depravity, and murder. It moves on once the host is a hollowed-out shell, leaving behind a shadow of a human being, something moving through a routine

of abuse in the hopes of reigniting *some* feeling in the burnt-out cinder that used to be his soul.

Rage 5, Gnosis 8, Willpower 6, Essence 19 (plus up to 10 more if the Bane has fed recently)

Charms: Airt Sense, Corruption, Materialize, Sleaze Aura*

* **Sleaze Aura:** The Bane can lend the effects of the Gift: Persuasion (see W20, p. 153) to anyone who goes along with the suggestions it whispers through Corruption, so long as they continue following those suggestions.

Image: A Raptor looks like a great, fleshy flower atop an array of slim, well-toned legs of both genders.

Background: This Bane feeds from the lusts of its host, the act of consummation, and then the pain of the host's victims when he casts them aside; it needs all three in order to feed. The more profound the victim's residual sense of use or violation, the more Essence the Raptor gains. A regular one-night-stand with someone as worn-down as the host himself is worth only a single point, while ruining someone else's life might be worth five all at once.

Storytelling Notes: Once, Pentex tried to bond Raptors to various products, including cosmetics and colognes. The Raptors refused to cooperate, and now despise Pentex-created Enticers. A Raptor will go out of its way to guide its host into an Enticer's path, with the intent of using and ruining the fomer, even killing it, if possible.

Rot Walker

While not the mightiest or cleverest of the Wyrms' children, the Banes known as Rot Walkers are among the most disturbing. They are spirits of decay: not of death, but of the corruption that follows, not of endings, but of unresolved conclusions left to fester. They are the Wyrms' promise for the future, a world inescapable even in final dissolution: a world where there is no afterlife for valiant heroes, but only an eternity of shuffling footsteps and putrid meat.

Rage 5, Gnosis 4, Willpower 7, Essence 16

Charms: Airt Sense, Armor, Blighted Touch, Carrion Walk*, Lightning in the Meat*, Tracking

* **Carrion Walk:** This Charm is similar to Possession, but can only be used upon a corpse. Any corpse will do: a dead Pentex employee, a road kill raccoon, a slaughtered steer, and — on one horribly memorable occasion — a freshly deceased elephant can all host a Rot Walker. The cadaver must still have some flesh on its frame (so no possessed dinosaurs skeletons), and it cannot already be possessed or animated by other means (putting vampires off-limits). A corpse animated by Carrion Walk uses the traits it had when alive, rather than the controlling Bane's spirit traits, but uses the Bane's Essence instead of a health track.



Carrion Walk puts a tremendous strain on the corpse being possessed; the necrotic energies of the Bane rapidly accelerate the process of decay, so that most possessed shells become flyblown horrors in short order. Few cadavers manage to last for more than a week before devolving into an immobile stew of bones and pulpy meat.

*** Lightning in the Meat:** This Charm allows the Rot Walker to spend one Essence per day to re-animate the brain of a corpse possessed with Carrion Walk. There must be a brain present for this to work. While the body's soul has long since moved on to whatever awaits beyond the veil of death, a residue of memories and personality still dwell in the wrinkles of the mind, and it is this shadow of the deceased that the Rot Walker resurrects, up until the body falls apart. The revived persona knows nothing of the possessing Bane, and may even believe itself alive at first. It is likely to try to head back to familiar surroundings, such as the house where its grieving family awaits. Some Rot Walkers resume control at this point; others prefer to simply let the lightning continue to drive the meat, watching the corpse and its loved ones go through the agony of decay, dissolution, and a second and final demise.

Image: A Rot Walker in the Umbra looks like a collection of rotting corpse-parts from a variety of different animals, bound together with gut and sinew. One might be a crude centaur made of the rotting lower parts of a

horse, topped by a decaying human torso and a half-flayed cattle skull; another could be a dead hound, creeping along on a multitude of mismatched and rotting arms and legs.

Background: The Silent Striders were the first tribe to encounter Rot Walkers. When they speak of these Banes at all, they say that they were once lesser spirits of death that watched over the moment when spirit and corpse separated. Curious, they listened at cracks between their domain and the Low Umbra of the dead; whatever whispers came through to them changed them forever, filling their eyes with darkness and their forms with decay. Now they are harbingers of the world beyond the Apocalypse, a soulless land of ugly, senseless destruction; and of meat silently rotting beneath a red and wounded sun.

Storytelling Notes: Rot Walkers are opportunists, taking whatever corpse seems most interesting to them at any given moment, but they take especial joy in presenting the Garou with evidence of their handiwork. If a werewolf loses control and kills an innocent in the grip of Frenzy, a Rot Walker will ensure she meets her victim again, she may even go so far as to restore the victim's control of the corpse, so she can ask the werewolf why she had to die. Rot Walkers also enjoy dragging dead Kinfolk out of their graves.

Uktena Theurges have catalogued the existence of a similar, weaker Bane known as a Meat Puppet, which animates only the remains of the young, such as dead children and drowned kittens. Meat Puppets possess Carrion Walk, but not Lightning in the Meat.

Rust Spider

Rust Spiders aren't really a single variety of Bane. Instead, they're the catch-all name that both Garou and Black Spiral Dancers use to refer to those cases where the spirit-servants of the Weaver — Pattern Spiders, Net Spiders, Chaos Monitors, and so on — are corrupted by the vile essence of the Wyrms, yet retain their basic shape and function.

Rust Spiders seem to serve two masters, rather than tumbling completely into the grasp of the Wyrms as most corrupted spirits do. That distinction is, in truth, what makes a Rust Spider a Rust Spider, rather than just another urban-conceptual Bane. A former Pattern Spider continues to weave according to the Weaver's design. A former Net-Spider continues to herd data packets to and fro across the networks where it makes its lair. Corrupted guardian spirits, such as Hunter Spiders, show the greatest deviance in their behavior, for they always allow Wyrms-tainted spirits free passage, and never treat them as enemies.

Rust Spiders keep the traits they had prior to their corruption.

Charms: Rust Spiders continue to use the Charms they originally possessed as Weaver spirits. In addition, they gain Blighted Touch and Darkweaving*.

* **Darkweaving:** This Charm more than anything else defines a Rust Spider. Darkweaving's effects are permanent, and stain the spirit's every works with an indelible trace of Wyrms-taint. When a tainted Pattern Spider reinforces the Gauntlet, it weaves in blackly glistening, Wyrmsish strands of spiritual effluvia, which Banes find it easier to pierce (-1 to the local Gauntlet for Wyrms spirits only). When they work on the great Pattern Webs that span cities, the strands they weave act as efficient superhighways for Banes. When a Hunter Spider scans for enemies in need of destruction, they heed the distress cries of Banes and treat them as a summons of the Weaver. When a Net-Spider ushers data packets from place to place, it subtly taints them, imparting a negative tone to digital communications, or promoting data loss or corruption in vital transactions. The individual effect of this Charm upon any action is small, but the cumulative result is a spirit that remakes Gaia into the Wyrms' image as efficiently and tirelessly as its brothers and sisters calcify the world into the Weaver's design.

Image: The average Rust Spider closely resembles a Pattern Spider, or whatever sort of spirit it was before its corruption. Indeed, from a distance it might even be mistaken for one. Upon closer inspection, the spirit's altered nature is unmistakable; its shining body is cor-

roded and pitted, while unwholesome organic growths replace formerly mechanical elements. The overall first impression is that the spirit has contracted some form of biomechanical cancer, and its movements bear this out. They're shuddering and jerky, lacking the elegant clockwork precision that is the usual hallmark of the Weaver.

Background: Some Rust Spiders are "naturally occurring," appearing at the peripheries of blights, Pits, and other badly Wyrms-tainted areas of the Umbra. More often, Black Spiral Dancers create Rust Spiders through the Gift: Claws of Corrosion (see p. 121). This is often part of establishing an urban Pit, transforming the city's spiritual antibodies into guardians and reinforcements for the spiritual power of the nascent Wyrms-caern. Because many Rust Spiders are non-aggressive if left alone, less-experienced Garou are sadly apt to overlook them, treating them almost as a background detail. Only those canny in the ways of the Wyrms are likely to recognize dense concentrations of Rust Spiders as a likely sign that a Pit is somewhere nearby.

Storytelling Notes: Rust Spiders work well as set pieces for urban stories, showing that the war for Gaia is bigger than a simple clash of Wyrms vs. Garou. Even the cold, terrible purity of the Weaver is a target for the Wyrms' poisons as the Apocalypse looms. This is a particularly sobering threat for Glass Walker characters.

Shattered Harts

Raging through once pristine Umbral landscapes, Shattered Harts find sustenance in agony and misery. They prefer to feed from the pain of Gaian spirits that have been subjected to the desecration of once sacred land. Insane and violent, the Harts roam their hunting grounds, attacking anything that would end the misery in which they bask. When there aren't any adequate victims, a Shattered Hart spends its time inflicting further injury on the weaker Banes and creatures in the area.

Age 10, Gnosis 8, Willpower 6, Essence 24

Charms: Armor, Materialize, Smoke*, Tracking

* **Smoke:** By spending a point of Essence, a Shattered Hart can snort out a cloud of sulfurous smoke that shrouds the Bane in darkness. Increase the difficulty of all rolls to hit the Bane by one, or two for Garou in Lupus form due to the stench. The Shattered Hart can see clearly through the smoke and suffers no penalties.

Image: A Shattered Hart resembles a stag spirit with an over-exaggerated muscle structure similar to a bull's. Its hide is oil-slicked and reflects all light in a sickly yellow hue, regardless of the source. Stark white eyes gleam from under antlers that twist in a tight gnarl over its head; these overgrown antlers are covered in inch-long thorns. Wisps of smoke curl from the Bane's nostrils. They have no permanent places of rest, but wander their territory endlessly, always on the hunt for intruders.



Background: When the Wyrms' minions capture a Stag spirit and carve out its Gaian essence, they create a Shattered Hart. With only emptiness inside, the spirits seek to fulfill themselves by wreaking the agony they faced back upon the world. Shattered Harts haunt Blights and Hellholes that exist in the wilderness. They feel at home anywhere Pentex has leveled forests or started a fracking operation. Rarely materializing, the banes stalk the Umbra, attacking anyone or anything it perceives as a threat to it or its territory. Only when they detect an overwhelming threat in the physical world will the spirit materialize to attack it. A Shattered Hart will lash out at any Garou, including the Black Spiral Dancers.

Storytelling Notes: Shattered Harts work well to add a new level of horror to Hellholes and Blights. All Garou go into such places knowing they're going to face banes, but not necessarily banes crafted from Gaian spirits they revere. Black Spiral Dancers take delight in taunting Shattered Harts and leading them to packs or septs with large numbers of Fianna.

Thinbone

The Banes known as Thinbones are insatiable spirits of hunger, born in places of terrible famine. Unlike many conceptual Banes, Thinbones don't hang around the places of their creation, but instead seek out places of richness and opulence — lands of plenty. It is here that they hunt, using humans to feed their own insatiable appetites and to amuse their bizarre whims. Thinbones are at least easy for the Garou to spot once they arrive in an area, as their victims' deaths are usually strange enough to make local headlines.

Rage 7, Gnosis 7, Willpower 5, Essence 19 (up to 25 if possessing a host)

Charms: Airt Sense, Corruption, Materialize, Possession*, Tracking

* **Possession:** A Thinbone's Possession Charm is different from that of other Banes. Thinbones are incapable of creating fomori through permanent possession, or of directly controlling the host. Instead, a possessing Thinbone consumes everything the host eats before it can nourish him. Once the host begins starving, the Thinbone uses its Corruption Charm to whisper suggested meals that might sate the host; each time the host partakes of such a meal, the Thinbone gains one point of Essence. Soon after, the gnawing hunger returns and the host's starvation continues. Thinbones never suggest ordinary food to their unlucky host; instead, they recommend the host consume something he values. A devout Christian might be compelled to tear out the pages of his Bible and eat them, one by one, while a fashionista sits down and methodically eats every outfit and shoe in her closet. The strongest of Thinbones turn their hosts against loved ones,

starving the possessed individual into a cannibal feast. Once the host starves to death, the Thinbone departs to begin the cycle anew.

Image: Thinbones look like tall, genderless, emaciated humans with elongated features dominated by an eternally gaping mouth. Their long, thin bones protrude through their flesh in places, whittled down to sharp points.

Background: Once uncommon, Thinbones have proliferated in the second half of the twentieth century. This puzzles many Garou, for famine has always been a great scourge of humanity. There seems no obvious reason for the sudden increase in this Bane's numbers.

Thinbones lust after the incredible power of caerns, but have no means of consuming them. They will target off-duty caern guardians if at all possible.

Storytelling Notes: As solo Banes, Thinbones present little physical threat to a mighty werewolf; instead, they are opportunities for the Garou to act as heroes, saving the unfortunates that Thinbones possess from a terrible, demeaning, prolonged death. On the other hand, Thinbones tend to target those in positions of privilege and plenty; certain Garou (such as Bone Gnawers and Red Talons) may not *want* to help the spirit's victims.

Spawn of the Wyrms

If Banes and their twisted flesh-puppets were the Wyrms' only creations, the work of the Garou would be much more straightforward, if no less daunting. However, the Wyrms' polluted loins are fecund indeed, and multitudes of horrors walk the Earth, stamped by its taint. Some of these are twisted things the Wyrms has spawned upon the face of Gaia; its servants at Pentex made others. Each is a threat unto itself.

Heart Eaters

The monstrosities known as Heart Eaters are an old, old work of the Wyrms: rare, subtle, and insidious. They're strange things, neither Banes nor fomori nor the product of any other Wyrms' artifice of which the Garou are aware. They seem to exist only to reap a harvest of death and betrayal, and to worship the Maeljin known as Empress Aliara.

Heart Eaters are soft-bodied, writhing, flexible things. No creature of Gaia could feel anything save revulsion for a Heart Eater. However, the Heart Eaters understand the emotions and relationships of others all too well. Possessed of an uncanny empathy and a genius for relationship dynamics, Heart Eaters find it easy to sniff out deep bonds between others. When they find a particularly deep or vital bond, they go to work.

Heart-Eaters are a sort of skin-walker, eating an individual's heart and brain to absorb their identity. They

then wear the skin of their victim and masquerade as them, the better to get close to the victim's paramour.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0 (uses host-skin's Appearance), Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Empathy 5, Expression 4, Performance 5, Subterfuge 5

Rage 5, Gnosis 8, Willpower 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated.

Attacks: Strength +3 bite (lethal), Strength tentacle attack (bashing, out to 10 feet), Strength +1 sting (lethal, see below)

Powers: Body Barbs, Clean Scent*, Empathy*, Extra Limbs, Sting*

* **Clean Scent:** The Heart Eater may spend one Gnosis point per scene to hide its Wyrms-taint from detection.

* **Empathy:** With a Wits + Empathy roll (difficulty 5) the Heart Eater can discern not only whom an individual loves passionately, but if the object of the target's desire feels the same way. By consuming an individual's heart and brain and spending two Gnosis points, the Heart Eater can perfectly impersonate the victim. They instinctively mimic the victim's personality, mannerisms, and even habits, and have access to the victim's memories. This access is instinctive rather than deliberate, however. The Heart Eater can't "rifle around" in the victim's memories selectively. Instead, memories arise and present themselves as necessary for the Heart Eater to maintain its masquerade.

* **Sting:** The Heart Eater can inject a paralytic toxin into its victim through the tips of its tentacles. Unless the target makes a Stamina roll against difficulty 9, they will be rendered unable to move for the rest of the scene. Injecting a dose of toxin costs one point of Rage.

Image: When a Heart Eater emerges from a stolen skin, it is a hideously malformed thing that only fits the description of "human" by a great act of generosity. The monster is mottled mold-green and maggot-white, its body plump, segmented, flexible, with collapsible flesh, and many-jointed limbs. Its face consists of two perfectly human eyes, which can change colors at a whim, set in the midst of puffy flesh and a great, sharp-fanged, lipless maw. Two long, stinger-tipped tentacles extend from the flesh of the thing's lower back; it wraps them around itself when sliding into a skin. The monster is able to compress its body radically, so that it always fits into any flayed skin it has stolen, and the hideous secretions that coat its flesh are able to preserve a stolen skin almost indefinitely.

Background: No one knows where the Heart Eaters come from. They feature in Uktena songs that date all the way back to the War of Rage, making them one of

the Wyrms' most enduring horrors. Heart Eaters have always primarily been found in the Americas, with only a very few ever stalking the towns and woods of Europe. They feature prominently in the cautionary songs and foe-litanies of the Pure Tribes, but were almost unknown to European Garou during the era of the Wyrmscomers. As a result, the Heart Eaters reaped a great and terrible harvest among their new and unwary foes up until the twentieth century, when shared knowledge informed all the Garou Nation of these creatures.

Storytelling Notes: Heart Eaters are willing to play the long game when wearing a loved one's skin. They're cowardly things, more interested in destroying hearts and shattering sanity than in simple murder. As a result, they often leave the paramours of their victims alive after paralyzing them, "disrobing" in front of a horrified captive audience. The greatest of Heart-Eaters may stalk a preferred target throughout his life, returning to check on him every few years, waiting patiently for him to fall in love again, and then repeating their masquerade. Supernatural beings, already alienated from the rest of the world, are particularly tempting targets.

Heart Eaters are mostly solo operators, seeming to reserve their Wyrmsish devotion exclusively for Empress Aliara, but will work occasionally with other Wyrms-horror or even Black Spiral Dancers if they can be convinced that their allies are also true servants of Aliara. Heart Eaters are especially dangerous when working alongside others, restraining their natural impulses in order to act as long-term deep-cover spies within Kinfolk families or even septs of the Garou.

Thunderwyrms

Vast and deformed children of the atomic age, Thunderwyrms are among the more recent Wyrms-birthed monstrosities, and among the largest. Massive, pale, bloated terrors, Thunderwyrms live only to consume and grow. They sleep deep beneath the ground for many years before the need to feed drives them to the surface in an orgy of destruction: trees, cars, livestock, a Thunderwyrms can digest almost anything, but only living things truly satisfy the monster's massive appetite.

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 4, Stamina 8, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Note: The Attributes listed above reflect the statistics for an average (30-foot) Thunderwyrms. Strength and Stamina increase substantially the larger the creatures grow, and there appears to be no upper limit on how much they can grow. Grandmother Thunderwyrms is allegedly strong enough to shatter concrete by rippling her skin.

Abilities: Athletics 5 (cannot dodge), Brawl 5

Rage 6, Willpower 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -3, -3, -4, -4, -5, -5, Incapacitated

Attacks: Bite (Strength lethal), Roll (Strength bashing — more than 3 successes indicates the target is pinned under the creature's bulk), Body Slam (Strength + 3 bashing)

Powers: Armor (four extra soak dice), Burrow (as the Garou Gift, but with no cost)

Image: Thunderwyrms range in size from merely huge to unspeakably gigantic. The most commonly encountered normally stretch 30 feet in length, and almost eight feet wide. The largest, and presumably oldest, is Grandmother Thunderwyrms: she spans the length of two football fields and is almost three hundred feet around. Rumor has it that she contains an entire Wyrms caern in her gut. The smallest Thunderwyrms yet seen — presumably newly hatched — was only the length of a man.

These pillars of pale grey flesh constantly secrete a thick, mucus-like substance to speed their way through the earth. They move through muscular contractions, and by eating everything ahead of them and defecating the earth out as they pass, leaving little trace of their presence. Thunderwyrms resemble earthworms with enormous mouths filled with row upon row of jagged teeth. Some are aquatic and develop rubbery black hides more like a leech.

Background: According to the Uktena, the first Thunderwyrms were born from the radioactive soil at the Trinity nuclear test site. Reports of Thunderwyrms attacks are rising in frequency. A new generation of the things appears to have recently hatched, and Thunderwyrms are born hungry.

Storytelling Notes: Encounters with Thunderwyrms are rare, and generally in rural areas. Many Thunderwyrms follow trends in their attack patterns: only coming out during storms, for example, or repeatedly stalking favored locations. The marks they leave on the ground strongly resemble the patterns left by tornadoes. While their digestion-trails are badly Wyrms-tainted, they leave no chemical digestive residue in the soil for scientists to examine.

Thunderwyrms are perfect for stories where “something” is beginning to terrorize a small farming community, or isolated desert town. If the Garou don't step in, a hungry Thunderwyrms — or its newly hatched brood — might devour the entire settlement.

Skull Pigs

The Skull Pigs are twisted horrors, the only surviving trace of the once powerful Grondr. Once charged with cleansing Gaia, the wereboar's fallen descendants

became their opposite. Skull Pigs attempt to befoul or devour everything they touch. They eat carrion and draw sinister strength from the flesh of the dead, though they can subsist on almost anything: including garbage, toxic waste, or even radioactive corpses. Skull Pigs dig through graveyards seeking human bones, devouring them to regain their Rage. When they eat bones of Wyrms-creatures, the Pigs gain a malevolent cunning that makes them all the more dangerous. The Skull Pigs can smell such tainted remains, and devouring such a feast raises a Skull Pig's intelligence within only a few minutes.

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

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Intimidation 4, Primal-Urge 3, Stealth 2, Survival 4

Powers: Regeneration (as Garou)

Rage 5, Willpower 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attacks: Body Slam, Tusks (Strength +3)

Each meal of Wyrms-tainted bones increases the Skull Pig's Intelligence by 1, to a maximum of 5. These increases last for one year. Eating the bodies of especially powerful fomori, or devouring large numbers of them at once, makes these increases permanent. An intelligent Skull Pig learns at least one Black Spiral Dancer Gift per dot in Intelligence. Because of their toxic diet and innate corruption, the flesh of a Skull Pig is poisonous; any creature biting one suffers a point lethal damage per turn for the next six turns (see “Poisons and Drugs,” **W20** pp. 258-259).

Image: Skull Pigs resemble huge, somewhat emaciated wild boars that stand six feet at the shoulder and are almost seven feet long. Their bristles are coarse and malformed and they stink of grave-rot. The deathly pale flesh covering their skulls is so thin, and the bone structure so distinctive, that it's easy to get the impression that they have no flesh to their heads at all. Despite their deathlike appearance, they obviously possess a wiry strength.

Unlike many of the Wyrms' creatures, Skull Pigs do not have obvious sores or deformities like withered limbs. Corrupted so long ago, the Skull Pigs have fully adapted to the Wyrms' foul energies. They have lost the ability to change shape, and are born and grow up as nothing more than clever animals. They must devour flesh poisoned by the Wyrms to regain the intelligence once common to all of their ancestors.

Background: All of the Changing Breeds know that the War of Rage brought about the Grondr's extermination. So enraged were the members of one of the last Sounders (packs) of Grondr, by the Garou's slaughter of their Breed that their lust for vengeance and their hatred



of the Garou attracted the attention of Lord Steel, the Maeljin Incarna of hatred. He offered these Grondr the chance to survive the werewolves' onslaught and for them and their descendants to strike back against their enemies. The wereboars accepted this foul deal and they and their descendants became agents of the Wyrms.

Today, Skull Pigs roam in packs of three to seven. Often family groups, packs drive off young or elderly males, who form their own especially violent and predatory packs. Ordinary Skull Pigs have an evil cunning, but are only slightly more intelligent than gorillas or chimpanzees. However, if they are able to feed on the bones of a creature tainted by the Wyrms, they become fully intelligent and more actively malevolent. Intelligent Skull Pigs can be almost as dangerous as Black Spiral Dancers, but still lack the ability to change shape.

Storytelling Notes: Even the unintelligent Skull Pigs will attack Garou, though they ignore humans who are not obviously easy prey. Most humans either do not remember seeing a Skull Pig, or believe that they have seen a normal, if often terrifying wild boar or feral pig. They inflict Delirium the same as seeing a Garou's Crinos form.

Ordinary Skull Pigs have keen senses and are skilled and ever-hungry pack hunters. They can smell weakness, and make a special effort to prey upon the weak. Intel-

ligent Skull Pigs revel in tainting the land and corrupting or killing other Changing Breeds, especially the Garou. Despite now being creatures of the Wyrms, intelligent Skull Pigs retain a faint racial memory of the destruction of their kind at the hands of the Garou.

In addition to becoming intelligent, Skull Pigs who devour Wym-tainted remains also gain the ability to imitate perfectly sounds and voices. They use this ability to trick humans and members of the Changing Breeds into thinking that an ally or comrade is calling for help. The pigs then lie in ambush when their victim comes to help. Skull Pigs can use their hooves to dig tunnels, and the intelligent members of their Breed occasionally construct large warrens to act as traps. They collapse these tunnels upon enemies who enter attempting to slay the Skull Pigs.

The Fallen

The Black Spiral Dancers are the only tribe of Garou that has fallen to the Wyrms, but they are far from the only members of the Changing Breeds fallen to corruption. Agents of the Wyrms work to corrupt individuals as well as groups. Every year, a few individuals among the Changing Breeds forswear their duty to Gaia and become servants of the Wyrms. Some are willfully blind to the consequences of their actions and choose cor-

ruption because they so firmly believe the ends justify the means that they lose sight of the ends they seek to accomplish. Others might ally with the Wyrms to save their own lives, or carry previous taint by the Wyrms and fell due to shame and self-loathing. A few simply decide that they want to be on what looks to them like the winning side in the coming Apocalypse

The Spider-Queen's Fallen: Antara

Queen Ananasa rules the werespiders. The Tenere, Kumoti and Hatar each obeys one of the Triat, as decided by the Queen. Even the Kumo have their place in the Ananasa's web, corrupting and killing to her ultimate design.

Not the Antara. Also known as Breakers, the Antara walked Queen Ananasa's web, obediently following the strands until they saw her trap for what it is. Refusing ensnarement they entreated the Wyrms for power and broke free of the webs. While the Hatar follow the Wyrms' original purpose, the Antara follow the Wyrms into freedom.

The Antara believe Queen Ananasa uses the Ananasi for her own goals, not Gaia's. Why should they serve when they can choose their own path? Breaking free of the Queen's web opens their eyes — they understand corruption is inevitable, and everything must fall. Entropy is unceasing — even the most debased and degraded can erode further. The Antara see freedom in what others call the Wyrms' madness. It is insanity on a cosmic scale, and only the uncontrolled can begin to understand it.

The Antara know that everything will eventually be of the Wyrms. They didn't choose the Wyrms because they want to increase its power and speed its inevitable victory — although their existence does both. The Breakers choose the Wyrms' power to gain freedom from the Queen's machinations and to experience everything life has to offer before the Wyrms take it all.

Antara are the hedonists of the Ananasi. Much like the Kumo, they revel in emotional release, often acting in spontaneous, seemingly irrational ways. The Antara see no kinship with the Kumo, and even their apparent irrational behavior is driven by perceptions and goals that are alien to other Ananasi. The Kumo are given to the Wyrms' service by Queen Ananasi and still serve her plans — duped into believing they serve only the Wyrms. The difference between the Antara and Kumo is invisible to other werespiders, evoking deep anger within the Breakers. To the Antara the difference is immense. Where the Kumo still indirectly serve the Queen, the Antara are free of her webs. Their independence and lifestyle aligns them with the Wyrms but they do not serve it. Their act of breaking from Queen Ananasa is a victory

CREATING BREAKERS

Antara creation is the same as for other Ananasi. They still have the markings showing which member of the Triat they originally served — their fall to the Wyrms does not include any visual sign for others to notice.

Antara may purchase any Ananasi Gift as though it was favored. Queen Ananasa relinquishes all restrictions on these rebellious children, as this is the only way she can ensure they act fully of their own will and are free of her influences. Though this harms the resistance provided by her faithful Ananasi, the Queen has to hope that eventually the gambit will be rewarded when they bind the Wyrms within their webs.

for the Wyrms, and every free action they take damages the threads of her plans. Their existence empowers the Wyrms but the Antara serve only their own whims.

The Antara are free of manipulations and control. They command their own destinies, and they will fight to the death before they submit to any other master, including each other. They reject others binding them, but love to ensnare victims in their webs. In freeing them, the Wyrms may have doomed itself to a prison of its own making. The inescapable core of their being as Ananasi is to weave and build and control. The Antara will inevitably even seek to bind the Wyrms.

More than other werespiders, Breakers are solitary. They will sometimes work with other Antara, or other Ananasi, but they chafe under anyone giving them instruction or controlling their actions. For a Breaker to follow another requires tremendous strength of will to not murder the transgressor. Antara only follow if they independently believe it will further their own goals.

The Shadow War

The Antara don't just think they're free. *They are free.* They see the threads of Queen Ananasa's webs and the corruption of the Wyrms more clearly than anyone else. What they don't understand is that they play a more important role in the war against the Wyrms than anyone knows.

When the Wyrms kidnapped Queen Ananasa it was incapable of destroying her, but the Wyrms is patient and understands the rules governing the Triat better than any lesser being ever could. Its corruption is insidious. The



shadowy war. The actions of the Antara may decide in these final days who is victorious – the master manipulator or the supreme seducer.

Liar-Kings: Histpah

The Bastet are Gaia's eyes, hunting out secrets in hidden places, guided by their cunning and grace to enter the darkness and emerge triumphant. The werecats are Gaia's beautiful, proud children. They were born last of the shapeshifters and embody perfection. The Bastet play a coy game with Cahlash, the Father of Night and Author of Mysteries, following him into the unknown but always keeping themselves aloof and in control. The Garou call Cahlash the Wyrms, the embodiment of corruption.

The Bastet know better. Cahlash is the ancient embodiment of the Balance Wyrms, not the modern, lesser, form. This vanity is the Bastet's greatest downfall; though the cats believe they have control, with every venture into the darkness the Wyrms tempts them with the promise of the greatest secret of all. Every triumphant return brings with it the possibility that the Bastet has opened her eyes to the truth and joined the ranks of the Histpah. The most curious Bastet discover the final obstacle to unlocking Cahlash's truth is to bind an unbreakable geas into the essence of their being to never reveal a secret's answer. Thus over-curious Bastet willingly corrupt their Gaia-given purpose.

Having witnessed the new Histpah accept the geas, Cahlash reveals the truth as he knows it. All of Creation is irrelevant. The Wyrms was never the embodiment of balance; the Wyrms is bigger than anything else, it is the void within which everything else sits. The Wyrms conceded tiny parts of its unknowable self to permit the Weaver and the Wyld to exist as brief diversions in its infinite expanse. These two, lesser, elements of the Triat are no more capable of ever being balanced than a Bastet is balanced by one of her claws. Gaia herself is even less significant than the Triat; she is a momentary experiment in the Wyrms's brief diversion. This diversion was never meant to be permanent and it has run its course, so the Wyrms returns it to the nothingness from which it came.

The Histpah emerge from the darkness full of truth and knowing they can never reveal this or anything else to anyone ever again. To any other creature this would be a nuisance, but the Bastet were made to uncover secrets and bring truths to the light. The Histpah have sold out their purpose and ability to ever again feel the satisfaction of fulfilling their duty, all in exchange for the ultimate nihilistic understanding of the pointlessness of existence.

Wyrms knows how the purest objects are those most quickly tarnished. Perfection attracts degradation. It could not kill the spider queen, but while she languished in her self-made tomb in the heart of Malfeas she could not prevent the Wyrms's corruption slowly seeping through her web.

When the Garou recovered Ananasa's prison-orb from Malfeas, the Queen could already feel the Wyrms's tendrils seeking a way into her mind. When the werewolves cracked it open she could not tell whether she was already corrupted — what if it was so subtle she never recognized that her decisions were not her own?

Fighting the Wyrms's touch from her thoughts, Queen Ananasa made the only choice she knew the Wyrms couldn't predict or counter. She introduced random flaws into her web that only her most independent children could find, although Ananasa has no influence on which qualities lead an individual Ananasi to the Wyrms. These clever, wicked children desert their Queen, but in doing so they sever the threads binding them to any master. She cannot choose who should walk this path — that would give her influence and make the choice untrustworthy. The Antara are truly free agents, and their nature must lead them to turn on the Wyrms as surely as they turned on the Queen.

Unfortunately, the Wyrms is not as easily deceived as Queen Ananasa believes. The Wyrms knew of her impending escape and manipulated events to further its goals. It allowed the Garou to succeed, setting opposition that was merely devastating instead of impossible. It could not mar Ananasa's opal shell but it believed the manipulated and misguided Garou heroes might succeed. The crack in the shell gave the Wyrms access to Ananasa, and a hook into her mind.

Both the Wyrms and Ananasa believe the freeing of the Antara was the first act in the next stage of their

The Histpah can't reveal the truth they've learned, and they can never share the answer to any other secret. They are still Bastet and they still yearn to know what hides behind the secrets they encounter, but now they must hoard the truths they've worked so hard to uncover.

The Cycle of Lies

Most Histpah soon learn that their geas does nothing to prevent them sharing falsehoods as though they were

true and they turn their Bastet instincts to spreading misinformation. The spiritual stain they feel in spreading lies is insignificant to the ever-building pressure of denying their natures. They also learn that the pressure only eases if the recipient of information believes it to be true. Other Bastet are canny, skeptical creatures and are unlikely to accept a secret that doesn't feel right. Most Histpah soon learn how hard it is to fool their own kind, and must take drastic action to prevent their secret from spreading to the Bastet. This is the Histpah's wretched existence until she dies; a cycle of lies, misinformation and murder to keep hold of the outlet she so desperately needs.

Some Histpah, desperate for release, delight in revealing what they know to helpless victims who will soon die by the Bastet's claws. This outlet relieves a tremendous amount of stress for the werecat, but many Histpah have learned to their regret that fate sometimes conspires to give their doomed victims a chance to escape, in turn dooming the incautious Histpah. Whether this ends the victim or the werecat, the Wyrms is sated as long one dies.

No tribe of Bastet is more likely to fall victim to Cahlash's temptations than the others — Father Night intimately understands the curiosity of the werecats and knows how to twist his tantalizing secrets to attract the attentions of any tribe. The Bastet themselves tend to believe Bubasti fall to the Wyrms more than the other tribes, but this is simple prejudice spread by the Histpah to protect their own fallen existence. In fact, the Bubasti are better at uncovering their fallen cousins than other tribes but they have difficulty sharing this knowledge due to the mistrust. Cahlash delights when his fallen children use Bastet pride and arrogance to turn suspicion on innocents.

Cahlash still whispers to fallen Bastet long after they learn his secret. He listens to confessions in the darkness and knows where cunning hunters may find new secrets. Histpah who know that a secret exists but have not learned it may listen to Cahlash's whispers for clues. Roll Wits + Occult (difficulty 7) with each success giving the Histpah a clue where the answer may be found. This could be the location of a vault, the name of a lost tome, or the image of someone who knows the secret. Cahlash will never directly reveal the answer to the Histpah but will tease the werecat with tantalizing hints. Should the Histpah follow the clues to learn the secret, she is no more capable of revealing it than any other she knows. A fallen werecat can only listen to Cahlash's whispers once per secret.

Raven's Lost Children: Buzzards

Every pair of wereravens must deliberately create their children using the Rite of the Fetish Egg. As the child matures, this egg begins to crack. It hatches when

CREATING HISTPAH

A Histpah character is made the same as any Bastet character but has an additional Yava. The Histpah may never reveal the true answer to a secret. This applies to all forms of communication — the Histpah is prevented in word, thought or deed from sharing the truth.

Histpah can be tricked into revealing an answer — for example by another character presenting a series of choices and watching the Histpah's involuntary reactions carefully to discern the truth. Unfortunately for the corrupted werecat, even involuntary revelation violates the terms of her geas.

Any violation of this Yava starts to unravel the Histpah's existence. She suffers one level of unsoakable aggravated damage per day and appears increasingly translucent until she dies and fades away to nothingness, becoming a secret whose existence Cahlash has scrubbed from history. Other Bastet may have vague memories of the Histpah and search for proof she existed, but such secrets are very hard to find.

The Histpah may halt the dissolution by destroying everyone who learned the secret she carelessly revealed. Though individual Histpah may find such killing distasteful, few are willing to sacrifice themselves when others could die in their place. Fortunately for the Histpah, the nature of her curse leads her in the direction of the closest victim, but how she gets there is up to her.

The doomed werecat can indulge in straightforward murder if only one person knew the secret, but if more than one person knows, or if those people told others, the Histpah must slaughter her way to safety or accept the dissipation of her being.

the youth nears adulthood, transforming the young human, or raven into one of the Corax. At least, things *should* work that way.

The Rite of the Fetish Egg is extremely difficult and demanding. Many Corax only perform it once in their lifetime, and so they protect the fetish egg with their lives. Corax consider their duty to guard the eggs of their children to be one of their most sacred responsibilities, but sometimes even the most dedicated guardians fail. Occasionally, Black Spiral Dancers or other agents of the Wyrms discover a wereraven's Umbral nest and steal the fetish egg — usually from the cold dead talons of its guardian.

Deleterious Effects

The thieves carry the egg back to Malfeas. Once there, the spiritual thread connecting the fetish egg with the raven or human who would grow up to become a Corax begins to fray. After several weeks, the spiritual thread snaps. If heroic wereravens rescue the fetish egg before this connection vanishes, all is well, and the young Corax eventually undergoes her First Change, experiencing nothing worse than periodic nightmares.

However, once the connection snaps, the young human or raven becomes catatonic. Most die soon after. At the same time, the egg begins to decay, soon leaving nothing but an empty shell. The thieves plan a far more terrible fate for the egg. In Malfeas, they place it in a foul birthing pit along with a stolen human infant.

Here, the thieves perform the Rite of the Broken Wing, a hideous mockery of the Rite of the Fetish Egg that connects the stolen and dying egg to the infant next to it. Completing this relatively simple ritual requires the ritemaster to shatter systematically every bone in the left wing of a captive bird. Although agents of the Wyrms can use any bird, most prefer to use a raven — or a captive Corax.

If the Rite of the Broken Wing fails, the egg dissipates and the infant dies. If it succeeds, it binds the two together in a horrible imitation of what should happen to a young wereraven. The damage to the egg and the corrupt energies of Malfeas both serve to warp the final creature. The Corax call these cursed unfortunates Buzzards or Scabs.

Growing Up Scabby

The Rite of the Broken Wing instantly triggers the infant Buzzard's First Change. Rather than becoming a wereraven as a young adult, the trauma instantly overwhelms the child with the bizarre torture of feeling his body warp and twist in unnatural ways. The shock of this transformation and the sudden combination of human and raven drives the Buzzard permanently insane. Then, to ensure its full corruption, other Buzzards either raise it in Malfeas or take it to earth where Black Spiral Kinfolk

CREATING BUZZARDS

Buzzards are in most ways identical to Homid Corax. They share the same addiction to shiny things, the same compulsion to gossip and share what they learn. A few of the most insane Buzzards share all of their knowledge with everyone they encounter, to the point of becoming another insane person standing on a street corner ranting about the End of Days.

They also share the same physical traits, including hollow bones and a vulnerability to gold. Buzzards differ from Corax in only two major ways. They cannot gain Raven's patronage as a Totem, and they each suffer a physical deformity, their bodies reflecting their twisted origins.

Most have the same deformities found in metis Garou, like incomplete transformations or a total lack of feathers. Other Buzzards have afflictions that more obviously come from the Wyrms, such as rotting flesh, large numbers of warts, extraneous fleshy growths, or a tendency to vomit up large numbers of live worms. Almost all have somewhat ragged feathers, leaving some behind after every transformation. In human form, even Buzzards who are not obviously deformed have a somewhat skeletal appearance and look arthritic, sickly, and generally unattractive. Buzzards can never possess an Appearance higher than two.

Despite suffering such horrors, they're not fomori and they haven't traveled the Black Spiral Labyrinth. Instead, they are simply deformed, insane, and generally malevolent Corax. They still possess Rage, Gnosis, Renown, and all other standard Corax traits. They can learn the tribal Gifts of the Black Spiral Dancers, but lack any innate powers associated with the Wyrms.

or other willing agents of the Wyrms raise it to be a mad and dangerous soldier of corruption.

Regardless of where they grow up, a Buzzard's corrupt guardians train the young Scab as a spy and assassin. He studies the arts of subterfuge and sabotage and learns to be a sneaky and careful observer. His mentors also teach them everything they know about Corax life and customs.

A few of the less obviously deformed or insane Buzzards can successfully pass for Corax for a short time. Their erratic behavior prevents them from accomplish-

ing any sort of extended deception. Eventually even the most careful Buzzard strikes other Corax as being wrong in some fundamental way. Instead, the bulk of a Scab's training about the Corax enables him to spy successfully unseen upon wereravens, to understand what he learns, and to kill any lone Corax that he encounters.

Madness and Malformation

Created using a perversion of the wereraven's sacred birthing Rite and nurtured amidst the twisted energies of Malfeas, Scabs lack the elegance and internal harmony of normal Corax. They are inherently clumsy and discordant individuals. Rather than giving them the best of both species, the Rite of the Broken Wing pits human and raven drives and psychology against one another. Most Buzzards suffer nervous tics and inappropriate mannerisms, and are naturally ungainly while flying and walking. Some Corax who have met Scabs claim they walk like a bird, fly like a human and generally consist of the worst features of each. Buzzards are also prone to violent outbursts of temper, alternating between fits of rage, depression, and euphoria.

Eaters of Secrets: Mnetics

The Mokolé guard Gaia's memory. They witness history and wait for the turning of the age. They're not naïve enough to hope the other changing breeds learn from past mistakes and use this knowledge to avoid the same tragic paths. Maybe the Mokolé once had this hope for the young breeds in ages past, but the Mnesis' endless parade of repeated mistakes demonstrates its futility. So the Mokolé watch the world dying around them and await the next Apocalypse. Whatever happens, the Mokolé believe they will emerge out the other side to continue watching and remembering for Gaia.

The Mnetics know the other Mokolé's faith is beautifully tragic, and wish they could remember which of

their kind twisted the Mnesis to so completely fool the weresaurians. The Mnetics have opened their eyes to the truth that memories are ephemeral, malleable things no harder to reshape than a ball of soft putty. Mnesis isn't the secure vault the Mokolé believe it to be. Even the unfallen Mokolé know that memories from ages past are difficult to dream with clarity. They trust in the similarity of symbols and ideas shared by streams. If every Mokolé of a given stream dreams the same, the Mnesis must reflect the truth.

This is wrong. Just ask the Mnetics, who manipulate memories and twist the gossamer threads of recollections as easily as other Mokolé breathe. They know first-hand how unreliable memory is, as they rewrite history every day. This knowledge makes most fallen Mokolé live for the present. Mokolé often have a reputation for being mired in the past, but the Mnetics buck this trend. They adopt new technology to better understand how to twist, pervert and use it to their advantage. Many develop an interest in photography and recording technologies, to better understand how to edit and delete these records that are beyond Mnesis. The Mnetics have a particular love/hate relationship with the internet and social media. They love the many methods of lying, twisting and distorting the truth on a massive scale, but loathe the externalizing of humanity's knowledge and experiences — their memory — as it makes it difficult for the Mnetics to permanently destroy something so widespread. Fortunately the nature of today's media means people often accept lies as truth, and the way media, politicians and entertainers spin facts to better reflect the message they want, not the truth as it is, gives the Mnetics a niche to control.

It is the Mokolé trust in Mnesis that leads some to reject what they thought to be true and join the Wyrms. Such a simple foundation of faith is an easy target for the Wyrms — often merely demonstrating the lie is enough to tip a faithful weresaurian from his purpose. Deleting something the Mokolé would be sure of, twisting a memory to render important details incorrect, or inserting a new memory that is clearly fantasy but absolutely true to the victim are common weapons used to tear apart the weresaurian's purpose, leading them to abandon Gaia and choose the Wyrms.

Other Mokolé fall from the addictive rush they first experience altering memory. Some try to forget an act so terrible it must be buried, others wish to relieve the pain of a tragedy they cannot face. These small tweaks begin innocently enough, but each time the justification for a new alteration becomes easier to make, and soon the new Mnetic is altering the memories of others to protect his secret, and twisting his own recollection of the event to feel better about it. Eventually they become solipsistic nihilists, trapped forever in the now because the past is one great canvas of superficial, pretty lies.

The existence of the Mnetics is an infectious meme to other Mokolé, memory worms that burrow inside and

THE MANY MEMORIES

The Mnetics have many names, most of which they gave themselves. Dumenkara, Mindborn, Sasahai, Katikasasa, Vanus, and more, all which relate in some way to twisting the Mnesis. They do this partly to confound the Mokolé and give the appearance of enemies everywhere, but they also use different names for their own amusement, because they like the way they sound, and, ultimately, because none like the name 'Addict'.

plant doubt in the Mokolé's suitability to serve as Gaia's memory. Mnetic numbers grow faster than the fallen of any other Changing Breed, as the fallen weresaurians hope to bring the entire species to extinction with this modern day Apocalypse. Few Mnetics regret their decision to fall. The weresaurians ruthlessly practice their Gifts on their own memories, changing regrets to relief, and excising unpleasant and unwanted recollections. As a result, the Mnetics are unreliable witnesses but have one of the most positive outlooks of any shapeshifter.

Other Changing Breeds have Gifts that alter, suppress or fool the memories of their victims, but these do not affect the true Mnesis and the Mokolé look upon them with disdain. A Mokolé may be irritated to learn her mind was violated by another Breed, but she knows a healing sleep will cleanse her memories as they wash through the tides of Mnesis. This attitude instills great faith in Mnesis, which makes the Mnetics' manipulation of the memory source all the more devastating, and shocks an ever-increasing number of weresaurians into falling to the Wyrms' blissful embrace to escape the realization.

The Mnetics have a special affinity with the Innocents, who also twist and remove Mokolé memories. Many Mnetics who didn't experience their crisis of faith at the hands of another Mnetic experienced their first doubts of Mnesis from the powers of Innocents. The stillborn spirits both love and hate their fallen cousins. They delight in tormenting the once-Mokolé by twisting their memories when they think they can do so without being noticed, but also teach memory-corrupting powers to their Mnetic partners.

The Mnetics tend to work well together, as they have the best defenses against the memory tampering of their own kind. They also don't tend to care if their memories are accurate — it's no trouble to edit them afterward. Clutches may work together for years with each member having a very different recollection of the experience. Mnetics are also notoriously difficult to interrogate — if they think capture is inevitable, they quickly erase their memories or rewrite them to prevent giving up their co-conspirators or to reveal their plans. Mokolé find it particularly frustrating when they finally capture one of their fallen kind, only to discover his last remaining memory is to tell them he deleted it all.

The Mnetics hide in plain sight, twisting the memory of those around them to forget when they're gone. Some delight in confounding others through their tinkering. For two decades covering the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, a group of Mnetics convinced Mokolé, Garou and most of the Pentex board of the existence of a particularly depraved member of their kind who engaged in vile acts within the Atrocity Realm. Calling their creation Braney, hundreds of people believed

CREATING MNETICS

Mnetics are mostly the same as other Mokolé and follow usual character creation rules. Mnetics may learn the Steal Mnesis and Corrupt Mnesis powers normally restricted to Innocents (*W20 Changing Breeds*, p.142), who delight in the partnership with the fallen reptiles and sometimes act as totems.

A Mnetic may alter her own memories at will through a Mnesis quest, taking several hours. She may attempt to alter the memories of those she meets with a Manipulation + Mnesis roll. The difficulty depends on how many people share the memory — difficulty 5 for memories known only to the victim, difficulty 6 if known by less than 10 people, difficulty 7 for 10 to 100 people, and difficulty 8 for more than 100. The Mnetic can reduce the difficulty by 1 by touching the victim while attempting the alteration.

The Mnetic may attempt to quickly alter the Mnesis of members of her clutch, stream, or Mokolé she can physically touch. The player makes a Manipulation + Mnesis roll (difficulty 7 for clutch, 8 for stream), resisted by the victim's Perception + Mnesis (difficulty 7). Each success for the Mnetic allows one minor alteration.

With more time and extended Mnesis quests, the Mnetic may more slowly alter her stream's Mnesis. She makes an extended Manipulation + Mnesis roll (difficulty 6) per night of Mnesis quest. Every 10 successes allow her to make a minor alteration to the collected pool of memory, such as changing the name of a storied hero. Alternatively, she can save those successes to attempt to gain 50 successes, to make a major Mnesis alteration, such as having an ancient human civilization existing alongside the dinosaurs. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what constitutes a minor or major modification. Rolling a botch at any time during this extended roll leaves a memory stain that everyone sharing that Mnesis can find — some may have the skill and clarity to follow the stain back to the Mnetic.

that a fallen No-Sun Mokolé called Deep Purple Dark was the dark inspiration behind the children's television show. Each of these witnesses swore that they had seen poorly-

copied, smuggled tapes of 'Braney' performing depraved acts of torture and violation, and pointed to 'innocent' events within the children's show that they said were hidden references to the filth. 'Braney' never existed, but Deep Purple Dark did. The Mnetics wanted to see how far and for how long they could twist perceptions. When they grew bored of their game, they made sure various hunters suddenly knew how to find Deep Purple Dark and bring him to 'justice'. Deep Purple Dark's full confession before his execution helped reassure the Mokolé that they had the right person. The Mnetics clutch is now pondering who their next victim will be, and how far they'll push it this time.

Secret, precious memories are the most vulnerable to the Mnetics and are those considered most interesting. Memories that everyone recalls are harder to change or eliminate because of their distribution through the Mnesis. Those held by only a few — or ideally just one person — are targeted by Mnetics for surgical strikes.

Hollow Laughter: Bitter-Grins

The Bitter-Grins — also called the Nokhomi — want to see the conclusion of the greatest prank of all. Long ago, the Wyrms looked at the balance between the Triat and saw that its siblings took that balance for granted. With a bitter grin, the Wyrms designed a prank to teach its siblings the value of what they had.

The Wyrms spoke to the Weaver and teased her that the Wyld had greater dominion over Gaia. Though this was untrue and the three forces were balanced, the Weaver listened to the Wyrms and grew jealous of her sibling. Everywhere the Weaver placed order the Wyld crept through, desecrating the fixed structures with teeming life and chaos. What the Weaver did not see was the Wyrms conspiring with the Wyld to subvert the order and break its cohesion. The Wyrms nipped at the structures to make cracks through which the Wyld energies couldn't help but spring through.

Enraged by what she perceived as inequality, the Weaver desperately covered dynamic Wyld with static forms, with little success. The Wyld kept breaking through. The Weaver lamented to the Wyrms and the Wyrms grinned and enacted the second part of his plan. He empathized with the Weaver but conceded he had to obey his nature and weaken the order she imposed on the world. The Weaver snapped and enacted her plan to ensnare the Wyrms in her webs and defeat the Wyld. Her anguish blinded her to seeing that this was the Wyrms' plan all along.

Trapped within the Weaver's webs, the Wyrms was able to alter its nature — something it could not achieve while the Triat was balanced. It whispered to itself in

the darkness and changed, gaining dominion over corruption and decay. With this newfound influence the Wyrms degraded the Weaver's bonds. Free of its bonds, and able to affect the demeanor of a force gone mad, the Wyrms threw itself into the role, corrupting and perverting everything that it had once balanced.

This is what the Nokhomi know — the Wyrms cannot be defeated because the Wyrms is not really fighting. It is playing a prank on everyone and everything and any action besides complete surrender is pointless. The Weaver is too stubborn and staid in its ways to learn from the prank, and the Wyld is too capricious and fickle to comprehend the lesson offered to it.

The fallen Nuwisha understand the joke better than anyone else, even old Coyote himself. They know that the Wyrms fell victim to its own prank, and that is the funniest joke of all. It did once want to teach its siblings, but its new nature as corruptor twisted its vision. Now the Wyrms drags everything to oblivion because it can't stop the decay any more than the Weaver can loosen up or the Wyld can settle down.

The Apocalypse can't be stopped — it's the punchline of the whole tragic triumvirate, and the fallen werecoyotes weep at how fucking pointless and *hilarious* they find the whole drama.

Knowing that nothing matters, the Bitter-Grins work towards ever more perverse and destructive pranks against their fellow shapeshifters. The unfallen Nuwisha prank other Changing Breeds so they can understand and learn to overcome their flaws. The Nokhomi only ever try to teach one lesson to their victims — surrender. Only when Gaia's warriors, eyes, ears, and other pointless functions realize the futility of their purpose and cease their fruitless struggle can the Wyrms strangle his siblings and dismember their rotting corpses. Then the pain can stop and the Bitter-Grins' laughter will cease.

Until then, the Nokhomi exult in telling the ultimate joke, driving their victims to despair and surrender by destroying their treasures and perverting their loves. Their preferred targets are other Nuwisha and their best prank is aimed at Coyote himself. The Nokhomi believe if they can pervert enough of their brethren the old bastard may open his eyes to the truth and fall with his children. The Bitter-Grins giggle to themselves at night as they think of Coyote turning his wicked talents to the Wyrms' service. Some Nokhomi think Coyote's aspect Xochipilli has already fallen, and works from within to corrupt the old dog.

The Twisted Totems of Coyote

The Nokhomi still follow the many faces of Coyote, but they interpret the role of each aspect through their fatalistic lens. For unknown reasons, most Coyote totems

CREATING A BITTER-GRIN

Bitter-Grins are exactly like other Nuwisha, but have opened their eyes and chosen the Wyrms. Nuwisha who follow Ptah before they fall lose its patronage and must choose another totem. For reasons known only to Ptah, the totem does not tell other Nuwisha of the new Bitter-Grin.

don't abandon their fallen followers. Most Bitter-Grins laugh that this is a sign of Coyote's inevitable fall, but some wonder if the old trickster is setting up his fallen children for some incredible prank.

Chung Kuel: Luck is an illusion that disguises brief respite from the inevitable doom. These Nokhomi hasten despair by ensuring a cascade of ever larger problems beset their enemies.

Kishijoten: These Bitter-Grins use gentleness to lull enemies to drop their guard, before striking with an explosive punchline.

Kokopelli: Celebrating to excess makes enemies unwary. Nokhomi who follow Kokopelli develop prodigious tolerance for drugs and alcohol, to better play their lethal tricks on intoxicated victims.

Loki: Ferocious Bitter-Grins who follow Loki urge their temporary allies to overcommit — before betraying them and laughing at the ensuing slaughter.

Oghma: Bitter-Grins who retain the hidden history of their fallen kind, they study to identify weaknesses in the Nuwisha and lead them to doom, making them the most successful at corrupting their blind cousins.

Ptah: Ptah is the only totem to refuse patronage to the Nokhomi, but they gain the last laugh, as they are unbound by the pact limiting Nuwisha on earth. Nokhomi may return to the physical as they choose, and in doing so force an unfallen Nuwisha to take to the Umbra.

Raven: Some of the most cunning Nokhomi, they walk among Garou and lead werewolves to war with their own kind and slaughter innocents in Gaia's name.

Ti Malice: Bitter-Grins find easy kinship with Ti Malice's treachery. They favor influential figures with truth of purpose and strength of character as their prey, for the highest stars have the farthest to fall.

Xochipilli: Nokhomi believe Xochipilli is already of the Wyrms, playing a risky game in convincing unfallen Nuwisha to follow it and further the Wyrms' goals. The Nokhomi find this hilarious but few follow the totem themselves, out of respect for the epic prank it plays.

Forsaken by Rat: The Mad Destroyers

The Wyrms are insane and hate the Weaver for ensnaring it in her web. Both its madness and its loathing of the Weaver give it common cause with at least some wererats. Ratkin are prone to madness and many of them consider the Weaver to be an even greater threat than the Wyrms. The rulers of most Ratkin nests wish to build up their numbers before they strike at humanity, and are content that the Apocalypse will arrive soon enough. A few wererats have grown tired of waiting. The ones who glory in the idea of watching the entire world burn, or who fixate on plans to destroy humanity sometimes find like-minded allies among the legions of the Wyrms.

Thurifuge, the Maeljin Incarna of disease, takes the most interest in recruiting Ratkin. He finds work for most of them in his Duchy in Malfeas, where they create ever more deadly plagues. He also assigns some of them to work in Pentex medical research facilities back on Earth.

A Corrupt Courtship

Black Spiral Dancers regularly look for hints that one of the Ratkin holds Wyrms sympathies, as do Mad Destroyers who have already embraced the Wyrms. If an agent of the Wyrms encounters a wererat pack that seem like they could be possible recruits, he attempts to befriend them and aids the pack in their attacks on the Weaver. Some Black Spiral Dancers also arrange ambushes or other threats and then "rescue" the wererats from the supposed danger.

The agent of the Wyrms spurs the potential recruits to increasingly more violent attacks on targets associated with the Weaver, preferably attacks that cause a maximum of death and suffering or that release various persistent and deadly toxins. Some of the most violent Ratkin gladly accept a gift of nerve gas — produced by

CREATING FALLEN RATKIN

Mad Destroyers are exactly like any other Ratkin, except that they've chosen to work for the other side. None of them was born corrupt, they all choose their fate. In addition to their ordinary Gifts, Mad Destroyers can also learn Black Spiral Dancer tribal Gifts. Rat turns her back on them, so the Mad Destroyers can only make a connection to Wyrms Totems.

one of Magadon's many subsidiaries — and use it to kill people in sealed office buildings or subway tunnels, not considering the lasting corruption that results. The tempter then congratulates them on their efforts and tries to make them proud of the death and suffering they have caused. Some packs recoil in horror at such treatment, but others grow bolder and increasingly violent.

The tempter's next step is to convince the pack to attack a target related to the Wyld. If the pack goes through with the attack, striking against that which they are supposed to hold dear, the tempter reveals her true nature and purpose and offers the new recruits considerably more power. At this point, many Ratkin, overcome at the horror of working with the Wyrms, strike out at their former ally. If their tempter survives this attack, he makes certain that other shapeshifters learn the truth about the Ratkin's actions and delights in the ensuing carnage.

Other wererats either hate the Weaver sufficiently to not care who they are working with, or believe they have already fallen and serve the Wyrms either to survive or out of hatred the world. The most violent and dangerous Ratkin believe that their desire to bring about an apocalyptic end to humanity dovetails perfectly with the Wyrms' goals, and enthusiastically join the ranks of the fallen.

Defiling Sea: Balefire Sharks

In 1955, a nuclear blast killed more than three quarters of all of the immortal Rokea. While the blast vaporized the oldest sharks as well as all of the other Rokea who were near the center of the gathering, some sharks took a lethal dose of radiation but did not die immediately. Covered with hideous burns and suffering from fatal radiation sickness, the vast majority died within a day or two of the blast. Tentacled minions of Lord Kerne, the Master of Hellfire, approached these dying weresharks and offered them a chance to survive by embracing the radiation that was killing them. Out of many hundreds of dying sharks, only a handful accepted this hideous offer, but these few, maddened sufficiently by their pain and fear, swore allegiance to the Wyrms — despite knowing that the same force that was killing them now asked for their loyalty.

The balefire elementals sent to aid these traitorous weresharks healed them, but in the process also warped and twisted them. As a result, all of these Rokea bear marks of their ordeal and their transformation. In addition to large and terrible scars, all of them also possess some warped features like an additional eye or fin, or some malformed body part that grew back twisted when they healed from the bomb blast.

In return for their life, these Balefire Sharks pledged loyalty to the Wyrms. Because Gaia charged the weresharks

CREATING BALEFIRE SHARKS

Balefire Sharks have all of the traits of ordinary Rokea, except that they can regain Gnosis in any body of polluted or radioactive water and they are immune to the effects of any of the four elemental Wyrms. They possess the same Gifts as other Rokea, but can also learn Black Spiral Dancer tribal Gifts. In addition, they can only possess Wym Totems and summon Banes, since other spirits refuse to deal with these corrupt creatures.

Balefire Sharks require regular exposure to radiation to survive. At least once a month, every Balefire Shark must spend at least one full day in an undersea Wym Grotto associated with the element of balefire or swimming in a source of moderately strong radiation. Spending time in an intense source of radioactivity also allows them to recover all of their Gnosis within an hour. Only the cracked reactor core of a sunken nuclear submarine or other similarly massive sources of radiation are powerful enough to allow the Balefire Shark to accomplish this feat.

to survive, not to fight the Wyrms, most had few regrets about this alliance. Swearing allegiance to creatures allied with the deadly radiation of the atomic blast that killed them was a very different matter. Only the most desperate Rokea made this terrible choice. Some soon regretted their decision but like all bargains with the Wyrms, this one was far easier to make than to break. The nature of their transformation means that most Balefire Sharks have difficulty even considering disobeying Lord Kerne's orders and any who attempt to forswear the Wyrms swiftly die from radiation sickness.

The balefire elementals ordered these sharks to patrol the polluted waters around nuclear power plants and factories producing toxic chemicals, keeping them safe from anyone on land or sea who would interfere with their operation. Balefire Sharks can exist comfortably in both fresh and saltwater, as long as this water is radioactive or otherwise polluted. As a result, a few Balefire Sharks now patrol areas in the Great Lakes, Lake Baikal, the Caspian Sea, and other similar bodies of water.

Since the mid-1950s, many of the Balefire Sharks have learned more about the land, so that they can better protect factories and power plants. Most, however,



still have little real understanding of human technology or society. Instead, their methods of providing protection remain exceedingly direct. They attack and devour anyone who interferes with a location they are guarding. The Wyrms affected their minds as well as their bodies, altering their loyalties so that most of them see nothing wrong with killing other weresharks who threaten their charges. Most Balefire Sharks are now far more comfortable with other minions of the Wyrms than with non-corrupted Rokea. The corruption that balefire inflicts upon a creature has driven a few Balefire Sharks entirely mad. These creatures take every opportunity to spread the radiation that nourishes them all across the oceans.

Instead of protecting nuclear sites from interference, they destroy reactors and rip open radioactive waste dumps in order to spread poison across a large area. These insane Balefire Sharks are sometimes too indiscriminately destructive for the Wyrms' more careful and subtle agents. On a few occasions, agents of the Wyrms have found ways to pass messages to either Rokea or members of another Changing Breed, encouraging them to slay a Balefire

Shark whose indiscriminate destruction and overt pollution has gotten in the way of some of the Wyrms' plans.

Habitat

Balefire Sharks lack the freedom of the open seas because they need to feed on radiation too often to stray far into open waters. In addition, all but the most thoughtless or self-serving Rokea is horrified and enraged at seeing a wereshark who has become a radioactive monster. Almost all Rokea feel a strong desire to attempt to kill the Balefire Shark and then to dispose of its body on land or in one of the deepest undersea trenches. Most Balefire Sharks give up the wide-ranging travels of their former Breed and lurk near a particular corrupt location. Some become the guardians of Wyrms' Grottos, protecting the vile location from outside interference and using it to summon banes and fomori that go forth to do the Wyrms' bidding. Others protect coastal nuclear power plants from interference. These Balefire Sharks bask in illegal radioactive discharges into the ocean, and spend time both on land and in the water making certain that none of the Changing Breeds can interfere with the reactor.

Nothing like the blast that killed most of the Rokea has happened since the 1950s, but periodically weresharks encounter radiation seeping into the ocean. Some become fatally ill from this exposure and balefire elementals seek them out and offer to heal them. Like in 1955, a few choose to become Balefire Sharks.

The Chittering Darkness: Xibalan

The Xibalan denied the truth of what they had become. They believed they served Bat as his only true followers, who understood his enduring service to the Wyrms. They thought his temporary service to Gaia was a brief period of daylight in his existence before he rediscovered the beauty of night. The Xibalan were his heralds, who explored the endless darkness to mark a path for Bat to find his way home.

The claws of the Garou proved the Xibalan correct.

Small groups of Xibalan emerged from every Camazotz population. Ironically, the South American Camazotz who drew the Shadow Lords' ire were the least corrupted population. These Camazotz openly practiced blood rituals and sacrifices and brought the rites out of the darkness. This openness let them quickly identify and destroy the few Xibalan who couldn't resist the Wyrms' lure.

The other Camazotz tribes across the world performed blood magic in secret, limiting participation in the mysteries to werebats who were initiated into the cults only after careful scrutiny. These cults attracted the Wyrms' attention and many individuals accepted its offer of additional power — they believed the Wyrms' whispers of Bat's imminent return to its embrace, becoming Xibalan, the fallen bats. Several new Xibalan tried converting their cult members to the Wyrms' cause. While some were successful, more fled the claws and shrieks of the loyal Camazotz.

The Xibalan were as social as the rest of the Camazotz and listened for chitters of other werebats, to try and join their swarms. The Xibalan remembered the lessons from the hidden blood cults and set up their own groups, teaching other Camazotz the ways to power — modifying what they taught to include greater influence and appreciation for the Wyrms in the hopes of ensnaring promising new disciples to spread the word and forge Bat's path back to the darkness. In this way the Wyrms' influence spread throughout the Camazotz population.

The Xibalan were a persistent weeping boil to the Camazotz breed. Though they never accounted for more than one-tenth of the werebats, their teachings and beliefs seemed impervious to permanent eradication. Loyal Camazotz worked tirelessly to locate and destroy the Xibalan but there always seemed to be some

CREATING XIBALAN

The Xibalan no longer exist — they died out with the rest of the Camazotz. No evidence contradicts their research. No stories tell of the Xibalan past the final fall of Bat. The fallen werebats are dead and gone, never to trouble Gaia's children again.

What everyone knows so often has an exception. Storytellers wanting to put the lie to this received wisdom should use the rules for Camazotz in **W20 Changing Breeds** for Xibalan characters.

who would escape and restart the infection no matter how thorough the Camazotz were or how carefully they planned — almost as if Bat himself helped ensure some of his fallen children always existed, just in case.

The number of Xibalan seemed to ebb and flow with the state of Bat's mind and his dedication to Gaia. When Bat's faith in the Celestine wavered, the Xibalan population thrived. When he regained confidence and committed himself to her cause, the Camazotz seemed better able to find and destroy Xibalan nests.

When the Garou destroyed the South American Camazotz, Bat's most pure and uncorrupted children, the spirit's identity fractured. The Xibalan flew from their earthly hiding places to be by his side and fight the loyalist Gaian Camazotz who would keep him divided. They helped convince Bat of the futility of the struggle. When the Australian Camazotz lost hope — as the Garou nation slaughtered the Bunyip — the Xibalan flew ahead of the fallen Bat into the depths of the Wyrms' strongholds in the Umbra, never to be heard from again. Whether they're truly gone, or just masters of killing everyone who discovers their existence remains to be seen.

Bloodbats

The Xibalan may be gone but their legacy lives on. Garou and Fera alike tell of giant bats whose jaws drip with acidic blood, and whose shrieks herald madness. These Bloodbats are all that's left of the Camazotz. Some Mokolé and Ananasi claim that they are all that remains of the Gaian Camazotz who tried to stop Bat falling to the Wyrms. Others believe that the Bloodbats are nothing but a vicious mockery, an attempt by the great deceiver to dishearten the Garou by reminding them of their great folly.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 7, Stamina 4, Charisma 0, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 2, Stealth 5, Subterfuge 3

Rage 5, Willpower 4

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attacks: Bite (Strength + 1 aggravated), Wing Swipe (Strength + 1 lethal)

Powers: Burning Blood*, Regeneration, Terrifying Shriek*

***Burning Blood:** A Bloodbat's acidic ichor can burn even Garou flesh. In addition to making the Bloodbat's bite deal aggravated damage, anyone who successfully bites a Bloodbat suffers three dice of aggravated damage as caustic fluids burn her mouth and throat. Damage from this power (including a Bloodbat's bite damage) is always soaked at difficulty 9.

*** Terrifying Shriek:** A Bloodbat can unleash an ultrasonic shriek that instills primal terror in anyone who hears it. Spend a point of Willpower and roll Manipulation + Subterfuge. Everyone within twenty yards of the Bloodbat suffers the Delirium, even if they are normally immune. Reduce the victim's effective Willpower by one for each success rolled.

Image: Bloodbats are black bats the size of a human being, with wicked talons on their wings. Their heads look like a cross between bat and wolf, much like some Black Spiral Dancers. Their jaws contain too many needle-like fangs, which constantly drip acidic blood. Each Bloodbat has a unique pattern of burn-marks where their own blood has dissolved their fur.

Background: Whether descended from the Xibalan or not, the Bloodbats are a recent appearance in the World of Darkness. Nobody had encountered one until three years ago, when a Bloodbat attacked a clutch of Mokolé in Australia. Since then, they have grown in number, and their attacks have grown more frequent.

Storytelling Notes: Bloodbats prefer wild, shadowy places where they can hide in the dark, swooping out to attack their prey. They create a cacophony of sounds to distract their prey, then send them fleeing with a terrifying shriek, and swoop down to pick off stragglers.

The Mockery Breeds

Now and then, things go right for Pentex. Neuro-Dynamic Laboratories is a Pentex front established several decades ago for the primary purpose of conducting corporate asset raids against Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated, and finding something useful to do with any research it managed to steal.

Much to the sorrow of the Garou and all other things that are of Gaia, Pentex considers the program a rousing success. Until recently, NDL was officially a sub-operation of Project Iliad, Pentex's fomor-creating operation, with the internal company code-name of Project Lycaon. The purpose of Project Lycaon is nothing less than the artificial creation of a Changing Breed under Pentex's direct control. They want a more cooperative and pliable alternative to the temperamental and arrogant Black Spiral Dancers, able to provide Pentex with easy access to Wyrnish magic on par with that of the Dancers, and also capable of fighting the Garou head to head.

Project Iliad was initially unaware of NDL's overall aims. This changed in the whirlwind of exposés, smears, and lies as part of the latest election to the Board of Directors (p. 62). Discovering that part of his operation wanted to do away with the need for Black Spiral Dancers, Francesco was incensed. He would have destroyed Project Lycaon if it hadn't split away in a flurry of mergers and backroom deals. In the end, NDL split away from Project Iliad, becoming its own entity under the control of Sir Frederick Appleton — himself the result of one of NDL's experiments.

To date, none of NDL's major projects has fully succeeded in realizing these goals, but none has been abject failures, either. Pentex continues to funnel research funds into Project Lycaon, and continues to keep word of it well away from the company's Spiral allies.

War Wolves

The abominations known as War Wolves were Project Lycaon's first successful project. Using genetic material from several captured werewolves as well as copious amounts of stolen DNA research, Pentex scientists managed to create perfect, custom-built killing machines, able to get close to their Garou targets and strike with the advantages of both surprise and overwhelming force. War Wolves have no higher intelligence, and certainly nothing resembling morals; they have no need for understanding, only an in-born hunger for the flesh of the Garou.

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

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 2, Primal-Urge 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Rage: 8; Willpower: 6

Powers: Immunity to the Delirium; Regeneration, Shapeshifting*

*** Shapeshifting:** War Wolves are capable of only one transformation: from Lupus (their natural form) to Crinos, and back again. Shapeshifting is always automatically

successful and immediate, and costs the War Wolf one point of Rage. The number in brackets for their Physical Attributes is for Crinos form.

Image: War Wolves appear to be emaciated, drooling wolves with ragged pelts. In Crinos form, they are rangy and savage. They smell rank and ill, and reek of the Wyrms to spiritual senses. Unfortunately, they also smell enough like wolves to be able to work their way close enough to wolf Kin that once their victims realize something is wrong, it's much too late.

Background: War Wolves were Neuro-Dynamic's first answer to the Garou: genetically altered dogs and wolves with immunity to the Delirium and the ability to fight on the same level as the Garou. These "artificial werewolves" have a very selective diet, and remain constantly hungry until they encounter either Kinfolk or Garou. Other meat nourishes them, but does not satisfy. Pentex goes to great pains to steer War Wolves away from Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk, but the Spirals are naturally secretive about the location and numbers of their kin. Accidents are inevitable.

The Wolves' shapeshifting is semi-mystical in nature, but because they aren't half-spirit like true Garou, they can't manage any forms other than Lupus and Crinos. They can't use Gifts, have no Gnosis, and the spirit world doesn't consider them shapeshifters in any way by the spirit world, yet they share the Garou's weakness to silver. They are also incapable of stepping sideways.

Storytelling Notes: War Wolves hunt in packs, and the rare nature of their preferred prey means that when encountered, they will almost invariably be starving. These mongrel horrors are perhaps Pentex's greatest insult to the Garou to date, and can provide terrifying stories beginning with the characters finding gnawed bones and racing against the clock to find out what is hunting their Kin, and to avenge them against the creators of the War Wolves.

Anurana

It's difficult to say quite what drove the creation of the Anurana. Officially, they were supposed to shore up a critical deficiency in Pentex maritime security, acting as a counterbalance to the Rokea; they might have also been deployed in the sewers to flush out Bone Gnawer packs, or to patrol heavily polluted rivers, lakes, and estuaries around Pentex factories. Privately, the Pentex Board of Directors suspects that personnel from the disastrous Freakfeet fomor project (see p. 132), reassigned from Project Iliad to Project Lycaon, simply wanted another shot at doing things right.

In the end, they screwed up again.

The Anurana are the result of a mixture of repurposed NDL technologies based on those that created the War

Wolves and improved techniques from the Freakfeet project. The aim was to create a breed of true shapeshifters under Pentex control, codenamed the Anurana (a portmanteau of order: *Anura*, genus: *rana*, presumably because "werefrog" didn't sound sufficiently intimidating). The project was a limited success, but the Anurana proved entirely uncontrollable. Hypnotic, mystical, and Bane-implant conditioning all failed utterly, and the first generation of test subjects, sent out on a scouting mission to investigate Rokea activity off the coast of New England, never returned.

They survived, though, and now thrive in the wild. The Anurana have a strange, lingering connection to Pentex, and stalk its facilities and personnel to this day, preferring to dwell and breed in the pollution-rich waters near the Wyrms-corporation's factories. This does not make them allies of the Garou, however; the Anurana are terrible things, designed to thrive in the polluted waters of the Apocalyptic world, and fiercely attack any who attempt to cleanse the tainted places the Anurana call home. They have a kind of understanding with the Balefire Sharks who also patrol those horrific waters.

Traits: Anurana vary as much as any other "shapeshifter," though they have a distinct tendency toward low Intelligence and Appearance ratings, and toward high Brawl, Primal-Urge, Athletics, and Willpower. Their particular features are as follows:

Breeds: Anurana have only two Breeds, homid and metis, as they are entirely incapable of reproduction with any kind of earthly amphibian. Homid Anurana begin with Rage 3, Gnosis 1, Willpower 5; the more powerful, monstrous Metis Anurana begin with Rage 5, Gnosis 2, Willpower 3.

Forms: Anurana have three forms: Homid, Anuran (roughly equivalent to Glabro), and Dagon (roughly equivalent to Crinos).

The trait modifiers for Anuran are Strength +1, Dexterity +1, Stamina +1, Appearance -2. The character can swim at his full movement speed as though he were on land. The character can hold his breath for up to (Stamina) hours.

Dagon form modifiers are Strength +2, Dexterity +2, Stamina +2, Appearance 0. The character gains claw and bite attacks as a Garou, can swim at twice his normal movement speed, and triples his leaping distances. The character can operate underwater indefinitely. Witnessing a character in Dagon form induces the Delirium in humans.

Powers: Anurana can step sideways by submerging themselves in polluted waters, or emerging from the same. They regenerate damage at the same rate as Garou, but do not suffer any vulnerability to silver or any other substance. They are immune to the Delirium.

The Anurana are not part of the Pact with the spirit world, and no spirits will consent to teach them Gifts. Even Banes look down on these pretend-shapeshifters. Instead, Anurana have a number of innate, fomor-like powers in Dagon form. These include: Eyes of the Wyrms, Frog Tongue, Maw of the Wyrms and Nimbleness.

Image: Anurana in Homid form seem distinctly off. They suffer from a number of subtle malformations. Wide-set eyes, broad thin-lipped mouths, tiny or huge ears, and elongated fingers are all common for them.

In Anuran form, a werefrog's bodily and facial hair vanishes, and any hair on their head becomes slick and patchy. Their limbs elongate and bulge with rubbery muscle. Their fingers and toes develop webbing, and their skin takes on a grayish or greenish cast. Eyes bulge, lips vanish, and the skin develops a distinct sheen.

A werefrog in Dagon form is both absurd and terrifying — a great hulking hunch-backed frogman, with staring eyes, a huge mouth, and long gangling arms and legs. Something of the fish is present in this form as well, for some reason, the form's limbs terminate in wicked, webbed talons, and its mouth is crowded with tiny needle teeth.

Background: The Anurana haven't spread very far beyond the confines of the American East Coast, at least as far as Pentex is aware. The details of their reproduction help to slow their spread, while also precluding any sort of normal life away from their polluted nests. Anurana have no Kinfolk and are incapable of producing any; most pregnancies borne or caused by an Anurana end in a singularly hideous miscarriage, as the swirling stew of altered genes and polluted magic simply fail to come together to produce anything viable; the final product is a rush of briny water, malformed bones, and dead frogs. On the rare occasions when a werefrog's spawn manages to survive to full term and birth, the result is always Anurana.

Anurana Metis are worse. They're much less likely to fail *in utero*, but are born sterile, deformed, and monstrous. Rather than an infant, an Anurana metis is born as something like a cat-sized tadpole with a human-ish face; they reach full maturity in only five years, and are able to abandon their immature form in favor of shape-shifting into Homid, Anuran, and Dagon forms after only three years. They have, as best Pentex can tell, a life expectancy of little over two decades.

Storytelling Notes: Given their penchant for abducting Pentex employees as breeding stock, Garou briefly may consider thinking of the Anurana as allies. Nothing could be further from the truth; the "werefrogs" are a slap in the face to Gaia's design, a new almost-Changing Breed manufactured in a Pentex laboratory. The Anurana harass Pentex simply because they don't like getting poked, prodded, or intruded upon.

The Anurana are outsiders in the war for Gaia, and routinely snubbed or even hunted during their forays into the spirit world, but they're slowly learning about the various powers and factions of the supernatural world. They know enough to understand that the Garou will stop at nothing to destroy them, once the werewolves become aware enough of the Anurana to realize they're something other than unusually resilient fomori. Some werefrogs are formulating plans to strike first, while the most cunning of their kind ponder what elements they may be missing that Gaia's shapeshifters have. Perhaps breeding with normal humans has been a mistake; perhaps Garou Kinfolk already carrying changing blood is what they need.

Samsa

Project Metamorphosis aimed to produce the ultimate corporate espionage tool — a swarm-based shapeshifter that could infiltrate anywhere and immediately pass information back through the link shared by every member of the swarm. NDL's product marketing personnel sold the idea of an assassin concealed in a hundred different places in a room, waiting for a target to arrive before reforming into a single killing form.

Unfortunately, the NDL scientists could not meet these goals. They have created a human/insect hybrid, but it cannot separate into a swarm. Instead, the Samsa are mind-shattered eight-foot tall bipedal cockroaches that are terrified of the dark. Pentex closed Project Metamorphosis as an abject failure, leaving NDL with several dozen prototype Samsa gibbering with fear in their cells.

Traits: Samsa are highly variable but tend toward high Stamina and low Appearance. Samsa also tend toward high Alertness, Streetwise and Survival. High Willpower is useful, but their mindset rarely supports such strength of character. All Samsa have the Paranoia Derangement (W20 p.486) and must choose a second Derangement.

Breeds: Samsa have two Breeds, homid and metis. Homid Samsa begin with Rage 2, Gnosis 4, Willpower 3, while metis Samsa begin with Rage 3, Gnosis 2, Willpower 4.

Forms: Samsa have only two forms: Homid and Ungeziefer. Homid Samsa invariably have a disheveled and confused appearance, and a feverish madness in their eyes. Ungeziefer are nightmarish eight-foot tall bipedal cockroaches with greenish-brown armored carapaces and clicking mandibles.

Ungeziefer trait modifiers are Strength +3, Dexterity +1, Stamina +3, Appearance 0. Their serrated exoskeleton permits claw attacks (Str +2 L) but they cannot bite. Ungeziefer inflicts the Delirium on vulnerable witnesses.

Each time a Samsa takes Ungeziefer she chooses two traits from the following list. The majority are fomori

powers function as per W20 (pp. 430-439) except as noted; Antenna and Swarm are unique to the Samsa. They can manifest different traits with the first transformation each scene, but keep those traits until the scene ends.

- **Antenna:** Add 3 dice to Perception rolls, and can detect spirits only as Sense the Unnatural (W20, p. 436).
- **Armored Carapace:** Samsa armor cannot soak aggravated damage caused by insecticide.
- **Claws**
- **Darksight:** Even when Samsa can see in pitch blackness, it doesn't stop the voices.
- **Extra Limbs:** All Ungeziefer have an extra pair of limb, useless arms. With this the arms are as capable as their primary set.
- **Wings:** Samsa are clumsy fliers. They have Dex -2 while airborne.
- **Swarm:** Each turn, dozens of cockroaches fall from beneath the Samsa's carapace. These cockroaches obey the Samsa's spoken commands.
- **Wall Walking**

Powers: Samsa are incapable of stepping sideways but they hear nearby spirits whenever they enter deep shadow or darkness — feeding the Samsa's paranoia and dread. Samsa are only immune to the Delirium in Ungeziefer form — in Homid they are as vulnerable as any human.

CAUSE INSANITY (SAMSA ONLY)

The Samsa inflicts her own fears and mental illness on her victim, gaining brief respite in return. The Samsa spends one Gnosis point and rolls Willpower (difficulty 7), adding 2 dice per Derangement she currently has.

Every success passes one of the Samsa's Derangements to her victim for a scene. The Samsa chooses which Derangement is inflicted. With five or more successes the victim's mind breaks with the sudden strain and he shuts down for the scene, refusing to act except to try and flee violence.

A Samsa loses access to this power whenever she passes all her Derangements to others. She can use the power multiple times to inflict separate Derangements on different victims, but can't invoke the power again on a victim already suffering one of her Derangements.

Samsa heal at the same rate as Garou. They are not vulnerable to silver but suffer aggravated damage from insecticides in Ungeziefer form. Samsa never suffer damage caused by radiation or toxic waste.

Samsa all have the fomori powers Animal Control (for cockroaches only), and a unique version of Cause Insanity.

Samsa are as difficult to eradicate as natural cockroaches. When a Samsa takes lethal or aggravated damage in her last health box she automatically spends one permanent Willpower dot and dissolves into a thousand cockroaches scrambling in all directions. All but one cockroach dies within the following hour. This final cockroach has only one health level and is ravenously hungry — each day it must consume twice its body weight, growing in size and regaining another health level. When the Samsa regains seven health levels the now giant cockroach spontaneously shapeshifts to Homid form. The Samsa has no memory of several hours before her near death, and can only recall snippets of her cockroach experience through terrifying nightmares. Each use of this power inflicts another permanent Derangement on the Samsa.

Cockroach spirits will teach the Samsa Gifts if the wretches listen long enough to learn. The Glass Walkers recently discovered this tutelage and are confused and saddened, exacerbated by the fact that their totem refuses to discuss it with the tribe.

Image: Samsa look entirely human in Homid form, with haunted expressions and a tendency to jump at sudden noises. Most Samsa have a mild sensitivity to bright light and a fear of darkness.

In Ungeziefer form the Samsa is an oversized cockroach standing on human-like legs. His entire body is covered in a sickly green-brown exoskeleton and has four arms — the lower pair often hangs limp and useless. The arms end in three-fingered claws where one serves as an opposable 'thumb'. The Ungeziefer's mandibles make hissing, clicking sounds that can't be understood by humans — Samsa can understand and speak these sounds in either form.

Background: Pentex has little use for the Samsa except for psychological warfare or as distractions for other, more important missions. Pentex teams drop Samsa into an area and wait for the inevitable chaos to erupt. Clean-up teams try to recapture Samsa after missions, but are just as happy to hose them down with industrial strength insecticide if they prove difficult.

A number of Samsa exploded into cockroaches when Pentex collection teams tried to recapture them, revealing the Samsa's last-ditch survival ability. Pentex doesn't realize what happened, assuming that the thousands of

WAIT, COCKROACH DOES WHAT?

Yes, cockroach spirits will teach Gifts to Samsa, for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the totem Cockroach is the spirit courts' great survivor. He intends to exist even if the Wyrms win. Long after the Wyrms' minions turn on themselves and devour each other, Cockroach plans to survive with his brood. The Samsa may prove useful in this regard.

Secondly, Cockroach is curious about these new creations. The Samsa stink of corruption, but Cockroach knows his children adapt to survive almost anything. Samsa definitely aren't his, but he's intently watching their survival strategies.

Either way, Cockroach is investing in the possible future. The Samsa are deeply paranoid, broken, and loathed even by other Wyrms creatures. Cockroach intends to be the only one Samsa can trust. One day they may even betray the Wyrms and fight for Gaia.

If the Samsa prove to be more trouble than they're worth, he can always call on the Glass Walkers to destroy the mockery breed. Until then, he refuses to discuss the issue with the Garou, has cockroach spirits teach the Samsa Gifts, and plans as only the greatest survivor can.

dead cockroaches were just another flaw in the Samsa design — unaware that the wercockroach had escaped the company's clutches.

These free Samsa are even more insane, unable to cope with, or relate to, the world around them. Although these wercockroaches haven't yet bred, their genes are true and any offspring will likely be new Samsa.

Storytelling Notes: Samsa will most likely be encountered as a Pentex distraction or as part of a psychological warfare operation. These Samsa are confused, vulnerable and volatile. Anyone attempting to help them will become a victim of their Cause Insanity power.

Cockroach may enlist Glass Walkers and other city-based shapeshifters to help the Samsa. His servants noticed the escape of the first Samsa and Cockroach instructed them to follow, watch and try to help. These spirits assist individual Samsa to find each other but the wercockroaches are very unwilling to trust whispering voices from the darkness.

Kerasi

Pentex is very interested in the African continent, with its multitude of nations, constant factional differences, millions of people, and wilderness to destroy. Africa is also witness to the largest, bloodiest shapeshifter war since the Wars of Rage, and the Wyrms gleefully takes part.

The Kerasi are young even for a mockery breed; intended to be shock-troops in Africa where War Wolves would draw unwanted attention. NDL experimented on both white and black rhinoceroses, using techniques learned from other breeds to create the Kerasi.

Pentex considers the Kerasi to be a success second only to the Yeren. NDL is keen to improve upon the initial Kerasi by improving the mental capabilities of the breed and adding a workable Homid form. If they succeed, some factions in Pentex would to elevate the Kerasi above the Yeren, making them NDL's main focus. This displeases the corporate-climbing wereapes, who will interfere with further development of the breed.

The Kerasi are mystically weak compared with other mockery breeds, but they can disguise their origins as Wyrms-creations better than most Pentex assets. They also breed true — both with other kerasi and with natural rhinoceroses. The Kerasi are fertile with both the white and black rhinoceroses, linking the two distinct species in a decidedly unnatural way. Further, Kerasi mating with rhinoceroses will result in pregnancy more often than natural rhino pairings, and the offspring are almost always Kerasi.

The Kerasi compound misery in Africa by slaughtering human communities where they can, and creating discord for both sides of the Ahadi-Black Tooth war. Their herds travel at Pentex's behest, and ravage at the company's command. The Kerasi also breed and experience an independence they never had in the laboratories, and start to wonder why they take orders from Pentex. Their thoughts turn slowly, but each new day may be the one when the Kerasi rebel from their corporate masters and choose their own destiny.

Traits: The Kerasi genes favor physical prowess and tend towards high Strength and Stamina. Despite their reputation for being simple-minded, many Kerasi blend low Wits with high Intelligence, retaining more information than anyone suspects. Kerasi usually have high Athletics, Brawl, and Intimidation.

Breeds: Kerasi have two Breeds, faru (rhinoceros) and metis. Faru Kerasi begin with Rage 3, Gnosis 2, Willpower 5; metis Kerasi begin with Rage 5, Gnosis 2, Willpower 3. Metis Kerasi are fertile but have greater success mating with other Kerasi than with natural rhinoceroses.

Forms: Kerasi have three forms: Bandia (Glabro), Kiforu (Crinos), and Faru (rhino).

Bandia has Strength +3, Stamina +2, Manipulation -2, Appearance -2. Banda's coarse, leathery skin counts as armor and gives +1 soak die.

Kiforu trait modifiers are Strength +5, Dexterity -1, Stamina +5, Manipulation -4, Appearance 0. Its armored hide gives +3 soak. The Kiforu form may make claw attacks as per Crinos Garou but cannot bite. It can make a gore attack with its horn (difficulty 6) for Strength +2 aggravated damage.

Faru form modifiers are Strength +4, Stamina +4, Appearance 0. Faru can gore with their horn (difficulty 6) for Strength +2 lethal damage — this increases to Strength +4 lethal if the character charges at the target before attacking.

Powers: Kerasi heal at the same rate as Garou, have no vulnerability to silver or any other substance and are immune to the Delirium. Kerasi invoke Delirium in Bandia and Kiforu forms. Kerasi cannot access the spirit world or learn Gifts. As well as the inherent power of their forms, they may use the fomori powers Sense Gaia, Sense the Unnatural and Triatic Sense (Wyld).

Image: Kerasi in Bandia form are thick-skinned, barely human slabs of muscle, with bulky, oversized heads, tiny eyes, and a large, bumpy nose with a distinctive proto-horn protruding from it. Their thick, rough skin has an off-colored grey tint that doesn't hide the massive muscles moving underneath. Bandia can only be mistaken for human in the dimmest light.

Kiforu form is an armored bipedal monster with a giant rhinoceros head, two massive snout-horns and clawed four-fingered hands. It stands between 12 and 14 feet in height and weighs between one and two tons. Solid grey armored plates cover its body and its head is that of a rhinoceros. Its massive primary horn is the deep crimson color of old blood.

Kerasi in Faru form appear as larger, healthier specimens of their parent breed. Metis Kerasi take the appearance of either of their parents, and their primary horn has a red tint. This coloring is subtle, but does give canny observers a 'tell' to distinguish Kerasi from natural rhinos.

Background: Pentex uses the Kerasi to sow misery and confusion in Africa. The Kerasi leave devastation in their wake, all without any trace of the Wyrms' involvement. Human-dominated First Teams go in after each slaughter planting evidence implicating either Ahadi or Black Tooth's supporters, to increase the war's hostility and bloodshed. Pentex also facilitated contact with Black Tooth's senior lieutenants and introduced them to the Kerasi. The wererhinos turned the tide of several hard-

KERASI AND BLACK TOOTH

Kerasi are active causing confusion and havoc while Black Tooth's war rages. They have encountered various members of his army — even some of the Endless Storm — but they weren't introduced to Black Tooth before the Ahadi killed him (see **W20: Changing Breeds** for more information on Black Tooth's fall).

Black Tooth's followers are desperate in the wake of his death and forge alliances with the Kerasi to continue the fight. The Ahadi may have won the war, but the insurgency will linger for many years if Pentex can help it.

Storytellers may choose to bring Black Tooth and the Kerasi together earlier. The Kerasi will be formidable allies for Black Tooth, and may repel the Ahadi's strike that will kill the Simba. An Africa that experiences this outcome will be a much darker place indeed.

fought battles with the Ahadi, with the lieutenants singing the Kerasi's praises with the plan of introducing them to Black Tooth. Even though Black Tooth is gone, his followers still fight and may win the war with Pentex's help.

The Kerasi's ability to suppress its Wyrms' taint gives it the potential to be the most successful mockery breed for interacting with Gaia's servants and infiltrating their groups, but the lack of Homid form and generally low intelligence renders this particularly challenging. NDL scientists are under considerable pressure to improve these deficiencies, but so far every successful increase in mental ability has resulted in the new Kerasi reeking of Wyrms' taint, and no amount of tinkering has produced a human-like form that doesn't appear monstrous.

One of Pentex's 'animal conservation' subsidiaries has seeded African rhinoceros populations with dozens of Kerasi as part of its public environmental program. The early success of this program gives the appearance of replenished black and white rhinoceros populations, but in reality the Kerasi population thrives, while rhinoceros species are closer than ever to extinction.

Storytelling Notes: Kerasi are short-tempered, brutish and impatient. Garou are unlikely to encounter them outside Africa and any first encounter is likely to be confusing for Gaian shapeshifters as these strange new shapeshifters suppress their Wyrms' stink. The Kerasi will try to convince other shapeshifters of their allegiance to



Gaia, but Kerasi are not notably cunning or persuasive. If persuasion fails, the wererhinos will attack to prevent their secret being exposed.

Yeren

All top-level Pentex projections are clear: the Garou are fighting a losing battle, in every sense. In particular, the battle for Earth's rainforests, reefs, and other "pure" ecosystems is a foregone conclusion: they're going to vanish. That the majority of the Garou Nation has chosen these sacred places as the grounds to make their final stand suits Pentex fine. They think their victory in the Amazon and in other hotspots is a certain victory. The Board of Directors know the final battles in the Wyrms' march of triumph will take place in the cities, in the skyscrapers, in the black and heaving heart of the urban jungle that will be all that remains in the end. They suspect the Bone Gnawers and Glass Walkers will be the last tribes standing in any strength (what else is to be expected of the followers of Rat and Cockroach?), and that the ragged remnants of the other tribes will pour into the cities in a desperate attempt to continue their doomed, futile crusade.

With the aid of Project Lycaon, Pentex will be ready for them.

The Yeren are the most advanced and successful result of NDL's research on behalf of the Wyrms, or so

the project's Directors claim. Yeren are shapeshifters who take on the form of apes, designed to thrive in the modern city, and to hold an edge over the savage and primitive Garou. The Yeren's instinctive domain is the halls of power. They're naturally attracted to money and authority. Creatures of appetite and greed, the majority have nestled themselves into the upper-middle management of corporations, banks, and law firms, where they remain in sporadic contact with Pentex. A few Yeren have even begun climbing the corporate ranks of Pentex-owned companies, and most of those few have their eyes on a seat on the Board of Directors. They're one of the major influences pushing Toads (see p. 137) out of their traditional niches, and they're territorial to boot. Yeren bristle when they become aware of other supernaturals dipping their talons into a wereape's self-proclaimed domain. This makes them natural rivals of the Glass Walkers, and they take a particular delight in using their mastery of political and financial influence to demolish, or re-zone Bone Gnawer septs. Of course, the wereapes' rapacious greed and territorial instincts also bring them into conflict with vampires, urban Black Spiral hives, and other Wyrmspawn.

In the end, the Yeren want it all: all the money, all the power, all the respect; and they'll happily backstab, undermine, and eat anyone who gets in their way. They

may be the newest players on the battlefield of the Apocalypse, but they've already gone all-in. Let the Garou satisfy themselves with glorious, Pyrrhic final charges, and the Anurana with subsistence survival in toxic swamps, closers close, and winners win.

Traits: Yeren traits vary as much as those of the Garou or any other Changing Breed, but there are some generalizations. They tend toward high Manipulation and decent Intelligence or Wits, with physical traits often tertiary. Politics, Leadership and Subterfuge are often high, and many Yeren begin to cultivate Athletics after their First Change.

Breeds: Yeren have only one Breed, homid. They cannot produce metis, and are entirely incapable of reproduction with other primates. All Yeren begin with Rage 3, Gnosis 1, and Willpower 4.

Forms: Yeren have only two natural forms: Homid and Crinos.

In Crinos form, Yeren have Strength +3, Dexterity +2, Stamina +2, Appearance -3, and Athletics +2. The character gains a bite and claw attack like Garou, but these inflict lethal rather than aggravated damage. Witnessing a Yeren in Crinos form induces the Delirium in humans.

Powers: Yeren can step sideways in the same fashion as Garou, but must use fabricated reflective surfaces such as mirrors or chromed installations. The surface of a still pond is of no use to a wereape. They regenerate damage in the same fashion as Garou, suffer no vulnerability to silver or any other substance, and are immune to the Delirium.

Unlike the other "Mockery Breeds" developed by Project Lycaon, the Wyrms' spirit minions have provisionally accepted the Yeren into the arm of the Pact that grants Black Spiral Dancers their Gifts. Specifically, they've been sponsored by Relshab, the Faceless Eater (see p. 126), and gain their Gifts from corrupt spirits of man, the city, consumption, and greed. As a result, Yeren may take Gifts from the homid list, and are developing a number of their own Yeren Gifts (see below). Yeren gain renown for acquiring power, status symbols, and influence, but do so slowly, for even their handful of spirit-sponsors remain wary of these unnatural creatures. No Yeren has currently advanced beyond Rank Three.

Image: In Homid form, a Yeren looks much like anyone else trying to climb her way up the professional ladder: well-groomed, young, hungry. Those spending any degree of time around them discover they have a certain manic intensity that speaks to either immense personal drive or mild psychosis.

A Yeren's Crinos form is a hybrid of man and primate, the particular ape or monkey whose features crop up in the Crinos form seems to depend on the personality of the Yeren in question. Pentex has recorded monstrous

blends of human and orangutan, mandrill, mountain gorilla, and chimpanzee, as well as a number of wereapes of indeterminate species. Their battle form gains over a foot of height and an enormous amount of muscle mass, as well as long, hard nails.

Background: The Yeren have spread far and wide throughout corporate America, and have finally begun to branch out to other countries in recent years. They "reproduce" through something resembling the Corax Rite of the Spirit Egg, save that Yeren are incapable of producing Kinfolk. Instead, they pass on the "shadow of the ape" to potential wereapes. Desirable recruits have certain characteristics, such as overwhelming greed and appetite. The Yeren conduct the rite through a four-day careening debauch, reeling from party to party, and bar to bar. The Yeren and their prospective offspring use and abuse anyone and everything they come across, lurching in and out of blackouts, and as the rite progresses, stumbling in and out of the Umbra, as well, where the new "pledge" steadily fuses his flesh and the nature of his spirit together. The rite culminates in the First Change and a bloody rampage. Often, the sponsoring Yeren has arranged to have Pentex clean up. Anyone with important goals and ambitions nobler than simple greed cannot become Yeren, and probably dies from the conspicuous consumption or becomes a meal for a frustrated Yeren during the rite.

Storytelling Notes: The Yeren are pointless, open-ended greed writ large. They embody everything short-sighted, petty, and rotten that the Garou condemn in human nature when they refer to people as "apes." Their territoriality keeps Yeren from working in close groups very often (though they network extensively), and this is a blessing for urban Garou; on the other hand, the Yeren are very new, and few Garou are even aware of them as a threat, meaning they often have no idea they're being targeted by a wereape until the hammer drops.

The Yeren largely support Pentex because Pentex supports them, but they're not satisfied as pawns and cats-paws. There's no such thing as a stable relationship of master and servant where Yeren are concerned. Their ambition is without limit, and when they see power they don't have, they want it for themselves. Pentex may not fully appreciate what it has unleashed upon itself in the form of the Yeren, who appear in the company's middle management in greater numbers with every passing year.

Yeren Gifts

The following Gifts from this book and W20 are appropriate for the Yeren Gift list:

Level One: Balance, Bane Protector, Bestowing the Predator's Shadow, Eye of the Hunter, Falling Touch, Glass Canyon Predator (as Ways of the Urban Wolf), Gorilla's Embrace (as Falcon's Grasp), Monkey Tail (as

the Level Three Gift), Open Seal, Resist Toxin, Trash is Treasure, Sense Wyrms, Venom Claws

Level Two: Between the Cracks, Blissful Ignorance, Distractions, Glib Tongue, Monkey Leap (as the Level One Gift: Hare's Leap), Odious Aroma, Nimblefeet (as the Level Three Gift: Catfeet), Taking the Forgotten, Wyrms Hide

Level Three: Beautiful Lie, Bloody Feast, Call the Rust, Feast of Essence, Flame Dance (as the Level Two Gift), Gorge (as the Level Four Gift), Intrusion, Spider's Song (as the Level Two Gift), Spirit of the Fray (as the Level Two Gift)

In addition, the Yeren have started to develop some Gifts unique to themselves.

- **Middleman (Level One)** — The Yeren can push on far past the point of exhaustion, taking strength from the activity around him.

System: The player spends a point of Rage or Gnosis. For the remainder of the scene, the Yeren regains a point of the same trait for every two points spent within the wereape's hearing range. Middleman only keeps the Yeren fighting on dwindling resources and cannot restore his pool above three points. The character chooses whether to focus on Rage or Gnosis when activating the Gift; both aspects may not be used in the same scene.

- **Shit Rolls Downhill (Level One)** — The Yeren transfers all blame and negative social consequences for an activity to a chosen victim. The Yeren is praised for success, but the victim will be disciplined for any failure. Any corporate investigation, police enquiry or Garou pack that tries to find the person responsible for the project will discover the victim.

System: The player spends one Gnosis and touches the victim. All non-supernatural enquiries to discover the Yeren's involvement with an activity will instead find solid evidence of the victim's responsibility — even if parts of a project succeed the negatives will all point to the victim and obscure the Yeren's involvement. Anyone using supernatural powers to penetrate this shield add the Yeren's Gnosis to the difficulty.

- **Fistful of Filth (Level Two)** — The Yeren flings steaming gobs of corrosive filth at its enemies. This filth smells like excrement but is produced by the Gift — The Yeren need not supply his own ammunition.

System: The filth is a thrown weapon with traits equivalent to a knife (W20 p. 302). Its corrosive nature continues to inflict 2 levels of lethal damage for a number of turns equal to the Yeren's Rage. The waste burns through most natural substances including wood and metal; some Yeren have come up with creative uses for this Gift as a result.

- **Dressing Down (Level Three)** — The Yeren berates a subordinate for real or imagined failures and steals her self-worth to boost the ape's confidence.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Leadership (difficulty 6). Each success transfers one Willpower point from the victim to the Yeren. The Yeren can't take more Willpower than the victim has and he can't be targeted more than once per day. This power can only be used on the wereape's inferiors.

- **Artist's Lament (Level Three)** — All creators instil their work with some part of themselves. The Yeren abuses this link by destroying the creation to harm its maker. This Gift applies to anything invested with time and energy by its creator, such as speeches, software, or corporate presentations.

System: The Yeren destroys the creation and the player rolls Gnosis (difficulty equal to the victim's Willpower). Each success removes a point of an Attribute or Willpower from the victim for the remainder of the scene (though it can't reduce the trait to zero). These points return at the end of the scene. The Yeren must know the victim for this Gift to work. The Gift works best on unique items — add 1 to the difficulty for mass-produced or widely-published works.

Stranger Things

The horrors spawned from the maddened dreams and loins of the Wyrms know no limits. The enemy's ranks include wicked spirits, corrupted shapeshifters, possessed and corrupted humans and animals, and even outright monsters.

Then there are the other things, the things that just don't fit into the big picture. The things the Garou just don't have a frame of reference to explain. The things that don't seem to have any origins, and yet *are*. The things that don't seem to be part of the war, but whose existence the Garou simply cannot tolerate. The other.

Inquisitors

No one knows where the Inquisitors come from or what they're after. That they have an agenda is clear; they're no-nonsense creatures, clearly acting with purpose. Inquisitors appear in search of particular bits of information, and are willing to do whatever it takes to acquire it. Nor are they unreasonable beings, or so they insist. They give subjects the opportunity to talk freely, and those victims who answer an Inquisitor's questions openly and honestly are left puzzled but otherwise unmolested.

Those who try to impede the Inquisitors die painfully.

The Inquisitors reek of the Wyrms, but seem as interested in gathering information on the Corrupter as they are in finding patterns within the madness of the Wyld or plotting out the works of the Weaver. Those few who have compared notes on the Inquisitors suspect they are taking some sort of survey of the strength and deployment of the various forces involved in the Apocalypse, but for what reason? If they are agents of some higher power, then why does that being want the information the Inquisitors gather?

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 6

Abilities: All save Primal-Urge and Rituals at 4.

Rage: 5; **Gnosis:** 5; **Willpower:** 10

Powers: Armor (as the spirit Charm; cost: 1 Gnosis), Control Electrical Systems (as the spirit Charm; cost: 1 Gnosis), Cyber-Senses (as the Glass Walker Gift), Mind Probe*

* **Mind Probe:** Inquisitors may extend a series of thin metallic filaments from their fingertips. They use these probes to pierce the skull of a restrained victim and literally to drain away his knowledge. The Inquisitor spends 1 Gnosis and rolls Wits + Enigmas against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Each success removes one year of memories the Inquisitor suspects may contain useful information. This process also lowers the victim's Intelligence by one dot. The Inquisitor may repeat this process until the results satisfy him, or until he runs out of Gnosis.

For humans, all damage done by Mind Probe is permanent; the brain of a person fully drained appears smooth and unwrinkled — a clearly unnatural state. Garou are able to regenerate most of the damage of this Charm, restoring Intelligence and memories at a rate of one dot and one year's worth of memories per day of rest and recovery. Even for the Garou, a few minor details are unrecoverable: a childhood friend's phone number, what the character got for her tenth birthday, that sort of thing.

Image: Inquisitors are flat, matte black humanoid shapes. They have no distinguishing features. They have no faces at all, only vague suggestions of where facial features might be. They come in two varieties — roughly male and almost female — but all have identical cold, inflectionless voices. They tend towards nondescript, conservative clothing. They drive black rental cars when they use any sort of transportation at all.

Background: The Inquisitors are an enigma. Everything about their behavior suggests they are creatures of the Weaver, but they positively reek of Wyrms-taint. Pentex has become especially interested in them after the Inquisitors reduced a number of their agents in Dallas, Boston, and London to drooling husks. Whatever their

agenda might be, they've yet to reveal it to anyone, and they don't answer questions.

Storytelling Notes: The Inquisitors are meant as an unknown threat, and an opportunity for Storytellers to come up with a dire conspiracy of their own choosing.

Chulorviah

The abyssal depths of the sea hold mysteries and terror beyond the reckoning of the Garou and beyond the counting of the Rokea. Of all the horrors given up from the sea, the Chulorviah are perhaps the most enigmatic.

Other names for them are Kraken-Born or the abyssal strain; Chulorviah are neither species, nor spirit, nor even disease, though they share the traits of all three. Certainly, they are an infection, but the few Glass Walkers who have autopsied Chulorvian corpses could isolate no biological cause for their condition. Certainly, they are creatures, they live in flesh and expand their numbers by physical reproduction. And certainly, there is a spiritual element to what they are; their elders wield terrible and potent magic, and they know of the Triat, though they seem not to concern themselves with it.

Viewed as an infection, the Chulorviah are peculiar in the extreme. They afflict themselves upon humans, and cephalopods, and really nothing else: there are no whale, shark, or crab Chulorviah. Viewed with spiritual senses, a murky, tattered halo surrounds a Chulorviah, mottled like rotting flesh.

The Chulorviah are clearly intelligent, and carrying out some great and organized plan, but what that might be remains a mystery. They exhibit no particular interest in the doings of the Garou, Pentex, or other elements of the war for Gaia; instead, the Chulorviah quietly infiltrate small seaside communities, corporate offices, and maritime trade routes. In recent years, they have taken a great interest in offshore drilling, working to promote and expand the practice; those few that have fought the Chulorviah conjecture that Kraken's children seek the unearthing of something lost beneath the bottom of the sea — lost — or deliberately sealed away.

The Chulorviah come in two basic varieties: infected humans and infected cephalopods. Chulorvian cephalopods, known as Petryani, perpetuate the abyssal strain through direct physical injection—piercing flesh with their unnaturally powerful tentacles or beaks. The vector for human infection remains unknown, but appears to be at least somewhat non-physical; some evidence shows it being sexually transmitted, while others have it passed from one person to another by prolonged conversation, or through a long enough period of cohabitation with a Chulorviah.

Regardless of original species, anyone infected simply becomes Chulorviah afterward. Although the



Kraken-Born retain full knowledge of their lives prior to infection, they no longer possess any emotional attachment to those thoughts or memories; their loyalty to the strain is absolute.

Markings of the Abyss

All Chulorviah share a few traits in common. They are able to communicate silently with one another regardless of any language barriers through a form of psychic communion similar to the Galliard Gift: Mindspeak. All Chulorviah are fully amphibious, able to survive for unlimited periods above or below the waves, and at any depth. Chulorviah can sense other carriers of the abyssal strain; whenever a Chulorviah sleeps, it awakens with a certain awareness of exactly how many other Chulorviah can be found within 50 miles of its location, where those Kraken-Born are, and what identities they wear, if any.

Finally, all Chulorviah register *very* powerfully to the Gift: Sense Wurm. The difficulty to detect a Chulorviah at close range is only 5. The particular sensation they produce when analyzed with the Gift is almost overpowering, like being engulfed in a tide of rot. It's the kind of aura of corruption one might expect from a Wurmish Incarna, not a monster little stronger than a fomor. Perhaps each Chulorviah is but a tentacle extruded from some terrible, central mind.

The Enfolded

The lowest among the abyssal strain, the Enfolded are infected humans. They're generally treated as disposable in the plans of the Kraken-Born, used as manual labor or shock troops in Chulorvian plans. Some have theorized that these wretches represent the future of humanity, should the great work of the Chulorviah come to fruition.

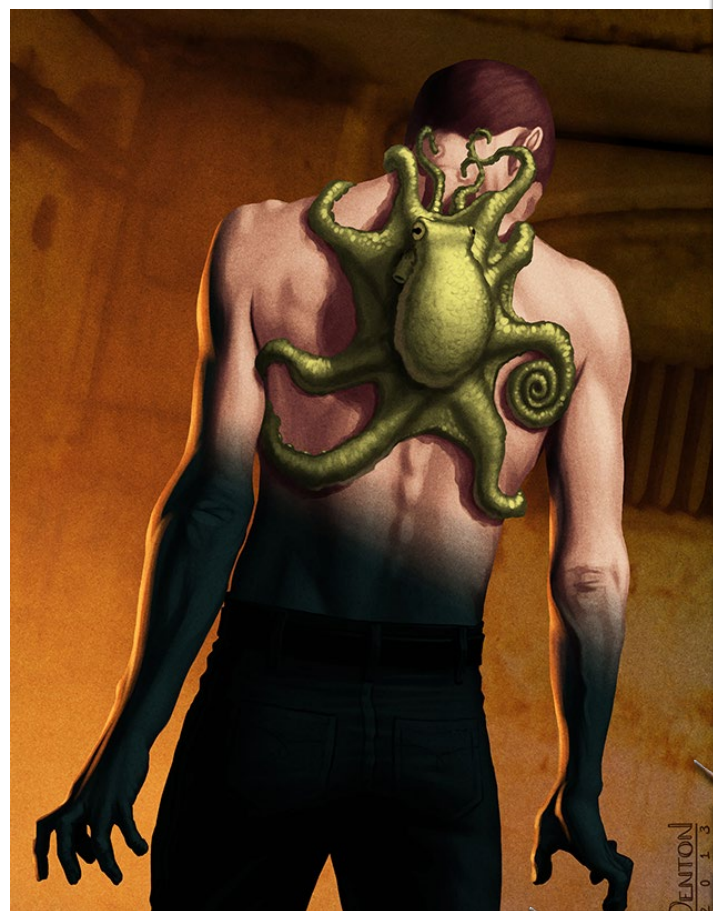
Image: People infected with the abyssal strain continue to look completely human, with only a slight mottling of the skin to show anything is wrong... at first. Over time, more changes creep in. Teeth fuse into a chitinous beak; suckers appear at random, odd points on the body; a small cluster of anemone-like tendrils replaces the Enfolded's genitalia. Once the Enfolded can no longer pass for human, he returns to the depths to perform unknown services for his cephalopod superiors.

Traits: Enfolded retain the same traits they had prior to infection.

Powers: Basic Chulorviah powers, Immunity to the Delirium, Numbing

Petryanos

Petryani are infected cephalopods who have developed a cold, malign sentience and a talent for mind control. They oversee the implementation of the Chulorvian agenda, moving from useful host to useful host and directing the more numerous Enfolded under their command. While Petryani normally focus on human



hosts, they're not exclusively limited to them; in times of war, a Petryanos may bore into the cartilaginous skull of a shark, or enslave the mind and body of a killer whale to act as a living weapon.

It is worth noting that while Petryani can infect the humans they puppeteer, transforming them into Enfolded, the Petryani prefer to dispose of them once their usefulness is ended. Generally, the Petryanos forces the host to swim far out to sea, deep beneath the waves, and then disentangles itself and swims away, leaving the wounded host to drown. Nobody's certain why the Petryani are selective in the spreading of the abyssal strain. Perhaps they fear exposure; perhaps initiating infection takes some great toll on them; perhaps they simply consider humans unworthy of elevation to the ranks of the Kraken-Born, and make no more Enfolded workers than they need.

Image: Petryani take the form of small cephalopods, most commonly nautili, octopi, and cuttlefish. They possess a few more tentacles than their mundane cousins do; these extras are long and slender, perfect for burrowing through a victim's skull, and coiling around his brainstem. Petryani are almost never larger than a human head, all told. They can change color at will, and use this talent to conceal themselves both on and off of host bodies.

Attributes: Strength 3-5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Manipulation 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4. Petryani use the host's Charisma and Appearance; without a host, they possess 0 in both traits.

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Enigmas 2, Occult 4, Stealth 5.

Petryani may also use the Abilities of its host.

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Powers: Basic Chulorviah powers, Brain-Burrow, Immunity to the Delirium.

To use Brain Burrow, the Petryanos must initiate a clinch and spend a Willpower point. This inflicts one level of lethal damage, as the Petryanos makes a hole in the base or back of the victim's skull. Afterward, the Petryanos exercises full control over its victim's body, while the victim's mind remains fully conscious and helpless. The victim can attempt to gain control of his body for a few moments by spending a point of Willpower and making a Willpower roll at difficulty 9; each success grants one turn of free action. Petryani often deny a recalcitrant victim sleep for days on end in order to deplete their Willpower reserves.

Petryanos possession can be ended through Gifts such as Exorcism, or by driving away or surgically removing the Chulorviah. Simply ripping a Petryanos loose is possible with a successful grapple attempt, but rarely a good

idea, as the Chulorviah generally comes away with big chunks of grey matter grasped in its tentacles.

Notes: Petryani generally fight as the host body; in a pinch, they can grapple and bite for +1 lethal damage.

Chulorviah Elder

The changes that drive the Enfolded into the waves do not cease once they abandon the world of light and air. Few survive long in the courts of the abyss, but those that do continue to become stranger and stronger—they grow, and grow, until after hundreds or thousands of years, they become Chulorvian elders. These vast horrors orchestrate the great plans of the Chulorviah, and send the Petryani here and there to carry out the will of the abyssal strain. If the Kraken-Born find it ironic that only the lowliest among them may grow to become the rulers of their kind, they keep their thoughts to themselves.

The Chulorvian elders are timeless and ageless. They claim to inherit the memory of the abyssal strain, and speak of events that happened long before their birth as though they had witnessed them personally. The memories of the Chulorvian elders stretch back and back, ever into deeper darkness, through geological ages. They remember a time before humanity. They remember the time before land or light, when all was simply icy darkness. At the great extremes of their recollection, they do not know if they recall the past or the future; perhaps it is both, and this is the goal toward which the abyssal strain strives, attempting to meet itself across the bridge of time.

Few not of the abyssal strain ever meet a Chulorvian elder and live. Most of those that do are powerful Rokea, who find themselves the target of Chulorvian aggressions ever afterward.

Image: Each elder is an individual nightmare of writhing, cephalopod horror, a cauldron of flesh twisted without rhyme or reason. Chitinous beaks snap, great eyes stare, tentacles writhe and coil and rubbery skin mottles, all these elements placed without rhyme or reason. Almost all retain a few vestigial indicators of the people they once were: a few fingers wagging at the end of a tentacle, or a woman's lovely green eyes staring out of a nest of rustling mantles. The speech of the Chulorvian elders tolls hollowly in the minds of those they address.

Attributes: Strength 9+, Dexterity 5+, Stamina 9+, Charisma 3, Manipulation 6, Appearance 0, Perception 5+, Intelligence 6+, Wits 4

Abilities: Elder abilities vary wildly. They retain any skills from life, and most are accomplished fighters with Brawl ratings at 4 or 5. All have Occult 6+.

Willpower: 8+

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5, -5, Incapacitated

CORRUPTION AND FREE WILL

The Wyrms cannot force any living creature to swear loyalty to it. Even Black Spiral Dancers, Buzzards, Skull Pigs, and other Changing Breeds who belong to the Wyrms ultimately do so by choice. Of course, this choice may not be entirely free, and such choices can almost never be undone. Some creatures grow up with the Wyrms whispering to them in the back of their minds, surrounded by mentors or parents who use some combination of threats, brutality, and temptation to encourage them to embrace corruption. Ultimately, however, each individual must make his or her choice.

For many, the choice is an exceptionally final one. Garou who dance the Black Spiral, Skull Pigs who devour Wym-tainted bones, and Rokea who willingly accept balefire into their bodies and minds become not merely servants of the Wyrms, but living avatars of corruption. No force short of death can undo such a drastic and final choice. Even thinking of going against the Wyrms' desires requires a great effort. Rejecting the Wyrms would kill them. Other members of the Changing Breeds who fall to the Wyrms retain slightly more of their free will, but their choice is still brutally final.

The few members of tainted groups like the Scabs or Black Spiral Dancers who reject the Wyrms usually do not survive long. Their teachers and fellows view refusing to accept the Wyrms as a betrayal punishable by death. Most take the easy and final escape of suicide, but a very few flee from their own kind. These creatures live lonely lives, battling with insanity and fearing discovery by either the Changing Breeds or agents of the Wyrms. A handful find ways to spy upon the Wyrms' other minions and pass messages to members of the Changing Breeds, but other shapeshifters will never embrace or even trust them. These rebels have not fallen to the Wyrms, but their upbringing still taints their bodies and minds sufficiently that none of the Gaian Fera will ever accept them. Most eventually either kill themselves, or give into the corruption in their blood.

Powers: Basic Chulorviah powers, Immunity to the Delirium.

All Chulorvian elders are capable of Mindspeak-style communication with other Kraken-Born from up to 500 miles away. Finally, each elder possesses a unique array of Gifts chosen by the Storyteller, generally between five and 15.

The Tainted

Becoming an agent of the Wyrms is sometimes the result of a swift and hideous choice, but more often, the path to corruption is far slower and more complex. The Wyrms can warp the minds and bodies of anything that it comes into contact with. Contact with some of the most potent of the Wyrms' toxins will taint any who manage to survive. Others spend too long in a Wym Caern, a Hellhole, or in Malfeas itself and become physically or mentally tainted; coming too far under the influence of an Urge Wym is a sure-fire route to mental taint. A shapeshifter or occultist might attract the attention of a powerful Bane, or perhaps even one of the Maeljin Incarna, and find that it has formed a connection to her mind through which it can poison her thoughts. Some attract attention by fighting against Wymspawn, others because they are powerful or important individuals who demonstrate a vice or weakness that the Wyrms can exploit.

Physical Taints

The Wyrms corrupts everything it touches, including the bodies of its victims. These physical transformations and sickness can include everything from deformities like those common to metis Garou to wounds that refuse to heal and which even a werewolf's regeneration cannot repair. Such transformations cause victims pain and disgust at the fact that their body now contains visible and often hideous traces of the Wyrms. Someone afflicted with this sort of taint owes no allegiance to the Wyrms, and it cannot affect him in any way, except by the problems his affliction causes him. Minions of the Wyrms can sense these tainted individuals, and they show up as Wym-tainted to Garou using Sense Wym to investigate the sickness or deformity.

Afflicted with hairlessness, a withered limb, masses of writhing warts or something even more disturbing, the victims of these problems often search for cures and solutions. However removing deeply embedded physical traces of the Wyrms is exceptionally difficult. While certain spirits and rites have the power to cure completely Wym afflictions, finding such cures takes a great deal

of time and effort. The Wyrms can offer a cure, either sending a Bane or Black Spiral Dancer, or appearing in the victim's dreams. This cure might fade over time, or cure only part of a larger affliction. In either case, only continued service to the Wyrms can cure a physical deformity permanently, and even then, only as long as the heads of the Hydra find benefit in doing so.

Mental Taints

Sometimes exposure to especially strong manifestations of the Wyrms provides a conduit into the mind of an individual, allowing one of the Urge Wyrms to corrupt her thoughts and dreams. She can also attract an Urge Wyrms' attention by giving in to excesses of a particular emotion, receiving taint simply because she gives in to her vices one time too often.

Urge Wyrms cannot forcibly corrupt someone, but they are insidious and persistent. The victim hears an aspect of the Wyrms whispering advice and commentary in the back of her mind. In addition to being an uncomfortable and confusing experience, Urge Wyrms seek out individuals who have personalities they can most easily influence. Someone inclined to fear would most likely be contacted by Foebok, just as a greedy individual would hear Vorus in his head.

The Path of Corruption

In return for a cure or because of ceaseless whispering by an Urge Wyrms, sometimes one of the Changing Breeds signs on the metaphorical dotted line and swears allegiance to the Wyrms. That sort of clean and final choice is relatively rare. In cases like the Balefire Sharks, where the choice is to serve the Wyrms or die, a few of the Changing Breeds value life more than loyalty and honor, but most are unwilling to so obviously betray everything they believe in. The Wyrms can however be both subtle and patient. In return for curing an affliction, the Wyrms may ask an individual to perform some small service. A bane may ask someone to arrange to have a captured Black Spiral Dancer escape before she can be questioned and killed, or make a call to warn a Pentex employee of a planned raid on one of the company's facilities. Often, this task is both easy and essentially free of risk. If she performs the task, she had aided the Wyrms, but just as importantly, she has started on the path of corruption.

When corrupting someone who suffers from a physical taint, an agent of the Wyrms approaches the target and offers a cure, for a price. If the individual performs the first task, in short order there's a second, usually just as risk free but perhaps a bit more difficult and involved. In return, the dream voice, Bane, or Black Spiral Dancer cures some of the less obvious but lingering symptoms of the character's affliction. Each task comes with a promised

MENTAL TAINT EFFECTS

Mental corruption has two effects. First, the victim must make a Wits + Primal Urge roll with a difficulty of at least 6 in situations where giving into the Urge Wyrms' emotion would make sense. A character who fails this roll must give in to the emotion for the rest of the scene. In order to free herself of the compulsion for a single turn, she must spend a point of Willpower.

The tainted individual also regularly hears whispers from the Urge Wyrms, attempting to persuade her to surrender to her base urges and embrace corruption. Vorus might whisper that the character should take what she desires and that the world owes it to her because of all she has done. Unless she succeeds in a Wits + Enigmas roll (difficulty 8), the character doesn't recognize that these thoughts come from an outside source. If the character is aware of the existence of Urge Wyrms, or has an ally who understands what might cause her symptoms, the difficulty of this roll decreases to 6.

reward, but the tasks become more difficult and dangerous as time goes on. If the victim's allies ever discover his betrayal, the Wyrms' agents will offer to help the victim escape without asking anything in return — this time. After a while, the tasks requested bring nothing in return beyond not informing the character's pack or other allies of what he has done. Somewhere in the midst of performing these "small favors," the individual performing them belongs to the Wyrms, but the exact point where this happens may not be obvious except in retrospect, which is exactly the way agents of the Wyrms prefer it.

The path of mental corruption is far simpler. The Urge Wyrms continues to whisper warnings and suggestions that to at least some degree align with the character's unconscious desires, slowly leading him to betraying his principles and falling to the Wyrms. If he covets another Garou's klaive, Vorus might suggest that he steal it, whispering that the klaive's owner doesn't deserve it and reasons why he should hate the klaive's owner. Sykora might suggest that a character's romantic rival is plotting to kill her or that her friends are about to betray her and that the character must strike first if she wishes survive. If the character follows through on these urgings, she eventually becomes an agent of the Wyrms.

Avoiding Corruption

Physical and mental taints can never force anyone to swear allegiance to the Wyrms. Although the process can be difficult and potentially humiliating, almost everyone who is tainted by the Wyrms can eventually throw off this taint. Accomplishing this feat typically involves two steps. The first step is admitting to someone who understands and can help that the character has become corrupted and requires aid. For obvious physical changes, this process is simple, but most Garou feel great shame at becoming corrupted, as well as no small amount of fear that they might soon fall to the Wyrms. As a result, many attempt to conceal any physical transformations that can be hidden. The Changing Breeds regard mental taint even less well, looking askance at anyone who admits that they hear the Wyrms' whispered threats and promises, believing them to be already fallen or at best unworthy of any trust or responsibility. Worse, most shapeshifters believe that only individuals who were previously weak or corrupt are tainted by the Wyrms.

Admitting what is wrong and seeking aid can undo both physical and mental corruption, but it is only the first step. The next step is finding a cure, a process that usually requires significant effort. The path to accomplishing any such cure is far from easy. In the early days of being tainted, a simple Rite of Cleansing might suffice to wash the Wyrms' stench away. Beyond that point, a wise and experienced Theurge might know some method of purifying the victim, but this purification often requires a journey deep into the Umbra. She might have to find a fount of pure Wyld energies to cleanse her mind and body, or bargain with a powerful spirit in return for its help curing her of the Wyrms' mark.

Regardless of the cure, the Wyrms will not let go without a fight. Agents of the Wyrms may try to discredit anyone the victim goes to for help, or simply attempt to kill them and frame the tainted one for the murder. Others use far subtler forms of trickery, sending Banes

disguised as friendly spirits, or offering a Rite of Cleansing that intensifies the victim's taint unless she does something for the ritemaster.

Redemption for the Fallen

Someone who falls to the Wyrms suffers irrevocable changes. Her will is no longer fully her own and her mind — and in some cases her body — is now sustained by the Wyrms' corrupt energies. She has no way back; no one who makes this choice can ever unmake it and return to being a whole person. Any of the fallen who struggle against their fate: face either failure or death as their only options.

Some experiences, like walking the Black Spiral Labyrinth or feeding on Wyrms-tainted flesh make any who survive them completely unable to even consider betraying or working against the Wyrms. Individuals who fall to the Wyrms through less extreme forms of corruption can work against their dark master, but only with great difficulty and greater cost.

When anyone who has fallen to the Wyrms betrays it, banes and other creatures associated with the Corrupter know of what has happened. Some fomori, and other Wyrmspawn like the Balefire Sharks, rely on the Wyrms' corrupt energies to survive. Were one to turn against the Wyrms it would soon suffer a painful death, as the power that sustains them suddenly cuts off.

Otherwise, the Wyrms' minions try to destroy the betrayer. Those who manage to escape or survive gradually become physically and mentally ill as the strain of working against the Wyrms wracks their minds and bodies. All the Wyrms' servants understand this price, although many only learned it after they swore allegiance to it. The few who bitterly regret their choice and are willing to help make amends often choose to betray the Wyrms in a way that ends in their death. Myths tell of a silver lake in the Umbra that could bring them redemption, but many die before they ever find it.





Steve Ellis



Appendix: Rotten Baubles

The Wyrms' taint comes in many forms. From the twisted fetishes of the Black Spiral Dancers to the products of Pentex subsidiaries lining supermarket shelves, it sometimes looks like the Wyrms' minions have the best toys. A not-insignificant portion of the equipment distributed to trusted Wyrmlings comes from the Duchies of Malfeas, engineered from the warped power of that realm.

Fetishes

Most often found in the hands of the Black Spiral Dancers, at the Storyteller's discretion another servant of the Wyrms might possess one. Whether he knows how to use it or not is another question altogether.

Brush of the Ancients

Level 1, Gnosis 8

A paintbrush made from wolf-fur and bound in silver, a Black Spiral Dancer can use the Brush of the Ancients to channel her ancestors to paint accurate scenes of the past, and of things yet to come. The messages hidden in the image take time to unravel. It takes half an hour's study, and an Intelligence + Enigmas roll (difficulty 7) to understand the painting's significance.

Stolen Eye

Level 1, Gnosis 2

One of the few Fetishes used by Buzzards, the Stolen Eye is nothing short of a human eyeball, plucked from a still-living person. When she dips it in salt water and lays it on a flat surface, the eye wriggles and flops around until it looks in the direction of the nearest Corax.

If their fragile texture doesn't destroy the eye first, most Stolen Eyes last for about a month before becoming too rotten to use, though it starts to stink horribly long before that. If the original owner dies while the Fetish is still usable, it immediately decays to green sludge.

Bane Lantern

Level 2, Gnosis 5

An old-fashioned steel lantern painted with bizarre and obscene glyphs, the Bane Lantern needs no fuel. The user simply commands it to ignite — in either Pictish, the garbled Garou-speak of the Black Spiral Dancers, or the secret tongue of the Wyrms — and it casts an unnatural purple light. The light illuminates all spirits it touches, making them quite visible even in the material world. Fomori and other possessed creatures look much the

same as normal, but their shadows reflect their spiritual passengers. While the lantern remains lit, spirits in the vicinity flock to the glow like moths to a flame.

Devilwhip

Level 2, Gnosis 6

Just as the Klaive is to the Garou, so the Devilwhip is to the Black Spiral Dancers. A wickedly barbed 15-foot lash, a Devilwhip begins its existence as the severed tentacle of a Bane, cured in the smoke of rank-smelling herbs so that it can exist permanently in the physical world. The handle, sewn over the severed end of the tentacle, must be re-made every month as the tentacle oozes sticky ichor that slowly dissolves almost all non-living substances. The Bane controlling the Devilwhip can animate it as though the Black Spiral Dancer was wielding it herself. In combat, a Devilwhip deals Strength +1 aggravated damage. The tip shrieks through the air like a wailing lunatic, laughing every time it draws blood. Cracked in front of an opponent's face, the Black Spiral Dancer can activate the whip to compel her foe to prostrate himself before her (requiring a Willpower roll, difficulty 6 to resist).

Wyrmflesh

Level 3, Gnosis 6

Few Black Spiral Dancers learn to make Wyrmflesh in modern nights — flaying a human over the course of a lunar month, carefully keeping him alive until the last moment, is bound to draw attention from law enforcement or Gaian Garou. The Dancer tattoos the skin with eye-warping glyphs, tans it, and then makes into a tunic. Wyrmflesh increases the wearer's Soak against all damage (including silver) by three dice. It shapeshifts along with the wearer, providing protection in every form. Should any damage get through the Wyrmflesh's protection, it lets out a deafening shriek and blood flows thick and red from even the smallest cut.

Baneklaive

Level 5, Gnosis 7

Comparable to the Grand Klaives of the Garou, the Baneklaive is a sword-length silver blade, engraved with twisted runes. Though not as well-made as other Grand Klaives (difficulty 7, Strength +3 aggravated damage), the faint tracteries of balefire mean the blade is not just silver but also a Wurm-emanation, for purposes of inflicting damage. When activated, add one die to the wielder's Melee pool. When fighting spirits, the Baneklaive can steal their power. Every two points of damage dealt to the spirit returns one point of Gnosis to the Black Spiral Dancer, though this power only works on one spirit per scene.

Equipment

Some of the following equipment is mundane in nature, available for anyone who can pay. Other items are somewhat rarer: developed in Pentex R&D facilities, or manufactured in the hideous workhouses of Malfeas itself. While Pentex First Teams will use much of this equipment, they're not alone in needing tools to do the Wurm's work.

Poison Rounds

Pentex manufactures silver hollow-point and Glaser bullets that go beyond the power of mere silver rounds. Mixed in with the silver is a core of fast-acting Wurm-tainted poison. In addition to dealing unsoakable aggravated damage (unless the werewolf is in his breed form), the poison deals one level of lethal damage per turn for three turns — and as it's intermingled with silver from the bullet, this damage also cannot be soaked.

Pus Armor

This disgusting form of protection is a fleshy vest that offers protection similar to Kevlar (Armor rating 3, Dexterity penalty 1). When an attacker pierces the outer layer, whether with a bullet, tooth, or talon, highly infectious pus sprays out of the puncture out to two yards away. Touching the pus with bare skin or fur deals two levels of aggravated damage; unless wiped off immediately it causes a permanent burn-like injury that only magical means can heal. Each day that the wound goes unhealed, it does another level of aggravated damage that can only be healed with the initial injury. Cutting out the wound deals as much damage as it has already caused over again, if left untreated the victim will die as the injury eats away at her.

Pus armor has seen multiple successful field deployments, but the risk of the wearer being caught by his own pus stream — especially if the vest is punctured by a werewolf's tooth or claw — means that their appeal remains limited.

Balefire Thrower

One of the strangest devices to come out of Malfeas' factory-prisons, the balefire thrower is a refinement of a design first seen fifteen years ago. Early models required a large backpack-mounted fuel tank covered in humming machinery, connected to a pistol-sized projector that wouldn't look out of place on the end of a garden hose. The comical appearance belied the weapon's devastating applications, but it lacked concealability. Newer designs appear much more lethal, aping the design of large, bulky assault rifles. They can still draw fuel from a backpack-mounted tank, or connect to a portable fuel reserve the



size of a large soda bottle. Unlike normal flamethrowers, balefire throwers don't have a pilot light, though the fuel tanks give off a sickly green glow.

The balefire thrower sprays semi-liquid balefire out to a range of 30 feet. Hitting a target requires a Dexterity + Firearms roll at difficulty 7. Success sets the unlucky bastard alight with balefire. Most hits set the victim half alight, dealing two levels of aggravated damage per turn. Large fuel tanks have enough concentrated balefire for six bursts, the smaller tanks only have enough for two.

While the initial kinks that caused old-model balefire throwers to sometimes explode at random have been removed from modern versions, the fuel tank still remains a weak point.

Three or more successes on a called shot to a small tank (W20, p. 295) engulfs the wielder in balefire without a chance to dodge. He's set entirely alight, and takes three levels of damage per turn.

Striking a large tank with an attack that does more than five levels of damage makes the fuel tank explode. This is Very Not Good. The explosion douses the wielder in balefire, the same as if the smaller tank had exploded. If the character who cracked the tank did so with a Brawl or Melee attack, they suffer the same fate. Everyone within 10 yards must take an action to dodge the blast (difficulty 8). Those within five yards of the blast have half their bodies set alight, while those further away survive with only part of their bodies burning with sickly green flames.

BALEFIRE

Balefire consumes the very essence of everyone it burns; even once extinguished it leaves horrific scars. Use the rules for fire (W20, p. 258) with the following changes:

- Balefire deals unsoakable aggravated damage. Only the dice provided by the Gift: Resist Toxin can attempt to soak the damage.
- Balefire wounds take double the normal time to heal.
- A character who relies on her Rage to stay active when hurt by balefire must select two Battle Scars instead of one.

Jonone Gas

A nuisance to humans, this gas is far more effective against Garou, especially lupus. Extracted from the common violet, Jonone completely shuts down the victim's sense of smell for about an hour. Mystic Gifts that relate to scent (such as Sense Wyrm) still provide some information, but those that rely directly on the Garou's olfactory senses (Heightened Senses, Scent of Sight) provide no benefit. Some Pentex First Teams

carry ionone gas grenades; the chemical dissipates into the air after five minutes.

Kiss of the Wyrms

Kiss of the Wyrms is a viscous yellowish liquid, usually delivered in conjunction with a dart pistol or rifle. It heightens the victim's feelings of paranoia and bloodlust, causing symptoms similar to frenzy in humans and Garou alike.

Werewolves hit by Kiss of the Wyrms need only three successes to enter frenzy, and five to enter Thrall of the Wyrms. A turn after being hit, players make a Rage roll to resist going into a berserk frenzy. Due to the spiritual nature of the toxin, it can also affect vampires, who must resist frenzy as normal. Humans who are under the influence of Kiss of the Wyrms enter a similar state, only able to attack the nearest living creature.

Resist Toxin renders a Garou immune to Kiss of the Wyrms, otherwise, the reduced frenzy threshold lasts until the victim receives a Rite of Cleansing (difficulty 5).

Fomorol

Malfeas' factories produce Fomorol from recycled fomori and pass it down to Pentex who hand it to their most trusted fomori shock troops. When injected, it temporarily boosts all the fomori's powers. Starting on the turn after injecting the drug, roll the fomori's Willpower, (difficulty 9). On a success, his powers are doubled until the end of the scene. On a failure, roll again next turn at difficulty 8. Keep rolling and reducing the difficulty of the roll until the power enhancement manifests or the roll fails at difficulty 3 (in which case the drug has no effect). Double the effects of each power — Armored Hide provides six extra soak dice, Berserkers gain an extra five Rage points, while those who can Cause Insanity double the number of successes rolled. Just one use of Fomorol causes horrific addiction, even if it had no effect. However, Pentex doesn't see that as a drawback to the drug.

Products

The goods and services offered by Pentex subsidiaries flood the shelves of toy stores, supermarkets, fast-food restaurants, and online videogame storefronts around the world. This section presents just a few ways that the average consumer can acquire Wyrms-taint.

Black Dog Game Factory

Space Accountant

Space Accountant is the world's first ever single-shard economic simulator. Thousands of people enter numbers into fully integrated spreadsheets using fictional

THE NATURE OF TAINT

Many of the products in this section contain a level of Wyrms-taint, even when a consumer doesn't get a beer containing a Bane, or cosmetics with a hidden twist. Each product listed gives an indication of how much an unwilling patsy must use the product before Gifts such as Sense Wyrms can detect it, and the difficulty of removing that Taint with a Rite of Cleansing. Some of the Wyrms' tools sink deep into their users' souls, so a Rite of Cleansing may have unintended side effects.

currency (IGD — the Inter-Galactic Dollar) to buy, sell, and trade large quantities of minerals with different large quantities of minerals. In space!

Players can also work together, forming corporations that serve the shipping and production needs of this engaging universe. These corporations are just like the real thing, complete with customizable employee handbooks, public relations nightmares, sexual harassment lawsuits, and a detailed and intricate tax filing simulator. Designed by several out-of-work economists, the simulation in Space Accountant is meticulously intricate and well detailed, reacting just like the economy of the real world would (if people in the real world mined asteroids and built spaceships).

People from all over the world log into the state-of-the-art client to argue the finer aspects of bulk shipping and mass production. They build their own ships that transport materials to and from various space factories to make more ships that ship more materials! At higher levels corporate officers can engage in tax record fraud, security scandals, and money market manipulation. CEOs fight each other through tense, months-long negotiations over entire percentage points. Occasionally, thousands of employees show up in a sector of space, ready for a tense and exciting tax code seminar or even an educational conference on updated spreadsheet coding.

Players praise the complexity of the game design. They rave about how long it takes to make a starting character, the authentically tedious contract creation process, and the gorgeous spreadsheets that render thousands of intense calculations using the latest 3D graphics. If you're willing to spend just a couple of months learning the basics, Space Accountant can provide you with years of engaging and enthralling tutorials to make

even the most mundane tasks an exciting challenge to uncover — along with a slow buildup of Wyrmtaint that any passing werewolf will notice.

Space Accountant is free to install and every update is also free. Just provide a credit card for the monthly subscription fee, and you too can start crunching numbers! In space!

Lycanthrope: The Rapture 17th Anniversary Edition

The signs are impossible to ignore. The cities teem with people staring at cellphone screens. The skies are choked with data and fossil fuel fumes. Civilization is slowly eroding the wild places of the world. Humanity has all but conquered the world. The Rapture is upon us...

... and only a handful of heroes stand ready to bring about the apocalyptic end of everything that humanity has built.

Enter the world of the Lycanthrope, the werewolves of myth and legend that stand ready to destroy everything that is good and wholesome in the name of their demon god. From the disease-ridden jungles to the desolate

arctic wastes, the signs are everywhere: destroy all that is civilized!

Black Dog Game Factory brings you this anniversary edition of **Lycanthrope: The Rapture**, celebrating seventeen years of blood, gore, dismemberment, and demon worship. It contains revised and updated rules for playing Lycanthropes in the World of Shadow, spearheaded by long-time line developer Evan Stump. All of the Lycanthrope's Karma powers are compiled into one place; with full-color art showing every drop of blood spray and every inch of rent flesh. Updated rules using all new English words have been vigorously playtested over the course of several minutes. The book used Black Dog's highly popular "closed development" system, where the writers and artists hint vaguely at what they're working on without revealing anything to the community.

Further, Black Dog will partner with the well-established CashGrab community-funding site to produce a Limited Edition version of **Lycanthrope: The Rapture**. This steel-bound volume has been tested thoroughly by Evan Stump, and is guaranteed to be able to murder an unpaid intern within two or three swings. People who



pledge over \$1,000 will get a chance to see the pages that Will Ridges scribbled in his original *Lycanthrope* design notes before going mad.

Lycanthrope: When Will You Murder?

Endron

Endron Regular Unleaded

Contrary to the tales told around the fire in Garou septs, Endron does not bind spirits or banes into its gasoline. That would be counterproductive. They don't need to make their gas do anything particularly evil, not when it's one of Pentex's best spiritual smokescreens available. A car burning Endron's regular unleaded leaves a lingering trail of fumes that contain tiny particles infused with Wyrmtaint. When several cars drive through an area, the whole place stinks of the Wyrmtaint, giving the Corruptor's minions plenty of cover.

It takes hundreds of cars burning Endron's gas for an area to show up as tainted: most urban areas, motor shows, and any gas station that supplies Endron fuel all stink of Wyrmtaint. A Rite of Cleansing can clear the taint, and is difficulty 4 to work over any area up to a square mile. The true difficulty comes soon after—unless the Garou can bar cars and trucks from the area entirely.

Falcon Pathfinder

In 2009, Endron bought out Falcon Motors, a small car manufacturer who had made waves with their first hybrid off-road vehicle, the Falcon Trailblazer. With an infusion of Endron's money, not to mention cutting edge science and engineering from Endron's alternative energy research groups, three years later the Falcon Pathfinder hit the roads. It's a completely new type of electric car: it charges in just an hour from a standard wall outlet, yet has an effective range of 1500 miles before needing to recharge. Its zero-to-sixty time is lower than most sports coupes and leaves even the fastest standing over a quarter-mile. The car also has back seats big enough for three teenagers, a trunk big enough for a family vacation, and cutting-edge safety features to protect passengers and anyone hit by the car. The Pathfinder also has adaptive suspension, for a smooth ride in the city and off-road.

The Pathfinder has such great results because its engine has a Bane bound to it. The spirit doesn't have any influence over the car beyond producing its astounding performance, but that's second to its real purpose. Everyone who rides in a Pathfinder for more than a couple of hours bears a very strong Wyrmtaint that takes weeks to fade. The car itself exudes the same taint, and a Rite of Cleansing to remove it from car or passengers is difficulty 7. The car is as environmentally friendly as the ads claim, and were it not for the Wyrmtaint many Garou would

welcome it as a blessing to Gaia. As it is, they're too busy destroying the cars—and unleashing its trapped Bane—for the world to reap the benefits of Falcon's engineering.

King Breweries

Blue Stripe

A typical American beer, Blue Stripe appears on shelves next to Budweiser, Coors, and Miller. Say what you will about those drinks, but only Blue Stripe goes above and beyond, actively deadening the drinker's soul. About one bottle in every thousand includes a psychoactive additive that makes the drinker more irritable and prone to lash out at the slightest provocation. Drink enough Blue Stripe and even the most caring spouse will slowly slip into a cycle of abusing her husband and children—even when sober.

Drinking more than five of bottles of Blue Stripe, every week for a month, causes a drinker to show up as tainted to Sense Wyrmtaint; the Rite of Cleansing difficulty depends on how long the victim has drunk King's beers. The first two months are difficulty 3, rising to difficulty 4 during the first year, difficulty 5 for the next four years, and difficulty 6 for anyone who has drunk King beers weekly for at least five years.

Woody Creek

Woody Creek is a single-barrel Kentucky bourbon, with a rich and complex scent and a surprisingly deep flavor. It's 90 proof when it goes into the bottle, at which point a black wax seals in the cork. The distillery stamps a distinctive logo into the wax on top of each bottle, actually a Wyrmtaint rune. Every time a seal breaks, those who know the language of spirits can hear a quiet cry for help. Drinking Woody Creek for any length of time exaggerates the drinker's palate, making her more sensitive to tiny differences in flavor, and making other whiskies taste subtly wrong. She becomes more and more of a whiskey snob, dismissing everything but Woody Creek as entirely inferior. After a while, she won't drink with people who don't share her tastes, because having to put up with the opinions of those who are so plainly wrong is too much for her to bear.

Almost one in five hundred bottles of Woody Creek contains a Bane bound to the glyph on the seal. If the drinker finishes the whole bottle in under a week—without sharing—the Bane latches on to her soul. She becomes first elitist, then impossible to please, pioneering implausible positions just for the love of arguing and the joyous feeling of being persecuted. After a month, the black thoughts that have gnawed away at her family and friends turn inwards, distorting her into a fomor. For those lucky enough to avoid a Bane-tainted bottle, Woody Creek

causes a drinker to show up as tainted in the same manner as Blue Stripe, with a shot replacing a bottle of beer.

Magadon

FluBuster!

Almost everyone's had the same feeling — waking up with a head cold or flu on the day of a big meeting, a career-defining presentation, or a major exam. Fortunately Magadon has just the solution: FluBuster! It contains painkillers, decongestants, cough suppressants, and stimulants. Two pills don't just numb the pain and help breathing; they give more of a wake-up kick than a six-pack of energy drinks. They're the most effective cold and flu relief medication on the market; so many turn to FluBuster when they feel like crap.

The concoction of stimulants has a whole range of negative side effects. After the initial rush, someone taking FluBuster feels his thoughts are racing, and he's able to think rings around everyone else. It also removes inhibitions better than half a bottle of tequila. The result has a FluBuster user acting on his every impulse, while convinced he will get away with it, even though the drug doesn't change his natural ability to lie or hide evidence. Once he stops taking FluBuster he suffers frequent mood swings — one minute he's wracked with guilt and depression, the next he feels an almost manic need for secrecy.

Most people who take FluBuster don't show up as tainted. A few keep taking the drug recreationally to avoid the mood-swings, and they show up as tainted to Garou. Apart from the potentially disastrous effects on friends and family, FluBuster does nothing actively malicious, and a Rite of Cleansing has no effect beyond removing the scent of taint.

UltraSheen

One of Magadon's most popular cosmetic ranges, the UltraSheen line comprises foundation, eye shadow, lip-gloss, and mascara. Unlike many things made by Pentex, people using UltraSheen don't show up as tainted. Instead, it's a powerful tool for some of Magadon's executives to spy on rivals and werewolves alike.

Imported to the physical world from Malfeas, the factories make the entire UltraSheen line from the remains of weakened Banes. These Banes create a spiritual link, allowing viewing stations in Magadon offices to connect to the makeup. Magadon employees can look through the eyes of anyone wearing UltraSheen mascara or eye shadow. Most offices employ temps and interns to watch for anything interesting coming from thousands of people wearing UltraSheen. The lip-gloss is slightly different: an operator can use the spiritual link to force

the wearer to utter a short phrase of no more than five words without her knowledge. Doing so more than once a week overloads the spiritual link, breaking it until the victim next applies UltraSheen cosmetics.

A canny Garou looking in the Umbra can see a faint glow around the eyes and mouth of anyone wearing UltraSheen with a Perception + Enigmas roll (difficulty 7). UltraSheen foundation raises the difficulty of that roll to 9. Though a wearer does not show up to Sense Wyrms, a Rite of Cleansing (difficulty 5) can break the sympathetic link.

NikNak Computing

Pentex acquired the tiny NikNak Computing electronics company to create a direct competitor to Sunburst Computers. With Pentex's massive cash injection, NikNak rapidly expanded its market share by introducing proprietary operating systems, games consoles and smartphones that replicate, but are incompatible with, Sunburst's systems and other non-Pentex brands.

These alternative devices led to aggressive marketing campaigns, industrial espionage and sabotage from the two subsidiaries vying for market monopoly. Pentex encourages this rivalry as the competitors squeeze out all rivals and realise greater market share than Sunburst alone. Each manufacturer ensures software developers commit to delivering products to only one operating system. This forces consumers to purchase duplicate, incompatible equipment to enjoy the full range of games, applications, and advertised features.

Only the senior executives of each company know Pentex owns both. Employees who delve too deep into ownership details tend to disappear, or suffer unfortunate accidents.

Killer's Pledge

Killer's Pledge from Deep Dive Games immerses the player in breathtakingly accurate renderings of historic locations. Players assume the role of a member of a society of killers who must murder historic personages to ensure the freedom of society. Opposing the players is a conspiracy of murderous shapeshifters called 'the Ferals' who oppress humanity within a brutal 'Impergium'. The player is out-matched at the start but by embracing brilliant, forward-thinking scientific minds from each age they develop skills and obtain the strength and equipment to reveal the secret history of the world and defeat the shapeshifters.

Deep Dive courted controversy in the media recently by making the bold decision to acknowledge women had little, if any, involvement in key historic events. This rejection of the politically correct, but historically-inaccurate, accounts of history resulted in a social media storm of hate from apologist sympathizers. 'All *Killer's Pledge* protagonists are male as we strive for immersive,

authentic experiences over pandering to the PC-gone-mad minority preaching revisionist history over the truth,' a Deep Dive spokesman said.

Thrill of Service

The Thrill of Service game franchise is NikNak Computing's alternative to Tellus' Biological Warfare series. Developed by Deep Dive Games, it follows a best-selling formula to churn out endless sequels. Thrill of Service sends players into the heart of battle in historically-themed modern-era battles dating back to the First World War. The game focuses on slaughtering wave after wave of enemies — either to exhaust enemy reserves or reach objectives.

The series originally included immersive storylines, but Deep Dive developers quickly realized the players only wanted to experience the killing and moved to an online multiplayer environment where strangers murder each other over and over again. The high resolution visuals, gratuitously gory animations, and quick respawns desensitize players to the real world impact their actions would have.

UMe

NikNak's flagship product in the smartphone market, the UMe (pronounced You-Me) slightly underperforms all major competitors, including Sunburst's Solaris phones. The UMe counters this with greater storage and battery life, and costs around two-thirds the price of the Solaris. The UMe application market offers significantly fewer products than Solaris, but developers and programmers have rushed to fill the void as NikNak gives them greater control over their designs and charges a smaller hosting fee than Sunburst. NikNak expects the UMe store to overtake the Solaris within a year as it quickly fills with compatible versions of all the must-have apps.

NikNak engineers have demonstrated that the EM radiation produced by these phones will, over the next decade, cause tumors. The company has hidden these studies, and strenuously denies rumors of their existence. These emissions are invisible to all current testing methods but do register give off a faint scent of Wyrms-taint. A Rite of Cleansing has no effect on this taint.

RED Network

Mega Cage

With the Mega Cage, RED Network takes advantage of Pentex's private prison network to stage vicious no-holds barred cage fights between inmates and broadcasts them pay-per-view. Several anti-violence and civil liberties groups have strongly protested the practice but RED Network has so far benefited from the free publicity — in no small part by ensuring its own news channels provide



selective and skewed coverage of the protest campaigns. The protests give Mega Cage the perfect opportunity to unleash well-respected (and well-paid) mental health experts who provide opinion on how fights provide much needed relief to prisoners, and how the controlled and sanctioned bouts correlate with a decrease in random prison violence. Whistle-blower statements attribute the decreases to under-reporting and that, in truth, the prison environment has worsened since the advent of Mega Cage. These anonymous claims remain unverified and denied.

Participation in Mega Cage is strictly voluntary — but prison administrators have many ways to coerce participation, especially if the inmate is notorious. Troublemakers also find themselves with little choice but to 'volunteer' — they soon learn to fall in line if they want to survive.

Despite the controversy — or because of it — Mega Cage is a financial and ratings success. That some of the more successful fighters prove themselves suitable for First Team recruitment is an added bonus.

Battle News

Battle News follows investigative war-zone journalists embedded in front-line combat units. It explores the day-to-day existence of soldiers, from recreation to the mind-numbing boredom between patrols and the gut-wrenching terror of combat.

Battle News skews coverage to serve Pentex's political and psychological goals. Governments who hire First Team paramilitary units or allow Pentex to construct training facilities and barracks within their borders receive favorable reporting while their enemies are portrayed as bloodthirsty extremists.

Battle News correspondents carefully manage reports to avoid exposing identifiable First Teams. Sympathetic stories generically focus on troops, highlighting the brave men and women performing vital battlefield support



roles and avoiding discussion of combat. The journalists are very careful not to mention the horrendous carnage inflicted on their enemies by Pentex's overwhelming firepower — including chemical and biological weapons that always need field testing.

First Team Equipment

Pentex First Teams have some of the finest equipment the corporation can provide via its vast network of subsidiaries. If the First Teams need something that an existing subsidiary can't manufacture, synthesize, or procure, Pentex will find it, and initiate an aggressive acquisition campaign. The company prefers to keep First Team supply chains 'in-house' to better service the unique requirements of many of its staff.

First Team administrators coordinate supply with the Board's blessing. While the First Team budget is finite, the powers within Pentex always seem able to squeeze a little more when needed. After all, it may be one of their pet projects that requires the next First Team intervention.

Full Force Solutions

Pentex is very interested in weapons manufacture — Full Force Solutions is just one of the many arms merchants in Pentex's portfolio. Full Force enjoys the envious position as not only Pentex's premiere manufacturer, but also the key supplier of First Team weapons and equipment. The subsidiary generates billion-dollar profits each year selling weapons and armor to governments, dictators, freedom fighters, and terrorists across the world. Wherever people need guns for self-protection, assassination, or for violently overthrowing governments, Full Force has the solution.

Full Force Solutions has defeated dozens of legal challenges trying to link it to the supply of weapons to

terror groups. Its covert arms traffickers are the best in the business and FFS has always provided clear, watertight records showing that all its products were legally manufactured and sold to legitimate customers. On paper, the arms supplier is transparent, accountable, and untouchable.

FT-13, PX-66F and more

Part of Full Force's success comes from the standard First Team issue of the FT-13 semi-automatic pistol and the PX-66F assault rifle. Every First Team trooper has an FT-13 on their person at all times, to respond to sudden enemy incursion. Troops assigned to those facilities expecting attack also carry the PX-66F. Both weapons are incredibly reliable and robust, requiring only minimal field maintenance. These designs also benefit from their capacity to be stripped for cleaning by all but the most inept fomeri fingers — or tentacles. The interchangeable grips and other parts for oversized — or even more unusual — hands are key Full Force design elements, and preferred by First Teams. Full Force also manufactures heavier and lighter weapons, such as submachine guns and heavy machineguns, for issue to First Teams as required.

Whisper Rounds

The Full Force Whisper ammunition comes in all common calibres and works with other manufacturer's firearms. Statistically, Whisperers are more likely to cause non-lethal injuries compared with other similar rounds. Whisper rounds have the same stopping power as other ammunition, but despite the massive flesh trauma and organ damage they inflict, more victims survive being shot with Whisperers.

The secret comes from the embryonic Bane bound into every slug. Little more than a mote of existence, these most pathetic spawn of Malfeas jump at the chance to be something more. The binding is weak and the Bane is released from its cage once the shot is fired regardless of whether it hits or misses. When a Whisper round hits a target, the bane finds itself in the perfect location to try and possess the victim. Better still, a critically wounded victim is in shock, rapidly approaching death, and very susceptible to the Bane's whispered offers of assistance. If the victim accepts the devil's bargain — what he usually believes are hallucinations — the Bane keeps him alive long enough for medical assistance to arrive, or for its new host to naturally heal. These tiny spirits are usually too weak to help the healing beyond stabilizing the host, and don't yet have enough power to force a full possession.

Gun control lobby groups praise Whisper rounds for the decline in shooting victim death rates. They have no idea that each survivor incubates a tiny malevolent spirit,

determined to wait and worm into its host's subconscious over the years until it grows enough to seize control and complete the fomori transformation.

The embryonic Banes are individually too small to register to most Wyrmsensing abilities. Increase the difficulty of detecting Wyrms taint by 3 if less than a thousand Whisper rounds are nearby (maximum difficulty 9); reducing this penalty by 1 for every additional thousand rounds.

Bullseye

Manufactured from lead smelted in Malfeas, Bullseye ammunition makes it easier to hit a target after he's been hit once. Full Force manufactures these rounds using conventional processes, and to an outside observer these bullets are indistinguishable from others. Nothing about the round should improve accuracy, yet they do.

The lead used for Bullseyes is the key. Within Malfean forges, dark spiritual techniques bind a captured Gaian metal elemental to the molten lead. More than just binding within a normal fetish or talen, this process smelts the spirit's essence with the lead's physical presence, creating a quasi-spiritual alloy. As the lead is divided into the slugs for each bullet, the tortured and insane spirit remains alive but divided. Thereafter, the spirit desperately tries to reform itself from the fragments. After one slug strikes, the spirit's desperation draws subsequent shots to the original. This does have the unfortunate side effect of decreasing the likelihood of hitting after one miss, but Full Force is working to correct this defect.

The first attack with Bullseye rounds has no modifiers to the roll. If it strikes the target, subsequent attacks are at -1 difficulty (minimum 3). If it misses the target, subsequent attacks are made at +1 difficulty (maximum 9). Subsequent attacks raise or lower the difficulty appropriately.

Bullseye rounds are expensive to manufacture and aren't usually issued to inexperienced First Teams. A favored tactic is for a sniper to ambush a target with a Bullseye round before the rest of the squad unleashes a hail of automatic fire.

Some unknown alchemical or spiritual incompatibility prevents Bullseye rounds being made from silver.

Avalon Incorporated

Doc Chaney's Involuntary Reaction (IR) Filters

Many people are surprised that a toy manufacturer is any use to the First Teams, but Avalon proved its worth with the invention of Doc Chaney's lenses. The lenses were the product of Avalon's research into new children's sunglasses that magnified the harmful effects of UV rays.

The filters issued to First Teams usually come in the form of tactical goggles or built into helmet face-shields. Recent developments in refining the lenses has made it possible for Avalon to offer them in sunglasses form for teams that need to blend in with civilian or corporate surroundings, such as VIP protection.

Doc Chaney's IR filters dull the effects of Delirium, making it possible for humans to fight Garou without fleeing in terror. A wearer reacts to the Delirium as though her Willpower were three dots higher than it is. The lenses are vulnerable to removal or damage, and true to Avalon's initial design they increase the harmful UV rays that reach the retina, leading to blindness if worn too long in the sunlight.

Endron Oil

Tarnish

First Teams have considerable experience with werewolves outmaneuvering them through the spirit world. They also understand how reflective surfaces contribute to this flexibility. Tarnish is a sticky, flammable foam in a spray can. The toxic chemical coats surfaces with an opaque, matte layer almost impossible to remove without industrial solvents or by burning — which usually damages the reflective surface and leaves behind oily soot. It can be used to foul water and other reflective liquids — a brief spray quickly spreads to a molecule-thick layer rendering water undrinkable, unbreathable, and definitely non-reflective.

A single spray can holds enough for 10 applications, but does have the unfortunate tendency to explode if struck by stray bullets. Teams can also request drums with larger volumes of Tarnish for areas requiring greater coverage.

LightUp

Exploding LightUp grenades cover everything within a ten foot radius with sticky, fluorescent pink, orange and yellow strands of expanding resin strings. These strands cling to skin and hair like glue and are insoluble in water. They also attract static electricity like lightning rods, and are faintly radioactive.

Anyone covered with LightUp is easy to see and track (-2 difficulty) and is distracted by the constant crackle and sparking of static electricity, suffering +1 difficulty to actions requiring concentration.

Endron, in association with Avalon Incorporated, makes a 'child-friendly' version of LightUp that comes in ozone-depleting aerosol cans. The domestic formula lacks the radioactivity and is water soluble, but breaks down into component chemicals that build up in soil

and water supplies, killing plants and fish. The string is not immediately toxic to people incautious enough to eat it, but does increase the risk of sterility or passing on genetic diseases to any future offspring.

Sunburst Computers

Squealer

Squealers take advantage of the different frequencies humans and wolves hear — particularly the slight ‘bleed’ of frequencies Garou retain in homid form. These cellphone-sized devices clip onto clothing and emit warbling, disorienting high frequency sonic pulses when activated that interfere with werewolf coordination and reasoning.

Active Squealers destroy any chance of stealth against werewolves — or foes with similar hearing ranges. The casing is covered in microscopic barbs too small to pierce skin but which instantly tangle in hair or fur. Tangled scramblers can’t be removed without cutting or tearing the hair from the body.

Squealers add +1 difficulty to rolls for all Garou within 15 feet, which increases to +2 difficulty in Crinos and Hispo forms, and +3 in Lupus.

First Teams working with Black Spiral Dancers should not use Squealers, on pain of being torn apart by their irate allies.

SquadNet

Encrypted wireless headsets with biomonitoring technology, modern military forces across the world equip their soldiers with SquadNet devices. SquadNet keeps units in contact with each other, their fellow squads, and their commanders. Functions are locally controlled but can be overridden by superior ranked devices, so

commanders can minimize chatter or prevent wounded, screaming troops from demoralizing their fellows.

First Team SquadNets are compatible with commercial versions, but have an additional feature. These units tune into sounds and conversations within the Penumbra. These sound like ghostly, echoing reflections of real sounds and are difficult to hear clearly. Despite this limitation, more than one First Team has received warning of an imminent Garou attack as the werewolves try to ambush the Pentex troops through the Gauntlet, only to be ambushed in turn.

Magadon Pharmaceuticals

FightBack

Magadon made FightBack to interfere with the brain’s natural biochemical processes induced by stress and terror. FightBack modifies these processes to result in anger and hostility. First Teams use gas grenades with FightBack for distractions in crowded locations—there’s always someone in a crowd who is unbalanced enough to snap and resort to instant, unprovoked violence.

FightBack is most useful for First Teams facing Garou in public or populated locations. Any security the werewolves feel in using their Delirium-inflicting forms soon disappears when the crowd’s fear turns to chaotic, homicidal rage at the Garou. FightBack’s effects don’t increase the victim’s survivability or fighting prowess against a raging Crinos Garou, but they are an unwelcome surprise to the Garou who have to waste time avoiding or slaughtering innocent bystanders rather than the Pentex troops.

Use the Delirium chart (W20, p.263) as normal, but any result indicating fear is replaced with anger and violence, the savagery of which depends on the intensity of the fear.

PENTEX

Army of the Night

Antonine Teardrop
Ash Walter
Charles Madgyesi
Chuck L. Taylor
Dukal Shadowstrike
Ethan W. Morris
Gareth Hodges
Gaven Ramlow
Hachas
Heimi
Ian A. A. Watson
James Cartwright
Lisa "Hazmat" Treadway

Lou Silvers
Mark Huba
Matt M McElroy
Miguel Esteban Carrero Torres
Mike Piper Bone Gnawer Athrow
Moreno Bianconcini
Odysseus Onassis, SCIENTIST!
Pedro Obrador Cruz
Rose Bailey
Samuel Brana-Soto
Sprite-Across-the-Snow
Tamsyn 'Destroyer of Worlds' Kennedy
Tassy Crewse

Twisted Fomori

Vaughn E Allen
w5748
Walter F. Croft

...

Noble Thayer Graves, Tremere Templar
Wyrmie McGee

...

Insanguinemus

...

Babetten
Dan Summers
Matthew Barrett

...

Ken MacLean

Debased Kinfolk

Sean K.I.W. Steele/Arcane

...

-- | horsefly | --

Aaron 'Braves-the-Darkness' Spelling
Adam "Shadowfox" Tullett
Adam Lake
Al Provance
Alexander "guddha" Gudenau
Alexander Lucard
Alexander Syga (Kashi)
Alice Lanteigne
Amy Veeres
Andrew McWhirter
Andrew Stein
Anthony John Bridge
Bardo de valfenda
Black Gauntlet
Bobby Chow
Brian Campbell
Caesar Thompson

Charles Siegel
Chaz P. Lynd, Hermit
Christofer Sandell
Christopher Allen
Christoph "Chaki" Stumpfer
CM Cunningham
Colin Morris
Cora Anderson
Craig Curtis
Dan Lovejoy
Dancer in Shadows
Daniel Cazan
Danilo, the misspeling bureaucrat (Argh!)
Danni Feveile Börm
Danny Rushton
Darkshifter
Dave Scheidecker
David A. Cuneo
David 'dj' Coleman
David-Karan

Davin Wärter
Dr. James Blair
Dugas Mathieu
Eric "Lameth" Folco
Eric C. Magnuson
Erin Riggs Smith
Fernando Autran
Footnotegirl
Frank McCormick
Froth
Galen Brownsmith
Garrett Alspach
Hansbeck Balshiv
Imran Inayat
Ivo de Mooij
Jackson Brantley
James Bombok
Jared Buckey
Jason Brennan
Jason Italiano
Jeb Woodard
Jim Urquhart
Jocelyn Blight-singer
Joe "Pentex Killer" Coyle
Jonathan D. Harter
Joshua B. Gillund
Kailindorian
Kevin Harrison
Kirilee "Moonlost" Lester
Kristen "The Shadow Spiral" Volpi
Lin Liren
Lod Marcannis
Lucas "Blackheart" Marmitt
Luke Jordan
Luke Van Buren
Madame Bug
Mariano Alejandro Leonardi
Mark Hope
Mary Webster
Matt Betts of Black Hole Trebuchet
Maxime Berar
Metal Fatigue
Michael Roebeling
Mike Nelson Wagner
Mike Spector
Mya Giordano
Nathan Henderson
Nicolas Chrétien bani Tremere
Nin
Oomizuao
Patrick O'Donnell

Patrick Sandoval
Paweł Jendrych
Peter Gates
Peter Kuhnert
Peter McGyrk
Phil Broughton
Phil Hattie
Philipp Hinderer
Picks-at-Flies
Pisses-on-the-Wyrm
Quentin "Whacko" Kowalski
Ralph
Randy Ochs
Rasmus Nicolaj West
Rémi "Batronoban" Teulière
Rich Shirley
Shadrack Klieg
Skips-Stones-in-Battle
Tass P
Ted Ludemann
Teeth-That-Wait
Thutmose Speaker For The Dead
Tim Bogosh
Vari Sylphi Kahiki-Neryth, investigative reporter
Víctor Jiménez Merino
Xyrus Oblisk aka Hieu "Tony" Nguyen
Yugula the World-Raper
Zachary Johnson
Zalabar

• • •

Andy Kwong
Chris 'AkatsukiLeader13' Gawne
Doctor Ion
Jeremy Seeley
Jim Schofield
Mark 'Keleas' Webb
Mike & Brian Goubeaux
Peter Smyk
Robert Armstrong
Roxane Tourigny

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Geoffrey Rabe
Gregory Faster-Than-Light
Harley Silver Wolf
Ian Magee
Jason Best
Julia Czarniecki
Kyle Gallagher
Matthew Madden
Nuno Vargas
Peter Naughton

Peter Steponaitis
Rand Brittain
Rob Mayer
Sicill Col
Stefano d'Ovidio
Stew Thompson
Stuart Armstrong
Tiffamy Korta
William Boyd Nix
Ziv Ragowsky

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Daniel "Hears-The-Wind" Fishman
Finn "Peregrin-SQUAR" McKenzie
John Wm. Thompson
Nicholas Muehlenweg
Ryan Hammell
Silver Mane The Traitor
Søren Høeg Pedersen
Vladislav Lazarov
Wes Frazier

• • •

Bruce Gray
Dane "Noctis" Madsen
Federico Medina III
Genevieve Cogman
Guillaume Boisjoli
Jamie Robert Lee
Mike de Jong
Oscar Ulloa
Rib
Robert G. Male
Samuel J Piaggio
Sean Smith

Sebastian Wittler
Stephen T Smith
Steve Lord
Tathel
Vesp
Zachary Chapterlane

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Alexander "Kuein" Yatskov
Ambrosia
Andrew McGraw
Angelo Pileggi
Bernard J. Wright II
Bob Jones
Bob Ooton
Doongar
Dustin Rector
Emily McCabe
Ernie "pookie" LaFountain
Joonas Iivonen
Ketty Mint
Kevin Chauncey
Kristine Roper
Loki Master of Cats
Lupin Chevalier
Maicon Luiz de Souza
Megan "Nezumi" Greathouse
Michael
Peter Dean
Pyotr Kriz, C.E.O. Of Save The Insanity Foundation
Rose
Steven Thesken
The Plaid Mentat

Black Spiral Initiates

A. Quentin Murlin
Aaron & Heidi Chiles
Aaron Buttery
Aaron Nowack
Adam Doochin
Adam 'Sham' Talicska
Adrienne Jean Benfield
Albert Schroter
Alex
Alexander "Tongue of Acid" Ravenoff
Alexander Lezama
Alexis & Jeremy
Alyssia Ashkevorn
Amy & Daniel Deschenes

Andrew Jay Cardinal
Andrew Wilson
Andy Blanchard
Andy Zeiner
Annida Christofi-Clark
Austin Ness
Axeman of the Ozarks
Ben "Damocles Thread" Walker
Ben Dinsmore
Ben Lyons
Benjamin Loy
Berek Marcus
Births the Apocalypse
Brad Bazor

Brandon Kunc
Bret Anderson
Brian D. Nazaryk
Brian Gilkison
Brian King
Brian Watt
Bryce Perry
Bumslayer
C Hartley
Caitlin Eckert
Cason Snow
Chad Griffith
Chad Hazel-Kepler
Charlie "PookaKnight" Cantrell
Chris "Jade's Own Personal Seto Kaiba" Green
Chris "Odin's Bane" Lyden
Chris "Shallow Tracks" Shaffer
Chris Duesler
Chris Irvin
Chris Wagner
Christian, the Green Dragon
Christie "Laughter Rejoices in Darkness" Craig
Christopher "Ju Ju" Merrill
Christopher Blanton
Christopher Borst
Chuck Childers
Clint "Vermin" Cheek
Collin McCullen
Craig Gaddis
Crystal "Herr Doktor" Greenlee
Crystal. A. Chappelle
Cybermancer
Cynesra James
D Sonderling
Daniel "hunting moon" Weber
Daniel Auger
Darkest Night of Winter
Darkshmoo
Darkwolf Nightshade, Gabriel Vandal, & Sithis Nightshade
David Doucey
Derek Guder
Devin Curtiss
Dion Woods
Douglass Kern
Dustin Carpenter
Eat Your Crackers
el Miko
Eric "Stormchilde" Nelsen
Eric "The Ragabash" Francis
Evan D Myers
Frank Marshall

Gabriel Miller
Garron Lewis
Garth deumbra
Gary R Smith II
Gavin Downing
George Trace Webster
Gimble Gax
Greg Rebelo
Greg Valleau
Hailey McAuliffe
Handriel
Haroon Alsaif
Henry Jones
Hiryo, Kitsune Legend
HPLustcraft
HR and Nixx
Iarlais
Irene "Running Gag" Posey, on behalf of Jackson "Two Minds" Arndet
Jack Barone
James A. Gecko
James H. Ziegler IV
James Heche
James Rollins
James Smith
Janessa Tjara Portner
Jared "InverseThunder" Batora
Jared Fattmann
Jared Koon
Jason Kenney
Jason Pennel "Teller of the Hidden Truth, Twilight Bubasti"
Jason Place
Jason Ross Inczauskis
Jean McCrea
Jeff Dieterle
Jen "Loopy" Smith
Jenni Marion Foggo
Jeremey D Walker
Jeremy Brown
Jerry Gundry, Pentex Pleasures Division Head
Joe "Big Dog" Bianco
John "King" Roberts
John Christensen
John Coeey
John D Kennedy
John P. Baggett
John Peter Drury
Johnnie Facebiter
jon hicks
Jonathan "Thatzal" Perrine
Jonathan Osterhaus
Joseph Cottin

Justin Caletges
Kaeli Chambers
Kate Kirby
Katy Crumb
Kaylor Terrant
Keegan Sullivan
Keith Morrison
Kenneth Kier
Kerr "Alpha" D'Ercole
Kevin Caldwell
Kevin DeVormer
Kimberly Morris
Kitka
Kristopher Deters
Lane Broadhurst
Lau Moon Shines Darkly
Lee Leggett
LeopardWolf
Leslie and Ryan Schaad
Liam Black
Liana Vasko
Lillian Rose
Linda "Eel" Lee
Lips That Sear With The Venom Of The Wyrms
Lord Todd "TaleWeaver" Rivers
Lucifer "Luci" Hunter
Luis "Who dances the Spiral" Lopez
Lycaina
'Maadha' Charles C. Levay
Majicou83
Mako "Dancer of Corrupted Shadows" Ramsay
Mark "Bone Grinder" Taylor
Mark Garbrick
Marty "Spyder-Byte"
Matt (Ryya-yub) and Miranda Gnepper
Matt Asbell
Matt Bresee
Matt Johansen
Matt Lutz
Matt Piasecki
Matthew C Malis
Matthew Hedge
Matthew Horoszowski
Matthew Koelling
Matthew Laine
Max Vaillancourt
Megan K. McGuire
Michael & Danielle
Michelle
Mike Goble
Mike Macary

Monique Mooney
Nate Wetzel
Nejlah Al-Rahab- Gangrel Antitribu
Nemo Niemand
Nick Esposito
Nick Pilon
Nicole Porter
Octavio Arango
Omer Ahmed
Orin Spiess
Patrick and Michelle Cunningham
Paul "Anorak" Record
Pentex 5
Peter H Krulder II
Pieter Spealman
Plays With Nukes
Radcliffe Sanger, "Broken Code" Fallen Glass Walker
Razafani "Antagonises-the-Unyielding"
Redfuji6
Reuben Israel Beattie
Richard "Asche" Grant
Richard Taylor
Richie Tears of the Innocent
Rob Herman
Robert "Crossroads" Johnson
Robert "Jefepato" Dall
Rogan "Seven Moons" Hamby
Rohel Terrazas
Ron 'Jack Sorrow' Conner
Rosemary Wexler
Ross D. Thomas Shadow Lord Spy
Ross Pollock
Ruben Catinchi
Russell Godfrey
Ryan Schmidt
Sadler Lytton
Saleem Halabi
Sam Feipel
sam hing
Sameer Yalamanchi
Samuel Benke
Samuel Tesla
Sandy Loves Ken
Sarah Gulbrandson
Sawyer Sweet
Scott Rick
Scott Sytten
SCSi
Sean Silva-Miramón
Sean Vo Kirkpatrick
Sean W

Sethreich Ardestahdt
Shaun D. Burton
Silas Blacktooth
Skarsol
Skylar "Walks the Edge" Jones
Slippery Jim
Soren Haurberg
Stephen Brahms
Stoney
Streamjumper
Sylvanwulf
Talespinner
Taylor Dale Wright
Ted Pertzborn
the Derzer
TheAIY
Thomas "Wakshaani" Willoughby
Thomas Greer "Final Revelation," Athro, Theurge, Black
Spiral Dancer
Tinker "Catch 'em Alive" Thompson
Todd Keck
Tommie Boatwright
Trevor Stamper
Trista & Daniel Robichaud
Troy Warrington
Tzalik the 'Fist of God'
Vassily Petranovich
Vincent Giovanni
Walter Soto
Wayne seeger
Westonard
Whelp Strangler
William "Fox" Coleman
William Ruby

• • •

Aaragon "Rage Bringer" Kiss
Aaron Woodside
Acrodon
Akela "Claws-Like-Ice" Hohnihohkaiyohos
Alan and Nichole Harasen
Alec McClain
Alvaro "Sixaola" Madrigal
Amanda "Laughing Hyena" Johnson
Amanda H Lambert
An Anonymous Researcher
Ander Rabann
Andrés Montañez
Andrew Cummings, Liason to the Fulbright Foundation
Andrew H. Behrens
Andrew Oleniach
Anna Ashcroft Umbral Danser and Monkey Wrench Queen
Anna Shaw of the Black Furies

Anonymous
Anthony Howell
Anthony Jennings
Ariel Kaiser
Arthur "Torakhan" Dreese
Astraj Serpent-Sworn
Austin Haught
babus
Bartole
Baxxavi
Beachfox
Benjamin "eSca" Reed
Bill Dittmar
BJ McManus
Black Sun
Blake Deakins
Board Room Dancers
Brendan R McCann
Brianne M. Sifert
Bryan Allen Hickok
CAGWorks
Carl Capler
Casey/Victoria Geyer
ChaoticCore
Chasym
Chris "Diablerist" Hitchcock
Chris and Amber Roberts
Chris Dyer
Chris Foster "Stands Stoic"
Chris Kyle
Chris Woodruff
Christina "Lashes-with-Fury" Sims
Christoph Schulz
Christopher Bertell
Christopher Gunning
Christopher R. Wain
Clay Huettemann
Cody Wagar
D. Lacheny
Damien Starlurker
Daniel Dwyer
Daniel Niekerk
Daniel Wright
Danielle Oremus
DarkBlaze
Dashekita N. Brooks
David "JustDave" Talboy
David "Sugarwookie" Baity
David K Uspal
David Mortensen
Deanna Rossi

Delilah Ring-Breaker Reid
Devin & Linny
Diluvium Ignis
Dolan Ross Scherfel
Doug Atkinson
Dread Lime
Ed Moretti
Edgardo Alfredo Montes Rosa
Eekjh Fline, Fallen Simba, Garou Scourge
Emilio J. "Krusmir" Sánchez-Sierra
Eric -Forsaken One - Crabtree
Eric Pensman
Evan "JabberWokky" and Sarah Edwards
Everett Thane
Experiment 626
Garrett Stonekill
Gregory "Do I look like I'm made of airports?" Krakovich
Hektor Leonidas Dimitrius Philip Crasius Diocletian "Son of
Cahlash" McElhone
Henry F. Bruckman Vargas
Ian "Squee" Sargeant
Ian Hamilton
J. H. Frank
J.Noah Wiley
Jacob "Stormsinger" Flores
Jacob Williamson
Jade
Jason & Amy Berteotti
Jason Conners
Jason Dickerson
Jason Freston
Jason Geis
Jason Stierle
Jason Wells
Jay "Sarael" Mahala
JAYSON "the14thguest" TURNER
jeff brister
Jeff Holland
Jeffrey S. James
Jen Jenkins
Jenny Langley
Jeremy "JDazzle" Marshall
Jeremy "Storm of Wrath" Miller
Jeremy A. Mowery
Jeremy Kostiew
Jessica Gains
Jody Bowman
John Carnathan
John R. Trapasso
Joseph "Warbeast" Drake
Joseph Lonergan
Joshua Coyle

Joshua Jenkins
Justin Jones
Kate Gryn
Ken Cheng
Kerry Shatswell
Kevin C. Wong
Kevin L. Tapper
Kim Dong-Ryul
Kirk Foote
Kyle D.
Kyle Winters
LeAnn 'Ellyham' LaFollette
Lee Dignam
Leonard Holding
LeviathanVII - Greg D -
Lindsey IV
Lior =^_ ^=
Lordkillmore
Lucas Paynter
Malacshakor
Marc Kuczborski
Marcus Xavier Figuerola
Mario Baumann
Matt Proehl
Matthew Dames
Matthew Finco
Matthew York
Michael "Voss" Leahy
Michael Albright
Michael Jacobson
Michael Pietrelli
Michael Tears-of-Joy
Michael W Kilduff
Mike Kiesling
Mike Todd
Mouseychan
Myke :Kinslayer: Diemart
MythosGamer
Nathan Kelly
Nathanielstarr
Nikika Giovanni
Nora "Needle" Hammond
Patrick "Yellow Behind the Ears" Hutchison
Patrick Pocher
Philip "Pip!" Martinez
Preston L. bobo
Randall Crawford
Reinhardt Dwar "Legion" Spiral Ahroun
Richard Pruiett
Richard Rush
Rob "Soul Rider" Stephenson

Rob Gatlin
Robin E. Head
Roger Robinson
Russell Graham
Ryan A. Rose
Sara Walker "Stalks-The-Net"
Shan "Shanathan" Morris
Shane Rose
Sharleen Dis
Shawn P
Shelby "D.J." Babb
Shepard "Priest" Addams
Stephen StormCloud
Stephen Struharik, Esq.
Steve and Nayla Caruso
Steve 'Pholtus' Jones
Steven Lau
Steven Sauer
Strikes-The-Fatal-Blow
Talkai Moonshadow
Tekgulith Seperates-the-Buttocks
Terry Moore
Thaddeus Ryker
Thomas Boston
Tracy Cook
Wayne "Stalks-the-Silent-Night" Myers
Whispers in Darkness
Willa Feeds-On-Pain
William Rodrigue
Wyllerd
Yuyue. Sun

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"Mr. Impolite" Sascha Jung
"S.I.N." Sigmund Ivanovich Necrosis
Abner Rodrigues
Adam Caverly
Adrian THK
Alessandro Rossi
Alexandre "Magnamagister" Joly
Ammariel Melwasul
Andara Shadowfang
Anders Holmström
André Roy
Andreas "Zanity" Bengtsson
Andreas 'Cifer' Gruner
Andrés Inocencio Pinzón
Archcani
Arthur Walks-the-lanes
Ben 'Spinner' Neilsen
Benoit Devost
Bill Heron

Brad Parks
Bruno Pereira
Butch2k
C.James Blukacz
Caroline Henry Hyll
Cedryck Mimault
Cesare Della Corte
Chad & Christine Geraghty
Chains, "Mind-Breaker"
Charley Gustavsson
Christophe Loyce
Colin Anderson
Craig Bishell
Craig Johnston (flash_cxxi)
CSN
D L Hector
Dacar Arunsone
Dances the Spiral Backwards
Dane Winton
David "Davegotsu" Mann
David Rego
David van Nederveen Meerkerk
Dawid "Salubrus" Wojcieszynski
Dean Stuart McNabb
Devour the weak
Dirk Renckens
Drew "Industrial Scribe" Scarr
Eoin Burke
Fayre
Franz Georg Rösel
Fraser Imrie
Gareth Clark
Habena
Haltaris
Heath J Banyai
Heike Vollnberg
Helder Lavigne
His Tyrannical Majesty Simon Teece.
Issar
Ivo Goudzwaard
Jake Kroker
Jake Tonguing-Your-Ear
Jason MacGillivray
Javier "He-who-walks-between-worlds" Montegrís
Jean-Francois Ethier
Jesper Julskov Schlie
Jessy Tremblay-Bigras
Joe Dunham
Joel Purton
Johran Garberus
Joshua "Dread Wolf" Mellor

Juan "Outsider" Dominguez
Junior 'Madmenquill' Korrigan
Katelyn "Howler-of-Tales" Menzies
Kenneth Peltokangas
Kevin Paul Warmerdam
Kimberly Horne
Kokiteno
Kokopelli GrrBrool "Bites-the-Tail" LaTrans
Krzysztof Zajkowski
Landis Adair
Laura Bennett
Leath Sheales
Lenus-Nel Bronkhorst
Lewis Davies
Lewis Knight
Lifestealer
Lord Vox Anteron
M. Ulfstedt
Mad Grin
Maddie the Rotti
Manolis Kemerlis
Marc-André Perreault
Marcin Kosiedowski
Mark S
Martijn Kruining
Martin Brown
MAS
Mathew Bryan
Mathias Thomsen
Mathieu Lapierre
Matthew Dive
Matthias Pettersson
Mélanie-Many-Mouths
Membranoso
Michael "Odin" Oberhauser
Michael Bach Kristensen
Michael Eringsmark
Michael Gunn
Michael 'The Abomination' Trudo
Michael Wood
Mikael Bergström
Neil Lavery
Nibbio
Nic Matuzic
Nicholas Chevallier
Nicholas Madgett II
Nicholas Ross
Nick Crinos Dale
Niklas Nordberg
Nikolai Steen "The Tainted One"
Oberon McRizzo

Oourlag Rips-The-Skins
Pantera Laranja
Panu "Father O'Brian" Laukkanen
Paweł "nimdij" Matysiak
Paweł Paradowski
Peter De Kinder
Petri Wessman
Piotr Piegat
Professor Richard Kently
Raphael Bourdot
Raphael Fernandes
Ricardo Foureaux
Roberto Salles
Romain PESSIOT
Rory Chambers
Rune Printzlau
Ryan Pater
Scanmangler
Schleicher
Scott Mullock
Sebastian Hall
Serpent's Kiss
Shosuro
Simon York
Song-of-Fenris-rhya
Spilios Aggelos Spiliopoulos
Stalks-the-Reef
Stefan Breuker
Stefan Schasse
Steffen Thorbjørnson
Stuart "Spider" Adam
Sylvain "OgGy" TANGUY
The Mordak
Tiercel Twice-Sworn
Tjalling Eekman
Tjerk Bieringa
Tobias Schulte-Krumpen
Toguro
Tommy Svensson
Torben Lindqvist
Torgeir
Travis Carpenter
Tshonka
Tyde Ratmeat
TYRA: THE CORRUPTER
Tyson "Daji" Pink
Vegard Kivle
Vladimir "Reverend Vermis" Dzundza
Waelcyrge
Wayne Welgush
Weltwandler

Will Inskip
William Dovan
Yan Brodeur

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Adam Whitcomb
Alexander Wolf
AlyssaC
Anonymous Gaian Garou
Anthony J. Pirri
Arik Marshal
Ashton
Bill Sorensen
Brad D. Kane
Brett "Broken Fang" Grimstad
Connell McTire
Dancer's Doom
Darryl Johnson
Derek "Pineapple Steak" Swoyer
Ernie Sawyer
Jaeryn Vulkovic
Jonathan Grimm
Justin Simon
Karl Fiebiger
Kneedles
Matt "Catapult" Wang
Metis Grimorae
Michael Duer
Owen Milton
Patrick Walters
Rain & Aidenn
Robert Harrison
Robert T. Sagris
scarybunnie
Shadowflame "The Darkness that Burns"
Terry Mealy
Thom Langan
Timothy York aka Ace

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Bitter Crow
Captain Button
Christian Walters
Coyotekin
Daniel Gochnauer
Edward Monical-Vuylsteke
Heather A. Harrelson
He-Zin Kwon
J. "Dragos" La Ragione
James "Walking Disaster" Cross
Jason "Occam's Razor Claw" Murray
Jason Van Pelt
Joe Parrino

Kraig Blackwelder
Merokchew
Methandrela
Michael T. Eastham
Millicent
Patrick "Raikel" Mailhot
Paul Singleton
Roberto Hoyle
Shelby Mehl
Silverwalker
Speaks-With-Pups
Tiberous Khan
Timothy Vollmer
Tynan Wren
Viktor Tolchenski
Wolfen Dancer
Zylo-Kills-The-Foe

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"Smell of the Wyrms", Gaian infiltrator, monkeywrencher
(un)reason
Alan Douglas
Alan Orr
Alexander Harcourt
Alvaro Saavedra
Ambrose Woden
Amy "Yee Tsun" Morgan
Andrea Migone
Andreas Åkerberg the profet of leech
Andrei Antonio Gonzalez Reyes
Andrew Waterfall
Andrew 'Whitenoise' Rogers
Arcade Lancelot de Isengard
Arne Radtke
Ben Bogaerts
Ben Liddell
Ben Treeby
Benoit Primeau
Brynjar Sigurðsson
Burak "The Fallen" Türköz (on behalf of TOMA Holding)
Caio "Visão-de-Águia" Geroto e Leila "Olho-da-
Tempestade" — And now we know all your secrets,
kisses from The Garou Nation
Carlos "ChecaWolf" Checa Barambio
Carsten Bolk
Christian A. Nord
Christopher "Tarquin" Grierson
Christopher Snook
Claus Larsen
Craig "Renfield286" Crowe
Dale 'Damien' Millward
Dances-with-corpses
Daniel Lundsby

David Hansen
 David Pérez
 David Rose Fraser
 Dhaunae De Vir
 Dominic Robertson
 Dr Marc Brown
 Eduardo "Du" Oliveira
 Erol Mazhar "Croc" Aksoy (on behalf of TOMA Holding)
 Erwin Burema
 Ferdinand von Schenk
 François Labaye
 Gabriela Degaspere
 Gaiya
 Gobbos
 Grzegorz Koczyk
 Guido Gerritzen
 Guilherme Ieno
 Guillaume "Lenny" Asset
 Hastein le Noir
 Henning "The Lieutenant" Hauser
 Iain MacPhee
 Ian Moloney
 Ignacio Sato
 Ivo Manca
 Jaap L
 Jacob "Jack" Guldbrandsen
 Jason "Panda" Hayes
 Jean-Marie CONSIGNY
 Jeff McRoy
 Jefferson, Scourge of Wyrms and Whiskey
 Jens Thorup Jensen
 Jeremy Brown
 John Doe
 John Lambert
 Jonas Hansson
 Joseph Lecomte
 Julián Navarro
 Kai Schiefer
 Keiko
 Kevin Lietz
 Lars Lauridsen
 Livia von Sucro
 Lord Necor
 Louis
 Luca Sacchini
 Luis Eduardo Garces Rodriguez
 Łukasz Korzeń
 Luzbhel
 Marc Blinn
 Marc Collins
 Marcel "Reideen" Roßborsky

Marcos Almeida Leite Bomfim
 Marcos Dacosta
 Maria Swan 'Fuzzy Spiral' Ragabash Elder, Mistress to the
 Hive of the Cackling Swallow
 Mark "Thunderhowl" Brunsdon
 Mark Lazure
 Mathieu Guittard
 Mathieu Lepage
 Matthew Sanderson
 MaTTias TT Svensson
 Mehmet "Rakshasa" Ortaç (on behalf of the TOMA Holding)
 Michael "Manyskins" Brosens
 Mirko a. Mitta
 Nick Ball
 Oliver Steckmeier
 Pablo Caracciolo
 Patrick Burke
 Paula Toledo Palomino
 Peter George Coulthard
 Peter Merkel
 peter peretti
 Philatis
 Philip Minchin
 Pieta Delaney
 Pria "Dawn Massacre" Furore
 Rafael Rodrigues
 Ralix "Requiem" Oaken
 Rob Buck
 Roberto Hiroshi Kina Filho
 Scott Forward
 Sebastian N. Behrndtz
 Sebastian Pusch
 Sébastien "Sebkun" Agogué
 Somalucard
 Spi
 Stefan Lundsby
 STene
 Talita "Setheus" Amaral
 Tara Cameron
 Thiago Henrique Righetti e Silva
 Tomislav Ivek
 Tormenta of the Night of 9 Fallen Caerns
 Triple D Alliance
 Tristan Lhomme
 Vermidas
 Virgile "Mafalda" Gaspard
 Warrick Voyzey
 Yann Abaziou
 Zakoros Skormis

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Adam Kost
 Andrew DiNovo
 Andrew McCarthy
 Anthony E. Harbo
 Ben Kesner
 Ben Orell
 Bill Shaffer
 Bob Stauffer
 Brett Shaw
 Bruce "Frostynutzz" Gregory
 Bursts-the-Heart-of-Gaia
 Ceann Cath
 Charlie Rose
 Chris "Eyes-of-Winter" Pallante
 Chris Eggers
 Christian Gunter, aka "Eclipse"
 Christopher Aronen
 Count Traitor VonBadguy
 Crusher-of-Cities
 Daniel H. Spain
 Darin Kerr
 David Bresson
 Denis Perron
 Derrick Sigmon
 Eats-the-Wolves
 Elijah Kautzman
 Francois Del La Mer, PE
 Greg "Whispers-Blasphemy" Meyer
 Gregory "GM" McIntire
 Indraneel 'Further-Down-The-Spiral' Dutt
 J. Quincy Sperber
 J. W. Bennett
 Jason Ludwig
 Jason Robinson
 Jayna Pavlin
 Jenna 'Silvered Snarl'
 Jennifer Hastings
 Jeremy "Ghost Wailer" Cue
 Jerome "Dra'cus" Stokes
 Jessica "Stormdanser" Darke
 John "Ebon Dragon" Bonar
 John C. Spainhour
 John Olszewski
 Jonathan Crow
 Jonci Aguillard
 Joseph A. "Scratch" Reichman, Jr.
 Keeper Of Dreams
 Kevin Butcher
 Kraftormel
 Leads-Astray
 Loriean

M.K. Miller
 Magus
 Majdi Badri
 Marcus and Leslie Arena
 Matt "Walks in Shadows" Millman
 Maxwell Harris
 Michael Lenzo
 Michael V. Roberts
 Mike "DaiTengu" Miller
 Nancy Calvert-Warren
 Naquu, the Baleblade
 NICHOLAS BARNETT
 Nicholas Faust
 Nick Cler
 Nulgaathi the Faceless One
 Panther Page
 Patrick Joynt
 Phill Calle
 Ravnico
 Robert "Rev. Bob" Hood
 S.A. Wolf
 scaredofshadows
 Scarlett Fontaine
 Scott "DarkSpiral" Martin
 Shimon Klein
 Timothy Mushel
 Travis Soul-Dancer Jarland
 True of Mind
 Warren P Nelson
 William Ash
 Zach Hodge
 Zachary Thomas Tyler, Uktena Galliard Earth Guide

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Austrball, Harlonious
 Bradley Yesko, Jason Rodriguez
 Byrony Turns-The-Weak, Drakomaxos Nikostratos
 Domino Burns-the-Sky Blackburn, Jon The-Deluded-Raven
 Wachowicz
 Eidan Rodriguez: Black Dog Gamer, Ricardo Rodriguez
 "Lycanthope: The Rapture" Beta Tester
 Fynikz "Boundless Rage" Gnoll, Malroth "Dashing Charach"
 Gnoll
 Jason Magnotte, Shannon Magnotte
 Jason Perez, Scott Duncan
 Jeff "Shadow" Fowler, Cali "Vidya" Crisler
 Lyre O'Kelly, Quinn Breckenridge
 Matthew G Payton
 Mike Spera & T.M.
 Nicholas D. Dragisic, Tim Prisching
 Raul Urbina, Edward Hernandez
 Russell Duff, Alexander Edwards
 Sean Banecraft & Scott Banehoefer

Trevor A. Lee and W.J. Schebler
Yakecen-Sings, Gage

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Alexander Kratochwill
Aurora Grayfur
Breaks-the-spirit
Claude Martel-Olivier
Emiliano Marchetti
Faolain Leamhnach
Grordan
Ian Dominey
Jakob Kiilerich of the LTG Roleplay Club
John Yngve Fredrik Lundgren
Kevin Vastavel
Lachlan
Leslie Weatherstone
Nicole Mezzasalma
Olivier Jobin
Perséfone "La-que-lleva-la-Muerte" (Lunus Flambeau)
Robert 'Cryn' Schlesier
Seana McGuinness
Thergolan Sternenjäger

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Azrael Von Braunschweig
Bruce Ralston
Charles Crowe
Christian Topp
Christopher A Bell
Cintain
J Desaulniers - Alberta
Johan Staaf
kathislava
Rémi DESSY
Roi Gary
Sir Joshua Raphael
Stephen Birks
Thabanne
Thomas E Huddleston

• • •

Alexandre "BloodSnow" Enrique
Anthony "Selketh" Denetiere
Bryce Undy
Chris Stewart
Christopher 'eChryxius' Wai
Daniel "Mega" Ferraresi
David Palau
Dawn Hammett
Demian
Dr. Balberith Ineluki
DreamingLilliane
Frankie Mundens

Ghilbert de Rouen
Glenn Clifford
Greg Phillips
Heinrich Krebs
Jan-Willem Kaagman
Johno "Darkest Moon" Moore
Kieran Carder
Klimt Silverpeak
Lars Holgaard
Maddy Maddington
Manuel Cadiz
Marc-André Laurence
Martin Mehaffy
Matthew Wasiak
Michael McCann, Chews-on-Glass (Club Mecatol Rex, Madrid)
Michael Patrick Thomas Hartwell
Nicholas A. Tan
Paul Jonathan S. Tio
Paul Ryan
Paul Williams
Per Nyrud Kaas
Richard 'Vidiian' Greene
Robert Biskin
Ron Hills
Sam Wong
Santiago García Belmar
Shawn VanSchuyver
Thomas Maund & Hazel Bell
Tom "Destroyer of Gaia" Depoorter
Wily Kaceres

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Alex Kovic, Thomas Masters
Andreas "ESSO" Jensen and Mikkel Lund
Chris McLean and Varden Fhaling
Conan Brasher, Allan Jackson
Daniel "Illuminos" Persson and Adam "Boman Brutalius" Persson
Dunkelschimmer, Jade Frostfeuer
Gregg Workman, Joseph Doherty
Grupo Fomori Mendigos Bébados, o Leprechau
Luciana Nogueira Soares, Carolina Voigt
Manfred Krause, Christian Klinkewitz
Marc Bouchard, Jean-François Charland
Mark Kelly & Aaron Jacob Kelly
Matthew "The Gentleman Gamer" Dawkins and Scarred-to-Remember
Oliver Schuster, Marco Klomfas
Rowan Conjures Incarna Thunderchild; Pascal Alexander
Shawn Kehoe, Nathan Myatt

First Team Officers

Colin Urbina
Damien Moore
Lucas Tenison Fortis
Michel Foisy
Pyro Darkfoot
S. Snyder
Samuel Gordon Mitson
Sappho Irodotou

Uniform Two Six
...
A. Treamayne
Christopher "Walks A Beat" Greer
Fabio "Wolfen" Machado
Mark Bussey
Nik May
Timothy Cook

Gorehounds

Ernesto Yip, Ami Comi Store, Exaula Calm Wind.
Jason Seitz, Wizard Asylum, George W. Bush
...
Hammur Bonesplinter, Selima Spawn-Tender, Arroz, The
Klaive-Taker, Vekthiss
Lady Synthe, Black Eye Vexed, Scathaigh, Overlord Nobody,
Ruinlord of the Nameless
Xeu, Zach Chuckran, Ben McVay, Honore Cruciatu Ivoire,
Keith "Lunas Perseverance" Morgan
...

Ben "PitchBlackSoul", Nico "BurnsYouTillYourEyeballsMelt",
Stephanie "TheTentacle(lover)",
Jan "SpineripperDeathclaw",
Willow "StranglesYou,WithYourOwnTesticles"
Jérôme Bianquis; Trollune; Charles Trécourt; Louis Trécourt;
Yannick Peyrède
...
Igor Bone, Matheus Chokos Veloso, Irian "Dança-na-Lua-
Negra", Bento "The charnel Bear", Igor "Uivo-dos-
Fantasmas" de Paula

Pentex Administrators

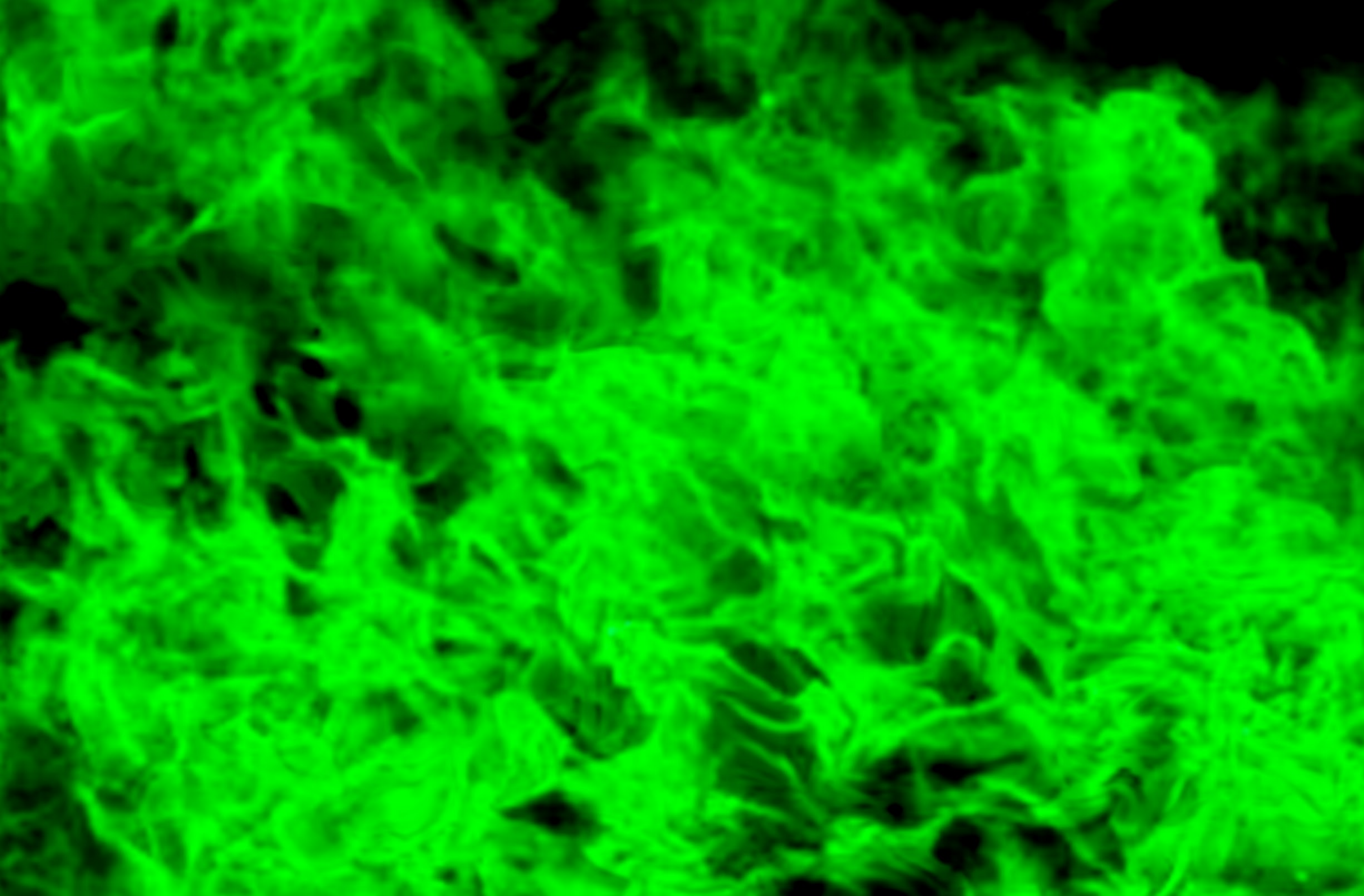
Adam Ault
Brent Logan Reitze
Collin "Malecclipse" Smith
David Michael Felt
Dominic Parent
Erich Orzech
Hammer
Harald Hellerud

James C King
Paul (Old Buddhist Crab) Thorgrimson
Ryan Porter
Samuel Meacham
Scott "PlagueRat" Shnider
...
Keith Reynolds (Admin #24601, Legal Department)
...

Pentex Board Nominees

Bentley W. Chism
David W. Kaufman II
Donnie "Lord Aludian" Roos, Jr.
Frédéri "Volk Kommissar Friedrich" POCHARD

Ian Roberson
Nick Brunskill
Ryan Owens
Toxic & Noxious (Mike)



BOOK OF THE WYRM™

Coils of the Corruptor

From the Umbral realm of Malfeas to the boardrooms of Pentex and its subsidiaries, minions of the Wyrms plot to kill Gaia. Warped fomori, monstrous Banes, and Wyrms-tainted shapeshifters lash out at the world with acidic claws. The Maeljin Incarna steals the easily forgotten, ignored, or missed to populate their perverse realms. Factories belch smoke that blackens the sky, and toxic waste floods into rivers and seas. The heads of the Hydra see what they have done to the world and know that it is good.

Strangling the World

Once long ago, the Wyrms was an agent of Balance. Now, strangled by the Weaver's webs, it strikes out in madness and pain. If it can poison the world, sow cancer and disease throughout all that is, it might finally be free.

Book of the Wyrms contains:

- All-new lore and background on the corrupting Wyrms
- Information on the Wyrms's minions, from fomori to Skull Pigs to Chulorvia.
- An in-depth look at the Black Spiral Dancers, twisted mockeries of Garou

